

The Question of Deification in the Theology of John Calvin

By

SUNG WOO PARK

Dissertation

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree:

Philosophiae Doctor

Department of Dogmatics & Christian Ethics
In the Faculty of Theology
University of Pretoria

Supervisor: Prof. Daniël P. Veldsman

August 2016

DECLARATION

I, Sung Woo Park, declare that the thesis, “The Question of Deification in the Theology of John Calvin,” which I hereby submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Dogmatics and Christian Ethics at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

FULL NAME: SUNG WOO PARK

SIGNATURE:  _____

DATE: **AUGUST 2016**

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I first of all thank and give glory to my God who gave me such a great opportunity to study abroad and empowered me to complete this thesis. God also gave me a great opportunity to experience mission work as a faculty member of ABBA (Africa Bible Based Academy) in South Africa.

I thank my supervisor, Prof. Daniël P. Veldsman for his excellent teaching, guidance, and constant encouragement. I also appreciate emeritus Prof. F. S. Malan for his kindness in editing my academic work and giving insightful advice, which has been a great support.

I am deeply grateful to my relatives, especially to two of my uncles, Dal-Soo Jung and Dal-Ok Jung, who have supported my study with constant prayer and financial aid. Some of my friends also deserve to be mentioned here for the worm friendship which they have shown toward me in prayerful and financial support the whole time I have studied: deacon Sung-Yong Han and deaconess Sun-Ok Lee.

I dedicate this thesis to all members of my family, especially to my mother who has been praying with tears for her second son ceaselessly. Thanks to my three lovely sons, Ji-Won, Ji-Yu and Ji-Yin, who have constantly shown their love and trust in me, which have really meant a lot to me. My heartiest thanks to my dearest wife, Eun-Sun Kong who haven't spared herself to support me with all labours in love.

ABSTRACT

Title: The question of deification in the theology of John Calvin

Researcher: Sung Woo Park

Supervisor: Prof. Daniël P. Veldsman

Department: Dogmatics and Christian Ethics

Degree: Philosophiae Doctor

Under the influence of the Christian ecumenical movement, there has been a tendency to reread the Western theological tradition through the lens of the Eastern idea of deification. The studies of the theology of John Calvin, who is a leading figure in the Reformation tradition, cannot avoid such a tendency, either. Not a few scholars have affirmed Calvin's doctrine of deification, in a way, akin to the Eastern doctrine of deification, by rereading him from the perspective of the Eastern Orthodoxy. However, with the objection to this interpretation by those who deny the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin, the question of deification in Calvin's theology has been a grave issue of an ongoing debate among Calvin scholars.

The current debate on the question of deification in Calvin shows that the following three issues form the frame of reference for reasoning the question: Calvin's understanding of the communication of properties between Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union, the nature of his notion of union with Christ, and his idea of the nature of the salvific gift.

The observations of Calvin's ideas about the three issues render incapable any attempt to find the idea of deification as participation in the intrinsic divine life in his theology. Calvin's rejection of the direct communication of properties from Christ's

divinity to His humanity renders impossible the deification of Christ's humanity, which is marked as the basis of our deification by the interpreters who endorse his doctrine of deification as in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Calvin's idea of the spiritual and personal union with Christ, in which the ontological distinctiveness between Christ and us is guaranteed, disapproves the idea that the intrinsic divine life flows to us through the channel of Christ's humanity in our union with Him. Therefore it can be reasonably concluded that as far as deification is construed as the believers' participation in the intrinsic divine life, mediated by Christ's humanity in their union with Christ, it is hard to hold that Calvin teaches deification.

KEY WORDS

- John Calvin
- Deification
- Gregory Palamas
- Mediator
- *Communicatio idiomatum*
- Chalcedonian Christology
- *Extra Calvinisticum*
- Union with Christ
- Spirit-bonded union
- Lord's Supper
- Life-giving bread
- Justification
- Imputation
- *Extra nos*

ABBREVIATIONS

CO	<i>Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia</i>
Comm.	<i>Commentary</i>
CR	<i>Corpus Reformatorum</i>
CSQ	<i>Cistercian Studies Quarterly</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
Dialog	<i>Dialog: A Journal of Theology</i>
ECQ	<i>The Eastern Churches Quarterly</i>
ECR	<i>Eastern Churches Review</i>
EQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
HeyJ	<i>The Heythrop Journal</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IJOT	<i>International Journal of Orthodox Theology</i>
IJST	<i>International Journal of Systematic Theology</i>
Inst.	<i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>
JEH	<i>The Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JES	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>

<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KTJ</i>	<i>Kosin Theological Journal</i>
<i>MAJT</i>	<i>Mid-America Journal of Theology</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>SH</i>	<i>Studia Human</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>STCL</i>	<i>STUDIA THEOLOGIA CATHOLICA LATINA</i>
<i>SVTQ</i>	<i>St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>TB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>Theol. Stud.</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TT</i>	<i>Tracts and Treatises</i>
<i>TTJ</i>	<i>Torch Trinity Journal</i>
<i>WA</i>	<i>D. Martin Luthers Werke</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. The research problem

Under the influence of the Christian ecumenical movement, the idea of deification, which has been regarded as an exclusive possession of Eastern Orthodoxy, becomes a matter of considerable concern among Western theologians.¹ Such an interest in deification results in a tendency among scholars to reappropriate the idea of deification as “one of the oldest Christian symbols of salvation,” rereading the Western theological tradition through the perspective of Eastern Orthodoxy (Kärkkäinen 2004: 8). The typical example of this attempt is “the new interpretation” of Luther’s theology, as advanced by the Finnish School (ed. Braaten and Jenson 1998; cf. Kärkkäinen 2006: 75).² The theology of Calvin, who is a leading figure of the Reformation tradition, could not avoid such a tendency, either. Many Calvin scholars have been reinterpreting Calvin’s theology in terms of deification.

Mosser is one of passionate proponents of Calvin’s doctrine of deification. In his article “The Greatest Possible Blessing: Calvin and Deification,” Mosser (2002: 36-7) asserts that Calvin positively affirms the patristic notion of deification, which can be defined in terms of man’s becoming by grace what the Son of God is by nature and partaking of certain attributes like immortality and incorruptibility that are natural to divinity only.

¹ In his work *Partaking in Divine Nature: Deification and Communion*, Collins (2010: 1) introduces the recent discourses on deification beyond the Eastern Orthodox Tradition: Nellas (1987); Maloney (2003); Russell (2004; 2009); Finlan and Kharlamov (ed. 2006-2011); Christensen and Wittung (ed. 2007).

² For the other examples of rereading of western theological tradition through the perspective of Eastern Orthodoxy, see Leek 2013: 2 n.8.

In support of this assertion, Mosser focuses on Calvin's discussion on union with Christ as our Mediator. In Calvin's theology, through our union with Christ who is our Mediator as true God and true human, we are united to God Himself and become partakers of divine nature, which Calvin calls "the greatest possible blessing" (Mosser 2002: 40). For Calvin, the task of Christ as our Mediator is to impart to us by grace what is His by nature so that we may become sons of God, sharing in all His blessings like divine immortality (eternal life) and love of the Father for the Son etc. (Mosser 2002: 45, 47). It is to grant us this blessing that the Son of God became human (Mosser 2002: 42). Mosser argues that two distinct levels of union with Christ are involved in this blessing in Calvin's thought. First, the hypostatic union of Christ with the human nature that He assumed in the Incarnation is involved in this blessing at a fundamental level. "At this level there is a communication of properties between Christ's divinity and His humanity" (Mosser 2002: 46). In the hypostatic union, the human nature that Christ assumed in common with us was deified by virtue of the communication of properties between His divinity and humanity. And at a consequential level, there is a particular union of Christ with individual believers. At this level, we are united to God because in Christ's Person "God and humanity are already united" and thereby we partake of the divine nature (Mosser 2002: 46).

Mosser, affirming the communication of properties between Christ's two natures in Calvin's theology, suggests that when Calvin mentions 'what is Christ's,' which is imparted to us through our union with Christ, he means 'that which is proper to His divinity.' Through our union with Christ, we become partakers of the properties of Christ's divinity, which is already communicated to His humanity in the hypostatic union. The deified human nature of Christ becomes a channel through which the properties of His divinity is transferred to us in the context of our union with Him. Mosser (2002: 46) affirms this idea, referring to the comparison made by Calvin between Christ and a channel through which water flows: "The fullness of blessings

and what was hidden in God are now made plain in Christ ‘that He may pass it on to His people; as the water flowing from the fountain through various channels waters the fields everywhere.’”

In the sense that our union with Christ results in our partaking of that which is proper to His divine nature and thus our union with Christ is the very same as our union with God, Mosser (2002: 46) concludes that Calvin’s concept of union with Christ is deification in patristic terms.

Besides the communication of properties between Christ’s divinity and His humanity in His hypostatic union, and the union of believers with Christ and God, Mosser traces various aspects of Calvin’s theology like the restoration of the image of God, the glorification of believers, the Lord’s Supper, the title ‘gods’ designated to glorified believers, etc., which he believes are involved in the concept of deification, to conclude that Calvin not only knows about deification of believers, but also affirms it (Mosser 2002: 39).

Habets (2006: 149) also underlines the close connection between Calvin’s concept of the union with Christ and deification. In Calvin’s theology, deification as man’s partaking of divine nature is initiated in the believers’ election for salvation and is effected in their union with Christ. Habets (2006: 149), as Mosser, emphasizes the significance of the hypostatic union of Christ for deification in Calvin’s thought. In the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity in the Person of Christ, the human nature assumed by Christ was deified. In Calvin’s view, the human nature that Christ assumed in His incarnation is vicarious for all humanity. By virtue of this vicarious character of His humanity, “Christ becomes the last Adam and New Man to whom all humanity is ontologically related and in whom all humanity must participate for communion with God to be realized” (Habets 2009: 491). Thus the deification of Christ’s human nature in the hypostatic union represents “a divinizing

of humanity through the humanizing of divinity,” which is a “wonderful exchange” (Habets 2006: 149). The reality of the deified humanity of Christ is applied to individual believers through their union with Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit (Habets 2006:149; 2009: 491). Through our union with Christ, we are united to His deified humanity and partake of the divine nature (Habets 2009: 492). In this sense, deification is built on the hypostatic union of Christ in Calvin’s theology. For Calvin, the deification of Christ’s human nature in the hypostatic union becomes the ground of our deification: “*Theosis* is only possible because human nature has been deified in the theandric person of the Mediator” (Habets 2006: 149).

Habets (2009: 491-2) also points out the correlation between trinitarianism and deification in Calvin’s theology. Since our union with Christ is our being “included in His own self-presentation before the Father,” we, through our union with Christ, come to enter into “the triune communion of God’s intra-trinitarian life.” In this sense, deification can be identified with the “participation in the triune communion or *perichoresis*” in Calvin’s theology.

Ollerton (2011: 239) argues that in line with the patristic, especially Alexandrian trajectory, Calvin also affirms believers’ deification as the goal of the gospel. Ollerton (2011: 240-42) insists that while Calvin rejects the believers’ direct reception of the divine essence, as Osiander teaches, he affirms the real reception of divine nature in humanity, which is deification. He (2011: 244-45), drawing on Calvin’s (*Inst.*, 4.17.9; *Comm. Jn.* 6:51-59) statements that seem to refer to the flesh of Christ as a fountain which transfuses the divine life of God into us, emphasizes the significance of the flesh of Christ in the believers’ real reception of divine life in Calvin’s thought. For Calvin, the flesh of Christ, which is deified in the hypostatic union with the divine nature, becomes the source of the divine life (Ollerton 2011: 244). In this sense, to Calvin, the incarnation of the Son of God is “the *definition*” (Ollerton 2011: 243) or “the *nature*” (2011: 250) of deification. Ollerton (2011: 248)

also insists that Calvin's notion of union with Christ has a substantial nature beyond a personal nature. Though Calvin uses the term "substance" with respect to our union with Christ only in the theological sense rather than the philosophical sense, his notion of the substantial union implies the ontological exchange between Christ and us: "Christ being a partaker of our nature (incarnation) and we being partakers of His nature (deification)" (Ollerton 2011: 248). For Calvin, our reception of the divine life is accomplished by our participation in the substance of Christ (Ollerton 2011: 248).

Billings (2005: 316-17; cf. McClean 2009: 133-4) also interprets Calvin's concept of believers' participation in the Triune God through their union with Christ in terms of deification. But Billings insists on the uniqueness of Calvin's doctrine of deification, which is to be differentiated from the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of deification. He (2005: 316) cautions against the attitude to look to the Eastern Orthodox tradition as the standard of the concept of deification in treating Western theologians including Calvin with regard to deification, who were unfamiliar with the Eastern Orthodox tradition. "Calvin teaches deification of a particular sort" (Billings 2005: 316). Calvin's doctrine of deification is to be differentiated from other alternatives of the doctrine of deification, particularly from the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of deification, in that, being rooted in Scripture and the church fathers, "the Creator-creature distinction" (Billings 2005: 334; 2007: 42), the forensic character of justification, the horizontal dimension of the Trinitarian union, and the rejection of synergism are constitutive to it (Billings 2005: 334).

However, Billings (2007: 62-3) pays attention to the ontological dimension of Calvin's concept of the union of believers with Christ. For Calvin, the participation of believers in Christ is the participation in the substance of Christ. Billings admits that Calvin's "substantial participation" does not involve a "transfusion of substance of Christ's deity to the believer" as seen in Osiander's account of the justification as

participating in the essential righteousness of divinity since Calvin's notion of union with Christ "is always mediated" by the Holy Spirit. However he (2007: 64) applies the concept of *perichoresis*, which is traditionally used to refer to "intra-Trinitarian relationships," to Calvin's concept of the substantial participation of believers in Christ. Since *perichoresis* can be understood as "a complete mutual interpenetration of two substances that preserves the identity and properties of each intact," Calvin's concept of the union of believers with Christ "can be seen as a perichoretic model of interpenetration."³

These interpretations that affirm Calvin's doctrine of deification have raised objections from other theologians who reject the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin.

For instances, Slater (2005: 41), in reply to Mosser, rejects Mosser's assertion that deification is present in Calvin's theology as unfounded allegation. One of the points of his refutation against Mosser is that believers, through their union with Christ, share in what is Christ's according to His humanity, rather than according to His divinity. With regard to Mosser's definition of deification as the believers' partaking of the divine nature in the union of believers with Christ, Slater's interest is primarily on the meaning of 'divine.' Slater (2005: 42-44, 55) reads the term 'divine' in terms of 'divine origin', rather than 'divine quality'. The nature of that which believers come to partake in their union with Christ can be designated as 'divine' in that it is given by God, rather than in that it itself is God's proper quality. This implies that in Calvin's thought what is Christ's that is transferred to believers in their union with Christ, is what Christ has received from the Father according to His humanity, "not what He has possessed with the Father from all eternity" (Slater 2005: 43). Mosser's failure to grasp Calvin's emphasis on Christ's humanity is one of the significant

³ The following figures can be added to the list of the interpreters who affirm the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin's theology: Murphy (2008: 191-212); McClelland (1973: 10-25).

weaknesses in his argument in regard to the work of Christ as the Mediator (Slater 2005: 45).

Along with this point, Slater's focus in refuting Mosser is also on the question of the legitimacy of the *communicatio idiomatum* in Calvin's Christology. According to Slater (2005: 49-50), to Calvin, the direct communication of properties between Christ's divine nature and His human nature, on which Mosser's affirmation of Calvin's doctrine of deification is grounded, is not a real fact, but just something of a manner of speaking. In support of his position, Slater (2005: 41) emphasizes Calvin's eagerness to protect the full integrity of the divinity and humanity of Christ: "Christ is *homoousias* with the Father according to His divinity, and remains so even in the Incarnation. Christ is *homoousias* with us according to His humanity, and remains so even after the resurrection and ascension." In this sense, deification, as Mosser defines it, "has little support in Calvin" (Slater 2005: 50).

McClean (2009: 133-34) objects to Billings and Butin⁴ who interpret Calvin's notion of union with Christ as deificatory by construing it in terms of *perichoresis*. According to McClean (2009: 141), Calvin's notion of union with Christ should be viewed as "Spirit-mediated," rather than as "perichoretic." The relationship of Christ with the Father is not same with the intra-Trinitarian relationship. Christ is united to the Father not as the Eternal Son but as "the incarnate Mediator" (McClean 2009: 136). This unity of Christ with the Father is mediated by the Spirit (McClean 2009: 139-

⁴ In his book *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine--Human Relationship*, Butin (1995: 69), while not directly mentioning the question of deification, like Billings, applies the concept of *perichoresis*, which is meant for "a complete mutual interpenetration of two substances that preserves the identity and properties of each intact" (cf. Harrison 1991: 54), to Calvin's notion of union with Christ, and affirms the inclusion of believers into the Trinitarian perichoretic relationship through their union with Christ. According to Butin (1995: 65, 68), the hypostatic union of Christ's divinity and His humanity is the important motif that involves this inclusion of believers into the perichoretic relationship of Trinity. In the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures of Christ, there is a perichoretic interpenetration of the two natures. And this perichoretic interpenetration of the two natures provides the pattern for the coalescence of Christ's divinity and our human nature, which enables God's communication of Himself to us in the Person of Christ.⁴ In this way, for Calvin, through our union with Christ, we enter the perichoretic relationship of Christ with the Father.

40). Therefore our union with Christ does not bring us to enter the intra-Trinitarian relationship and thus Calvin's union with Christ cannot be construed as deificatory.

McCormack (2010: 504-29) also argues that since to Calvin, the believer's union with Christ is a union with the humanity of Christ (and all the gifts given to it) mediated by the Holy Spirit, Calvin is "a most unpromising candidate for inclusion in the new orthodoxy of the twenty-first century" (McCormack 2010: 529). In support of this assertion, McCormack refers to Calvin's understanding of the themes that are related to the theme of union with Christ: the Lord's Supper, the hypostatic union of Christ, and justification.

In the Lord's Supper, believers participate in the substance of Christ's body which remains separated from them in space by the secret power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the ontological otherness between Christ's body and the believers' bodies is secured and guaranteed even in the participation of believers in the substance of Christ's body. In this sense, though Calvin uses the term 'substance' to describe the believers' union with Christ in the context of the Supper, the union cannot be substantial in a metaphysical sense in Calvin's theology (McCormack 2010: 507-11). McCormack (2010: 512-516) also argues that Calvin, adhering to the Chalcedonian tradition concerning Christology, affirms the full integrity of Christ's divinity and His humanity sustained in the hypostatic union of both natures. Calvin does not approve the direct communication of properties between Christ's two natures. Calvin rather understands the communication on the personal level, in which case, the properties of each of Christ's two natures are ascribed to His Person. McCormack (2010: 518) also points out that to Calvin, the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to believers in their justification, is the righteousness that Christ acquired by His obedience and sacrificial death in His humanity rather than in His divine nature.

According to McCormack, Calvin's understanding of the themes renders the attempt to find the doctrine of deification in Calvin's theology inadequate. Since there is no interpenetration of the natures in Christ, believers' participation in Christ's human nature cannot result in their participation in His divinity. Thus the life of God in which believers participate through their union with Christ must be "the life that belongs to God because He has created it" (McCormack 2010: 521). In this sense, in Calvin's thought believers' union with Christ cannot result in their deification (McCormack 2010: 516).⁵

In this way, the question of deification in Calvin's theology is still a live issue among Calvin scholars. Which position is more appropriate? Does Calvin really affirm the idea of deification? Or is it really incapacitate to reread Calvin's theology in terms of deification?

1.2. The purpose and method of this study

The present study is aimed to join the current debate on the question of deification in Calvin and to attempt to find a prudent answer to the question. To answer the question properly, firstly, this study will inquire into an essential figure of the idea of deification. The essential figure of the idea of deification will be a frame of reference for reasoning the question of deification in Calvin. And then this study will listen to Calvin's own teaching about the issues that constitute the essential figure of deification theory to make a final judgment on the question of deification in Calvin's theology.

⁵ The following figures can be added to the list of interpreters who reject the presence of deification in Calvin's theology: Niesel ([1956]1980: 126); Wendel ([1950]1963: 235); Smedes ([1970]1983: 128); Copper (1982: 233-4); Norris (1996: 420); Partee ([2008]2010: 172-79); Horton (2007: 129-52); Garcia (2008: 257-58).

In this study, to identify the essential figure of the idea of deification, two sources will be consulted. First, the ongoing debate among scholars on the question of deification in Calvin itself. It is expectable that the central points of the discussion of the interpreters who affirm the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin will constitute the essential figure of deification. And the kernel of the debate among scholars on the question of Calvin and deification is anticipated to function as the frame of reference for reasoning the question. Second, the Eastern Orthodox understanding of deification. Given that in the history of Christian Church, the idea of deification has been regarded as an exclusive possession of the Eastern Orthodoxy, it is natural that the task of identifying the essential figure of deification includes the task of grasping the general picture of the Eastern understanding of deification.

For the general picture of the Eastern Orthodox idea of deification, this study will focus on Gregory Palamas (1296-1359), who was a monk at Mount Athos in Greece and later the Archbishop of Thessalonica. It is commonly acknowledged among theologians that the typical picture of the Eastern Orthodox understanding of deification can be encountered in the writings of Gregory Palamas (cf. Collins 2010: 6, 76; Russell 2004: 15; Murray 2009: 437). Given Palamas' importance in the Orthodox tradition, it can be justified to focus on his doctrine of deification to grasp the general picture of the Orthodox idea of deification. Billings (2005: 316, 328) cautions against the attitude to look to the Orthodox tradition as the standard of the notion of deification in treating Western theologians, who are unfamiliar to the Orthodox tradition, regarding deification. But as the next chapter will show, the essential points of the discussion of the interpreters who affirm Calvin's doctrine are reiterated in Palamas' doctrine in a more systematized form.

1.3. The main issues of this study

The investigation of the contemporary theological discussion on deification in Calvin's theology shows what is the kernel of the debate which encircles the question of deification in Calvin's theology. It is the question about the nature of the salvific gift that Christ grants to His saints. More specifically, it is the question whether the salvific gift conferred to believers in their salvation is that which peculiarly belongs to Christ's divinity or that which He acquired through His salvific work in His humanity. This question can be expressed in other words as McCormack (2010: 505) suggests: whether the life conferred on believers in their salvation is a 'created life' by God, or an 'uncreated life' which is proper to God.

How to answer this question becomes a dividing ridge between two opposing positions in interpreting Calvin regarding deification. On the one hand, the interpreters who positively affirm the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin's theology insist that the salvific gift that Christ grants to His saints is that which properly belongs to Christ's divinity. The life conferred on believers is the uncreated life which is proper to God. Believers participate in the uncreated divine life in their salvation. On the other hand, the principal point to which the interpreters who reject the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin's theology refer, is that the salvific gift granted to believers is that which Christ acquired through His salvific work in His humanity rather than that which intrinsically belongs to His divinity. According to those interpreters, the life in which believers participate is a created life by God. That the life is called the divine life is only in the sense that Christ acquired it from God the Father through His obedience in His humanity.

The question how Calvin understands the nature of the salvific gift granted to believers in their salvation is deeply related to two other questions. The one is about the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ: whether Calvin understands union

with Christ on a personal level or on an ontological level beyond the personal. The other is about Calvin's idea of the relation between Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union, more specifically, about his understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* of Christ's two natures: whether Calvin understands the communication of properties of Christ's two natures on a personal level or on an ontological level beyond the personal.

The investigation of the contemporary theological discussion on deification in Calvin's theology shows that these three questions (i.e. about the substance of the salvific gift, the nature of the union with Christ, and the relation of the two natures in the Person of Christ) are interrelated with one another and encircle the question of deification in Calvin's theology. For instance, it can be seen in the discussion of the interpreters who affirm Calvin's doctrine of deification that the affirmation of the communication of properties of Christ's divinity and His humanity in Calvin's Christology, and of the ontological dimension of his notion of union with Christ, underly the identification of the substance of the salvific gift as that which properly belongs to Christ's divinity in his soteriology. According to their arguments, Calvin teaches that Christ's assumed humanity partook of the divine life and was deified by virtue of the communication of properties from the divinity to the humanity. And to Calvin, we, being united to the deified humanity of Christ, partake of the divine life which was conferred on the deified humanity of Christ. That means, Calvin's notion of union with Christ has an ontological or substantial dimension beyond the personal, in which case, the humanity of Christ becomes a channel through which the divine life flows to believers in the union.

The argument of interpreters who positively affirms the doctrine of deification in Calvin can be schematized as follows: Calvin teaches deification as man's participation in the uncreated divine life in his salvation. He approves the communication of properties from Christ's divinity to His humanity in the hypostatic

union that brings about the deification of Christ's human nature as the basis of the believers' deification. And Calvin also affirms the ontological dimension of believers' union with Christ, by means of which the divine life is conferred on them.

This schema may not be completely applied to all the interpretations that affirm Calvin's doctrine of deification, especially to the interpretation that suggests Calvin's differentiated idea of deification. However, it should be noted again that the three issues, which encircle the question of deification, are interrelated with one another. Then, to the present writer, it is likely that the arguments of those who approve Calvin's differentiated idea of deification correspond to the schema at least in one or two points. Billings' application of the inter-Trinitarian concept of *perichoresis* to our participation in Christ in Calvin's thought can be interpreted as his affirmation of the ontological or substantial dimension of Calvin's notion of union with Christ. As McClean cautions, there is a strong possibility that construing of our union with Christ in terms of *perichoresis* results in the approval of our inclusion into the inter-Trinitarian relationship. The same principle can be applied to Butin's affirmation of the inclusion of believers into the Trinitarian perichoretic relationship through their union with Christ. Moreover, Butin (1995: 65,68) grounds this inclusion on the interpenetration of Christ's divinity and His humanity in their hypostatic union.⁶

In contrast with this argument is that of the interpreters who reject the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin. According to them, Calvin does not approve a substantial interpenetration between Christ's two natures. Rather Calvin understands the communication of properties on the personal level, in which case, the full integrity of Christ's divinity and His humanity are sustained in the hypostatic union of both natures. Therefore Christ's humanity does not function as a channel through which the intrinsic divine life flows to believers in their union with Him. And

⁶ We can also see Canlis' affirmation of the ontological dimension of Calvin's notion of union with Christ in her interpretation that Calvin's notion of adoption of believers amounts to their inclusion into the inter-Trinitarian relationship (Canlis 2004: 181 n.44).

to Calvin, our union with Christ is a personal union in which the ontological distinctiveness between Christ and us is guaranteed. Calvin's notion of union with Christ, according to them, ensures that the life that is given to believers in their union with Christ is not the intrinsic divine life, but the life that Christ acquired by His salvific work in His humanity.

In this way, there are three questions that revolve around the discussion on deification in Calvin. To put them in logical order, it is as follows: (1) Whether Calvin understands the communication of properties of Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union on an ontological level or on a personal level. (2) Whether Calvin understands believers' union with Christ on a personal level or on an ontological level beyond personal. (3) Whether the blessing conferred on believers in their union with Christ is that which peculiarly belongs to Christ's divinity or that which He acquired through His salvific work in His humanity. These three questions constitute the frame of reference for reasoning about the question of deification in Calvin's theology. The proper answers to these three questions will give a rationale for judging the interpretation that rereads Calvin through the lens of deification. In this sense, it seems to be appropriate that the focus of the present study, as an attempt to give a prudent answer to the question of the deification in Calvin's theology, is given to these three issues [*i.e.* Calvin's idea about the communication of properties between Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union, the nature of his notion about the union with Christ, and his idea of the nature of the salvific gift].

To the knowledge of the present researcher, there is no full-length study devoted to the significance of the three topics for the question of deification in Calvin's theology, except two essays that were written by McCormack (2010: 504-529) and Garcia (2006: 219-51). In this sense, this thesis will have a significance as a full-length study devoted to the interrelatedness of Calvin's ideas about the three topics and to their importance regarding the question of deification in Calvin's theology.

1.4. The outline of chapters

Besides the present introductory chapter, this thesis consists of six main chapters: Chapter 2. Gregory Palamas' doctrine of deification; Chapter 3. Calvin's idea of the relation between Christ's divinity and His humanity in the hypostatic union; Chapter 4. The nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ; Chapter 5. Calvin's idea of communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper; Chapter 6. Calvin's doctrine of justification; Chapter 7. Conclusion.

The second chapter will examine the doctrine of deification of Gregory Palamas to grasp the typical picture of the Orthodox understanding of deification.

The third chapter attempts an answer to the question whether Calvin understands the communication of properties of Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union on an ontological level or on a personal level. It focuses on Calvin's understanding of the relation between Christ's divinity and His humanity in the hypostatic union which encircles the question of the communication of properties of both natures. Christ's mediatorship is Calvin's primary concern in his discussion not only of the work of Christ but also of His Person. Calvin's concern about Christ's mediatorship underlies his understanding of the relation of Christ's two natures in their hypostatic union. Therefore, this chapter will begin with the examination of Calvin's idea of Christ's mediatorship.

In the fourth chapter, the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ will be examined to find the proper answer to the second question which encircles the interpretation of Calvin regarding deification: whether Calvin's notion of union with Christ has an ontological or substantial dimension beyond the personal.

For Calvin, the communion that believers enjoy with Christ in the Lord's Supper is not different in its essence from their union with Christ in the soteriological context. In Calvin's thought, our union with Christ through faith in Him in the soteriological context is confirmed and strengthened in the Lord's Supper. Therefore the examination of the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ includes his discussion on the communion with Christ that occurs in the Lord's Supper. The discussion of the fourth chapter will be limited to Calvin's more general soteriological understanding of the union with Christ, and the fifth chapter will explore his idea of the communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper.

In the sixth chapter, Calvin's doctrine of justification will be explored at length. For Calvin, justification, along with sanctification, constitutes the twofold grace that is given to us in our union with Christ. That is, the righteousness of Christ on the basis of which we are justified is a representative gift that is conferred on us in our union with Christ. Therefore the exploration of Calvin's doctrine of justification is an attempt to figure out the nature of the blessing conferred on believers in their union with Christ in Calvin's thought, which is the kernel of the debate that encircles the question of deification in his theology: whether it peculiarly belongs to the divinity of Christ or to what He acquired through His salvific work in His humanity. This chapter, as the investigation of the nature of the righteousness of Christ which is conferred on us in our union with Christ, involves a reflection on the following issues: Calvin's repudiation of Andreas Osiander's teaching on justification, the question of the compatibility between Calvin's teaching of the forensic nature of justification and his emphasis on the causal priority of the union with Christ to justification, and the relation between justification and sanctification in Calvin's thought.

In the last chapter, the final judgment on the question of deification in Calvin's theology will be attempted through reasoning from his own answers to the three questions.

Chapter 2. Gregory Palamas' doctrine of deification

2.1. Introduction

Collins (2010: 77) points out that deification has been considered as a touchstone for distinguishing the belief of Orthodoxy from the beliefs of other Christians. Clendenin (1994: 366) also says that the deification of human nature is “the central theme, chief aim, basic purpose, or primary religious ideal of Orthodoxy.” This deification as the central theme of the Orthodox Church, according to Russell (2004: 2, 14), was originally expressed in metaphorical language until the end of the fourth century, when it came to be expressed conceptually and dogmatically. This metaphor of deification developed along two distinct approaches: one ethical and the other realistic. While the former is concerned with the believers' attainment of likeness to God through the practice of virtue, the latter is concerned with their participation in the uncreated divine energies, which ordinarily is designated as the life of God. This participation in the uncreated divine energies, enabled by virtue of the Incarnation of the Son of God, brings about the transformation of humanity to be like God. As Louth (2007: 37, 39-40) emphasizes, in Orthodox theology, this transformation is perceived ontologically. Since the transformation is the result of the believers' participation in the life of God, enabled by the Incarnation of the Son of God, it is a real change. Even though the change does not involve “a conversion into something other than human,” it, however, is “fundamental, radical, a rebuilding of what it is to be human from the roots up” (Louth 2007: 37, 39-40). The participation of the believers in God's life renders them to be gods by grace. They truly become like God by virtue of their participation in the divine life. It is dominantly

along this realistic approach that the metaphor of deification developed in the Orthodox Church (Jacobs 2009: 616-17).

There are several basic conceptions which constitute such a realistic approach of the Orthodox Church to deification. The anthropological assumption that man was created in the image of God underlies the metaphor of deification as the believers' transformation which is resulted from their participation in the divine life. The concept of man's creation in God's image is the premise for the possibility of his relationship with God and thereby his eternal life (Collins 2010: 78). And the Incarnation of the Son of God is an essential motif in the realistic approach to the deification metaphor. The transformation of Christ's humanity through its hypostatic union with the Son of God is the basis for the believer's transformation through union with Christ (Russell 2004: 14-15). All the believers are deified through their unity with the deified human nature of Christ. Since in Orthodox theology the theme of deification, as Collins (2010: 76, 81) points out, is involved in God's purpose with His creation and His redemption of the whole cosmos beyond the scope of human beings, the hypostatic union of the Son of God with the human nature that He assumed is the foundation and goal of the cosmos in their theology (cf. Collins 2005: 30). The sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist also occupy a preeminent position in their realistic understanding of deification. The sacraments are the created means by which the uncreated deifying grace bestowed on Christ's human nature united to the divine Hypostasis is made accessible to the participants of it.

The typical picture of the Orthodox understanding of deification can be encountered in the writings of Gregory Palamas who was a monk at Mount Athos in Greece and later the Archbishop of Thessalonica. The preeminent position which Gregory Palamas, together with Maximus the Confessor, occupies in the Orthodox understanding of deification is commonly acknowledged among theologians. Collins (2010: 6, 76) proclaims that the current Orthodox doctrine of deification is a

synthesis of the ideas of the two figures, Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas, constructed by modern Orthodox theologians (cf. Russell 2004: 15). Archbishop Basil Krivocheine (1954: 49 in Hussey 1974: 22-3) also gives the following evaluation of the significance of Palamas in Orthodox theology: “To sum up in short the significance of Gregory Palamas in the development of the Orthodox thought, we may say that the traditional ascetic-mystical teaching of the Orthodox East not only finds in his work its final and systematic expression, but also its theological and philosophical expression.” Palamas’ theology is identified by the Orthodox Church “as an essential part of its tradition” (Murray 2009: 437).

Given Palamas’ importance in the Orthodox tradition, it is justified to focus on his doctrine of deification in this chapter, which is aimed at grasping the general picture of the Orthodox understanding of deification to compare with Calvin’s. It can be said that to grasp Palamas’ doctrine of deification is nothing but to grasp the general Orthodox understanding of deification. And the fact that Palamas is periodically closer to Calvin than Maximus, also renders the study of his doctrine of deification appropriate for the comparison of the Orthodox understanding of deification with Calvin’s.

The typical understanding of the Orthodox Church about deification is found in the writings of Palamas on this theme. To Palamas, man’s participation in the life of God is the substance of his deification. This deification as the participation in the divine life is premised by man’s creation in God’s image, and meets the example of its historical completion in the deified body assumed by the Son of God. Palamas emphasizes that the deified body of Christ becomes the source of our deification. The deifying grace bestowed on the body of Christ becomes ours through our union with Christ. The sacrament of the Eucharist is the means by which we receive the deifying grace bestowed on Christ’s body. In this chapter, all these will be investigated in the following order: ‘the presupposition of deification: man’s being

created in the image of God,' 'the substance of deification: the participation in the uncreated divine energies,' 'the locus of deification: the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ,' 'the means of deification: the Sacrament of the Eucharist.' Before the investigation of all these issues, it seems to be necessary to survey the theological controversy among Orthodox theologians, in which Palamas was also deeply engaged. The controversy, which is called the 'hesychast controversy,' becomes the background against which Palamas regulates his doctrine of deification.

2.2. The Hesychast controversy

Gregory Palamas was engaged in the fourteenth century's hesychast controversy as a representative advocate of hesychasm. Hesychasm⁷ is a monastic movement that seeks to experience a vision of 'divine light' by the means of continual prayer which unites man's mind and heart by the invocation of the Name of Jesus. This prayer is carried out with peculiar physical technics: "sitting with the head bowed so as to gaze upon the area of the heart breathing slowly and with as little depth as possible" (Bradshaw 2004: 230). Hesychasm confronted their opposition in the following two points: the role of the body in man's spiritual experience and the possibility of his direct experience of God (Rojek 2013: 4). Palamas provided the theological basis for the veracity and legitimacy of the hesychastic spiritual experience in his polemics against the anti-hesychasts on these two points.

The fourteenth hesychast controversy commenced with Barlaam of Calabria, who was a monk and philosopher imbued with the nominalism and neo-Platonic spiritualism (cf. Meyendorff [1964]1974: 42; Cazabonne 2002: 307). Barlaam

⁷ The designation 'Hesychasm' is derived from the Greek word '*hesychia*' which means 'silence', 'tranquility', and 'stillness' (McFarland 2011: 211).

objected to the involvement of the human body in prayer. He ridiculed the hesychasts, whose concern was a particular bodily method of prayer, calling them “*omphalopsychoi*” (those whose soul is in their navel). Barlaam also rejected the possibility of man’s experience of a vision of the uncreated light claimed by the hesychasts. Since God is essentially unknowable and invisible, the light that the hesychasts claim to see cannot be divine. The light is merely a created one and a symbol of and allusion to the divine reality (Palamas 1983: 63). Barlaam linked the hesychasts to the Messalians, the fourth-century heretics, who believed that “through ascetic effort and uninterrupted prayer they could achieve a corporeal vision of the divine essence” (Russell 2004: 304). This concept of God’s unknowability is the primary logic that Barlaam used in defending the Orthodox position concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit against the doctrine of the *filioque* affirmed by the Western Church. Barlaam’s argument concerning the procession of the Spirit, as Meyendorff ([1964]1974: 43) points out, exhibits a tendency to “dogmatic relativism”:

God being unknowable, the Latins should give up their claim to demonstrate their doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit. How could they demonstrate a reality which is outside all perception and all human reasoning? Latins and Greeks should be content to refer to the Fathers who had received a special illumination on the subject from God. But the Fathers themselves are not always perfectly clear; therefore the only thing to do is to relegate the doctrine of the Procession to the domain of private theological opinions which do not constitute an obstacle to the unity of the Church (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 43).

Barlaam’s objection was a serious attack on the hesychasts since the rejection of the divine character of the light that they experience is regarded by them to be the rejection of the very reality of man’s redemption and his deification.

Therefore Palamas, himself a monk imbued with hesychasm, on the request of the hesychasts, devoted himself to defend the veracity and legitimacy of the

hesychastic spiritual experience. In answer to Barlaams' accusation of Messalianism, Palamas wrote his famous work, *Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*, in which he works out the distinction between the essence and the energies of God. God is entirely inapproachable in His essence, but at the same time He is entirely participative in His energies. The veracity and legitimacy of the experience of God is ensured by this distinction between the essence and the energies of God. Whereas we cannot know or experience God in His essence, it is possible for us to know or to experience God in His energies. In his answer to the accusation of *omphalopsychoi*, Palamas clarified his understanding of man as a unity of body and soul, which affirms the positive role of the body in man's spiritual life. He refers to the publican's prayer in the parable of Jesus Christ as a typical example of the Hesychast's form of prayer in keeping their attention on themselves:

As the Lord said in the Gospels, 'the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven.' Those who keep attention in themselves during prayer try to imitate him externally. People who call them *omphalopsyches* (those whose soul is in their navel) evidently so call them to ridicule that of which they wrongly accuse them. For who among the latter asserts that the soul is in the navel? (Palamas 1969: 408 in Cazabonne 2002: 307).

The council which was convened in Constantinople on June 10, 1341 approved Palamas' teaching and, in turn, condemned Barlaam's (Cazabonne 2002: 308). A second council had to be convened in Saint Sophia in August 1341 to settle the dispute raised by another leading anti-hesychast, Gregory Akindynos, who objected to Palamas' distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies. Even after Akindynos was condemned in this council, the hesychast controversy that was "linked with political, national, dynastic, ecclesiastical and class struggles" (Rojek 2013: 5), was not finished until Nicephorus Gregoras, the other leading theological adversary of Palamas, was condemned and Palamas' whole theology, especially his distinction between the divine essence and divine energies was approved again

in another council at Constantinople in 1351 (Cazabonne 2002: 309). In 1352, the Palamite principal theses were included in the “*Synodikon*, a concise summary of Orthodox faith read out in all [Orthodox] churches on the second Sunday of Lent called ‘The Triumph of Orthodoxy’” (Rojek 2013: 5). Thereafter “hesychasm and its Palamite interpretation became the official theology of the Orthodox world, spreading not only through Byzantium but also to Russia and the Slavic” (Bradshaw 2004: 235; Rojek 2013: 5).

2.3. The presupposition of deification: Man as created in the image of God

Palamas emphasizes the dignity of human beings. Man “takes his proper place at the summit of the created order immediately after God, and superior even to the angels” (Sinkewicz 1986: 861; cf. Palamas 1988: 89). The concept of man as “a microcosm,” that is, “the center of creation” (Meyendorff [1974]1987: 138), which concurs with the Greek patristic tradition, is also found in the teaching of Palamas (Mantzaridis 1984: 20). Before man’s creation the entire sensible world was created for his sake. Even the kingdom of heaven was prepared for man’s sake (Palamas 1988: 107). The divine counsel concerning man was taken beforehand and “he was formed by the hand of God” (Palamas 1988: 107). For Palamas, man was created as a recapitulation and an ornament of the whole of creation (Christou n.d.; cf. Palamas 2009: 206). Man’s dignity, according to Palamas, is grounded on the fact that he was created in the image of God. Since man is created in God’s image, he is so dignified as to be placed at the summit of the created order immediately after God.

2.3.1. Analogies between God and man

Man's conformity with God, according to Palamas, is a significant virtue of man as created in God's image. Palamas takes note of the triadic character of God's image in man. There are some analogies between God and man, since man is created in the image of God. There is an inherent conjunction of mind, reason (or word) and spirit in man's soul⁸, just as in one Godhead there are three Persons, that is, the Father ("the Supreme Mind"), the Son ("the Supreme Word") and the Holy Spirit (Palamas 1988:119-21; 2009: 495). In one Godhead the Son is begotten from the Father "in a divinely fitting manner" and the Holy Spirit ineffably proceeds together with the Son from the Father (Palamas 1988: 121). Likewise in man the word is begotten and the spirit is projected from the mind (Mantzaridis 1984: 18; Sinkewicz 1986: 863-4). And Palamas (1988: 123) interprets the Holy Spirit as the ineffable love of the Father towards the Son, the ineffably begotten Word, and the ineffable love of the latter for the former as well (cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 18).⁹ Likewise he (1988: 123) describes the relation of the mind to the word in man's soul in terms of an intellectual love (*eros*), which is identified with the spirit (cf. Sinkewicz 1986: 865). Man's spirit is the intellectual love of the mind towards the word. Man's insatiable desire for spiritual knowledge can be explained with this:

Our mind too, since it is created in the image of God, possesses the

⁸ In Palamas' thought, these three are not the essence like the soul. They are simply functions of man's soul, "expressing it as a unique whole" (Christou n.d.). Man's soul, even though attached to the body, is an independent essence which does not perish with the body when the body passes away, since it "possesses life essentially of itself." As a spiritual essence, even though created, the soul is immortal (Palamas 1988: 115, 117, 135).

⁹ Palamas' interpretation of the Holy Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son, which is "a hallmark of Augustine's theology of the Trinity," does not imply his approval of the existential procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and the Son (Sinkewicz 1986: 865). As a representative orthodox theologian, Palamas explicitly insists that in His substance the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. The Holy Spirit's being the mutual love of both the Father and the Son, as Mantzaridis (1984: 18) points out, is involved only with His function, not His existence: "...this pre-eternal joy of the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit in that He is common to Them by mutual intimacy. Therefore, He is sent to the worthy from both, but in His coming to be, He belongs to the Father alone and thus He also proceeds from Him alone in His manner of coming to be" (Palamas 1988: 123; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 18).

image of this highest love in the relation of the mind to the knowledge [i.e. word or *logos*] which exists perpetually from it and in it, in that this love is from it and proceeds from it together with the innermost word. The insatiable desire of men for knowledge is a very clear indication of this even for those who are unable to perceive their own innermost being (Palamas 1988: 123; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 18-19).

Palamas also takes notice of the analogy between man's spirit and the Holy Spirit in respect of their life-giving virtue. Just as the Holy Spirit gives life to the world, so the spirit in man vivifies the body. "The soul of each man," says Palamas, "is also the life of the body it animates, and it possesses a life-giving activity seen as directed towards something else, namely, to the body which it vivifies" (Palamas 1988: 115; cf. Sinkewicz 1986: 861). The soul of man receives life-giving power so that "it conserves and gives life to the body joined to it" (Palamas 1988: 125). For Palamas, it is through the spirit of man that man's soul conserves and gives life to its own body since man's spirit as the intellectual love existing in the mind and the word is also the bond of the soul and the body (Palamas 1988: 125). Through the spirit, the life-giving power, man's soul sustains, encompasses and gives life to the body with which it was created in conjunction (Palamas 1988: 154; cf. Sinkewicz 1986: 861). This life-giving virtue of the spirit, according to Palamas, renders man superior to the angels with regard to the image of God. In the sense that the spirit of man, in its life-giving activity toward its own body, reflects God who sustains, encompasses and gives life to the world, the image of God in man is more perfect than in the angels, whose spirits have no creative power in that they are not bounded to a corporeal body: "The intellectual and rational nature of the soul, alone possessing mind and word and life-giving spirit, has alone been created more in the image of God than the incorporeal angels" (Palamas 1988: 127; cf. Palamas 1988: 125, 133, 155; Stan 2011: 130; Mantzaridis 1984: 19; Sinkewicz 1986: 864).¹⁰

¹⁰ In addition to the life-giving virtue, another element of the image of God in man that renders him superior to the angels is his sovereign power over the material world according to Palamas (1988: 155, 157): "Not in this respect alone has man been created in the image of God more so than the

2.3.2. The harmonious mutual bond of the soul and the body

While Palamas, following the Alexandrian tradition, seeks the significance of man's creation in God's image primarily in that he has a mind, which is regarded as the highest aspect of human nature¹¹ (Mantzaridis 1984: 17), he does not neglect man's body in relation to the image of God. The body of man is not a prison or sepulcher where his soul is held captive as taught by Platonists. Man's soul "naturally possesses such a bond of love with its own body that it never wishes to leave it and will not do so at all unless force is brought to bear on it externally from some very serious disease or trauma" (Palamas 1988: 125; cf. Sinkewicz 1986: 864). By virtue of this harmonious mutual bond of the soul and the body, that which is in God's image involves not only with man's mind but also with the whole man including his body in Palamas' thought (Stan 2011: 129).

2.3.3. The capability of participation in the life of God

Man's participation in divine life, for Palamas, is another significant virtue of man's creation in God's image. Palamas links man's creation in the divine image to his capability of the reception of the divine energies. As an existence created in God's image, man is not only "capable of receiving God through struggle and grace," but also capable of being "united with God in a single hypostasis" (Palamas 1988: 109). The first man Adam, when he was created in God's image, participated in the uncreated divine radiance. Before the transgression Adam was clothed in a garment of divine glory and "was far more richly adorned ... than those who now wear diadems ornamented with much gold and shining stones" (Palamas 1988: 161). Since man

angels, namely, in that he possesses within himself both a sustaining and life-giving power, but also as regards dominion... because of the faculty of dominion within us God gave us lordship over all the earth" (cf. Sinkewicz 1986: 864; Mantzaridis 1984: 20).

¹¹ "...for it is not the bodily constitution but the very nature of the mind which possesses this image and nothing in our nature is superior to the mind. If there were something superior, that is where the image would be" (Palamas 1988: 111).

was created in the image of God, he could be the locus of the energies of God. This participation in the divine energies is the real life of man. Whereas the soul of man gives life to the body which is attached to it, the spiritual life for the soul is granted by the divine energies. Therefore man's life is worthless except when it springs from the participation in the divine energies in Palamas' thought (Christou n.d.).¹² Man, for Palamas, by virtue of his creation in God's image, could not only be the receptor of the divine energies, but was also granted the potentiality to attain to perfection in full communion with God (Leek 2013: 43). The perfection, man's final destiny, to Palamas, is that he is fully conformed to his Archetype, *i.e.*, God (Palamas 1983: 30) and he is united with Him "in a single hypostasis" (Palamas 1988: 109), so that he may be called "another God" (Christou n.d.). The first man Adam, created in God's image, was in a sense in conformity with God. But he had to continue to be conformed to the divine Archetype (Mantzaridis 1984: 21). Adam had to become perfect in God's image, continually participating in the divine life.¹³

2.3.4. Free will

For Palamas, man's conformation to the divine Archetype is through God's grace and at the same time his task which is to be accomplished by his human effort (Meyendorff [1974]1987: 139). Man's soul was given a free will by God so that he was "susceptible of opposites, namely, good and evil" and "disposed according to either one" (Palamas 1988: 117; cf. Christou n.d.). Man's soul does not essentially possess goodness or evil, but "as a sort of quality," which "is not spatially located," but present when man's soul "inclines towards the quality, and wills to live in

¹² In his book on *Byzantine Theology*, Meyendorff ([1974]1987: 139) presents the concept of man as a dependent (not an autonomous) being, whose humanity is realized only in his living in God and his possession of divine qualities as the most important aspect of Greek patristic anthropology, which was approved by Medieval Byzantine theologians.

¹³ It is likely that Palamas makes a distinction between "image" and "likeness" as patristic writers do (Meyendorff [1974]1987: 139). Whereas the image of God is the gift already granted to man at his creation, which is common property to all human beings, yet the likeness to God is the final goal toward which man should run from his creation.

accordance with it” (Palamas 1988: 117). Whether man remains in communion with God by relying on the grace of the Holy Spirit or moves away from Him, depends on his free will (Christou n.d.). For Palamas, this free will is also one of the great prerogatives of man as created in the image of God. Its significance with regard to man’s conformation to God for which he was created is not limited to the prelapsarian period only. The completion of the purpose of man’s creation continues to depend on his free will “even after the coming of Christ and the accomplishment of His mission of regeneration” (Mantzaridis 1984: 20). For Palamas, man’s participation in the divine life is a gift, but also a task to be fulfilled through human effort. There is no opposition between God’s grace and human freedom in Palamas’ anthropology as in the Greek patristic tradition (Kärkkäinen 2004: 20).

2.4. The substance of deification: the participation in the uncreated divine energies

In Palamas’ understanding, deification signifies a real - spiritual as well as corporeal - participation of the believers in the uncreated divine energies, which renders them “*homotheoi* - wholly one with God” and “Gods by grace” (Russell 2006: 376; Collins 2010: 101).

2.4.1. The uncreated divine character of the deifying grace

For Palamas, the deifying grace granted to the believers is an uncreated entity. The believers participate in the uncreated divine energies, which causes their deification. Palamas, following the tradition of hesychasm, describes the participation in the divine energies in terms of the vision of the divine light. The believers, in their union with God, experience the vision of the divine light. This vision of the divine light is

that which the Hesychasts pursue in conducting the so-called “prayer of Jesus.” Palamas (1983: 63) defends the real existence and the true divinity of the light against the assertion of the anti-Hesychasts that the light is just a “symbol apparition and allusion to immaterial and intelligible realities” which is adapted to a particular circumstance. The light which God has manifested to the believers are “radiant and divine, eternal, supereminently possessing immutable being.” Palamas (1983: 57) applies the term “hypostatic” to the light to explain that it is not an illusion, rather it is a concrete and objective reality. The light that illumines the believers is not “something imagined by a subjective mind,” but it possesses true existence. In support of this, Palamas quotes Pseud-Macarius who regards “the perfect illumination of the Spirit” not merely as “a revelation of thoughts,” but as “a certain and perpetual illumination of a hypostatic light in the soul” (Hussey 1974: 25). Pseud-Macarius, according to Palamas, intentionally applies the word “hypostatic” to the light in order to refute the people who “refer everything which is said about the light only to knowledge” (Hussey 1974: 25). However, while Palamas stresses that the divine light is real, denies its independent existence in itself. The divine light does not possess its own hypostasis. The term “hypostatic” as applied by Palamas to the uncreated light should not be confused with “hypostasis,” which designates one of the Persons in the Trinity. The divine light is not one of the Persons in the Trinity. The uncreated light does not constitute “a fourth hypostasis” in God (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 131 n.2¹⁴). In the sense that the divine light exists permanently and stably but not independently, Palamas (1983: 78; cf. Hussey 1974: 25) applies the term “enhypostatic” to the light as well:

Clearly, this term [“enhypostatic”] is not used to affirm that it possesses its own hypostasis. ... By contrast, one calls “anhypostatic” not only nonbeing or hallucination, but also everything which quickly disintegrates and runs away, which disappears and straightway ceases to be, such as, for example, thunder and lightning, and our own words

¹⁴ Nicholas Gendle, while translating Palamas’ *Triads* into English, wrote some footnotes on the text to clarify Palamas’ meaning.

and thoughts. The Fathers have done well, then, to call this light *enhypostatic*, in order to show its permanence and stability, because it remains in being, and does not elude the gaze, as does lightning, or words, or thoughts ...”

With regard to the divine status of the light, Palamas takes notice of the importance of the event of the transfiguration of Christ on the Mount Thabor. The light in which Christ was transfigured on the Mount Thabor was truly the divine uncreated light, rather than just a sensible and created light symbolizing divinity, as Barlaam the Calabrian asserts. The light of transfigured Christ on the Mountain was “an effulgence of divinity” (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 134 n.50) and thus it was the very “light unapproachable” since God dwells in the light unapproachable (Palamas 1983: 74). The divine glory that Christ as the Only Begotten had possessed from the beginning was manifested to the disciples on the Mountain through the flesh which He assumed (Palamas 1983: 76). This is the reason why the disciples “fell to the ground, unable to rest their gaze on the glory of the light” of Christ on the Mountain (Palamas 1983: 74). The light was not just a created symbol of divinity, “but truly the light of the true divinity, not only the divinity of the Son, but that of the Father and the Spirit too” (Palamas 1983: 74). It was “the immaterial divinity of the Father and the Spirit, which shines forth in the Only Son” (Palamas 1983: 76). To Palamas (*Triads* 3.1.9 in A. Williams 1994: 489), what the disciples saw on the Mount Thabor is “the essential and eternal beauty” of God, the vision of which deifies man and renders him worthy of a personal relation with God.

Palamas identifies the light that illumines the believers in their deification with the light of Thabor. It is this light of Thabor that the believers today experience in their union with God. The light of the Son which illumined the disciples on the Mount Thabor continues to shine on the believers today. And Palamas explains that the light of Thabor will also be the eschatological glory of the age to come. For Palamas (2002b: 135; Cf. Cazabonne 2002: 316), the divine light that the Apostles saw on

Thabor is the same one that purified souls contemplate now, and “has the same [form of] existence as the good things in the age to come.” Thus the believers who receive the divine light here and now are anticipating the splendour of the resurrection of the age to come (Palamas 1983: 63, 72, 138).

2.4.2. The necessity of the divinity of the deifying grace

2.4.2.1 The mortality inherited from fallen Adam

As Costache (2011: 14) points out, Palamas’ insistence on the divinity of the deifying grace is deeply related to his conviction that a created grace can bring about neither “the overcoming of mortality” nor “the renewal of life.” In Palamas’ view, the first sin of Adam brought about not only his death but also all human beings’ death. All human beings came to be subjected to corruption and death with the transgression of Adam. For Palamas, Adam’s death is the natural consequence of his transgression. Adam was abandoned by God when he was inveigled by Satan to abandon God by transgressing His commandment. Since life is God Himself, man’s estrangement from God is nothing but death to him. Just as man’s soul gives life to the body joined to it, so does the divine Spirit grant the true life to the soul. Therefore just as the separation of the body from the soul brings about death of the body, so does the estrangement of the soul from the divine Spirit result in spiritual death (Palamas 2002a: 184). The soul of man, when estranged from the divine Spirit, “is dead even while it lives” in that “in substance it is immortal” (Palamas 1988: 135). It “only technically preserves its immortality” (Christou n.d.). And the physical death is the inevitable consequence of the spiritual death since the death of the soul implies the death of the spirit which is the life-giving power for the body attached to

the soul.¹⁵ In this way, to Palamas, man's death, spiritual as well as physical, is not a kind of judgment of God, but the natural consequence of his separation from God:

He [God] did not say to Adam, 'Return from whence you were taken!' but rather, "You are earth and unto earth you shall return" (Gen. 3:19). Those who listen intelligently can see from these words that God did not make death, neither for the soul nor for the body. For neither did He at the first give the command saying, 'Die on the day that you eat of it!' but rather, "You shall die on the day you eat of it" (Gen. 217). Nor thereafter did He say, 'Return now unto the earth!' but rather, "You shall return." After the prior announcement He let the matter go, but without hindering its just outcome (Palamas 1988: 145; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 24).

As the descendants of Adam, all human beings inherited mortality from Adam. As "the root of the human race," Adam "produced us as shoots subject to death" (Palamas 2009: 408; cf. Meyendorff [1964]1974: 125). After the fall of the first man Adam, all human beings underwent the death of their soul and their body as well. The transgression of Adam brings about the corruption of the whole human race. The image of God in human beings, though not totally destroyed, came to be obscured and distorted with the fall of the first man Adam (Palamas 1988: 127). The distortion of the image of God has been transmitted to all human beings by natural generation. For Palamas (2009: 448; cf. Meyendorff [1964]1974: 125-6), man "was no longer according to God, that is to say, after the likeness of his Creator, nor could he beget children who were like God, but only ones who were old and corrupted like himself." This hereditary corruption leads human beings to sin. Thus all human beings are "involved in a sort of vicious circle of death and sin" (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 125).

These two aspects, the spiritual and physical death, and the obscuring or distortion of God's image, are those on which the Eastern Christianity, according to

¹⁵ The physical death of man, for Palamas, while it is the natural result of man's estrangement from God, is also God's favour to man by interrupting the course of sin and cancelling the perpetuation of evil (Mantzaridis 1984: 25).

Kärkkäinen (2004: 21-22), focuses as the effects of the fall of the first man. In the Eastern Christian tradition, the tragedy of mankind caused by Adam's fall is not that all human beings inherited guilt from the first man as in Western Christian tradition, following Augustine, but that they came to be subject to death and mortality, which is the consequence of their separation from God who is life itself (Clendenin 1994: 375).

2.4.2.2. The grant of immortality

According to Kärkkäinen (2004: 22-23), the difference in focus between the Western and Eastern Churches regarding the effect of the fall of Adam results in their different emphases regarding salvation. Whereas the Western theologians understand salvation mainly in terms of justification and liberation from sin, in the Eastern Christian tradition, salvation is primarily viewed as “a return to life immortal and the reshaping” of man in the image of his Creator. Consequently in the Eastern tradition, Christ's salvific work is primarily understood as the vanquishment of death rather than as the “satisfaction of divine justice” (Kärkkäinen 2004: 22). Only the Incarnate who has full divine immortality can return mortal humanity to life immortal. Death and mortality can be overcome only by the divine immortality itself. “The voluntary assumption of human mortality” by the Son of God who alone has divine immortality brought about victory over death (Kärkkäinen 2004: 22). This is what Gregory of Nazianzus means when he states, “For that which He [Christ] has not assumed, He has not healed, but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved”; therefore, “we needed a God made flesh and put to death in order that we could live again” (Kärkkäinen 2004: 22).

Palamas also understands salvation in terms of overcoming our mortal nature, of granting divine life to us, and of reshaping the image of God in us. Thus to him (1983: 85-86) the deifying grace should be uncreated. If the deifying grace is

created, the deified saints would not be born of God and thus not transcend their mortal natures. If man's deification does no more than the perfection of his rational nature, only activated by a created natural power, the deified believers are not spirit, not transcending their mortal nature, since they are not born of the Spirit. For Palamas (1983: 90), the divine light or divine life in which the believers participate is divinity itself, the uncreated glory of God, which grants them the overcoming of their mortal nature and the "life appropriate to God." In this way, Palamas' concern in insisting on the divinity of the deifying grace is soteriological. As Russell (2006: 368) points out, there is a similarity between the argument of Palamas for the divinity of the deifying grace and the argument of Athanasius for the *homoousion* of the Holy Spirit. Both of them are soteriological arguments.

2.4.3. Distinction between the essence and energies of God

2.4.3.1. The essence as the inner being of God and energies as His personal manifestation *ad extra*

This teaching that the deifying grace is divinely uncreated is criticized by Barlaam as a heresy affiliated to "the charismatic-like movement of Messalianism" (Costache 2011:11). To Barlaam, God is transcendent, and the believers' access to the inner being of God is impossible. Therefore, what the hesychasts call the deifying grace is not divine, but just created and natural. Deification is the perfection of human beings as rational creatures, rather than the transformation of their whole existences by the vision of the uncreated divine light (Palamas *Triads* 3.1.31 in Russell 2004: 305).

Palamas, in his response to this criticism, points out that there is a distinction between the essence and the energy of God. The divine life which is mystically participated by the believers is not the essence of God but His energy. How are the

essence and the energy of God distinguished from one another? According to Palamas, the distinction between the essence and the energy of God is “that which God is in Himself,” and “the way He manifests Himself” (Rossum 2003: 372). Whereas the essence of God is that which God is in Himself, the energy of God is “God’s activity that makes Him manifest to His creatures and enables them to share in Him” (Russell 2006: 376). In Palamas’ theology, such a distinction between the essence and the energy of God is deeply related to the fact that God is personal. On the one hand, Palamas lays great emphasis on the transcendence of God. For Palamas, the divine transcendence is the reality rooted in God Himself. Thus the essence of God is what He is in Himself and absolutely transcendent (Rossum 2003: 368; cf. Palamas 2002b: 139). God does not reveal His essence to us. God in His essence is unknowable and inaccessible. On the other hand, since God is personal, He is able to go beyond Himself by His own free will and to reveal Himself *ad extra* to us in acts of “condescension.” God is personal so that “His existence is not limited to the essence but is really present in creation through His energies, or acts” (Meyendorff 1986: 33; cf. Palamas 2002b: 139). “God, while remaining entirely in Himself,” according to Palamas (1983: 39), “dwells entirely in us by His superessential power and communicates to us not His nature, but His proper glory and splendor.” The God of Palamas, though “utterly and permanently unknowable and inaccessible in His essence,” yet “comes to us and shares His life with us in His energies” (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 124 n.46). The divine energies, which form “the essential link” between God who is imparticipable in His essence and His creatures, should not be thought of as the result of an act of an impersonal emanation of God as in Neo-platonism. Rather they are the personal manifestation of God who is entirely present in each of them (Palamas 1983: 132; cf. Rossum 2015: 32).

This distinction between the essence as the inner being of God and the energy as His personal manifestation *ad extra* can be compared to the difference between the

Son's being begotten of the Father and God's creation of the world. While the former "belongs to the level of God's being," the latter is linked to the divine energy as "an act and a manifestation of God outside of Himself, *ad extra*" (Rossum 2003: 374-5). Palamas emphasizes that God's act of creation of the world is contingent in the sense that it is subject to His will (Rossum 2003: 374). If creation had been the work of the divine nature, the creatures would be "coeternal with the divine nature, for they have not come into being when God willed. The work of nature is not later than this nature nor is it subjected to a will." In the sense that it is subject to God's will, the creation of the world is an act of the divine energy, not of the divine essence. But the Son's being begotten of the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit belong to the level of God's essence, though according to "the patristic axiom of the monarchy of the Father" the Person of the Father, "not merely the divine essence, is the origin of both the Son and the Spirit" (Rossum 2003: 376).

2.4.3.2. The real distinction, not nominal

For Palamas, the distinction between the energy and essence in God is not nominal, but real.¹⁶ The divine energies are uncreated like the divine essence. God reveals Himself as goodness, holiness, glory, life, etc. All of these attributes or energies, which are appertaining essentially to God, are unoriginated like God's essence since there was never a time when they did not exist (Palamas 1983: 95). However, these attributes or energies are not "simply the superessential essence of God" because He infinitely "transcends them all as Cause" (Palamas 1983: 95). Palamas' idea of the temporary nature of certain energies of God supplies arguments for his

¹⁶ Palamas (1983: 88) mentions that the energy to which the believers are united for their deification is identical to the deifying essence. However, according to Rossum (2003: 371), what Palamas says is that the energy is not inferior to the essence. For this, Rossum (2003: 371) refers to the fact that the term used by Palamas is "ἴσος" which means "equal" rather than "identical." Nicholas Gendle (in Palamas 1983: 145 n.129), who translates the term "ἴσος" as "identical," also points out that it does not mean that "essence and energy in God are identical" since the essence transcends the energy in Palamas' thought. Rather it means that the grace given to the believers and made present in them is "the same energy that eternally exists in God."

insistence on the distinction between the essence and energies in God. Palamas mentions that while all energies of God are uncreated, yet not all of them are without beginning or end. There are some energies of God that have a beginning or end, at least in their external operations. For instance, God's creative energy. Though God always possessed it, it "became effective only when creation and time simultaneously began" (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 148 n.21). As shown in the saying of Gen. 2:3, "God rested from all the works which He had begun to do," a beginning and end must be ascribed to the energies, though not to the creative power itself, but to its activity "as directed towards created things" (1983: 96). And the prescience of God, which enables Him to foresee His creation, though without a beginning in that He did not begin to contemplate His creation in time, will stop its operation "in the sense that time comes to an end in eternity, and there are no events or developments in the age to come for God to foresee" (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 148 n.24). For Palamas, the superessential essence of God is not to be identified with His energies. The divine energies are really distinct from the divine essence.¹⁷

2.4.3.3. The real distinction, but without division

A real distinction between God's essence and His energies does not imply some composition in God as Gregory Akindynos criticizes.¹⁸ Whereas Palamas insists on the ontological distinction between the essence and energies in God, he denies any division between them. The divine essence and divine energy, though

¹⁷ The idea that the distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies is not nominal but real, is implied in the following saying of the Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos, a Palamas' disciple: "The divine energy is participated in (by the human person), but the divine essence is not at all participated in; the energy is divided without division, but the divine essence is in no way divided; the energy has a name, but the essence is without a name ... The divine essence exists in itself, but the energy exists in and is attached to the essence ... One thing is 'to exist,' another thing is 'to exist in something and 'to be attached to' something" (Rossum 2003: 371).

¹⁸ Gregory Akindynos criticized that Palamas' teaching of the real distinction between the essence and energies in God implies polytheism (Russell 2006: 369).

distinguished, are not separated from one another. There is an inseparable unity between them. Palamas (1983: 60) says,

To our human nature He [God] has given the glory of the Godhead, but not the divine nature; for the nature of God is one thing, His glory another, even though they be inseparable one from another. However, even though this glory is different from the divine nature, it cannot be classified amongst the things subject to time, for in its transcendence “it is not”, because it belongs to the divine nature in an ineffable manner.

Palamas, while restraining himself from giving a “philosophical explanation of this distinction” since for him the distinction between the essence and energies in God is “in a manner that is known to God alone” (Rossum 2003: 368),¹⁹ occasionally compares the relation between the divine essence and energies to the relation between the sun and its rays. The rays which surround the sun are distinguished from the sun which is the source of the rays. They are certainly not the essence of the sun. However, the rays are not separated from their source, the essence of the sun. The rays are also called “sun” together with the essence of the sun. Yet “it does not follow that there are two suns” (Palamas 1983: 108). Likewise, while the divine energies as “the things around God” are distinguished from God’s inner being, that is, the essence of God, there is no division between them. The divine energies that proceed from the divine essence are intrinsic to God's being as His natural attributes, not having their existence separate from God (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 153 n.112). There is a single God, not two (Palamas 1983: 108). For Palamas, to distinguish between the essence and energies in God does not result in polytheism.²⁰

¹⁹ Rossum (2003: 368) points out that the Palamite distinction between the essence and energies in God is not to be conceived in a human logical sense, according to which, “the ‘distinction’ implies the notion of *separability*.”

²⁰ The council of 1351 also stated the inseparable relation between divine essence and energy as follows: “We know this energy to be a substantial and essential movement of God and we say that it proceeds and flows from the divine essence as from an everflowing source. It is never contemplated without this essence, but always remains unseparated from it. From all eternity it exists with, and is inseparably united to, the divine essence, completely unable to be separated from it by

To Palamas (1983: 96), God is indivisible and has “supernatural simplicity.” God is entirely present in each of His energies. Each of the divine energies manifests God entirely, and He can be named by each of the energies. Each divine energy is not a part of God. Although the divine energies are experienced as manifold and varied, God is wholly present in each of the energies “without any division at all” (Palamas 1983: 96). To Palamas, this whole presence of God in each of His energies without compromising His supernatural simplicity is due to His transcendence. By reason of His transcendence over the energies, God can be entirely present in each of a number of energies without any division in Him and at the same time without exhaustion of the reality of the divine mystery by any of the energies or even by all of them (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 148 n.20). The same God totally reveals and gives Himself in His energies while remaining absolutely “transcendent to His own self-revelation” (Cazabonne 2002: 312).²¹

2.4.4. Deification as the participation in the uncreated divine energies

2.4.4.1. Man’s becoming god eternal and uncreated by grace

Palamas asserts that the participation in the uncreated divine energy causes those who participate in it to become gods. The consequence of the believers’ participation in the divine life or energies is their becoming “*homotheoi* - wholly one with God” and “gods by grace” (Russell 2006: 376; Collins 2010: 101). The believers’ acquisition of the vision of the divine light results in their transfiguration into the light which they see. God as the Sun which shines forth the true light “grants an eternal and endless light to those worthy, and transforms those who participate in this light

eternity or by any distance of time or space” (Hussey 1974: 22).

²¹ Rossum (2003: 369) agrees with R. Williams (1977: 32) who thinks Palamas’ idea of God as “nonsense from an Aristotelian point of view,” but points out that the God of Palamas is not the God of Aristotle, but “the living God of revelation in the history of salvation.”

into other suns” (Palamas 1983: 89). The sun which each of the believers becomes is the same one which illumines the true light, since they “will acquire the same energy as the Sun of Righteousness” (Palamas 1983: 89).

For Palamas, the decisive aspect of being god is sharing in the attributes appertaining to God like eternity and uncreatedness. Palamas affirms that the believers, through their participation in divine energies, are made gods “*anarchoi*” (“without beginning”) and “*ateleuteto*” (“without end”) (Russell 2006: 370). Since the deifying grace is unoriginated, the believers, through participation in this grace, become “unoriginated like Melchizedek, of whom it is said that his days had no beginning and his life no end,” being permeated with the grace (Palamas 1983: 106; cf. Rossum 2015: 35). And this participation in the divine life renders the believers uncreated as well. The believers who receive the deifying gift of the Holy Spirit are granted a life appropriate to God. Thus they, like Paul the Apostle, live no longer a created life, but the divine and eternal life of the Word dwelling in them (Palamas 1983: 90, 106). Palamas articulates that though man’s deification will be completed in the age to come, even in this earthly life, the believers are given the uncreated divine life, which conduces to their deification. As Mantzaridis (1984: 55) points out, to Palamas, man’s deification “is not simply a gift to be conferred in the future but a living reality in present existence.”

There is an intimate relation between Palamas’ understanding of the divine energy as an *enhypostaton* and his teaching that the participation in the divine energy renders those deified who participate in it, sharing in the divine attributes like eternity and uncreatedness. In Palamas’ understanding, the divine energy does not have its own hypostasis, that is, it exists only in another person. In this sense, the divine energy essentially belongs to the divine Persons as an *enhypostaton*. And this divine energy, when communicated to us, becomes in a certain sense enhypostasized in our persons also (Hussey 1974: 26). For Palamas (1983: 71; cf.

Hussey 1974: 26), the divine life is said to be enhypostasized, because it does not possess a *hypostatis* of its own, but “the Spirit sends it out into the *hypostasis* of another, in which it is indeed contemplated.” Since the divine energy, when it is communicated to us in our union with God, is enhypostasized in our persons, our participation in the divine energy makes God’s attributes like eternity and uncreatedness to be ours. Palamas (*Triads* 3.1.31 in Hussey 1974: 26) says,

The saints clearly say that this adoption which has become a reality through faith, this deifying gift, is enhypostasized. Barlaam alone considers the principle of deification and the deifying gift to be merely the imitation of God and he affirms that it is not enhypostasized; but this is quite different from the deification which the fathers knew and professed. The divine Maximus says that this deifying power is not only enhypostasized, but also uncreated; that it is not only uncreated, but also beyond the limits of space and time; and that those who possess it become thereby uncreated and beyond the limits of space and time.

2.4.4.2. Without cessation of being a creature

However, Palamas makes it clear that the deified believers do not become equal to God in essence. For Palamas, there is a significant difference between becoming what God is in His essence and sharing in His energies. The participation of the believers in the divine energies does not cause them to become equal to God as He is in Himself, since God remains inaccessible to them in His essence, even when they participate in God in His energies. Since the believers participate in the divine energies “by grace,” not “by nature” (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 149 n. 38), they never cease to be creatures, though they “come to share in the nature of the uncreated God” (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 150 n. 39). According to Meyendorff ([1964]1974: 178), Palamas’ daring application of the term “uncreated” to the deified believers does not mean his approval of the cessation of their being creatures in their deification. When the term “uncreated” is used for the deified man, to Palamas, it signifies “the whole field of the supernatural,” which means that the deified man

“is transported into a different state,” and that he “gratuitously acquires a condition fundamentally foreign to nature,” that is, into the divine life (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 178). Rossum (2015: 35) also points out that Palamas’ saying of man’s becoming “uncreated by grace” or “without beginning like Melchizedek” does not mean that man stops being a creature and becomes equal to God. Rather it must not be understood as “a way of saying that it is possible for man to be completely permeated with the divine energies.” (Rossum 2015: 35). In Palamas’ (*Triads* 3.1.31 in Hussey 1974: 26) thought, the believers are deified in their union with God, possessing the divine energy enhypostasized to their persons, but “in their own proper nature they are still creatures who have come from non-being.”

In this way, by means of his concept that the uncreated divine energies are distinct from the divine essence, Palamas is able to hold both the possibility of man’s participation in God and the transcendence of God. Man, a creature, can know God, the Creator, and participate in Him in the divine energies, neither compromising the createdness of man, nor the uncreatedness of God, nor the transcendence of God in His essence (Collins 2010: 100-101). To Palamas, it is due to man’s limitation to participate in the divine energies that man’s deification does not make him equal to God. Man has a limitation in participating in the divine energies. Man’s participation in the divine energies is not perfect in that as a creature he cannot receive the entire, infinitely potent power of the Spirit. There is no one who is able to receive the divine energies fully except the incarnate Word:

It [The deifying gift of the Spirit] is the deifying energy of this divine essence, yet not the totality of this energy, even though it is indivisible in itself. Indeed, what created thing could receive the entire, infinitely potent power of the Spirit, except He who was carried in the womb of a Virgin, by the presence of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the power of the Most High? (Palamas 1983: 89).

The deifying energy of the Holy Spirit is fully present to all the participants of it, “yet in the measure to which each is able to receive it” (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 146 n.140).

2.4.4.3. Deification spiritual as well as corporeal

To Palamas, deification involves not only our souls, but also our bodies. The experience of the vision of the divine light, which results in our deification, is real in that it is not only an interior experience, but also perceptible to bodily eyes, transfigured by grace. The divine light is not that which can be sensually perceived since it, as uncreated, exceeds both human senses and understanding. The deifying energy of God “is itself inaccessible to all sense perception and to every mind, to every incorporeal or corporeal being” (Palamas 1983: 87-8). Nevertheless, the vision of the divine light involves the human soul and body as well. When the divine light illumines us, the natural faculties of our minds and sense-perceptions are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our minds and sense perceptions become transcending themselves. Thus we come to be able to see the divine light with our transformed minds and senses. This vision of the divine light is transcending the natural faculties of our minds and senses. The divine light becomes accessible to the “mind surpassing mind” and the “sense perception transcending the senses” by the grace of the Spirit (Palamas 1983: 90-91; cf. Christou n.d.). This is the very experience of the disciples on Mount Thabor. When the divine light of Christ shone upon them on the Mount, the disciples “first received eyes they did not possess before” (Palamas 1983: 80). Palamas (1983: 80) goes on describing the disciples’ experience of the vision of the divine light of Christ as follows:

From being blind men, they began to see and to contemplate this uncreated light. The light, then, became accessible to their eyes, but to

eyes which saw in a way superior to that of natural sight, and had acquired the spiritual power of the spiritual light.

When the vision of the divine light transcends the natural faculties of mind and senses, it does not abolish the natural faculties. The man “who receives God does not lose his senses” (Palamas 1983: 91). As in the case of Peter at the time of Pentecost (1983: 91), “a heightened awareness of God” in the mysterious and divine union coexists “with the usual operations of the senses and the mind” in most cases (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 146 n.157). The uncreated divine light which the disciples saw on the Mount Thabor, is visible to the believers who transcend themselves with the help of the Holy Spirit (Palamas 1983: 107). The radiance of the divinity, the mysterious light, “inaccessible, immaterial, uncreated, deifying, eternal,” is “at once accessible to sense perception” that transcends itself, being transformed by the Holy Spirit (Palamas 1983: 80).

Therefore the transfiguration of the believers which accompanies their experience of the vision of divine light involves not only their soul, but also their body. The divine light “transforms the body, and communicates its own splendor to it when, miraculously, the light which deifies the body becomes accessible to the bodily eyes” (Palamas 1983: 57). To Palamas, the transfiguration of Christ on the Mount Thabor is not an isolated event which belongs to Christ Himself only, but “an eternal paradigm of the vision of God” for all the believers who are worthy of receiving the deifying grace (Gendle in Palamas 1983: 138 n. 13). Thus when Christ appears again at the end of this world in the same glory as that in which He revealed Himself to the disciples on Thabor, the bodies of the believers will also be transfigured with the glory of Christ. The believers put on the uncreated glory of God as “the garment of their deification corporeally as well as spiritually so that their bodies too are transformed and come to appropriate the divine life” (Russell 2006: 376-77). Whereas this transfiguration of the body is the event of the age to come, it has already been experienced by some pious people like Moses and Stephan, in

addition to that of Christ on Mount Thabor (Palamas 1983: 57). To Palamas, the deification of the believers through their participation in the uncreated divine energies involves their whole existences.

2.5. The locus of deification – the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ

Palamas underlines the link between the Incarnation of the Son of God and our deification (Cazabonne 2002: 314). To Palamas, the human nature which the Son of God assumed in His incarnation is the source of our deification. According to Palamas' anthropology, as in the Eastern Christian tradition, the Fall of Adam brought about the distortion of the image of God in all human beings and made them subject to death. Therefore, in Palamas' view, salvation is understood as releasing man from corruption and death, restoring the image of God in man, and granting immortal life to him. This salvation, according to Palamas, was accomplished by the incarnation of the Son of God who is the true image of God and alone has divine immortality. The Son of God took a human nature like ours and united it to His divine Person and granted to it the immortal life appropriate to His divinity and thus deified it. Through the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ, the human nature assumed by the Son was deified. And this deification of Christ's human nature becomes the source of the believers' deification. All the believers are deified through their being united to the deified human nature of Christ. In this sense, Mantzaridis (1984: 27) argument that Palamas' main emphasis on the purpose of the incarnation of the Son of God is "the soteriological significance of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures" in the Person of Christ, seems to be adequate. Palamas' doctrine of

deification is determined by his Christology, particularly his understanding of the hypostatic union of Christ (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 180).

2.5.1. The real body of Christ

To Palamas, the human nature assumed by the Son of God is not an abstraction, “in which case, it has no intrinsic reality” (Mantzaridis 1984: 29). The body taken by the Son of God is a real body, which is capable of suffering and of dying (Palamas 2002a: 195, 198; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 28). Christ was born as a man from a woman so that “He might take upon Himself the same nature which He formed in our forefathers” (Palamas 2009: 481). However Palamas (2002a: 52) makes a distinction between person and nature. The Son of God did not assume an individual human person but a human nature. This human nature had no previous existence as individual in itself until it was taken by the Son of God. It came into existence from the moment when it was taken by the Son of God and was united to Him in His Hypostasis (Mantzaridis 1984: 30). The Son of God united the ‘enhypostatic’ human nature to His own Hypostasis in an ineffable manner to form “the existence of one theandric Hypostasis” (Palamas 2009: 478).

Palamas (2002a: 182) affirms the purity of Christ’s human nature. The humanity of Christ, though, a real humanity like ours, capable of suffering and dying, was “wholly pure and unsullied.” He was perfectly pure and thus never needed to be purified. This purity of Christ’s human nature, according to Palamas, was derived from His being born of a Virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. If Christ had been born of a sperm, He would have inherited corruption, “being part of the old stock” (Palamas 2009: 481). Since Christ was born of a Virgin by the overshadowing of the divine power, He was “the only one neither shaped in iniquity nor conceived in sin” (Palamas 2002a: 182). Palamas (1983: 89; cf. Palamas 2009: 481) states that Christ’s virginal birth enabled His human nature to receive the fullness of the

incorruptible divinity and thereby to be deified. There is no one among created beings who can receive “the entire, infinitely potent power of the Spirit.” Only Christ, who was conceived in the womb of a Virgin “by the presence of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the power of the Most High,” could comprehend the fullness of the uncreated divine energy.

2.5.2. *Communicatio idiomatum* and deification of Christ’s human nature

In addition to the virginal birth of Christ, Palamas also refers to the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ as an immediate cause of the deification of Christ’s human nature. The Son of God took a human nature and united it to Himself in His own Hypostasis and became one with it. The human nature taken by the Son of God truly became His human nature, enhypostasized in Him (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 182). Thus we can properly “apply to Him appellations which derive from humanity” and grant His own appellations to the human nature (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 182). And since the human nature truly became the human nature of the Son of God, it came to fully participate in the uncreated life which properly belongs to the Son. Christ’s human nature derives its life from the divine nature to which it is united in the Hypostasis of the Son of God (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 182). It is the very divine life of the Son of God that deifies Christ’s human nature in its union with the Hypostasis of the Son. As Meyendorff ([1964]1974: 180-3) says, Palamas affirms the *communicatio idiomatum* which brings about the exchange of the energies between the two natures in the one Person of Christ.²² Though the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ does not bring about any

²² Loudovikos (2013: 128) expresses this reality of exchange of energies between two natures affirmed by Palamas as “the complete dialogue of created and uncreated energies,” which results in “theandric energy” of Christ, which is nothing other than “a dialogical syn-energy of His two natures that makes them perfectly co-exist and collaborate.”

confusion or diminishment of either of them,²³ through this hypostatic union, the uncreated energies proper to the divine nature of the Son of God are communicated to His human nature and deified it.

The issue of the *communicatio idiomatum* of Christ's two natures, according to Meyendorff ([1964]1974: 180-2), underlies the controversy between Palamas and his opponents concerning whether the deifying grace is created or uncreated. For instance, Akindynos, one of anti-Hesychasts along with Barlaam, has recourse to the Christological argument which refuses the real communication of idioms of Christ's two natures to advocate his position that the deifying grace is a created entity. The characteristics proper to Christ's divine nature are not communicated to His human nature. Even though Christ's human nature was deified in its hypostatic union with the divine nature, no transformation of the one nature into the other nature took place in Christ. Therefore our participation in Christ's human nature through our union with Him does not confer the uncreated grace on us. The deifying grace granted to us through our participation in His human nature is a created entity, which is essentially different from His divine nature (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 180-1). Meyendorff ([1964]1974: 181) declares that such a Christological assumption as Akindynos' corresponds to Nestorianism which endorses that the divine and human natures of Christ are "in a purely external relation of juxtaposition," being "impermeable one by the other."

On the other hand, Palamas, in unfolding his concept of deification, affirms the communication of idioms between the divine and human natures of Christ which takes place in the hypostatic union of the two natures, especially as explicated by

²³ Palamas (2009: 477-78) says that Christ is "God and flesh mingled unconfusedly by the divine Mind to form the existence of one theandric hypostasis." Therefore Christ is both perfect God and perfect man. The same Christ is both the one who anoints and is anointed. As man Christ is anointed with the eternal Spirit from God, and "as God He has the source of anointing within Himself" (Palamas 2009: 478).

Maximus the Confessor.²⁴ Through the communication of idioms of the two natures that took place in their hypostatic union, Christ's human nature was given the fullness of the divinity, and was deified from the moment when He assumed and united it to His divine Person (Palamas 1983: 76). Through the hypostatic union, Christ's human nature attained the full conformity to the divine Archetype. In Christ's human nature, the image of God was renewed and "its elevation towards the Archetype", which is the goal of man's existence and God's purpose in creating man in His image, was accomplished (Mantzaridis 1984: 29).

2.5.3. An inexhaustible source of our deification

Palamas (1983: 88) says that the human nature of Christ, which was united to the Hypostasis of the Son of God and was deified through its hypostatic union with the divine nature, is "the first-fruits of our human constitution." It is as the first-fruits of our substance that Christ's human nature was deified. The significance of this is that the deification of Christ's human nature becomes the source of our deification. According to Palamas, the deification of Christ's human nature accomplished in the hypostatic union means the creation of the "new root," from which the divine life and incorruptibility are infused into us who are its branches (Christou n.d.). The deified human nature of Christ becomes "an inexhaustible source" of our deification (Palamas 2002a: 183). The deified human nature of Christ is the channel through which the divine energies which dwell in the human nature of Christ are transmitted to us in our union with it (cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 33). We are deified through our becoming one single body with Christ, sharing the fullness of the Godhead which dwells in the body of Christ. Palamas (2002b: 130; cf. Meyendorff [1964]1974: 151) writes,

²⁴ Meyendorff ([1964]1974: 181) points out that Palamas "almost always" borrows the terms for expounding his Christological assumption from Maximus the Confessor.

...the Son of God, in His incomparable love for men, not only unites His divine *hypostasis* with our nature, in order to ‘*appear on earth and live among men,*’ possessing a psyche-bearing body animated by a nous-bearing psyche. He also unites ... with the human *hypostases* themselves, mingling Himself with each one of His faithful in their communion with His holy Body. He then becomes one Body with us, making of us a temple for the whole Divinity. For in the very Body of Christ ‘*all the fullness of the Divinity lives bodily.*’

As Meyendorff ([1964]1974: 182) states, in Palamas’ thought, “deifying grace does really reach us by virtue of the communication of idioms” of the divine and human natures of Christ that took place through their hypostatic union. For Palamas (1988: 151), the deified body of Christ is the point of our contact with God (Mantzaridis 1984: 30), and it is the way for us to be drawn near to the Kingdom of heaven. In this sense, the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in Christ is the very locus of deification.²⁵

²⁵ Palamas’ view that the conformity of human nature to the divine Archetype (*i.e.* deification of human nature) is accomplished in the hypostatic union in the Person of Christ, leads Bogdan G. Bucur to argue that the incarnation of the Son of God appears to be God’s original plan for human beings in Palamas’ theology. Bucur (2008: 208) uses the term “christomorphic anthropology” in designating the view that sees the incarnation of the Son of God in view of God’s original purpose for human beings. According to this view, the incarnate Son of God is the paradigm of both “the original humanity and the restored human being.” Bucur argues that Palamas holds this christomorphic anthropology. In support of this, Bucur (2008: 209) refers to the following passage from one of Palamas’ sermons (*Sermon on the Epiphany*):

Even the original creation of the world was established for Him who is baptized here below as son of man but is acknowledged by God from above as the only beloved Son ... even the original creation of man, when he was fashioned in the image of God, took place on His account, that man might be able someday to accommodate the Archetype. And the law decreed by God in Paradise was on His account ... Nor is this all ... The angelic natures and orders and the heavenly degrees, have also from the beginning had as their final end the dispensation of the Incarnation.

Man was created in God’s image for the purpose of his accommodation to the divine Archetype. The accommodation of humanity to God would be accomplished in the hypostatic union of the human nature with the divine Person in Christ. Christ is the paradigm of humanity. Not only the restoration of man but also his original creation was carried out in Christ. Even the old Adam was viewed “as being in Christ.” In Palamas’ thought, “the ‘theandric dispensation’ made possible only in Christ” is the original purpose of God in creation, not only of human beings but also of the hierarchies of angels (Bucur 2008: 209).

This view that the deification of human nature is grounded on its union with the divine Hypostasis of the Son of God, which Mantzaridis (1984: 29) calls “the so-called ‘physical’ view of deification,” is condensed in Palamas (2002a: 192)’ statement as follows: “By becoming the Son of man and sharing our mortality, He [the Son of God] made men sons of God and partakers of divine immortality.”²⁶ This notion that the Son of God became the Son of man in order that sons of man might become sons of God, which is so-called “the exchange formula” (Collins 2010: 50), is commonly expressed by Greek patristic writers. Irenaeus (2012: 526) refers to the Son of God as “the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.” Athanasius (2012: 65) expresses this concept more succinctly: “He [The Word of God] was made man that we might be made God.” This formula is echoed by Gregory of Nazianzus (2012: 308; cf. Clendenin 1994: 371; Kharlamov 2008: 126) who says, “While His [Christ’s] inferior Nature, the Humanity, became God, because it was united to God, and became One Person because the Higher Nature prevailed in order that I too might be made God so far as He is made Man.” Gregory of Nyssa (1999: 948; cf. Kärkkäinen 2004: 26) also reiterates this formula by saying, “[God] was transfused throughout our nature, in order that *our nature* might by this transfusion of the Divine become itself divine, rescued as it was from death.” And according to Mantzaridis (1984: 29), this view that underlines the close link between the deification of human nature and the incarnation of the Son of God, was further developed by Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus and thus became “the common property” of the Orthodox Christian tradition.

²⁶ The following passage from Palamas’ sermon on “the holy nativity of the Lord” also implies the so-called ‘physical’ view of deification: “The very Word of God from God emptied Himself in an indescribable way, came down from on high to the lowest state of man’s nature, and indissolubly linked it with Himself, and in humbling Himself and becoming poor like us, He raised on high the things below, or rather, He gathered both things into one, mingling humanity with divinity” (Palamas 2009: 479).

To Palamas, the deified human nature of Christ is the inexhaustible source of our deification, and the deifying energies, which are transmitted to us through His human nature in our union with Christ, must be uncreated divine energies. In Palamas' thought, to define the deifying energies as created would bring disgrace on Christ's divinity in that the deifying energies are inherent in His divinity (Mantzaridis 1984: 33). Since the deifying energies are inherent in Christ's divine nature, to insist that they are created entities is to deny Christ's genuine divinity. It is in this sense that Palamas accuses his opponents who insist on the createdness of the deifying grace of formulating the ancient heresies like Arians, Eunomians and Eutychians (Mantzaridis 1984: 33).

2.5.4. The salvific significance of the whole life of Christ

While laying emphasis on the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, Palamas does not neglect the salvific significance of the divine dispensation achieved through the whole life of Christ from His birth to the ascension to heaven. While the hypostatic union of the two natures in the incarnation of the Son of God is the foundation of the deification of our human nature, the passion and resurrection of Christ are the consummation of His incarnation and thus the consummation of the deification of our human nature (Mantzaridis 1984: 31-2). Palamas (2009: 330; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 32) refers to the salvific significance of the whole life of Christ as follows:

The most excellent thing of all, or rather, the only truly excellent event beyond compare, was the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ and, even more so, its outcome: the saving passion and the resurrection... All the prerequisites for our salvation were ready; the complete divine plan for the Son of God in the flesh, His divine teaching while incarnate, the consequences of His activity as God and man, the sharing of His divine and human body, the great and holy Sacrifice for our salvation, the resurrection from the dead on the third day, the beginning of eternal life with its godly joy.

Christ, dying on the cross, defeated and crushed the devil who had hold our nature since the transgression of Adam and thereby set us free. By His death on the cross we were forgiven all our trespasses and our enmity towards God was abolished so that we came to be reconciled with God (Palamas 2002a: 132-33). And the resurrection of Christ brought about the glorification of the first-fruits of our human substance (Palamas 2002a: 237, 253; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 32). Finally Christ, having ascended into the heaven, made “our human nature share the same throne as the Father, being equally divine” (Palamas 2002a: 237; cf. Palamas 2002a: 190-91; Mantzaridis 1984: 32).

2.6. The means of deification – the sacraments

Since the deified body of Christ is the “inexhaustible source” of deification of the believers, this deification is accomplished through their incorporation of it. Palamas says that the incomparable love of the Son of God for us enables Him not only to unite His divine *Hypostasis* with our human nature in His incarnation, but also to unite Himself with our human *hypostases*, in mingling Himself with each of us “by communion with His holy body” and becoming one single body with us (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 151). Since in the body of Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, the believers, through being one single body with Christ, become the temple of the entire divinity. That is, the believers, through their incorporation into the body of Christ, are deified, sharing the fullness of the Godhead which dwells in His body. And Palamas also says that this incorporation of the believers into the body of Christ is performed fully by means of the sacraments. The sacraments are the means of deification in the sense that they are the means by which our communion with the deified body “is carried out most fully” (Cazabonne 2002: 318) and we are thereby deified.

2.6.1. The nature of union with Christ carried out through the Eucharist

2.6.1.1. Spiritual as well as corporeal

Palamas points out the significance of the sacrament of the Eucharist as the created means by which the uncreated deifying grace bestowed on the body that the Son of God assumed is made accessible to the participants of it. Through the sacrament of the Eucharist the believers experience the communion with Christ and become partakers of the deifying grace dwelling in His body. To partake of the Eucharist, for Palamas (2009: 464; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 321), means to see Christ, “to touch Him,” and “to hold Him in our inmost selves.” The ineffable communion, which the believers experience with Christ in the sacrament, is so intimate that it can be described from various aspects:

O how manifold and ineffable this communion! Christ became our brother, partaking of the same flesh and blood with us, and through them became like us...He has made us His friends by bestowing upon us the revelation of these mysteries. Through the partaking of this blood He has bound and betrothed us to Himself as a bridegroom His bride, and become one flesh with us. But He has also become our Father through holy baptism in His name, and nourishes us with His own breasts as a loving mother feeds her babies (Palamas 2009: 464; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 52-3).

Palamas emphasizes the corporeal character of the communion carried out in the Eucharist. The union that is granted to us in the Eucharist is not only spiritual but also corporeal: We, partaking of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, “might be one with Him not just in spirit but in body, flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones” (Palamas 2009: 464; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 319). The participants of the

Eucharist come to have God in themselves and “become concorporeal with Him” (Cazabonne 2002: 319).

2.6.1.2. In divine energy, not in divine *hypostasis*

Palamas underlines that our intermingling with Christ’s body in the Eucharist is not like the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ. Our union with Christ does not bring about “a single *hypostasis* with Christ” as in the hypostatic union in Christ in the strict sense (Mantzaridis 1984: 53). Palamas (1988: 171) explicitly expresses the uniqueness of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ: “Hypostatic union happens to be predicated of the Word and God-man alone.” Whereas our union with Christ is a union “by grace” (Palamas 1988: 171)²⁷ and in divine energy, the hypostatic union in Christ is a union of natures and in divine hypostasis:

God in His completeness was incarnate, even though all the divine hypostases were not incarnate; He has united one of the three hypostases with our “mixture,” not through essence, but by the hypostasis; thus God in His completeness deifies those who are worthy of this, by uniting Himself with them not through the hypostasis - that belonged to Christ alone - nor through the essence, but through a small part of the uncreated energies and the uncreated divinity ... while yet being entirely present in each (Palamas *Against Akindynos* V.26 in Meyendorff [1964]1974: 182; cf. A. Williams 1994: 490).

2.6.2. The effect of the union with Christ

Palamas explicates that the effect of the Eucharist is the deification of the believers. Since this body of Christ is the body which is the dwelling of the fullness of the

²⁷ “Those who have become fit for the divine energy ... became living icons of Christ and the same as He is, more *by grace* than by assimilation” (Palamas 1988: 171; emphasis added).

Godhead, being hypostatically united to the Son of God, the believers' corporeal union with it in the sacrament of the Eucharist effects their participation in the entire divinity and thereby becoming "completely Godlike" (Palamas 2002a: 261; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 320). The partaking of the body and blood of the Christ in the Eucharist not only brings about the restoration of the image of God in the believers, but also causes them to become "eternal and heavenly gods and kings," by clothing themselves with Christ, "the King and God of heaven" (Palamas 2009: 465; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 321). This deification as the consequence of the Eucharist is described by Palamas in terms of sharing in the divine life:

Let us therefore mingle our blood with God's, in order to remove the corruption from our own, for in this blood there is great benefit past telling. It makes us new instead of old and eternal instead of temporary; it frees us from death and makes us like evergreen trees planted by the rivers of the water of the divine Spirit, from which is gathered fruit unto life eternal (Palamas 2009: 465; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 320).

The sacramental communion grants to the believers the overcoming of the corruption in themselves and the eternal life. Thus when we spiritually see the bread set before us, we are vivified by participating in it (Palamas 2009: 463; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 320). Palamas (2009: 465-66; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 320) describes the deification of the believers as the effect of the Eucharist also in terms of illumination:

When we approach these mysteries we become a royal purple robe or, rather, the blood and body of the King and – O marvellous wonder! – we are transformed to receive divine sonship, as God's radiance comes upon us in secret, shines round about us in an extraordinary way, makes us God's anointed ones, and gives us power, according to the promise, to shine as the sun in the presence of the Father, provided only that no strain lingering in the soul of the person drawing near stands in the way.

In partaking of the sacrament of the Eucharist, we are really united with the body of Christ, become one body with Him, and are deified thereby, sharing in the divine

immortality and the divine light which dwells in His body. And for Palamas, the Eucharist has a profound eschatological significance in the sense that the sacramental communion is a pledge of the ineffable communion that we will have with Christ in the age to come (Mantzaridis 1984: 55).

2.6.3. The preparation for partaking of the Eucharist

Palamas points out that there is a responsibility conferred on man for partaking of the sacrament of the Eucharist. Since the effect of the Eucharist is man's deification, the responsibility of man to partake of the sacrament is also the responsibility for his deification. To Palamas man's deification is primarily a free gift of God's grace. Palamas insists on the supernatural character of man's deification. The reality of deification as the participation in the uncreated divine energies presupposes the divine initiation for it. The deifying energies are beyond natural humanity. Man's deification is carried out by the grace of God who unites him to the body of Christ and makes him one body with Him so that he shares in the divine immortality and the divine light which dwells in His body. The deification of man is a free gift of God's grace.

2.6.3.1. Purification

However, Palamas also emphasizes that some obligations are imposed upon man to partake of the sacrament of the Eucharist. First, purification is required. Since man, through partaking of the Eucharist, becomes one body with Christ and is deified thereby, sharing in His divine life, the sanctity of this sacramental communion imposes an obligation upon him to be purified as a prerequisite condition to partake of the sacrament. In himself no one can receive the body of Christ, without first being cleansed from his stain of sin, since Christ's "sinless body will not consent to dwell in a body indulging in sins" (Palamas 2009: 461; cf.

Cazabonne 2002: 319). Thus, for us to have communion with God and to become one body with Him, we must first lay “aside our sins through confession,” and be cleansed away from the stain on our soul, “by means of almsgiving, purity, self-control, prayer, contrition and the other works of repentance” (Palamas 2009: 462; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 319). Palamas explains the necessity of our purification as a prerequisite condition for our deification with the example of a goldsmith who first scrapes metal before gilding it: “How much more ought we, who are going to be made golden in a far better way, to cleanse ourselves beforehand from all defilement of flesh and spirit?... Then we shall also draw near to salvation” (Palamas 2009: 462; cf. Cazabonne 2002: 321).

2.6.3.2. Faith

Another qualification which is needed for the believers to participate in the sacrament is faith. The elements of the Sacrament have spiritual significance. The bread offered in the Eucharist is a kind of “veil concealing the Godhead” (Palamas 2009: 463). Therefore the believers should partake of it with faith, perceiving its spiritual significance beyond its outward appearance:

“Let us approach with steadfast hope and faith, not simply beholding what is visible, but things unseen ... if you look at the appearance, it will be of no benefit to you, but ... if you behold spiritually this bread set before you, you will be made alive by partaking in it” (Palamas 2009: 463; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 56).

2.6.3.3. Continual life in accordance with God’s will

Palamas also stresses the believers’ continual life worthy of their participation in the divine life through the sacramental communion. The believers who participate in the divine life, being one body with Christ through the Eucharist, live in accordance with

God's will. The Son of God became man not only to make us "partakers of divine immortality" but also to be "an example to us of humility and a healing remedy for pride" of flesh (Palamas 2002a: 192). The crucified body of Christ not only nourishes us but also teaches us how to share in His virtues and His sufferings, "clearly showing us the way of love," "humility," "obedience," "putting the passions to death" (Palamas 2009: 467; cf. Mantzaridis 1984: 65). Therefore it is fair and proper that we, who are nourished by Christ's body through the sacramental communion with Him, should regulate our life in accordance with God's will, shown by the examples of Christ's earthly life. Our life in accordance with God's will demonstrates our participation in divine life, being one body with Christ through the sacramental communion.

2.6.4. The sacrament of Baptism

With regard to our deification, the sacrament of Baptism is also significant to Palamas in that it initiates our incorporation into Christ and our regeneration into the divine and eternal life of Christ.²⁸ In Palamas' thought, through Baptism we die with Christ to sin and are resurrected with Him into the life of the new age (Mantzaridis 1984: 45; Russell 2006: 377). The baptismal grace cleanses us of the stain of sin and restores the image of God in us to its original brightness. The baptismal grace brings about a resurrection of our soul, delivering us from the original corruption (Palamas 2002a: 189). And through the regenerative grace of Baptism the power to achieve the likeness to God, which was lost through sin, is granted to our soul (Mantzaridis 1984: 46). The sacrament of Baptism communicates to us "the ability to be fashioned like the glorious body of the Son of God" (Palamas 2002a: 206; cf. Meyendorff [1964]1974: 160). But the grant of the

²⁸ In line with the patristic tradition, Palamas approves of the Baptism and the Eucharist as the main sacraments of the Church (Mantzaridis 1984: 43-44). He proclaims that "our whole salvation depends on these two sacraments," since "the entire dispensation whereby God became man is summed up in them" (Palamas 2009:496).

strength to attain the likeness to God upon us by the Baptism is only in germinal form. This initial grace should be cultivated by us in our desire to be conformed to our divine Archetype (Mantzaridis 1984: 46; cf. Palamas 2002a: 206). Through the baptismal grace the image of God in us is restored and our conformity to the divine Archetype commences, “but it depends on us to give real value to this grace” (Meyendorff [1964]1974: 160; cf. Palamas 2009: 241). After being baptized, we are liable to advance toward the likeness of God, striving to cultivate the communion with God (Mantzaridis 1984: 43). But according to the teaching of Palamas, the means by which this cultivation of our communion with God is accomplished was already given by God through His grace. We are able to advance towards the likeness to our divine Archetype by regular participation in the sacrament of the Eucharist (Mantzaridis 1984: 51). To Palamas, the sacrament of the Eucharist is the very means of grace that enables the “baptismal regeneration to germinate, to spread, to blossom, and to produce the fruits of eternal life” (Cazabonne 2002: 320).

2.7. Summary

In this chapter which is aimed at the investigation of the understanding of the Orthodox Church about deification, the present study focused on Gregory Palamas’ understanding of deification, convinced that their typical understanding of it can be found in the writings of Palamas. Palamas underlines the significance of man’s being as created in the image of God as the presupposition of deification. By virtue of his being as created in God’s image, man is capable of being united with God and of participating in His life, which, according to Palamas’ understanding, is the substance of deification. Palamas primarily understands deification in terms of man’s participation in the life of God, which signifies the uncreated divine energies. Since Palamas emphasizes the uncreated divine character of the deifying grace, this is due to his understanding of salvation as the overcoming of mortality inherited

from fallen Adam and the grant of immortality appropriate to God. Meanwhile, Palamas makes a distinction between the essence and the energies of God. That in which man participates in his deification is the divine energies, not the divine essence. By means of this distinction, Palamas is able to hold both the possibility of man's participation in God and the transcendence of God at the same time. While man becomes a god eternal and uncreated through his participation in the divine energies, the participation does not render him equal to God in essence. Man's deification as the consequence of his participation in the divine energies does not imply the cessation of his being as a creature. According to Palamas, the deification as participation in the divine energies meets the example of its historical completion in the deified human nature assumed by the Son of God. The Son of God assumed and intimately united human nature to His Hypostasis so that it truly became His human nature. There is a real communication of properties which brings about the exchange of the energies between the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ, by virtue of which the human nature, assumed by the Son of God, was given the fullness of the divinity and was thereby deified. Palamas articulates that this deified body of Christ becomes the source of our deification. The deifying divine energies bestowed on the body of Christ becomes ours through our incorporation into His body and our communion with Him. To Palamas, the hypostatic union of Christ is the locus of our deification. Palamas also emphasizes that the sacrament of the Eucharist is the means of our deification in the sense that through it we are incorporated into the deified body of Christ and have communion with it most fully.

The investigation of Palamas' doctrine of deification confirms the logic of the interpreters who affirm Calvin's doctrine of deification as seen in the previous chapter, yet in a more systematized form: the substance of deification is the participation in the divine life; the basis or source of this deification as the participation in the divine life is Christ's human nature, which was given the fullness of divinity through its hypostatic union with the divinity and thereby was deified; the

means of our deification is the substantial union between Christ and us, in which the divine life flows to us through the channel of the deified humanity of Christ.

This strengthens the motive of the scrutiny of Calvin's ideas about the hypostatic union of Christ, the nature of our union with Christ and justification in the present thesis, as an attempt to answer the question whether the concept of deification can be found in Calvin's theology. While Calvin's ideas about those themes will be investigated throughout the following four chapters, firstly his understanding of the hypostatic union of Christ, which is marked as the basis or source of deification in the interpretation that positively affirms Calvin's doctrine of deification, will be treated.

Chapter 3. Calvin's idea of the relation between Christ's divinity and His humanity in the hypostatic union

3.1. Introduction

George (1988: 216) asserts that the overriding theme of Calvin's Christology is the knowledge about Christ in His salvific works as the Mediator rather than the knowledge about Him in His divine essence. George's such an assertion seems to be supported by Calvin himself. Calvin's main concern in his discussion on Christ is over His Person and office as the Mediator between God and humans. For instance, in commenting on the description of the immutability of Christ in Heb. 13:8, Calvin explicates that the subject of the immutability, of which the author of Hebrews is speaking, is not Christ's essence, but His quality and power that He has manifested to His people. Even in his discussion of Christ's deity as the Son of God, Calvin's concern is on the Person of Christ as the Mediator rather than on His divine essence itself. Calvin (*Inst.*, 1.13.7) seeks for the evidence of Christ's deity in His role in the creation of the universe as "intermediary." Calvin (*Comm.* 2 Cor. 4:4) also understands Christ's being "the Image of God" in terms of His Person as the Mediator between God the Father and mankind, rather than of His divine essence, as being "co-essential with the Father." That Christ is called the Image of God refers not merely to His essence, but to His function in representing the Father, who "is in Himself not apprehended by human understanding," to the world. Christ, Calvin (*Comm.* Jn. 14:10) says, "is said to be the lively Image, or Portrait, of God, because

in Him God has fully revealed Himself, so far as God's infinite goodness, wisdom, and power, are clearly manifested in Him."²⁹

The significance of the theme of Christ's mediatorship in Calvin's theology is reflected in his use of the term "mediator." In the final Latin edition of the *Institutes* (1559), Calvin uses the term "mediator" 96 times (*mediator* 21, *mediatoris* 39, *mediatorem* 19, *mediatore* 12, *mediatori* 4, *mediators* 1). In the same book, he uses various words (e.g. *medius*, *medium*, *intercedente* etc.) that have the same meaning as "mediator." The term "mediator" is also used 129 times in his *commentaries* on the Old Testament, 14 times in his prayers from his *lectures* on the Minor Prophets, 132 times in his *commentaries* on the New Testament (Moon n.d.: 8). This term "mediator," according to Moon (2016: 770), is used by Calvin primarily in a singular form to indicate the uniqueness of Christ's mediatorship. On occasion, the term refers to the mediation of people and angels. Even in these cases, however, the term "mediator" is, without exception, used to indicate Christ as their Head as the unique Mediator (Moon 2016: 770). Such is the significance of Christ's mediatorship between God and men in Calvin's Christology. This seems to justify, as Edmondson (2004: 6) points out, Oberman's (1970: 60-62) assertion that there is a shift of accent in Calvin's Christology "from a natures-Christology to an offices-Christology, converging towards a Mediator-theology."

The present chapter is aimed at attempting to answer to the question whether Calvin affirms the interpenetration of Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union, which is marked as the basis or source of deification by the interpreters who affirm Calvin's doctrine of deification. For this purpose, the present chapter will bring its focus on Calvin's idea of the relation between Christ's divinity and His humanity in

²⁹ Moon (n.d.: 5) takes notice of Calvin's translation of the term "*Logos*" in John 1:1 as "*sermo*" (speech) rather than as "*verbum*" (word) (cf. Calvin *Comm. Jn.* 1:1). According to Moon (n.d.: 5), Calvin's such translation is intended to lay stress on the "twofold relation" Christ has with God and men in the sense that in Him God reveals Himself to us.

the hypostatic union which encircles the question of the *communicatio idiomatum* of the two natures. However, the importance of Christ's mediatorship in Calvin's Christology renders the examination of Calvin's idea of Christ's mediatorship necessary even in this study focused on Calvin's understanding of the relation of Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union. Thus this chapter will begin with the theme of Christ's mediatorship.

Calvin affirms that as our Mediator Christ must be true God and true man. In order to fulfil His tasks as our Mediator, particularly as the redemptive Mediator, Christ had to assume a human nature in common with us. Calvin's such conviction of the genuineness of Christ's divinity and humanity will be investigated next to his understanding of Christ's mediatorship. And then Calvin's understanding of the relation between Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union will be examined. Calvin believes that the divine nature and the human nature constitute Christ's one Person. Christ is one Person as God and man. However the full integrity of the two natures is sustained in their union in the Person of Christ. That is, Calvin illustrates the relation between Christ's two natures in the following two words: distinction and union. The investigation of Calvin's such an idea of the relation of the two natures occupies significant position in the present chapter. Lastly Calvin's discussion on the question of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which is deeply related to the doctrine of deification, will be explored. Calvin's predicate "improper, although not without reason" regarding the communication of the properties of one nature to other nature, will be another main subject in the present chapter.

3.2. Christ, the Cosmic Mediator³⁰

As seen in his statement that the sole objective of all the discussion concerning Christ should lead us to seek salvation only in Him (*Inst.*, 2.16.1), the Person and salvific work of Christ as “God revealed in the flesh” (Tylenda 1972b³¹: 147) occupies a central position in Calvin’s discussion on Christ’s mediatorship (Edmondson 2004: 30). However, it is not Calvin’s view that Christ eventually came to be the Mediator at His incarnation. In Calvin’s view, Christ’s mediatorship did not begin with His incarnation, but He was already the Mediator between God and the creatures “from the beginning, before Adam’s fall and the alienation and separation of the human race from God” (Tylenda 1972b: 147). Christ, as God’s Eternal Word, worked in the creation of the universe as the “intermediary” (*Inst.*, 1.13.7). Christ as the Eternal Word also worked as the Mediator in preserving the creation even before sin entered the world: “Christ was from the beginning that life-giving Word of the Father [John 1:1], the spring and source of life, from which all things have always received their capacity to live ... He [Christ], flowing even into all creatures, instilled in them the power to breathe and live” (*Inst.*, 4.17.8). Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.12.4) also indicates that Christ, as “the first-born of all creation,”³² was “set over angels and men as their Head” “in the original order of creation and the unfallen state of nature.”

To Calvin, this mediatorship of the Eternal Word as the Head of humans was necessary by reason of the intrinsic distinction between God and His creatures.

³⁰ The two designations which are applied to Christ, “Cosmic Mediator” and “Redemptive Mediator” are borrowed from Crisp 2011: 29.

³¹ Calvin wrote two letter-treatises refuting Stancaró’s teaching on Christ’s mediatorship. Joseph Tylenda presents the English translation of these treatises in his two works published in 1972: “Christ the Mediator: Calvin versus Stancaró” and “The Controversy on Christ the Mediator: Calvin’s Second Reply to Stancaró.” Unless otherwise noted, references to Tylenda 1972a and Tylenda 1972b are from Calvin’s own treatises.

³² Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.2) says that the term “first-born,” when applied to Christ, it refers not to age but to “degree of honor and loftiness of power.”

There is “the infinite gap between God and humanity,” which is intrinsically grounded in God’s infinitude and man’s creatureliness (Edmondson 2004: 38). This intrinsic distinction between God and humanity makes the mediatorship of the Eternal Word necessary for man, even in the unfallen state, to have a relationship with God. Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.12.1) says, “even if man had remained free from all stain, his condition would have been too lowly for him to reach God without a Mediator.” Even unfallen angels needed Christ as their Head, “through whose bond they might cleave firmly and undividedly to their God” (*Inst.*, 2.12.1).

Besides the *Institutes*³³, Calvin’s idea of Christ’s being the Mediator as God’s Eternal Word is prominently expressed in the course of his objection against Francesco Stancaro, who teaches that Christ’s mediatorship between God and men is involved only with His humanity.³⁴ Stancaro asserts that Christ must not be a mediator with respect to His divinity since this would mean that Christ is inferior to the Father in His divinity (Tylenda 1972a: 11), which is the Arian heresy. Therefore, for Stancaro, Christ is the Mediator only as far as He is a man. And the subject who is mediated by Christ is the entire Trinity rather than the Father alone (Tylenda 1972a: 5). Christ’s divinity functions merely as the source to enable Him to fulfil His mediatorial offices (Tylenda 1972a: 137; cf. Edmondson 2004: 17).³⁵ In response to this teaching of Stancaro, Calvin makes it clear that Christ’s mediatorship is

³³ Calvin’s other reference to Christ’s mediatorship as the Head of men and angels in the *Institutes* can also be found in the context of his refutation of Osiander’s teaching concerning Christ’s incarnation. Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.12.7), in the course of his presentation of the redemption of God’s people as “the sole purpose of Christ’s incarnation,” asserts that Christ as “the first-born of all creation” was already the Head of angels and men before His incarnation, refuting Osiander’s teaching that Christ’s incarnation was necessary for Him to be the Head of both.

³⁴ For the historical background of the controversy in relation to Stancaro’s teaching of Christ’s mediatorship and the translations of Calvin’s two treatises against Stancaro, see Tylenda 1972a: 5-16 and Tylenda 1972b: 131-157.

³⁵ Edmondson (2004: 24-27, 31) asserts that Stancaro’s position regarding Christ’s mediatorship has continuity with the medieval tradition preceding him, of which Lombard, Bonaventure and Aquinas are representatives. According to Edmondson, though their views of Christ’s mediatorial work are not as severe as Stancaro’s, they also conceive Christ’s mediation primarily in terms of priestly reconciliation between God and sinful humanity, and limit Christ’s mediatorial work as the reconciler only to His human nature.

directly involved with His divinity. In support of this, Calvin refers to Christ's mediatorship as the Eternal Word in relation to the creation. Christ was already the Mediator from the beginning, before Adam's fall and before His incarnation as a response to the fall, in that He was the Head of the Church and the angels as the first-born of all the creation. Calvin (Tylenda, 1972a: 12; cf. Tylenda 1972b: 147) writes,

But we maintain, first, that the name of mediator suits Christ, not only by the fact that He put on flesh, or that He took on the office of reconciling the human race to God, but from the beginning of creation He already truly was mediator, for He always was the head of the Church, had primacy over the angels, and was the firstborn of every creature [Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:15; 2:10]. Therefore, we conclude that not only after Adam's fall did He begin to exercise His office of mediator, but since He is the Eternal Word of God, both angels as well as men were united to God by His grace so that they would remain uncorrupted.

Against Stancaró's assertion that Christ's mediatorial work directly concerned only His human nature, Calvin refers to Christ's mediatorship as the Head of angels and men as the basis for Christ's divine nature to be involved in His mediatorship: since Christ was already the Mediator between God and His creation as the Head of the Church and the angels before His incarnation, it is obvious that Christ's divinity is directly involved in His mediatorship. Calvin (Tylenda 1972a: 13; cf. Tylenda 1972b: 174) indicates that Christ, before His incarnation, was "the mid-point (*medium*) between God and creatures, so that the life which was otherwise hidden in God would flow from Him."

Since the salvific work of Christ is central to His mediatorship, it is not surprising that the theme of Christ's mediatorship as the Eternal Word in relation to His creation does not figure as the center in Calvin's discussion on Christ (Edmondson 2004: 30). However, the significance of the theme of Christ's Cosmic Mediatorship in Calvin's theology should not be neglected, in the sense that the theme, as

Edmondson (2004: 30-31) points out, explicitly reflects the important principle of Calvin's theology that "mediation stands at the heart of God's activity toward us."

3.3. Christ, the Redemptive Mediator

3.3.1. The necessity of the redemptive mediatorship

The intrinsic gulf between God and us, which is grounded in our creatureliness, was aggravated (cf. Edmondson 2004:38) and became "impassable" (Niesel [1956]1980: 112) by our sin. For Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.6.4), "God's majesty is too lofty to be attained by mortal men, who are like grubs crawling upon earth." As Niesel ([1956]1980: 112) interprets, what Calvin here is speaking should be understood as "the fissure in creation caused by the Fall, and of the creature in consequence being burdened by the punishment of death," not just as the intrinsic distance between the Creator and the creature. In addition to the finitude of the creature, an obstacle of sin was set up between God and men. Hence the task of restoration of the relationship between God and men broken by their sin was added to Christ's mediatorship. For completing this task of the restoration of the broken relationship, Christ must assume human nature as ours since the reconciliation can be achieved only through atonement (*Inst.*, 2.12.4). God ordained expiation through the sacrifice of Christ as an essential prerequisite for the restoration of the broken relationship (*Inst.*, 2.17.1; cf. *Inst.*, 2.12.1). Christ was "appointed to appease God's wrath with His sacrifice" as the Mediator between God and His people (*Inst.*, 2.17.1; cf. *Inst.*, 2.15.6; Tylenda 1972b: 147).³⁶

³⁶ Calvin (*Comm. Ex.* 29:38-41) says that the sacrifices in the period of the Old Testament typified Christ, who is the eternal Priest and sacrifice itself at the same time. Under the law of sacrifices the people of Israel in the period of the Old Testament might be "directed to the Mediator, by whose death God was hereafter to be appeased; and surely if Christ be put out of sight, all the sacrifices that may be offered differ in no respect from mere profane butchery."

It should be noted that in Calvin's thought, even though Christ's redemptive mediatorship is involved in human's sin, its origin is in God's eternal council as His cosmic mediatorship. Calvin (*Comm.* 1 Pet. 1:20) interprets the saying of 1 Peter 1:20f that Christ was chosen before the creation of the world in terms of His redemptive mediatorship. God ordained Christ to be the Redeemer of His people in His eternal council, foreseeing Adam's fall even before it.

3.3.2. Performance of the redemptive mediatorship before incarnation

According to Calvin, Christ carried out His tasks as the redemptive Mediator even before His incarnation. Christ "began to fulfill the office of the Mediator" as the reconciler before His incarnation, coming down to His people in the Person of the "Angel of the Eternal God" to have a fellowship with His people and to lead them (*Inst.*, 1.13.10). For Calvin, it is beyond doubt that the angel who appeared to Manoah and his wife was Jehovah Himself since He permitted a sacrifice to be offered to Himself and called Himself "wonderful." Hosea [Hos. 12:4-5]³⁷ confirmed Jacob's confession that "I have seen God face to face" [Gen. 32:30] after he struggled with the angel. The chief angel whom Zechariah saw was declared as "the God of Hosts," and "the highest power" was ascribed to Him [Zech. 2:9] (*Inst.*, 1.13.10). This leads Calvin (*Comm.* Zech. 1:18-21) to say that Christ performed His mediatorial office as the Head of the Church before clothing Himself with our flesh:

This chief angel was the Mediator and the Head of the Church; and the same is Jehovah, for Christ, as we know, is God manifested in the flesh. There is then no wonder that the Prophet should indiscriminately call Him angel and Jehovah, He being the Mediator of the Church, and also God. He is God, being of the same essence with the Father; and Mediator, having already undertaken His Mediatorial office, though not

³⁷ Hos. 12:4-5 (NIV): He [Jacob] struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favour. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there – the LORD God Almighty, the LORD is His name of renown!

then clothed in our flesh, so as to become our brother; for the Church could not exist, nor be united to her God without a head. We hence see that Christ, as to His eternal essence, is said to be God, and that He is called an angel on account of His office, that is, of a Mediator.

Christ also sent His Spirit, by whom the prophets “ministered the heavenly doctrine” in the period of the Old Testament “just as much as the apostles did” (*Inst.*, 1.13.7; cf. Tylanda 1972a: 14).

3.3.3. The redemptive mediatorship concerned Christ’s whole Person as God and man

However, since Christ’s sacrifice was ordained as an essential prerequisite for the reconciliation of the broken relationship between God and men, Christ’s assumption of human nature as ours was necessary for Him to complete His mediatorial offices. Christ had to come forth a true man “to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God’s righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved” (*Inst.*, 2.12.3). Christ’s assumption of human nature was necessary for Him to die in place of us. Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.12.4) stresses that the sole purpose of Christ’s incarnation was for Him to be a sacrifice to reconcile us to God, objecting to the teaching of Andreas Osiander (1498-1552) that Christ’s incarnation was necessary regardless of our redemption.³⁸ This reconciling work of Christ as our Mediator involves not only His atoning death, but also His obedience to the Father in the whole course of His life in Calvin’s thought. Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.16.5) writes,

How has Christ abolished sin, banished the separation between us and God, and acquired righteousness to render God favourable and kindly toward us? To this we can in general reply that He has achieved this for us by the whole course of His obedience... Paul extends the basis of the pardon that frees us from the curse of the law to the whole life of

³⁸ In the respect of this, Crisp’s (2011: 41) assertion that Calvin’s idea of Christ’s mediatorship as the Head of the angels and men uniting them to God “requires the Incarnation quite apart from any redemptive function,” seems not to be acceptable.

Christ.

It is not only for dying as a ransom, but also for countering Adam's disobedience with His obedience to the Father in place of him that Christ took the person of Adam and his name (*Inst.*, 2.12.3).

Calvin's emphasis on the necessity of Christ's assumption of human nature for fulfilling His mediatorial tasks should not be interpreted as his approval of Stancaró's teaching that Christ's mediatorship primarily concerns His human nature. For Calvin, Christ's mediatorship in reconciling the broken relationship between God and His people does not belong to His humanity alone. It concerns His divine nature as well. It can be said that Christ's divine nature, though dying is proper only to humanity, is also involved in the event of Christ's death in the sense that it is because of His divine nature that Christ's death could bring about the reconciliation of the broken relationship between God and His people. If Christ were only man, His death could not bring about the reconciliation since man alone cannot overcome death. Christ swallowed up death by means of His divine power that His death could make us free from the power of death (Tylenda 1972b: 149; *Inst.*, 2.12.3). In this sense, it can be said that not only Christ's human nature but also Christ's divine nature were involved in His atoning death. Calvin (Tylenda 1972a: 15) writes,

If we take into account the apostle's meaning when he says that by the blood of Christ our consciences are purified because He offered Himself through the Spirit [Heb. 9:14], we will not separate the natures in the act of dying, since atonement could not have been effected by man alone unless the divine power were conjoined.

Calvin (Tylenda 1972a: 15)'s saying that Christ's death "was expiatory since He was the only begotten Son of God and the Redeemer given to mankind" can be understood in this sense. Calvin (Tylenda 1972a: 14) also indicates that Christ's sacrifice could not be completed without His entering into the heavenly sanctuary, which means that Christ's priesthood concerns not only His human nature but also

His divine nature. Christ's divinity as "the only begotten Son of God" is "a necessary requisite of the office of priesthood." Concerning the obedience of Christ, by which He acquired righteousness, it can be also said that His divine nature is involved in it in the sense that "the acquisition of righteousness does borrow its force from the divine nature" (Tylanda 1972b: 150).³⁹ In this way to Calvin, all the salvific works of Christ as our Mediator concern His human nature and His divine nature as well. To be more exact, for Calvin, Christ's redemptive mediatorship concerns "His complete Person" as God and man (Tylanda 1972b: 149; cf. Tylanda 1972a: 14-15). Christ must be "true God and true man" to fulfil His tasks as our Mediator (*Inst.*, 2.12.2).

Besides the expiation, Calvin presents the tasks of Christ as our Redemptive Mediator in various terms. One of Christ's tasks as our Mediator is to make us children of God and heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom (*Inst.*, 2.12.2). According to Calvin, this task makes Christ's being true God and true man necessary since it could not be accomplished except by the Son of God becoming the Son of man who took what was ours to "impart what was His to us, and to make what was His by nature ours by grace" (*Inst.*, 2.12.2; cf. Tylanda 1972b: 149).⁴⁰ Calvin (Tylanda 1972b: 148) also presents the work of uniting us to God as a proper function of Christ, our Mediator, which cannot be fulfilled except by the one who is man and at the same time God. All of us were estranged from the presence of God by our iniquities. Men's alienation from God initiated by sin becomes more severe by their

³⁹ Harrison (1991: 64) who defines *perichoresis* in Christology in terms of how Christ's two natures are truly united in the hypostatic union while each remains distinguished from each other, argues that it is the hypostatic union of Christ's two natures that "makes His human sufferings and death salvific."

⁴⁰ Concerning the blessing of our becoming the children of God, Canlis (2004: 181) identifies it with our participation in the eternal intra-Trinitarian relation, which Christ as the Eternal Son of God has with the Father. On the other hand, McCormack (2010: 519) interprets our becoming the children of God in terms of our adoption into the relation of Christ the Incarnate as our Mediator to the Father. McCormack (2010: 519) argues that the everlasting glory and blessedness, which are our inheritance as the children of God, are "created gifts" in the sense that they are the fruits of Christ's salvific works in His person as God and man. In support of this assertion, McCormack refers to Calvin's typical association of adoption with our "reception of created goods, gifts given to Christ by the Father not for Himself but to be handed on to us" (cf. *Inst.*, 3.1.1).

ongoing fear of God that springs from their guilty consciences. Men flee from God's presence, regarding Him as adverse to them (*Comm. Gen. 28:12*). Thus we would have had no hope to reach to God unless God had not descended to us in the Person of the Mediator, who, as true God and true man, bridged the gulf between God and us (*Inst.*, 1.12.1). For this work of reuniting us to God, "it was necessary for the Son of God to become 'Immanuel, that is, God with us,' and in such a way that His divinity and our human nature might by mutual connection grow together" (*Inst.*, 1.12.1).⁴¹

Christ's being "our ordinary approach" to God (Tylenda 1972b: 153) is an important aspect of His mediatorship as God and man in Calvin's theology. Christ's being our access to God is primarily based on His reconciling work. Owing to Christ's reconciling work, the throne of God's majesty became to us the throne of His grace (*Comm. Heb. 4:16*). Christ our Mediator, having entered a heavenly sanctuary,

appears before the Father's face as our constant advocate and intercessor. Thus He turns the Father's eyes to His own righteousness to avert His gaze from our sins. He so reconciles the Father's heart to us that by His intercession He prepares a way and access for us to the Father's throne. He fills with grace and kindness the throne that for miserable sinners would otherwise have been filled with dread (*Inst.*, 2.16.16).

Calvin also mentions Christ's nearness to us, which arises from His assumption of humanity as ours. Paul the apostle, in describing Christ as the Mediator, emphasizes Christ's manhood: "There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ" [1 Tim. 2:5]. Paul could have added the word "God" instead of the word "the man," or he could have called just "Jesus Christ," omitting the word "the man" (*Inst.*, 2.12.1). But this is for the Holy Spirit, who speaks through the apostle, to teach us that Christ our Mediator is near us as one of ourselves (*Inst.*,

⁴¹ Calvin (*Comm. Gen. 28:12*) interprets the ladder that appeared in Jacob's dream as a figure of Christ who "connects heaven and earth," and is "the medium through which the fullness of all celestial blessings flows down to us, and through which we, in turn, ascend to God."

2.12.1). That the throne of God is the throne of grace to us is also because Christ, who is our advocate as our high priest, is able to sympathize with our weaknesses since He “in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sinning” [Heb. 4:15] (*Inst.*, 2.12.1).

To Calvin (Tylenda 1972b: 147), Christ has been our Mediator as “God revealed in the flesh” since sin entered the world. At this point, it is to be considered how Calvin answered Stancaró’s concern that if Christ is a mediator between God and humanity with respect to His divine nature, Christ would be inferior to the Father. For Calvin, Stancaró’s such concern is indiscreet in that he does not consider the distinction between God’s “essence” and God’s “economy.” When we consider the relation between the Father and Christ, we should distinguish between God’s essence and God’s economy. In divine essence, Christ, as “the only begotten Son of God” (Tylenda 1972a: 13), is one and equal with the Father. But with respect to God’s economy in which God relates to His creatures, Christ is said to be inferior to the Father since He took the mediatorial role “to be the intermediary between God and us.” Christ’s mediatorial position is not concerned with His essence. Thus Christ’s inferiority to the Father in the divine economy cannot be a threat to His unity and equality with the Father in His divine essence (Tylenda 1972b: 150-51; cf. Edmondson 2004: 37). Calvin (Tylenda 1972b: 152) writes,

Without any injury, Christ will be placed as intermediary between us and the Father; in this nothing is taken from His immeasurable glory, even though He be perceived (in a more obscure way) under the veil of His humanity until the time when Christ in His human nature, and the course of His mediatorship being completed, submits to the Father, and His divine essence and majesty immediately shine forth in splendour.

3.4. The genuineness of Christ's divinity and humanity

3.4.1. The genuineness of Christ's divinity

In the *Institutes*, after discussing the necessity of Christ to be true God and true man as the Mediator (*Inst.*, 2.12), Calvin proceeds to demonstrate the genuineness of the two natures of Christ (*Inst.*, 2.13).⁴² The divinity of Christ as “the only begotten Son of God” (Tylenda 1972a: 14) is proved by His works in relation to the world. Christ worked in the creation of the universe as an intermediary (*Inst.*, 1.13.7) and governs the universe “with providence and power” (*Inst.*, 1.13.12). He (*Inst.*, 1.13.10), as mentioned above (§ 3.3.2), was identified with the Eternal God when He appeared to God's people in the period of the Old Testament as the Angel of God.

Calvin mentions three main factors which demonstrate Christ's divinity since His incarnation. First, the witness of the apostles. The apostles proclaimed Christ to be the one who fulfilled and would fulfil “what had been foretold concerning the Eternal God” when He appeared in the flesh (*Inst.*, 1.13.11). In Romans 9:32-33, for example, Paul declared that Isaiah's prophecy that “the Lord of Hosts is to be ‘a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense for the Judeans and Israelites’” [Isa. 8:14p] was fulfilled in Christ. With this Paul proclaimed Christ to be the Lord of Hosts (*Inst.*, 1.13.11). And Paul, applying God's foretelling concerning Himself that “before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear” to Christ, said that “we must all stand once before the judgment seat of Christ” [Rom. 14:10p] (*Inst.*, 1.13.11). Second, Christ's works which are proper only to God. For example, when Christ proved that He had the power of remission of sins, which is proper only to God, He showed Himself to be equal with God (*Inst.*, 1.13.12). Third, Christ's divinity was

⁴² The deity of Christ is discussed in the *Institutes* 1.13.7-13.

also “demonstrated by His miracles” like raising the dead, healing the sick and casting out demons, which were done on His own authority (*Inst.*, 1.13.13). Christ also has been acknowledged by the Church of both the Old Testament and the New Testament as the only one in whom they can put their trust and hope since salvation, righteousness and life are contained in Him (*Inst.*, 1.13.13). All these prove the deity of Christ. Christ is the eternal God, the only begotten Son of God.⁴³

Calvin (*Inst.*, 1.13.13), as Edmondson (2004: 206-207) points out, emphasizes the importance of the practical knowledge of Christ in recognizing the divinity of Christ. When we experience Christ’s grace, we can perceive His divinity more certainly and firmly than with any idle speculation. Calvin (*Inst.*, 1.13.13) concludes his discussion on the genuineness of Christ’s divinity with the following statement: “The pious mind perceives the very presence of God, and almost touches Him, when it feels itself quickened, illumined, preserved, justified, and sanctified.”

3.4.2. The genuineness of Christ’s humanity

The Son of God is clothed with our flesh to fulfil the office of the Redemptive Mediator. The human nature which Christ assumed is real. Calvin demonstrates the genuineness of Christ’s humanity against two representative opponents of Christ’s real manhood: the Marcionites⁴⁴ and the Manichees, who Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.1) believes “fancied Christ’s body a mere appearance,” and “dreamed that He was endowed with heavenly flesh” respectively. Against these figures, Calvin says that Christ was “a man truly begotten of human seed,” not created in the air. This was

⁴³ Calvin (*Inst.*, 1.13.2-6, 16-20) insists on the unity of divine essence and at the same time “the real distinction” among the three Persons (cf. Wendel [1950]1963: 168-69). The Father, the Son and the Spirit are one God, yet they are differentiated by “an incommunicable quality.” The Son is not the Father since He went forth from the Father. Nor is the Spirit the Father, since the Spirit proceeds from the Father. It was the Son who descended upon the earth, died and arose again.

⁴⁴ McNeill (in *Inst.*, 2.13.1 n.2) points out that the representative contemporary Marcionite who Calvin has in mind is Menno Simons (1496-1561), who argues that Jesus took His flesh from heaven, which Simons calls “celestial flesh” (Horton 2011: 471). According to Simons, Mary was “represented merely as a ‘channel’ through which Jesus was born” (Horton 2011: 471; cf. Thomas 2008: 212).

made clear by Christ's calling Himself "the Son of man," which means a true man in the Hebrew idiom (*Inst.*, 2.13.1; 2.13.2). Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.1; 2.13.3) also presents Christ's being called "the seed of Abraham and the fruit of David's loins" as a convincing evidence that proves His true manhood. The promises of "the blessing" and "the eternal throne" were not given to a heavenly seed or a man of air, but to the seed of Abraham and the fruit of David's loins. It is to fulfill these promises for Christ to assume human nature. Paul designated Christ's human nature by immediately adding the adverbial phrase "according to the flesh" when he named Christ "Son of David" [Rom. 1:3]. That Joseph was not involved in the conception of Christ's human body does not nullify that Christ is the seed of David since "it was clear enough that Mary came from the same family" as Joseph (*Inst.*, 2.13.3).

In response to the objection that if Christ derived from men, "He could not be exempted from the common rule" that all Adam's offspring are subject to sin, Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.4) refers to the comparison that Paul the apostle makes between Adam and Christ, which demonstrates that the rule is not applicable to Christ, the Second Adam [Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:47]. When Paul states that God sent Christ "in the likeness of sinful flesh" for the law to be satisfied [Rom. 8:3-4], he teaches clearly that Christ is "true man but without fault and corruption, being distinguished from all other descendants of Adam. Christ is free from all stain not just because Mary, of whom He was begotten, is not unclean as a virgin, but because "He was sanctified by the Spirit that the generation might be pure and undefiled as would have been true before Adam's fall" (*Inst.*, 2.13.4). Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.1) also sees Christ's reception of the Holy Spirit as an evidence of the genuineness of Christ's humanity: Since God cannot "be enriched in His essence by some accidental gift," it is clear that the gifts of the Spirit was given to Christ according to His humanity. Christ alone as our Head received the Holy Spirit without measure so that "we should all receive from His fullness" (*Inst.*, 2.13.1; cf. *Comm.* Lk. 1:15). The anointing with the Holy

Spirit, as Willis-Watkins (1966: 83-84) points out, equipped Christ's humanity with gifts to accomplish His Redemptive mediatorial offices.

Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.1; cf. *Comm. Lk.* 2:40) refers to the testimonies of the Gospels that show Christ "to have been subject to hunger, thirst, cold, and other infirmities of our nature" including "ignorance." Christ grew in body and made progress in mind. He was even "in all points tempted like we are, sin excepted" (*Comm. Lk.* 2:40). The only difference between Christ and us is that "the weaknesses which press upon us, by a necessity which we cannot avoid, were undertaken by Him voluntarily, and of His own accord" (*Comm. Lk.* 2:40). The fact that Christ assumed our nature and have been subject to its infirmities serves "to edify our minds in true confidence" (*Inst.*, 2.13.1). That is, Christ is our high priest who is able to sympathize with our infirmities.

3.5. The relation between Christ's two natures (1) - distinction

3.5.1. Distinction and union of Christ's two natures

In the *Institutes* 2.14.1-8 (1559), Calvin, after demonstrating that Christ is true God and true man, proceeds to discuss the relation between Christ's divine nature and human nature in His person. The Son of God had to become man to fulfil His office as the Mediator. He actually assumed human nature and became true God and true man. Yet Christ is one person as God and man, not two persons. The divine nature and human nature constitute the one Person of Christ as God and man. Here the question whether the unity of the Person of Christ did not corrupt the integrity of one of the natures or of both is raised. Calvin is clear that while the two natures constitute the one Person of Christ, each nature keeps its own proper characters in their union. In this respect, it can be said that Calvin stands within the Chalcedonian

tradition concerning Christology, particularly, the doctrine of the hypostatic union of Christ: Christ's divine nature and human nature are inseparably yet distinctly united with each other in the one Person of Christ.⁴⁵ Calvin's idea is expressed in the opening of his discussion on the relation between the two natures in Christ's Person in the *Institutes*. He (*Inst.*, 2.14.1) writes,

We ought not to understand the statement that "the Word was made flesh" [Jn. 1:14] in the sense that the Word was turned into flesh or confusedly mingled with flesh. Rather, it means that, because He chose for Himself the virgin's womb as a temple in which to dwell, He who was the Son of God became the Son of man – not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we affirm His divinity so joined and united with His humanity that each retains its distinctive nature unimpaired, and yet these two natures constitute one Christ.

In this way, for Calvin, the relation between the divine nature and human nature in Christ's Person has two aspects at the same time: "distinction and union." These two aspects of the relation of both natures in Christ's Person is also reflected in the distinction that Calvin makes between two words: "union" (*unio*) and "unity" (*unitas*) in the Preface of his *Commentary on Jeremiah*, which is dedicated to Frederick III, a Palatine of the Rhine. For Calvin, while the former refers to the two natures of Christ, the latter is proper to His Person alone. Calvin indicates that to assert the unity of the two natures is absurd in the sense that it implies the coalescence of the two natures by "blending together" into one. For Calvin, the divine and human natures of Christ are united so intimately that they constitute the unity of His Person,

⁴⁵ The original Chalcedonian expression in describing the relation of the two natures, which are united with each other in one Person of Christ, is negative: "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation" (Sellers 1953: 210 in Grillmeier [1965]1975: 544). Paul Helm (2004: 61) indicates that this "series of negations" implies that the Chalcedonian statement was not intended to positively explain the metaphysics of the relation between Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union, but to prevent "the drawing of false inferences" about it. According to Helm (2004: 60-71), Calvin's description of the Incarnation as a union of Christ's divine nature and His human nature while each of them has its own distinctness accords with true Chalcedonian fashion (cf. Thomas 2008: 218).

yet their union is not the coalescence which leaves no distinction between both natures (CO 20:75; cf. Willis-Watkins 1966: 33). Hence in order to comprehend Calvin's discussion on the relation between Christ's divine nature and human nature in His Person, as Edmondson (2004: 215) points out, these two aspects - distinction and union - should be considered together. Even though in this study, for convenience' sake, the two aspects will be treated separately from each other (the aspect of distinction will first be treated in the current section and the aspect of union will be treated in the following section), this should be kept in mind in the course of this study.

3.5.2. The distinction of the two natures and *Extra Calvinisticum*

Calvin's conviction about the distinction between the two natures of Christ is expressed in his *commentary* on John 1:14:

The unity of Person does not hinder the two natures from remaining distinct, so that His divinity retains all that is peculiar to itself, and His humanity holds separately whatever belongs to it... since he [John] distinctly gives to the man Christ the name of *the Speech (Logos)*, it follows that Christ, when He became man, did not cease to be what He formerly was, and that no change took place in that eternal essence of God which was clothed with *flesh (Comm. Jn. 1:14)*.

In Calvin's thought, Christ's being made flesh does not imply His divinity's sharing with the characteristics of the flesh. Even though the Son of God assumed the same flesh as ours, He, as God, is not restricted to the flesh. Instead, Christ, as the Eternal Word, still fills all things even after incarnation as before. Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.4) expresses his conviction of the integrity of Christ's divinity even after incarnation as follows:

They thrust upon us as something absurd that fact that if the Word of God became flesh, then He was confined within the narrow prison of an earthly body. This is mere impudence! For even if the Word in His

immeasurable essence united with the nature of man into one person, we do not imagine that He was confined therein. Here is something marvelous: the Son of God descended from heaven in such a way that, without leaving heaven, He willed to be borne in the virgin's womb, to go about the earth, and to hang upon the cross; yet He continuously filled the world even as He had done from the beginning!

This is what has come to be known as the *Extra Calvinisticum*, which can be defined as a teaching that “though Christ's divinity is united to His humanity and is fully present therein, it nonetheless is not contained by that humanity in its finitude, but is ubiquitously present outside (*extra*) it” (Edmondson 2004: 211).⁴⁶ Calvin's formulation of the doctrine of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* first appears in his discussion of the Eucharist.⁴⁷ Calvin, while emphasizing the integrity of Christ's human nature even after His resurrection and ascension against the idea of the ubiquity of His body, insists on the real presence of Christ in the Supper. He uses

⁴⁶ Willis-Watkins (1966: 8-9) says that even though the term “*Extra Calvinisticum*” was produced by the Lutherans to designate the peculiar teaching of Calvinists on the nature of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper in the context of debate between Reformed and Lutheran theologians, the doctrine of the *Extra Calvinisticum* was already broadly confessed in the Christian tradition long before the sixteenth century. For instance, one patristic expression of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* appears in Athanasius' work concerning Christ's Incarnation (cf. Crisp 2007: 52). In his book *On the Incarnation of the Word*, Athanasius (2012: 45) writes as follows: “For He was not, as might be imagined, circumscribed in the body, nor, while present in the body, was He absent elsewhere; nor, while He moved the body, was the universe left void of His working and providence; but, thing most marvelous, Word as He was, so far from being contained by anything, He rather contained all things Himself; and just as while present in the whole of creation, He is at once distinct in being from the universe, and present in all things by His own power... thus, even while present in a human body and Himself quickening it, He was, without inconsistency, quickening the universe as well, and was in every process of nature, and was outside the whole, and while known from the body by His works, He was none the less manifest from the working of the universe as well.”

In his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas (TP, Q[5], A[2], 1976: 141) also indicates that the descent of Christ in His divine nature does not mean His divine nature's ceasing to be in heaven, but His existence here below in a new way, that is, by His assumed nature. Aquinas (TP, Q[10], A[1], 1974: 103; cf. Willis-Watkins 1966: 38) says that “not even in a union based on personal existence does human nature fully comprehend the Word of God, or the divine nature. Although the entire divine nature was united to human nature in the one person of the Son, the whole power of the divinity was not as it were circumscribed by that human nature.”

Willis-Watkins (1966: 26-60) portrays the idea of the *Extra Calvinisticum* in other figures like Origen, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril, and Gabriel Biel besides Lombard and St. Augustine, whom Calvin identifies as his sources in the matter. Willis-Watkins (1966: 60) proposes to coin “*Extra Catholicum*” or “*Extra Patristicum*” as more appropriate label for the doctrine than “*Extra Calvinisticum*,” in the sense that since the *Extra Calvinisticum* is widespread and ancient doctrine in the tradition before Calvin, there is no uniqueness with Calvinists concerning the doctrine.

⁴⁷ For the development of Calvin's discussion of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* within the context of the Eucharistic discussion in the *Institutes*, from the first edition (1536) to the final edition (1559) of it, see Willis-Watkins 1966: 28-31.

the doctrine of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* for explicating the special manner of Christ's real presence in the Supper. Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.30) writes,

He [Christ] is said to have descended to that place according to His divinity, not because divinity left heaven to hide itself in the prison house of the body, but because even though it filled all things, still in Christ's very humanity it dwelt bodily [Col. 2:9], that is, by nature, and in a certain ineffable way. There is a commonplace distinction of the schools to which I am not ashamed to refer: although the whole Christ is everywhere, still the whole of that which is in Him is not everywhere... Therefore, since the whole Christ is everywhere, our Mediator is ever present with His own people, and in the Supper reveals Himself in a special way, yet in such a way that the whole Christ is present, but not in His wholeness. For, as has been said, in His flesh He is contained in heaven until He appears in judgment.

Although Christ's flesh has been contained in heaven since His bodily ascension, the whole (not wholly) Christ, nonetheless, is present in the Supper in that He still fills heaven and earth in His divinity, which is not bound to the humanity even in the hypostatic union.

This so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* underlies Calvin's understanding of Christ's mediatorial offices. Christ as the Eternal Word carried out the role of the Cosmic Mediator in creating and preserving the created order from the beginning. This Cosmic Mediatorship did not cease when Christ assumed human nature to fulfil His role as the Redemptive Mediator in reconciling the broken relationship between God and humans. Christ continued to exercise His dominion all over the universe even when He, as God manifested in the flesh, carried out His reconciling work on earth (cf. Willis-Watkins 1966: 71, 76).

And Calvin's discussion of the humiliation of Christ, particularly of Christ's self-emptying also reflects the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum*. Calvin understands Christ's self-emptying as "the concealment, not the abdication, of the Eternal Son's divine majesty" (Willis-Watkins 1966: 80). In the course of commenting on Christ's

self-emptying, Calvin (*Comm. Phil. 2:6-7*) repeatedly states that the *kenosis* of Christ is not abdication of His Godhead itself, but the concealment of His divine majesty as the Son of God who is in reality equal to God. Christ could not divest Himself of the Godhead. Instead He just kept the majesty of the Godhead concealed for a time in such a way that “it might not be seen under the weakness of the flesh. Hence He laid aside His glory in the view of men, not by lessening it, but by concealing it” (*Comm. Phil. 2:7*; cf. *Inst.*, 2.14.3). The abasement of the flesh Christ assumed was like a veil, “by which His divine majesty was concealed” (*Comm. Phil. 2:7*). In his *commentary* on Matthew 24:36, Calvin indicates that Christ’s confession of His being in ignorance of the last day does not derogate from the majesty of His divinity. Against the objection that “it is an insult offered to the Son of God, if it be said that any kind of ignorance can properly apply to Him,” Calvin comments that this ignorance does not involve Christ’s divinity, but only His humanity. Calvin (*Comm. Mt. 24:36*) writes,

in Christ the two natures were united into one Person in such a manner that each retained its own properties; and more especially the divine nature was in a state of repose, and did not at all exert itself, whenever it was necessary that the human nature should act separately, according to what was peculiar to itself, in discharging the office of Mediator. There would be no impropriety, therefore in saying that Christ, who knew *all things*, was ignorant of something in respect of His perception as a man... if Christ, as man, did not know the last day, that does not any more derogate from His divine nature than to have been mortal.

Calvin’s concern in his discussion of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* is not only for the integrity of Christ’s divine nature in the hypostatic union, but also for the reality of the human nature He assumed in the Incarnation. As quoted above, one of Calvin’s classical statements of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* is expressed in the *Institutes* 2.13.4 where Calvin concludes his discussion on the genuineness of Christ’s humanity. In response to the objection that if Christ assumed the human nature as ours, He must have been subject to sin, Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.4) emphasizes

Christ's sinlessness, which is due to the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying Him at His conception in Mary's womb. And against those who object to Christ's assumption of the humanity as ours by reason that it must result in His being restricted to the flesh, which is desecration, Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.4) also emphasizes the integrity of Christ's divinity in the hypostatic union. Since Christ's divine nature was not confined in the human nature in the hypostatic union, rather it continued to dwell in heaven and to fill the world as before the Incarnation, there is no desecration in Christ's assumption of true human nature. In this sense, it can be said that Calvin's concern in his statement of the *Extra Calvinisticum* in the *Institutes* 2.13.4 is to affirm that "Christ is *homoousias* with us according to His human nature, without in any way compromising His being *homoousias* with the Father" (Slater 2005: 46; cf. Edmondson 2004: 213).

3.5.3. The context of Calvin's discussion on the distinction

Calvin's emphasis on the distinction of the two natures of Christ, his endeavor to keep the integrity of both natures even in the hypostatic union, made a number of scholars criticize that there is a Nestorian tendency in his Christology.⁴⁸ Wendel, for example, referring to "Calvin's unilateral interest in the divine nature and its exaltation" ([1950]1963: 224) that do not allow anything "to diminish the divinity or divest it of any of its privileges" ([1950]1963: 223), raises a possibility that Calvin's emphasis on the distinction between Christ's two natures may distort his discussion on the unity of the Person of Christ:

If we place ourselves at the point of view of Christological doctrine we may, however, wonder whether, by thus accentuating the distinction between the two natures, he [Calvin] did not endanger the fundamental unity of the Person of Christ, and whether some of the affirmations he made would not tend toward somewhat unorthodox conclusions

⁴⁸ McDonnell (1967: 213, n.28) presents a list of Calvin Scholars who noted Calvin's Nestorian tendency.

(Wendel [1950]1963: 225).

To answer this question, as Edmondson (2004: 210) points out, particular polemical contexts that shape Calvin's emphasis on the distinction between both natures, should be considered.

3.5.3.1. In response to Servetus

Michael Servetus is one of the main figures who are in Calvin's mind when he presents his teaching on the distinction of the natures in the *Institutes*. Servetus, as Calvin understands him, denies the eternity of Christ's divinity as the eternal Son of God. Christ is not God and man in whom the divine nature of the eternal Son of God and the human nature He assumed are joined to each other in the hypostatic union. According to Servetus, Christ became the Son of God when He was "begotten of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin's womb" (*Inst.*, 2.14.5), and His filiation "took its beginning from the time when He was made manifest in flesh" (*Inst.*, 2.14.6). Servetus speaks about the eternity of the Son of God, but in the sense that the Son of God existed only as "an idea" in the mind of God to be "preordained to be the man who would become the essential image of God" (*Inst.*, 2.14.8). To Servetus, the Son of God "was begotten of God by knowledge and predestination" (*Inst.*, 2.14.8), and was finally made man from "God's essence, spirit, flesh, and three uncreated elements" (*Inst.*, 2.14.5). For Servetus, Christ is constituted by a mixture of elements of some divine and some human (*Inst.*, 2.14.5).

Calvin's emphasis on the distinctiveness of Christ's divinity in the hypostatic union can be properly understood in the context of his response to Servetus' such teaching. Calvin's chief concern in response to Servetus' teaching is to affirm the reality of the Eternal Son of God before the Incarnation. Christ was the Son of God begotten of the Father before all ages. This eternal Son of God took human nature

in the hypostatic union in such a way that He became God and man. The distinctiveness of Christ's divinity from the humanity He took in the hypostatic union bears testimony to the eternity of Christ's divinity. Since Christ as the Eternal Son of God is eternally begotten of the Father, took human nature in the hypostatic union and became the Son of God manifested in the flesh to make us sons of God by free adoption, it is no wonder that the privileges which belonged to the Eternal Son of God before the Incarnation were not diminished by the hypostatic union. That is, Calvin's concern in emphasizing the integrity of Christ's divinity in the hypostatic union is, as Edmondson (2004: 212) argues, not just for protecting His divinity from His humanity, but for arguing "the original reality of His divinity preceding this union."

3.5.3.2. In response to the Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's body

Calvin's insistence on the reality of Christ's humanity is implied in his response to the Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's body, which is the other context in which Calvin's discussion on the distinction of the two natures of Christ is set forth. According to the Lutheran theology, the humanity was so united to the divinity in the hypostatic union that subsequent to the Incarnation Christ's divinity was nowhere present beyond the humanity (Edmondson 2004: 211). This was possible because of the exchange of the attributes between Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union. The attributes, particularly the omnipresence of the divine nature, are communicated to Christ's human nature through the Incarnation so that His human nature could be omnipresent with His divine nature. Lutheran doctrine of corporeal presence of Christ's human nature in the elements of the Eucharist is based on this idea of the ubiquity of His human nature (cf. Suh 2000: 39-40).

Calvin responded to this Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's human nature with the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum*. But Calvin's argument for the ubiquity of

Christ's divinity beyond His humanity is not intended to turn us to Christ's divinity apart from His humanity (Edmondson 2004: 215). For Calvin, the integrity of Christ's assumed human nature is so important to our salvation since our salvation rests on the genuineness of His human nature:

Though righteousness flows from God alone, still we shall not attain the full manifestation of it any where else than in the flesh of Christ; for in it was accomplished the redemption of man, in it a sacrifice was offered to atone for sins, and an obedience yielded to God, to reconcile Him to us; it was also filled with the sanctification of the Spirit, and at length, having vanquished death, it was received into the heavenly glory (*Comm. Jn. 6:51*).⁴⁹

Calvin's concern in his discussion on the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* is to give the rationale for the communication of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper. By the virtue of His divine essence which is not confined in the assumed human nature, Christ communicates the substance of His body to us in the Sacrament (*TT 2. 285, 558-59*).

When the polemic contexts that shape Calvin's emphasis on the distinction between Christ's two natures is considered, his emphasis on the distinction can be properly understood as the evidence of his eagerness to affirm Christ's being the Mediator as God manifested in the flesh against any teaching that threatens one of Christ's two natures, either His divine nature or His human nature. It cannot be interpreted as an evidence of a Nestorian tendency in Calvin's Christology. Calvin, as Edmondson (2004: 214) argues, by emphasizing the distinctness of Christ's two natures, "directs Christians nowhere other than to the Person of the Mediator, Christ in the unity of His two natures, to find and unite themselves to God as God has revealed Godself in God's love and mercy."

⁴⁹ For more details on the significance of the substance of Christ's body in our salvation, see § 5.5 of the present thesis.

3.6. The relation between Christ's two natures (2) - union

Calvin's emphasis on the distinction of the two natures of Christ is involved in his concern about Christ's mediatorial offices as God manifested in the flesh. Therefore Calvin's discussion on the distinction of the two natures of Christ can be properly understood only when it is treated with his conviction about the unity of Christ's Person composed of the two natures.

3.6.1. The figures of clothing and of a temple

Calvin objects to Nestorianism.⁵⁰ According to Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.4), Nestorius committed the error of devising "a double Christ," "in wanting to pull apart rather than distinguish the nature[s] of Christ." The application of the name "Son of God" to Him who is born of Mary, the Virgin [Lk. 1:32], and Mary's being called "the mother of our Lord" [Lk. 1:43] are convincing evidences of the intimate union of both natures in the one Person of Christ, against the error of Nestorius (*Inst.*, 2.14.4). Willis-Watkins, in his discussion of Calvin's idea of the unity of Christ's Person, takes notice of the terminology that Calvin uses to describe the Incarnation of the Son of God. Calvin describes the Incarnation in terms of the Son's putting on the flesh or clothing Himself with human nature. Calvin also carries over "the *templum* figure" for Christ's body from the 1539 to the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* (Willis-Watkins 1966: 64, n.2). These languages seem to suggest the Nestorian tendency of Calvin's understanding of the Person of Christ, or at least they seem to weaken Calvin's insistence on the union of two natures in the one Person of Christ. Willis-Watkins (1966: 65), however, argues that Calvin's terminology does neither imply any Nestorian tendency in his theology nor even weaken his insistence on the unity

⁵⁰ Crisp (2007:37) summarizes the assertion of Nestorianism as that "the Word assumed an existing person, indwelling and coexisting with him for the duration of the Incarnation."

of Christ's Person. The expression, putting on the flesh or clothing oneself with human nature is "uniquely descriptive of the Incarnation." In case of the angels, they were said to appear in human form, which they took on. They were never said to put on, or clothe themselves with, human nature as the Son of God was. The two angels who appeared to Abraham in human form were not "surrounded with human bodies, in the same manner in which Christ clothed Himself in our nature, together with our flesh" (*Comm. Gen.* 18:16; cf. Willis-Watkins 1966: 77). Therefore, the description of the Son's clothing Himself with human nature is the confession of the unity of the Person.

Neither does Calvin's consistent usage of "the *templum* figure" for Christ's body contradict his insistence on the union of two natures in Christ's Person. On the one hand, Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.4) uses this figure to refute Eutyches' error of comingling the two natures of Christ. Christ's calling His body a temple [John 2:19] implies the distinction of His divinity from the body. However Calvin is aware of the peril of misuse of this figure as a proof of the Nestorian view. Calvin, in his *commentary* on John 2:19, actually refutes Nestorius' use of the figure of temple "for the purpose of taking away the unity of Person in Christ." Nestorius clearly abused this figure since he neglected the difference between the manner of our bodies' being called temples of God and that of Christ's assumed body's being called a temple. When our bodies are called temples of God, it is in different sense from the case of Christ. While "God dwells in us by the power and grace of His Spirit," "in Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, so that He is truly God manifested in flesh" (*Comm. Jn.* 2:19; cf. Willis-Watkins 1966: 64).

This idea also is reflected in one of Calvin's classical statements of the so-called *Extra-Calvinisticum*:

In this way He was also Son of man in heaven [John 3:13], for the very same Christ, who, according to the flesh, dwelt as Son of man on earth,

was God in heaven. In this manner He is said to have descended to that place according to His divinity, not because divinity left heaven to hide itself in the prison house of the body, but because even though it filled all things, still in Christ's very humanity it dwelt bodily [Col. 2:9], that is, by nature, and in a certain ineffable way (*Inst.*, 4.17.30).

Calvin here contrasts the manner of the Eternal Son's dwelling in His assumed human nature with His dwelling in all other things by virtue of His divine omnipresence. It is because of this difference of the manners of His dwelling that the Eternal Son could be said to descend to the earth according to His divinity in His Incarnation, while He still dwelt in heaven in His divinity. In contrast to the Son's dwelling in all other things by virtue of His divine omnipresence, His dwelling in the flesh in His Incarnation renders Him justly and appropriately called as God manifested in flesh.⁵¹

As already mentioned, in his refutation of Servetus, Calvin affirms the eternal existence of Christ as the second Person of the Trinity before His assumption of human nature. Servetus objects to Calvin that to affirm the eternal and personal existence of the Son of God is to make two Sons of God. In response to this objection, Calvin explicitly exhibits his conviction of the unity of the Person of Christ. The Eternal Son of God and Christ the Incarnate are not two, but the same Person. Christ the Incarnate was the Eternal Son of God manifested in the flesh. The one, Eternal Son of God clothed Himself a human nature and became man. He did not, for that reason, begin to be a new God. The union of the Eternal Son of God and the human nature did not make a new person distinct from the Person of the Son (Helm 2004: 71; Edmondson 2004: 217; *Inst.*, 2.14.5). Regarding this unity of the Person of Christ, Helm (2004: 70)'s suggestion that in Calvin's thought, the human nature which the Son of God assumed is "a particular expression of human nature,"

⁵¹ Helm (2004: 68) illustrates that the contrast is "between God as being omnipresent in the sense that He is everywhere active and God being present by identifying Himself with human nature in the Person of Jesus in a way that warrants statements such as 'The Word became flesh.'"

which came into existence “not independently of the Son’s incarnation, but precisely in incarnation,” is noteworthy. This is involved with the question whether Christ’s assumed human nature could have become a human being in its own right apart from its being united to the Son of God or not.⁵² While admitting that Calvin is not explicit on this point, Helm (2004: 70) suggests that Calvin would approve the following statement of Aquinas (TP, Q[2], A[2], 1976: 47):

Although a human nature is a kind of individual in the category of substance, in Christ it does not exist separately in itself but in another more perfect reality, namely in the person of the Word of God, and consequently does not have its own personality. Thus the union was effected in the person.

3.6.2. The Scriptures’ ascription of the properties of natures to Christ

3.6.2.1. The ascription of human properties to Christ

Calvin’s view of the union of the two distinctive natures in the one Person of Christ is also expressed in his explanation of the Scriptures’ ascription of the properties of natures to Christ Himself in various ways. Firstly, when Scriptures describe Christ, it at times attributes to Christ the properties which “must be referred solely to His humanity.” For example, Christ is called “the servant of the Father” [Isa. 42:1], and He is said to have “increased in age and wisdom” [Lk. 2:52]; not to “seek His own glory” [John 8:50]; “not to know the Last Day” [Mk. 13:32]; not to “speak by Himself” [John 14:10]; not to “do His own will” [John 6:38], and He is also said to have been “seen and handled” [Lk. 24:39]. Even though all these qualities properly and solely belong to human nature, Christ “does not ascribe them solely to His humanity, but takes them upon Himself as being in harmony with the Person of the Mediator” (*Inst.*,

⁵² For the *anhypostasia* – *enhypostasia* distinction regarding the humanity of Christ, see Crisp 2007: 72-89.

2.14.2). This shows that Christ's humanity does not exist apart from His Person, but, along with His divinity, consists His one Person as God and man. The characteristics or activities of Christ's humanity are properly attributed to Christ Himself because He, as God and man, is the subject of them.

3.6.2.2. The ascription of divine properties to Christ

Secondly, Scriptures sometimes attribute to Christ "what belongs uniquely to His divinity." For example, Christ says that "before Abraham was, I am" [Jn. 8:58]. And apostles proclaim Christ to be "the first-born of all creation ... who was before all things and in whom all things hold together" [Col. 1:15, 17], to have been "glorious in His Father's presence before the world was made" [Jn. 17:5] and to be "working together with His Father" [Jn. 5:17]. All these qualities belong properly and exclusively to Christ's divinity, but are attributed not only to His divinity, but also to Christ Himself, like the properties which belong solely to His humanity (*Inst.*, 2.14.2). This shows that Christ's divinity is also the essential part which constitutes Christ's Person, God and man, as the Mediator. The characteristics or activities of Christ's divinity are properly attributed to Christ Himself because He, as God and man, is the subject of them.

3.6.2.3. The ascription of divine-human properties to Christ

Thirdly, Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.3) indicates that Scriptures sometimes attribute to Christ "what embraces both natures but fits neither alone." These properties belong neither to Christ's divinity nor to His humanity alone, but to both at once. Calvin, for examples, indicates Christ's power of "remitting sins" [Jn. 1:29], of "raising to life whom He will," of "bestowing righteousness, holiness, salvation." This kind of power is given to Christ by the Father, to the Person God and man as the Mediator. Christ

was also “appointed judge of the living and the dead in order that He might be honored, even as the Father” [Jn. 5:21-23]. And He is called the "light of the world" [Jn. 9:5; 8:12], the "good shepherd" [Jn. 10:11], the “only door” [Jn. 10:9], and the "true vine" [Jn. 15:1]. All these prerogatives were given to Christ from the Father when He incarnated. Even though Christ as the Eternal Son of God, along with the Father, “held them before the creation of the world, it had not been in the same manner or respect.” The prerogatives mentioned above are those which were bestowed on Christ in His capacity as Mediator, as God manifested in the flesh. They do not only belong to Christ’s divinity. Neither could they have been “given to a man who was nothing but a man.” These prerogatives, with which Christ was endowed, belong neither to His divine nature nor to His human nature alone, but to both simultaneously.

Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.3) says that “the Kingdom of God,” which Christ will deliver to the Father [1 Cor. 15:24], corresponds to this case. The Kingdom of the Eternal Son “had no beginning and will have no end.” But the Kingdom of God mentioned in 1 Cor. 15:24 is the Kingdom which was given to Christ, who took the nature of a servant as the incarnated Mediator. Therefore God exalted Him to be seated at the right hand of the Father as the ambassador of His Father. God the Father governs us by the hand of Christ, the Mediator. Until He comes to judge the world, Christ will reign, “joining us to the Father as the measure of our weakness permits.” But when we, as the partakers of heavenly glory, see God as He is, Christ, having then discharged the office of Mediator, will cease to be the ambassador of His Father, and “will be satisfied with that glory which He enjoyed before the creation of the world.”

Here the reality of the unity of Christ’s Person is clearly set forth. Christ’s divinity and His humanity, joined together, constitute the one Person of Christ, the Mediator

as God and man. The divine and human characteristics are properly assigned to Christ because He is the subject of them as God and man.⁵³

3.7. The question of the *communicatio idiomatum*

To Calvin, the relation between Christ's divine and human natures has the aspects of both distinction and union at the same time. The two natures are inseparably yet distinctively united to each other in the one Person of Christ. Calvin's idea of the union of the two distinctive natures in Christ's Person is expressed clearly in his explanation of the Scriptural testimonies to the interchange of the two natures, which is traditionally called *communicatio idiomatum* (*Inst.*, 1.14.1).

3.7.1. The Scriptures' examples of the *communicatio idiomatum*

The examples of the exchange of Christ's two natures which Calvin cites can be sorted into two. Firstly, the properties that belong to the human nature alone are attributed to the divine nature. We, for example, read in Scriptures that "God purchased the church with His blood" [Act. 20:28]. God does not have blood. Bleeding is solely a property of humanity. Here, however, bleeding is attributed to "God," which is designated by divinity (*Inst.*, 2.14.2). Besides this, we hear the apostles proclaim that "God laid down His life for us" [1 Jn. 3:16]; "the Lord of glory was crucified" [1 Cor. 2:8]; "the Word of life was handled" [1 Jn. 1:1]. In all these cases, that which Christ carried out in His human nature as dying, being crucified,

⁵³ Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.1) presents the relation between body and soul of man as "the most apposite parallel" of the reality of the unity of the two distinctive natures in the one Person of Christ. Man consists of two substances: body and soul. These two are not mingled, but retain their own distinctive natures. Yet he who is composed of these two substances is one man, not many. The two natures constitute one person in man, joined together. "There is one person in man composed of two elements joined together." It is these "two diverse underlying natures that make up this person."

being touched with hands, are attributed to His divine nature, according to which the names “God,” “the Lord of glory,” “the Word of life” are designated (*Inst.*, 2.14.2).

Secondly, Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.2) cites the examples where the properties that belong solely to Christ’s divinity are attributed to His humanity. We hear Christ says about Himself that “no one has ascended into heaven but the Son of man who was in heaven” [Jn. 3:13]. It was before His ascension that Christ said this. That is, His flesh was not in heaven at that time when Christ said this. “As man, in the flesh that He had taken upon Himself, He was not in heaven.” Therefore it is certain that Christ’s being in heaven is that which refers to His divine nature. As already mentioned, Christ was in heaven in His divinity even when He was living on earth in His flesh. It becomes clearer in John 6:62 that when Christ mentioned His being in heaven, He referred to His eternal existence: “What if you see the Son of man ascend to where He was before” [John 6:62]. Heaven is the place where as the Eternal Son of God Christ had been before His Incarnation and was only in His divine nature since the Incarnation. However it is said that “the Son of man” was in heaven. In this passage, the properties even including the eternity that belong solely to Christ’s divinity are attributed to the name “the Son of man,” which indicates His humanity (*Comm.* Jn. 6:62; Tylenda 1975: 62).

3.7.2. Calvin’s appraisal (1) - “improper”

The key of Calvin’s understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* is his indication that the interchange is “improper, although not without reason.” Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.2) writes about the *communicatio idiomatum* as follows:

Surely God does not have blood, does not suffer, cannot be touched with hands. But since Christ, who was true God and also true man, was crucified and shed His blood for us, the things that He carried out in His human nature are transferred *improperly, although not without reason,*

to His divinity (emphasis added).

What does Calvin mean with the predicate “improperly, although not without reason”? On the one hand, the predicate “improperly” implies that Calvin does not consider the transfer of Christ’s human nature to His divine nature as real. For Calvin (Tylenda 1975: 64), in Christ there is no “ontological communication of properties, whereby the characteristics of one nature ontologically belong to the other nature.” Christ’s two natures keep their own characteristics even in their union. They are not co-mingling with each other. It was not by confusion of substance that the Son of God became the Son of man (*Inst.*, 2.14.1). Therefore the mortality of the humanity which Christ assumed cannot be substantially transferred to His divinity. Surely Christ “does not have blood, does not suffer, cannot be touched with hands” in His divinity as God. As Tylenda (1975: 62 n.18) points out, if it is said that “Christ purchased the church with His blood,” the statement may be proper since the name “Christ” is designated according to His divine nature and human nature at the same time. The ascription of the possession of blood and mortality to Christ is proper since Christ, as the “subject possessing the two natures” (Tylenda 1975: 59), is true man. To say, however, that “God purchased the church with His blood” is improper in that it implies the ontological transference of mortality to “the divine nature in the abstract” (Tylenda 1975: 58; Ngien 2004: 58), which is essentially immortal. The Scriptures’ ascription of the properties of one nature of Christ to His other nature must not be understood as the ontological communication of properties between both. In this sense, Calvin calls the Scriptures’ reference of the communication of the properties “a figure of speech” (*Inst.*, 2.14.1).

Calvin’s rejection of the ontological co-mingling of the two natures is clearly reflected in the context of his refutation of the Lutherans’ use of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Luther first of all conceives the *communicatio idiomatum* in terms of the ascription of the properties of two natures to the whole Person of Christ, approving

that the two natures retain their properties in their union (Luther *WA* 22. 491-2 in Ngien 2004: 59). But Luther goes further to teach the idea of a real communication of properties between the two natures themselves (Lienhard 1982: 340; Ngien 2004: 59). Luther (*WA* 47.199 in Lienhard 1982: 340) writes,

As for what happens to and befalls this Person Christ, it happens to and befalls both to this God and to this man. From whence it comes that these two natures in Christ communicate their attributes and their properties the one to the other; that is to say, that which is the peculiar property of one nature is communicated also to the other. That is why one says justly of the natures that they are attached to one another, intertwined and united.

For Luther, by virtue of this real communication of the properties between two nature themselves, it can be really said that God suffers or that man creates. Even though creation is what is proper solely to the divinity, “nevertheless,” Luther (*WA* 26. 265 in Ngien 2004: 61) says, “it is said correctly that ‘the man created’, because the divinity, which alone creates, is incarnate with the humanity, and therefore the humanity participates in the attributes of both predicates.” Especially, Luther insists that this real *communicatio* enables Christ’s human nature to be ubiquitous. Christ’s human nature is “beyond the creatures,” and “no longer submits to the laws of space and time” (Lienhard 1982: 340). This *communicatio idiomatum* provides a theological foundation for Luther’s teaching of the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper (Lienhard 1982: 340). Following Luther, the Lutheran orthodoxy insists on the communication of some of the divine properties to the human nature, which results in the ubiquity of Christ’s human nature.⁵⁴ The idea of the ubiquity of Christ’s human nature is involved in Lutherans’ teaching that subsequent to the

⁵⁴ Berkhof ([1939]1974: 325) describes the variation in Lutheran understanding of the *communicatio*. For Luther and some of the early Lutherans, the communication happened “in both directions, from the divine nature to the human, and also from the human to the divine.” In the subsequent development of the doctrine, however, a unilateral communication only from the divine to the human nature is stressed. And eventually Lutheran scholastics come to “distinguish between the operative attributes of God (omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience), and His quiescent attributes (infinitude, eternity, etc.),” and limit the communication only to the former.

Incarnation Christ's divine nature is nowhere outside of His humanity. This is guaranteed by the ubiquity of Christ's human nature. Their conviction of the physical presence of Christ's body in the Supper can be also explained by the ubiquity of Christ's body.⁵⁵

Calvin rejects the Lutheran understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*, especially their idea of the ubiquity of Christ's humanity. In the Preface to his *Commentary on Jeremiah*, which is dedicated to Frederick III, Calvin criticizes the Lutheran teaching of the ubiquity of Christ's humanity as being in conflict with Scriptures:

That they may, however, get rid of the absurdity of a local presence, it has been found necessary to fabricate the strange notion of ubiquity; which, if we think it not possible to reconcile to the principles of faith, we must beg them at least to pardon our ignorance. Here we follow not our own understanding; but according to the knowledge given us from above, we cannot comprehend that it is at all agreeable to Scripture to say that the body of Christ is everywhere. Both Christ Himself and His apostles clearly shew that the immensity of God does not belong to the flesh; a personal union is what they teach.

Calvin (*Preface to Jeremiah*), moreover, warns that to blend the two nature that "when Christ became man, the attributes of Deity were communicated to His human nature" is to repeat the heresy of Eutyches (cf. Tylenda 1975: 64).

⁵⁵ Helm (2004: 73) argues that this is characteristic of Alexandrian and Cappadocian Christology. Emphasizing the unity of Christ's Person in the Incarnation, they use the *communicatio idiomatum* not only in the sense of the ascription of properties of the divine or human nature to the whole Person of Christ, but also in the sense of the ascription of the one nature to the other nature. In support of this assertion, Helm refers to Kelly's (1972: 322) description of Cyril of Alexandria: Cyril of Alexandria "conceived of each of the natures as participating in the properties of the other... Thus the humanity was infused with the life-giving energy of the Word, and itself became life-giving. Yet there were limits to this principle. As he explained, the Word did not actually suffer in His own nature; He suffered as incarnate..." On the other hand, Torrance (2008: 210) argues that for Cyril, the *communicatio idiomatum* does not refer to "a mutual interpenetration of the divine and human qualities or properties, as it came to be understood in Lutheran theology."

To Calvin the communication of properties is improper in that there is no ontological co-mingling of Christ's two natures. As Calvin does not read the proclamation of John that "the Word was made flesh" [John 1:14] as implying the Word's sharing with the characteristics of the flesh, neither does he read it as affirmation of the transfer of the characteristics of the Word to the flesh. Calvin's discussion of Christ's sinlessness testifies to his refusal of a real transfer of the properties of Christ's human nature to His divine nature. To Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.13.4), the Scriptures' description of Christ's purity is that of the purity of His humanity, not of His divinity, since it is "superfluous to say that God is pure." And the source of this purity of Christ's humanity is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (*Inst.*, 2.13.4), rather than the transmission of divine purity from His divinity to His humanity (cf. Slater 2005: 46). Even after the resurrection, Christ's human nature, even though given immortality, is still subject to the common limits of human nature. Christ's flesh does not come to be omnipresent as His divine nature.

Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.29) reads the event that after His resurrection Christ met the two disciples who were going to the village Emmaus in view of this. It is not because the figure of Christ's body was changed, but because their eyes were restrained [Lk. 24:16] that they did not recognize the resurrected Christ the first time they met. Even after His resurrection Christ was as He always had been (*Comm.* Lk. 24:16). With regard to Christ's suddenly vanishing from their eyes, Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.29; *Comm.* Lk. 24:31) comments that this does not mean that Christ's body became invisible, but that in withdrawing from their sight, He just disappeared. Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.29) interprets the event when the resurrected Christ went in to His disciples while the doors were shut [John 20:19] as probably "the stone was removed" at Christ's command, and the wall was opened for Him to enter. That Christ entered through closed doors means "not just penetrating through solid matter, but opening an entrance for Himself by divine power." Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.29) also argues that

Christ walked on the water by virtue of His divine power by which “the water, like a solid pavement, provided” a path to Him.

3.7.3. Calvin’s appraisal (2) - “Although not without reason”

On the other hand, to Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.2), it is “not without reason” for Scriptures to interchange Christ’s two natures. Here Calvin’s emphasis on the union of the two natures in the one Person of Christ is implied. Calvin understands the communication of properties of the two natures on the personal level, not on the “ontological level” (Allen 2007: 393). The two natures, while remaining distinguished from each other, are so intimately united together in Christ as to constitute one Person (*Comm.* Acts 20:28). Christ is the same subject of His divinity as well as His humanity which are united each other in His *Hypostasis*. This hypostatic union of Christ’s two natures is the “reason” that Calvin has in mind when he says that the Scriptures’ description of the interchange of both natures is “not without reason.” It is because of Christ’s being the same subject of both natures that what belongs to one nature of Christ can be attributed to His other nature. Properties of Christ’s humanity is those of Christ Himself who is the “subject possessing the nature” (Tylenda 1975: 59), and thus they justly and appropriately are attributed to Him. Moreover, the properties of Christ’s human nature may be also attributed to His divinity in the sense that Christ is also the subject possessing the divinity as God and man. However, this attribution must not be understood as a real, ontological communication of the properties between both natures. Rather this attribution is only a figure of speech which can be spoken of only in the context of the hypostatic union of both natures.

Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.30) indicates that when the Lord of glory is said to be crucified [1 Cor. 2:8], it does not mean that Christ suffered anything in His divine nature as God. Nonetheless, in the passage the apostle, applying the name “the Lord of glory,”

which designates Christ's divinity, attributed the act of being crucified to His divinity. According to Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.30), the apostle could say this "because the same Christ, who was cast down and despised, and suffered in the flesh, was God and the Lord of glory." Christ's suffering may be predicated to His divinity because Christ, who suffered in His humanity, is also the subject of His divinity which is united to His humanity in His person. Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.2; cf. *Comm.* Acts 20:28) says that "since Christ, who was true God and also true man, was crucified and shed His blood for us, the things that He carried out in His human nature are transferred improperly, *although not without reason*, to His divinity."

The same principle can be applied to the attribution of the properties of Christ's divinity to His humanity. When the Son of man, still living on earth, was said to be in heaven, this does not mean that Christ was really in heaven "in the flesh that He had taken upon Himself" (*Inst.*, 2.14.2). Christ's being in heaven at that time was the thing of His divinity alone. Christ, as God, was in heaven ruling over the whole universe in His divinity even when He was living on earth in His humanity. But because Christ, who is in heaven as true God, is also true man, by virtue of the union of both natures in His person His being in heaven in His divinity can be attributed to His humanity as well, according to which the name "the Son of man" is designated (*Inst.*, 2.14.2). Christ could be said to be the Son of man in heaven "for the very same Christ, who according to the flesh dwelt as Son of man on earth, was God in heaven" (*Inst.*, 4.17.30).⁵⁶ In this way, according to Calvin's explanation, it is because of the union of both natures in His person as God and man that the characteristics or activities of Christ's one nature can be attributed to His other nature. It should be noted that for Calvin, the attribution of what is proper to one

⁵⁶ Calvin (*Comm.* Jn. 6:62) also applies the same principle in interpreting Christ's saying that He was in heaven before He came on earth: "When He says *that He was formerly in heaven*, this does not apply strictly to His human nature, and yet He speaks of *the Son of man*; but since the two natures in Christ constitute one Person, it is not an unusual way of speaking to transfer to one nature what is peculiar to the other."

nature of Christ to His other nature is only a figure of speech that can be spoken of in the context of the hypostatic union of the two natures. The attribution does not imply that there is a real communication of properties between Christ's two natures.

3.7.4. Two interpretations on Calvin's understanding of the *communicatio*

3.7.4.1. The indirect communication from the natures to the Person of Christ as God and man

It is noteworthy that there are two different interpretations regarding Calvin's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*. On the one hand, many scholars think that Calvin understands the *communicatio* in terms of the predicating of properties of the divine or human nature to the whole Person of Christ. Joseph Tylanda reads Calvin's discussion on the *communicatio idiomatum* in this manner. Tylanda (1975: 65) defines the *communicatio idiomatum* in Calvin's thought as the "interchange of properties by which a subject denominated by one of His two natures so possesses the other nature and its properties that these properties may be truly attributed to Him." While admitting that Calvin does not explicitly mention the ascription of the properties of each of Christ's two natures to the Person of Christ, who is the subject of the two natures, Tylanda (1975: 59-60, 61 n.17) argues that the Scriptural examples of the *communicatio* which Calvin cites, and his rejection of any real ontological exchange of properties of one nature to the other, justify the judgment that the idea of the indirect communication from the natures to the Person of Christ as God and man is implicit in Calvin. Therefore, in Calvin's (*Inst.*, 2.14.2) statement that "the things that He [Christ] carried out in His human nature are transferred improperly, although not without reason, to His divinity," the term 'divinity' should be understood as "divinity in the concrete," or "a divine being," who

is a subject possessing both divine and human natures, rather than as “the divine nature as such,” or the divine nature “in the abstract” (Tylenda 1975: 58, 60). Tylenda (1975: 60 n.17) quotes John Damascene⁵⁷ and Leo the Great⁵⁸ as examples of an explicit treatment of the *communicatio idiomatum* as the ascription of the properties of each of the two natures to the Person of Christ as God and man. Oberman (1970: 57) and McCormack (2010: 515) also read Calvin’s discussion of the *communicatio* in a similar manner as Tylenda.⁵⁹

3.7.4.2. A hermeneutic rule for protecting the full integrity of both natures of Christ the Mediator

On the other hand, Paul Helm rejects Tylenda’s interpretation that Calvin sees the communication indirectly from two natures to the Person of Christ. According to Helm (2004: 79), Calvin’s appraisal of it as “improper” or “figurative” can be meaningful only when the *communicatio* refers to the ascription of the properties of Christ’s human nature to His divine nature and vice versa. In Calvin’s thought, the Scriptures’ expression that God purchased the church with His own blood, is “not literally true” and thus it is an improper expression. It is only “figuratively true” by virtue of the hypostatic union of both natures. The Scriptures’ ascription of the mortality of Christ’s human nature to His divine nature is not literally true in that God

⁵⁷ “When we speak of the divinity we do not predicate of it the properties [*idiomata*] of the humanity; thus we do not say that the divinity is subject to suffering or is created. Nor do we assign to flesh or humanity the properties of the divinity; thus we do not say that flesh or humanity is uncreated. However, since we are speaking about a person, whether we name him by reason of both [natures] together, or only one, we assign to him the properties of either nature” (Damascene *PG* 94:997 in Tylenda 1975: 60 n.17).

⁵⁸ “It is irrelevant from which nature Christ is denominated, since, given the unity of Person, it is the same being who is the whole Son of Man in virtue of the flesh and who is the whole Son of God in virtue of the unique divinity held with the Father” (Leo *PL* 54:1066 in Tylenda 1975: 60 n.17).

⁵⁹ Moon (n.d.: 5) argues that Calvin’s understanding of the *communicatio* in terms of the indirect communication of the properties through the Person of Christ becomes the doctrinal ground of the Reformed teaching of the *communicatio*. Calvin’s understanding is reiterated more systematically by Hodge 1995: 387-397 and Bavinck 2006: 258-259, 276, 304-319 (Moon n.d.: 5 n.13).

cannot die. In this sense the Scriptures' ascription is an improper expression. Yet, the ascription is figuratively true in that human and divine natures are united with each other in the Person of Christ. Helm (2004: 76) indicates that in his discussion of the *communicatio*, Calvin provides a hermeneutical rule for properly understanding the Scriptures' description of the communication. That is, while the Scriptures' expressions are "somewhat hard if taken literally," by virtue of the hypostatic union of the divinity and the humanity in the Person of Christ "we can and must interpret such expressions figuratively" (Helm 2004: 80).

Slater (2005: 45-50) also reads Calvin's discussion in this manner. When Calvin says that the Scriptures' description of the exchange of properties of Christ's two natures is improper, what he has in mind is primarily "a transfer from one nature to the other nature," rather than the indirect communication of natures to His Person (Slater 2005: 50). Slater (2005: 50) argues that Calvin's overarching concern regarding the *communicatio idiomatum* is over the Person and office of Christ as Mediator and the full integrity of His divine nature and human nature as the Mediator. Calvin treats the Scriptural description of the *communicatio* as "a hermeneutic rule" for protecting the full integrity of both natures of Christ the Mediator, rather than as an affirmation of the direct communication from nature to nature (Slater 2005: 47, 51).

3.7.4.3. The communication occurred on the personal level

These two interpretations do not seem to be much different from each other in respect of the rationale of Calvin's appraisal, 'improper, although not without reason' about the Scriptural expressions of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Both interpretations suggest Calvin's conviction of the distinctness of the two natures of Christ as the basic reason for his appraisal "improper." Calvin does not approve the

substantial or ontological communication of properties between the two natures. In this sense, the ascription of the properties of one nature to the other nature is improper.⁶⁰

And both interpretations are agreed that Calvin's conviction of the unity of Christ's Person is the basic reason of his appraisal "although not without reason." It seems to the present writer that the indirect communication of two natures to the whole Person of Christ (Tylenda's interpretation) is a mechanism which explains how the ascription of the properties of one nature to the other is figuratively true in virtue of the hypostatic union (Helm's interpretation). In Calvin's thought, what is proper to the one nature of Christ is primarily attributed to Christ's Person Himself, who possesses the two natures at the same time, and only in the context of the hypostatic union of both natures, it can be attributed to His other nature, which also belongs to Him, only in a manner of speaking. While the description of Scriptures of the *communicatio idiomatum* is improper in that there is no real direct communication of properties between Christ's divine nature and His human nature, yet it is not without reason in that the attribution primarily applies to the subject possessing the two nature, Christ God and man, and the attribution of the properties of His one nature to His other nature is possible by virtue of Christ's being God and man even though only in manner of speaking.

Calvin rejects a real, ontological communication of the properties of Christ's two natures, in which case, the full integrity of the two natures is obliterated. Instead, Calvin understands the communication on the personal level, in which case, the full integrity of the two natures and the unity of the Person of Christ as God and man

⁶⁰ Tylenda, who reads Calvin's discussion on the *communicatio* in terms of the ascription to the natures in concrete, not in the abstract, also finds the reason of Calvin's appraisal "improper" in his disdain of the ontological communication of properties between the two natures. Tylenda (1975: 62 n.18) says that "in the statement, 'God purchased the church with His blood,' the transfer of a human attribute to a subject designated by function of His divine nature is said to be improper since mortality cannot be predicated of divinity as such."

are secured and guaranteed. The properties of each of Christ's two natures are justly and appropriately attributed to Christ Himself as God and man, and the properties of one nature may be also attributed to the other nature only in manner of speaking in the context of the hypostatic union of the two natures. Calvin's such view on the *communicatio* is reiterated by Theodore Beza, who is Calvin's friend and successor in Geneva. Beza (1579: 54 in McGinnis 2014: 80) writes, "the *communicatio idiomatum*, that is, a predication, in which the properties of one nature are attributed to the other nature in the concrete, is real with respect to the Person of Christ, but indeed is only verbal with respect to the natures."

In this way, Calvin's discussion of the *communicatio idiomatum* clearly reflects his conviction that Christ's divine nature and human nature are so intimately united to each other in the hypostatic union that while each retains its distinctive nature unimpaired, they constitute one Christ the Mediator as God manifested in the flesh. With regard to the *communicatio*, Calvin's main concern is on the full integrity of Christ's divine nature and His human nature, and over the unity of His Person as God and man (cf. Edmondson 2004: 216).

3.8. Summary

So far we have seen how Calvin understands the relation of Christ's divinity and His humanity in the hypostatic union to attempt to give an answer to the question whether Calvin affirms the real interpenetration of both natures in the hypostatic union, which is marked as the basis of deification in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, as taught by Palamas as well as in the interpretation that affirms Calvin's doctrine of deification.

Calvin's overriding concern in his discussion of Christ is over His Person and office as the Mediator between God and humans. For Calvin, Christ's mediatorship

renders His being true God and true man necessary. While from the beginning as the Eternal Word Christ carried out the Cosmic mediatorship in relation to creatures, His Incarnation was necessary for Him to complete His task as our Redemptive Mediator. The Eternal Son of God assumed a human nature and became true God and true man to fulfil His office as our Mediator. In the Book of the *Institutes* (1559) Calvin spares a number of pages (*Inst.*, 2.12-13) to explicate the necessity of Christ's being true God and true man and the genuineness of His two natures in the *Institutes*.

Calvin understands the relation between Christ's two natures in terms of 'distinction and union.' The divine nature and the human nature are so intimately united to each other that they constitute the one Person of Christ as God and man. But the integrity of both natures are not corrupted in their union. In other words, Christ's two natures are inseparably yet distinctly united with each other in His Person. Calvin's idea of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* is involved in his affirmation of the distinction between Christ's two natures. With the idea of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* Calvin emphasizes the integrity not only of Christ's divinity but also of His humanity in the hypostatic union. And Calvin's conviction of the union of the two natures in the one Person of Christ is expressed in his explanation of the Scriptures' ascription of the properties of natures to Him in various way: the ascription of the properties of one of the two natures to Christ Himself, and the ascription of divine-human properties to Christ Himself. All these cases are just and appropriate in that as God and man Christ is the subject to whom the properties of both natures belong.

Calvin's idea of the union of Christ's two distinctive natures in His one Person is well expressed in his discussion of the Scriptural testimonies to the *communicatio idiomatum*. On the one hand, to Calvin the *communicatio idiomatum* is improper in that there is no ontological co-mingling of Christ's two natures. On the other hand, the ascription of the properties of one nature to the other nature is not without

reason in Calvin's thought in that the two natures are so intimately united to each other in the *Hypostasis* of Christ. Calvin understands the communication of properties on a personal level, not on an ontological. The properties of each of the two natures are justly and appropriately ascribed to Christ's whole Person as God and man. And then the properties of one nature may be also ascribed to the other nature only as a figure of speech in the context of the hypostatic union.

From what has been said above, it seems reasonable to conclude that Calvin does not affirm the idea of deification of Christ's humanity, which is marked as the basis of our deification by the interpreters who endorse his doctrine of deification as in Eastern Orthodox tradition. Calvin does not affirm the direct communication of properties of Christ's divinity and His humanity in their hypostatic union. This amounts to saying that Calvin does not affirm the communication of the uncreated divine life proper to God to Christ's assumed humanity.

Now we turn to the second question whether Calvin understands the believers' union with Christ on a personal level or on an ontological beyond the personal.

Chapter 4. The nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ

4.1. Introduction

Most Calvin scholars agree that union with Christ is an important theme in Calvin's soteriology (Gifford 2010: 122).⁶¹ According to Garcia (2008: 18-9), union with Christ is a "singularly determinative idea" at least in Calvin's soteriology in that the theme of the union with Christ has a constructual and constitutive determination for understanding his soteriology, especially his teaching on the application of redemption. Garcia's argument seems to be adequate when Calvin's connection of the possession of redemption with the union with Christ is considered.

Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.16.19) proclaims that the whole entity of our salvation is in Christ and thus we may not seek any other source for our salvation than Him. Through the obedience which He practiced throughout His whole life, Christ "acquired righteousness to render God favorable and kindly toward us" (*Inst.*, 2.16.5). Christ was crucified as the expiatory sacrifice which satisfied God's justice to forgive us our sins (*Inst.*, 2.16.6). His death and burial set forth to us "liberation from the death to which we had been bound, and mortification of our flesh" (*Inst.*, 2.16.7). We are released from "the dread of death" and "the pains of hell" by Christ's suffering in His soul the terrible torments caused by condemnation and estrangement from God (*Inst.*, 2.16.10-11). The resurrection of Christ brought about our being born anew to a living hope (*Inst.*, 2.16.13). Through His ascension to heaven in His assumed

⁶¹ While most current Calvin scholars agree on the importance of the theme of union with Christ in Calvin's soteriology, there has been a debate among scholars whether the theme of union is the controlling principle of his soteriology. As Gifford (2010: 122) points out, the debate between Johnson (2008: 543-58) who affirms that the theme of union is the controlling principle in Calvin's soteriology and Wenger (2007: 311-28; 2008: 559-72) who denies it, is a good example. Another instance is the debate in *Ordained Servant* (vol. 18) between Fesko (2009: 98-104) and Gaffin (2009b: 104-13).

flesh as ours Christ opened the way for us “into the Heavenly Kingdom, which had been closed through Adam” (*Inst.*, 2.16.16). Calvin’s conviction of Christ as the sole and complete source of our salvation is well expressed at the close of his exposition of the Christological section of the Apostles’ Creed (*Inst.*, 2.16.19; cf. J. Kim 1998: 104).

But for Calvin, as Wendel ([1950]1963: 234) points out, the salvific blessings which Christ acquired throughout His whole life, especially through His death and resurrection are “no more than a kind of potential grace,” in that it is not given automatically to man “while he is a sinner and therefore separated from Christ and a stranger to Him.” The salvific blessings are embodied in Christ (cf. Kennedy 2002: 135). Therefore, in order for the blessings to be ours, it is necessary for Christ to become ours first. Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.1.1) makes this clear in his initial discussion on the application of salvation in the *Institutes*:

We must now examine this question. How do we receive those benefits which the Father has bestowed on His only-begotten Son - not for Christ’s own private use, but that He might enrich poor and needy men?

First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from Him, all that He has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us. Therefore, to share with us what He has received from the Father, He had to become ours and to dwell within us.

All the blessings that Christ won in His salvific work become ours only in the context of our union with Christ. Only those who are joined to Christ as their Head and have put Him on, can benefit from the salvific work of the Redemptive Mediator. It is only through our union with Him that Christ “has not unprofitably come with the name of Savior” (*Inst.*, 3.1.3).

This theme of union with Christ is the main subject of the present chapter. Particularly the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ will be explored in this chapter to find the proper answer to the question whether his notion of union with Christ has an ontological or substantial dimension beyond the personal, which deeply concerns the question of the deification in his theology. It should be noted that to Calvin, our union with Christ in the soteriological context is not different from our communion with Christ in the context of the Lord's Supper (cf. Johnson 2006: 13-4). Therefore the examination of the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ must include Calvin's discussion on the communication of Christ to the believers in the Lord's Supper. While in the present chapter the exploration will be limited to the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ that occurs in the soteriological context, his idea of our reception of Christ in the Lord's Supper will be discussed in the following chapter.

4.2. Real and true union with Christ

For Calvin the union between Christ and us is real. We are really and truly united to Christ. Calvin does not perceive the union merely in a moral dimension. Our union with Christ does not only mean our imitation of Christ: Our being engrafted into Christ signifies "not only a conformity of example, but a secret union, by which we are joined to Him; so that He, reviving us by His Spirit, transfers His own virtue to us" (*Comm. Rom. 6:5*). In Calvin's thought, our conformity to Christ is made possible only through our being revived by His Spirit and the transference of His power to us through our union with Christ.

Calvin, as seen in the following passage (*Inst.*, 3.11.10; cf. Tamburello 1994: 84; E. Kim 2010: 171-72) in which he emphasizes the importance of union with Christ for the application of salvation, expresses this union in various terms: 'our possession

of Christ,' 'joining together of Head and members,' 'indwelling of Christ in us,' 'mystical union,' 'putting on Christ,' 'being grafted into Christ's body,' 'being one with Christ,' 'having fellowship of righteousness with Christ,' etc.:

I confess that we are deprived of this utterly incomparable good until *Christ is made ours*. Therefore, that *joining together of Head and members*, that *indwelling of Christ in our hearts* - in short, that *mystical union* - are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with Him in the gifts with which He has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate Him outside ourselves from afar in order that His righteousness may be imputed to us but because we *put on Christ* and are *grafted into His body* - in short, because He deigns *to make us one with Him*. For this reason, we glory that we have *fellowship of righteousness with Him*.⁶²

Among these terms, the agricultural terminology (*i.e.* "grafting" [*insero, insitio*]), which amply shows the real nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ (cf. Zachman 2009: 366), is most frequently used by Calvin to describe the reality of union with Christ (Tamburello 1994: 85, 111).

In this sense, Calvin (*Comm.* 1 Cor. 1:4) prefers the phrase "in Him [Christ]" to "by Him" or "through Him" in describing the manner of our reception of the salvific gifts:

The phrase *in ipso (in Him)* I have preferred to retain, rather than render it *per ipsum (by Him)* because it has in my opinion more expressiveness and force. For we are *enriched in Christ*, inasmuch as we are members of His body, and are grafted into Him: nay more, being made one with Him, He makes us share with Him in everything that He has received from the Father.

For Calvin (*Comm.* 2 Cor. 5:21), this phrase 'in Him' "corresponds better with Paul's intention" since all the salvific gifts become ours only in the context of our union with Christ. Christ really "makes us, ingrafted into His body, participants not only in all

⁶² For a detailed analysis of the various terms which Calvin uses in referring to our union with Christ, see Tamburello (1994: 111-13).

His benefits but also in Himself” (*Inst.*, 3.2.24). The preposition “in” expresses the reality of “grafting, which makes us one with Christ,” better than the preposition “through” (*Comm.* Rom. 6:11).

The real nature of our union with Christ is also made clear in Calvin’s description of the union as our becoming one body with Christ. Our union with Christ is the “sacred wedlock through which we are made flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone, and thus one with Him” (*Inst.*, 3.1.3). To Calvin (*Comm.* Eph. 5:30), this is “no exaggeration, but simple truth.” Christ not only “cleave to us by an indivisible bond of fellowship, but with a wonderful communion, day by day, He grows more and more into one body with us, until He becomes completely one with us” (*Inst.*, 3.2.24; cf. Calvin [1954]2000: 171).

Calvin (*Comm.* Eph. 5:31) boldly uses the term “substance”(substantia) to emphasize the real nature of our union with Christ:

As Eve was formed out of the substance of her husband, and thus was a part of himself; so, if we are the true members of Christ, we share His substance, and by this intercourse unite into one body ... that the wife was formed of the flesh and bones of her husband. Such is the union between us and Christ, who in some sort makes us partakers of His substance. “We 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.⁶³

We can be fairly certain that Calvin does not affirm “a gross mixture” (*Inst.*, 3.11.10) of essence between Christ and us when he uses the term “substance” in describing the reality of our union with Christ. This is made clear by Calvin’s refutation of

⁶³ For the other examples of Calvin’s usage of the term “substance” in describing the nature of our union with Christ, see § 5.4.2.3 of this thesis. Most of Calvin’s references to the term are involved in his description of the mode of the Eucharistic presence of Christ. However, it is noteworthy that for Calvin, Christ is received no differently in faith (generally) than in the Lord’s Supper.

Osiander who teaches the essential union between Christ and us. While Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.5) agrees with Osiander in that our union with Christ is real and true, he explicitly denies that “Christ’s essence is mixed with our own.”

In this sense, some scholars are concerned that Calvin's understanding of the nature of the union should not be read in ontological or substantial terms. For instance Niesel ([1956]1980: 126; cf. Hesselink 1998: 18) claims that Calvin's teaching of union with Christ “has nothing whatever to do with the absorption of the pious mystic into the sphere of divine being.” Wendel ([1950]1963: 235) also writes of Calvin's conception of union with Christ as follows: “There is no question, when Calvin is speaking about union or communion with Christ, of any absorption into Christ, or any mystical identification that would diminish human personality in the slightest degree, or draw Christ down to us.” While they admit that Calvin thinks of believer's union with Christ in the most intimate manner, they still insist that the union must be construed non-ontologically (cf. Partee 1987: 198; Chin 2003: 199). Venema’s (2007: 88) statement is a typical example of this line of interpretation: “Though it forms the closest possible union between Christ and ourselves, it remains a union at the level of a personal relationship.”

Calvin’s bold usage of the term “substance” to describe the nature of our union with Christ is related to his conviction that Christ’s flesh is the source of the power of life since He accomplished our redemption in His body. Thus in Calvin’s thought, our partaking of Christ’s substance is our partaking of the life-giving virtue of His body. When we partake of the substance of Christ’s body, we partake of the salvific grace that Christ acquired in His body.⁶⁴

64 For a detailed exposition of what Calvin means when he describes our union with Christ as our partaking of His substance, see § 5.6 of this thesis. W. Evans (1996: 45) says that to Calvin our partaking of the substance of Christ’s humanity is necessary in that Christ’s humanity functions as a “channel through which the power of His divinity flows to” us. For W. Evans (1996: 45), Calvin's idea is one of the strong reasons to conclude that he “intends his ‘substance’ language in an ultimately ontological sense.” Though W. Evans (1996: 47) does not fail to grasp that Calvin’s idea

Therefore it can be said that the Chalcedonian axiom - *distinctio sed non separatio* - which was used for describing the hypostatic union of Christ's divinity and His humanity, is also applied to Calvin's notion of the union between Christ and us. Just as Christ's two natures are united to each other non-separately yet without confusion in His Person, so does Christ unite us to Himself that we become one with Him but in a manner of keeping the personal individuality of both Christ and us. We, being engrafted into Christ, truly and really become one with Him, but there is no confusion between Christ and us (cf. E. Kim 2010: 178; Fisk 2009: 312). The application of the Chalcedonian axiom to our union with Christ does not amount to saying that the manner in which Christ's two nature are united to each other in the His *Hypostasis* is the same as the manner of our union with Christ. In Calvin's theology, while our union with Christ is the union between two individual persons, the hypostatic union of Christ's two natures is the union that constitutes one Person of Christ as God and man. Calvin would agree with Palamas who says that our union with Christ does not bring about "a single *hypostasis* with Christ" as in the hypostatic union of Christ's two natures in the strict sense (Mantzaridis 1984: 53).

Calvin's designation of the union as a mystical union (*unio mystica*), "which is extensively used by the Medieval mysticism and the Roman Catholic church" (J. Kim 1998: 134)⁶⁵, must be interpreted in line with the above explanation. The *unio mystica* spoken of by Calvin is not an experience of an esoteric ecstasy or an absorption of the mystic into the divine being (cf. Niesel [1956]1980: 126; Chin 2002: 280).⁶⁶ Instead, the term "*mystica*," in Calvin, implies an incomprehensibility of our

of union with Christ "does not diminish the personal individuality of both Christ and the individual believer," he seems to miss the point when he seeks the necessity of our partaking of Christ's humanity in its function as a channel of the power of His divinity, rather than in its function as the source of salvific grace which He acquired in His body.

⁶⁵ For the study on the influence of the Medieval mystics on Calvin, see Reid (1978: 127-45); Raitt (1981: 98-121); Lane (1976: 253-83); Tamburello (1994). J. Kim (1998: 134-5) suggests the possibility that Calvin borrows the term "*mystica*" from Scriptures, especially from Paul's writings.

⁶⁶ Chin (2002: 280) points out that Calvin's notion of union with Christ is involved in the relationship between the sinner and the Redeemer rather than in the relationship between a created being and the divine being. In this sense, Calvin's doctrine of union with Christ is "not a doctrine of being

union with Christ.⁶⁷ The union between Christ and us is supernatural in that this union is effected by the infinite power of the Holy Spirit. Thus we cannot comprehend fully this union with our natural reason. The union is “beyond our finite minds to grasp” (J. Kim 1998: 137)⁶⁸. When Paul uses the analogy of marriage to describe the intimacy of our union with Christ in Eph. 5:29-32, he concludes: “This mystery is great - but I am talking about Christ and the church” [Eph. 5:32]. Calvin (*Comm.* Eph. 5:32) elaborates on the incomprehensibility of our union with Christ in his commentary on this passage as follows:

This is a great mystery; by which he [Paul] means, that no language can explain fully what it implies. It is to no purpose that men fret themselves to comprehend, by the judgment of the flesh, the manner and character of this union; for here the infinite power of the Divine Spirit is entered. Those who refuse to admit anything on this subject beyond what their own capacity can reach, act an exceedingly foolish part ... For my own part, I am overwhelmed by the depth of this mystery, and am not ashamed to join Paul in acknowledging at once my ignorance and my admiration. How much more satisfactory would this be than to follow my carnal judgment, in undervaluing what Paul declares to be a deep mystery!

Therefore our proper attitude concerning the union is to strive to experience Christ living in us rather than to discover the nature of the union:

Reason itself teaches how we ought to act in such matters; for whatever is supernatural is clearly beyond our own comprehension. Let us therefore labour more to feel Christ living in us, than to discover the nature of that intercourse (*Comm.* Eph. 5:32; cf. Chin 2002: 288; Gerrish

(ontology), but a doctrine of salvation (soteriology).”

⁶⁷ Smedes ([1970]1983: 128), while insisting that Calvin’s idea of union with Christ renders him short of classical mysticism, admits that he can be regarded as a mystic when the term ‘mystical’ is used merely for designating Christian’s experience that is inexplicable.

⁶⁸ Tamburello (1994: 89) analyses that Calvin uses at least seven times in the *Institutes* the word *arcane* or *incomprehensibilis* to describe union with Christ.

[1993]2002: 73).

For Calvin, it is by virtue of the Holy Spirit that while we are truly and really united to Christ so that we become one with Him, the personal individuality of both Christ and us are kept in the union. In Calvin's thought, the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ unites us to Himself. In this sense, our union with Christ is spiritual to Calvin.

4.3. The agent of our union with Christ – the Holy Spirit

Calvin insists on the spiritual character of our union with Christ since the union is effected by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is "the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to Himself" (*Inst.*, 3.1.1). Christ "unites Himself to us by the Spirit alone." It is by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit that we are made Christ's members (*Inst.*, 3.1.3).

4.3.1. The inner teacher enlightening us to receive Christ

According to Calvin's exposition, the primary work of the Holy Spirit regarding our union with Christ is enlightening us to receive Christ as offered through the gospel by faith. Christ and His salvific blessings are offered through the gospel. But "not all indiscriminately embrace that communion with Christ." Only those who are enlightened by the secret power of the Spirit "come to enjoy Christ and all His benefits" (*Inst.*, 3.1.1). It is only by the secret work of the Holy Spirit that we come to receive Christ and to have communion with Him. In this sense, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.1.4) refers to the Holy Spirit as the inner teacher "by whose effort the promise of salvation penetrates into our minds."

According to Calvin's exposition, the necessity of the secret work of the Holy Spirit as the inner teacher is derived from our incompetence to discern the mystery of the

heavenly Kingdom. Before we are “beamed by the light of the Holy Spirit,” our understanding has been quite foolish and dull in tasting those things which belong to the Kingdom. The mystery of Christ’s Kingdom “cannot penetrate into our minds unless the Spirit, as the inner teacher, through His illumination, makes entry for it” (*Inst.*, 3.2.34). “Until our minds become intent upon the Spirit,” Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.1.3) also says, “Christ, so to speak, lies idle because we coldly contemplate Him as outside ourselves - indeed, far from us.” Without the work of the Holy Spirit as the inner teacher the promise of salvation would “only strike the air or beat upon our ears” (*Inst.*, 3.1.4). The testimony of the Spirit seals the cleansing and sacrifice of Christ upon our hearts. Only through the testimony of the Spirit, the shedding of Christ’s sacred blood for us may not be nullified (*Inst.*, 3.1.1).⁶⁹

4.3.2. The Spirit of Christ communicates Christ and what belongs to Him

Calvin takes notice of the intimate relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit in the entire economy of salvation (cf. Johnson 2006: 52). The Holy Spirit is involved in Christ’s salvific work as the Redemptive Mediator. The Spirit was poured upon Christ boundlessly so that Christ could accomplish His salvific work as the Mediator: “God the Father ... has bestowed the whole fullness of the Spirit upon the Son to be minister and steward of His liberality” (*Inst.*, 3.1.2). Therefore, the Spirit is called not only “the Spirit of the Father,” but also “the Spirit of the Son” (*Inst.*, 3.1.2). It is obvious that the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of the Son as He is the bond in whom Christ, as the eternal Word of God, is joined with the Father. But for Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.1.2), it is also true that the Spirit is called the Spirit of the Son from Christ’s character as the Mediator. Christ was given the Holy Spirit boundlessly so that He

⁶⁹ In Calvin’s thought, the work of the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds to receive Christ as offered in the gospel, presupposes the external ministries of preaching the Word and the administration of the sacraments (Calvin [1954]2000: 172-73; cf. Johnson 2006: 51).

might accomplish His salvific work as the Mediator, furnished with the power of the Spirit, and become “a life-giving Spirit” who grants the spiritual life upon His people so that they become one with Him (*Inst.*, 3.1.2; *Comm.* Rom. 8:9).

And as the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit was sent by Christ to accomplish the application of the redemption to His chosen people. By giving the witness concerning Christ effectually, the Holy Spirit makes us partakers of Christ and His salvation. Since in Christ alone the whole salvation resides, the Spirit comes to us as “the bearer of Christ” (Johnson 2006: 54) and communicates to us what belongs to Christ for our salvation: “Nothing, therefore, is bestowed on us by the Spirit apart from Christ, but He takes it from Christ, that He may communicate it to us” (*Comm.* Jn. 16:14). The Holy Spirit “does not enlighten us to draw us away in the smallest degree from Christ.” Instead the Spirit displays Christ’s glory in all things by enriching us “with no other than the riches of Christ” (*Comm.* Jn. 16:14). In this sense, the Holy Spirit has an intimate relationship with Christ even in the economy of salvation.

Calvin’s such conviction of the intimate relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation enables him to link Christ’s dwelling in us closely to the Holy Spirit’s dwelling in us. The dwelling of the Holy Spirit in us signifies the dwelling of Christ in us. In his commentary on John 14:18, Calvin writes,

When He [Christ] says, “*I will come to you,*” He shows in what manner He dwells in His people, and in what manner He fills all things. It is, by the power of His Spirit; and hence it is evident, that the grace of the Spirit is a striking proof of His Divinity.

The manner of Christ’s dwelling in His people is by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of the Spirit is a proof of His presence. This idea is made clear in Calvin’s commentary on the passage in which our possessing of the Spirit and Christ’s dwelling in us are interchanged:

What he [Paul] had before said of the Spirit he now says of Christ, in order that the mode of Christ's dwelling in us might be intimated; for as by the Spirit He consecrates us as temples to Himself, so by the same He dwells in us (*Comm. Rom. 8:10*).

It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us: "Christ does not otherwise dwell in us than through His Spirit, nor in any other way communicates Himself to us than through the same Spirit" (Calvin [1954]2000: 172).

4.3.3. The agent of union guaranteeing the personal dimension of the union

Like this, for Calvin, our union with Christ is spiritual since it is effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The function of the Holy Spirit as the bond of our union with Christ is important to Calvin in that it prevents the ontological mixture of Christ and us in the union. Calvin (*Comm. Jn. 17:21*) says,

We are *one* with the Son of God, not because He conveys His substance to us, but because, by the power of His Spirit, He imparts to us His life and all the blessings which He has received from the Father.

It is by virtue of the Holy Spirit that while our union with Christ is real and true, it is not ontological, but a personal union in that the personal individuality of Christ and us are kept in it. Fisk, in his writing "Calvin's metaphysic of our union with Christ" (2009), elaborates on this personal dimension of Calvin's notion of union with Christ. Fisk (2009: 320) argues that our union with Christ is the union between Christ's impeccable human nature and our sinful nature. Even though Christ, who is perfect in holiness, dwells in us, "we are still given to all villainies." Calvin is aware of the problem of the incompatibility between Christ's impeccable human nature and our sinful nature. And Calvin believes that the Holy Spirit overcomes the distance between both. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the bond of our union with Christ, and makes us take after Christ in holiness (Fisk 2009: 321; cf. Calvin *CO 52:225-238*).

Yet our being Christ-like in our spiritual union with Him is not completed in an instant, but it is continued throughout our life (*Comm.* 1 Jn. 3:5).

In this sense, Calvin's notion of union with Christ is personal and dynamic rather than ontological. This personal and dynamic dimension of Calvin's notion of union with Christ is confirmed by the fact that our faith is involved in the union as the necessary instrument by which the Spirit unites us to Christ. This issue of faith as the instrument of our union with Christ will be taken up in the next section.

Before turning to the issue of faith, one more point regarding the spiritual union should be clarified: The spiritual character of our union with Christ does not lay aside Christ's body or our body in the union in Calvin's thought. For Calvin (*Comm.* 1 Cor. 6:15), "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*." This union implemented by the Holy Spirit extends to the whole man, body and soul. As quoted already, in his commentary on Eph. 5:31, Calvin explicitly refers to the link between the agency of the Holy Spirit in our union with Christ and our partaking of the substance of Christ's body:

... the wife was formed of the flesh and bones of her husband. Such is the union between us and Christ, who in some sort *makes us partakers of His substance*. 'We are bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh,' 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 (emphasis added).

Therefore the bodily departure of Christ is no ground for anxiety to the disciples. For the absence of Christ's bodily presence does not mean the absence of "His actual presence" (*Comm.* Jn. 14:27). The disciples will enjoy Christ's actual presence "through the grace and power of His Spirit," which is in any case "far more

advantageous and far more desirable” presence (*Comm. Jn. 16:7*; cf. Johnson 2006: 55).

4.4. The instrument of our union with Christ - faith

For Calvin, our faith is necessarily involved in our union with Christ. Calvin relates faith closely to union with Christ. He (*Inst.*, 3.2.35) says, “Christ, when He illumines us into faith by the power of His Spirit, at the same time so engrafts us into His body that we become partakers of every good.” Our engrafting into the body of Christ occurs simultaneously with our enlightenment into faith (cf. Tamburello 1994: 85).

4.4.1. Faith as the cause of union with Christ

Calvin (*Comm. Eph. 3:17*) describes the relation between faith and union with Christ in terms of cause and effect: “Most people consider fellowship with Christ, and believing in Christ, to be the same; but the fellowship which we have with Christ is the consequence of faith.” Calvin does not identify faith with union with Christ. For Calvin, our being engrafted into the body of Christ is not just our believing in Him. Rather our being engrafted into Christ’s body is the immediate result of faith. Our faith really brings about our communion with the body of Christ. Faith is related to union with Christ as cause and effect. Calvin’s idea of faith as the cause of union with Christ is also shown in his following statements (*Comm. Jn. 6:35*):

Those who infer from this passage [John 6:35ff; “he that cometh to me shall never hunger”] that *to eat* Christ is *faith*, and nothing else, reason inconclusively. I readily acknowledge that there is no other way in which we *eat* Christ than by *believing*; but the *eating* is the effect and fruit of faith rather than faith itself. For *faith* does not look at Christ only as at a distance, but embraces Him, that He may become ours and may dwell in us. It causes us to be incorporated with Him, to have life in common with Him, and, in short, *to become one with Him*.

4.4.2. The sole object of faith: Christ

Although Calvin sees faith as the cause of our union with Christ in that it brings about our being engrafted into the body of Christ, it does not attribute some intrinsic value or power to faith. Faith has no intrinsic value in itself. The value or power of faith rests only in its object, that is, Christ (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.2.1).

Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.2.7) defines faith as “a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ.” The benevolence of God toward us is clearly shown in Christ. God’s will toward us is to save us. For this God sent Christ to us as our righteousness, our holiness and our life (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.2.2). God’s love for us dwells and rests in Christ, “the beloved Son” (*Inst.*, 3.2.32). Christ is “the bond whereby God may be found to us in fatherly faithfulness” (*Inst.*, 3.2.32). “All God’s promises are confirmed and fulfilled” in Christ (*Inst.*, 3.2.32). Therefore the object of our faith is none other than Christ. That is, faith is the very acknowledgement of Christ as our saviour and acceptance of Him as offered in the gospel. By faith we not only acknowledge that “Christ suffered and rose from the dead on our account,” but also, by accepting Christ as offered in the gospel, we “possess and enjoy Him as our Saviour” (*Comm. Eph.* 3:17).

Faith “brings nothing to God.” It “places man before God as empty and poor, that he may be filled with Christ and with His grace” (Calvin *Comm. Jn.* 6:29). For us to have faith means our coming to Christ “as hungry persons” so that “He may fill us” (*Comm. Jn.* 6: 35). In this sense, Calvin (*Comm. Jn.* 6: 56) figuratively describes faith as “the mouth” or “the stomach of our soul” to eat Christ.

4.4.3. The origin of faith: the Holy Spirit

It is also due to its origin from the Holy Spirit that faith has no intrinsic value in itself. For Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.1.4) faith is “the principal work of the Holy Spirit.” The Spirit is “author and cause” of faith (*Inst.*, 3.2.33). Faith is not that which we have by nature, rather it is given to us by the Spirit (*Inst.*, 3.2.35). Faith has “no other source than the Spirit” (*Inst.*, 3.1.4). Therefore Paul calls faith itself “the spirit of faith” [2 Cor. 4:13] (*Inst.*, 3.2.35). Calvin is convinced of man’s spiritual blindness concerning the divine matters. Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.2.19) says, “Flesh is not capable of such lofty wisdom as to conceive God and what is God’s, unless it be illumined by the Spirit of God.” “Man’s mind can become spiritually wise only in so far as God illumines it” (*Inst.*, 2.2.20). We can have firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us only through the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit creates faith in us and by means of faith unites us to Christ. Faith is the instrument by which the Holy Spirit engrafts us into the body of Christ. In the sense faith is initiated only by the Holy Spirit, it is also called “the work of God” [2 Thess. 1:11] (*Inst.*, 3.2.35).

Calvin often describes the work of the Spirit regarding faith in two categories: illumination and confirmation. In his Geneva Catechism where he describes faith as the work of the Holy Spirit, Calvin (*TT* 2.53) mentions these two categories:

The Holy Spirit by His illumination makes us capable of understanding those things which would otherwise far exceed our capacity, and forms us to a firm persuasion, by sealing the promises of salvation on our hearts.

The Holy Spirit gives a light to our mind to perceive Christ as offered in the gospel. As already mentioned in the previous section, the Holy Spirit is “the inner teacher by whose effort the promise of salvation penetrates into our minds, a promise that would otherwise only strike the air or beat upon our ears” (*Inst.*, 3.1.4). Man’s mind, being made new by the illumination of the Holy Spirit (*Inst.*, 2.2.20), “truly begins to

taste those things which belong to the Kingdom of God, having formerly been quite foolish and dull in tasting them" (*Inst.*, 3.2.34). Calvin emphasizes the word of God as the true foundation of faith. Faith as the knowledge of God's benevolence toward us is "founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ" (*Inst.*, 3.2.7). The word of God is "the basis whereby faith is supported and sustained" (*Inst.*, 3.26). However, Calvin is convinced that the word of God becomes efficacious for our faith only through the illumination of the Holy Spirit (J. Kim 1998: 164). For Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.2.33), "without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the word can do nothing."

In Calvin's thought, while the Spirit's illumination of our minds is the important part of faith, this would not be enough unless our hearts are also strengthened and supported by His power (J. Kim 1998: 164):

It now remains to pour into the heart itself what the mind has absorbed. For the Word of God is not received by faith if it flits about in the top of the brain, but when it takes root in the depth of the heart that it may be an invincible defense to withstand and drive off all the stratagems of temptation. But if it is true that the mind's real understanding is illumination by the Spirit of God, then in such confirmation of the heart His power is much more clearly manifested, to the extent that the heart's distrust is greater than the mind's blindness (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.2.36).

Faith is not just an opinion or "a common assent to the gospel history" (*Inst.*, 3.2.1). Since the knowledge of faith is concerned with one's adoption, the sense of piety or the fear of God is a necessary response to the knowledge (*Inst.*, 3.2.8). From its initiation faith already contains within itself the reconciliation whereby man approaches God. Therefore faith is "more of the heart than of the brain, and more of the disposition than of the understanding" (*Inst.*, 3.2.8). It is in this sense that Paul declares that "the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" [Rom. 5:5] (*Inst.*, 3.2.12). We not only perceive the promises of divine benevolence toward us by the illumination of the

Spirit, but are also convinced of God's fatherly love for us by a firm conviction which is derived from the persuasion of the Spirit in our hearts.

Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.2.36) uses the term "seal" to describe the confirmative aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit with respect to faith: "The Spirit accordingly serves as a seal, to seal up in our hearts those very promises the certainty of which it has previously impressed upon our minds; and takes the place of a guarantee to confirm and establish them." Calvin (*Comm. Eph.* 1:13) takes notice of the function of a seal to give validity to daily human affairs. "Seals give validity both to charters and to testaments." It distinguishes what is true and certain, from what is false and spurious." Likewise, we are convinced of the veracity of God's word by the testimony of the Holy Spirit "who seals the truth of it" in our hearts. For Calvin (*Comm. Eph.* 1:13),

The true conviction which believers have of the word of God, of their own salvation, and of religion in general, does not spring from the judgment of the flesh, or from human and philosophical arguments, but from the sealing of the Spirit, who imparts to their consciences such certainty as to remove all doubt.

In this way, in Calvin's (*Inst.*, 3.2.7) thought, there are two operations of the Holy Spirit with respect to faith. The Spirit reveals the truth of the gospel to our minds and seals it upon our hearts. For Calvin, faith consists of knowledge and conviction. Knowledge is the commencement of faith and "the completion of it is a firm and steady conviction, which admits of no opposing doubt" (*Comm. Eph.* 1:13). The two operations of the Spirit, that is, illumination and confirmation, correspond to the two parts of faith, knowledge and conviction, respectively.

4.4.4. The dynamic dimension of faith

While Calvin emphasizes the certainty of faith through the operations of the Holy Spirit, illumination and confirmation, he at the same time admits the imperfection of the certainty. Though faith can be defined as a certain assurance of God's benevolence toward us, we should not imagine "any certainty that is not tinged with doubt, or any assurance that is not assailed by some anxiety" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.2.17). He (*Inst.*, 3.2.17) admits that "believers are in perpetual conflict with their own unbelief." Unbelief is always mixed with faith (*Inst.*, 3.2.4). However, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.2.19) makes it clear that no matter how weak our faith is, the faith is real as far as it is initiated by the Holy Spirit: "However much we are shadowed on every side with great darkness, we are nevertheless illumined as much as need be for firm assurance when ... the light of God sheds even a little of its radiance." "When first even the least drop of faith is instilled in our minds," Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.2.19) says, "we begin to contemplate God's face, peaceful and calm and gracious toward us."

For Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.2.33) faith has a dynamic dimension. After our faith is initiated by the operation of the Holy Spirit, it continues to increase by degree by the same Spirit until we are led to the Kingdom of Heaven. Calvin's idea of the progressive character of faith concerns the personal and dynamic character of his notion of union with Christ. The more we advance in faith, the nearer and thus surer sight of God we obtain, and "by the very continuance He is made even more familiar to us" (*Inst.*, 3.2.19). As Fisk (2009: 324) indicates, to Calvin, our union with Christ is not a static union since the bond of our union strengthens as our faith increases.

4.5. Summary

All the observations in this chapter have shown that the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ is spiritual, personal and dynamic. First of all, to Calvin, the union that believers have with Christ is real and true. They are really and truly united to Christ and become one with Him. However, this union does not bring about any ontological mixture. Both Christ and the believers keep their own personal individuality in their union. Our union with Christ is not an ontological, but a personal union. In this sense, the Chalcedonian axiom "*distinctio sed non separation*," which was used for describing the hypostatic union of Christ's divinity and His humanity, can be also applied to Calvin's notion of our union with Christ.

The important motif which keeps the personal individuality in the context of our union with Christ is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works as the bond or agency of our union with Christ. First the Spirit, as inner teacher, enlightens us to receive Christ as offered through the gospel. And the Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, also communicates Christ and His salvific gifts to us. By virtue of the intimate relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Spirit signifies the indwelling of Christ in us that is implemented by the secret power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore our union with Christ is spiritual and mystical.

The personal dimension of Calvin's notion of union with Christ is made clear by his emphasis on faith as the necessary aspect on our side for us to enter the union. Faith is involved in our union with Christ as the instrument by which the Spirit unites us to Christ. This faith has a progressive character. Faith is not only initiated by the work of the Holy Spirit, but also increases by degrees by the Spirit so that we enjoy more and more the intimate communion with Christ.

To Calvin our union with Christ is a Spirit-bonded union by faith, which has a personal and dynamic dimension, but not ontological.

Since in Calvin's thought believers' union with Christ in the soteriological context is not different from their communion with Christ in the context of the Lord's Supper, the study of the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ must include his discussion on the communication of Christ to the believers in the Lord's Supper. In this chapter the discussion has been limited to the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ by faith in the soteriological context. Therefore the following chapter examines Calvin's idea of our reception of Christ in the context of the Lord's Supper.

Chapter 5. Calvin's idea of communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper

5.1. Introduction

As Garcia (2008: 149-50) mentioned, Christ, salvation, and sacrament are inter-connected with one another for the Reformers. "A strong soteriological motivation" underlay the Eucharistic controversy of the sixteenth century. This is the chief cause that the Reformers could not compromise their own understanding of the Lord's Supper.⁷⁰ This inter-connectedness between Christ, salvation, and sacrament is found in Calvin as well. For Calvin, the grace of salvation and the grace of the Lord's Supper are essentially the same. Just as the union with Christ is the quintessence of the grace of salvation in Calvin's soteriology, so the union with Christ in His flesh and blood is the *res* of the sacrament in Calvin's Eucharistology. In Calvin's thought, the union with Christ is the prerequisite of the sacrament and it is confirmed and strengthened in the sacrament. Calvin's conviction of the inter-connectedness between Christ, salvation and the Eucharist leads him even to say that a firm and certain knowledge of the Eucharist is requisite for salvation: "However, as it is a very perilous thing to have no certainty on an ordinance [the Lord's Supper], the understanding of which is so requisite for our salvation..." (Calvin *TT* 2.164).

⁷⁰ Garcia (2008: 149-50) says that in the Eucharistic controversy between Zwingli and Luther their understanding of salvation was an essential matter. According to him, Zwingli believes that the Lutheran understanding of the Lord's Supper threatens the central Christian doctrine that salvation comes through Christ alone since the idea of a corporeal presence of Christ shifts "the locus of faith" from Christ to "a visible, material object incapable of bearing salvation." On the other hand, Luther sees the deprivation of the only hope of salvation - Christ who is presented personally in the Supper - in Zwingli's spiritualism. The rejection of Christ's personal presence in the Supper, for Luther, is the very rejection of the "divinely ordained connection between the outer Word and the sacraments as vehicles of inner grace."

It is commonly acknowledged by Calvin scholars that Calvin stands mid-way between Zwinglians and Roman Catholics or Lutherans in regard to the Lord's Supper.⁷¹ On the one hand, Calvin, against the memorialism of Zwingli, explicitly asserts that the substance of Christ's body is truly communicated in the Lord's Supper. To be sure, this is not the same with the local or corporeal presence of Christ in which the transfer of His substance into external materials or believers is implied. On the other hand, Calvin, against the spatial/local objectivism of the Roman Catholics and Lutherans, argues that the presence of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper is spiritual.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the nature of Calvin's idea of the communication of the substance of Christ's body to believers that is carried out in the Lord's Supper. In view of Calvin's conviction of the inter-connectedness of salvation and the Eucharist, this chapter as the investigation of Calvin's idea of communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper can be regarded as a succession of the previous chapter exploring the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ. Therefore, the question whether the nature of Calvin's notion of our reception of the substance of Christ's body is coincide with his notion of union with Christ as a Spirit-bonded union by faith, which has a personal and dynamic dimension, not an ontological, as described in the previous chapter, will be chiefly reflected in this chapter. Given that our reception of the substance of Christ's body that occurs in the Lord's Supper is not different in its essence from our union with Christ through faith in the soteriological context in Calvin's thought, it is not avoidable that the question of the necessity of the Supper alongside the preaching of the gospel is

⁷¹ Janse (2008: 51-67) refers to Calvin's enthusiasm for the unity of the Church as the cause of his medial position. According to him, since Lutheran, Bucerian, and Zwinglian strands stand together in Calvin's "mature" eucharistic theology, this is due to his desire for Christian unity. This desire makes Calvin "willing to modify his eucharistic theology over the course of his career, and seek to incorporate insights from competing schools of sacramental thought."

raised. Thus this chapter will begin with the reflection on the significance of the Lord's Supper in regard of our union with Christ.

5.2. A witness of the union with Christ in His flesh and blood

5.2.1. The metaphors for the Lord's Supper

In his initial discussion of the sacraments in the *Institutes*, Calvin refers to the significance of the sacraments as confirmation of the promises of the gospel. The sacraments are given to sustain, nourish, confirm, and increase a believer's faith by attesting God's good will toward him. In this sense Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.7) calls the sacraments "testimonies" or "seals of God's grace." Besides these designations, Calvin displays the significance of the sacraments in confirming the gospel with various metaphors. The sacraments represent God's promises to us as clearly as "painted in a picture" or as "portrayed graphically and in the manner of images." In this sense, Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.6) approves of Augustine who calls a sacrament "a visible word". Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.6) designates the sacraments also as 'pillars of our faith', given in addition to the Word of God as a foundation of our faith, by which our faith is more firmly established. Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.6) also calls the sacraments "mirrors in which we may contemplate the riches of God's grace, which He lavishes upon us." And the sacraments are defined by Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.1) as outward signs "by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of His good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith."

5.2.2. A witness of our union with Christ in His flesh and blood

As Billings (2009: 428; cf. Calvin *Inst.*, 3.1.1) points out, Calvin describes "the sum of the gospel" as the twofold grace of justification and sanctification, which are

accessed through our union with Christ. In this sense, for Calvin what the Lord's Supper confirms is the reality of our union with Christ more than anything else. The promise of the gospel that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper seals on our consciences is "concerning our being made partakers of His body and blood" (Calvin [1954]2000: 144). Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.2) mentions "the wonderful exchange" between Christ and believers, of which godly souls get great assurance in the Lord's Supper:

This is the wonderful exchange which, out of His measureless benevolence, He has made with us; that, becoming the Son of man with us, He has made us sons of God with Him; that, by His descent to earth, He has prepared an ascent to heaven for us; that, by taking on our mortality, He has conferred His immortality upon us; that, accepting our weakness, He has strengthened us by His power; that, receiving our poverty unto Himself, He has transferred His wealth to us; that, taking the weight of our iniquity upon Himself (which oppressed us), He has clothed us with His righteousness.

For Calvin (*CR* 9:751 in McDonnell 1967: 185), the Lord's Supper is "a witness of the union which we have with Jesus Christ."

Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.4) uses a more vivid expression for explaining the reality of the union of Christ which is attested in the Lord's Supper. The union with Christ is eating of Christ's flesh and drinking of Christ's blood. Christ is the "food for our spiritual life." Christ, as "the bread of life," feeds us unto eternal life. The purpose of the Lord's Supper is, for Calvin, to seal and confirm this promise. Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.3) draws an analogy between material signs of the Lord's Supper (*i.e.* bread and wine) and the substance of the sacrament (*i.e.* Christ's flesh and blood). That bread is given as a symbol of Christ's body is meant for us to realize that "as bread nourishes, sustains, and keeps the life of our body, so Christ's body is the only food to invigorate and enliven our soul." And since wine is given as a symbol of Christ's blood, this is to assure us that Christ's blood nourishes, refreshes, strengthens and

gladdens our soul as wine does to our body. That is, for Calvin, the Lord's Supper is a witness of our union with Christ in His flesh and blood. He (*TT* 2.167) writes, "our Lord, therefore, instituted the Supper, first, in order to sign and seal in our consciences the promises contained in His gospel concerning our being made partakers of His body and blood."⁷²

Calvin emphasizes on the significance of Christ's death on the cross for His flesh and blood to be our spiritual life. According to Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.4), the promise of Christ's being our spiritual food unto eternal life "was indeed performed and in all respects fulfilled" on the cross of Christ. Christ, by His death, "swallowed up and annihilated death." In that eating Christ's body is meaningless to our salvation unless Christ is crucified, the name, "the bread of life" is deeply involved with Christ's death on the cross (*Inst.*, 4.17.4).⁷³ Therefore the Lord's Supper leads us to the cross. There "in living experience we grasp the efficacy of His death" (*Inst.*, 4.17.3). In this sense, the Lord's Supper is a witness of our union with Christ in His flesh split and blood shed for us.

5.2.3. A visible witness of the union with Christ accomplished by faith

The nature of the Lord's Supper as a witness of our union with Christ presupposes that our union with Christ is already accomplished apart from the context of the Lord's Supper. The Supper does not commence our union with Christ. We come to partake in Christ's body and blood when we believe in Him as our saviour as proclaimed in the gospel. And in the Lord's Supper this spiritual blessing already

⁷² McDonnell (1967: 179) suggests that for Calvin, a specific function of the Lord's Supper is "to interpret more precisely and more concretely that union we have with Christ, a union not just with the Godhead of Christ, but rather a union with Him who took our flesh, a flesh that is now the instrument of eternal life."

⁷³ Besides Christ's atoning death, His incarnation and resurrection are also involved in His being "the life-giving bread" in Calvin's (*Inst.*, 4.17.4) thought.

obtained by faith is attested and confirmed visibly. This view of Calvin's is seen in his commentary on the sixth chapter of John. Regarding the discourse that people must eat and drink Christ's flesh and blood for eternal life⁷⁴, Calvin rejects the interpretation of the ancients and his contemporaries that applies this discourse directly to the Lord's Supper. Instead Calvin interprets this discourse as a reference primarily to our union with Christ accomplished by faith in soteriological context. "This discourse does not", says Calvin (*Comm. Jn. 6:53*), "relate to the Lord's Supper, but to the uninterrupted communication of the flesh of Christ, which we obtain apart from the use of the Lord's Supper." In the commentary on the successive verse, Calvin (*Comm. Jn. 6:54*) writes as follows:

From these words, it plainly appears that the whole of this passage is improperly explained, as applied to the Lord's Supper ... It is certain, then, that he [John] now speaks of the perpetual and ordinary manner of eating the flesh of Christ⁷⁵, which is done by faith only.⁷⁶

For Calvin (*Comm. Jn. 6:54*), the Lord's Supper is instituted "as a seal and confirmation" of the eating of Christ's flesh done by faith only, representing it "figuratively". While it is true that the gospel offers the very same grace, yet it is in

⁷⁴ "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" [John 6:53-4].

⁷⁵ To Calvin, when Christ mentions His flesh as the bread of life, Christ's blood is already included in the word "flesh." The expression 'eating Christ's flesh' is enough for partaking of the complete life in Christ. Nonetheless it is His accommodation to our weakness that Christ mentions "His blood" separately. In this regard, Calvin (*Comm. Jn. 6:55*) writes as follows: "For when He [Christ] expressly mentions *food and drink*, He declares that the life which He bestows is complete in every respect, that we may not imagine a life which is only half or imperfect; as if He had said, that we shall want nothing that belongs to life, provided that we *eat His flesh and drink His blood*."

⁷⁶ As Johnson (2006: 78) points out, the main factor that motivates Calvin's rejection of the attempt of applying this discourse primarily to the Lord's Supper is "his disdain for the Lutheran concept of the *manducatio impiorum*"-"the eating of the impious." Relating Christ's being "the life-giving bread" directly to the outward symbol of the Lord's Supper makes even unbelievers partakers of Christ's flesh and blood and receivers of the life in Christ. For Calvin (*Comm. Jn. 6:55*), this cannot happen because Christ becomes one with us only by faith, "the only bond of union." "It is a mockery to dream of any way of *eating the flesh of Christ* without faith, since faith alone is the mouth, so to speak, and the stomach of the soul."

the Supper that we have “more ample certainty” and “fuller enjoyment of it” according to Calvin’s theology (Calvin *TT* 2.169).

5.2.4. The necessity of the Lord’s Supper as a witness of the union with Christ

Calvin’s emphasis on the significance of the Lord’s Supper as a witness of our union with Christ already accomplished by faith raises the question about the sufficiency of the Word of God: If the sacrament needs to be instituted for the purpose that the sacramental signs may visibly attest and confirm the proclaimed Word of God, does not this imply an insufficiency of God’s Word itself? However, Calvin is convinced of the certainty of the Word of God. “For God’s truth,” Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.3) says, “is of itself firm and sure enough, and it cannot receive better confirmation from any other source than from itself.” Calvin, nonetheless, attributes the necessity of the sacramental signs to our physical weakness. Such functions of the sacrament as ‘a seal’, ‘a sign’, ‘a pillar,’ and ‘a mirror’ of God’s promises of the gospel are due to our weakness in apprehending the promises. In his initial discussion of the sacraments in the *Institutes* Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.3) clarifies this as follows: “since we are creatures who always creep on the ground, cleave to the flesh, and, do not think about or even conceive of anything spiritual,” God tempers Himself to our capacity to lead us to Himself by earthly elements.

With regard to this, it should be noted that Calvin doesn’t regard our physical weakness, which needs material, sacramental signs for conceiving God’s promises, primarily as “a symptom of humanity’s fallen condition” as Moore-Keish (2008: 29) assumes. For Calvin, the human weakness to apprehend God’s promise is primarily due to his createdness. This view of Calvin’s is found in his *commentary on Genesis*. In his comments on Genesis 2:9 Calvin interprets ‘the tree of life’ as God’s accommodation to our capacity in leading us to Himself. This tree of life is given by

God as an “external symbol” of His grace only, by which man lives. By this symbol, Calvin says, God “stretches out His hand to us, because, without assistance, we cannot ascend to Him. He intended, therefore, that man, as often as he tasted the fruit of that tree, should remember whence he received his life, in order that he might acknowledge that he lives not by his own power, but by the kindness of God alone; and that life is not (as they commonly speak) an intrinsic good, but proceeds from God.” Physical, sacramental signs of God’s grace, like the tree of life, were necessary even for unfallen Adam to know God and to live in fellowship with God in addition to the preached word. Seeing, touching, and tasting physical, sacramental signs are divinely designed ways for humans to know God together with hearing the preached word in Calvin’s theology.⁷⁷ For Calvin (*Comm. Gen. 2:9*), our fallen situation renders the institution of the sacramental signs to attest the proclamation of the gospel about God’s grace for us more necessary.

Calvin finds the necessity of instituting the Lord’s Supper in the mystical nature of the union with Christ as well. Since the reality of the union with Christ is a spiritual mystery, it cannot be conceived by the natural mind. Therefore God instituted the sacrament to depict visibly this particular mystery:

Since, however, this mystery of Christ’s secret union with the devout is by nature incomprehensible, He [God] shows its figure and image in visible signs best adapted to our small capacity. Indeed, by giving guarantees and tokens He makes it as certain for us as if we had seen

⁷⁷ In this sense, Billings’ (2013: 179) assessment that the need of material, external signs for humans to apprehend God’s grace “is, at least in part, a dimension of the created goodness of humanity,” is pertinent to Calvin’s thought. This idea can be one of the answers to the question posed by Wendel ([1950]1963: 353): “Is there still a good reason for the existence of the Supper alongside the preaching of the Word?” What Wendel meant with this question is that the Lord’s Supper is superfluous in that the reality that the Lord’s Supper attests or confirms is the union with Christ accomplished already by hearing the proclaimed gospel. For Calvin, seeing, touching, and tasting material, sacramental signs of God’s grace are also God’s designed ways for humans to know God and live in peace with God like hearing the preached word. According to Calvin, the Lord’s Supper is God’s chosen means by which He shows clearly His promises, of which the union with Christ in His flesh and blood is the quintessence. In this sense, Moore-Keish’s (2008: 27) assessment that in Calvin’s theology the word of God and the sacrament are “requiring and mutually informing one another” is justifiable.

it with our own eyes (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.17.1).⁷⁸

5.3. The instrument by which the body and blood of Christ are communicated

5.3.1. Attestation in experience

With his reference to the Supper as an attestation of the gospel, Calvin might be positioned in the Zwinglian strand of the Reformation. However, Calvin does not look for the significance of the Lord's Supper only in confirming the promise of the gospel. Calvin cannot be satisfied with Zwingli's position that identifies eating of bread as the symbol of Christ's body only with remembrance of Christ's atoning death on the cross and His resurrection.⁷⁹ To Calvin more important significance of the sacrament is the communication of the promise.⁸⁰ In the Lord's Supper Christ's flesh and blood are truly and really given as our spiritual food and drink. In the Sacrament the acts of eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood really are performed. According to Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.17), God "truly executes whatever He promises and represents in signs."

⁷⁸ Calvin's sentiment is also found in his Treatise on the Lord's Supper (1541): "For 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" (*TT* 2.171).

⁷⁹ Zwingli thoroughly distinguishes the signs of the sacrament from things signified by them. He thinks that which is material cannot bear that which is spiritual. The signs simply and only point to things signified, which were already accomplished (Rozeboom 2012: 151; Locher 1981: 12, 22). The sacrament is just a memorial symbol of the grace given in the past. In this sense, Gerrish (1982: 119-20) labelled Zwingli's Eucharistic view as "symbolic memorialism." According to him, there is no possibility of "treating the signs as a vehicle by which Christ's body might be communicated" in Zwingli's view of the Supper.

⁸⁰ This Zwinglian sense of the Lord's Supper is "secondary" in significance to Calvin (Billings 2013: 173). Calvin regards the communication of the promise as of primary significance to the Lord's Supper.

Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.5) rejects an interpretation that identifies eating Christ's flesh with believing in Christ, which Calvin regards as Zwinglian. While Calvin insists that eating Christ's flesh is only by faith, he at the same time insists that it is "something more definite, and more elevated" than just faith. Eating Christ's flesh is "the true partaking of Christ," the consequence of which is our being "quickenened to spiritual life." For Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.5), our salvation rest not only on our belief in Christ's death and resurrection, but also on our true partaking of Him, by which "His life passes into us and is made ours - just as bread when taken as food imparts vigor to the body." This coincides with Calvin's view of the relation of faith with union with Christ in terms of cause and effect, as seen in the previous chapter (§ 4.4.1). Calvin does not identify faith with union with Christ. For Calvin, our being engrafted into the body of Christ is not just our believing in Him. Rather our being engrafted into Christ's body is the immediate result of faith. Our faith really brings about our communion with the body of Christ. Like this, we not only ascertain our union with Christ in the Lord's Supper, but also experience the reality of the union in the sacrament.

It can be said that Calvin does not think the confirmation of the promise of the gospel in the Lord's Supper as that which is accomplished apart from the real communication of the promise. The reality of the union with Christ in His flesh and blood is sealed by a real, current experience of the union in the Lord's Supper:

Now, that sacred partaking of His flesh and blood, by which Christ pours His life into us, as if it penetrated into our bones and marrow, He also testifies and seals in the Supper - *not by presenting a vain and empty sign, but by manifesting there the effectiveness of His Spirit to fulfil what He promises* (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.17.10 emphasis added).

In this way, for Calvin, "the intellectual certainty of a truth presented by a sign" and "the experience of the spiritual reality in and through the sign" are both implied in the Lord's Supper (G. Evans 1992: 162).

In this regard, Calvin's positive usage of the word "*exhibere*" in his explanation of the sacrament is significant. According to Rozeboom (2012: 152), the term *exhibere* means much more than "to present" as in "to show." Rather it means "to present" as in "to offer," "to proffer," and "to hand over." Calvin repeatedly uses the term in this more positive sense in his various writings on the Eucharist. In his commentary on eleventh chapter of First Corinthians, for example, Calvin (*Comm.* 1 Cor. 11:24) uses this term in elucidating the legitimacy of calling the bread the body of Christ:

... the name of the thing signified is not applied to the sign simply as being a representation of it, but rather as being a symbol of it, by which the reality is presented to (*exhibetur*) us. For I do not allow the force of those comparisons which some borrow from profane or earthly things; for there is a material difference between them and the sacraments of our Lord. The statue of Hercules is called Hercules, but what have we there but a bare, empty representation? ... Hence the *bread* is *Christ's body*, because it assuredly testifies, that the body which it represents is held forth to us (*exhiberi*), or because the Lord, by holding out to us that symbol, gives us at the same time His own body; for Christ is not a deceiver, to mock us with empty representations.

The bread does not cease just in representing the body of Christ barely. It is not empty representation as the statue of somebody represents him or her. It goes further. The bread is being used as an instrument by which the body of Christ which it represents is presented or held forth to us in the Supper.

5.3.2. Sacramental conjunction of the sign and the reality signified

5.3.2.1. Conjunction of the sign and the thing signified

For Calvin (*Comm.* 1 Cor. 11:24), the reality signified "is conjoined with the sign." In this sense, bread can appropriately be called the body of Christ. As implied in his statement quoted above (*Comm.* 1 Cor. 11:24), for Calvin, the sacramental conjunction of the sign and the reality signified arises from God's veracity. The

bread and wine are given to symbolize that the body and blood of Christ are real food for our spiritual life. And we are bidden to eat and drink them. And God who gives them for us to eat and drink as the symbol of Christ's body and blood is the One who cannot deceive or lie. Thus it is certain that God communicates the body and blood of Christ to us when we receive the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. With this conviction Calvin (*TT* 2.172) encourages us to confess that "if the representation which God gives us in the Supper is true, the internal substance of the sacrament is conjoined with the visible signs; and as the bread is distributed to us by the hand, so the body of Christ is communicated to us in order that we may be made partakers of it." A similar sentiment is reiterated by Calvin in his *Institutes* 4.17.10:

I indeed admit that the breaking of bread is a symbol; it is not the thing itself. But, having admitted this, we shall nevertheless duly infer that by the showing (*exhibitione*) of the symbol the thing itself is also shown (*exhiberi*). For unless a man means to call God a deceiver, he would never dare assert that an empty symbol is set forth by Him. 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.

It is remarkable that Calvin applies the word *exhibere* equally to the material signs and the thing signified (cf. Rozeboom 2012: 153). Calvin's conviction of the sacramental conjunction of the sign and the thing signified leads him even to legitimate the saying that "the body of Christ is given us under the bread, or with the bread" (Calvin *TT* 2.576). Considering Calvin's rejection to the Luther's formulation - "under, with, and in the bread" - somewhere else⁸¹, his positive usage of the prepositional phrases, "under the bread," and "with the bread" is surprising.

⁸¹ *Consensus Tigurinus*, of which Calvin (*TT* 2.219) writes the first draft for the purpose of the unity of Protestant churches in regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, states in its twenty fourth article as follows: "We deem it no less absurd to place Christ under the bread or couple Him with the bread, than to transubstantiate the bread into His body." According to Tylenda (1974b: 182), this statement

5.3.2.2. Distinction between the sign and the thing signified

Yet with this usage of the prepositions we should not position Calvin in the Lutheran camp with regard to the Lord's Supper.⁸² Calvin (*TT* 2.576) immediately qualifies the prepositional phrases by elucidating that they does not approve "a substantial union of corruptible meat with the flesh of Christ." The conjunction of the sign and the reality signified is "sacramental." The Holy Spirit is involved in this conjunction (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.14.17). The force of the sacramental signs by which the thing signified is exhibited, is not proper to the signs themselves. Their force is derived entirely from "the inner grace of the Spirit." The Holy Spirit makes the sacramental signs bearers of Christ who is the *res* of the sacrament. In other words, by His inner grace "the Holy Spirit makes us partakers in Christ" with the means of outward signs in the Lord's Supper (*Inst.*, 4.14.16). This agency of the Spirit administering the Lord's Supper implies a distinction between the sign and the reality signified even in their conjunction in Calvin's Eucharistic view.

A distinction between the sign and the thing signified is already implied in the nature of the sacrament itself as a visible attestation of the invisible, incomprehensible mystery, *i.e.*, the participation in the body and blood of Christ. The bread and wine are not Christ's body and blood themselves, but visible signs which represent them to us. If the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ that they signify, their function as symbols would disappear. For Calvin (*TT* 2.186), the

is "what gave birth to the long disquieting controversy between Calvin and Joachim Westphal, a Lutheran pastor in Hamburg."

⁸² Rozeboom (2012: 153) sees Calvin's keenness for the unity with Lutherans in his usage of these prepositional phrases. He (2012: 153) says that Calvin deliberately uses the prepositions "under" or "with" to obtain "concord with Lutherans." However, Rozeboom (2012: 153) points out that even though Calvin regards the usage of the prepositions as lawful, he never allows the preposition "in" to be used for the relation between the sign and the thing signified. This is because the preposition "in," since it nuances "contain," seems to suggest "local, even corporeal presence of Christ's body and blood."

bread should remain a material bread because it is the Lord's intention for the bread as the visible sign to testify visibly to us that the body of Christ is our spiritual food.

Calvin's idea of the agency of the Spirit in administering the Lord's Supper makes the distinction between the signs and the thing signified clear. It is by the agency of the Holy Spirit that the sacramental signs become bearers of Christ who is the reality that they signify. The sacramental signs are the instruments with which the Holy Spirit communicates Christ to the participants in the Sacrament. They are worthy only in so far as the Holy Spirit uses them as the instruments. However the power of the Holy Spirit cannot be enclosed in the external elements. That means that the inner grace of the Holy Spirit which enables us to partake of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper must be distinguished from the external elements by means of which we partake of His body and blood.

Calvin's idea of the distinction between the inner grace of the Holy Spirit and the external elements in the Lord's Supper underlies his discussion on the necessity of faith for efficaciousness of the Sacrament. It is only when we participate in the Sacrament with faith that we can receive the true benefit from the Lord's Supper. Our being possessed by Christ more fully and enjoying His riches as the benefit of the Sacrament happen only "when we receive in true faith what is offered there." While believers come to partake of Christ's body and blood by eating of the bread and drinking of the wine in the Lord's Supper, unbelievers receive no benefit from the Sacrament (*Inst.*, 4.14.16). Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.33) admits that "the flesh and blood of Christ are no less truly given to the unworthy than to God's elect believers" in the Lord's Supper. For Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.33), the mystery of the Sacrament cannot be nullified by human's unbelief.⁸³ Nevertheless, "it is one thing to be

⁸³ In this sense, Gerrish ([1993]2002: 161) comments that even though Calvin's view is different from Roman Catholics' objectivity in regard to "sacramental efficacy," it is "not a collapse into subjectivity."

offered, another to be received.” While the “truth and effectiveness” of the Lord’s Supper “remain undiminished” regardless of nonexistence of belief, “the wicked go away empty after outward participation in it” (*Inst.*, 4.17.33). This can be also described in terms of Augustine who makes a distinction between “sacramental eating” and “spiritual eating”: While the former is participation only in a visible sign, which corresponds to unbelievers, the latter is partaking of Christ’s body and blood, which is accomplished only by faith (*Inst.*, 4.17.34).⁸⁴

It is notable that this faith, according to Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.8), by which the partaking of Christ’s body and blood in the Lord’s Supper is accomplished, is also the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit. As in the Word, the Holy Spirit, in the sacraments as well, illumines our minds and opens our hearts for us to receive the reality of the sacraments. Without this work of the Holy Spirit the sacraments “only strike our ears and appear before our eyes, but not at all affect us within.” In this sense, for Calvin (*Comm. Eph. 5:26*), the efficaciousness of the Lord’s Supper depends wholly on the Holy Spirit. Calvin’s designation of the sacraments as instruments displays the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in making the sacraments effective.

In this way, Calvin does not neglect the distinction of the sign and the reality signified, even when he speaks about their conjunction. For Calvin distinction and conjunction of the sign and the reality signified are both equally important to appropriately understand the significance of the Lord’s Supper.⁸⁵ Thus, as Gerrish

⁸⁴ Such a significance of faith in partaking of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper is used by Calvin as a ground of his repudiation of the Transubstantiation of the Roman Catholics and the Consubstantiation of the Lutherans. Calvin (*TT* 2.249) refers to this issue when he refutes Joachim Westphal’s assumption that the bread is substantially the body of Christ. To identify the bread with the body of Christ substantially would necessarily bring about the impious’ eating of the body of Christ. However to say about the eating of the body of Christ without faith is “as inappropriate as to say that a seed may germinate in fire” (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.17.33).

⁸⁵ Calvin (*TT* 2.172) writes, “To distinguish, in order to guard against confounding them [the sacraments and their reality and substance], is not only good and reasonable, but altogether necessary; but to divide them, so as to make the one exist without the other, is absurd.”

([1993]2002: 137) says, the Chalcedonian Christological formula, “distinctive but inseparable” can be applied to describe Calvin’s view on the relation of a sign and a thing signified as well. While Calvin insists that the elements truly exhibit the substance of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, he (*Inst.*, 4.17.21) makes also it clear that the elements “differ in essence from the thing signified” (cf. Billings 2007: 134). The signs of the Lord’s Supper are worthy only in so far as the Holy Spirit uses them as the instruments with which He communicates Christ to believers in the Sacrament.

5.3.2.3. “Christological truth”

Calvin’s concern for “Christological truth” (McDonnell 1967: 211) underlies his approval of the sacramental conjunction of the sign and the thing signified mediated by the Holy Spirit, rejecting the substantial conjunction of both. Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.29), following the Chalcedonian Christological formula, insists on the inseparable yet distinctive union of the divine nature and human nature in the one Person of Christ: “The one Person of Christ so consists of two natures that each nevertheless retains unimpaired its own distinctive character.” This distinctiveness between Christ’s divinity and His humanity in their inseparable hypostatic union still remains after the resurrection of Christ. The resurrected body of Christ is given immortality without its nature’s being destroyed (Calvin [1954]2000: 176). It is still subject to the common limits of a human body. Therefore, since a human body “must subsist in one definite place, with its own size and form,” the body of Christ cannot be present in more than one place at the same time (*Inst.*, 4.17.24).⁸⁶ And

⁸⁶ In this regard, Calvin’s interpretation on the event in John 20:19 [Christ, after resurrection, went in to His disciples when the doors were closed] is interesting. Calvin’s opponents appeal to this event for their objection that the resurrected body of Christ is not subjected to common human limits. To this objection Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.29) answers that probably “the stone was removed” at Christ’s command, and the wall was opened for Him to enter. Here “to enter through closed doors,” says Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.29), “means not just penetrating through solid matter but opening an entrance for Himself by divine power.”

Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.26) makes it clear that the ascension of Christ implies His “location transfer” (Suh 2000: 147) in His body, in contrast to the assumption that the ascension is “nothing but a change of mortal state.” Thus, since the body of Christ “is contained in heaven” since His ascension into heaven to “the Last Day,” His body is not circumscribed in the elements of the sacrament (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.17.26). In this way, Calvin’s conviction of the spatial limitation of Christ’s body is a factor that underlies his insistence on the distinction between the sign and the thing signified. The divine nature of Christ also retains its own properties intact in the hypostatic union. Christ’s divinity cannot be enclosed or limited to His body even in the hypostatic union. This transcendence of Christ’s divinity is another factor that guarantees the distinction of the sign and the thing signified. The essence of Christ as the Son of God cannot be contained in the created elements of the sacrament (cf. Billings 2007: 135). And this transcendence of Christ’s divinity is a factor, along with the agency of the Holy Spirit, that makes the sacramental conjunction of the sign and the thing signified possible in Calvin’s thought.⁸⁷

5.3.3. “Symbolic instrumentalism”

Since Calvin insists that God uses the sign as an instrument to grant the reality signified to us in the Lord’s Supper, Gerrish ([1993]2002: 167) calls Calvin’s view on the sacramental efficacy “symbolic instrumentalism.” Besides this label, Gerrish ([1993]2002: 167) provides two more labels for designating the various views of the Eucharist within the sixteenth century’s Reformed camp: “symbolic memorialism” and “symbolic parallelism.” These three concepts are not mutually exclusive in that they share the same notion that signs “point to” something else. However, there is clear difference among them in various ways in which the thing pointed to is thought of: “as a happening in the past, a happening that occurs simultaneously in the

⁸⁷ This subject will be considered later (in § 5.4.2) in more detail.

present, or a present happening that is actually brought about through the signs” ([1993]2002: 167). With the label “symbolic memorialism” Gerrish ([1993]2002: 167) points to Zwingli’s understanding of the Lord’s Supper as remembrance of Christ’s atoning death done in the past. But Bullinger, the successor of Zwingli moves beyond his teacher to the extent that he teaches “a sacramental union of sign and reality” (Gerrish 1982: 124). Bullinger thinks that the thing signified is in fact accomplished or granted at the same time the sign is issued. Feeding upon the body of Christ inwardly and eating of the bread outwardly are done at the same time in parallel. In this sense, Gerrish (1982: 124) labels Bullinger’s position on the Lord’s Supper as “symbolic parallelism” comparing with Zwingli’s “symbolic memorialism.” Gerrish ([1993]2002: 167-8) also insists that Calvin’s position must be distinguished from Bullinger’s parallelism that lacks the usage of the instrumental expressions. Calvin believes that eating of Christ’s body inwardly is carried out *through* eating of the bread outwardly. While Calvin does not exclude the other two ways of looking at the Lord’s Supper, his position is stronger than Zwingli’s and Bullinger’s in that he uses the instrumental expression.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Wendel ([1950]1963: 344-45) suggests that with regard to the relation of signs and the thing signified Calvin stands in the strand of the Franciscans and Duns Scotus in opposition to the strand of Thomas Aquinas. “For Franciscan doctrine,” Wendel ([1950]1963: 344-45) says, “as for Calvin, there was a parallelism between the reception of the elements and the Supper and the action of the Spirit of Christ, but the elements and the Spirit remained distinct.” Yet Gerrish ([1993]2002: 167-68) thinks that Calvin’s position regarding the relation of signs and the thing signified is closer to instrumentalism of Aquinas than the parallelism of Scotus.

5.4. True communication of the substance of the body and blood of Christ

5.4.1. Negation of the local presence of Christ's body

Calvin's understanding of the Christological truth leads him to repudiate the spatial/local objectivism of the Roman Catholics and the High Lutherans in regard to the Lord's Supper.⁸⁹ Besides his disdain of *manducatio impiorum* ("the eating of the impious"), Calvin's keenness for the Chalcedonian Christological formula is a quite important motive of his rebuttal of the idea of the local presence of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Calvin sees the assumption that the body of Christ is enclosed in a bread, or is joined locally to it, as being destructive to the orthodox belief on the humanity of Christ. For Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.19), to approve a local presence of the body of Christ in the elements of the Lord's Supper is to deal inappropriately with the reality of Christ's humanity. The appropriate attitude on the reality of the humanity of Christ involves respecting the integrity of Christ's humanity and His heavenly glory as well. Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.19) sees not only the violation of the reality of Christ's humanity but also the derogation of Christ's heavenly glory in the local objectivism of the Roman Catholics and the High Lutherans. On the one hand, Christ's heavenly glory might be annihilated "when He is brought under the corruptible elements of this world, or bound to any earthly creatures." On the other hand, the integrity of Christ's humanity might be destroyed when his body "is said either to be infinite or to be put in a number of places."

⁸⁹ McDonnell (1967: 211) suggests that the arguments used by Calvin against the Lutherans, from Calvin's point of view, are quite valid against the Roman Catholics, since "both positions necessitated a kind of local presence."

It should be noted that Calvin's concern for the integrity of Christ's humanity is deeply related to his concern for our salvation. As Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.29) himself points out, Lutheran understanding of the local presence of Christ's body in the Supper is grounded on the ubiquity of His body. The theoretical basis of the idea that the body of Christ is corporeally presented "under," "with," and "in" the bread is the assumption that divine invisibility and omnipresence came to be communicated to the humanity of Christ when His body was glorified through the resurrection. In consequence of the communication of the divine invisibility and omnipresence to His humanity, Christ's glorified body came to be able to "fill all things in an invisible manner," and to be "in many places at once and not held in any space." In support of his rebuttal against such assumption, Calvin (*TT* 2.241) refers to the truth that the resurrected body of Christ is the pattern to which all the saints will be conformed at their resurrection. Therefore if the glorious body of Christ is given divine omnipresence, this would mean that all the saints will be given the divine omnipresence following their pattern at their resurrection. Yet, for Calvin (*TT* 2.241), this is to invalidate the hope of the resurrection in that in this assumption human being, through his resurrection, will be made "a monstrous phantom":

The immensity which they imagine the flesh of Christ to possess, is a monstrous phantom, which overturns the hope of a resurrection. To all the absurdities they advance concerning the heavenly life, I will always oppose the words of St. Paul that we wait for Christ from heaven who will transform our poor body and make it conformable to His own glorious body. Need we say how absurd it were to fill the whole world with the single body of each believer?"(cf. *Inst.*, 4.17.29)

Here Calvin's conviction that the integrity of the human nature of Christ is quite essential to our salvation, is shown clearly. Calvin's keenness for keeping the integrity of Christ's humanity is due to his conviction that our salvation rests on the truth of the human nature of Christ. To approve the local presence of the body of Christ is to destroy the truth of Christ's humanity, the essential basis of our salvation,

by assuming the ubiquity of His body. And the result of this is nothing but the nullification of our redemption. In this way a sacramental issue, for Calvin, is undoubtedly not only the very question about Christ Himself but also the question about our salvation, of which Christ is the author.⁹⁰

5.4.2. Approval of true communication of the substance of Christ's body

However Calvin's negation of the local presence of Christ's body should not be regarded as a denial of the true communication of His body in the Lord's Supper. In fact Calvin (*TT* 2.401-2) adamantly insists on the true communication of the body and blood of Christ. The reality communicated to believers in the Lord's Supper is not just the fruit of Christ's atoning death. It is the very body of Christ which was hung on the cross, resurrected, and ascended. This body of Christ is "truly" communicated to participants in the Lord's Supper.⁹¹ Joachim Westphal (1510-1574)⁹² accused Calvin along with Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bucer, and Bullinger as sacramentarian, because they do not admit the real presence of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper so that they leave nothing but empty symbols. According to Calvin (*TT* 2.207), Westphal's accusation was too impudent and grossly absurd, since they openly acknowledge that "the body of Jesus Christ is truly communicated to believers in the Supper." Calvin's other Lutheran opponent, Tilemann Heshusius

⁹⁰ The significance of the body of Christ for our salvation in Calvin's theology will be dealt with in more detail in § 5.5.

⁹¹ Tylenda (1974a: 68-9) demonstrates Calvin's firm conviction and belief that the body and blood of Christ is truly communicated to believers so that they are truly made partakers of Christ's life in the Lord's Supper on the basis of Calvin's frequent usage of the term "true" for describing the mode of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper.

⁹² Joachim Westphal is the representative Lutheran with whom Calvin engages in "the literary battle" (Greef [1989]2008: 180) in regard to the Lord's Supper for more than six years. The English translation of Calvin's treatises against Westphal appears in Calvin *TT* 2.221-494. For the historical introduction and a more specific explanation of this debate, see Tylenda 1974b: 182-209 and Tylenda 1997: 9-21.

(1527-1588),⁹³ a Lutheran theologian at the University of Heidelberg, blames Calvin for confining the term *koinonia* (communion) to “the fellowship which we have with Christ, by partaking of His benefits” (Calvin *TT* 2.516). In response to this, Calvin (*TT* 2.516-7) makes it clear that the communion is “not only in the fruit of Christ’s death, but also in His body offered for our salvation.” For Calvin (*TT* 2.170), the communion with Christ’s body is such a crucial matter in the Lord’s Supper that denying the true communication of Christ’s body in the Sacrament is to “render this holy Sacrament frivolous and useless.”

5.4.2.1. Distance overcome by the Holy Spirit

At this point the following question is raised: How can Calvin, who rejects the local presence of the body of Christ in the elements of the Lord’s Supper on the basis of the heavenly glory and the common limitation of Christ’s glorified body as a human body, approve the true communication of the same body of Christ to believers in the Sacrament without violating these two? Isn’t there a certain contradiction between true communication of the body of Christ and the withdrawal of the local presence of it? Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.14.16) resolves this seeming contradiction by involving the work of the Holy Spirit in the communication of the body of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. By His inner grace the Holy Spirit makes us partakers in Christ with the means of outward signs in the Lord’s Supper.

In this proposition, the idea of the secret power of the Holy Spirit uniting and bringing together into one “things that are disjoined in local space,” is implied (Calvin [1954]2000: 168). There is a spatial distance as great as heaven from earth

⁹³ Tilemann Heshusius is one of the Lutheran polemics who attacks Calvin’s Eucharistic theology in his series of polemical treatises. His attack evoked from Calvin “a crisp and eloquent response” (Steinmetz 2010: 173), *Dilucida Explicatio Sanae Doctrinae de Vera Participatione Carnis et Sanguinis Christi in Sacra coena, ad Kiscutiendas Heshusii Nebulas*. The English translation of this treatise appears in Calvin *TT* 2.495-572. For the summary of Heshusius’ attack against Calvin and Calvin’s response to this, see Steinmetz 2010: 172-186.

between Christ's body and us or material signs.⁹⁴ Yet the Holy Spirit overcomes this distance by His incomprehensible power⁹⁵ so that through Him "we may be

⁹⁴ Billings (2007: 138) suggests that the term "heaven" is not meant for any specific place, but for the transcendence of Christ, especially His power of administration of heaven and earth in Calvin's thought. Thus Calvin's mention of 'the distance between Christ in heaven and believers on earth' is also to be understood qualitatively, rather than spatially (cf. Kaiser, 2003: 250-1). By the power of the Holy Spirit, for Calvin, this qualitative distance is overcome, and believers become partakers of the heavenly body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. When Calvin's following statement is considered, Billings' suggestion would seem to be plausible:

That ascended up far above all heavens; that is, beyond this created world. When Christ is said to be in heaven, we must not view him as dwelling among the spheres and numbering of the stars. Heaven denotes a place higher than all the spheres, which was assigned to the Son of God after his resurrection. Not that it is literally a place beyond the world, but we cannot speak of the kingdom of God without using our ordinary language (Comm. Eph. 4:10; cf. Calvin Comm. 2 Cor. 12:2).

However several reasons suggest that Calvin perceives "heaven" qualitatively and spatially as well. First, Calvin's following statements lead us to reason like that:

When it is said that Christ is taken up into heaven; here is plainly noted the distance of place...It is evident that the heaven whereinto Christ was received is opposite to the frame of the world; therefore it doth necessarily follow, that if He be in heaven, He is without [beyond] the world" (*Comm. Acts 1:11*);

...as Christ the Son of God, the Mediator, and our Head, was once received into heavenly glory, so He is separated from us in respect of His flesh by distance of place, but still, by His Divine essence and virtue, and also spiritual grace, fills heaven and earth (*TT 2.576*).

Second, it is certain that for Calvin, the ascension of Christ involves a location transfer:

But why do we repeat the word "ascension" so often? Does it not imply moving from one place to another? They deny this: according to them, height signifies only the majesty of His rule. But what is the manner of the ascension itself? Is He not lifted up on high before His disciples' very eyes? Do not the Evangelists clearly relate that He was received into heaven?" (*Inst.*, 4.17.27);

...by His ascension into heaven He made it plain that it is not in all places, but when it passes into one, it leaves the previous one (*Inst.*, 4.17.30).

Third, since the humanity of Christ keeps its integrity even after resurrection and ascension, it seems to be the proper consequence that the place for the dwelling of Christ's body cannot be free from spatiality:

Flesh must therefore be flesh; spirit, spirit - each thing in the state and condition wherein God created it. But such is the condition of flesh that it must subsist in one definite place, with its own size and form. With this condition Christ took flesh, giving to it, as Augustine attests, incorruption and glory, and not taking away from it nature and truth (*Inst.*, 4.17.24).

However, it should be added that Calvin does not specifically point out a specific place where the body of Christ is retained. This assumption is the very speculation rejected by Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.26):

made one in body, spirit, and soul with” Christ. He is the bond of our participation in Christ, and is “like a channel through which all that Christ Himself is and has is conveyed to us” (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.17.12). Like the sun which, “shedding its beams upon the earth, casts its substance in some measure upon it [the earth] in order to beget, nourish, and give growth to its offspring,” the Holy Spirit, by His radiance, “imparts to us the communion” of the body and blood of Christ (*Inst.*, 4.17.12). Therefore, for Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.12), there is no need of a local presence of Christ’s body in the sacramental elements in order for the believer to participate in it. It is not necessary for Christ to descend from heaven in His body since, by “the boundless energy of the Spirit” with which “no extent of space interferes,” He transfuses life into us from His body (Calvin *TT* 2.249). The distance between Christ’s body and us cannot be an obstacle preventing Christ from being truly united to us (*TT* 2.514).

5.4.2.2. Our spiritual ascent

While Calvin mentions about Christ’s descent for having communion with us in the Lord’s Supper, he explicates that this descent of Christ is not locally or corporeally, but it is spiritually:

Although the body of Christ be in heaven, we nevertheless truly feed upon it here on earth, because the Christ, by the unfathomable and

“Shall we therefore, someone will say, assign to Christ a definite region of heaven? But I reply with Augustine that this is a very prying and superfluous question: for us it is enough to believe that He is in heaven.” Even Wendel ([1950]1963: 348), who emphasizes Calvin’s localization of the body of Christ in heaven, wonders to what extent Calvin, with his cosmological conceptions and his attachment to the ancient world-system, can emphasize the localization of Christ’s body “above the visible sphere of the heavens and yet in a given portion of space.”

⁹⁵ Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.10) puts stress on the incomprehensibility of the work of the Holy Spirit in making us partakers of the body of Christ which is separated from us by a great distance. This is a matter of “faith,” rather than of “mind.” “Even though,” Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.10) writes, “it seems unbelievable that Christ’s flesh, separated from us by such great distance, penetrates to us, so that it becomes our food, let us remember how far the secret power of the Holy Spirit towers above all our senses, and how foolish it is to wish to measure His immeasurableness by our measure. What, then, our mind does not comprehend, let faith conceive: that the Spirit truly unites things separated in space.”

omnipresent virtue of His Spirit, makes Himself so much our own that He dwells in us without change of place . . . Christ comes down towards us not only in the outward symbols but also in the hidden working of His Spirit, so that we can ascend to Him by faith (Calvin CO 19:603 in Wendel [1950]1963: 352; cf. Hesselink 2002: 79-81).

As seen in the above statement, this spiritual descent of Christ appears to be prerequisite for the ascent of the believer in Calvin's view. To be sure, as Kaiser (2003: 257) points out, the ascent of the believer and Christ's real presence should not be understood as "discrete steps," rather both are identical to each other. The one reason why the distance between the ascended body of Christ and us cannot be an obstacle to our communion with the body of Christ is because Christ raises our soul to the right hand of God where Christ is seated. There we have communion with the risen Christ and thus enjoy the vivifying vigour of His flesh: "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 vigour of His flesh, just as the rays of the sun invigorate us by its vital warmth" (Calvin *TT* 2.240; cf. Calvin *TT* 2.279).⁹⁶ For Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.16), the people who try to drag Christ from heaven to enjoy His presence in the Supper, are mistaken in that "they do not understand the manner of descent by which He [Christ] lifts us up to Himself" (cf. *Inst.*, 4.17.31).⁹⁷ Calvin's approval of the *sursum corda* of the liturgy ("lift up your hearts") involves in his conviction of our spiritual ascension to heaven (cf. *Inst.*, 4.17.36; Calvin *TT* 2.188, 443). In the sense that we are raised to Christ in heaven through

⁹⁶ Kaiser, in his article (2003: 247-67) focused on Calvin's thought of our eucharistic ascent to heaven, elucidates that for Calvin, our being lifted to heaven is "a real, albeit spiritual, ascent" (2003: 254), "not just a change in the believer's mental attitude" (2003: 256). In support of this, Kaiser (2003: 253-65) refers to several points: 1. Calvin describes the ascent of the believer to heaven as a means of union with Christ and of being nourished by Christ in the sacrament. 2. Calvin attributes the ascent of the believer to the divine power of the risen Christ. 3. Calvin associated the ascent of the believer in the Lord's Supper with the experiences of Jacob and Paul described in Gen. 28 and 2 Cor. 12 respectively. 4. Calvin appeals to church fathers like Chrysostom and Augustine for the discussion on the eucharistic ascent of the believer.

⁹⁷ In this sense, Wallace ([1953]1957: 208), who labels Calvin's idea on the presence of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper "a celestial mode of presence" is plausible.

the elements of the Lord's Supper, Calvin (*Comm. Gen. 28:17*) calls the sacrament "the gate of heaven" like Jacob's ladder at Bethel (cf. Kaiser, 2003: 251). In this way there is no contradiction between our true communion with the body of Christ and Christ's withdrawal of the local presence of His body from us in Calvin's theology (Calvin [1954]2000: 168).

In this sense, Calvin (*TT 2.282, 239*) explicitly points out that the dispute between his Lutheran critics and himself is not about the communication of the body of Christ itself, but is about the mode in which this communication takes place. The dispute is not about the 'what' (the substance of the body of Christ), but about the 'how' (the mode of the presence). Calvin (*TT 2.578*) himself labels his own understanding on the communion of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper as "spiritual," in contrast to the Lutheran's "carnal eating" of Christ's body, which implies transfusion of the substance of Christ into the recipient.

5.4.2.3. Spiritual eating of the substance of Christ's body

Yet, even though the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is labelled spiritual in that it is mediated by the Holy Spirit and in contrast to Lutheran's carnal presence, for Calvin, the spiritual presence of Christ is real and true and no less substantial than the Lutheran's carnal presence. Though the communion that occurs in the Lord's Supper is spiritual in that it is governed by the Holy Spirit, this is not to say that Calvin regards the Spirit instead of Christ as the substance of the communion. He (*Inst., 4.17.7*) explicitly disapproves the tendency to describe the reality of the communion with Christ as partaking of "the Spirit only, omitting mention of flesh and

blood.” Instead, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we truly become participants in the body of Christ as we partake of the bread (Calvin *Comm.* 1 Cor. 11:24).⁹⁸

It is remarkable that Calvin uses boldly and habitually the term “substance” in describing the reality of the body and blood of Christ which is truly communicated in the Lord’s Supper. In his *Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*, Calvin (*TT* 2.197) writes as follows:

We all then confess with one mouth, that on receiving the Sacrament in faith, according to the ordinance of the Lord, we are truly made partakers of *the proper substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ* (emphasis added).

Calvin’s usage of the term “substance” to describe the communion with Christ in His body and blood is found persistently from his early writings to the last period of his works.⁹⁹ When Heshusius accused him of a “corrupter of the Confession of

⁹⁸ In support of his contention that the body of Christ is truly communicated in the Lord’s Supper, Calvin (*TT* 2.507) refers to Christ’s own saying of the bread and wine in the Last Supper: “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.”

⁹⁹ Calvin’s *Treatise on the Lord’s Supper* quoted above was published in 1540. And Calvin uses this term also in his *Geneva Catechism* (1545):

M: Have we in the Supper only a figure of the benefits which you have mentioned, or are they there exhibited to us in reality?

C: Seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truth itself, there cannot be a doubt that He at the same time fulfils the promises which He there gives us, and adds the reality to the figures. Wherefore I doubt not that as He testifies by words and signs, so He also makes us partakers of His *substance*, that thus we may have one life with Him (*TT* 2.91).

The first usage of this term “substance” in his *Institutes* appears in the 1543 edition, and is carried on unto 1559 edition:

I say, therefore, that in the mystery of the Supper, Christ is truly shown to us through the symbols of bread and wine, His very body and blood, in which He has fulfilled all obedience to obtain righteousness for us. Why? First, that we may grow into one body with Him; secondly, having been made partakers of *His substance (participes substantiae eius)*, that we may feel His power in partaking of all His benefits (*Inst.*, 4.17.11).

Augsburg” because he rejected the reception of the substance of Christ’s body and blood, Calvin explicitly expresses his approval of the substantial eating of Christ’s body and blood. Calvin (*TT* 2.502) writes,

But it is declared in my writings more than a hundred times, that so far am I from rejecting the term substance that I ingenuously and readily declare, that by the incomprehensible agency of the Spirit, spiritual life is infused into us from the substance of the flesh of Christ. I also constantly admit that we are substantially fed on the flesh and blood of Christ, though I discard the gross fiction of a local intermingling.

For Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.19), if, in the term “substance,” the Lutheran notion of carnal eating of Christ’s body and blood is removed, there is no reason for denying the substantial partaking of the body and blood of Christ. For Calvin, our partaking of Christ is spiritual partaking of the substance of His body and blood. While Calvin admits that the notion of the spiritual reception of the substance of Christ’s body is incomprehensible to the human mind, yet he does not see any contradiction in it.

5.4.2.4. The *totus-totum* distinction and *Extra Calvinisticum*

Calvin’s approval of distinction between “whole” (*totus*) and “wholly” (*totum*) as was taught by St. Augustine and Peter Lombard (cf. Wallace [1953]1957: 232) is helpful to understand how the substance of Christ’s body, while remaining in heaven, can be truly communicated in the Lord’s Supper in Calvin’s theology. Calvin affirms the distinction between “whole” (*totus*) and “wholly” (*totum*) for explicating the special manner of Christ’s real presence in the Lord’s Supper:

And in order to express this in a still more palpable form, I employed the trite dictum of the schools, that Christ is whole everywhere, but not

And it is also found in Calvin’s sermon on Ephesians 5:25-27 (1558, May):

Also when we receive the bread and wine in the Supper, [the Word] is an infallible pledge to us that we are nourished with *the very substance of the Son of God*, so that His flesh is our meat and His blood our drink (*Serm.* Eph. 5:25-27).

wholly, (*totus ubique sed non totum*;) in other words, in His entire Person of Mediator He fills heaven and earth, though in His flesh He is in heaven, which He had chosen as the abode of His human nature, until He appears for judgment (*TT* 2.514-5);

We deny not that the whole and entire Christ in the Person of the Mediator fills heaven and earth. I say whole, not wholly, (*totus, non totum*;) because it were absurd to apply this to His flesh (*TT* 2.557-58).

As already mentioned in § 3.5.2 of this thesis, Calvin's teaching of the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* is involved in this distinction. Christ's divinity is not bound to the humanity even in the hypostatic union. Christ, in His divine majesty and essence, fills heaven and earth while He is contained in heaven in His body since His bodily ascension. In His divine nature which fills heaven and earth, not bounded to the humanity, the whole Christ is present in the Lord's Supper, though not wholly in that He is in heaven in His flesh, where "He has chosen as the abode of His human nature, until He appears for judgment" (Calvin *TT* 2.515).¹⁰⁰ Thus Christ's body does not need to leave heaven in order for us to have communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper. In the presence of Christ's divine nature we have the presence of the whole Person of Christ. For Calvin the absence of Christ's body does not mean the absence of His Person.

In this way, the so-called *Extra Calvinisticum* makes the communication of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper possible in Calvin's theology. By the virtue of His divine nature Christ "unites us with Himself in one body so that that flesh, although it remains in heaven, is our food" (Calvin *TT* 2.285; cf. *TT* 2.558-9). To Calvin, that the flesh of Christ can exercise its virtue on the earth while remaining

¹⁰⁰ As Billings (2007: 135) points out, *Extra Calvinisticum* is one of the theological bases underlying Calvin's denial of the local presence of Christ's substance in the elements of the Lord's Supper. Christ's divine nature cannot be "enclosed or limited" to Christ's body even in the hypostatic union. Likewise Christ's substance "is not subject to spatial limitations or circumscription." Christ's substance cannot be contained in the created elements of the sacrament.

in heaven is due not only to the secret power of the Holy Spirit but also to the ubiquity of the divine nature of Christ as well.

At this point it should be noted again that Calvin never approve the direct communication of the two natures in the Person of Christ. Calvin (*TT* 2.558) explicitly states that the hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ does not necessarily involve the direct communication of the two natures: “The hypostatic union of the two natures is not equivalent to a communication of the immensity of the Godhead to the flesh, since the peculiar properties of both natures are perfectly accordant with unity of Person.” In this sense, as Willis-Watkins (1966: 95-7) points out, Wallace’s ([1953]1957: 232-23) reading of the following passage as Calvin’s positive affirmation of the essential presence of Christ’s humanity in believers seems not to be justified:

If it is unlawful to dis sever the flesh of Christ from His divinity, wherever the divinity dwells the flesh also dwells corporeally. But the deity of Christ always dwells in believers as well in life as in death; therefore so dwells the flesh ... I again repeat, as the divine majesty and essence of Christ fills heaven and earth, and this is extended to the flesh; therefore independently of the use of the Supper, the flesh of Christ dwells essentially in believers, because they possess the presence of His deity (Calvin *TT* 2.559-60).

As Willis-Watkins (1966: 95-7) argues, the scrutiny of the context of this passage renders that it should be read as Calvin’s rhetoric for refuting Heshusius’ assertion that the human nature of Christ has “some properties common to the divine essence,” particularly, the immensity in the hypostatic union (Calvin *TT* 2.561).

5.5. The salvific necessity of participation in Christ’s flesh

Calvin’s insistence on true reception of the substance of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, is deeply related to his conviction of the salvific

necessity of participation in Christ's body and blood. Calvin (*Comm. Jn. 6:51*) emphasizes the significance of the flesh of Christ with regard to our salvation. All things needed for our salvation are accomplished in His flesh:

Though righteousness flows from God alone, still we shall not attain the full manifestation of it anywhere else than in the flesh of Christ, for in it was accomplished the redemption of man, in it a sacrifice was offered to atone for sins, and an obedience yielded to God to reconcile Him to us; it was also filled with the sanctification of the Spirit and at length, having vanquished death, it was received into heavenly glory. It follows therefore that all the parts of life have been placed in it.

Undoubtedly Calvin does not neglect the significance of the divine nature of Christ in His work of redemption. If Christ "had not been true God, He could not cleanse our souls by His blood, nor appease His Father by His sacrifice, nor absolve us from guilt, not, in sum, fulfil the office of priest, because the power of the flesh is unequal to so great a burden" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.9). In the sense that Christ's human nature does not have of itself the power to give us life, the significance of His divine nature should not be neglected. Nonetheless Calvin's emphasis with regard to Christ's work of redemption is still on His human nature: "yet it is certain that He [Christ] carried out all these acts according to His human nature" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.9). For Calvin (*TT* 2.170), the blessing of salvation is acquired by Christ's "all obedience to God His Father, in order to satisfy our debts" in His humanity. In this sense, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.9) goes far to state that "the matter both of righteousness and of salvation resides in His flesh." Calvin's conviction of the significant role of Christ's humanity in the redemptive work underlies his conviction that to keep the integrity of Christ's humanity is essential for our salvation.

As Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.1.1) makes it clear in his initial discussion on the application of salvation, all that Christ acquired for our salvation are "useless and of no value for us" apart from our union with Him. Therefore since all things needed for our salvation were accomplished in Christ's humanity, in order for us to become

partakers of the gift of salvation, our participation in His humanity is necessarily required:

The Lord Jesus, to communicate the gift of salvation which He has purchased for us, must first be made ours, and His flesh be our meat and nourishment, seeing that it is from it that we derive life (Calvin *TT* 2.207-8).

In this way, the necessity of the communication of the substance of the body of Christ is due to the very fact that Christ accomplished our redemption in His body according to Calvin's theology.

However some statements appear to show that Calvin is seeking the significance of the body of Christ as "the life-giving bread" in the event of the incarnation itself, rather than in His salvific work in His humanity. For example, Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.8) interprets Christ's calling Himself the "bread of life" in John 6 as follows:

By these words ["I am the bread of life come down from heaven. And the bread which I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world"; John 6:48, 51] He [Christ] teaches not only that He is life since He is the eternal Word of God, who came down from heaven to us, but also that by coming down He poured that power upon the flesh which He took in order that from it participation in life might flow unto us.

Here Calvin says that Christ, who is fountain of life as the eternal Word, assumed our human flesh for the purpose that the flesh He assumed may become the channel through which life flows to us. It seems to be that to Calvin the proper reason why Christ's flesh is called "the bread of life" is because it functions as the channel which conveys life to us. The same sentiment is seen more clearly in the following statement:

But an objection is brought, that the flesh of Christ cannot give life, because it was liable to death, and because even now it is not immortal in itself; and next, that it does not at all belong to the nature of flesh to quicken souls. I reply, though this power comes from another source

than from the flesh, still this is no reason why the designation may not accurately apply to it; for as the eternal Word of God is the fountain of *life*, so His flesh, as a channel, conveys to us that *life* which dwells intrinsically, as we say, in His Divinity. And in this sense it is called life-giving, because it conveys to us that life which it borrows for us from another quarter (Calvin *Comm.* Jn. 6:51).

In this statement Calvin appears to present that the life, of which Christ's flesh functions as channel to convey it to us, is Christ's divine life. The life is that which "dwells intrinsically in His Divinity." Christ's flesh borrows the life "from another quarter." This another quarter is the very Godhead. That is, "the flesh of Christ is like a rich and inexhaustible fountain that pours into us the life springing forth from the Godhead into itself" (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.17.9).

These statements are used by some theologians to see deification in patristic terms in Calvin's concept of union with Christ. For example, Mosser (2002: 44-45), on the basis of this statement, suggests that the signification of Christ's body as being the life-giving bread is in the fact that Christ, "being made a sharer in our human mortality," "made us partakers in His divine immortality." Mosser involves the notion of the deification of Christ's humanity through the hypostatic union in His body's being the life-giving bread. According to him (2002: 46), Christ's humanity is deified first in the hypostatic union and thus through the deified humanity of Christ the divine life is transferred to believers. In this way, the union of believers with Christ results in their partaking of divine nature.

As already mentioned, Calvin here appears to describe the life as that which belongs to Christ's divinity. Therefore, McCormack (2004: 104), who rejects any attempt to interpret Calvin's concept of union with Christ as the ground for deification theory of the Eastern Orthodox, points out the difficulty in interpreting Calvin's such statements:

It is hard to understand how a theologian who rejects all mixture of the

divine and human natures in Christ, who everywhere in his Christology laid emphasis on the thought of 'two natures unimpaired after the union' and who, on that basis, rejected the doctrine of a communication of attributes from the divine nature to the human nature as taught by the Lutherans, (not to mention Osiander's confusion of Christ's 'essential' divine righteousness with His 'acquired righteousness'!) can now speak of the life flowing forth from the Godhead into Christ's human nature.

Calvin's such statements, according to McCormack (2010: 511), "work exceptionally in Calvin's writings: they are not the norm."

While we, following McCormack, should admit the difficulty in interpreting Calvin's such statements, we should take notice of the qualification that Calvin makes with regard to the life. After Calvin states that Christ's body can be called as life-giving in that it functions as channel to convey the life that dwells intrinsically in His divinity to us, he immediately qualifies this life as that which is deeply related to the righteousness Christ acquired by His salvific work in His flesh. Calvin's (*Comm. Jn. 6:51*) following statements, though already quoted above, is worthy to be quoted here again:

This will not be difficult to understand, if we consider what is the cause of life, namely, righteousness. And though righteousness flows from God alone, still we shall not attain the full manifestation of it anywhere else than in the flesh of Christ; for in it was accomplished the redemption of man, in it a sacrifice was offered to atone for sins, and an obedience yielded to God, to reconcile Him to us; it was also filled with the sanctification of the Spirit, and at length, having vanquished death, it was received into the heavenly glory.

Here Calvin relates the full manifestation of righteousness, which is the cause of life, in the flesh of Christ to His salvific work according to His humanity. This implies that for Calvin, the righteousness, which is the cause of life, is that which is acquired by Christ's salvific work in His humanity. Originally righteousness flows from God. And in the sense that the origin of righteousness is God, this righteousness can be called divine. Yet, this righteousness is not that which belongs peculiarly to Christ's

divinity. Rather it is that which is acquired by Christ's atoning death and obedience in His humanity. Here what Calvin implies is that Christ's body became the life-giving bread by virtue of that He acquired the righteousness, the cause of life, by His salvific work in His body.

Likewise it seems to be plausible to suggest the possibility that the divine life which is conveyed to believers through the channel of Christ's body in those statements is that which was acquired by Christ's salvific work in His body rather than what peculiarly belongs to His divinity. Here the distinction that Jonathan Slater makes between the two meanings the term "divine" marks - the one is "source" and the other is "quality" – for understanding appropriately the divine life which Calvin mentions is conveyed to believers through Christ's body, is meaningful. According to Slater (2005: 55), when Calvin refers to divine life conveyed to believers through Christ's body, he, with the term "divine," points to the source of the life rather than the quality of it. That is, the life can be properly called divine life because Christ acquired it from God the Father by His obedience according to His humanity rather than because it belongs peculiarly to Christ's divinity.

The communion which believers have with Christ is with His body and blood not less than with His Spirit, "so that thus they possess the whole Christ" (Calvin [1954]2000: 168). In the Lord's Supper this whole Christ is presented and with Him the blessings that He acquired by His salvific work in His humanity are given also. In this way, to Calvin, the truth that Christ as the substance and foundation of all blessings is truly communicated in the Lord's Supper, is important. These blessings are intimately connected to the substance of the body of Christ. And this intimate connection of the substance of Christ's body and the salvific gifts gives a clue to understand what the reality of the communication of the substance of Christ's body is in Calvin's theology.

5.6. The reality of the communication of the substance of the body of Christ

5.6.1. The term ‘substance’ rejected in metaphysical sense

Calvin boldly and habitually uses the term “substance” in describing the reality of the body and blood of Christ that is truly communicated in the Lord’s Supper. Given Calvin’s denial of any notion of the transfusion of Christ’s substance into believers, as made clear in his repudiation of what he thinks is Lutheran’s Eucharistic view, that is, the consumption of the localized body of Christ, his use of the term “substance” seems to be “confusing” (Garrish [1993]2002: 178). Calvin (1986: 107), in his first edition of the *Institutes* (1536), explicitly rejected that the actual substance of the body of Christ is given in the Lord’s Supper:

By way of teaching, we say [Christ] is in truth and in effective working shown forth, but not in nature. By this we obviously mean that the very substance of His body or the true and natural body of Christ is not given there.

Yet, the alteration of Calvin’s negative usage of the term “substance” to positive, is found in his treatise on the Lord’s Supper published in 1540. And since Calvin’s first positive use of the term in 1540, he persistently uses the term substance to describe the communion with Christ in His body and blood to the last period of his works.

Calvin’s fluid use of the term “substance” can be understood when it is considered that he attaches different meanings to the term. According to Gerrish ([1993]2002: 178), the term substance, when it was rejected by Calvin in his 1536 edition of the *Institutes*, means “the actual, space-occupying *material* of the body.” But when Calvin uses the term positively, he takes it “in an empirical, rather than a metaphysical, sense” (Gerrish [1993]2002: 178). Helmut Gollwitzer’s categorization

of the term substance in Calvin is useful to understand his genuine intention in using the term regarding the communication of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Gollwitzer (1937: 120 in Wendel [1950]1963: 342; cf. McDonnell 1967: 232-33) distinguishes three different meanings Calvin attaches to the term:

1. The 'substance or nature' of a thing, therefore the bodily substance; that is, 'the real and natural body of the Christ'; after 1536 Calvin never ceased to deny that this substance was given us; its function was to be the source from which flowed the life that was destined for us... 2. Christ Himself considered as 'the substance of the sacrament.' He is received by faith, in a personal union with Him. 3. The substance of that which is given to us when we receive Christ; namely, the life, the benefits, the strength proceeding from His body. That is a spiritual substance. It is at the same time the 'spiritual substance of the body of Christ,' whence it 'flows into our souls.'

Most of Calvin scholars, not only the scholars who are mentioned above, agree that Calvin rejects the term substance in the first sense. For Calvin, the communication of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper is by no means the communication of the material substance, which results in the mixture of Christ's flesh with our soul.

5.6.2. Receiving the life-giving virtue of Christ's body

Calvin (*TT* 2.577) explains the mode of communication of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper in terms of our receiving life from the body:

Whence it follows, that we are conjoined with Him by a substantial fellowship, just as substantial vigour flows from the head to the members. The explanation to be adopted will thus be, that substantially we become partakers of the flesh of Christ - not that any carnal mixture takes place, or that the flesh of Christ brought down from heaven penetrates into us, or is swallowed by the mouth, but because the flesh of Christ, in respect of its power and efficacy, vivifies our souls in the same way that bread and wine nourish our bodies.

Our partaking of the substance of Christ's body is by no means His body's penetrating, in a metaphysical sense, into our soul, but it is our eating of the body by means of which we receive life (Calvin *Comm.* Mt. 26:26; *Inst.*, 4.17.32). The following statement shows how closely Calvin conjoins the substance of Christ's body and the life-giving virtue of His body in the Lord's Supper:

I use the common form of expression, but my meaning is, that our souls are nourished by the substance of the body, that we may truly be made one with Him, or, what amounts to the same thing, that a life-giving virtue from Christ's flesh is poured into us by the Spirit, though it is at a great distance from us and is not mixed with us (*Comm.* 1 Cor. 11:24).

Here Calvin appears to equate receiving the substance of Christ's body with receiving the life-giving virtue of it. Calvin's example of the rays which radiate from the sun to explain the mode of the communion of the substance of Christ's body, makes this intimate connection of both clear:

For if we see that the sun, shedding its beams upon the earth, casts its substance in some measure upon it in order to beget, nourish, and give growth to its offspring - why should the radiance of Christ's Spirit be less in order to impart to us the communion of His flesh and blood? (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.17.12; cf. Gerrish [1993]2002: 177)

The sun communicates its substance upon the earth shedding its beams upon it to nourish it. Likewise, Christ, by His Spirit, communicates the substance of His body "transfusing into us the vivifying vigour of His flesh" (Calvin *TT* 2.240). As Gerrish ([1993]2002: 177) suggests, in Calvin's mind to partake of the substance of Christ's body is "synonymous" with partaking of the virtue of His body.¹⁰¹ Though the body

¹⁰¹ Gerrish ([1993]2002: 177) says that for Calvin, "to feed upon Christ's flesh, or to have communion with His body, is nothing other than to be brought under the sway of the vital power that Christ wields from the right hand of the Father." In support of his suggestion, Gerrish ([1993]2002: 178) refers to Calvin's employing of various circumlocutions to explain the mode of partaking of Christ's flesh. According to him ([1993]2002: 178), Calvin, instead of "the flesh of Christ," mentions "the vigor of His flesh," "life from His flesh," "from the substance of His flesh," and "the mystical and incomprehensible operation of the flesh." He ([1993]2002: 179-80) concludes that Calvin's concept of union with Christ is "substantial," not because Christ's substance is transfused into us, but because the vital power we receive is from the substance.

of Christ and the gift acquired by His salvific work are distinguished in concept, “both are not disjoined in reality” (Wallas 1953: 203). In this sense, it seems to be that when Calvin positively uses the term substance regarding the communion of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, he uses it in the third sense in Gollwitzer’s categorization of the term.

Yet it should be noted that Calvin cannot be satisfied with the reception of the benefit of Christ’s salvific works apart from His body in which He acquired the salvific gifts. Calvin (*Comm. 1 Cor. 11:24*) explicitly states that “Christ does not simply present to us the benefit of His death and resurrection, but the very body in which He suffered and rose again.” To Calvin, it is not possible that the salvific gifts are given to us without our participation in the body of Christ. It is only when we receive the substance of the body of Christ that we come to be partakers of its benefits (Calvin *Comm. 1 Cor. 11:24*). In this sense, the suggestion of Grass (1954: 230, 238, 239 in McDonnell 1967: 241) seems to be appropriate that Calvin’s real intention in saying that we receive the substance of Christ’s flesh, is to emphasize the truth that “the flesh is the source of the power of life.” Christ’s flesh is the source of the power of life because Christ accomplished redemption by His salvific works including His atoning death and resurrection in His humanity.

McDonnell’s interpretation that Calvin uses the term substance not in philosophical terms, but rather in soteriological terms, is also in line with this. According to him (1967: 246-48), Calvin’s emphasis on the body and blood of Christ is actually an emphasis on the redemption accomplished in His body and blood. Christ’s body was given and His blood was shed for our redemption. This is the very reason why Christ’s body and blood become the food and drink for our souls. Therefore there is no other way than partaking of Christ’s body and blood through which we receive His salvific gifts. Only through partaking of Christ’s body and blood can we be partakers of the blessings acquired by His body and blood. In this sense, for Calvin,

Christ who is given in the Lord's Supper is "the Redeemer, the God-man who died and resurrected for us." That is, Calvin's concept of substance signifies "the profound reality of the Person of the Redeemer and Mediator."

5.6.3. Strengthening our union with Christ

To Calvin, eating of Christ's flesh and blood is not the gift initiated in the Lord's Supper, but the gift given by faith apart from the Supper. And the communion of the substance of Christ's body and blood which occurs in the Lord's Supper, is not different in its essence from the communion initiated by faith apart from the Supper. The union with Christ, whether it occurs in the Lord's Supper or apart from the Supper, is all the same as the union with the substance of Christ's body. Calvin (*TT* 2.520-22) makes this clear against Heshusius who asserts that something new in respect of the union with Christ is given in the Lord's Supper in that we come to eat Christ's flesh corporeally in the Supper. As Davis (1995: 214) indicates, "there cannot be a different or separate type of presence in the Eucharist than what the Christian already has" in Calvin's theology, because "he has set up his theology so that the definition of being a Christian is to be in union with Jesus Christ." The union with Christ is confirmed and strengthened in the Lord's Supper (Calvin *TT* 2.524).

For Calvin, eating Christ's body, the life-giving bread, is not one-off event. Rather it should be continued until we fully get eternal life. The union with Christ is "not whole and perfect from the very first, but subject to growth, vicissitudes, and impediments" (Gerrish [1993]2002: 134). Calvin's view is shown clearly in his interpretation of the saying of Jesus Christ in John 6:51: "... my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." Here Calvin (*Comm.* Jn. 6:51) gives two senses to the word "give":

The word *give* is used in various senses. The first *giving*, of which He has formerly spoken, is made daily, whenever Christ offers Himself to us. Secondly, it denotes that singular *giving* which was done on the

cross, when He offered Himself as a sacrifice to His Father; for then He delivered Himself up to death for the life of men, and now He invites us to enjoy the fruit of His death. For it would be of no avail to us that that sacrifice was once offered, if we did not now feast on that sacred banquet.

Christ's giving His flesh to us means not only His atoning death on the cross in His body but also His giving of His flesh for us to be fed on it daily. If Christ did not give Himself as a sacrifice to His Father, our eating of His flesh as the life-giving bread would have been of no avail. Likewise, it is also beyond doubt that Christ's giving Himself as the sacrifice would be of no avail to us unless we now feast on the sacred banquet. For Calvin (*Inst.*, 4.17.33), the significance of the Lord's Supper regarding our salvation is to help us to grow more and more together with Christ, engrafted into His body, until "He perfectly joins us with Him in the heavenly life." It is because "insofar as a sacrament recruits all our five senses," we can receive the gift of communion with the substance of Christ's body and blood more "effectively - that is, more clearly and forcefully" in the Lord's Supper (Gerrish [1993]2002: 163).¹⁰²

5.7. Summary

This chapter investigated Calvin's idea of the communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper with the conviction that for Calvin, the *res* of the Lord's Supper is nothing other than our union with Christ that is also the quintessence of our salvation. In this investigation it was ascertained that the nature of Calvin's notion of our communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper is coincide with his notion about our union with Christ accomplished through faith in the soteriological context. In the

¹⁰² This leads us to think about the relation of the communion with Christ and faith. According to Calvin, the communion with Christ is accomplished by faith. Therefore it can be said that to strengthen faith corresponds to strengthen the communion with Christ. In this sense, the benefits of the Lord's Supper, namely, the confirmation of the truth of the union with Christ and the truly communication of Christ's substance are concomitant matters.

previous chapter Calvin's notion of our union with Christ was described as a Spirit-bonded union by faith, which has a personal and dynamic dimension, not an ontological. This nature of Calvin's notion of the union is confirmed in his idea of our communion with Christ that occurs in the Supper.

According to Calvin's exposition, we truly have communion with Christ in His body and blood in the Lord's Supper. The substance of Christ's body and blood is truly communicated to us in the Sacrament. There is a sacramental conjunction between the external materials as signs and Christ's body and blood as the reality signified. When we partake of the sacramental signs, we truly receive the substance of Christ's body. Our union with Christ initiated through faith in the soteriological context is confirmed and strengthened by our reception of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper.

Calvin's insistence on our true reception of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper is deeply related to his conviction that Christ's body is the source of the power of life since He accomplished our redemption in His body. Thus for Calvin, the reality of the reception of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper is the reception of the life-giving virtue of it. When we partake of the substance of Christ's body, we partake of the salvific grace that Christ acquired in His body.

To be sure, our eating of Christ's body is not carnal eating of Christ's natural body, as taught by Lutherans. Calvin's Chalcedonian Christology cannot approve the local or corporeal presence of Christ's body. Rather our eating of Christ's body in the Sacrament is spiritual. By virtue of the inner grace of the Holy Spirit, we become partakers of Christ's body in the Sacrament. By the secret power of the Holy Spirit, the distance between the ascended body of Christ and us is overcome.

For Calvin, it is also because Christ raises our soul to heavenly throne where He is seated that the distance between Christ's body and us cannot be an obstacle to our

communion with His body in the Lord's Supper. Here our faith is involved in the communion. The conjunction between the sacramental signs and the substance of Christ's body is sacramental, not ontological. Therefore when we participate in the sacrament, we are bidden to lift up our hearts and to seek Christ in heaven. Calvin's conviction of the necessity of faith in our union with Christ, besides his keenness for the Chalcedonian Christological formula, is an important motive of his rejection of Lutheran idea of the local presence of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper. The idea of the corporeal presence of Christ's body in the Supper cannot be accepted since it makes even unbelievers partakers of Christ's body and receivers of the life in Him.

Until now, throughout three chapters (chap. 3, 4, 5), the attempt to give an answer to the two questions that revolving the question of deification in Calvin's theology has been made: (1) Whether Calvin understands the communication of properties of Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union on ontological level or on personal level. (2) Whether Calvin understands believers' union with Christ on personal level or on ontological level beyond personal. The hitherto study in this thesis seems to support the argument of the interpreters who reject the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin. Calvin's idea of the hypostatic union of Christ's divinity and His humanity does not approve the ontological interpenetration between His two natures. Calvin understands the communication of properties on a personal level, in which case, the full integrity of Christ's two natures are sustained in their hypostatic union. Therefore Christ's humanity does not function as the channel through which the intrinsic divine life flows to believers in their union with Him. To Calvin our union with Christ is personal union in which the ontological distinctiveness between Christ and us is guaranteed in the union of both.

Now we have one more question to consider with regard to the question of deification in Calvin's theology: Whether the blessing conferred on believers in their

union with Christ is that which peculiarly belongs to Christ's divinity or that which He acquired through His salvific work in His humanity. As already seen in this chapter, to Calvin, the reception of the substance of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper is, in its reality, same as the reception of the life-giving virtue of it. When we partake of the substance of Christ's body, we partake of the salvific grace that Christ acquired in His body. Calvin's such an idea is clearly shown in his discussion on justification. Calvin makes it clear that the righteousness of Christ, on the basis of which we are justified, is acquired by Christ's atoning death and obedience in His humanity. In the next chapter, Calvin's understanding of justification will be explored at length.

Chapter 6. Calvin's Doctrine of Justification

6.1. Introduction

Alister. E. McGrath (1982: 241) asserts that the chief discontinuity of the Reformers with the Medieval Church with regard to the doctrine of justification is their understanding of justification in forensic terms. The theologians of the Roman Catholic Church in the medieval period understand the concept of justification as God's act of making a believer really righteous. The understanding of St. Thomas Aquinas on the concept of justification is a representative example for this. For Aquinas (FS, Q[113], A[1]; cf. McCormack 2004: 88), justification is a process in which God makes the believer to be just. This state of justice is "a kind of rightness of order in man's own interior disposition," in which "what is highest in man [*i.e.* reason] is subject to God and the lower powers of his soul [*i.e.* appetite] are subject to" his reason. This right order was disturbed by sin. Every sin implies the disorder that neither man's reason is subject to God nor the appetite is subject to the reason in man himself. In this sense, every sin may be called "injustice." Justification is the very "movement" of the soul caused by God "from the state of injustice to the state of justice" (McCormack 2004: 88; cf. Aquinas FS, Q[113], A[5]). For this, God infuses "the gift of justifying grace" into the soul, which causes a movement of man's free-will towards God and remaking of the soul after the image of God (McCormack 2004: 87; cf. Aquinas FS, Q[113], A[3]).¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Actually, such an understanding of justification can be traced back to that of St. Augustine. It is generally agreed that for Augustine, justification involves the process of being made righteous. In his anti-Pelagian writing, *On the Spirit and the Letter*, Augustine (1999: 333-34; cf. Wright 2006: 56-7) interprets the Latin verb *iustifico* as 'to make righteous': "What else does the phrase 'being justified' [*iustificati*] signify than 'being made righteous' [*iustificati*], - by Him, of course, who justifies the ungodly man, that he may become a godly one [*fiat iustus*] instead?" Augustine's understanding of 'to justify' as such is confirmed in his (1999: 305, 312, 341) other statements (cf. Lane 2002: 45). That Augustine understands justification as a process of being made righteous enables McGrath

In counteraction to the transformative concept of justification of the Medieval Church, the Reformers solidify the forensic concept of justification. They understood justification as God's acts by which He absolves believers of sins and declares them to be righteous in His tribunal. Justification, for the Reformers, involves "a change in man's status rather than in his nature" (McGrath 1982: 223).¹⁰⁴ A strong distinction between justification and sanctification is made by them. While the former is related to God's act of declaring a sinner to be righteous, yet the latter is related to the process of renewal of the believer's existence by the grace of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁵

Calvin, who is a leading figure of the Reformation tradition, also holds fast to the forensic character of justification. For Calvin, justification is God's act of judging believers righteous solely on the basis of Christ's righteousness, which is imputed to them. In this respect, justification is distinguished from sanctification, which involves the change of man's inner being. However, Calvin emphasizes the causal priority of union with Christ to justification. For Calvin, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us for our justification is carried out in the context of our union with Christ. Justification is one of benefits that flow from union with Christ. Calvin's such an emphasis on the causal priority of union with Christ to justification renders the

(1982: 238) to assert that "in this respect at least, the medieval period was totally faithful to the teaching of Augustine."

¹⁰⁴ McGrath (1982: 223) portrays the leading characteristics of the doctrines of justification of the Reformers as follows: (1) justification is defined as God's forensic declaration that the Christian is righteous (2) "a deliberate and systematic distinction is made" between justification and sanctification or regeneration (3) "the formal cause of justification is the alien righteousness of Christ, external to man and imputed to him."

¹⁰⁵ With respect to this, it should be mentioned that Luther is distinguished from other Reformers in that he compromises the exclusively forensic character of justification. While Luther insists on the external and alien righteousness of Christ (McGrath 1982: 225), he at the same time identifies the word justification in the word of God as creative, not just judicially or forensically declarative. This is deeply related to Luther's understanding of justification as the cause of sanctification. Luther relates sanctification to justification as effect to cause (Garcia 2009: 422). In this sense, McGrath (1982: 225) suggests that Luther "can be regarded as remaining faithful to Augustinian understanding of justification as both event and process, embracing the beginning, continuation, and perfection of the Christian life, and thereby subsuming regeneration under justification."

discussion on his doctrine of justification complicated. Since union with Christ has existential dimension in contrast to the forensic justification, from Calvin's insistence on the causal priority of union with Christ to justification, the question of compatibility between the forensic aspect of justification and the existential aspect of union with Christ is necessarily raised: Is it possible to speak in defense of the forensic aspect of justification within the context of the existential reality of union with Christ? It will be unavoidable to work out this question in the discussion on Calvin's doctrine of justification.

This chapter is an attempt to figure out the nature of the blessing conferred on believers in their union with Christ in Calvin's theology, by exploring his idea of the nature of justification, a representative benefit of the union with Christ along with sanctification. In this chapter, the forensic nature of Calvin's notion of justification and his emphasis on the causal priority of union with Christ to justification will be first discussed in order. Then in order to work out the question of compatibility between Calvin's forensic definition of justification and his understanding of union with Christ as the ground of justification, his refutation of Andreas Osiander's teaching of justification will be scrutinized at length, where his view of the relation of union with Christ and justification becomes clear. And lastly how Calvin understands the relation between justification and sanctification, which is deeply related to the question of the relation between his forensic definition of justification and his insistence on the causal priority of union with Christ to justification, will be discussed.

6.2. The forensic and gratuitous nature of Calvin's concept of justification

6.2.1. A gratuitous juridical judgment of God

The fact that Calvin's concept of justification is forensic is demonstrated by the words which Calvin uses for defining the concept of justification. Calvin, in his book of the *Institutes* (3.11.2), explains the concept of justification as follows:

He is said to be justified in God's sight who is both reckoned (*censetur*) righteous in God's judgment and has been accepted on account of his righteousness...Now he is justified who is reckoned (*habetur*) in the condition not of a sinner, but of a righteous man; and for that reason, he stands firm before God's judgment seat while all sinners fall.

Here the Latin words which are used by Calvin to explain the meaning of justification have a forensic concept. Besides the English word "reckon", they can also be translated as "regard as", "account", "consider as" etc.¹⁰⁶ With regard to justification, these words concern God's juridical act of declaring that believers are righteous. Therefore such a definition of justification for which these words are used like Calvin's definition of justification, is distinguished obviously from the understanding of Medieval theologians that justification is equivalent to making righteous.

Calvin takes some Scriptural usages of the word "to justify" in support of his view that justification concerns a juridical act rather than making righteous. For instances,

¹⁰⁶ "He, on the other hand, is justified who is *regarded* (*habetur*) not as a sinner, but as righteous, and as such stands acquitted at the judgment-seat of God, where all sinners are condemned" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.2, emphasis added); "Forgiveness of sins is preached when men are taught that for them Christ became redemption, righteousness, salvation, and life [1 Cor. 1:30], by whose name they are freely *accounted* (*habeantur*) righteous and innocent in God's sight" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.3.19); "... after pardon of sins has been obtained, the sinner is *considered as* (*habitum*) a just man in God's sight" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.3).

the saying of Luke that “people, having heard Christ, justified God” [Lk. 7:29] cannot mean that “they confer righteousness” on God since “righteousness always remains undivided with God” (*Inst.*, 3.11.3). And when Christ declares that “wisdom [which Calvin interprets is God’s doctrine] is justified of all her children,” [Lk. 7:35] He doesn’t mean that God’s doctrine is made just since it is righteous of itself (*Inst.*, 3.11.3). Both expressions, according to Calvin (*Inst.* 3.11.3), “are equivalent to attributing due praise to God and His doctrine.” For Calvin, justification is the very juridical act of God declaring that someone is righteous rather than God’s act of making him righteous.

Calvin insists that justification such as God’s juridical judgment is based not on the inherent condition of man who is judged, but only on the righteousness of Christ which he grasps through faith. God justifies the believer who, “excluded from the righteousness of works, grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith, and clothed in it, appears in God’s sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man” (*Inst.*, 3.11.2).¹⁰⁷ In this sense, to Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.2), justification is the gracious juridical judgment of God. Justification can be explained “simply as the [free] acceptance with which God receives us into His favor as righteous men.”

6.2.2. Remission of sins and imputation of Christ’s righteousness

As a gratuitous juridical judgment of God, the believer’s justification consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.1) Since the believer is justified by the remission of sins, justification can only be

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that Calvin speaks not only of justification by faith but also of justification by works. In the latter case, the basis of the judgment is on the innocence of the one who are judged. Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.2) says that the man “in whose life that purity and holiness will be found which deserves a testimony of righteousness before God’s throne will be said to be justified.” God declares an innocent man righteous according to his own innocence. However Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.12.1) is convinced that this case cannot happen by the reason of man’s depravity and God’s perfect justice.

understood within a legal framework. We are all guilty before God and thus deserving of condemnation from Him. However in His act of justification, God absolves us from all blame (Calvin *Comm.* Rom. 8:33). The believer is accounted as righteous before God's tribunal when He acquits him of guilt (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.3). This is non-imputation of unrighteousness. God does not count our sins against us. We are justified when God reconciles us to Himself, not counting our sins against us (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.22). The basis of God's non-imputation of our sins to us is the righteousness which Christ attained by His atoning death. Our guilt was transferred to Christ¹⁰⁸ and He paid the penalty of our sins through His sacrifice on the cross in our place. On the basis of this righteousness of Christ God accounts us righteous, not counting our sins against us:

...righteousness has been procured for us through the death of Christ, so that, our sins being remitted, we are acceptable to God (Calvin *Comm.* Col. 1:22);
Christ by His obedience satisfied the Father's justice...as on account of the sacrifice which He offered is our guilt removed (Calvin *Comm.* Rom. 3:24).

The concept of imputation is involved in this process. Besides imputation of our sins to Christ, justification involves the imputation of the righteousness that Christ attained by His atoning death. Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.3) refers to the imputation of Christ's righteousness as the cause or way by which the forgiveness of sins is attained: "since God justifies us by the intercession of Christ, He absolves us not by the confirmation of our own innocence but by the imputation of righteousness." It is this concept of imputation that makes the forensic nature of Calvin's concept of justification more clear. Imputation can be defined as a declarative reckoning in ascribing to one what belongs properly to another. Thus, in the context of justification, imputation means God's declarative reckoning of Christ's

¹⁰⁸ "This is our acquittal: the guilt that held us liable for punishment has been transferred to the head of the Son of God" (Calvin *Inst.*, 2.16.5); "He [the Son of God] who was about to cleanse the filth of those iniquities was covered with them by transferred imputation" (Calvin *Inst.*, 2.16.6).

righteousness as that of believers' (Garcia 2009: 419). Calvin uses the term imputation in this sense in his discussion on believers' justification. For Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.3), imputation is the very mechanism in which Christ's righteousness is reckoned as believers' own righteousness.

According to Calvin (*Comm. Rom. 4:3*), since righteousness belongs properly only to Christ, in order for us to be justified, "Christ should come forth as one who clothes us with His own righteousness." Therefore the question involved in the matter of justification is "not what men are in themselves, but how God regards them." Calvin's understanding of imputation in terms of God's declarative reckoning of Christ's righteousness, which is *extra nos*, as ours, is expressed well in his approving quotation of Ambrose who took notice of the analogy between the blessing of Jacob and our justification: It was by wearing his brother's cloth and thus being concealed in it that Jacob, who did not of himself deserve the right of the first-born, received the blessing of the first-born. In a similar manner, we "hide under the precious purity of our first-born brother, Christ, so that we may be attested righteous in God's sight" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.23). In this way the concept of imputation reflects well the forensic character of Calvin's concept of justification.

6.2.3. The righteousness that Christ acquired in His active obedience

Since for Calvin the imputation of Christ's righteousness is the cause or way by which the forgiveness of sins is attained, both the imputation of Christ's righteousness and the forgiveness of sins are interrelated with each other (Venema 2007: 100). In his repudiation of Osiander on the doctrine of justification Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.8-9) makes it clear that this righteousness is that which Christ acquired by His obedience to the Father in His human nature.¹⁰⁹ However, it is worthy to infer

¹⁰⁹ A more specific consideration of Calvin's repudiation of Osiander regarding the doctrine of justification will be done in § 6.5.

whether the righteousness is limited only to His atoning death or extended to His whole life of obedience in Calvin's thought.

This question is related to the distinction which Post-Calvin reformed theologians draw regarding Christ's obedience: "passive obedience" and "active obedience." While the former corresponds to the atoning death of Christ on the cross, the latter imports His observance of the law throughout His whole life. For instance, Berkhof ([1939]1974: 380-1), drawing a distinction between the passive obedience of Christ and His active obedience, indicates that while the former consists in "His paying the penalty of sin by His sufferings and death," the latter in "all that He did to observe the law." According to Berkhof ([1939]1974: 514-6), these two aspects of Christ's obedience correspond to the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which constitute justification, respectively. While as the negative element in justification the remission of sins is "based more particularly, though not exclusively, on the passive obedience of Christ," as the positive element in justification the imputation of Christ's righteousness is based more particularly on the active obedience of Christ. By the imputation of the active obedience of Christ, which is the positive element in justification, believers can receive the adoption of children and the right to eternal life.

Justification is often identified simply with the forgiveness of sins in Calvin's discussion on it.¹¹⁰ And as in his commentary on Rom. 4:25, Calvin (cf. *Comm.* Rom. 5:9; *Comm.* Col. 1:22) often refers to the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to the believer for justification in terms of His atoning death alone:

¹¹⁰ "God justifies by pardoning" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.11); "the righteousness of faith ... consists solely in the forgiveness of sins" (*Inst.*, 3.11.21); "such righteousness can be called, in a word, 'remission of sins'" (*Inst.*, 3.11.21); "the apostle so connects forgiveness of sins with righteousness that he shows them to be exactly the same" (*Inst.*, 3.11.22); "certainly, since it is the forgiveness of sins that alone reconciles God to us ... this passage shows plainly what is the strict meaning of the word *justified*: it means, to stand before God as if we were righteous... Hence it follows, that *righteousness* consists in the forgiveness of sins" (*Comm.* Lk. 18:13-14); "... righteousness, according to Paul, is nothing other than the remission of sins" (*Comm.* Rom. 4:6).

...when we possess the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection, there is nothing wanting to the completion of perfect righteousness. By separating His death from His resurrection, he [Paul] no doubt accommodates what he says to our ignorance; for it is also true that righteousness has been obtained for us by that obedience of Christ, which He exhibited in His death.

In this sense it is likely that for Calvin Christ's righteousness which is imputed to the believers is based only on Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Clifford (2007: 331-348) is one of the proponents of this position. He (2007: 336) argues that for Calvin Christ's righteousness is identical with the remission of sins. Clifford suggests that for Calvin Christ's "active obedience" is significant to the believer's salvation in two senses. On the one hand, Christ's active obedience is required of Him to be qualified as "the guiltless sin-bearer." In this respect, Christ's active obedience is related to the justification of believers only indirectly. On the other hand, Christ's active obedience, to Calvin, is "a model and example for the believer's sanctification" (Clifford 2007: 347). Behind this position, there is Clifford's anxiety that the concept of the imputation of righteousness which is acquired through Christ's active obedience may result in antinomianism. If we are justified by means of the imputation of Christ's active obedience, that is, if His perfect observance of the law becomes ours in justification, this will abet our indolence in sanctification. Clifford (2007: 348) insists that Christ's active obedience is rather the model and example for our sanctification than one of the elements comprising justification.

Though Calvin does not explicitly draw the later distinction between Christ's "active" and "passive" obedience, there are some passages in his writings where he clearly anticipates the post-Calvin Reformed doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience for the believer's justification. In his commentary on Rom. 3:31, for instance, Calvin (*Comm. Rom. 3:31*) writes,

For the moral law is in reality confirmed and established through faith in Christ, inasmuch as it was given for this end - to lead man to Christ by

showing him his iniquity... where there is a coming to Christ, there is first found in Him *the perfect righteousness of the law, which becomes ours by imputation*, and then there is sanctification, by which our hearts are prepared to keep the law. Similar is the case with ceremonies, which indeed cease and vanish away when Christ comes, but they are in reality confirmed by Him...they have obtained their accomplishment in Christ (emphasis added).

Here Calvin makes it clear that justification involves the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness of the law. And this law consists in the ceremonial law and the moral law as well, according to his description. Christ perfectly fulfilled both of them. Thus it is certain that the perfect righteousness of Christ mentioned here is that which is attained by His active obedience of the whole law. This sentiment is reiterated in Calvin's Commentary on Rom. 3:22:

First, the question respecting our justification is to be referred, not to the judgment of men, but to the judgment of God, before whom *nothing is counted righteousness, but perfect and absolute obedience to the law*; which appears clear from its promises and threatenings: if no one is found who has attained to such a perfect measure of holiness, it follows that all are in themselves destitute of righteousness. Secondly, it is necessary that Christ should come to our aid; who, being alone just, can render us just by transferring to us His own righteousness (emphasis added).

Before God, nothing is counted righteousness but perfect and absolute obedience to the law. This implies that the righteousness of Christ which is the basis of our justification is that which was acquired by Christ's perfect and absolute obedience to the law.

And in his discussion on the righteousness which Christ acquired "to render God favorable and kindly toward us," Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.16.5) mentions the whole course of Christ's obedience. While Scripture ascribes our redemption as peculiar and proper to Christ's atoning death, "the remainder of the obedience that He manifested in His life is not excluded." The basis of our acquittal before God's judgment is extended

to the whole life of Christ from His birth to His death and resurrection.¹¹¹ In view of these passages, it can be said that for Calvin Christ's righteousness which is imputed to believers for their justification, is that which is attained by "the whole sum of Christ's obedience" including His atoning death and His perfect obedience of the law as well (Venema 2007: 101).¹¹²

6.2.4. Faith, the instrumental cause of justification

Calvin's insistence on that justification is obtained by faith shows the gratuitous character of his concept of justification. Men are justified with Christ's righteousness imputed to them by faith. To be sure, Calvin makes it clear that faith of itself does not possess the power of justifying. Since faith is always weak and imperfect, "if faith justified of itself or through some intrinsic power," justification effected by the faith "would be defective" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.7). For Calvin, that faith of itself is not meritorious is because it is nothing but depending thoroughly on Christ, who is "the material cause and at the same time the Author and Minister" of the gift of justification. Faith places us before God "empty and with the mouth of our soul open to seek Christ's grace" (*Inst.*, 3.11.7). Faith is the vessel through which we receive Christ's righteousness (*Inst.*, 3.11.7). In this sense, Calvin designates faith the instrumental cause in justification in terms of Aristotle. He (*Comm. Rom.* 3:24; cf. *Comm. Rom.* 3:22) writes,

...for it shows that God's mercy is the efficient cause, that Christ with His blood is the meritorious cause, that the formal or the instrumental

¹¹¹ It should be noted that I am indebted to Coxhead (2008: 311), Yoo (2009: 19-20, 25-7) and Venema (2009: 28-31) for these references to Calvin's approval of the imputation of Christ's active obedience.

¹¹² Coxhead (2008: 311-2) also insists that Calvin believes that Christ's active obedience in fulfilment of the law is an aspect constituting Christ's imputed righteousness to believers. For the sketch of the debate in the period of Reformed Orthodoxy and more recent literature regarding whether Calvin teaches the imputation of Christ's active obedience, see Venema 2009: 19-26.

cause is faith in the word, and that moreover, the final cause is the glory of the divine justice and goodness.

So far the forensic and gratuitous nature of Calvin's concept of justification has been discussed. For Calvin, justification is God's act of judging believers righteous solely on the basis of Christ's righteousness, which was acquired by His obedience and is imputed to them with their faith. However, the discussion on Calvin's doctrine of justification becomes complicated when his emphasis on the casual priority of union with Christ to justification is considered. Calvin grounds justification on union with Christ. Justification is a salvific gift that is conferred on us through our union with Christ. Let us now observe this subject.

6.3. Union with Christ as the logical ground of justification

Most of Calvin scholars agree that for Calvin justification is a gift which is given to the believers through their union with Christ. According to Calvin, justification occurs through the believers' putting on Christ and being engrafted into His body. The believers are justified in that the righteousness of Christ becomes theirs by His indwelling in their hearts and His making them one with Him. That is, the union with Christ is the logical ground of justification in Calvin's theology.¹¹³

¹¹³ Every interpreter of Calvin is not in agreement with this. For instance, Fesko (2009: 98-104) advocates the priority of justification to union with Christ in Calvin's soteriology. In support of his assertion, Fesko (2009: 103) draws on Calvin's statement that justification "is the main hinge on which religion turns" and that apart from it, men have neither a foundation on which to establish their salvation "nor one on which to build piety toward God" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.1). And Fesko (2009: 101) holds Calvin's identification of justification by faith as the main theme of the Epistle to the Romans as "a counter evidence" against the priority of the union with Christ to justification.

In response of this, Gaffin (2009b: 104-13) insists on the priority of the union with Christ to justification in Calvin's soteriology. While he admits the "pivotal and central importance" of justification as the hinge of true religion, Gaffin (2009a: 75) puts a limitation to justification as the hinge: The hinge is not a skyhook. For justification, as the hinge, to function effectively, it has to be anchored to something else, namely, union with Christ. Justification as the hinge of true religion "can only turn as it is anchored firmly in our union with Christ, as we are bonded to Him by faith. Indeed, as Calvin sees it, justification has its pivotal significance only as - and because it is - anchored in union" (cf. Gaffin 2009b: 109). And Gaffin (2009b: 109) suggests that Calvin's identification of justification as the main theme of Romans does not nullify the priority of the union with Christ to

This idea is already implied in Calvin's (*Inst.*, 3.1.1) initial statement in his discussion on the application or personal appropriation of salvation that was accomplished once-for-all by Christ, albeit put negatively:

We must now examine this question. How do we receive those benefits which the Father bestowed on His only-begotten Son - not for Christ's own private use, but that He might enrich poor and needy men? First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from Him, all that He has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us.

What Calvin here intends with the adverb "first" is, as Richard Gaffin (2009a: 70) suggests, that union with Christ is a "most fundamental" matter in the application of salvation. Our union with Christ is so central in Calvin's applied soteriology that Calvin can affirm that without it the salvation accomplished once-for-all by Christ "remains useless and of no value for us." And this centrality of union with Christ in Calvin's applied soteriology is reiterated more positively at the outset of his discussion on justification:

Christ was given to us by God's generosity, to be grasped and possessed by us in faith. By partaking of Him, we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's Spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.1).

Here Calvin positively expresses that the saving benefits that Christ procured for the believers are given to them only by their partaking of Christ. Calvin points out that justification and sanctification, which Calvin designates "a double grace" in the singular, represents all other saving benefits given to the believers through their union with Christ. Here Calvin clearly indicates the priority of union with Christ to justification, which composes "a double grace" along with sanctification. This priority

justification in Calvin's soteriology since both are "hardly incompatible." For Calvin, union with Christ and justification are equally central in the application of salvation, "but they are that as the latter is the consequence of the former, not the reverse."

of union with Christ to justification is also clearly seen in Calvin's following inducement (*Inst.*, 3.16.1): "Do you wish, then, to attain righteousness in Christ? You must first possess Christ." Calvin's intention here is to point out that union with Christ is the logical ground of justification, rather than to introduce the temporal gap between both. Justification is the immediate, direct, and simultaneous consequence of union with Christ: "Therefore, as soon as you become engrafted into Christ through faith, you are made a son of God, an heir of heaven, a partaker in righteousness, a possessor of life" (*Inst.*, 3.15.6). It is "when we have been engrafted in Christ" that we are "righteous in God's sight" (*Inst.*, 3.17.10). It is also made clear in the following statement that union with Christ is positioned as a cause of justification in Calvin's theology:

[B]ut this order must be kept, that is, we must set Jesus Christ before us, and be conjoined together in Him; and then *this union will cause us to be beholden and reputed the children of Abram*. Wherefore there could be no such seed as is here spoken of, except Jesus Christ were the head, and we united to Him as members of His body, and thereby to be of the house of God, and so consequently the house of Abram (Calvin [1954]2000: 90).

The intimate connection that justification has with union with Christ leads Calvin even to describe the latter as identical with the former. In the *Institutes*, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.21) writes,

Thus, him whom He [God] receives into union with Himself the Lord is said to justify, because He cannot receive him into grace nor join him to Himself unless He turns him from a sinner into a righteous man.

What Calvin means with this statement is not that justification is a prerequisite for union with Christ. Rather, as Carpenter (2002: 382) interprets, it is that justification is a necessary salvific blessing of union with Christ. Divine reception of us into union with Christ is the very justification of us in the sense that we are not united to Christ without the grace of justification. For Calvin, that faith functions as the instrumental

cause for our justification is only in so far as it engrafts us into the body of Christ (*Inst.*, 3.2.30) “so that, made one with Him, we may enjoy participation in His righteousness” (*Inst.*, 3.17.11).

Calvin points out that the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us is not an abstract act of God apart from any intimate relationship between Christ and us. Rather Christ’s righteousness is imputed only in the context of our putting on Christ and being engrafted into His body, that is, our being made one with Him. This is the reason why the mystical union should be accorded by us the highest degree of importance:

... that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts - in short, that mystical union - are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with Him in the gifts with which He has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate Him outside ourselves from afar in order that His righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into His body - in short, because He deigns to make us one with Him. For this reason, we glory that we have fellowship of righteousness with Him (*Inst.*, 3.11.10).

In the sense that we are accepted by God as righteous only on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ, our righteousness in justification is always *extra nos sed in Christo*. However, the righteousness of Christ, which is the basis of divine acceptance of us in justification, is connected to us personally in the sense that we come to be sharers of the righteousness within the context of our personal union with Christ. We possess Christ’s righteousness because we are partakers of Him (*Inst.*, 3.11.23). In this way, for Calvin, union with Christ is the logical ground of justification.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ In view of Calvin’s such insistence on the intimate connection between union with Christ and justification as a cause and consequence (logically, not temporally), Coates (1963: 327)’ following judgment cannot be accepted as just: “Calvin, in his cold, abstract, systematic approach to doctrine, has little room for the Pauline *Christus in nobis* that is so prominent in, and so characteristic of Luther’s theology” (cf. Partee [2008]2010: 223).

6.4. The question of the relation between union with Christ and imputation: problem of incompatibility

At this point, the relation between Calvin's understanding of union with Christ and his "forensic" definition of justification, comes into question. Calvin asserts that justification is based solely upon the perfect righteousness of Christ that is imputed to us. However this justification, according to him, occurs through our putting on Christ and being engrafted into His body. That is, we are justified in that the righteousness of Christ becomes ours by His indwelling in our hearts and His making us one with Him. Herein the following questions are raised: since the union with Christ is defined in existential terms contradictory to the notion of a forensic, imputative justification, if we are justified by sharing in the righteousness of Christ in us, how can the forensic nature of the righteousness be preserved? In that case, can the righteousness be still called "an alien righteousness"?

6.4.1. Suggestions of the incompatibility between union with Christ and imputation

In fact, some Calvin scholars suggest that there is a tension, or even a contradiction, between Calvin's juridical conception of justification and his treatment of justification as an outworking of union with Christ, by which we are transformed through the indwelling Spirit. Lüttge is one of the vigorous proponents of such a claim. In his interpretation of Calvin's doctrine of justification, Lüttge (1909: 27, 43, 44 in Venema 2007: 150-1) argues that Calvin's usage of the imputation of Christ's righteousness in describing justification is not compatible with his view of the believer's renewing union with Christ. There is a tension in Calvin's thought between a "pure forensic conception" of justification, which involves the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, and a conception of justification as the result of the renewal of life

through union with Christ. Lüttge (1909: 48, 84, 89 in Venema, 2007: 151-2; cf. W. Evans 1996: 11-2) attempts to resolve this tension by subordinating the former to the latter. According to him, unlike the doctrine of justification in later Reformed orthodoxy, the forensic conception of justification is not fundamental to Calvin's viewpoint. Though imputation of the righteousness of Christ to believers is formally asserted by Calvin, it has, in actuality, no real place in his thought.

Stuermann (1952: 180-7) defends Calvin against such criticism as Lüttge's. He (1952: 385), however, also acknowledges that Calvin's idea of forensic imputation through the mystical union with Christ is incoherent since in the union with Christ there is "actually a coalescence of Christ with the human soul." In his conclusion, Stuermann (1952: 385) writes that Calvin's "idea of imputed righteousness seems superfluous, for in the coalescence [*i.e.* between Christ and us] we would partake of the righteousness of Christ and therefore not need imputation of it."¹¹⁵

McCormack (2004: 101-3) also points out the incompatibility between imputation and union with Christ in Calvin's doctrine of justification. He (2004: 102) argues that when Calvin grounds justification on the union with Christ, he betrays his own definition of justification as a divine verdict of acquittal accomplished by means of imputation. Since union with Christ can be equivalent in its reality with regeneration in Calvin's soteriology, Calvin's grounding of justification on the union with Christ renders his break with Medieval Catholic views vague in that he also makes the work of God "in us," *i.e.* regeneration, the ground of our justification. McCormack (2004: 103) prudently suggests the possibility that Calvin's treatment of

¹¹⁵ Doumergue (1910: 275 in Venema 2007: 152) calls for distinguishing the cause of justification from the means of it to resolve the alleged tension in Calvin's thought: the cause of justification is the sacrifice of Christ and the imputation of His righteousness, while the means by which this imputed righteousness becomes ours is the mystical union with Christ, in consequence of which we are regenerated. However, W. Evans (1996: 16) criticizes that Doumergue also "treats the terms 'justification by faith' and 'union with Christ' as virtual synonyms, from which flow the forensic and the transforming benefits of salvation." Venema (2007: 152-3) also criticizes that Doumergue makes justification depend causally upon sanctification in Calvin's soteriology (cf. Doumergue 1910: 270-1).

regeneration prior to justification in Book 3 of the *Institutes* might be due to his foregrounding of the union with Christ.

6.4.2. Suggestions of a harmony between union with Christ and imputation

To this argument, other scholars have responded by asserting a basic harmony between the forensic concept of imputation and the mystical union with Christ. They suggest a careful analysis of Calvin's formulation of the nature of our union with Christ as the resolution of the problem of the seeming incompatibility between these two themes. According to this suggestion, the personal, not substantial, character of Calvin's concept of the union with Christ ensures that the forensic aspect of justification defined in terms of imputation remains within the context of the union with Christ as its ground. Dee (1918: 187, 191 in Venema 2007: 153), for instance, points out that since Calvin's doctrine of union with Christ does not mean a mingling of His essence with ours, the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to us on the basis of this union, remains an inherent property of His Person and not of ours. Therefore the theme of union with Christ does not need to be construed to exclude a forensic conception of justification with its emphasis upon the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Venema (2009: 32) also argues that Calvin's understanding of our union with Christ as "a personal and reciprocal relation between ourselves and Christ through His Spirit" renders impossible any confusion between our own and His righteousness as the sole ground of our justification and thus enables us to "insist upon a juridical and imputative conception of justification as wholly consistent with" the union.

Other scholars assert the harmony between Calvin's reference to the forensic justification and his insistence on the primacy of union with Christ as the ground of justification on the basis of their conviction that Calvin's concept of imputation

comprises a forensic aspect and a participational aspect as well. This conviction is derived from their other conviction of the intrinsic nature of Calvin's concept of the union with Christ. W. Evans (1996: 59-61), for instance, putting emphasis on the intrinsic character of Calvin's concept of the union with Christ,¹¹⁶ argues that Calvin's understanding of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers comprehends a participational aspect as well as a forensic aspect. W. Evans draws on the functional (not conceptual) identification of the imputation of Christ's righteousness with the infusion of His life (1996: 60)¹¹⁷ and the "continual reception of the grace of justification through union with Christ" (1996: 61)¹¹⁸ in Calvin's theology, and argues that Calvin's understanding of the forensic imputation does not conform to the "immediate imputation," which was regularized by later Reformed Orthodoxy to "a static and punctiliar divine declaration" without regard for any personal connection between Christ and the believer. For Calvin, the forensic

¹¹⁶ W. Evans (1996: 47), in his analysis of Calvin's understanding of the nature of the union with Christ, concludes that the union is "nothing less than the impartation of the life of the risen Christ to the believer, albeit in a manner which does not diminish the personal individuality of both Christ and the individual believer."

¹¹⁷ The reference which W. Evans mentions for this is Calvin's (*Inst.*, 3.11.23) following statement: "The only fulfilment he [Paul] alludes to [in Rom. 8:3-4] is that which we obtain through imputation. For in such a way does the Lord Christ share His righteousness with us that, in some wonderful manner, He pours [*transfundat*] into us enough of His power to meet the judgment of God."

¹¹⁸ W. Evans (1996: 61) refers to Calvin's (*Inst.*, 3.14.10) following statement in support of this concept:

Therefore, God does not, as many stupidly believe, once for all reckon to us as righteousness that forgiveness of sins concerning which we have spoken in order that, having obtained pardon for our past life, we may afterward seek righteousness in the law; this would be only to lead us into false hope, to laugh at us, and mock us. For since no perfection can come to us so long as we are clothed in this flesh, and the law moreover announces death and judgment to all who do not maintain perfect righteousness in works, it will always have grounds for accusing and condemning us unless, on the contrary, God's mercy counters it, and by continual forgiveness of sins repeatedly acquits us.

Though W. Evans notes that justification which is received is not incomplete, his designation, "the continual reception of justification" produces the impression of the incompleteness of justification. Calvin here is refuting those who believe that they, having obtained pardon for their past life, may afterward seek righteousness in the law. Against their belief, Calvin emphasizes the defectiveness of our own righteousness in obedience to the law in this life and thus the necessity of our continual dependence entirely on God's mercy and the perfect righteousness of Christ for our salvation. In this sense, it is more plausible that what Calvin really means is our continual *conformation* to the grace of justification, rather than a continual *reception* of it.

imputation of Christ's righteousness to us and our genuine participation in Christ are not mutually exclusive categories (W. Evans 1996: 62). Calvin perceives "the forensic imputation of Christ's righteousness in dynamic and relational terms rather than as a static and punctiliar divine declaration" (W. Evans 1996: 61). It should be noted, however, that Evans, while emphasizing the personal aspect of imputation in Calvin's theology, does not see his doctrine of justification as "analytic." According to him (1996: 62), Calvin's understanding of imputation neither conform to the later notion of the "immediate imputation" nor to the "mediate imputation" since it does not involve an intrinsic moral quality as the ground of justification. While W. Evans (1996: 60) identifies imputation with infusion in Calvin's theology, he makes it clear that Calvin does not teach "the infusion of gracious "habits" or qualities of righteousness" as "the analytic ground of justification." He (1996: 16-7, 58) criticizes that to apply the seventeenth-century distinction between "mediate" and "immediate" imputation to Calvin's discussion on justification, is somewhat anachronistic.¹¹⁹

Santmire (1964: 297-304) also argues that a forensic aspect and a participating aspect of the believer's righteousness are not explicitly distinguished in Calvin's doctrine of justification. He (1964: 302) writes, "Calvin uses the word 'imputation' to designate the way in which the believer is perfectly righteous. By imputation of righteousness he means both God's pronouncing the believer righteous (this is the forensic aspect) and God's giving the believer actual communion with the righteousness of Christ (this is the participating aspect)."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ In support of this, W. Evans draws on McGrath ([1986]2005: 209)'s saying: "the most accurate description of the doctrines of justification associated with the Reformed and Lutheran churches from 1530 onwards is that they represent a radically new interpretation of the Pauline concept of 'imputed righteousness' set within an Augustinian soteriological framework."

¹²⁰ The emphasis on the "aspect of the transforming reality of justification" is seen also in Thomson (1996: 452, 465).

The appropriate answer to the question of the relation between imputation and union with Christ in Calvin's theology can be expected from his treatment of Osiander on justification. Calvin and Osiander insist in common on the significance of union with Christ as the ground of justification. And both agree in "the consequential simultaneity of forensic and transformative elements of salvation as a consequence of this union" (Garcia 2008: 213). But Osiander, unlike Calvin who insists on the forensic character of justification, teaches that justification involves God's act of making believers really righteous. Osiander's idea of justification, Calvin believes, is derived from his understanding of union with Christ in terms of substantial categories, in which case, those who are united with Christ become consubstantial with God. Osiander's idea of the essential union of Christ forms the basis of his teaching on justification as God's act of making believers really righteous. That is, believers are made righteous by partaking of the divine righteousness infused into them through their essential union with Christ. Therefore Calvin, refuting Osiander's doctrine of justification, clarifies what he believes to be the correct understanding of the nature of the union with Christ and of the relation of the union to justification (cf. Gaffin 2008: 265). Calvin's view of the relation between union with Christ and justification becomes clear in his refutation of Osiander's doctrine of justification. Therefore through a scrutiny of Calvin's treatment of Osiander, we can hear his own answer to the problem of the tension between union with Christ and the forensic concept of justification.

6.5. Calvin's repudiation of Osiander on justification

Calvin's lengthy refutation of what he believes to be Osiander's error on justification (*Institutes*. 3.5-12) follows his general definition of justification (*Institutes*. 3.1-4) in

his final Latin edition of the *Institutes* (1559).¹²¹ Weis (1965: 31, 42-3) presents the motives of Calvin's eagerness for refuting the then-deceased Osiander prior to his refutation of the Roman Catholic Church, which has been his main opponent on justification as follows: First, when Calvin writes the refutation, the Osiandrian controversy sparked by his disputation on justification at Königsberg in 1550 (*Disputatio de justificatione*)¹²² is still "a very live issue among Protestant theologians" (Weis 1965: 31). Second, Osiander's doctrine of justification, especially his idea of essential indwelling of Christ in the believer is involved in the ongoing Eucharistic controversies of the 1550s (Weis 1965: 31, 42). Third, Calvin is "quite sensitive" to be associated with Osiander by his Lutheran polemics. Weis (1965: 43) indicates that this controversy gives Calvin a chance to clarify his doctrine of justification in the process of differentiating himself from Osiander's aberrations.

6.5.1. Not infusion of the divine essential righteousness of Christ

Calvin's refutation of Osiander's doctrine of justification involves basically the following three points, which are interconnected to one another¹²³: First, it involves Osiander's conception of essential righteousness. According to Osiander, our justification is accomplished by our partaking of the essential righteousness of Christ. We are righteous in that Christ's essential righteousness becomes ours

¹²¹ In the *Institutes*, Calvin's refutation of Osiander's theology appears in two other places besides this area: in 1.15.3-5 on creation and in 2.12.4-7 on incarnation.

¹²² For the lists of Osiander's writings which are involved in the Osiandrian controversy, see Wilson-Kastner 1979: 78-79. According to her description (1979: 79), *De Justificatione* is Osiander's second disputation on justification, which is a complement to his first disputation on justification, *De Lege et Evangelio (On Law and Gospel)* published in 1549.

¹²³ Zimmermann (1989: 209 in Garcia 2008: 209), though convinced Calvin misinterprets Osiander, summarizes his objection of Osiander on justification as follows: (1) Osiander's characterization of union with Christ; (2) his conjunction of justification and sanctification; (3) the identification of Christ and faith; (4) his exaggeration of the "already" and his diminution of the "not yet" in the Christian's present situation; and (5) his idea of justification exclusively by Christ's divine nature.

(*Inst.*, 3.11.5). This essential righteousness of Christ is the righteousness which is His by virtue of His being eternal God: “Christ is Himself our righteousness, not in so far as He, by expiating sins as Priest, appeased the Father on our behalf, but as He is eternal God and life” (*Inst.*, 3.11.6). The righteousness, which is the basis of our justification, is Christ’s only with respect of His divine nature. For Osiander, that Christ is made righteousness for us is with respect to His divine nature, not His human nature (*Inst.*, 3.11.8). Osiander (ed. Bente and Dau1921: 156 in Weis 1965: 34-5) writes,

If the question be asked according to what nature Christ, His whole undivided Person, is our Righteousness, then, just as when one asks according to what nature He is the Creator of heaven and earth, the clear, correct, and plain answer is that He is our Righteousness according to His divine, and not according to His human nature, although we are unable to find, obtain, or apprehend such divine righteousness apart from His humanity.

It seems that for Osiander, the function of Christ’s human nature in justification is merely to be the channel through which the divine essential righteousness is infused into the believer: “we are unable to find, obtain, or apprehend such divine righteousness apart from His humanity.”¹²⁴

For Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.5), Osiander’s assumption of essential righteousness is “some strange monster” which abolishes the grace of Christ. Calvin’s concern in objecting to Osiander’s essential righteousness is on the significance of the office of Christ as the Mediator. If, as Osiander suggests, Christ becomes our righteousness according to His divine nature alone, this work of righteousness will not be peculiar to Christ but common with the Father and the Spirit since the righteousness, which is proper to Christ’s divine nature, belongs to the other Persons of the Trinity as well (*Inst.*, 3.11.8). Then the significance of the incarnation

¹²⁴ Wilson-Kastner (1979: 83), in her discussion on Osiander’s theology of grace, elucidates the role of Christ’s human nature as the channel through which we participate in the divine life for justification in Osiander’s view.

of the Son of God as the Mediator will be neglected. Instead, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.8) emphasizes that the righteousness of Christ is the one that He acquired by His obedience to the Father in His human nature. Calvin admits that Christ's divine nature is involved in His tasks as the Mediator in that the works of redemption surpass the power of mere flesh. He (*Inst.*, 3.11.8) writes,

Christ, if He had not been true God, could not cleanse our souls by His blood, nor appease His Father by His sacrifice, nor absolve us from guilt, nor, in sum, fulfil the office of priest, because the power of the flesh is unequal to so great a burden.¹²⁵

And in this sense, the righteousness of Christ, on the basis of which we are justified, can be regarded as “the eternal righteousness of the eternal God.” However, to ascribe, for this reason, the office of Christ as the Mediator to divine nature alone, is grossly delusive. Christ's works for our redemption primarily involves His human nature. It is certain that Christ “carried out all these acts according to His human nature” (*Inst.*, 3.11.9).

Calvin proves the significance of the human nature of Christ as the Mediator for justification with several Scriptural witnesses. According to Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.8), the focus of Paul's statement that “Christ was made righteousness by God” [1 Cor. 1:30] is on the Person of Christ as the Mediator, though not excluding divine nature, and thus this designation belongs properly to Christ, by which He is distinguished from the Father and the Spirit.¹²⁶ Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.8), in interpreting the prophecy of Isaiah that “by knowledge of himself shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous” [Isa. 53:11], also states that the fulfilment of this

¹²⁵ This sentiment is reiterated in the following statement: “now we do not divide Christ but confess that He, who, reconciling us to the Father in his flesh, gave us righteousness, is the eternal Word of God, and that the duties of the Mediator could not otherwise have been discharged by Him, or righteousness acquired for us, had He not been eternal God” (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.8).

¹²⁶ Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.8) also interprets the prophecy of Jeremiah that “Jehovah will be our righteousness” [Jer. 51:10] as pointing to Christ as God manifested in flesh: “But from this he shall deduce nothing but the fact that Christ, who is our righteousness, is God manifested in flesh... there is a simple and ready explanation of the words that Jehovah, when He should become the offspring of David, would be the righteousness of the godly.”

promise involves two successive events. On the one hand, Christ was made righteousness, assuming the form of a servant, that is, incarnation [Phil. 2:7]. On the other hand, “He justifies us in that He has shown Himself obedient to the Father” [Phil. 2:8]. Calvin here makes it clear that Christ acquired the righteousness, which is involved in our justification, by His obedience to the Father in His human nature He assumed in Incarnation. The significance of Christ’s human nature in justification is expressed also in Christ’s calling Himself “the bread of life” [John 6.48]. With this Christ sets forth “a sure pledge” of the righteousness and salvation in His own flesh (*Inst.*, 3.11.9).

Therefore for Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.11), to limit Christ’s righteousness in justification to His divine nature alone, as Osiander does, is the very diminishment of His work of redemption accomplished in His human nature, and this results in the nullification of the certainty of salvation. In his repudiation against some Lutherans who categorize him with Osiander on the basis of their common emphasis on union with Christ as the ground of justification, Calvin (*TT*2.488; cf. *TT*2. 554) complains about this association, and he accuses Osiander of despising the humiliated Christ, in distancing himself from him:

Here they bedaub us with the slime of their own Osiander, as if we had any kind of affinity with him. Be it that Osiander, in his insane pride, despised a humiliated Christ; what is that to us, whose piety is too well known to be defamed by such vile falsehood?

Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.12) steadfastly holds that “in Christ’s death and resurrection there is righteousness and life for us.” As mentioned already, for Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.16.5), while Scripture ascribes Christ’s “acquired righteousness” mainly to His atoning death, the righteousness is extended to the whole life of Christ from His birth to His death and resurrection. Though Calvin admits that due to the mystery of the Trinity, we come to participate in the Father and the Spirit as well through our union with

Christ, his emphasis, however, is still on the work of Christ as the Mediator. He (*Inst.*, 3.11.5) writes,

Although I admit this [the indwelling of Trinity in us] to be true, yet I say that it has been perversely twisted by Osiander; for he ought to have considered the manner of the indwelling – namely, that the Father and Spirit are in Christ, and even as the fullness of deity dwells in Him [Col. 2:9], so in Him we possess the whole of deity ... But in his treatment of the Father and the Holy Spirit he more openly, as I have said, brings out what he means: namely, that we are not justified by the grace of the Mediator alone, nor is righteousness simply or completely offered to us in His person, but that we are made partakers in God’s righteousness when God is united to us in essence.

For Calvin, as Partee ([2008]2010: 226) says, “justification is properly the distinctive work of the Mediator, not of the Father or the Spirit.”

6.5.2. No confusion of justification with sanctification

The second point of Calvin’s rebuttal against Osiander on justification is about his confusion of justification with sanctification. Osiander understands the verb ‘to be justified’ as “not only to be reconciled to God through free pardon but also to be made righteous” (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.6). Justification involves not only free pardon but also regeneration. Behind this understanding is there Osiander’s conviction that it cannot happen that “God leaves as they were by nature those whom He justifies, changing none of their vices” (*Inst.*, 3.11.6). It would be an insult to God and contrary to His nature that He should regard those who actually remain wicked as righteous (*Inst.*, 3.11.11). In this sense, Osiander criticizes Melancthon’s teaching of the mere imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer as colder than ice (Seeberg 1997: 369-70).¹²⁷ To use the expression of Rainbow (1989: 101),

¹²⁷ Weis (1965: 35) suggests that Osiander’s main concern in interpreting justification as making righteous is about exalting the believer’s responsibility in his life toward God “in the light of the presence of the indwelling Christ within him.”

Osiander is “scandalized by” God who justifies the ungodly who is not really righteous. Thus for Osiander, justification involves not only forgiveness of sins but also the renewal of the believer’s inner being. He is convinced that God makes us really righteous in justifying us (Vainio 2008: 104). He portrays the necessity of being made righteous in justification with the parable of a son of a doctor, who disobediently drinks from one of his father’s bottle containing poison. In this case, the boy’s plea for pardon, or his father’s forgiving is not enough for saving him from death. The poison must be removed from the boy’s body. In Osiander’s view, forgiveness of sins, which is procured by Christ’s redemptive work in His human nature, is just a precondition of justification, which involves the transformation of a man’s inner being (Vainio 2008: 100; Weis 1965: 34). This understanding of justification as making righteous underlies Osiander’s insistence on the infusion of the essential righteousness of Christ into the believer. It is by the transference of Christ’s essential righteousness, which is proper to His divine nature alone, to us that God makes us righteous.

6.5.2.1. Inseparability of justification and sanctification

In response of this, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.6) presents the inseparability of justification and regeneration or sanctification¹²⁸. The grace of justification is not separated from sanctification. Whomever God freely accepts as righteous in the basis of Christ’s righteousness, He at the same time renews him also. According to Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.6), the inseparability of justification and sanctification is derived from the unity of Christ’s Person. Christ was given to us for our righteousness and sanctification as well [1 Cor. 1:30]. Thus we come to receive both when we receive Christ. Both gifts, justification and sanctification, are simultaneously¹²⁹ given to us through our

¹²⁸ For Calvin, “regeneration” and “sanctification” are synonyms. Besides both, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.3.9) also uses “repentance” and “restoration” for pointing to the reality of sanctification.

¹²⁹ Gaffin (2009a:74) points out that in Calvin’s view, the inseparability of justification and

union with Christ, who became our righteousness and holiness. This idea is expressed already by Calvin in the opening of his treatment of justification. He (*Inst.*, 3.11.1) writes,

Christ was given to us by God's generosity, to be grasped and possessed by us in faith. By partaking of Him, we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by His Spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life.

Here Calvin speaks of justification and sanctification in the singular: "a double grace." Justification and sanctification is a twofold grace bestowed inseparably and simultaneously upon us on the basis of our union with Christ. For Calvin, to separate justification and sanctification is to tear Christ to pieces: "As Christ cannot be torn into parts, so these two which we perceive in Him together and conjointly are inseparable" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.6; cf. Calvin *Comm.* Rom. 8:9; *Comm.* 1 Cor. 1:30). In Osiander's view, God's veracity demands that His verdict of the believer's being righteous should reflect the reality within him. Thus for him it would be an insult to God that He should regard those who actually remain wicked as righteous. Calvin answers Osiander's critique by grounding justification and sanctification simultaneously upon the Person of Christ, who was given to us for our righteousness and holiness. There is "a mutual and indivisible connection" between justification and sanctification as a twofold grace inseparably and simultaneously rooted in union with Christ (*Inst.*, 3.11.6).

6.5.2.2. Conceptual distinction between justification and sanctification

Yet, in the meantime, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.1-4) stresses that justification must be distinguished conceptually from sanctification. Here Calvin reaffirms his definition

sanctification involves simultaneity of both.

of justification as God's gratuitous juridical judgment presented in the opening part of his treatment of justification. Justification involves the acquittal of our guilt before God's tribunal. It is God's gratuitous and irrevocable act of accepting us "who are not intrinsically righteous" as righteous on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ, "which alone entirely suffices for salvation before God" (*Inst.*, 3.11.11). But sanctification involves the renewal of our inner being. Sanctification as the renewal of one's inner being is given with justification "at the inception of the application of redemption" in that "a disposition is wrought in the ungodly to godliness and holy living" (Gaffin 2009a:74). Yet it needs to be progressed gradually throughout one's life. For Calvin, sanctification, compared to the settled and irreversible justification, is an ongoing, life-long process of our being remade to God's own image by the work of the Holy Spirit.¹³⁰ Since this process will not reach its completion in this life, those who are being sanctified are "always liable to the judgment of death before His tribunal" (*Inst.*, 3.11.11). While justification and sanctification, as a twofold grace of our union with Christ, are clearly inseparable, yet they must be clearly distinguished between each other in our conception. Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.6) introduces a fitting simile for describing the inseparable yet distinctive relation between justification and sanctification in union with Christ:

But if the brightness of the sun cannot be separated from its heat, shall we therefore say that the earth is warmed by its light, or lighted by its heat? ... The sun, by its heat, quickens and fructifies the earth, by its beams brightens and illumines it. Here is a mutual and indivisible connection. Yet reason itself forbids us to transfer the peculiar qualities of the one to the other.

Since Osiander mixes sanctification with justification and "contends that they are one and the same," this confusion of both gifts is the same absurdity as confusing light and heat of the sun (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.6).

¹³⁰ "For God so begins this second point [sanctification] in His elect, and progresses in it gradually, and sometimes slowly, throughout life..." (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.11).

6.5.2.3. Certainty of salvation

It is noteworthy that Calvin's insistence on the conceptual distinction between justification and sanctification is closely connected to his concern for the certainty of salvation. As Canlis (2004: 175) points out, as a pastor, "one of Calvin's greatest concerns for his parishioners" is the assurance of their salvation. For Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.11), the certainty of our salvation can be secured only in the imputed righteousness of Christ, the righteousness *extra nos*. And, to be sure, this righteousness is that which Christ acquired by His redemptive work in His human nature. As long as we rely on our own righteousness, since it is never perfect in this life, our conscience will never taste peace. If a man does not depend entirely on God's free acceptance for the certainty of his salvation, "he will hang uncertainly, wavering to this side and to that, for he will not be allowed to assume in himself as much righteousness as he needs for assurance." Thus it is essential for the assurance of salvation that the truth of justification that God freely accepts us, who are not intrinsically righteous, as righteous in the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ, must be preserved firmly in distinction from sanctification.

For Calvin, Osiander's teaching of justification as making righteous by the infused essential righteousness of Christ, is "an utterly intolerable impiety" (*Inst.*, 3.11.11), since it snatches from us "the confidence to glory in our salvation" (*Inst.*, 3.11.6), leading us to look within ourselves for the certainty of our salvation. Osiander's objection that God's free acceptance is contrary to His nature "topples back upon him," because he himself "is still compelled to confess that no one can please God" with his intrinsic condition, produced by the infused righteousness of Christ (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.11).¹³¹ To ground God's verdict of our being righteous on our intrinsic

¹³¹ Melancthon (1982: 169) accuses Osiander of destroying the certainty of salvation, making it depend on the works of the justified person effected by Christ's divine righteousness. Vainio (2008: 100) points out that Melancthon's accusation is "off the point" of Osiander's thought since Osiander makes a distinction between Christ's divine righteousness and human righteousness caused by the

condition which is imperfect is to disregard His veracity. Calvin's pastoral concern for the assurance of salvation in his objection of Osiander's doctrine of justification is reflected clearly in his summation of his lengthy refutation of him:

In short, whoever wraps up two kinds of righteousness in order that miserable souls may not repose wholly in God's mere mercy, crowns Christ in mockery with a wreath of thorns (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.12).

6.5.3. Not essential union between Christ and us

The other point of Calvin's objection against Osiander is about his understanding of the nature or the mode of union with Christ. Osiander's assumption of our partaking of the essential righteousness of Christ in justification presupposes the essential union between Christ and us. In Osiander's view, our union with Christ is the union with Christ's divine nature by way of the indwelling of His essence in us. In this essential union, His essential righteousness, by our partaking of which we are made righteous, is infused into us. For Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.10), Osiander's concept of the essential union is problematic in that it implies "a gross mixture" of essences between Christ and us. Christ's essence comes to be mingled with ours in the essential union. And since Christ's divine essence is shared by the Father and the Holy Spirit as well, the indwelling of Christ's divine essence in us is in effect the indwelling of the divinity of the whole Trinity in us. In this sense, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.5) accuses Osiander of throwing "in a mixture of substances by which God –

indwelling of it. For Osiander, salvation is based only on Christ's divine righteousness, rather than on human righteousness (Vainio 2008:102). Vainio (2008:103-5), however, indicates that Osiander's doctrine of justification tends to "subjectivism" in its practical application. For Osiander, Christ's satisfaction accomplished by His redemptive work in His human nature cannot be a part of righteousness given to us for justification. The righteousness which makes us stand before God's tribunal is only Christ's divine righteousness, which is infused through the indwelling of His essence. This idea, according to Vainio (2008: 105), has the problem with regard to the certainty of salvation that the indwelling of Christ's essence "is not an empirical quantity that can be measured through knowledge or emotion." There is no objective certainty of salvation in Osiander's idea of justification, in which the certainty of salvation is grounded on "the consciousness that Christ's divine nature dwells in the heart of the believer," rather than on "a historical event," that is, Christ's redemptive work in His human nature.

transfusing Himself into us, as it were – makes us part of Himself.”¹³² And Osiander’s confusion of justification and sanctification is also one of the problematic results of his idea of the essential indwelling of Christ (*Inst.*, 3.11.10).¹³³

6.5.3.1. The Holy Spirit as the bond of the union with Christ

According to Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.5), Osiander’s mingling of essences between Christ and us in union is the consequence of his overlooking of the work of the Holy Spirit as the bond of the union. Our union with Christ “comes about through the power of the Holy Spirit that we grow together with Christ, and He becomes our Head and we His members.” But Osiander reckons it “of almost no importance.” This is the decisive mistake of Osiander in regard to the nature or mode of union between Christ and us. He (*Inst.*, 3.11.5) writes,

Because he does not observe the bond of this unity, he deceives himself. Now it is easy for us to resolve all his difficulties. For we hold ourselves to be united with Christ by the secret power of His Spirit.

It is by “spurning this spiritual bond” that Osiander forces “a gross mingling of Christ with believers” (*Inst.*, 3.11.10). As mentioned already, Calvin is in line with Osiander in that he also insists on the primacy of union with Christ to justification. Justification

¹³² As Weis (1965: 33-4) indicates, Osiander’s doctrine of justification is closely connected to his understanding of the image of God. In Osiander’s view, Adam’s being created in God’s image has two meanings: (1) his being created according to the pattern of the future incarnate Son of God, and (2) the essential indwelling of the Son of God in him. In the sense that the Son of God is the pattern according to which man was created, His incarnation was necessary for fulfilling the creation of man regardless of man’s fall. However, since man lost the divine indwelling by his fall, one more reason was added to the incarnation of the Son of God, that is, the restoration of the lost divine indwelling. For the restoration of the lost divine indwelling, the incarnate Son of God made atonement for fallen men’s transgression by His death and fulfilled the law perfectly instead of fallen men. By this redemptive work of Christ the divine indwelling in man has been made possible again. In this way, for Osiander, justification involves the transformation of a fallen man’s inner being by the essential indwelling of the Son of God in him, not merely forgiveness of sins, which is rather a preparation for justification (cf. Calvin *Inst.*, 1.15.3, 2.12.6-7; ed. Bente and Dau 1921: 156).

¹³³ Venema (2007: 158) argues that the nature of union with Christ is a crucial issue in Calvin’s refutation of Osiander’s doctrine of justification in that “in Calvin’s judgment, Osiander’s confusion of justification and sanctification, as well as his diminishment of Christ’s redemptive work, spring from his doctrine of an immediate and essential union of the believer with Christ.”

is a benefit given through union with Christ. And he clearly mentions that our union with Christ is genuine and so intimate that “we have a real share in Christ’s righteousness” (Venema 2007: 160). We do not contemplate Christ “outside ourselves from afar in order that His righteousness may be imputed to us.” Rather, since we are made one with Christ, putting Him on and being engrafted into His body, “we glory that we have a fellowship of righteousness with Him” (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.10). Calvin, however, holds fast to the significance of the role of the Holy Spirit as the bond of our union with Christ. In his view, the work of the Holy Spirit is the momentum that enables the ontological distinction between Christ and us to be kept within our union with Him.

6.5.3.2. The union with Christ’s mediatorial humanity

As already mentioned, Calvin’s concern in refuting Osiander’s idea of Christ’s essential righteousness is on the significance of human nature of Christ as the Mediator. The righteousness, which is the basis of our justification, is that which Christ acquired by His obedience and sacrifice in His human nature, rather than the essential righteousness of His divine nature as Osiander teaches. And the certainty of our salvation can be secured only when it is grounded on the righteousness acquired by Christ’s redemptive work in His human nature, which is accounted to be ours by imputation. This significance of the mediatorial humanity of Christ is also Calvin’s pressing concern in objecting to Osiander’s teaching on the essential union with Christ. For Calvin, our participation in Christ’s humanity is necessary for us to receive the grace of justification, which is one of the benefits of the mediatorial works of Christ accomplished in His humanity. It is assured that the inseparable union of the human nature and the divine nature in the Person of Christ implies that our union with Christ involves not only His human nature but also His divine nature. However Calvin’s emphasis regarding our union with Christ is primarily on His

humanity, in which He accomplished His mediatorial works. Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.9) writes,

...we are justified in Christ, in so far as He was made an atoning sacrifice for us: something that does not comport with His divine nature. For this reason also, when Christ would seal the righteousness and salvation that He has brought us, He sets forth a sure pledge of it in His own flesh. Now He calls Himself “the bread of life” [John 6:48], but, in explaining how, He adds that “His flesh is truly meat, and His blood truly drink” [John 6:55]. This method of teaching is perceived in the sacraments; even though they direct our faith to the whole Christ and not to a half Christ, they teach that the matter both of righteousness and of salvation resides in His flesh; not that as mere man He justifies or quickens by Himself, but because it pleased God to reveal in the Mediator what was hidden and incomprehensible in Himself.

6.5.4. Not Lutheran model of *communicatio idiomatum*

The interpretation that the theological heart in Calvin’s rebuttal of Osiander’s doctrine of justification is Christology, in particular the issue of *communicatio idiomatum*, is noteworthy. Garcia (2006: 49-56) argues that “the principal point” of Calvin’s entire refutation of Osiander’s doctrine of justification is that Osiander’s heresy is the result of his application of Lutheran Christology and Eucharistology. According to Garcia (2006: 49, 56), Calvin perceives in Osiander’s aberrant doctrine of justification “the inevitable soteriological implications” of his “distinctly Lutheran idea of Christ and the Supper.” Osiander’s confusion of justification and sanctification is the consequence of his mixing of Christ’s divine essence with ours in His essential indwelling in us. And Osiander’s mixture of essences in union is based upon his Christological presupposition, that is, the Lutheran model of *communicatio idiomatum* and ubiquitarianism (cf. Garcia 2008: 242-52). In this sense, Garcia (2008: 250) interprets Calvin’s refutation of Osiander as a “strategic attack on Lutheran ubiquitarianism,” intended to demonstrate that Osiander’s aberrant doctrine of justification is necessarily implied in the Lutheran Christology

and Eucharistology. To Calvin, Osiander is “the only consistent Lutheran, as one who alone follows fully the logic of Lutheran Christology” (Garcia 2008: 259). McCormack (2004: 99) also points out that Calvin’s disdain of Osiander’s Christology, in which Christ’s human nature is mingled with His divine nature, is “the point he hammers home” in his refutation of Osiander on justification.

Canlis (2004: 173-4), with a perspective different from Garcia’s, connects Osiander’s aberrant doctrine of justification to his neglect of Christ’s humanity. She assumes “an *a priori* notion of transcendence” as underlying motif of Osiander’s doctrine of justification. “God’s attributes are His alone,” and they cannot be shared by human nature. The consequence of this idea is the elimination of Christ’s human nature in salvation. Jesus’ human righteousness cannot be a part of the righteousness which makes us to stand in front of God. Jesus is righteous not because He shares in God’s righteousness, but because His own righteousness is replaced “entirely with divine *ousia*.” Christ’s human nature is “overwhelmed by” the divine essence within Himself. Osiander’s Christology is closely connected to his anthropology. That is, “just as for Osiander, the human Jesus of Nazareth was infused with divine essence, so the believer is physically indwelt by the divine Christ.” This indwelling of the divine Christ effects those who are united with Him to be made righteous, which is justification.

In fact, Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.10) criticizes Osiander’s insistence on the essential indwelling of Christ, from which a gross mingling of the substances between God and us results, as his fancy of our “physical eating of Christ in the Lord’s Supper,” which is affirmed by Lutheran:

Osiander, by spurning this spiritual bond, forces a gross mingling of Christ with believers. And for this reason, he maliciously calls “Zwinglian” all those who do not subscribe to his mad error of “essential righteousness” because they do not hold the view that Christ is eaten in substance in the Lord’s Supper...The fact, then, that he insists so

violently upon essential righteousness and essential indwelling of Christ in us has this result: first, he holds that God pours Himself into us as a gross mixture, just as he fancies a physical eating in the Lord's Supper.

The Lutheran Christology, in particular the Lutheran model of *communicatio idiomatum* and ubiquitarianism underlies the Lutheran idea of physical eating of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Thus it appears that in Calvin's view, Osiander's essential mixing of human and divine natures in our union with Christ, and his confusion of justification and sanctification as the consequence of the mixture, are based upon his confusion of Christ's divine nature with His human nature. In Osiander's distinctly Lutheran model of *communicatio idiomatum*, in which Christ's human nature is mingled with His divine nature, there is little room for speaking of Christ's righteousness by virtue of His human nature. For Osiander, "Christ Himself was righteous by divine righteousness" (Calvin *Inst.*, 3.11.12). And in essential union with Christ, we are also made righteous by the divine righteousness.

With regard to Christology, in particular the issue of the *communicatio idiomatum*, as already discussed in § 3.5-3.7 of this thesis, Calvin stands in the Chalcedonian tradition. Calvin insists that even after His resurrection and ascension, Christ's divine nature and human nature are inseparably yet distinctively united to each other in His Person. Each of both natures "retains unimpaired its own distinctive character" in the hypostatic union of Christ. Christ's humanity is not directly given the attributes of His divinity, in particular the attribute of ubiquity. There is a spatial distance between our humanity and Christ's humanity which is "finite" and "contained in heaven" (Calvin *Inst.*, 4.17.26). This distance is overcome by the incomprehensible power of the Holy Spirit (*Inst.*, 4.17.10). The significance of the role of the Holy Spirit as the bond of our union with Christ is in preserving the ontological distinction between Christ's humanity and ours.

The work of the Holy Spirit as a safeguard against a confusion between those who are involved in this union, is first involved in the hypostatic union. The Holy Spirit is “the theological safeguard” for preserving the distinction between Christ’s divine nature and human nature in Calvin’s theology (Garcia, 2008: 247; cf. Canlis, 2010: 100). This important role of the Holy Spirit as the safeguard is also applied to the union between Christ and us. Since the Spirit is the bond of our union with Christ, the ontological distinction between Christ and us can be preserved within the union. If the Spirit “who preserves the humanity of Christ is also given to us, then our participation in Christ will also preserve and enhance our humanity” (Canlis 2010: 100).¹³⁴ Therefore to Calvin the union of the believer with Christ, as W. Niesel ([1956]1980: 126) notes, “has nothing whatever to do with the absorption of the pious mystic into the sphere of the divine being.” Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.12.7; 3.11.10) uses the term *unio mystica* two times in his *Institutes* in designating the union with Christ. Yet, the fact that the context of both of Calvin’s usages of the term *unio mystica* is his refutation of Osiander’s theology renders Tamburello’s (1994: 87-9) argument plausible that what Calvin means with the term is not “a strictly substantial union,” which implies “a kind of pantheistic mixture of substances between God and humans,” but a spiritual, yet real union, which is effected by the power of the Spirit.

6.5.5. Attribution model of imputation: The key to the question of

¹³⁴ Canlis (2004: 174) highlights this significance of the Holy Spirit in guaranteeing the ontological distinction between Christ and us in Calvin’s understanding of union with Christ. However, she, as seen in the following statements, appears to see justification itself to include a transformative aspect in Calvin’s view: “Righteousness *extra nos* does not exclude the process of real change. Rather, as McCormack argues, it goes beyond ‘the cleansing of a diseased human nature but (more positively) in the establishing of a divine-*human* righteousness.’ This is exactly what Osiander was after – a righteousness which is really real – but one which we receive through participation by the Spirit in the human Jesus rather than physical fusion with the divine essence” (Canlis 2004: 174). What Canlis suggests here seems to be this: Calvin does not deny Osiander’s proposition that justification must imply the transformation of the believer’s inner being beyond forgiveness of sins. However Calvin’s genius is seen in his appreciation of the role of the Spirit in allowing us to remain other in union. He affirms our participation in Christ’s own human righteousness by the Spirit. Therefore he can pursue the forensic and transformative aspects of justification without promoting fusion with the divine essence, as Osiander does.

incompatibility between union with Christ and imputation

According to Calvin's understanding, union with Christ is the union with Christ's mediatorial humanity, by virtue of which He acquired the righteousness that is the basis of our justification, through the work of the Holy Spirit as the bond of the union. Calvin's such an understanding of union with Christ as the personal union is the clue to the resolution of the problem of the seeming incompatibility between Calvin's insistence on the forensic nature of justification and his emphasis on the causal priority of union with Christ to justification. As Christ's human nature is inseparably yet distinctively united to the divine nature in His Person, believers are distinguished from Christ within the intimate union with Him, especially, with His human nature. In as much as our union with Christ is real and intimate, His righteousness truly belongs to us within the context of the union. At the same time, however, since our humanity is ontologically distinct from Christ's humanity within our union with Him, there is enough room for the righteousness, which Christ acquired by His mediatorial work in His humanity, to remain properly His own, that is, *extra nos*.

With regard to this, Garcia's (2006: 60-2) parallel between 'imputation' in justification and 'attribution' in Calvin's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* is persuasive. As Calvin holds fast to the Chalcedonian Christological tradition, he understands the *communicatio idiomatum* in the hypostatic union of Christ as a personal communication, rather than a direct and horizontal communication from nature to nature. To Calvin (*Inst.*, 2.14.2) the *communicatio idiomatum* is "improper, although not without reason." One the one hand, the communication is improper in that there is no ontological co-mingling of Christ's two natures. One the other hand, the attribution of the properties that is proper to Christ's one nature to His other nature is not without reason in that the two natures are so intimately united to each other in His Hypostasis. In the hypostatic union, the action or quality that is proper to the one nature of Christ is justly and appropriately

attributed to the whole of His Person as God and man. And then it may be also attributed to the other nature only in manner of speaking within the context of the hypostatic union. In this understanding of the personal communication, the proper qualities of one nature are kept distinct from the qualities of the other nature, while they can be attributed to the other nature as a figure of speech in the context of the hypostatic union. Garcia (2006: 62-3) gives attention to the parallel that the imputation of Christ's righteousness in the believer's union with Christ has with the personal communication of natures in the hypostatic union. He (2006: 62-3) writes,

In the indissoluble union of the believer with Christ, the righteousness which is proper only to Christ is attributed to the whole (Christ-and-the-believer-in-union) in such a way that the imputed righteousness truly belongs to the believer but, as far as justification is concerned, "improperly," that is, by attribution.

The imputed righteousness in justification is "properly Christ's own and, as imputed, remains so." At the same time it truly belongs to the believer within the context of his union with Christ in that he is a part of the whole to whom it is attributed just as the properties proper to the one nature of Christ are appropriately attributed to the whole Person in the hypostatic union (Garcia 2006: 64-5). To be sure, Garcia (2006: 66) elucidates that in proposing the parallel between the Christological union and the soteriological union, he is not suggesting that both unions are of the same order. The believer's union with Christ is not a hypostatic union since it is a union of persons who belong to different orders, but a union through the bond of the Holy Spirit. Garcia points out that the added qualifier of the Reformed Orthodox, *sive praesentiae gratiae tantum* ("by the presence of grace alone") to the *unio mystica* or *unio spiritualis* was to make this distinction between both unions clear.

Given that Calvin's refutation of Osiander's distinctly Lutheran Christology underlies his refutation of Osiander's doctrine of justification, and that Calvin emphasizes the significance of Christ's humanity and the work of the Holy Spirit in justification and

union with Christ as the ground of justification, Garcia's parallel of imputation in justification with attribution in Christology seems to be an appropriate and useful framework for interpreting Calvin's thought of the relation between the forensic justification and the existential reality of the union with Christ. This understanding of imputation as the soteriological attribution ensures that the forensic nature of justification remains even within the existential reality of the union of Christ since in this attribution model of imputation, Christ's acquired human righteousness as the sole ground of our justification is distinguished from our own "by virtue of the otherness of Christ that persists within that union" (Garcia 2009: 426).¹³⁵

In addition to the preservation of the forensic nature of justification, this attribution model of imputation also ensures that imputation remains personal rather than a reified abstraction" in that imputation as attribution sets forth the union with Christ as its prerequisite (Garcia 2009: 425). The necessity of the union with Christ who died and was resurrected as the context of the attribution of Christ's righteousness to the believer is clarified in the understanding of imputation as attribution. For Calvin the believer's justification is nothing but his participation in "the justification-verdict passed over Christ Himself in resurrection." In view of the believer's participation in Christ, justification cannot be exhausted merely on the level of theological abstraction (Garcia 2009: 425-6).

Given the existential reality of our union with Christ, as Venema (2007: 23) points out, it seems likely that the question of the relation between Calvin's forensic definition of justification and his understanding of union with Christ as the ground of justification is directly connected to the question of the relation between justification and sanctification in his theology. Though Calvin's understanding of the relation between justification and sanctification was already introduced in brief while

¹³⁵ Spijker (1989: 50-1) also points out that the spiritual nature of the union which is accomplished through the Holy Spirit and our faith safeguards both *in nobis* and *extra nos* character of Christ's imputed righteousness to us in Calvin's doctrine of justification.

explicating his refutation of Osiander's teaching of justification (§ 6.5.2), it needs to be discussed again in more detail before finishing this study of Calvin's doctrine of justification.

6.6. The relation between justification and sanctification: inseparable yet distinctive

In fact, the relation between justification and sanctification is a theme that Martin Luther deeply concerned prior to Calvin. Luther advocated the slogan 'justification by faith alone' against the Roman Catholic's concept of 'justification based upon good works.' He made a proper distinction between justification and sanctification. However, Luther soon came to be faced with the need to connect these two closely. Anabaptists as well as Roman Catholics attacked the teaching of justification by faith alone with the accusation that it would undermine the importance - or even necessity - of good works, and would make for a careless life. And the phenomenon of laxity of morals actually emerged in the Lutheran Church. Thus, by these apologetic and practical needs, Luther was compelled to think how to promote sanctification in the believer's life. He deliberated on the way to include sanctification in the process of the salvation of believers, without eliminating the forensic concept of justification. In this way, the question of the relation between justification solely based on the imputed righteousness of Christ and sanctification as renewal of one's inner life has been a significant theme of reflection in the Reformation tradition, of which Calvin is a leading theologian.

As clarified in his refutation of Osiander's doctrine of justification, Calvin defines the relation between justification and sanctification in terms of the Chalcedonian Christological formular: *distinctio sed non separatio*. For Calvin, justification and sanctification are the twofold grace that flows from our union with Christ

“simultaneously and without separation, yet also without confusion” (Richard B. Gaffin 2009a: 76). Calvin’s understanding of justification and sanctification as the inseparable yet distinct twofold benefit rooted in our union with Christ renders the following two extreme interpretations of Calvin regarding the relation of justification and sanctification unacceptable: on the one hand, Calvin simply juxtaposes justification and sanctification and provides no satisfactory account of their unity.¹³⁶ On the other hand, he relates the two so closely that he is unable to provide an adequate reason for continuing to distinguish between them (Lüttge 1909: 27, 43, 84; Stuermann 1952: 384-5; cf. Venema 2007: 23).

Calvin’s idea of the simultaneous, inseparable yet distinctive relation between justification and sanctification can also be perceived in his rationale of the structure of his discussion on the application of redemption in Book 3 of the *Institutes*. Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.3-10) treats sanctification at length before justification. Given the importance of the priority of justification to sanctification in the Reformation group against Roman Catholic subordinating of justification to sanctification, this order of his treatment, as Gaffin (2009a: 73) points out, “is apparently counterintuitive, even contrary, some might think, to Reformation instincts.” Besides, considering that Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.11.1) speaks of the pivotal importance of justification as “the main hinge on which religion turns,” and that he also refers to sanctification as the second of the twofold grace, his intention of his treatment of sanctification before justification in his *Institutes* seems to deserve due deliberation. Calvin himself (*Inst.*, 3.11.1) presents the purpose of his distinctive approach at the beginning of his discussion on justification:

Of regeneration, indeed, the second of these gifts, I have said what seemed sufficient. The theme of justification was therefore more lightly touched upon because it was more to the point to understand first how little devoid of good works is the faith, through which alone we obtain

¹³⁶ For the lists of the proponents of this view, see Venema 2007: 23. To this list Armstrong (1989: 135-53) may be added.

free righteousness by the mercy of God; and what is the nature of the good works of the saints, with which part of this question is concerned.”

Here Calvin speaks of two points regarding his purpose of the treatment of sanctification prior to justification. First, it involves Calvin’s strategy to confront the Roman Catholic charge that the Protestant doctrine of justification lacks the eagerness for the life of holiness (cf. Niesel [1956]1980: 130; Hunsinger 2004: 69; Gaffin 2009a: 73). In facing such charge, Calvin makes it clear that faith, as the sole instrument by which we receive the gift of justification, is not devoid of good works: “because it was more to the point to understand first how little devoid of good works is the faith through which alone we obtain free righteousness by the mercy of God.” That is, in Calvin’s full discussion of sanctification before justification, there was his intention to demolish the Roman Catholic charge that the doctrine of justification solely by faith makes people careless and wanton, by showing that though justification is not grounded on good works, it cannot be separated from the life of holiness, the disposition of which is entailed in faith.

Another purpose of Calvin’s treatment of sanctification before justification is implied in the last sentence of his passage quoted above: “what is the nature of the good works of the saints, with which part of this question is concerned.” It is likely that Calvin’s other intention in his preceding treatment of sanctification is to stress the fact that justification is by faith alone by providing a clear account of the nature of the believer’s good works and thus by showing the defectiveness of them. Correct understanding of the nature of good works of the believers renders any contribution of their sanctification to their justification impossible (cf. Venema 2007: 133-5).¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Venema (2007: 132-7) refers to the two points together as the purpose of Calvin’s treatment of sanctification before justification in his *Institutes*.

This interpretation is confirmed by Calvin's other statement regarding his distinctive approach at the outset of his discussion on sanctification. Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.3.1) writes,

Our immediate transition will be from faith to repentance. For when this topic [repentance, *i.e.* sanctification] is rightly understood it will better appear how man is justified by faith alone, and simple pardon.

Here Calvin's intention of giving an emphasis to justification by faith alone in his treatment of sanctification before justification is presented more clearly. In Calvin's conviction that we are justified solely by faith, not by our good works, his idea of the conceptual distinctiveness between justification and sanctification is already implied.

However Calvin (*Inst.*, 3.3.1) immediately adds that justification cannot be separated from sanctification, which is the concomitant grace with it, "conferred on us by Christ" and "attained by us through faith":

... nevertheless, actual holiness of life, so to speak, is not separated from free imputation of righteousness. Now it ought to be a fact beyond controversy that repentance not only constantly follows faith, but is also born of faith ... [S]urely no one can embrace the grace of the gospel without betaking himself from the errors of his past life into the right way, and applying his whole effort to the practice of repentance.

We, therefore, following Hunsinger (2004: 224-5), can conclude that Calvin's reversal of "the customary order of presentation" serves to underscore his conviction that justification and sanctification are the simultaneous, inseparable yet distinctive benefits that flow from union with Christ. Calvin, by grounding not only justification but also sanctification on union with Christ, is able to rightfully emphasize the necessity of sanctification without eliminating of the forensic aspect of justification.

6.7. Summary

This chapter explored Calvin's doctrine of justification, which is a representative salvific benefit that is conferred through union with Christ, to figure out Calvin's idea of the nature of the blessing conferred on believers in their union with Christ, which is the kernel of the debate that encircles the question of deification in Calvin's theology.

To sum up, for Calvin, justification is God's juridical act of judging the believers righteous solely on the basis of Christ's righteousness that is imputed to them in their union with Christ. According to Calvin, this imputed righteousness of Christ in our justification is not divine essential righteousness as Osiander teaches, but that which He acquired by His obedience in His human nature to the Father through His whole life from His birth to His death.

Especially, in his reputation of Osiander's teaching of justification, we hear at a time Calvin's own answers to the three questions which encircle the question of deification in his theology. The theological heart in Calvin's refutation of Osiander's teaching of justification is his Lutheran idea of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Osiander's fallacies on justification - the infusion of Christ's essential righteousness to the believers, the confusion of justification and sanctification, and the essential union between Christ and the believers - are derived from his Christological presupposition that Christ's human nature is mingled with His divine nature. In the mingling of the human nature and the divine nature, Christ Himself became righteous by divine righteousness. And in our essential union with Christ we are also made righteous by the divine righteousness.

Against this teaching of Osiander, Calvin insists on the distinction between Christ's divine nature and His human nature in the hypostatic union. For Calvin, the Holy

Spirit is involved in the hypostatic union as the theological safeguard for preserving the distinction between Christ's two natures. And the Holy Spirit also becomes the bond of our union with Christ so that the ontological distinction between Christ and us can be preserved within the union. Therefore our union with Christ does not bring about the infusion of the divine essential righteousness to us. Rather, since we are ontologically distinguished from Christ within the intimate union with Him, while His acquired righteousness truly belongs to us in the context of our union with Christ, it properly remains His own, that is, *extra nos*.

It follows from what has been said that for Calvin the blessing conferred on the believers in their union with Christ is that which Christ acquired through His salvific work in His humanity, not that which peculiarly belongs to Christ's divinity.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This study started with the investigation of the contemporary theological discussion on the question of deification in Calvin's theology. Under the influence of the Christian ecumenical movement, the idea of deification, which has been regarded as an exclusive possession of the Eastern Church, becomes a matter of considerable concern in the Western Church and this interest in deification results in a tendency among scholars to reread the Western theological tradition through the lens of the Eastern idea of deification. The studies of the theology of Calvin, who is a leading figure in the Reformation tradition, cannot avoid such a tendency, either. Not a few scholars has affirmed Calvin's doctrine of deification, in a way, akin to the Eastern doctrine of deification, by rereading him from the perspective of the Eastern Orthodoxy. Among the interpreters who affirm the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin, some insist on the uniqueness of his doctrine of deification, as differentiated from the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of deification. However, the interpretation that affirms Calvin's doctrine of deification has been rejected by other theologians who deny the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin. In this way, the question of deification in Calvin's theology is still a live issue among interpreters of Calvin. Therefore this thesis joined the current debate on it and attempted to suggest a frame of reference for reasoning on the question of deification in Calvin and to give a prudent answer to it.

7.1. The frame of reference for reasoning the question of deification in Calvin's theology

Through the investigation of the current debate on the question of deification in Calvin, three questions were suggested as the frame of reference for reasoning with

the question. The core of the current debate which encircles the question of deification in Calvin's theology is the question about the nature of the salvific gift that Christ grants on His saints in their redemption: (1) whether the salvific gift conferred to believers in their salvation is that which peculiarly belongs to Christ's divinity or that which He acquired through His salvific work in His humanity. Two other questions are involved in the question about the nature of the salvific gift. The one is the question about the nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ: (2) whether Calvin understands believers' union with Christ on a personal level or on an ontological level beyond the personal. The other is the question about Calvin's idea of the relation of Christ's two natures in their hypostatic union - more specifically, his idea of the communication of the properties of the two natures: (3) whether Calvin approves the direct communication of properties from Christ's divinity to His humanity in the context of the hypostatic union or not.

The investigation of the current research on deification in Calvin shows how to answer these three interrelated questions becomes a dividing ridge between the positive and negative positions on the question of deification in Calvin. On the one hand, the interpreters who positively affirm the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin insist that the life that believers are granted is the uncreated life which properly belongs to Christ's divinity. Believers participate in the uncreated divine life in their salvation. This divine life is the life that flowed from His divinity into the humanity assumed by the Son of God through His incarnation. By virtue of the communication of properties from the divinity to the humanity, Christ's assumed humanity partook of the divine life and was thereby deified. And the deified humanity of Christ becomes a channel through which the divine life, which was conferred on His humanity, flows to believers. The context in which the divine life flows to believers is their union with Christ. Believers become the partakers of the divine life that was conferred on Christ's humanity through their union with Him. In this sense, Calvin's notion of the union of believers with Christ has an ontological dimension.

In this way, the salvific blessing as participation in the uncreated divine life, the ontological dimension of union with Christ, and the direct communication of properties from Christ's divinity to His humanity, these three are interrelated with one another and constitute the rationale for affirming the idea of deification in Calvin positively.

This rationale for the positive affirmation of Calvin's doctrine of deification is reiterated in Palamas' doctrine of deification in a more systematized form: the substance of our deification is our participation in the uncreated divine life; the basis or source of this deification as participation in the uncreated divine life is Christ's human nature, which was given the fullness of divinity through its hypostatic union with the divinity and thereby was deified; the means of our deification is the substantial union between Christ and us, in which the divine life flows to us through the channel of the deified humanity of Christ.

In contrast with this argument is the interpretation that rejects the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin. The principal point to which the interpreters who reject the presence of the idea of deification in Calvin's theology refer, is that the life granted to believers by their salvation is the created life that Christ acquired through His salvific work in His humanity rather than the intrinsic divine life. It is called divine life in view of its origin, not in the sense of its quality. This idea is supported by Calvin's refusal of the direct communication of properties between Christ's two natures. For Calvin, the communication of properties are carried out only on the personal level. Calvin's idea of the personal communication of the properties of Christ's two natures undermines the ideas that the intrinsic divine life was transferred to the Christ's assumed humanity in the hypostatic union through which the humanity was deified. Therefore the ontological dimension of union with Christ, which guarantees believers' participation in the intrinsic divine life through the

channel of the deified humanity of Christ, is also excluded in Calvin's notion of union with Christ.

Calvin's understanding of the communication of properties between Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union, the nature of his notion of union with Christ, and his idea of the nature of the salvific gift, these three issues form the frame of reference for reasoning the question of deification in Calvin.

7.2. Calvin's answers to the three questions

The considerable parts of this thesis (chap. 3-6) discussed Calvin's answers to the three questions. Firstly, in regard to the issue of the communication of properties between Christ's two natures in the hypostatic union, it was shown that Calvin understands the communion on a personal level, not on an ontological. Calvin appraises the Scriptural description of the communication of properties of Christ's two natures as 'improper but not without reason' on the basis of the inseparable yet distinctive union of both. On the one hand, the ascription of the properties of Christ's two natures is not ontological co-mingling of both natures. On the other hand, the two natures are so intimately united to each other that they constitute the one Person of Christ. Calvin rejects the direct communication of properties from one nature to the other nature in Christ. Rather the communication must be understood as personal. The properties of each of the two natures are justly and appropriately ascribed to Christ's whole Person as God and man. And then the properties of one nature may be also ascribed to the other nature only as a figure of speech in the context of the hypostatic union.

Secondly, Calvin's notion of the believers' union with Christ is spiritual, personal and dynamic. For Calvin our union with Christ is a Spirit-bonded union by faith, which has personal and dynamic dimensions, that is, not ontological. To Calvin, the

agency of the Holy Spirit in our union with Christ is an important motif which guarantees the personal individuality of both in the real and true union between Christ and us. The personal and dynamic dimensions of Calvin's notion of our union with Christ are made clear by his emphasis on faith as the instrument by which the Spirit unites us to Christ.

This nature of Calvin's notion of union with Christ was confirmed by the exploration of Calvin's idea of communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper. Even though Calvin puts an emphasis on our true reception of the substance of Christ's body in the Supper, it does not guarantee the ontological dimension of his notion of union with Christ. Calvin's Chalcedonian Christology cannot approve a local or corporeal presence of Christ's body in the Supper. To Calvin, our partaking of Christ's body in the Supper is spiritual in that the partaking is carried out through the secret power of the Holy Spirit, through whom the distance between Christ's body and us is overcome. Our partaking of Christ's body in the Supper is spiritual in that it is also carried out by our soul's ascension to the heavenly throne where Christ is seated, too. Our faith is also involved in our partaking of Christ's body in the Supper. When we participate in the Lord's Supper, we are bidden to lift up our hearts and to seek Christ in heaven beyond the sacramental signs. Calvin's emphasis on the substance of Christ's body is focused on the life-giving virtue of Christ's body in the sense that He accomplished our redemption in His body. To Calvin, our reception of the substance of Christ's body is our reception of the salvific grace that He acquired in His body.

Thirdly, from Calvin's doctrine of justification, which is a representative salvific gift that is conferred on us in our union with Christ, it can be reasonably concluded that the life that we partake in our union with Him is that which He acquired through His salvific work in His humanity, not that which peculiarly belongs to His divinity. Calvin makes it clear that the righteousness of Christ, through which we are justified, is

acquired by Christ's atoning death and obedience in His humanity. Since we are ontologically distinguished from Christ within the intimate union with Him, our union with Christ does not bring about the infusion of the essential divine righteousness to us. To Calvin, the acquired righteousness of Christ, while truly belonging to us in our union with Him, properly remains His own, that is, *extra nos*.

7.3. The judgment on the question of deification in Calvin

All these observations of Calvin's ideas about the issues which encircle the question of deification seem to render incapacitate any attempt to find the idea of deification as participation in the intrinsic divine life in his theology. Calvin's rejection of the direct communication of properties from Christ's divinity to His humanity renders impossible the deification of Christ's humanity (McDonnell 1967: 220), which is marked as the basis of our deification by the interpreters who endorse his doctrine of deification as in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Calvin's idea of the spiritual and personal union with Christ, in which the ontological distinctiveness between Christ and us is guaranteed, disapproves the idea that the intrinsic divine life flows to us through the channel of Christ's humanity in our union with Him. Therefore it can be reasonably concluded that as far as deification is construed as the believers' participation in the intrinsic divine life, mediated by Christ's humanity in their union with Christ, it is hard to hold that Calvin teaches deification.

This conclusion agrees with McCormack (2010: 506) who notes that the participation in the life which is proper to God is, "by definition, a participation in something that is essential to God." It is assured that the interpreters who affirm Calvin's doctrine of deification do not neglect Calvin's emphasis on the Creator-creature distinction. They insist that Calvin's idea of deification as participation in the life proper to God does not imply that humans are made ontologically equal with

God. But it is questionable that the participation in the uncreated divine life does not imply participation in something that is essential to God. Some interpreters of Calvin, such as Mosser (2002: 54) and Lee (2010: 279), take notice of the similarity with the Palamite distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies in the statements in which Calvin (*Comm.* 2 Pet. 1:4; *Inst.* 1.15.5) draws a distinction between God's 'essence' and His 'kind or quality.' The Palamite idea of the divine essence-energies distinction is marked by them as the motif that underlies Calvin's emphasis on the Creator-creature distinction which is kept even in believers' participation in God.

However the Palamite idea of the divine essence-energies distinction remains a point of criticism among several Western theologians.¹³⁸ Partee ([2008]2010: 174, n.122) points out the inappropriateness of the distinction in the Reformed theology, especially in the Reformed doctrine of God's simplicity. McCormack (2010: 506) doubts the validity of the distinction because the Orthodox affirmation of the participation in the uncreated divine life cannot escape to imply the participation in something that is essential to God.

7.4. The exceptional statements of Calvin

However, there are some of Calvin's (*Inst.*, 4.17.9; *Comm.* Jn. 6:51) own statements that imply that believers come to partake of the intrinsic divine life through their union with Christ. These statements appear to show that Calvin is seeking the significance of the body of Christ as "the life-giving bread" in His incarnation itself, rather than in His salvific work in His humanity. It seems to be that to Calvin the proper reason why Christ's body is called "the bread of life" is because it functions

¹³⁸ For the Western critique against the Palamite distinction between divine essence and energies, see Vásquez 2000: 246-252.

as the channel through which the life which intrinsically dwells in His divinity flows to us. In fact, Calvin says, “the flesh of Christ is like a rich and inexhaustible fountain that pours into us the life springing forth from the Godhead into itself” (*Inst.*, 4.17.9). As far as these statements appear to show Calvin as describing the life conferred on us in our union with Christ to be that which belongs to His divinity, they seem to be in conflict with his rejection of the direct communication of properties of Christ’s two natures. These statements of Calvin are exceptional in his writings. Following McCormack (2010: 511), we can say that they are “not the norm” in Calvin’s theology.

However, in the same context where he seeks the significance of Christ’s body as the life-giving bread as the channel to convey to us the life that dwells intrinsically in His divinity, Calvin (*Comm. Jn.* 6:51) closely links that life to the righteousness Christ acquired by His salvific work in His flesh. The righteousness is the cause of the life that flows to us through the flesh of Christ. Calvin makes it plain that the righteousness, while called divine in that its origin is God, is that which is acquired by Christ’s atoning death and obedience in His humanity. Calvin implies that Christ’s body became the life-giving bread by virtue of the righteousness He acquired as the cause of life through His salvific work in His body. The divine life which is conveyed to believers through the channel of Christ’s body in those statements is that which was acquired by Christ’s salvific work in His body rather than what peculiarly belongs to His divinity. This life is called divine life in the sense of its origin, not in the sense of its quality, as in the case of righteousness. This life can be properly called divine life because Christ acquired it from God the Father by His obedience according to His humanity rather than because it belongs peculiarly to Christ’s divinity in Calvin’s thought.

As mentioned already, the Christian ecumenical movement underlies rereading of Calvin’s theology through the lens of the Eastern doctrine of deification. The

importance of the visible unity of the churches is undeniable. The endeavour to strengthen the unity of the churches in faith and order must be encouraged as a decisive mission of the churches. To accept that the theology of Calvin, who is a leading figure of the Reformed tradition, can be assimilated with the Eastern doctrine of deification, would reinforce the ecumenical movement.¹³⁹ However the Christian ecumenism does not justify a truncated and forced reading of Calvin's theology. As McCormack (2010: 529) cautions, failing to do justice to the full dimensions of Calvin's theology in order not to offend other churches "short-circuit the very valuable contribution that Calvin could make" to the ecumenical dialogue.

¹³⁹ In conclusion of his discussion on Calvin and deification, Mosser (2002: 57) points out the value of Calvin's doctrine of deification for a dialogue between the Reformed and Eastern Orthodoxy as "a point of departure" for the dialogue between them.

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