Divine Adoption in the Confessions of the Reformation Period

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“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons, in accordance with his pleasure and will.”

Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIV).

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ABSTRACT

The concept of divine adoption describes the entire plan of salvation by God ranging from predestination to eschatology. Because of this broad feature, the concept is able to present theological framework into which it is woven. However, in the past the concept has as a whole unfortunately been neglected throughout church history.

Currently, some theologians are trying to restore this neglected concept. Tim J. R. Trumper is one of them. Whereas Trumper values Calvin as the theologian of adoption, he wrongly judges the neglect of adoption in the confessions of the Reformation Period. In chapter 1, by questioning this judgment, the present study formulates the main research question; what is the place and function of the concept of adoption in the Protestant confessions in the 16th and 17th centuries?

In chapter 2, we grasp how Calvin treats the concept in his works because we methodologically use Calvin’s use of the concept as the center for exploring the confessions in the study. From chapters 3 through 5, this study explores eighteen important confessions in order to examine how the concept of adoption is treated in them. Chapter 3 investigates documents written prior to Calvin, specifying some seminal importance which has relevance to adoption. In chapter 4, we explore documents written by or directly related to Calvin, showing how this reformer developed the concept. In chapter 5, we explore the confessions written after Calvin, considering whether or not his soteriological thought influenced them in the context of adoption.

In chapter 6, we give a clear answer to the main research question by clarifying the place and function of the concept of adoption in the Protestant confessions. Regarding the historical place, we conclude that the concept had been maintained in the Reformed tradition throughout the confessional history of the Reformation Period. In regard to the theological function, we conclude that the concept functions as a teleological grace providing God’s children with both a basis for and the purpose of their salvation.
Samenvatting

Het thema van de geestelijke adoptie omvat het totaalplan van Gods verlossingswerk, van verkiezing tot en met eschaton. Wegens de breedte van dit begrip kunnen er brede theologische kaders mee worden weergegeven. In de geschiedenis van de kerk is dit begrip echter helaas verwaarloosd.

In onze tijd proberen sommige theologen nieuwe aandacht te vragen voor dit verwaarloosde concept. Eén van hen is Tim J. R. Trumper. Terwijl hij Calvijn waardeer als de theoloog van adoptie, beoordeelt hij de verwaarlozing van dit thema in de confessies uit de periode van de Reformatie te negatief. Deze observatie leidt in hoofdstuk 1 van de onderhavige studie tot de formulering van de hoofdvraag: Wat is de plaats en de functie van het adoptieconcept in de protestantse confessies in de 16e en 17e eeuw?

Omdat we Calvijns concept van adoptie als een methodologisch kader gebruiken om de belijdenisgeschriften in deze studie te onderzoeken, richten we ons in hoofdstuk 2 op de vraag hoe de geestelijke adoptie in Calvijns werken functioneerde. In de hoofdstukken 3 tot en met 5 worden achttien belangrijke confessies onderzocht op de vraag hoe de adoptie daarin aan de orde komt. In hoofdstuk 3 komen de documenten aan de orde uit de tijd vóór Calvijn. Het blijkt dat hierin sporen van het denken over adoptie aanwezig zijn. In hoofdstuk 4 exploreren we de geschriften die door Calvijn zijn geschreven of die direct aan hem zijn gerelateerd. In hoofdstuk 5 gaan we na of en in hoeverre de confessies na Calvijn in hun vertolking van de adoptie zijn beïnvloed door Calvijns verlossingsleer.

In hoofdstuk 6 wordt een duidelijk antwoord gegeven op de centrale onderzoeksvraag naar de plaats en functie van het adoptieconcept in de protestantse belijdenisgeschriften. In historisch opzicht concluderen we dat het concept in de confessionele geschiedenis van de gereformeerde traditie is gehandhaafd. In theologisch opzicht concluderen we dat de geestelijke adoptie op een teleologische manier functioneert om Gods kinderen te voorzien van een vaste grond voor en het uitzicht op hun zaligheid.

(Translated by prof. dr. Willem van Vlastuin)
ABBREVIATION

**BLK**  Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. 11th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1992)

**CC**  Calvin’s Commentaries (Edinburgh: 1559-)


**CO**  Ioanis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia, Corpus Reformatorum (CR), ed. W. Baum, et al., 59 vols. (Brunswick, Berlin: 1863-1900)

**CTS**  Calvin Translation Society translation of Calvin’s Commentaries, 45 vols.

**DSCHT**  The Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron, et al. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993)


**Niemeyer**  Collectio Confessionum in Ecclesiis Reformatis Publicarum, ed. Hermann A. Niemeyer (Leipzig: Julius Klinkhardt, 1840)


WA  Martin Luther, *Werke*. Kristische Gesamtausgabe Ausg. (Weimar: Bohlau, etc., 1883-)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of divine adoption in the confessions of the Reformation Period. The concept of adoption is based on the Pauline word *huiothesia* describing the redemptive-historical perspective, i.e. the entire plan of salvation by God ranging from predestination to consummation. Because of this broad feature, the concept has the potential to be an underlying theme, presenting a theological framework into which the concept is woven. However, in the past adoption has as a whole unfortunately been neglected or incorrectly treated throughout church history.

Currently, some theologians are trying to restore this neglected concept. Tim J. R. Trumper is one of them. Whereas Trumper values Calvin as the theologian of adoption, he wrongly judges the neglect of adoption in the confessions of the Reformation Period. In this chapter, by questioning his methodological problems, the present study formulates the main research question: *what is the place and function of the concept of adoption in the Protestant confessions in the 16th and 17th centuries?* In order to advance this research question, we carry out the two tasks: 1) the historical task to find the place of the concept in the confessions and 2) the systematic-theological task to clarify the function of the concept in the confessions. These two tasks are advanced by solving four sub-questions respectively, as we shall see later.

In this introductory chapter, we will see the detailed background which leads us to this main research question. The introductory chapter will proceed as follows. First, we will look into a biblical concept of divine adoption in the Pauline Epistles. Second, after taking a look at the current discussion of adoption, the study will explore the history of treatment of adoption ranging from the Church Fathers through the current era. Then, we will find unresolved issues by focusing on a theologian, Tim. J. R. Trumper, and questioning his treatment of confessions. That
we focus on him will help us to formulate the research question. At the end, after setting a thesis statement of the study, we will clarify the method and outline of the study.

A. A Basic Sketch of Adoption

In order to begin this study, it is first of all necessary to examine how Paul used his distinctive word *huiothesia*, translated as ‘adoption’, five times in his Epistles. The five locations where these are used are as follows. The order of those passages is based on the redemptive-historical framework of the Pauline *huiothesia* describing God’s plan for salvation:

For he [God] chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption [*huiothesia*] to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will. (Eph. 1:4-5)

For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption [*huiothesia*] to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. (Rom. 9:3-4)

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption [*huiothesia*] to sonship. (Gal. 4:4-5)

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1. ‘*huiothesia*’ is translated as ‘adoption’ and appears only five times in the following Scriptural passages in the Pauline epistles: Rom. 8:15, 23, 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5. Walter Bauer, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 4th augmented ed., s.v. “*huiothesia*.” The Scriptural passages quoted throughout the present study are almost exclusively taken from the New International Version (NIV). Each time it is indicated when the author of the present study quotes his own translation or from other versions.
For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption \textit{[huiothesia]} to sonship. And by him we cry “\textit{Abba, Father}.” (Rom. 8:14-15)

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption \textit{[huiothesia]} to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom. 8:22-23)

1. The Biblical Description

The following is an exegetical sketch of the basic meaning of adoption according to the order of Biblical passages presented above.\(^2\) This helps us to see that the concept of adoption in the Pauline Epistles, through the presenting its redemptive-historical framework, describes the entire plan of salvation by God, and significantly relates to some theological issues such as predestination, covenant, salvation, the Christian life, and eschatology.\(^3\)

Divine adoption as related above is a Pauline concept describing the soteriological grace which gives us, who were at once among “those who are disobedient” and “by nature deserving of wrath,” the status of God’s children coupled with extraordinary privileges.\(^4\) This amazing grace has been, within God’s eternal decrees, predestined for us before “the creation of the world” under his sole initiative based on his “redemptive purpose.”\(^5\) Certainly, from the very

\(^2\) In summarizing the biblical meaning of adoption, the present study, as ground work, exegetically explored the Greek texts of the five places where \textit{huiothesia} is used by the Apostle. Commentaries were also used for helping the study make exegetical investigations into these texts.

\(^3\) Herman Ridderbos, \textit{Paul: An Outline of His Theology}, trans. John R. De Witt (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1975), 198-203. See 198: “When we consider in greater detail the passages where Paul expressly speaks of the sonship of believers and of their adoption as sons, it becomes clear at once that he is again thinking in redemptive-historical, eschatological categories.”

\(^4\) Eph. 1:3-6, 2:3-4.

\(^5\) \textit{Thelema}’ in this context, although translated as “will” in the NIV translation mentioned above, signifies “that which is purposed, or intended and stresses his [God’s] active resolve, his redemptive
beginning in his eternal counsel God clearly purposed to lead us into his family solely through Jesus Christ by sharing his Sonship with us. In fact, divine adoption has been based not only on God’s redemptive purpose, but also on “his pleasure” in order to bring us into the familial relationship with him.

At first, the promise of adoption was revealed to Israel as the elect at the time of the Exodus through bringing her “out of the land of slavery.” Although adoption (huiothesia) in the context of Romans 9:4 is relevant to the historical event of the Exodus, the adoptive sonship of Israel does not naturally mean “salvation for every single Israelite,” but means a promise or covenant that God would accept the nation of Israel as his children if they would trust and obey him on the basis of the law.

“When the set time had fully come,” God graciously fulfilled this promise by sending his Son in order for those who were under the law to be redeemed and to receive the adoptive sonship by believing in Christ, and then even extended the same promise to the Gentiles to be heirs along with the Israelites. Because of this adoptive sonship which we received, God sent...
the Holy Spirit “into our hearts” for helping us to intimately call him “Abba, Father,” just as Christ did, through enjoying the mature relationship with him as his children.⁹

The life of the adoptive children entails the moral obligation to live by the Spirit, not by the flesh, through putting to “death the misdeeds of the body.”¹⁰ Because of the new status of belonging to the family of God, each of his children is expected to act properly as a son or daughter of this divine family. More concretely, the life of God’s children is characterized by their prayerful lives led by the Spirit of adoption, who gives them the assurance of sonship and helps them freely and confidently call him “Abba, Father.”¹¹ Although their going through suffering frequently during their earthly lives just as Christ did is unavoidable, their sufferings are not meaningless, but eventually lead to the glory which they as co-heirs will share with Christ.

Now God’s children with the whole creation are groaning and waiting for their Savior to come again. At that time they will be resurrected to spiritual bodies and the creation will be “brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.”¹² In this sense, their adoptive

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⁹. There has been a heated debate as to “whether the proper order is first sonship and then the gift of the Spirit” as described in Gal 4:6, or “first the reception of the Spirit and then sonship” as in Rom. 8:23 or Gal. 3:2-5, 14b, and 26. Theologically speaking, however, it is important to keep in mind that “sonship and receiving the Spirit are so intimately related that one can speak of them in either order,” as Longenecker explains. In this sense, it is plausible to recognize biblically, at least here in Gal. 4:6, that sonship precedes receiving the Spirit even though another explanation may be feasible. See Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 173; Bruce, Galatians, 198. Regarding “the mature relationship” mentioned in the above text, see Longenecker, Galatians, 161.

¹⁰. Rom. 8:12-17. See 14, “Those who are led by the Spirit of God [pneumati theou agontai] are the children of God.” Here the combination of “agontai” and a dative case signifies “surrendering to an overmastering compulsion.” Dunn, Romans 1-8, 450. Also, it should be noted that the leading of the Spirit is not making us God’s children, but “a distinguishing sign of God’s sons.” Morris, Romans, 313.

¹¹. In verse 15 “the Spirit you received,” the word “received [elabete]” in aorist tense probably points to the time of conversion. Morris, op. cit., 314; Dunn, op. cit., 451. Regarding calling [cry in NIV, krazomen] God “Abba, Father,” it is recognized that Paul uses this word in order to signify prayer. Morris, op. cit., 315; Cranfield, op. cit., 399. The meaning of the Aramaic word ‘Abba’ has not only intimacy, but also dignity. Originally, the use of this word for prayer was recognized as a distinctive characteristic of Jesus’ prayer. It is possible to say that Jesus shared this use with Christians as well as sharing his Sonship with them. Morris, op. cit., 315-16; Cranfield, op. cit., 400; Dunn, op. cit., 453-54.

¹². Rom. 8:18-25. The reason the whole creation is also waiting for the second coming is the fact that “the creation was subjected [hupetage] to frustration” by God’s will at the Fall. The aorist tense of “hupetage” points to the time of the Fall. Morris, op. cit., 321. Regarding “the pains of childbirth” in verse...
sonship is not yet completed, although it was already given when receiving the “first fruits of the Spirit.” In reality, God’s children are expected in “the already/not yet tension,” to press on towards the consummation when their adoption will be completed, namely “the redemption of our bodies.” Thus the life of God’s children is characterized by this certain hope based on their adoptive sonship in belonging to the divine family.

2. A Description of the Terminological Background

The Apostle Paul, in order to depict the soteriological grace mentioned above, chose the Greek word ‘huiothesia’ as a theological concept in order effectively to describe a spiritual and soteriological reality. As we shall see later, it is recognized that, at least in terms of the terminology itself, its most possible background would be Roman. Certainly, there are some similarities between the practice of Roman adoption and divine adoption. For example, in Roman adoption practice only adults could be adopted, whereas infant adoption became popular in modern times. This characteristic would remind us of Galatians 4:1-7 referring to the point that maturity is required for an heir, in the context of divine adoption, to have the full right to his inheritance as a son of God. Furthermore in the Roman adoption, after being adopted into a

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22, what it describes there is that the sufferings God’s children are facing are not meaningless, but are filled with a certain hope in the future. See ibid., 323; Dunn, op. cit., 472-73.

13. The connotation of using “first fruits of the Spirit” is that more blessings or fruit is coming. Morris, op. cit., 323; Dunn, op. cit., 473; Ridderbos, Paul, 203.

14. In verse 23, “the redemption of our bodies [ten apolutrosoin tou somatos hemon]” explains the meaning of “adoption [huiothesian].” Among the five places in the NT in which huiothesia is used, this is the only place in which we can find its definition given by Paul. Tim J. R. Trumper, “The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realization II: The Adoption Metaphor in Biblical Usage,” Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology 15 (1997): 98-115. Here, by using the phrase “the redemption of our bodies,” Paul emphasizes “the values of the body.” The resurrected body mentioned by Paul here is referring to what he calls at other places (1 Cor 15:44; Phil 3:21) “a spiritual body” or “a glorious body,” which is not the same body we have now. See Morris, op. cit., 324; Dunn, op. cit., 474-75.


16. Gal. 4:1-2: “What I am saying is that as long as an heir is under age, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.”
new family, an adopted son was treated equally with, and had the same privileges as, a naturally
born son. This practice would be reminiscent of Romans 8:17 depicting adopted children as
“co-heirs with Christ.”

However, it is too naïve to think that we can clarify the meaning of *huiothesia* by
relying only on the Roman practice of adoption, in considering the fact that there were some
significant differences, as well as similarities, between these two types of adoption. First of all,
whereas in the Roman practice, an adopted son would be qualified to take his inheritance only
after his adoptive father’s death, our adoptive Father in heaven will never die. Furthermore,
while the Roman practice did not need any mediator or third party in its process, the Son of God
as the Mediator has played a crucial role for divine adoption to be accomplished. In addition to
this, the purpose of the Roman adoption was different from that of divine adoption. Roman
practice preserved familial lineage in relation to their cult, but divine adoption has never meant to
have that purpose since God is eternal and “predestined us for adoption to sonship . . . in
accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace.” Thus, in order to
understand the richness of divine adoption, it is crucial to keep in mind that Paul, after seemingly
borrowing the terminology *huiothesia* from Roman practice, strategically used it as a distinctive

17. T. J. Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (Downers Grove,
Sandars (Chicago: Callogham, 1876), 103-11. The section on “*De Adoptionibus*” clarifies that the practice
of adoption was legally established, on a basis of the Roman law, in order to protect the right of those
adopted. In the Justinian era, Justinian made some changes on the law of adoption to make the right of the
these revisions, Justinian legally altered a tradition of adoption in that adoption caused “a total break with
the natal family.” In that sense, argues Gager, “Traditions of adoption were weakened somewhat by
Justinian’s legal reforms.”
19. Burke, op. cit., 70: “There was no role for an intermediary or a go-between in the Roman
sociolegal practice of adoption. In the New Testament, however, spiritual adoption always and only takes
place through God’s own Son, to whom the believer has been united by faith.”
20. Eph. 1:5-6 (italics mine); Burke, op. cit., 66; *Der neue Pauly*, 122.
word in his Epistles to depict a type of soteriological grace for the churches to which he wrote.  

3. A Description of Our Era

Whereas human adoption in Roman society originally seemed to provide Paul with a terminological source of his distinctive word in the New Testament era, the human practice of adoption in our day contrasts markedly with the Roman practice. One of the most significant differences must be that most commonly the practice of adoption in this era is not adult, but infant adoption as already mentioned. This phenomenon would make it even more difficult for us to understand the actual meaning of divine adoption as compared with Paul’s era when it was easy for the readers of his Epistles, at least in terms of its terminology, to understand the basic meanings of *huiοθεσία* since “Paul uses the term only in letters written to churches that were under Roman law.”

Some would say that the popularity of infant adoption may help us to some extent to understand the meaning of divine adoption. This is because they would assume that it may be easier to succeed in accepting adopted children into a new family as opposed to adults, and be more suitable to depict, in the manner that infant baptism does, the deeply predestined grace in God’s eternal counsel on which divine adoption has been dependent. However, this is not the case. It is generally recognized that not all infant adoption practices go as well as we would expect. This is why Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, a pastoral theologian, wrote a book in order theologically and pastorally to treat some serious challenges that the practice of adopting children

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23. See Eph. 1:5.
is facing in this era. This clearly shows the reality that the human practice of adoption, even in the case of infants, faces some difficulties that must be overcome in this fallen world.

However, it should be emphasized that divine adoption will never fail because the triune God has been working to accomplish the plan of divine adoption in order to take us out of the household of slavery to sin, and bring into God’s family. Here is our only comfort.

B. The Current Discussion on Divine Adoption

In one of his influential works, Knowing God, J. I. Packer states, “It is a strange fact that the truth of adoption has been little regarded in Christian history.” Indeed it is difficult to deny that the concept of adoption has been neglected or incorrectly treated in church history, as we shall see when tracing her history.

However, some theologians, as though they were triggered by what Packer stated, are now trying to restore this neglected concept to its appropriate place within the whole theological framework, while emphasizing its important role in constructing theology. It is generally recognized that one of the driving forces currently motivating theologians into researching adoption is a development of biblical theology focusing on ‘huiotesia’, a distinctive Pauline word as already mentioned. Research into ‘huiotesia’ inspires theologians to consider adoption in various areas of theology, such as systematic theology, historical theology and practical theology. One of these theologians, whom we will explore in this study is Tim

27. For example, in the area of biblical theology T. J. Burke, Adopted into God’s Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor; of systematic theology R. C. Zachman, The Assurance of Faith: The Conscience of the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox
Trumper.

In seeing the current theological movement mentioned above, it would be natural to raise the following question, “Why is this concept so attractive that some influential theologians are working on trying to restore it?” Regarding this question most theologians would say that the concept of adoption has the potential to shed fresh light on how soteriology should be treated. It has been insisted that, on the one hand, the so-called forensic approach has been mainly taken to treat justification emphasizing the vertical relationship between God and man as though a grace of justification were a mere forensic transaction. But adoption, on the other hand, has the potential to restore a relational and familial view of the relationship of God to man in terms of soteriology.\(^2\)\(^8\) In other words, the meaning of salvation can be re-defined, by recovering adoption, from a mainly forensic transaction between God and man to a more relational restoration of believers into God’s family.\(^2\)\(^9\) In this sense, it is clear that some important theologians are attracted to this soteriological concept of adoption while facing various challenges in the wretchedness of this post-modern world where the traditional family model is not ready to meet the challenges of today.

C. Reviewing the History of the Treatment of Adoption

When hearing from some theologians that the concept of adoption has been neglected or incorrectly treated, it is natural to raise the question of how this has been treated in church history.


Thus it is necessary to review church history briefly in terms of adoption, in order to examine whether or not it actually has been neglected. In paying careful attention to the history of the treatment of this concept, we are forced to acknowledge that adoption has been given scant attention by most of the influential theologians in history.

In what follows, this study observes the history of the treatment of adoption in a chronological way: the Church Fathers, the Reformation Period, the post-Reformation Period, and the period of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In this chronological way, we skip the Middle Ages because it is recognized that familial themes were not treated during this period of time due to the theological tendency of the Middle Ages placing special emphasis on God’s sovereignty.\(^{30}\) The method for observing the history of this matter is mainly based on secondary sources while the present study refers to primary sources in order to analyze this history accurately. Then this study refers to some theological consensuses on adoption currently recognized as a result of the on-going theological discussion of this concept.

1. The Church Fathers

Generally speaking, it is recognized that the Church Fathers did not pay much attention to adoption because they occupied themselves with fighting heresies and establishing orthodox doctrines. During their period there were numerous urgent issues on which they needed to focus, such as the doctrine of the Trinity and the Person of Christ.\(^ {31}\) Therefore, it is very difficult to find secondary sources focusing on the Church Fathers’ view on the concept of adoption.


However, there were some influential church fathers who paid some attention to or treated some issues related to adoption although their treatments were limited by the fact that they were forced to fight the heresies as already mentioned. Here it is necessary to refer to four church fathers: Irenaeus (ca. 125-202), Origen (ca. 185-254), Athanasius (ca. 296-373), and Augustine (354-430).32

a. The Greek Fathers: Irenaeus, Origen, and Athanasius

First, T. J. Burke, in his footnotes, recognizes Irenaeus as “the earliest witness in church history outside the New Testament canon to the doctrine of adoption.”33 On the other hand, it is pointed out by others that Irenaeus’ main focus was not on adoption itself, but on the Fatherhood of God, another aspect of adoption.34 While treating theological issues relating to creation, soteriology, and the consummation in his famous work Against Heresies, Irenaeus sometimes related the Fatherhood of God or adoption to those issues in subtle ways.35 For example, in treating soteriology in Against Heresies Irenaeus refers to adoption for clarifying the purpose of the Incarnation saying, “It was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and he who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God.”36 However, it is also pointed out that Irenaeus’s true intention was to emphasize the Creatorship of God rather than his Fatherhood, although his works were historically significant in relation to the latter since it was rarely treated by his

33. T. J. Burke, Adopted into God’s Family, 100.
34. Lidgett, op. cit., 156.
35. For example, see Irenaeus Against Heresies, 3.18.1, 3.19.1, 4.38.4, 4.41.2; Sano, “The Doctrine of Adoption in the History of Theology,” 12.
36. Irenaeus Against Heresies, 3.19.1 [PG 7: 940].
contemporaries.  

Second, Origen paid some attention to the relationship between Christ’s Sonship and the believer’s sonship through referring to two other issues, the image of God and the Logos Christology, functioning as links to relate each of these two sonships to the other. 

Third, it is pointed out by some that while treating the Fatherhood of God for constructing theology, Athanasius referred to two distinctive benefits of the Incarnation: rebirth and adoption. Although Athanasius did not use the word adoption, he actually related Fatherhood as another aspect of adoption to a purpose of the Incarnation. He stated, “The Savior of us all, the Word of God, in his great love took to himself a body and moved as man among men, meeting their senses, so to speak half way. He became himself an object for the senses, so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which he, the Word of God, did in the body.”

Thus these Greek fathers paid some attention to adoption or some issues related to it even though their treatments cannot be considered adequate in light of the richness of the concept of adoption. According to Trumper, the degree of neglecting adoption was to a lesser degree in the Greek fathers than in the Latin fathers because the Latin fathers were inclined to emphasize God’s sovereignty in terms of the doctrine of God.

b. The Issue of Deification

However, there was a significant issue in Augustine’s works even though his theological tendency was along the same lines with other Latin fathers in emphasizing God’s sovereignty.

37. Lidgett, op. cit., 160.
38. Origen De principijs, 1.2.7, 1.2.8, 3.6.1; Trumper, op. cit., 16; Sano, op. cit., 13-15.
40. Athanasius On the Incarnation of the Word, 3:15, [PG 25:122]; Also see ibid., 8:54 [PG 25:192].
That issue was the so-called deification of believers. Gerald Bonner in *Augustinus Lexicon* refers to the significant relationship between deification and *huiothesia* in Augustine’s thought, saying, “For Augustine, as for the Greek Fathers, deification is no more than what is implied by the New Testament doctrine of *huiothesia* – sonship by adoption and not by nature through God’s participation (*Participatio*) in our humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.”

Robert Puchniak, based on the new discovery of Augustine’s sermons, also points out that Augustine’s understanding of deification was basically equal to the meaning of adoption, although he was often reluctant to use this terminology, being afraid of misleading people into the false idea that man essentially becomes divine.

More interestingly, the issue of deification was treated not only by Augustine, but also by Irenaeus and Athanasius. Sano lists the following four similarities between deification and adoption he finds through those church fathers: (1) the Incarnation of the Logos takes a crucial role in relation to deification, (2) deification means the completion of being children of God, (3) deification is brought about at the time of the consummation, and (4) deification compels those who are in God to strive for their sanctification. In seeing these similarities, it is clear that there was some significant relevance in their understanding of deification to the concept of adoption.

It is generally recognized that the issue of deification has been theologically significant in the school of Eastern Orthodoxy. Also, it should be noted that deification became one of the debated issues “in the last decade among some Finnish and German theologians because of


43. Robert Puchniak, “Augustine’s Conception of Deification, Revisited,” in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, ed. Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co Ltd., 2010), 122, 131-33. For example, see Augustine *The City of God*, 18.18. This sermon, through treating “the transformations which seem to happen to men through the art of demons,” describes his reluctance of using the word, deification.

44. Irenaeus *Against Heresies*, 5. preface; Athanasius *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 8.5; Augustine *On the Holy Trinity*, 4.2.4; Sano, op. cit., 35. In fact Origen also refers to deification in his works, but Origen’s understanding, insists Sano, was different from the other three.
ecumenical dialog held between Finnish Lutherans and the Russian Orthodox.” Although this is beyond the scope of this study, it is interesting that those ecumenical dialogs discuss whether there was any influence by Eastern theology on Western theology, represented by Luther in this case, in terms of deification. Although it is not so easy to judge clearly the Eastern influence on Western theology in relation to *thesis*, it may be plausible that Eastern Orthodoxy was influenced by those Greek fathers paying attention to deification in considering the close relationship between them in past theological history. Furthermore, in considering the number of the church fathers mentioned above who paid attention to the issue of deification, it may be even possible to say that deification was treated earlier and to a greater extent by the Greek Fathers than by the Latin Fathers. The former is represented by Irenaeus, Origen, and Athanasius, but the latter only by Augustine.

Even though in early church history the issue of deification might have been taken up by the Greek or Eastern fathers influencing Eastern Orthodoxy, their treatment of deification did not lead to the doctrinal development of adoption by those church fathers in spite of its potential to lead to the development of adoption. In addition to this, it may be possible to say, at least in Western theology, that the issue of deification was not passed on to subsequent generations for further discussion because one of the main doctrinal focuses during their era was the sovereignty of God. After that neither later church fathers nor theologians during the Middle Ages focused on adoption or the Fatherhood of God.

c. The Adoptionist Controversy

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46. Lidgett, op. cit., 199-200; Trumper, op. cit., 17.
In concluding this section on the Church Fathers, it is necessary to mention briefly one interesting issue from their era, namely the Adoptionist controversy. Adoptionism negated the human nature of the Second Person of the Trinity by teaching that “the ‘Spirit’ or ‘Christ’ descended upon Jesus at baptism, initiating miraculous powers in one who was, though supremely virtuous, just an ordinary man.”

In other words, Jesus was adopted by God into the divine Sonship in terms of Adoptionism. Even though Adoptionism was recognized as one of the famous heresies of that era, this controversy could be a good opportunity that created an awareness of adoption. More precisely, church fathers or theologians in that era, insists Trumper, could reach the issue of believer’s sonship through discussing and deepening the issue of Christ’s Sonship which was the main focal point in this controversy. However, the church fathers or theologians within this controversy did not pay any attention to the issue of adoptive sonship beyond Christ’s Sonship. They were otherwise fully occupied with handling this heresy in order to protect the orthodox doctrine of Christology. It is necessary to wait for the Reformation Period to come in order to see the issue of adoption in church history.

2. The Reformation Period

As generally recognized, justification was one of the focal doctrines discussed during the Reformation Period, although most Reformers did not focus on adoption in spite of its significant relevance to justification. In actuality, they were occupied in protecting “justification by faith alone” in fighting against the Roman Catholic understanding of justification. In connection to this, it is understandable that only a scant number of secondary sources refer to the issue of adoption.

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47. *New Dictionary of Theology*, 1989 ed. S. B. Ferguson, D. F. Wright and J. I. Packer, s. v. “Adoptionism.” One of the most famous representatives of Adoptionism was Paul of Samosata. His teaching on Christology was condemned as a heresy at the Synod of Antioch (268).


adoption in this period.

When it comes to the treatment of adoption during the Reformation Period, most secondary sources pay attention mainly to two influential reformers: Martin Luther and John Calvin. Here this chapter focuses first on Luther and then on Calvin.

a. Martin Luther

It is not clear from the secondary sources how we should evaluate Luther in terms of his treatment of adoption in his works. On the one hand, Packer values Luther on the point that he emphasized adoption in his works as well as the doctrine of justification. But most secondary sources, on the other hand, seem not to value him. For example, Lidgett negatively evaluates and criticizes Luther because he did not refer much to adoption even in his comments on Galatians 4:1-7, one of the Pauline texts having significant relevance to the adoptive sonship through referring to the Spirit of adoption. Lidgett states, “Salvation is not conceived by Luther prevailingly under the form of realized and completed sonship, but as redemption, forgiveness, acceptance, confidence, and freedom, especially this last.” Also, Ferguson insists that Luther recognized adoption as a positive side of justification. He even states, “Luther’s stress on justification was at the expense of emphasizing the privilege of sonship. Sonship . . . is subservient to justification. At best it is the seal of justification.” In other words, Luther, according to Ferguson, did not pay attention to adoption as a distinctive issue by subsuming it under justification, while focusing on justification as the hallmark of his thought. In seeing those various comments on Luther, it is difficult to evaluate his theology in terms of adoption. This study reflects on this question in chapter 3 by exploring Luther’s two catechisms.

50. Packer, Knowing God, 207.
53. Ibid., 81.
b. John Calvin

While investigating confessional documents during the Reformation Period, most secondary sources pay special attention to Calvin. Although in the *Institutes* Calvin did not devote any chapter or section to adoption, most theologians working on him highly value his persistent treatment of it and recognize that it played a significant role in his theology. For example, Ferguson values Calvin saying in his theology that to become a child of God has the equal meaning to being a Christian. In other words, adoption plays a significant role as an underlying theme in Calvin’s theology. In actuality, for Calvin ‘*Pneuma huiotesias*’ is “the first title” of the Spirit, and thus his treatment of adoption appears to be distinguished from other reformers including Luther as mentioned above. In the section of “titles of the Holy Spirit in Scripture” in his *Institutes*, Calvin states, ‘First, he is called the ‘Spirit of adoption’ because he is the witness to us of the free benevolence of God with which God the Father has embraced us in his beloved only-begotten Son to become a Father to us . . . he supplies the very words so that we may fearlessly cry, ‘Abba, Father!’’

Furthermore, G. A. Wilterdink focuses in his research on Calvin’s treatment of the Fatherhood of God, which is another aspect of adoption. Although it is generally recognized that Calvin was inclined to emphasize God’s sovereignty in treating the doctrine of God, the Fatherhood, insists Wilterdink, functioned significantly in terms of the Christian piety consisting of “gratitude, confidence and peace.” In Calvin’s thought, while knowing God’s superiority

through reflecting on his sovereignty, Christians were able to experience piety through knowing God as their Father and becoming members of his family.

In short, Calvin’s treatment of adoption, including his treatment of the Fatherhood, actually appears to be impressive and special. In chapter 2 this study clarifies Calvin’s treatment of adoption in his works as a whole. Then, in chapter 4 we explore Calvin’s confessional documents to discuss his treatment of adoption in detail.

3. The Post-Reformation Period

As mentioned above, divine adoption might be an underlying theme in Calvin’s theological thought. Nevertheless, the fact that Calvin in the *Institutes* did not devote any chapter or section on adoption could negatively influence later reformers or theologians, as some suggest.\(^5\) In reality, it is observable that the concept of adoption was not developed in the post Reformation Period and the following ages as a whole. What we can recognize in looking at these ages is that adoption was rarely focused on, even though a small number of theologians or theological works paid some attention to it and tried to restore adoption in their period of time.

a. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) and its Tradition

It is well known that the *Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)* is the first confessional document that devoted a section to the concepts of grace and adoption in church history.

Chapter 12. Of Adoption

All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and

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enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.59

Also, the relevant questions and answers in both the Larger (WLC, 1648) and Shorter Catechisms (WSC, 1648) are quoted here.

WLC, Q76. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.

WSC, Q34. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

Although it is important to have the WCF, WLC and WSC in the history of treating adoption, it is said that the WCF’s influence was not so significant in terms of the development of adoption even though Chapter 12 of the WCF might have played a role in keeping it in the Presbyterian tradition to some degree.60 According to Trumper’s investigation of Schaff’s The Creeds of Christendom, after the WCF only five confessional documents (1658-1925) set a

59. Westminster Confession of Faith (Glasgow, UK: Free Presbyterian Pub., 1994), 60-61. Also see ibid., 166 for QA 74 in the Larger Catechism, and ibid., 297 for QA 34 in the Shorter Catechism.

chapter on adoption, as we shall see later. In reality, it is difficult to say that the concept of adoption, under the influence of the *WCF*, developed within the Presbyterian tradition, as Kelly states, “It seems to me that followers of the Westminster tradition have unwittingly given grounds for other Christians to think that they have an insufficient confessional grasp of familial relational themes so central to Scripture, because they have neglected to make use of and develop further what Westminster itself says about adoption.”

It is also difficult to evaluate the Puritans, who shared the heritage of the *WCF* with the Presbyterian tradition. Whereas most secondary sources do not value the Puritans, only Beeke, who is known for his Puritan research, refers in a positive manner to numerous Puritans who treat adoption in their works, such as William Ames, Thomas Watson, and Herman Witsius. However, there are two issues which make it difficult to evaluate the Puritans. First, W. Ames does not distinguish the Pauline adoption from the Johannine new birth in his work *The Marrow of Theology* although they are distinct theologically. Trumper points out that among the twenty-seven places in which Ames refers to adoption in the work, half of them are not related to the Pauline *huiothesia*, and “eight [of them] refer to the Johannine writings while four are solely reliant upon John.” Similar cases are also found in Watson and Witsius. Although Beeke is

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aware of this issue, somehow he is silent on it in his two works focusing on the Puritans. In seeing that such influential Puritan leaders appear to have the problem, we are forced to think whether or not the Puritans as a whole understood adoption in a theologically accurate way. We will return to the issue of the conflation of adoption with the new birth throughout the following chapters 3-6.

Second, whereas Puritans referred to adoption in their writings, it is difficult say that they theologically deepened it or took full advantage of what Calvin developed. Trumper points out that Puritans’ writings, in which the forensic tone is dominant as a whole, tend to emphasize the forensic aspect of salvation rather than its familial aspect, and even Beeke acknowledges that adoption, among Puritanism, was “not developed as thoroughly as several closely knit doctrines such as justification, sanctification, and assurance.” It is assumed, therefore, that because of the WCF Puritans, just as the Presbyterian, referred to adoption in their sermons or treatises to some extent, although the concept of adoption did not develop doctrinally beyond the WCF. Thus, it is plausible that what Kelly insists on the Presbyterian tradition is also applicable to the Puritans.

b. The Influence of Turretin

It is insisted by some important secondary sources that the concept of adoption was lost in the seventeenth century because of the influential work of F. Turretin (1623-1687). In his Institutes

27-28; Beeke, “The Puritans on Adoption,” 540.
66. Beeke, Heirs with Christ, 126.
67. Tim Trumper, When History Teaches Us Nothing: The Recent Reformed Sonship Debate in Context (Eugen, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 7-32. In a convincing way, Trumper shows us how the Puritans, facing the challenges from Arminianism and Neonomianism, were theologically compelled to lean to the forensic approach of salvation. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 20-22; Beeke, Heirs with Christ, 7.
of Elenctic Theology Turretin defined adoption as a positive side of justification as compared with another side of justification, the remission of sins. After treating the remission of sins in the previous question in that work, Turretin refers to the issue of adoption:

Sixth Question: Adoption

What is the adoption which is given to us in justification?

The other part of justification is adoption or the bestowal of a right to life, flowing from Christ’s righteousness, which acquired for us not only deliverance from death, but also a right to life by the adoption with which he endows us.

Here it should be noted that Turretin, by treating both the remission of sins and adoption under justification, doctrinally subsumed them under this forensic doctrine as its two parts. In the lengthy table of contents of Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Turretin actually states in the fourth question regarding justification, “Does justification consist only in the remission of sins? Or does it embrace also adoption and the right to life? The former we deny and affirm the latter.” Because of Turretin’s treatment subsuming adoption under the forensic doctrine, it was unavoidable that the familial tenor of adoption and other various aspects of adoption relating to other doctrines were missed in his work.

Then this work became so popular that it was used by numerous universities or seminaries for almost two centuries as “the theological textbook” influencing uncountable

71. Turretin, ibid., 2: xvii.
seminarians and pastors across two continents on the both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Kelly confirms this:

Turretin does not devote a separate section to adoption and essentially subsumes it as another way of saying “justification.” The majority of Reformed teachers followed their great textbook master in this sad omission [adoption as a *locus*], thus removing much of the central biblical picture of family relationship from the theological curriculum. None can doubt that this narrowing down of the crucial relationship of redeemed humans to the Holy God into only forensic terms . . . impacted the preaching of their students into a more legal, and less familial direction.

This effective omission of adoption from both the theological curriculum and the parish preaching of most of the Presbyterian, Reformed tradition seems to have preponderated from the late seventeenth to the nineteenth century.

Ferguson also states, “Turretin did have the great merit of linking Christian liberty to the idea of adoption, but the formulation he gave to the relation between justification and adoption became the bench-mark for most later expositions.” Consequentially, the familial direction of adoption

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72. Ferguson, “The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship,” 83; Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption II,” 186-87. Here in the footnote Trumper refers to Robert Duff’s remarks saying, “Writing in 1881 Robert Duff observed that ‘Turretin has been accepted for two centuries as an authoritative teacher in the Christian church, and . . . the doctrines he defined and upheld are those which distinguish much of the evangelical theology of the present time’ (‘Theologians of the Past – Francis Turretin’, *Catholic Presbyterian* 5 (Jan. – Jun. 1881, p.372).” James T. Dennison states, “Francis Turretin’s *Institutio* was commended by his contemporaries and championed by later Reformed theologians. It was particularly influential at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey – nineteenth century bastion of Old School American Presbyterianism.” In addition to this, Dennison points out that Turretin’s work was also used as a textbook at Union Theological Seminary, another influential school in the North America. James T. Dennison, “The Life and Career of Francis Turretin” in Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:648.


74. Ferguson, op. cit., 83. Interestingly, Ferguson here, following this remark, refers to the possibility that nineteenth century Liberalism might affect the neglect of adoption in the nineteenth century through being linked with the influence of Turretin. “This long-standing tradition [the relation between justification and adoption], linked with the influence of nineteenth century Liberalism’s emphasis on the universal Fatherhood of God and the corresponding universal sonship and brotherhood of man might have seemed to sound the death-knell of the doctrine of adoption. Evangelical teaching in general fought shy of the employment of language (Fatherhood of God, sonship of man) which had become hallmarks of
with its distinctiveness was lost because of Turretin’s definition of adoption.

In addition to this, the loss, or at least neglect, of adoption in the following centuries after Turretin can be historically illustrated by the fact that from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, there were only two monographs which dealt with adoption: T. Houston’s *The Adoption of Sons* (1872) and R.A. Webb’s *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption* (1947).\(^7\) In considering this significantly small number of monographs focusing on adoption, it would be fair to say, at least, that the concept of adoption during this long period of time was not recognized as important by most theologians.

c. The Survival of Adoption in the Celtic Background

On the other hand, Kelly makes an interesting comment on the post Reformation Period by saying that “it was intriguing to discover that apparently this theme of adoption has been seriously developed only among Reformed Christians of Celtic background” even though it was almost lost in other places.\(^7\) It is certainly this “Celtic background” where two controversies took place in relation to adoption or its related issues. The first one was called the Campbell controversy (1825-1831).\(^7\) This focused on the Fatherhood of God as an aspect of sonship although it did not succeed in recovering or developing the familial notion Campbell tried to

\(^7\) Liberalism and Universalism.” Trumper also pays attention to the issue of Universalism in relation to the nineteenth century neglect of adoption. Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption II,” 192-95.  
75. Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 14. Both works are out of print. Regarding the year of publishing of Webb’s work, it should be noted that his work was published twenty-eight years later after he died in 1919. The work consists of Webb’s manuscripts of lectures on adoption. Although he originally intended to publish them, Webb could not do so because of his premature death. See Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 437-38.  
77. The central figure of this controversy is John McLeod Campbell (1800-1872), a minister of the Church of Scotland. But Campbell was well known not for this controversy, but for his later work *The Nature of the Atonement* (c. 1856) rejecting Christ’s substitutional death. In his thought, “The atonement was not grounded any context of law, but in God’s fatherhood – a father’s desire to reclaim his erring children.” His understanding of the Fatherhood of God had a tendency of universalism. DSCHT, s.v. “Campbell, John McLeod.”
The second controversy is probably better-known than the first. The second one was called the Candlish/Crawford controversy (1865), and in it Robert S. Candlish and Thomas J. Crawford argued about the nature of the Fatherhood and of the believers’ sonship. More precisely, there were two issues in this controversy. First, this controversy discussed whether it was legitimate to say that the Fatherhood of God had relevance only to God the Son and believers. Second, the controversy argued how we should distinguish the Son’s filial relationship with the Father from the believers’ relationship with him; in other words, this controversy focused on the relationship between the Sonship of Christ and adoptive sonship. Although this controversy, because of these two issues, could have become a real opportunity for recovering adoption, it is generally recognized that in reality this did not make any significant contribution to the recovering of this neglected concept.

Nevertheless, some theologians from the Southern Reformed tradition in North America, which also had Scottish (Celtic) background, appeared to respond to these controversies in Scotland from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. One of those theologians was J. L. Girardeau. He recognized adoption not as a part of justification, but as a distinctive issue, and with other Southern Presbyterian theologians, tried to recover “the original biblical, emphasize.”

78 Here the author intentionally uses the phrase “the Fatherhood of God as another aspect of sonship,” not that of adoption. This is because it is not so sure whether Campbell took the divine act of adoption into account even though he emphasized the familial aspect of soteriology. Also see Trumper, When History Teaches Us Nothing, 34-36.

79. Candlish, Robert Smith (1806-1873) was a leader and preacher of the Free Church of Scotland. Crawford, Thomas Jackson (1812-1875) was a theologian of the Church of Scotland. In 1865 at the Cunningham Lectures, “He [Candlish] emphasized the sonship of believers in adoption and denied a universal fatherhood of God.” Crawford critically responded to him, which then led to an extensive controversy. DSCHT, s.v. “Candlish, Robert Smith,” and “Crawford, Thomas Jackson.”


personal/family theme of Father, Son and many sons bound together in a communion of loving fellowship by the Spirit of adoption,” whereas most theologians in his era were inclined to teach salvation lopsidedly “in somewhat impersonal categories in terms of legal transactions” through subsuming adoption under the forensic doctrine of justification. Girardeau actually distinguished adoption from justification through articulating, “Justification legally and formally introduces the regenerated sinner into the society of a righteous universe as a community or polity; adoption legally and formally introduces the regenerated sinner into the society of God’s family. Justification confers upon him the rights of a righteous man; adoption, the rights of a child.” But Girardeau did not succeed in passing this issue on to the following generations except for R. A. Webb, who was his son-in-law and wrote a monograph on adoption, as already mentioned.

4. Various Efforts in the Late Twentieth-Century

It is certainly understandable that Packer points out the serious neglect of adoption as we see how this doctrine was treated after the Reformation Period. It appears to be legitimate to say that most theologians after Calvin did not do justice to adoption.

However, the theological current changed in the late twentieth century as though what Packer stated led some careful theologians to focus on the concept of adoption in order to restore it. Beeke is struck with this new movement and states, “The twentieth century saw a burst of evangelical writings on adoption, including several popular books by solidly Reformed men such as Sinclair Ferguson, Mark Johnston, and Robert Peterson.” It would be natural for Beeke

86. Beeke, Heirs with Christ, 5.
to call this theological movement “a burst of evangelical writings on adoption,” considering the number of published works focusing on adoption in this period of time. According to Beeke, in addition to twenty articles published on adoption, “at least seven Ph.D. and Th.M. dissertations contributed substantially to the subject” in the late twentieth century.87

In connection to this relatively new movement, this study already mentioned that one of the driving forces for this is the development of biblical theology helping us to understand the rich meaning of *huiothesia*.88 It is also recognized that regarding *huiothesia*, its etymological research has advanced considerably and clarified its Roman background, even though Roman culture may not be the only aetiological factor in the background of *huiothesia*.89

Furthermore, in the twenty-first century, points out Beeke, “Two major Ph.D. dissertations on adoption have been completed.”90 They are Tim J. R. Trumper’s “A Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition (2001)” and David B. Garner’s “Adoption in Christ (2002).” Trumper’s dissertation is known for its broad approach investigating Calvin and theologians in the Westminster tradition in terms of the treatment of adoption. Garner’s work, on the other hand, is characterized by its doctrinal approach clarifying the eschatological nature of the Pauline adoption.

5. Some Theological Consensuses

As research on adoption advances, it is recognized among the secondary sources that there are four theological consensuses regarding the treatment of adoption: (1) the importance of the Pauline word (*huiothesia*), (2) the multiple aspects or roles of adoption in constructing

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soteriology, (3) the important role that union with Christ plays in relation to adoption, and (4) the importance of Calvin as a champion for adoption.

First, in relation to biblical theology, it is crucial to understand the meaning of *huiothesia*, the distinctive Pauline word. Regarding the etymological background, numerous scholars have been arguing what the most influential background for *huiothesia* is: Jewish, Greek, or Roman. In seeing recent discussions it is possible to say that the Roman background can provide the most likely background of the etymology of *huiothesia*.

Historically speaking, the Roman adoption system seems to be very similar to the meaning of Pauline *huiothesia* because both cases have significant similarities with each other, as already pointed out, in terms of the change of an adopted son’s status. However, it is more important to understand the distinctive meaning of the Pauline *huiothesia* itself than to pay attention to some similarities between Roman and Pauline adoption. This is because his original intention would not be to describe those similarities, but to emphasize a familial aspect of the gospel by using this metaphor.

Second, it is pointed out that doctrinally speaking, adoption has multiple aspects connecting to other doctrines or doctrinal issues in the whole theological framework. More precisely, adoption not only has a single aspect in relation to soteriology (although this aspect would be the most significant one), but also some significant aspects in relation to other

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91. Burke refers to main three reasons: 1) “Paul uses his *huiothesia* metaphor only in letters to communities directly under the rule of Roman law,” 2) “Roman law was the law of Paul’s own citizenship and would have been the law governing the apostle’s family life, and in particular his relationship with his parents,” and 3) “Adoption in its Roman form was becoming widespread even in other areas throughout the empire, particularly among Roman emperors.” Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, 61-62. Also see Stevenson-Moessner, *The Spirit of Adoption*, 30.


93. Regarding the understanding of *huiothesia*, Scott, while recognizing the Greco-Roman background of its terminology itself, emphasizes the importance of the Jewish/OT background to understand the Pauline *huiothesia*. His approach which puts more emphasis on the OT background is different from Burke valuing, in a balanced way, both the OT and Roman backgrounds. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God*, 267-70.

important doctrines such as the Creation and predestination. According to Trumper, adoption is related to four categories in the whole framework of theology: (1) protology including predestination, (2) covenant theology, (3) soteriology or pneumatology, and (4) eschatology.\(^{95}\) Besides Trumper, other theologians have also noted the multiple roles adoption plays.\(^{96}\) For example, Packer, while explaining the richness of adoption, states, “The entire Christian life has to be understood in terms of it [adoption].”\(^{97}\) It is obvious that “the entire Christian life” has not one, but many doctrines or doctrinal issues in its scope. Therefore, it is Packer’s contention that the Christian life in its whole range should be understood in terms of the concept of adoption. In the case of Peterson, while recognizing adoption as “an overarching way of viewing the Christian faith,” he claims, “Adoption pertains to the beginning of salvation, the Christian life, and the resurrection of the dead.”\(^{98}\) Furthermore, it needs to be pointed out that, while having multiple aspects within the entire doctrinal framework, adoption plays a crucial role in relation to soteriology.\(^{99}\) Kelly calls this special aspect related to soteriology “the culmination and climax of the blessings of redemption.”\(^{100}\)

Third, it is recognized that, theologically speaking, union with Christ has an inseparable relation to adoption.\(^{101}\) The awareness of union with Christ helps us to understand the rich meaning of adoption. Burke, while referring to “faith-union with Christ” as a foundation to Paul’s soteriology, insists that “incorporation into Christ (the Son) through faith enables all (Jews


\(^{97}\) Packer, op. cit.

\(^{98}\) Peterson, op. cit., 7.


\(^{100}\) Kelly, op. cit., 115.

and Gentiles) to become sons and daughters of God.”

Therefore, when we take the importance of union with Christ into account, it becomes possible for us to see the close relationship between Christ’s Sonship and the believers’ sonship, although it is necessary to keep in mind at the same time that there are not only similarities, but also differences between them. In short, it is crucial to focus on union with Christ in order to consider the true relationship between Christ’s Sonship and the adoptive sonship.

Fourth, it is pointed out that Calvin plays an important role as we focus on the concept of adoption, both historically and theologically. Some theologians insist that it is worth learning from Calvin in order to understand adoption even though he may not succeed in passing this concept on to the following generations, as we shall see later. While recognizing adoption as a Reformed doctrine, Ferguson claims, “It was left to the Reformed theological tradition, following the lead of Calvin, to recover this biblical emphasis.” Furthermore Trumper refers to the importance of adoption in Calvin’s thought:

Calvin’s references to adoption can be traced back to the first year after his conversion. Subsequently they became proliferate throughout in his writings, notably (but not exclusively) in his commentaries and his Institutes. The evidence of the importance of the motif for Calvin is seen in the rich coherence of these references; their relevance to an array of other doctrines (such as the Fatherhood of God, predestination, covenant theology, the atonement, union with Christ, justification, sanctification, Christian liberty, prayer, assurance, Christian obedience, providence, the last things, as well as baptism and the Lord’s Supper); and in the explicit statements Calvin makes about the motif’s

102. Burke, op. cit., 70.
In reading these remarks, it is noticeable that Calvin’s thought is significant in terms of adoption while having relevance to two of the theological consensuses mentioned above: the multiple aspects of adoption and union with Christ. It is not only Ferguson’s, but also Trumper’s conviction that it is necessary to learn from Calvin, besides returning to the Scripture, in order to recover the familial aspect of soteriology.107

D. Relevance of this Study

1. Trumper as a Theologian Focusing on Adoption

Following the “burst of evangelical writings on adoption” in the twentieth century, some theologians are now actively working on adoption, trying to recover it in accordance with their own special areas of theology.108 It should be pointed out that Trumper is regarded by some as a theologian contributing to the recovery of the concept of adoption. His dissertation is recognized by Beeke as one of the “major two Ph.D. dissertations on adoption” in so far, during this century, as already mentioned.109 It is also noticeable that Trumper’s works, including his dissertation, are influential to some extent because recent theologians working on adoption refer to Trumper’s name in their works.110

Through exploring Trumper’s works, it is clear that one of his strengths is that the areas on which he is working are wide-ranging. They cover biblical theology, systematic theology,

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106. Trumper, When History Teaches Us Nothing, 2.
109. Ibid., 7.
110. For example, Trevor J. Burke, Joel R. Beeke, Y. Sano, and so on. The newest work, as far as the author knows, is Julie Cantis, Calvin’s Ladder (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2010).
historical theology, and even practical theology, although the last one is not as significant as the others. For example, Trumper’s four articles and dissertation have focused on adoption mainly in the area of biblical theology.\textsuperscript{111} In the areas of both historical and systematic theology his two articles and dissertation explore the theological history that does not give adequate attention to adoption and try to find out some important factors that led to this neglect.\textsuperscript{112} Regarding his research done in these two articles, Trumper claims that this is “the first attempt that we know of to draw together in any substantive way the major reasons why adoption’s theological history has been as it has.”\textsuperscript{113} In making this attempt Trumper is proposing the way to recover the “relational tenor” of adoption in theology by both returning to Scripture and learning from past history.\textsuperscript{114} In addition to these he actively discusses the current justification issue through criticizing the so-called “New Perspective on Paul,” a theological school represented by N. T. Wright, which is trying to recover the communal aspect of justification without making any references to the concept of adoption.\textsuperscript{115}

Furthermore, there is another contribution which Trumper makes by exploring the Church’s creeds and confessions contained in Schaff’s collection, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}.\textsuperscript{116} Since his investigation ranges from the ecumenical creeds in the early period of the church through the modern confessions in the twentieth century, it can be claimed that this is the first

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{112} Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” and “The Theological History of Adoption II.”
\item \textsuperscript{113} Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 178.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 198-99. Trumper is also familiar with the history of the Puritans, who are in the tradition of the \textit{Westminster Confession of Faith}. Trumper, \textit{When History Teaches Us Nothing}, 7-32; Kelly, “Adoption,” 111.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption II,” 195-99.
\item \textsuperscript{116} He mainly investigates Schaff’s collection in his two works: “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” and “The Theological History of Adoption I.”
\end{itemize}
attempt to explore confessional documents in terms of the concept of adoption through the whole
course of church history. There are few secondary sources mentioned in each section of the two
works where Trumper explores confessional documents, although he refers to more than 540
secondary sources in the same works.¹¹⁷ In considering this we are forced to recognize that it is
not at all popular, but rather unusual for theologians to focus on adoption in terms of confessional
documents in church history. In this sense, it is possible to recognize Trumper as a rare theologian
working on creeds and confessions in terms of adoption, even though some theologians are now
actively trying to recover it.

After investigating The Creeds of Christendom edited by Schaff, Trumper points out,
“There are only six confessions that contain anything like a distinct chapter on adoption.”¹¹⁸
Trumper adds to this observation saying, “The fewness of the confessions containing distinctive
statements on adoption explains in part why the doctrine has been so infrequently discussed
throughout the millennia of theological reflection.”¹¹⁹ According to Trumper, even though some
of the confessions he investigates refer to adoption, “it is usually mentioned in connection with
predestination, assurance or the sacrament of baptism.”¹²⁰ In other words, the focus of these
confessions, according to Trumper, is not on adoption, but on other doctrines. Thus Trumper
concludes the neglect of adoption among creeds and confessions in church history by articulating,
“The truth is that adoption has rarely been accorded official creedal recognition” because of “the
small number of confessions that allot adoption a distinct chapter or section.”¹²¹

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¹¹⁷. In these two works we can find only four theologians’ names in relation to the secondary
sources working on adoption in confessional documents: R. S. Candlish, Louis Berkhof, Oliver
O’Donovan, and S. B. Ferguson. Ibid., 8-11.
¹¹⁸. Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 7. These six confessions are the
following: the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) with its Shorter and Larger Catechisms (1647), the
Savoy Declaration (1658), the Baptist Confession of Faith (1689), the XXIV Articles of the Presbyterian
Synod of England (1890), the Confessional Statement of the United Presbyterian Church of North America
(1925), and the Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada (1925).
¹¹⁹. Ibid., 8.
¹²⁰. Ibid., 13.
¹²¹. Ibid.
2. Questions

Since Trumper does a good investigation of adoption in various ways, he could be recognized as an important theologian currently working on this neglected concept. Yet, it is necessary to raise a question in seeing how he treats the church’s confessional documents in the Reformation Period, i.e. that is regarding the issue that his investigation seemingly lacks historical lines of treating adoption both prior to and after Calvin.

a. Historical Lines Prior to and After Calvin

According to Trumper, there seems to be no theological works in the Reformation Period, except for Calvin’s, which refer to adoption in significant ways even though some works or theologians do so in passing. Trumper states, “As alluded to in the previous article, Calvin has a most rich understanding of adoption,” and adds to this by saying that “it is fairly certain that he is the theologian of adoption.”

Therefore, in reading his evaluation of Calvin, some would think as though Calvin was the only theologian in that era who realized the importance of adoption and treated it significantly without having any theologians both influencing him or being influenced by him in terms of adoption. Certainly Trumper points out that in The Creeds of Christendom “there are only six confessions that contain anything like a distinct chapter on adoption,” as already mentioned. In other words, there are no confessions that devote a chapter to adoption or treat it distinctively during the Reformation Period because all these confessions including the WCF were written during the post Reformation Period.

At this point, some may raise a question asking whether there are any other significant confessions, besides Calvin’s, which value adoption in other ways than devoting a chapter to it.

during the Reformation Period. However, regarding this question, Trumper actually concludes that there was a neglect of adoption during that period by saying that “the truth is that adoption has rarely been accorded official creedal recognition.”124 While this conclusion is mainly based on “the small number of confessions that allot adoption a distinct chapter or section,” Trumper reinforces his conclusion by referring to Schaff’s comment in the *Creeds of Christendom*:

Indeed we may infer this oversight of adoption from Schaff’s comment that ‘a creed may cover the whole ground of Christian doctrine and practice, or contain only such points as are deemed fundamental and sufficient’. That adoption has, historically, been deemed generally to lie outwith the fundamental or sufficient elements of the gospel is itself indicative of the church’s inadequate understanding of the role and importance of the doctrine for her grasp of salvation.125

Of course, there is no doubt that Trumper himself in his works comprehensively explores *The Creeds of Christendom* through investigating confessions prior to and after Calvin in the Reformation Period. Then he recognizes Calvin as the exceptional theologian in the Reformation Period who fully did justice to adoption.126 Nevertheless, is it truly legitimate to recognize the confessions in the Reformation Period the way Trumper does?

b. Trumper’s Method

It remains necessary to again investigate the confessions in the Reformation Period even though

125. Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 13; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:4. Here somehow Trumper makes this quotation by cutting off the following important part, “or has been disputed.” Here is the whole sentence: “A creed may cover the whole ground of Christian doctrine and practice, or contain only such points as are deemed fundamental and sufficient or as have been disputed” (4; italics mine). The omission of the last part turns out to be significant as we shall see later in this chapter.
Trumper does this comprehensively because his method can be questioned. Regarding his method, it is clear that Trumper judges the neglect of adoption by investigating to see if there are any distinctive treatments of it in each confessional document. In this connection, it is also important to see how Trumper analyzes why Calvin does not succeed in passing the importance of adoption on to the following generations. Trumper says, “Calvin’s decision (if conscious decision it was) to forego the discussion of adoption in a separate chapter or section of the Institutes was to have a lasting negative impact on the subsequent theology of later Calvinism.”

Here, it is easy to see how Trumper values the number of chapters set on adoption as a crucial point as he treats adoption in the churches’ confessional documents.

However, is it legitimate to conclude the neglect of adoption by paying attention to the existence of chapters or the number of chapters set on this concept? Besides the number of chapters, are there any other important issues which need to be taken into account in order to judge whether there are any historical lines prior to and after Calvin relating to adoption?

c. Important Issues for Investigating the Confessions

There are five important issues we need to see in relation not only to Trumper’s method, but also to the investigation of the confessions in the Reformation Period: 1) inconsistency in Trumper’s treatment, 2) limitations of the method of paying attention to the number of chapters, 3) the terminological issue of doctrine, 4) union with Christ as an issues inseparable from adoption, and 5) the Fatherhood of God.

First, there is inconsistency between Trumper’s high evaluation of Calvin and his
conclusion regarding the neglect of adoption in the church’s confessional documents. For Trumper, the neglect of adoption within the church’s confessions is basically based on the fact of the small number of chapters set on the concept.  

On the other hand, he highly values Calvin although Calvin himself did not devote a chapter to adoption in his *Institutes.*  

Regarding Calvin, Trumper states, “The ascertaining of the importance of a doctrine for Calvin is determined not by the number of chapters allotted to its discussion but how pervasively it is referred to throughout his work.”  

While it is understandable that Trumper refers to this “pervasive” treatment of adoption for distinguishing Calvin, it is still necessary to ask whether there are any other confessions or creeds pervasively treating adoption in the Reformation Period. However, it is not certain that Trumper takes this point into account.  

Second, the method of paying attention to chapters on adoption has limitations for judging whether a confession values adoption because of the original character of confessions. Generally speaking, each confession is inclined to focus on issues debated by its contemporaries as Schaff points out, “A confession of faith is always the result of dogmatic controversy.”  

However, Trumper does not pay attention to this character of confessional documents, while referring to another character by quoting from Schaff’s work, “A creed may cover the whole ground of Christian doctrine and practice, or contain only such points as are deemed fundamental and sufficient.”  

Then, he concludes the creedal neglect of adoption on the basis of “the small number of confessions that allot adoption a distinct chapter or section.”  

Nevertheless, Trumper, as he quotes, somehow cuts off the following part of Schaff’s remark, “or as have been

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133. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendome,* 1:4. He adds to this saying, “Each symbol bears the impress of its age, and the historical situation out of which it arose.”
135. Ibid.
disputed.”136 Trumper, then, refers to this notion in one of his other articles.137 Therefore, it is puzzling that, although Trumper seemingly misses the notion mentioned above in concluding the creedal neglect of adoption, he refers to it in another place. Thus, we are forced to say that he intentionally cuts off this short part when judging the neglect of adoption in confessional history.

At any rate, in considering this characteristic pointed out by Schaff, it is very difficult to judge the importance of one doctrine only by counting the number of chapters or sections dedicated to it within a confessional document. J. Pelikan, in explaining “the proliferation of confessions in the age of the Reformation,” also states, “One possible negative explanation for this growth of confessions is the corresponding decline, just as the crisis of authority represented by the Reformation was erupting, in any consensus about how to resolve theological debates.”138 Because of the importance of historical background of each confession, it is not easy to judge, on the basis of distinctive treatment of a doctrine or even quantity of treating a doctrine, the importance of one doctrine within a confession. Actually, what it is possible to say, at least, by counting the number of chapters is not necessarily the importance of a doctrine, but how often a doctrine is discussed by the contemporaries of a confession.139 Thus, the importance of a doctrine should not be judged solely by counting the number of chapters devoted to it. Rather, it

137. Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption II,” 183-84. “The contrasting lengths of these chapters is explained not only by the amount of attention accorded the doctrine during the Reformation but also by the additional *via negativa* statements required arising from the controversies with Rome. Hence the relevance of Schaff’s observation that creeds and confessions not only include that which is ‘fundamental and sufficient’, but also ‘such points . . . as have been disputed’.”
139. For example, it is necessary in this respect to consider, as one of examples, the case of *Confessio gallicana*, in the forming of which Calvin was heavily involved. Erik A. de Boer, “Confession de Foy, faite d’un commun accord par les Français qui désirent vivre selon la pureté de l’Evangile de nostre Seigneur Jesu-Christ 1559 – Introductie” in *Confessies – Gereformeerde geloofsverantwoording in zestiende-eeuws Europa*, red. M. te Velde (Heerenveen, NL: Uitgeverij Groen, 2009), 355-66. It is interesting to see that there are only two passing statements on adoption in this confession. See Articles 17 and 22 of the *Confessio gallicana* von 1559 in “The French Confession, 1559/1571” in *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition (CCF)*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2003), 2: 379-81. Regarding the original text, see *Fatio*, 1986 ed., 120, 122, included in CD-ROM of *CCF*. 
is necessary, after taking the historical background of a confession into account, to consider how one doctrine relates to other doctrines within a confessional document in order to judge its importance in a confession.¹⁴⁰

Third, in connection to the method paying attention to the number of chapters on adoption, it can even be asked whether the terminology of “doctrine” is appropriate for treating the concept of it. The reason why Trumper values this method is that he clearly recognizes adoption as a doctrine and strongly insists that it should be distinctively treated as a *locus*. ¹⁴¹ Furthermore, in treating Puritanism, three Puritan leaders (W. Ames, T. Watson, and H. Witsius) highly valued by Trumper are all those who distinctively treated adoption as a *locus* as already pointed out.¹⁴² He criticizes, however, most Puritans by stating, “It [adoption] was a theme they were cognizant of in sermons and expositions of the Shorter and Larger Catechisms for instance, but too few of them dealt with the doctrine as a distinct theological *locus*.”¹⁴³

Terminologically speaking, “doctrine” is defined by the *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith* in the following way, “In contemporary usage it [doctrine] may mean the general teaching of the church (e.g. Christian doctrine), teaching of a church or tradition (e.g., Presbyterian; Reformed doctrine), or a specific *tenet of faith* (e.g., the doctrine of predestination).”¹⁴⁴ The terminology can be also defined in a simpler way as “a theological formulation that attempts to

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¹⁴⁰ It would be helpful to see this issue if we see the fact that *huiothēsia* appears only five times within the Pauline Epistles as already mentioned. According to Burke, “The determining factor regarding the importance of soteriological metaphors” is not “the number of times an expression occurs,” but “the way in which these metaphors relate to others (where this happens) and where each is tied, or not tied, to major themes in biblical theology.” Although his rationale is not for confessional documents, but for biblical theology, his point is suggestive to reflect on how to consider the importance of adoption in confessional documents. Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, 38-39.

¹⁴¹ Obviously, the title of the dissertation itself emphasizes adoption as a doctrine. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption."


¹⁴³ Ibid. 21-22. Trumper is also complaining about two famous Puritan leaders’, Thomas Goodwin and John Owen, treatment “reading Paul’s doctrine into John, thus confusing the apostle’s distinctive models of adoption and the new birth.” Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 23.

provide a summary statement of Scripture on a particular theological topic.”\textsuperscript{145} In viewing these
lexical definitions in our era, it is fair to say that the terminology of doctrine has a theological
connotation or even a message, though not all the time, that a doctrine should be distinctively
treated as a \textit{locus} because it is “a tenet of faith.”

Although the concept of adoption can be a doctrine in the sense mentioned above, it
must be noted at the same time that adoption is too unique to be merely treated as one doctrine in
seeing its characteristics as they relate to other doctrines or even tying them up within the whole
theological framework as an underlying theme.\textsuperscript{146} On the other hand, as compared with
adoption, justification or sanctification cannot be an underlying theme in the manner that
adoption is, although each of them plays a crucial role in soteriology. Therefore, if the
terminology of doctrine is taken to treat the concept, there may exist the danger of requiring that
adoption be treated distinctively by devoting a chapter to it without taking into account its
potential to be an underlying theme. Then, as some may easily think, because of the terminology,
that justice is not done to adoption unless it is treated distinctively in confessions. Even worse,
this terminology would make it difficult for readers of confessional documents to recognize any
treatment of adoption even though a confession treats it in other ways than devoting any chapter
or section to it.\textsuperscript{147} In this sense, it would be methodologically safe to avoid using the terminology
of doctrine for adoption as we work on the confessions of the Reformation Period.\textsuperscript{148}

Fourth, it is necessary to focus on some issues that are inseparable from adoption in
order to investigate it in the confessions. As mentioned already, adoption takes multiple aspects in

\textsuperscript{145} Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms, ed. Stanley J. Grenz (Downers Grove, IL: Inter
Varsity Press, 1999), 40 (40; italics mine).

\textsuperscript{146} Peterson, \textit{ Adopted by God}, 7.

\textsuperscript{147} Although this is another issue, it can be pointed out that, if the distinctive treatment of
adoption is taken as we construct theology, it may damage, through taking away a thread connecting to
each doctrine, the whole theological framework tied up by the concept of adoption.

\textsuperscript{148} Historically speaking, “doctrine” appears not to be an easy terminology to use. See Pelikan,
\textit{ Credo}, 64-88. Here in the section titled as “Confession of the Faith as Doctrine,” Pelikan explores the
historical background of “doctrine” as a terminology.
relation to other important doctrines. Ferguson, while paying attention to its multiple aspects, recognizes adoption as an “organizing principle for understanding salvation.” Because of this unique function that the multiple aspects bring about, it is natural that there are some issues or doctrines inseparable from adoption even though each doctrine or issue itself is doctrinally distinct. Among those doctrines, the most prominent one must be union with Christ because it is doctrinally defined as the source from which adoption flows out. Thus, it is necessary to pay attention to the union in order to explore the confessions. But, Trumper does not pay attention to it as he investigates the confessions. Therefore, as we shall see later in the research body (chapters 3-5) of this study, we will use this union as a theological lens to explore the concept of adoption in these confessions.

Fifth, in addition to union with Christ, it is also necessary to focus on the Fatherhood of God as an inseparable issue from adoption. When focusing on the Fatherhood, it is important to investigate it in the soteriological context because adoption is a soteriological grace; otherwise it will be everywhere, even in contexts which have no relevance to adoption. In the soteriological context, the Fatherhood is characterized by God’s fatherly grace which, on the basis of predestination, adopts us in Christ as his children, cares for, and sustains us through the Spirit toward the completion of our sonship. However, it is not clear whether Trumper takes this into

149. Ferguson, “The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship,” 86-87; Burke, Adoption into God’s Family, 41. This characteristic function of adoption is often focused on by other theologians although they give it different names, such as “the overarching biblical image” and “the overarching way of viewing the Christian faith. See Stevenson-Moessner, The Spirit of Adoption, 15; Peterson, Adopted by God, 7. Packer also refers to this function. Packer, Knowing God, 190.

150. Trumper, When History Teaches Us Nothing, 2.


152. See page 3 in this chapter of this study.

153. See pages 2-6 in ibid. In treating the Fatherhood of God, it should be noted that there are theologically three aspects within it: 1) the essential aspect of the Fatherhood within the Trinity, 2) the aspect of the creative Fatherhood of God the Creator, and 3) the soteriological aspect of the Fatherhood. Here, it is clear that aspect 3) is relevant to the present study. Regarding aspect 2), if the original status of
account as he investigates the confessional documents. Because of that, in the research body of this study, we will also use the Fatherhood as a theological lens for exploring the confessions.

After seeing these five issues, it becomes clear that, in order to see the importance of adoption, we need to pay attention, in addition to the number of chapters on adoption, to other relevant issues, such as Fatherhood in soteriological context and union with Christ. Particularly, as we explore the confessions in the research body, we will use the Fatherhood and union with Christ as lenses for looking for the concept of adoption. By paying attention to these issues, it becomes possible to see how adoption relates to other doctrines or issues within confessional documents. This point will make it easier to judge whether a confession values adoption, although there is another remaining “lens” to be considered.

d. What Makes Calvin Special?

In order to resolve the question that Trumper’s investigation seems to overlook the historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin, it is crucial to scrutinize the confessions through the two theological lenses, i.e. the Fatherhood of God and union with Christ. Regarding the period prior to Calvin, we must consider whether any confessions had some influence on him in terms of the treatment of adoption. Regarding the period after Calvin, we need to analyze whether any confessions treat adoption in the same manner that he did.

The above does not mean to deny that Calvin was an exceptional theologian who did justice to the issue of adoption; rather the intention is to consider whether he was the only theologian doing justice to adoption in terms of the confessional history during the Reformation Period. There is no doubt that Calvin is unique with regard to his treatment of adoption, as some

Adam included the filial relationship to God the Father, aspect 2) would also be relevant to the present study because in that case, divine adoption would include the restoration of the filial relationship with God the Creator which Adam had enjoyed before the Fall. We will return to this issue in chapter 6.
influential theologians point out. Nevertheless, we are not yet clear how unique Calvin is. At this point it is still necessary to clarify how and why he is special in terms of treating adoption. If it is possible to understand what makes Calvin special, this will make it much easier to see whether there are any historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin in the Reformation Period.

Trumper recognizes Calvin’s “pervasive” manner as the key factor making him special, as already mentioned. While this can be one of the factors used to distinguish him, the meaning of “pervasive” manner compels us to raise the question of “how often each confession needs to refer to adoption in order for its manner to be recognized as a “pervasive” one? Obviously it is not easy to respond to this question. Although this “pervasive” manner is understandably theoretical, it is not practically useful because it is difficult for us to judge objectively whether each confession has a “pervasive” manner in it. In addition to this, Confessio gallicana also helps us to examine whether pervasiveness is useful or not for judging practically whether a confession values adoption. As already mentioned, the Confessio gallicana has only two statements referring slightly to adoption within its forty articles. Obviously, it is difficult to conclude the neglect of adoption in this confession by using “pervasive” manner as the key for judging the level of neglect. In this sense, it is necessary to have a more useful way to judge whether or not each confession takes the approach Calvin did.

e. The Multiple Aspects of Adoption

In considering the issue of what makes Calvin special in terms of adoption, the point Sano makes is helpful to find out a more meaningful way for investigating the confessions in the Reformation Period. After investigating Calvin’s Institutes of 1559, Sano pays special attention to two elements contained in adoption in the theological framework of the Institutes. Sano concludes,

155. Article XVII, XXII; page 39n139 in this chapter of this study.
“The doctrine of adoption [in the *Institutes*] has not only the soteriological element of what we believe in Christ, but also the ecclesiological element of how we live in God, while operating in the wide range of time governed by God’s grace from predestination through the consummation.”\textsuperscript{156} In other words, the point Sano makes here is identical with the multiple aspects adoption has. Thus it is fair to say that Calvin’s treatment is characterized by giving adoption multiple aspects operating in almost every sphere of the whole theological framework.

Historically speaking, it is surprising to see that Calvin paid attention to these multiple aspects as early as the sixteenth century because these multiple aspects were only recently recognized as one of the theological consensuses regarding adoption. It is also remarkable to realize that Calvin referred to these multiple aspects fully in his era, which contrasts with the post Reformation era when most theologians tended to interpret adoption as a part of justification. In this sense, Calvin must be “the theologian of adoption” in the Reformation Period, even though he may not have been the only one in church history. Because of this, it is also necessary to use these multiple aspects as a third theological lens, in addition to the Fatherhood of God and union with Christ, for exploring the confessions in the research body and considering whether there are any historical lines of treating adoption prior to, and after, Calvin.

3. The Three Theological Lenses

In what follows, we look at three confessional documents as actual instances in order to illustrate how the three theological lenses, i.e. the Fatherhood of God, union with Christ, and the multiple aspects of adoption, methodically function as we explore a confession in terms of the concept of adoption. They as theological lenses help us to find, in a confession, some fresh insights which have relevance to the present study.

\textsuperscript{156} Sano, “The Doctrine of Adoption in Calvin’s Theology,” 106. The quotation is translated by the present writer from Japanese to English.
a. Fresh Insight: Luther’s *Small Catechism* (SC)

It is significant to see Luther’s *SC* (1529) by using the Fatherhood as a lens. As already mentioned, it is not clear how to evaluate Luther in terms of adoption. In the very least, it is clear that Luther did not treat the concept of adoption in the “pervasive” manner in which Calvin did. However, it is recognized that Luther, in his *SC*, refers to the name of God the Father or its cognate at eighteen places although there is no mention of adoption or God’s adoptive act within the *SC*. In noticing this, some would insist that calling God the Father itself has a theological meaning in relation to the adoptive state of God’s children. But, what is recognized here in the *SC* is more than calling God the Father as a name. Indeed eight of these places, though in a succinct way, describe the familial aspect of salvation by depicting the relationship between the Father and his children. In short, even though the *SC* does not take a pervasive way and most of the statements mentioned above are brief, the *SC* actually depicts the familial relationship between God the Father and his children. We will return to and delve into Luther’s *SC* and *Large Catechism* in chapter 3.

b. Fresh Insight: The *Tetrapolitan Confession* (TC)

In the case of the multiple aspects of adoption, it is important to use them as a lens to explore the *TC* (1530). It is observable that this confession appears to refer to adoption in relation not only to justification, but also to sanctification and ecclesiology. Indeed the Confession, at the very end

158. For example, the first article of the Creed refers to his “fatherly” care providing his children with what they need. *CCF*, 2:37; *BLK*, 511 (The original text is from *BLK* in the CD-ROM of *CCF*). In the section of the Lord’s Prayer, the *SC* repeatedly calls God the Father and refers to his relation to his children in various ways. *CCF*, 2:38; *BLK*, 512. Other examples in the Lord’s Prayer are as follows: 1) the first petition in *CCF*, 2:38; *BLK*, 512, 2) the second petition in *CCF*, 2:38; *BLK*, 513, 3) the fifth petition in *CCF*, 2:39; *BLK*, 514, 4) the seventh petition in *CCF*, 2:40; *BLK*, 515, and 5) the end of the petitions in *CCF*, 2:40; *BLK*, 515. Also see “Morning and Evening Prayers” in *CCF*, 2:44; *BLK*, 521.
159. Bucer was involved in this catechism as the primary author as we shall see in chapter 3.
of Chapter 3 entitled “Of Justification and Faith,” refers to the filial confidence caused by the Spirit which helps believers to call God “Abba, Father.” Then the Confession points to the adoptive sonship as a basis for our good works in Chapters 4 and 5 dealing with the issue of sanctification. Finally, the Confession makes one reference to the church as the “house of God” which is a place obtained only by “the children of God,” in chapter 15.

In seeing these places, the TC clearly refers to the concept of adoption in three distinctive areas within its theological framework. Thus, it is possible to see some hints of treating adoption the way Calvin does because the TC points to the multiple aspects of adoption. We will return to the TC in chapter 3.

c. Fresh Insight: the Heidelberg Catechism (HC)

In the case of union with Christ as a synonymous issue with adoption, it is suggested to see the HC (1563). This catechism has two statements (33, 120) that are directly relevant to adoption. Yet it is not sufficient only to mention these statements in the Catechism as we see HC articulate the Catechism’s underlying theme, union with Christ, which is the source of the grace

160. CCF, 2:223. Here, the original text of German is from Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften (RBS), Bd. 1/1, 1523-1534, hrsg. Heiner Faulenbach und Eberhard Busch (Neukirchen-Vluyn, DE: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002), 463. The Latin text is from Niemeyer in the CD-ROM of CCF, 747.

161. Chapter 4 is titled as “Of Good Works, Proceeding Out of Faith through Love” in CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747; Chapter 5, “To Whom Good Works Are to Be Ascribed, and How They Are Necessary” in CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:465; Niemeyer, 748.

162. CCF, 2:235; RBS, 1/1:479; Niemeyer, 758.

163. Throughout this section, the English translations of the HC are from “Heidelberg Catechism,” in Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions (Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1988), 12–77. The German original text is from RBS, 2/2. HC 33: “Q. Why is he called God’s ‘only Son’ when we also are God’s children? A. Because Christ alone is the eternal, natural Son of God. We, however, are adopted children of God [zu kindern Gottes angenommen] – adopted by grace through Christ.” Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions, 26; RBS, 2/2: 183. HC 120, “Q. Why did Christ command us to call God ‘our Father’? A. At the very beginning of our prayer Christ wants to kindle in us what is basic to our prayer – the childlike awe [kindliche furcht] and trust that God through Christ has become our Father. Our fathers do not refuse us the things of this life; God our Father will even less refuse to give us what we ask in faith.” Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions, 70; RBS, 2/2:207; Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 11.
of adoption. According to Ursinus, the primary author of this catechism, the Christian comfort in the HC consists of six parts and its first part includes adoptive sonship based on the reconciliation with God. Thus it appears that the HC treats adoption by emphasizing and weaving “union with Christ” throughout the whole catechism even though it does not articulate using the exact word adoption pervasively. We will return to this issue in chapter 5.

In short, it is recognized that there are some significant instances of treating adoption or its relevant issues in the SC, the TC, and the HC, even though the ways these confessions treat it are not exactly the same as Calvin’s. At any rate, these instances show that these three lenses are viable tools for looking for adoption or its relevant issues in the confessional documents. Yet there are still unresolved or unclear issues in terms of the present study.

d. Unresolved Issues

164. HC 1: “Q. What is your only comfort in life and in death? A. That I am not my own, but belong – body and soul, in life and in death – to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ [Jesu Christi eigen bin].” Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions, 13; RBS, 2/2:1.

165. “Of how many parts does this comfort consist? This comfort consists of six parts: 1. Our reconciliation with God, through Christ, so that we are no longer the enemies, but the sons of God; neither are we our own, but we belong to Christ.” Zacharias Ursinus, The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism, trans. G. W. Williard, (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1852), 18.


167. When it comes to the issue of union with Christ, according to Jacobs, union with Christ, the source of adoption, is variously treated in Reformed confessions through relating to other doctrines such as predestination, the Incarnation, ecclesiology and the sacraments. Ibid., 26, 37-38, 46, 55-57, 69, 71, 95-96, 103-104. Also see Jan Rohls, Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen, trans. John Hoffmeyer (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 67, 102, 161, 207, 216, 225, 227, 233. In the “Old Reformed Confessional Writings” it is recognized by Rohls that some issues which are relevant to adoption are significantly treated in Reformed confessions, such as the image of God, the filial relationships between God and man, and the sacraments.
Although it is helpful to find, through the three lenses, actual instances of treating adoption or its relevant issues in the confessions, only having them is not enough in terms of the present study; it is further necessary to delve into those instances from the historical and theological perspectives in the context of the confessions since there are unresolved or unclear issues.

From the historical perspective, it is necessary to refer to four issues as unresolved or unclear. First, since in the previous section we looked at three confessional documents as examples, it will be necessary for us, by using the three lenses, to explore the entire course of confessional history during the Reformation Period, seeing whether or not the confessions in that period as a whole have examples of treating the concept of adoption. Second, if we actually have instances of treating adoption in the confessions as a whole in the Reformation Period, we will need to delve into them to see whether or not there are any historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin in terms of confessional history, looking for any hint or influence related to his use of adoption.168 Third, if we find the historical lines related to Calvin, it will be further necessary to consider what the causes were for the difficulty of recognizing those lines in the course of the confessional history during the Reformation Period before the WCF devoted a chapter to adoption as a locus.169 Fourth, along with this third issue, it will be also necessary to reconsider the historical meaning of having WCF 12 as a locus of adoption in the course of confessional history.

Underneath these historical issues, there are four unclear issues we further need to clarify from the theological perspective. First, when actually having instances of treating adoption in the confessions, it will be further necessary to ask whether or not those instances reflect the Pauline ‘huiosthesia’ as having a redemptive-historical framework, ranging from

168. See pages 35-36 in this chapter of this study.
169. See page 34 in ibid.
election through the consummation, as we have seen.\textsuperscript{170} Then, if the confessions actually reflect ‘huiothesia’, it will become theologically necessary to investigate them in order to clarify how they reflect it, comparing them with the redemptive-historical framework and looking for any differences amongst them. Second, in the case that we find actual instances of treating adoption in the confessions, we will need to identify all the relevant issues related to adoption because the concept of adoption is characterized as having the multiple aspects relating to other theological issues or doctrines.\textsuperscript{171} Along with identifying them, it will be further required to clarify unclear or important relation of adoption to other doctrines or issues in the confessions, such as the relation of adoption to justification,\textsuperscript{172} union with Christ,\textsuperscript{173} the new birth,\textsuperscript{174} and deification.\textsuperscript{175} Third, after clarifying these relevant issues in the context of the confessions, furthermore it will become necessary to consider theological advantage or implication for a confession to have a familial aspect of soteriology described by the concept of adoption.\textsuperscript{176} In addition to this, we will also need to consider the significance of having the concept of adoption specifically in the confessional documents. Is there any difference for a confession to have the concept, as compared with having it in theological tracts, treatises, and textbooks? Fourth, we will further need to ask what “the development of the concept” signifies, considering the cases we find in the WCF and the post WCF treatments of adoption.\textsuperscript{177} This issue will be deepened by considering the most adequate method for presenting fully the concept of adoption in a confession.

\textsuperscript{170} See pages 3-6 in this chapter of this study.
\textsuperscript{171} Pages 29-30, 44-45 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{172} Pages 19-20, 22-25 in ibid. Although the WFC devotes a chapter to adoption and treats it as a locus in WCF 12, WCF does not clarify the relation of adoption to justification fully. For example, see how WCF 12 is started by the leading phrase “All those that are justified.” In seeing only WCF 12, we are not sure if adoption is an effect of justification or an aspect of justification.
\textsuperscript{173} Pages 41-42, 47-48 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} Pages 21-22 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{175} Pages 13-15 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{176} Pages 9-10 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} Pages 19-25 in ibid. See page 22: “Beeke acknowledges that adoption, among Puritanism, was ‘not developed as thoroughly as several closely knit doctrines such as justification, sanctification, and assurance.’”
4. Statement of the Main Research Question

Previously, we stated that Trumper does not do justice to the historical lines for treating adoption prior to and after Calvin in terms of the confessions in the Reformation Period. We also questioned his method and proposed to use the three theological lenses, besides the distinctive treatment of adoption, as viable tools for exploring the confessions in terms of the concept of adoption. These lenses actually help us to find instances of treating adoption or its relevant issues in the confessions. We also pointed out that only having those instances is not enough since there are unresolved issues in terms of adoption in the context of the confessions.

All the points and issues mentioned above help us here to develop the main research question. In synthesizing what was discussed above, the main research question of this study is this: what is the place and function of the concept of adoption in the Protestant confessions in the 16th and 17th centuries? In order to advance this main research question, two tasks are set before us. 1) In order to clarify the function of the concept of adoption, we first of all need to find instances (the actual locations) where adoption was mentioned in the confessions. Thus the first one is the historical task to find the place of the concept of adoption in the context of the confessional documents during the Reformation Period. 2) On the basis of this historical task, we have a second task which is a systematic-theological one for the purpose of clarifying the function of the concept of adoption in the confessional documents.

The historical task regarding the place of adoption is advanced by clarifying four sub-questions which are related to the unresolved issues mentioned above:

1) Are there any instances of treating adoption or its relevant issues in the confessions in the entire course of the Protestant confessions prior to the WCF?

2) Are there any historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin in terms of treating the
concept of adoption?

(3) What is the main factor causing the difficulty for us to recognize the historical lines related to Calvin in terms of the concept of adoption in the confessional history of the Reformation Period?

(4) On the basis of the three sub-questions answered, what is the meaning of having WCF 12 as a locus in the confessional history?

On the basis of the historical task, the systematic-theological task regarding the function of adoption is carried out by clarifying four sub-questions which have relevance to the unclear issues mentioned above:

(1) How do the instances of treating adoption in the confessions reflect or not reflect the redemptive-historical perspective of ‘huiothesia’?

(2) What are the relevant issues of adoption to which its concept is theologically related?

(3) What advantage or implication does the concept of adoption have for reshaping soteriology in a confession?

(4) How can the concept of adoption be expressed more fully in confessions?

E. Statement of Thesis

1. The Thesis of This Study

Although it appears that there are no historical lines for treating adoption in the confessional documents prior to and after Calvin in the Reformation Period, it is the contention of this study that in those confessions there are significant suggestions or clues related to the historical lines, reflecting a redemptive-historical perspective based on the concept of adoption. Thus, in order to solve the main research question of this study, it is crucial to pay special attention to these suggestions which historically point to possible lines leading to and flowing from Calvin and
theologically reflect a redemptive-historical perspective of the concept of adoption. The heart of this research project is to clarify that in the Reformation Period what the church, not specific theologians, believed and confessed in relation to the concept of adoption. This is because those confessional documents were believed, confessed, and used by the church for building herself up as the body of Christ, even though they were written by theologians or reformers. Here is also the reason the present work exclusively focuses on the confessional documents in the Reformation Period.

2. The Method and Outline of this Study
a. The Definition of the Concept of Adoption and the Criteria for an Assessment
In order to develop this thesis, this introductory chapter gives the concept of adoption a preliminary definition before starting the research of the present study. The concept of adoption is a soteriological grace in which God the Father gives sinners the status of God’s children by letting them participate in the Sonship of Christ through the Spirit of adoption.178 The concept describes the whole course of God’s salvific plan ranging from election into God’s family to the completion of the status at the consummation and shows a redemptive-historical framework based on the Pauline ‘huiothesia’.179 Because of this, the concept of adoption is theologically distinct from the Johannine concept of the new birth.180 On the basis of the definition mentioned above, the present study needs to investigate the confessional documents throughout its research.

In addition to this, it is necessary to refer to the terminology which the present study adopts for divine adoption. Although there are some alternative words, such as “doctrine” and “metaphor,” we will adopt the terminology “concept” for divine adoption throughout the study.

178. See pages 3-6 in this chapter of this study.
179. Page 3 in ibid; Ridderbos, Paul, 198-201.
180. Pages 21-22, 21n64 in this chapter of this study.
The reason to avoid using “doctrine” was already explained in this introductory chapter.\textsuperscript{181} Regarding another alternative word, it is not easy to use the word “metaphor” because it has some different levels for using it. For example, the following two metaphors, “the adopted children of God” and “the salt of the earth,” are both related to the identity of Christian. However, we cannot metaphorically treat them at the same level because Christians are not only metaphorically, but also literally God’s children in relation to God the Father. On the other hand, “the salt of the earth” metaphor does not function in the same manner as the adopted children metaphor does. Furthermore, if we choose the word “metaphor” for adoption, it will become further necessary to discuss which one is linguistically more appropriate to use, namely “metaphor” or “model”?\textsuperscript{182} Thus, this study will use a simpler word “concept” in order to avoid these complexities. It is beyond the scope of this study to treat the metaphorical function of adoption from a linguistic perspective. The word “motif” may be another alternative for adoption. But, considering the more objective as well as clearer feature of the word “concept,” we recognize it as more suitable for use in a systematic-theological study.

After defining the concept of adoption in a preliminary way, it is further necessary to clarify the criteria for an assessment, by which we recognize data as belonging to the concept since we use, besides the concept itself, the three theological lenses, i.e. the Fatherhood of God, union with Christ, and the multiple aspects of adoption, for exploring the confessions. There are two criteria the present study adopts throughout the research. The \textit{first criterion} is the redemptive-historical perspective based on the concept of adoption. If we find, exploring the confessions, references related to the three lenses in a context relevant to the

\textsuperscript{181} Pages 40-41 in this chapter of this study.

redemptive-historical perspective, we will count them as relevant data for the study. Because of that, we do not count the creative Fatherhood of God, which has relevance to the creation, as relevant to the concept of adoption. Also, we do not recognize the Fatherhood in a context of the Johannine new birth\textsuperscript{183} as relevant to the concept either. In the case that the Fatherhood is found in a context which is not clear whether or not it has relevance to the redemptive-historical perspective, we will take it and analyze it later.

The second criterion for the research is Calvin’s treatment as the center of treating the concept of adoption in the course of the confessional history during the Reformation Period. As the second sub-question in the historical task includes the phrase the “historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin,” his use of adoption occupies the central position in the Reformation Period and the present study will take it as the center to see if there are any historical lines leading to and flowing from him in the confessions (the second sub-question in the historical task).

In addition to these criteria, we will count conceptual references of adoption as relevant to the concept. More precisely, if a confession has a statement of bringing a believer into God’s family without having an exact or cognate word of “adoption,” we will recognize it as relevant conceptually. Similar cases are found in a statement, such as having brotherhood with Christ the Son, participating in his Sonship, knowing God as the Father by the Spirit, and so forth.

b. The Combination of the Historical and Systematic-Theological Approaches

As already mentioned, the two tasks coupled with the main research question, i.e., the historical and systematic-theological tasks, require the combination of the historical and systematic-theological approaches for the investigation and analysis of the confessions. Whereas both of these two tasks are eventually to clarify the function of the concept of adoption, the

\textsuperscript{183} See pages 21-22 in this chapter of this study.
present study first needs to find actual instances (the place) of the concept in a historical context of the confessional documents (the first sub-question). Then, in order to look for the historical lines of treating the concept prior to and after Calvin, this study also needs to scrutinize those instances by using him as the center (the second sub-question). After that, the present study can grasp the historical overview of treating the concept in the confessions during the Reformation Period (the third sub-question). On the basis of this historical task, the systematic-theological approach helps the study to carry out the systematic-theological task, consisting of its four sub-questions.

In order to carry out the two tasks and eventually answer the main research question, this study will proceed as follows. In chapter 2, this study will clarify Calvin’s use of adoption as the center for exploring the confessions in chapters 3-5. As the method to clarify the center, we will strategically use Trumper as a tool to grasp how Calvin treats the concept of adoption in his works as a whole. This does not mean that the present writer recognizes Trumper as best, as compared with others working on Calvin. As we shall see later, Trumper’s understanding of Calvin, at some important points, needs to be criticized and corrected. However, we still find Trumper’s treatment of Calvin viable as a tool to clarify Calvin as the center, considering that he covers most important works of Calvin including the Institutes and commentaries and that his works on Calvin are still recognized as relatively new. The way we clarify the center is as follows. First, chapter 2 presents Trumper’s understanding of Calvin’s treatment of adoption. At the same time, we keep an eye on his understanding, comparing it to other Calvin scholars, criticizing, and correcting him, as needed. Thus, chapter 2 will try to clarify Calvin’s use of adoption as a whole in a balanced way.

In the research body (chapters 3-5), this study will conduct comprehensive research on

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184. Pages 28, 28n90 in this chapter of this study.
the confessional documents from the Reformation Period by investigating their original texts while focusing on the concept of adoption with the three theological lenses. Throughout the research we will exclusively focus on documents, which are used by the church as confessions including those having the catechetical purpose. The exploration of the confessional documents will be broken down into three parts. First, it will be necessary to explore, in chapter 3, the confessional documents that appeared prior to Calvin. This period of time includes confessional documents written by some influential theologians such as Zwingli, Luther, and Bucer, who might have influenced Calvin in terms of the treatment of adoption. Second, in exploring the confessions written by Calvin in chapter 4, it is necessary to consider carefully how Calvin treats the concept, particularly in his confessions, as compared with his treatment of adoption as a whole. Third, we will investigate in chapter 5 important confessions that appeared after Calvin, considering whether or not his soteriological thought influenced them in the context of adoption.

Throughout the research body (chapters 3-5), the present study first pays attention to a historical context in which each confession was written. Then, the study looks for, in each confession, actual instances or hints of treating the concept of adoption, in accordance with the first and second criteria of the research. After that, the study theologically analyzes each confession, considering its strength, feature, and emphasis in terms of the concept. Also, at the end of each chapter, a brief overview of that era needs to be presented.

In the concluding chapter (chapter 6), this study will give a clear answer to the main research question by carrying out the historical and systematic-theological tasks. In the first half

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185. Pages 52-53 in this chapter. Because of this, we will not explore Calvin’s Institutes of 1559. Considering its exhaustive contents and role in the church, it is difficult to recognize it as a confession although the Institutes of 1536 is recognized as such. Richard A. Muller, The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 118-19.
of the concluding chapter, the study will conclude the first historical task by solving the four sub-questions. Regarding the first sub-question, it is intended that the instances found through the investigation in chapters 3-5 will become a clear answer to it. In regard to the second sub-question, chapter 6 will present a historical overview of what we find in the research body as a whole, discussing whether or not there are any historical lines related to Calvin. In order to clarify the third sub-question, chapter 6 will pay special attention to the contextual nature of confessions. After solving these three sub-questions, chapter 6 will answer the fourth sub-question and conclude the historical task regarding the place of the concept of adoption.

In the second half of chapter 6, on the basis of the conclusion to the historical task, this study will solve the four sub-questions coupled with the systematic-theological task. More precisely, in order to solve the first sub-question in that task, chapter 6 will compare the instances of treating adoption in the confessions with the redemptive-historical perspective of ‘*huiothesia*’ and evaluate them, considering their strength, thrusts, and weaknesses. Next, for treating the second sub-question, the concluding chapter will identify all the relevant issues to the concept of adoption, while clarifying relation of adoption to three unclear issues: 1) the twofold grace including union with Christ, 2) the new birth, and 3) deification. This is intended to

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186. Page 51 in this chapter. The historical task is “to find the place of the concept of adoption in the context of the confessional documents.”
187. Ibid: “Are there any instances of treating adoption or its relevant issues in the confessions in the entire course of the Protestant confessions prior to the WCF?”
188. Pages 51-52 in this chapter: “Are there any historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin in terms of treating the concept of adoption?”
189. Page 52 in this chapter: “What is the main factor causing the difficulty for us to recognize the historical lines related to Calvin in terms of the concept of adoption in the confessional history of the Reformation Period?”
190. Ibid: “On the basis of the three sub-questions answered, what is the meaning of having WCF 12 as a *locus* in the confessional history?”
191. Page 51 in this chapter. The systematic-theological task is to clarify “the function of the concept of adoption in the confessional documents.”
192. Page 52 in this chapter: “How do the confessions reflect or not reflect the redemptive-historical perspective of ‘*huiothesia*’?”
193. Ibid: “What are the relevant issues of adoption, to which its concept is theologically related?”
clarify the multiple aspects of the concept relating to other theological issues and doctrines.\(^{194}\)

Then, the concluding chapter will discuss advantage or implication of having the familial concept of adoption in a confession for reshaping soteriology, in order to answer the third sub-question.\(^{195}\)

Here is the place in which the concluding chapter will give a definition to the function of the concept of adoption in the confessions examined in this study. Finally, in relation to the fourth sub-question,\(^{196}\) the concluding chapter will discuss a possibility of developing or doing fuller justice to the concept, considering the most adequate method of presenting the concept in confessions. Then, at the very end, we will conclude this study by giving a clear answer to the main research question.

After concluding the study, we will set a short section “Perspective” which briefly shows the practical relevance of this research project to theology in our generation. This practical application will clarify the fact that adoption is not a mere theoretical concept but a practical and spiritual one that may help Christians to revitalize their Christian lives.

\(^{194}\) Pages 44-45 in this chapter.

\(^{195}\) Page 52 in this chapter: “What advantage or implication does the concept of adoption have for reshaping soteriology in a confession?”

\(^{196}\) Ibid: “How can the concept of adoption be expressed more fully in confessions?”
CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the present study clarified the main research question after observing the history of treating the concept of adoption and questioning Trumper’s treatment of confessions. We also articulated the thesis of this study that there are some significant hints of historical lines of treating adoption, prior to and after Calvin, in the confessions of the Reformation Period.

Chapter 2 will strategically focus on Trumper’s understanding of Calvin’s use of the concept of adoption in order to clarify Calvin as the center for exploring the confessional documents in the following chapters 3-5. The clarification of Calvin as the center needs to be developed in the following manner. First, this chapter will summarize Trumper’s treatment of Calvin in terms of the concept of adoption. Second, while summarizing it, this chapter will compare Trumper’s treatment with some recent works treating Calvin’s theology in order to evaluate it. Third, when necessary, this chapter will refer to any differences or important issues by comparing Trumper with those recent works. In order to evaluate Trumper as a whole, the following three works are primarily used: David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback, ed. *Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis* (2008); Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (2008); Herman J. Selderhuis, ed. *The Calvin Handbook* (2009).\(^1\) In addition to these three works, some other works as needed are used in a complementary fashion. In particular, when summarizing Trumper’s treatment of union with Christ in Calvin, this chapter will compare his treatment with some recent works focusing on union with Christ, such as J. V. Fesko,

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Beyond Calvin (2012); Julie Canlis, Calvin’s Ladder (2010); Mark A. Garcia, Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin’s Theology (2008); J. Todd Billings, Calvin, Participation, and the Gift (2007); Zachman, The Assurance of Faith (2005). This is because union with Christ is one of the key issues for us to grasp Calvin’s use of the concept of adoption. At the very end, this chapter will discuss what theological framework Calvin uses in his treatment of the concept of adoption since this is what Trumper lacks in his understanding of Calvin’s use of the concept.

A. Calvin’s Use of the Concept of Adoption in his Works

The most important theological thrust Trumper makes in his dissertation can be, at least in relation to the present study, his treatment of Calvin’s works on the concept of adoption. Trumper’s analysis of Calvin is divided into three parts. The first part is called by Trumper “the context of adoption,” recognized as the entrance to Calvin’s treatment of the concept of adoption. The second is “the heart of adoption” meaning the core of Calvin’s soteriology in terms of the concept. The third is entitled “the outworking of adoption” which treats the lives of God’s adopted children.

1. The Context of Adoption

With regard to the context of adoption, Trumper lists the following three contexts as the entrance to the concept of adoption: “the protological context,” “the relational context,” and “the covenantal context.”

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3. It is regrettable that Trumper has not published his dissertation treating Calvin’s works in terms of adoption. It is only possible to glance at some essence of his treatment of Calvin in the dissertation through When History Teaches Us Nothing, 2-3, 62-65. In the latter part, Trumper briefly refers to how Calvin understands union with Christ and justification in relation to adoption.
a. The Protological Context

This context concerns predestination. There are three points to summarize it. First, in Calvin, adoption starts with predestination. But, it should be emphasized that the purpose of beginning with predestination is not as to “the overall status of predestination in Calvin’s theology.” In his theology, insists Trumper, predestination should be recognized as “one integral aspect of Calvin’s soteriology.” What Trumper emphasizes here is that Calvin intentionally treats predestination in the context of soteriology where the concept of adoption plays a significant role.

Second, choosing predestination as the starting point of adoption also fits with Calvin’s “special interest in the history of redemption.” Here, Trumper clarifies the reason why he chooses not the term “predestinate,” but “protological” as the suitable adjective for this context where predestination is mainly treated in relation to adoption. By using a broader adjective “protological,” Trumper tries to depict the broad “nexus between predestination and adoption” which has not only predestination, but also the entire history of redemption in its scope. In order to understand this nexus, it is necessary, Trumper claims, to pay attention to Calvin’s doctrine of double predestination because it “determines his approach to adoption.” Through quoting from two places in the Institutes, Trumper tries to show us that “God’s eternal election to adoption forms . . . the positive side of Calvin’s predestination.” At the first quotation, Calvin states, “We shall never be clearly persuaded . . . that our salvation flows from the wellspring of God’s free mercy until we come to know his eternal election, which illumines God’s grace by this contrast: that he does not indiscriminately adopt all into the hope of salvation but gives some what he denies to others.” Calvin also says, at the second quotation, that “God adopts some to hope of

7. Ibid., 71.
8. Ibid.
life and sentences others to eternal death.” Thus, it is insisted by Trumper that what the scope of the protological context has in it is not just predestination as the starting point of adoption, but the entire history of redemption which is rooted in God’s decree and completed in the eschatological future. Trumper actually says that the concept of adoption “begins with electing grace and culminates in consummating glory.”

Third, according to Trumper, Calvin, in his works, treats predestination “pastorally and evangelically.” Trumper says, “Calvin seeks to demonstrate how predestination reflects God’s electing grace.” This is because, in terms of God’s decree in Calvin, “God’s desire has forever been to bring a people into filial relationship with himself through Jesus Christ.” Trumper adds to this insisting, “To this end the divine decrees were directed.” Here it is the contention of Trumper that adoption plays an important role as Calvin presents predestination reflecting “the sheer grace of God” which is to bring people into the filial relationship with him.

Here is one issue on which Trumper does not put sufficient emphasis when treating Calvin’s understanding of predestination in terms of adoption. It is Christ as “the mirror wherein we must . . . contemplate our election” to God’s children. Although Calvin clearly emphasizes election in Christ, it is hardly possible to say that Trumper does justice to the centrality of Christ

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12. Ibid., 72.
13. Ibid. Trumper quotes from Wilhelm Niesel, “It is just Calvin’s doctrine of election which proves that he is not primarily a speculative thinker.” Wilhelm Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, trans. H. Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), 160. R. Scott Clark agrees with this in terms of Calvin’s pastoral and evangelical motivation of treating election. Clark states, “He presented the election to salvation as good news for sinners and a source of encouragement to believers.” At the end he concludes, “He understood this doctrine to be biblical and theologically necessary, and he understood it as a pastoral doctrine, a source of comfort and assurance for those tempted to doubt their own salvation.” R. Scott Clark, “Election and Predestination: The Sovereign Expressions of God,” in Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes, 122. Also see Partee, The Theology of John Calvin, 246; Wilhelm H. Neuser, “Predestination,” in The Calvin Handbook, 312.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 74.
17. Inst., 3.24.5. Also see in ibid: “Those whom God has adopted as his sons are said to have been chosen not in themselves but in his Christ [Eph. 1:4].” Clark, “Election and Predestination,” 115-16; Parter, op. cit., 240-41; Howard Griffith, “‘The First Title of the Spirit’: Adoption in Calvin’s Soteriology,” Evangelical Quarterly 73 (no. 2, 2001), 139. Griffith insists, “Christ is the focus of election.”
in the context of election in Calvin’s thought.  

b. The Relational Context

The next context to be treated is one of the long debated issues in later Calvinism, namely the relationship, in Calvin’s theology, between the Fatherhood of God and the original status of Adam in Eden.  

It has been debated among orthodox Calvinists whether or not Adam in the garden originally knew God as his Father.  

Trumper refers to this question because, in Calvin’s soteriology, “The answer determines whether salvation involves the restoration of the filial relationship that Adam enjoyed with God.”  

According to what Trumper investigates, whereas in terms of the Fatherhood of God, Calvin’s emphasis is not on the creative paternity, but on “the redemptive paternity” as a whole, “Calvin deduces Adam’s sonship before God” in treating “Adam’s possession of the imago Dei.”  

In criticizing Osiander, Calvin says, “The dignity that had been conferred upon man belonged also to the angels. When we hear the angels called ‘children of God’ [Ps. 82:6] it would be inappropriate to deny that they were endowed with some quality resembling their Father.”  

Trumper adds to this quotation another remark by Calvin, “Scripture calls the angels ‘sons of God’ [Ps. 82:6], whose high dignity did not depend upon the

18. See Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 74. Trumper, only in passing, treats the issue of election in Christ, devoting one paragraph consisting of six lines.

19. Ibid., 83.
20. Ibid., 76, 80.
21. Ibid., 76n32. Trumper adds to this saying, “What it does not determine, however, is whether an Adamic sonship in Eden was the same as that received in Christ.”
22. Ibid., 78. Calvin in his Institutes relates the issue of imago Dei to adoption, although it is in the context of the redemptive Fatherhood. See Inst., 3.11.6 [CO 2 (CR 30): 537]. “Whomever, therefore, God receives into grace, on them he at the same time bestows the Spirit of adoption [spiritu adoptionis donat] [Rom 8:15], by whose power he remakes them to his own image [reformat ad suam imaginem].” Canlis, Calvin’s Ladder, 133n28. The connection between the image of God and the adoptive sonship may not be so obvious in Calvin, but it can be deduced through seeing that these two revolve around some common issues closely related to adoption, such as union with Christ, justification, sanctification, the “already but not yet-ness,” glorification, etc. This makes it possible to assume that there is some relationship between them in Calvin’s thought. See some examples of how the image of God is treated in Calvin’s theology. Eberhard Busch, “God and Humanity,” in The Calvin Handbook, 227; Anthony N. S. Lane, “Anthropology,” in The Calvin Handbook, 287; Günther H. Haas, “Ethics and Church Discipline,” in The Calvin Handbook, 333; Randall C. Zachman, “Communio cum Christo,” in The Calvin Handbook, 365.
coming redemption.” Thus, Trumper, by analyzing Calvin’s treatment of the angels, who shares with man the same dignity as “children of God,” concludes that Calvin has the notion of Adam’s sonship.

Although the answer to the question of Adam’s sonship appears to be “yes,” “Calvin’s concept of the creative Fatherhood of God exhibits then none of the paranoia that was to afflict certain of the later orthodox Calvinists who regarded the concept as a concession to Universalism and an undermining of the infinite Creator/creature divide.” On the contrary, Trumper claims that in Calvin’s theology, what the redemptive paternity accomplished was not only the restoration of the original sonship of Adam, but also the elevation to a higher status in Christ, by referring again to Calvin’s treatment of the image of God. Calvin says, “The state of man was not perfected in the person of Adam . . . The image of God was only shadowed forth in man till he should arrive at his perfection.” Thus, Trumper concludes that, in Calvin’s soteriology, “salvation . . . brings the adopted into a higher state, because – unlike in Eden – the adoptive experience is secure in Christ.” In other words, the elevation to a new status is able to help believers to share Christ’s own Sonship with him.

c. The Covenantal Context

It is recognized that there is a close relationship in Calvin’s theology between “the covenant of

27. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 81-82; CTS Gen., vol. 1, 112-13 [CO 23 (CR 51): 36]. Trumper also points out one of the differences between Calvin and later Calvinists by saying that “nineteenth-century Calvinists were to assess the elevating power of salvation by whether Adam had enjoyed an Edenic sonship before God.”
28. Inst., 2.6.1 [CO 2 (CR 30): 248]. Calvin insists, “It is quite unfitting that those not engrafted into the body of the only begotten Son are considered to have the place and rank of children [filiorum].” This is quoted in “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 84. Nigel Westhead, “Adoption in the Thought of John Calvin,” Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology 13:2 (Autumn, 1995): 104: “This redemptive sonship is so far superior and qualitatively different as to permit Calvin to aver that creative sonship is not sonship at all.” Westhead refers to Inst., 2.14.5.
grace” and adoption.\(^\text{29}\) Although Trumper does not give us the definition of “the covenant of grace,” it appears to signify, according to his understanding, not “a covenant of redemption” contrasted with “a covenant of works” in federal theology, but a broad terminology pointing to God’s covenantal treatment of his people throughout the history of salvation. Although it is long, it is worth quoting from what Trumper states:

> It is fascinating to observe the way that Calvin sees the outworking of God’s adoptive dealings with his people throughout the development of each *modus administrationis* of the covenant of grace. Although there is no covenant of works in his theology Calvin makes it clear that God’s encounter with his people began at the dawn of world-history. However, rather than speak of the Edenic scenario in terms of a covenant of works, Calvin prefers to subsume all redemptive history under the covenant of grace. Immediately noticeable is the integral connection that he draws between the covenant of grace and adoption. “All men adopted [cooptat] by God into the company of his people since the beginning of the world were covenanted [foederatos] to him by the same law and by the bond of the same doctrine as obtains among us.” \(^\text{30}\)  

Here, it is important to pay attention to the point that, according to Trumper, that Calvin, in terms of adoption, puts his emphasis primarily on the oneness of the covenant of grace although he does pay attention to the differences between the Old and New Testaments in terms of the covenant.\(^\text{31}\) While taking into account that God first entered into a covenantal relationship with

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\(^{30}\) Ibid., 86; *Inst.*, 2.10.1 [CO 2 (CR 30): 313]. Derek W. H. Thomas also recognizes that in Calvin’s thought, adoption is a relevant issue to God’s covenant in treating “the new covenant.” He states, “For Calvin, the appearance of the Mediator secured what the old covenant could not – a knowledge of God as our heavenly Father. . . . Indeed it is a point too infrequently understood, that for Calvin ‘piety’ meant recognizing that our lives are nourished by God’s fatherly care and that the chief blessing of the new covenant is free (or gratuitous) adoption.” Derek W. H. Thomas, “The Mediator of the Covenant,” in *Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes*, 209.

Abraham in order to adopt his seed as God’s children.\(^{32}\) Calvin recognizes the Exodus as God’s ratification and renewal of the Abrahamic covenant, by which God adopted the nation of Israel as his children.\(^{33}\) On the basis of this Old Covenant, God dynamically expanded the covenant of grace, in the New Testament era, in order to bring all who believe in Christ into his family.\(^{34}\) Whereas Calvin does justice to “both continuity and discontinuity within the development of the covenant,”\(^{35}\) what Calvin values most is the unity of the covenant of grace. Calvin states, “Now we have this in common with the ancient people, that God adopts us, that he may at length bring us into the inheritance of eternal life.”\(^{36}\)

2. The Heart of Adoption

Here, this study focuses on seven issues which are important to understand Calvin’s theology in terms of the concept of adoption: the wonderful exchange, the Incarnation, union with Christ, mystical union, the relationship between justification and adoption, spiritual union, and the church.

a. The Wonderful Exchange

While the wonderful exchange and union with Christ “overlap at vital points in their application to adoption,” Trumper gives the former a distinct definition on the basis of Calvin’s definition. “The wonderful exchange (mirifica commutatio) is the objective ground of salvation” explaining “the need for, and purpose of, union with Christ.”\(^{37}\) He says, “Calvin used the wonderful

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32. “God had chosen the race of Abraham and adopted them as his people... because he had deposited his covenant with Abraham and the fathers.” CTS Mal., 540 [CO 44 (CR 72): 444]; Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 88.
33. Ibid., 94. Trumper quotes from Calvin that God “favoured the children above all nations, when he adopted them as his peculiar people.” CTS Jer., vol. 4, 151 [CO 38 (CR 66): 704].
34. CTS Jer., 75 [CO 38 (CR 66): 655]: “Adoption with regard to God, remained indeed the same, as it has been stated; but as to the judgement of men, it was abolished. He then began anew so to collect his people, that they might really know him as their Father.” Also see Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 98n150.
35. Ibid., 99.
37. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 107; Inst., 4.17.2 [CO 2 (CR 30): 1003]. Calvin defines the wonderful exchange this way: “This is the wonderful exchange which, out
exchange to explain the way that Christ serves as the Father’s fountain of every good to us.”

b. The Incarnation

In his *Institutes*, Calvin gives a definition to the Incarnation saying, “Our common nature with Christ is the pledge [*pignus*] of our fellowship with the Son of God.” By quoting this from Calvin, Trumper clarifies the Incarnation as the foundation by which we, in the first place, have fellowship with the Sonship of Christ. According to Trumper, Calvin emphasizes the importance of the Incarnation to solve the two problems: “the natural impotence of humankind to become the children of God and the reality of sin which renders the fallen subject to God’s curse.” In order to solve the first of these, says Trumper, it was critical for Christ to have the “incarnate Sonship,” in which believers can participate to become God’s children. Calvin states, “It has been of the greatest importance for us that he who was to be our Mediator be both true God and true man.” After being clothed with our flesh, the incarnate Son needed to take Adam’s place as the second Adam in order to solve the second problem. The incarnate Son came, says Calvin, “to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God’s righteous judgment, and in the same

of his measureless benevolence, he has made with us; that becoming 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 upon 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.”


39. As we shall see later in treating union with Christ, the Incarnation, according to the two letters between Calvin and Vermigli, can be a form of our union with Christ, and be called “incarnational union.” Fesko, by referring to Rankin, states that “Vermigli has a threefold doctrine of union with Christ, which includes incarnational, mystical, and spiritual unions as different aspects of the one union with Christ that believers share.” Fesko, *Beyond Calvin*, 191; W. Duncan Rankin, “Calvin’s Correspondence on Our Threefold Union with Christ,” in *The Hope Fulfilled: Essays in Honor of O. Palmer Robertson*, ed. Robert L. Penny (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 250. Although Trumper supports this threefold doctrine of union, what he chooses is not “incarnational union,” but the more general term “the Incarnation.” Because of this, the writer of the present study chooses “the Incarnation” for this section. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 108.

40. *Inst.*, 2.12.3 [CO 2 (CR 30): 342].


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flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved.” 44 Thus, the Incarnation, as we shall see in what follows, sets the foundation for believers to have a deeper level of union. 45

Here, in addition to the Incarnation as the foundation of our union with Christ, Partee complements what Trumper lacks in the context of the Incarnation. Partee, by reading the context of the Institutes, 2.14.5-6 carefully, points out that in Calvin’s theology adoption functions as the purpose of the Incarnation. 46 These two points, i.e. the foundation and purpose, clearly show the importance of the Incarnation in terms of the concept of adoption.

c. Union with Christ.

While the wonderful exchange sets the basis for believers to receive various blessings from the Father, Trumper defines union with Christ by saying that “union with Christ highlights more directly the manner in which these blessings are appropriated,” and “complements the notion of the wonderful exchange.” 47 Consequently, the role of union with Christ would become more important in Calvin’s theology as it is related to divine adoption. After listing some important phrases used for describing “union with Christ” in the Institutes, Trumper takes up “adoption” (adoptio) from among them and says, “Although used less frequently, adoptio acts as a powerful metaphorical expression of union with Christ.” 48 It is clear here that Trumper recognizes union with Christ as almost synonymous with adoption in Calvin’s theology. 49

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45. Partee also pays attention to the importance of the Incarnation in terms of union with Christ. Partee, The Theology of John Calvin, 42.
46. “Christ . . . was made man that we might be made children of God by adoption and grace. Christ, then, possesses by nature the Sonship that we receive as a gift” Ibid., 151; Griffith, “The First Title of the Spirit,” 137. Griffith supports this point.
49. Fesko points out that there are various understandings of the place of adoption in the ordo salutis. Fesko, Beyond Calvin, 29. In this sense, it is also not easy how to understand the relationship between union with Christ and adoption, as we shall see later. For example, Günter H. Haas recognizes
After providing a definition of union with Christ, Trumper classified it into three aspects: incarnational union, mystical union, and spiritual union, whereas the latter two constitute, in Trumper’s understanding, a broader aspect of “pneumatological union.”\(^{50}\) The meanings of mystical and spiritual union and the relationship between these two are not easily definable because Calvin in the *Institutes* does not make any distinction between them. The only place where Calvin makes a distinction is found in a letter written to “his friend, the Italian Reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli, dated 8th August, 1555.”\(^{51}\) Although the evidence of the distinction is recognized only here, it is still legitimate, insists Trumper, to distinguish mystical union from spiritual union. This is because these two distinctive meanings are generally recognized in Calvin’s use of ‘union with Christ’. Both Garcia and Fesko, through exploring both Vermigli’s letter to Calvin and Calvin’s reply to Vermigli, support the distinction between the mystical and spiritual union in Calvin, although there are some differences between these two scholars.\(^{52}\)

d. Mystical Union

After referring to incarnational union, the initial subject in the three mentioned above, it should first be described here what mystical union signifies. On the basis of the *Institutes*, Trumper lists union with Christ as primary or foundational, and adoption as secondary. Günter H. Haus, “Ethics and Church Discipline,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, 338. Also see Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 23.

52. Garcia, *Life in Christ*, 282-83; Fesko, *Beyond Calvin*, 194-206. According to Fesko, there is a possibility that Vermigli’s understanding of the mystical and spiritual union influenced Calvin. Gaffin also uses this distinction, although he does not show us the source of the terminology. Gaffin, “Justification and Union with Christ,” in *Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes*, 259. Regarding the translation of the letters between Vermigli and Calvin, see G. C. Gorham, *Gleanings of a Few Scattered Ears and of the Times Immediately Succeeding; A.D. 1533 to A.D. 1558* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1857), 340-44, 349-52. “That the Son of God put on our flesh, in order that he might become our Brother, partaker of the same nature, – is a Communion which I do not mean to speak here.” Here, after briefly mentioning “incarnational union,” Calvin focuses on the other two unions (mystical and spiritual) saying, “1. That Communion which flows from his heavenly influence, and breathes life into us, and makes us to coalesce into one body with himself” and that “a second Communion, which, . . . is the fruit and effect of the former.” Gorham, *Gleanings of a Few Scattered Ears and of the Times*, 349-51. The translation is available from http://books.google.com.tw/books?hl=ja&lr=&id=SlkLAAAAIAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR21&dq=G.+C.+Gorham,+Gleanings+of+a+Few+Scattered+Ears+and+of+the+Times+Immediately+Succeeding&ots=qPB0W5oCf3&sig=mvwK5XZ6oxq9Pg50FayJTPm5boH4&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false under “Gleanings of a Few Scattered Ears and of the Times Immediately Succeeding; A.D. 1533 to A.D. 1558” (accessed May 2, 2011).
three verbs significantly describing mystical union: indwelling, sharing, and engrafting. These verbs clarify four important characteristics of mystical union. Trumper writes:

First, it is a once-for-all event resulting from the reception of Christ through faith.
Secondly, in mystical union sinners are brought into membership of Christ so that he becomes theirs and they become his. Thirdly, membership of Christ is constituted by his indwelling the believer, and by their sharing with him in all that he has been endowed with by the Father. Fourthly, mystical union is thoroughly grounded upon the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Although various meanings can be observed in these four, the central theme of mystical union with Christ, according to Trumper, is that “the sinner’s justification cannot be considered in isolation from his mystical union with Christ.” This mystical union is constituted, says Trumper, by two essential elements: “the ministry of the Holy Spirit and faith in Christ.”

e. The Relationship between Justification and Adoption

After recognizing mystical union as a manner or foundation to justification, it is necessary to consider the relationship between justification and adoption. At a glance it appears that justification is foundational to adoption in Calvin’s works. This is because, explains Trumper, Calvin was cautiously against Osiander’s distortion of justification which virtually makes Christ’s substitutional death meaningless, so that he might be compelled to emphasize more the necessity of the Mediator in protecting the doctrine of imputed righteousness on believers than

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54. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 127. As we shall see later, here the fourth characteristic can be questioned because elsewhere Trumper recognizes mystical union as primary and imputation as secondary.

55. Ibid.


focusing on “more localized reference to adoption.”

However this is not as simple as mentioned above. Trumper also refers to another finding as he investigates Calvin’s treatment of Ephesians 1:5-6. Calvin appears to treat “the adoptive act (acceptance) and the adoptive state (sonship)” distinctively. Then, Trumper insists that in Calvin’s treatment of justification, it can be defined as “acceptance.” Calvin says, “Paul surely refers to justification by the word ‘acceptance’ when in Ephesians 1:5-6 he says: ‘we are destined for adoption through Christ according to God’s good pleasure, to the praise of his glorious grace by which he has accounted us acceptable.’” Trumper also points out that the notion of “acceptance” in Calvin’s theology often entails both “the familial imagery” and “the forensic imagery” in it. Trumper quotes from Gerrish, “The familial imagery runs alongside the forensic imagery and finally supplants it. In the end, Christ . . . justifies us as God’s Son who takes us for his brothers and sisters.” Thus, Trumper concludes, “Although Calvin seems to simply associate justification with mystical union, the meaning of acceptance is not exhausted by the sinner’s reconciliation to an angry judge. It culminates in the receiving of the sinner by his loving heavenly Father. And so the justified sinner embarks on a filial relationship to God.” Trumper quotes from Calvin, “We reach the haven of security only when God lays aside the character of Judge, and exhibits himself to us as a Father.”

59. Ibid., 134; CC Eph., 126, 127 [CO 51 (CR 79): 148, 149]. Trumper quotes from CC Eph., 127, “In adopting us . . . the Lord does not look at what we are, and is not reconciled to us by any personal worth,” and then from Inst., 3.11.6 [CO 2 (CR 30): 537], “Whomever . . . God receives into grace, on them he at the same time bestows the Spirit of adoption.” However, it can be argued whether or not Calvin treats “the adoptive act” and “the adoptive state” distinctively in a clear way. As we shall see later, the point Trumper makes here is not so convincing. In terms of this distinction between act and state, Calvin’s treatment is not as clear as Trumper claims.
64. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 136, quoted from “Canons and Decree of the Council of Trent, with the Antidote,” in Calvin’s Tracts and Treatises (hereafter Tracts), 72
Therefore, in considering the relationship between justification and adoption, it is not enough to consider merely which one is foundational to the other. What needs to be considered is how to put in order theologically the following issues as a consistent whole: mystical and spiritual union, adoption, justification, and sanctification. In fact, Trumper presents his own two possible interpretations although he states, “We cannot be entirely sure.” The first possible interpretation is that Calvin may “regard adoption as co-terminous with union with Christ,” from which justification and sanctification flows. Given this, Calvin might relate the adoptive act to justification, and the adoptive state to sanctification. On the other hand, the second interpretation is that Calvin may subsume the adoptive act under justification, and the adoptive state under sanctification. Although “we cannot be entirely sure,” Trumper is actually leaning towards the second interpretation because, if the second is taken into account, it would be easy to explain “why Calvin so easily intermingles forensic and familial terminology” in treating justification. Also, Trumper refers to another reason of leaning towards the second interpretation, “The fact that justification and adoption share certain common characteristics confirms at least the plausibility of claiming that Calvin subsumed what we have called the adoptive act under justification.” This is because, “They emanate from the free grace of God.” He quotes from Calvin, “Every work from us has only one way of obtaining acceptance, viz., when all that was vicious in it is pardoned by paternal indulgence.” Calvin also says about Gentile believers that

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vol. 3, 147 [CO 7(CR 35): 473]; “The True Method of Reforming the Church and Healing Her Devisions,” in Tracts, vol. 3, 245 [CO 7 (CR 35): 595]. But, Trumper misses the point that at times God as the Judge is used in a positive manner. For example, see “Adultero-German Interim, with Calvin’s Refutation,” in Tracts, vol. 3, 230: “When they [the saints] were weak by nature, he [God] strengthened by the gift of grace, that they . . . obtained from the just Judge a crown of righteousness.”

66. Ibid., 135. Also see ibid., 125.
67. Ibid., 135.
70. Ibid. Trumper refers to CC Rom 74-75 [CO 49 (CR 77): 61].
“since . . . [they] are reckoned among the sons of God, it is evident that adoption comes, not by the merit of the law, but from the grace of faith.” Thus, Trumper is leaning to the second interpretation that Calvin subsumed the adoptive act under justification, and the adoptive state under sanctification. Given this, justification is recognized as a benefit of mystical union, and sanctification as a benefit of spiritual union. Here, Trumper presents a figure to assist us in understanding this.

**Pneumatological Union: Its Nuances, Benefits and Sacraments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Union:</th>
<th>Benefit of Union:</th>
<th>Sacrament(s) of union:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mystical Union</strong></td>
<td>Justification:</td>
<td>Baptism: Cleansing and union with Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Adoptive Act)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual Union</strong></td>
<td>Regeneration:</td>
<td>Baptism:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Adoptive State)</td>
<td>Cleansing, Mortification and the New Life,</td>
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<td>union with Christ.</td>
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<td><strong>Lord’s Supper</strong></td>
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However, it can be argued here whether Trumper’s understanding of mystical union is correct because there is a possible contradiction there. Although, as this figure shows, he recognizes justification (or imputation) as a benefit of mystical union, in treating mystical union itself in the previous section, Trumper writes about the fourth characteristic that “Mystical union

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Session of the Council of Trent,” *Tracts*, vol. 3, 146 (138; italics are Trumper’s) [CO 7 (CR 35): 472].


75. Ibid., 126.

76. Ibid. In ibid.14, Trumper also refers to baptism. He recognizes it in Calvin’s thought as “the symbol or testimony to adoption.” Calvin says, “Baptism is the sign of the initiation by which we are received [cooptamur] into the society of the church, in order that, engrafted in Christ, we may be reckoned among God’s children.” *Inst.*, 4.15.1 [CO 2 (CR 30): 962]. At another place, Calvin also insists that “in dealing with baptism our first consideration is the fact that God the Father . . . receives us by adoption into the fellowship of his sons.” *CC 1 Cor*, 30 [CO-49 (CR 77): 318].
is thoroughly grounded upon the imputed righteousness of Christ.” 77 Thus, in the previous section, Trumper actually understands mystical union as secondary and imputation as primary. Generally, in regard to the relationship between mystical union and imputation, there are two understandings of it: mystical union as primary or imputation as primary. 78 They are theologically not compatible with each other. At this point, Trumper’s treatment of union with Christ lacks coherence and can be questioned.

In addition to this, it is also necessary to consider whether the distinction Trumper makes between the adoptive act and state is legitimate because, among the investigated secondary sources on Calvin, none of them refer to this distinction. Instead of distinguishing the adoptive act from the adoptive state, what is recognized in them is the emphasis on the oneness of adoption in order to clarify the inseparable relationship between the twofold grace, justification and sanctification. 79 Here the point Zachman makes which deserves our attention:

By means of our participation in Christ (participatio Christi), we received the twofold grace of Christ (duplex gratia Christi), justification and sanctification. The grace of justification is the foundation and basis of our adoption by God; for God can only


78. Gaffin states, “It is true to say that for Calvin union with Christ is ‘the precondition for imputation.’” Richard B. Gaffin, “Justification and Union with Christ,” in Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes,” 261. Also, the following scholars clearly recognize union with Christ as primary. Billings, Union with Christ, 27; Canlis, Calvin’s Ladder, 140; Fesko, Beyond Calvin, 194; Partee, The Theology of John Calvin, 188; Garcia, Life in Christ, 282. Among all the explored secondary works on Calvin’s union with Christ, the only work which recognizes imputation as primary is Horton. He states, “The Reformers and Protestant orthodoxy still regarded imputation as the judicial basis of the entire ordo salutis, refusing to collapse imputation into an essential union. It is true that one can find references in Luther and Calvin to justification through union with Christ; this was only to affirm that all of our righteousness before God is in Christ and not in us.” Michael S. Horton, Covenant and Salvation (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 198. In exploring these, the argument for the first seems to be more solid.

regard us as God’s children if God forgives us our sins and reckons us as righteous. However, the grace of sanctification is the purpose and goal of our adoption, for God adopts us so that we might actually become God’s gratefully obedient children.  

In other words, it is possible to say that Zachman soteriologically recognizes adoption, in Calvin, as an inseparable link in relating justification to sanctification. However, by clearly dividing adoption into its two parts – act and state – what Trumper states here is the possible danger of separating justification and sanctification because it is adoption which gives Christians their new identity, helping us to see the inseparability existing between justification and sanctification. Thus, it is difficult to say that Trumper has sufficient evidence here in order to show us the legitimacy of dividing adoption, in Calvin’s thought, into act and state, as he himself acknowledges saying, “We cannot be entirely sure.”

f. Spiritual Union

After exploring mystical union, it is necessary to focus on “spiritual union” which Trumper recognizes as “the fruit and effect” of mystical union. He quotes from Calvin, “For after that Christ, by the interior influence of his Spirit, has bound us to himself and united us to his body, he exerts a second influence of his Spirit, enriching us by his gifts.” In other words, the focus of this spiritual union is on “the ongoing nature of our union with Christ.” Thus, it is clear that spiritual union has more relevance to “the Christian life” than to salvation itself.

80. Zachman, The Assurance of Faith, 11. He elsewhere reinforces the crucial role of adoption in the relationship between the twofold grace in Calvin. “It is his understanding of the Lord as our Father in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit that allows Calvin . . . to make Jesus Christ himself the object of faith, from whom flows the twofold grace of justification and sanctification, so that sanctification can be subordinated to justification regarding the basis of our adoption, whereas justification can be subordinated to sanctification regarding the goal of our adoption.” Ibid., 247.

81. Billings also pays attention to the same issue. “John Calvin . . . has a helpful exposition of this new identity. Calvin says that this reality of salvation as adoption is that by the Spirit we receive a double grace in union with Christ in his death and resurrection.” Billings, Union with Christ, 26.

82. Griffith, “The First Title of the Spirit,” 140: “Adoption is too fundamental a category to be subordinated to justification.”

83. Gorham, Gleanings of a Few Scattered Ears, 351; Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 145. It is legitimate to see the logical, not chronological, priority to justification over sanctification. See Fesko, Beyond Calvin, 29, 206, 381.
g. The Church

According to Trumper, the church, in relation to Calvin’s use of the concept of adoption, is understood as the place in which those adopted by God enjoy their lives as his children.\(^{84}\) In what follows, we need to elaborate on the issue of the church because in terms of the present study, it is a broad issue ranging from God’s act of adopting believers into his family through the inheritance of the kingdom of God.\(^{85}\)

In Calvin’s ecclesiology, insists Trumper, the church is treated on two different levels. First, the church is recognized as seen only in God’s sight, but not seen in the human eyes because the church is based on God’s election to his children.\(^{86}\) Calvin states:

> Sometimes by the term “church” it means that which is actually in God’s presence, into which no persons are received but those who are children of God \([\textit{filii Dei}]\) by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Then, indeed, the church includes not only the saints presently living on earth, but all the elect from the beginning of the world.\(^{87}\)


\(^{85}\) This broadness is understandable in considering the amount Calvin devotes to ecclesiology in the \textit{Institutes}. As it is well known, the whole Book Four in the \textit{Institutes} focuses on the church. Cf. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 149. Referring to L. S. Herstal’s work, \textit{L'Ecclesiologie de Calvin à la lumière de l'Ecclesia Mater}, Trumper writes, “His [Calvin’s] view of the church well illustrates the interconnectedness in Calvin’s thought of mystical and spiritual union/justification (the adoptive act) and sanctification (the adoptive experience).” Léopold Schürmmer Herstal, \textit{L'Ecclesiologie de Calvin à la lumière de l'Ecclesia Mater: son apport aux recherches ecclésiologiques tendant à exprimer l'unité en voie de manifestation} (Brussels: P. Lang, 1978), 4.

\(^{86}\) George Plasger, “Ecclesiology,” in \textit{The Calvin Handbook}, 325. Here Plasger refers to the two levels of the church as “the visible and invisible of the church.” Also see Tadataka Maruyama, \textit{Karuban no Shukyou-Kaikaku Kkyokaiyon – Kyorishi Kenkyuu} (Calvin’s Reformation Ecclesiology: A Study of the History of Doctrines) (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 2015), 86. Maruyama points out that some scholars who are specialists of the early years of Calvin, such as Ganoczy and Wendel, tend to recognize only the first level (the church seen only by God) in the \textit{Institutes} of 1536. However, Maruyama argues that Calvin already had the concept of the two levels, i.e. the so-called church as visible and invisible, even in the \textit{Institutes} of 1536. Here the present writer, in the thesis body, avoid using the adjectives “invisible” and “visible” to the two level of the church in Calvin’s ecclesiology because Calvin “uses the terms very seldom.” Plasger, “Ecclesiology,” 325.

\(^{87}\) \textit{Inst.}, 4.1.7 [CO 2 (CR 30): 752-53]; Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 149. Also see \textit{Inst.}, 4.1.3 [CO 2 (CR 30): 748]: “All who through the goodness of God the Father through the work of the Holy Spirit have come into the community of Christ.”
Here the concept of the church, in terms of adoption, centers on election since we cannot discern, but only God knows those true members of the church based on election.  

At a second level, the church is recognized in “its earthly and less than perfect form,” although the church, in that form, still needs to be valued as a glorious body of Christ. This earthly form of the church is more significant to the concept of adoption as compared with the first level mentioned above since Calvin depicts it in a richer manner by using three descriptions: the church as mother, family, and kingdom. In what follows, we pay attention to the three descriptions respectively.

The first description of the church as mother is, according to Trumper, pre-eminent one among the three descriptions. This motherhood metaphor is so broad that it covers from the OT through the new covenant in the NT era. Calvin states, “God is pleased to gather his sons [filios], not only that they may be nourished by her help and ministry as long as they are infants [infantes] and children [pueri], but also that they may be guided by her motherly care until they mature [adolescant] and at last reach the goal of faith.”

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88. See Inst., 4.1.2, 9 [CO 2 (CR 30): 747, 754]; Plasger, “Ecclesiology,” 323; “The primary and most decisive statement by Calvin concerning the church is that it is elected by God.” Here is an unclear issue regarding the relation of adoption to election in Calvin. While it is recognized that there is a close relationship between these two, it is not easy to grasp how he relate adoption to election in detail. See Sano, “The Doctrine of Adoption in Calvin’s Theology,” 99-100. We will return to this issue in chapter 4 as we investigate the Consensus Genevensis.


90. Although Trumper does not discuss it, it is an unresolved issue that how we need to understand the relationship between the church based on election and the earthly church in Calvin’s ecclesiology. Maruyama, Calvin’s Reformation Ecclesiology, 293. Plasger tries to connect the two with each other in Christ. Plasger, “Ecclesiology,” 325: “That both the election of and the form of the church are not separate but are seen as different corresponds to the relationship between judgment and salvation, whose arrangement, moreover, follows the orders of Christ.” Maruyama also tries to connect, by focusing on Christ, the church based on the election in Christ to the earthly church whose head is Christ. Maruyama, op. cit., 87.

91. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 150. Besides these three, there are two other descriptions Calvin uses for the church, although they do not have relevance to the concept of adoption: “the city of God” and “the tabernacle which the Most High has sanctified as his dwelling place.” See Inst. (1536) in CO 1 (CR 29): 78.

92. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 150; “Hence, Calvin opens his discussion of the church in the Institutes Book Four by entitling her the mother of all the Godly.”

Cyprian, Calvin emphasizes the church’s role for nurturing God’s children, saying that “those to whom [God] is Father the church may also be Mother.”94 Here, since Calvin chooses the metaphor “mother” for describing a role of the church, it is understandable that her role covers the entire process of nurturing children, ranging from giving birth to them through nurturing and guiding them until they reach maturity. Calvin writes, “There is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels [Matt. 22:30].”95 Since the maternal role of the church covers a lifelong process of God’s children, it is assumed that the main focus of this metaphor is primarily put on the educational role of the church guiding her members.96 Trumper insists that this role is “accomplished through the Word and the sacraments, thus making her instrumental in the sanctification of her children.”97

The second description of the church is the family of God. Whereas a maternal role nurturing God’s children is emphasized in terms of the motherhood metaphor, the church becomes “the sphere of the Fatherhood of God,”98 argues Trumper, when Calvin uses “family” for the church.99 Calvin writes, “God designates as his children [filios] those whom he has

94. *Inst.*, 4.1.1 [“quibus ipse est pater, ecclesia etiam mater sit” CO 2 (CR 30): 746]; Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 151. It is Battles, who relates this notion, in his footnotes in the *Institutes*, to Cyprian: “You cannot have God for your Father unless you have the church for your Mother.” Cyprian *On the Unity of the Catholic Church vi* (CSEL 3.1:214; trans. LCC V. 127f.). Cf. Nobuo Watanabe, *Karuban no Kyokairon* (Calvin’s Ecclesiology) (Tokyo: Kaikakusha, 1978), 35n30. Watanabe does not agree with Battles, and argues, “Although Calvin has in mind Cyprian’s famous phrase ‘the church as Mother,’ in the case of Calvin the church as ‘Mother’ is not a theological concept, but a metaphor describing how the church functions as a whole” (English translations are mine).

95. *Inst.*, 4.1.4 [CO 2 (CR 30): 748-49]; Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 151. In seeing that the “giving birth to God’s children” is a part of the maternal role of the church, we do not need to relate this notion to the Johannie concept of the new birth. This is because Calvin refers to the notion when commenting on Gal. 4:26: “The Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.” See *CC Gal.*, 87-88 [CO 50 (CR 78): 239-40].

96. *Inst.*, 4.1.5 [CO 2 (CR 30): 749-51].


99. See the phrase “the church as the household of God” in Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10; Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 151.
chosen, and appoints himself their Father. Further, by calling, he receives [asciscit] them into his family and unites them to him so that they may together be one.\textsuperscript{100} According to Trumper, there are two main reasons why God recognizes the church as his family. First, after adopting those who believe in Christ, God brings them into the church. Second, the church is also the place in which God the Father lives with those adopted.\textsuperscript{101} Thus, Trumper concludes that the main focus of the church as the family is put on God’s paternal role broadly covering from his act of adoption through his “providential preservation.”\textsuperscript{102} Calvin actually states, “Not only does the Lord through forgiveness of sins receive and adopt [cooptat] us once for all into the church, but through the same means he preserves and protects us there.”\textsuperscript{103}

Besides this paternal role, Trumper points out that the church as the family of God is a place in which Calvin treats the concept of adoption in a Trinitarian manner. Whereas Christ’s status as the firstborn Son in the family is emphasized there,\textsuperscript{104} it is the Spirit of adoption, who helps, in the family, those adopted to grow, conforming to Christ the Son.\textsuperscript{105}

The third description of the church is the kingdom of God. This description is theologically unique since, notes Trumper, God’s children enter the kingdom not only through adoption, but also through the new birth which is a Johannine concept.\textsuperscript{106} Regarding the new birth, Calvin comments on John 3, “It is plain that we must be formed for the kingdom of God by a second birth. And the meaning of Christ’s words is that, since a man is born from his mother’s womb only carnal, he must be fashioned anew by the Spirit that he may begin to be

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{101} Ibid; Inst., 1.17.6 [CO 2 (CR 30): 159].
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 152: “On the Pauline description of the church as ‘the pillar and ground of truth’ and ‘the house of God’ (1 Tim. 3:15), Calvin writes that ‘by its ministry and labor God willed to have the preaching of his word kept pure and to show himself the Father of a family, while he feeds us with spiritual food and provides everything that makes our salvation.’” Trumper quotes this from Inst., 4.1.10 [CO 2 (CR 30): 754-55] (italics added by him).
  \item \textsuperscript{103} Inst., 4.1.21 [CO 2 (CR 30): 762].
  \item \textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Here it is clear that what “a second birth” means is related to the spiritual renewal of believers (regeneration) which is brought about by the Spirit’s work. In addition to this, it is noted that the new birth here is not only related to entering the kingdom, but also to the spiritual life growing toward the completion of the kingdom. Thus, the new birth of God’s children is treated in the context of the kingdom, which has already come but not been yet completed.

Regarding the concept of adoption, it is necessary to pay attention to union with Christ, which in Calvin’s thought, leads those adopted to enter the kingdom of God. Calvin insists, “Unquestionably, as soon as we are by faith engrafted into the body of Christ, we have already entered the kingdom of God.”

In sum, after seeing these three descriptions, we have three points worth noting. First, the church, in terms of adoption, is a broad issue covering from the initial act of adopting believers into God’s family through the completion of the kingdom. Second, while it is broad, the main focus of the church, in relation to adoption, is on the life of those adopted, namely the sphere of sanctification. Third, the issue of the church is so broad that both concepts of adoption and of the new birth can be interwoven into the church as the kingdom.

3. The Adoptive Life

Regarding the issue of the adoptive life, Trumper clarifies it through referring first to the sacrament in Calvin’s theology. Trumper refers to three meanings of the sacrament: 1) the sacrament as “a token of the sinner’s cleansing,” 2) “a symbol of regeneration,” and 3) “the symbol or testimony of adoption” or union with Christ. Then, in relation to the adoptive state

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110. Ibid. Trumper concludes, “The kingdom motif reinforces, then, the overlapping relationship between sanctification and the adoptive state or experience.”
111. Ibid., 139-41. Regarding the first one, see Inst., 4.15.1 [CO 2 (CR 30): 962], the second
or life, Trumper points out, “Whereas justification (the adoptive act) relates to the first and third meanings of baptism (cleansing and union with Christ), Calvin reads regeneration into all three meanings of the sacrament, so indicating the presence of a considerable interface between spiritual union and regeneration on the one hand, and regeneration and adoption on the other.”

Given this, it is fair to say that regeneration or sanctification is no less relevant to adoption than justification. Theologically, sanctification is a significant sphere in Calvin’s theology where the adopted sons and daughters enjoy their adoptive lives.112

Here Trumper lists six benefits that the adoptive status brings about. The first benefit is “Christian liberty” consisting of three contents: 1) the liberty of “not having to justify oneself by the keeping of the whole law,”113 2) the liberty which freed Christians from the law’s yoke, so that “they willingly obey God’s will,”114 and 3) the liberty protecting Christians “from the threat of superstition.”115 The second benefit is “prayer.”116 The third is “assurance” related to prayer.117 The fourth is “providence” which can be defined as a special protection by the Father.118 The fifth is “obedience.”119 The sixth is “the inheritance” of the kingdom as joint-heirs of Christ. This is promised for the adopted children who come through trials in their earthly

one, see Inst., 4.15.5, 12, 4.16.30 [CO 2 (CR 30): 964, 968, 997]. In relation to the third one, Trumper makes a quotation, “What is baptism to us in the present day? Although it is a deed of mutual obligation between us and God, it has this as its special property, viz., to make certain of the free forgiveness of sins, and the perpetual gift of adoption.” “Antidote to the Seventh Session of the Council of Trent,” Tracts, vol. 3, 181 [CO 7 (CR 35): 499]. Also see “Calvin’s Letter to the King of France (October, 1557),” Letters, vol. 3, 375; “The True Method of Giving Peace, and of Reforming the Church,” Tracts, vol. 3, 288 [CO 7 (CR 35): 629]; Inst., 4.16.9 [CO 2 (CR 30): 982].


113. Ibid., 163; Inst., 3.19.2 [CO 2 (CR 30): 613-14], et al. Cf. Ridderbos, Paul, 202. Ridderbos counts the Christian liberty and heirship of the kingdom as two key issues which help us to understand the theological characteristics of adoption. This liberty “consists in freedom from the law,” has “a forensic significance (Gal. 3:23-25),” and “finally has reference . . . to the future glory of the children of God (Rom. 8:21).”

114. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 163-64; Inst., 3.19.4 [CO 2 (CR 30): 615]. Also see ; Inst., 3.19.5 [CO 2 (CR 30): 616]: “Such children ought we be [Tales not esse oportet], firmly trusting that our services will be approved by our most merciful father, however, small, rude and imperfect these may be.”


117. Ibid., 170-78; Inst., 3.24.5 [CO 2 (CR 30): 716], et al.


lives. Among these six, the contents of prayer and the inheritance require some elaboration because of their richness.

a. Prayer

Prayer, insists Trumper, clearly shows the Trinitarian manner of Calvin’s use of adoption in his works. Here we have three issues worth noting. First, Calvin recognizes the Father as object of prayer for his children. In this context, Trumper argues that “prayer is not for God’s sake but his children’s” because the Christian piety, in Calvin’s thought, is essentially filial, considering how God’s children are led to pray to their Father in heaven. Calvin writes:

Persuaded of God’s fatherly love, they gladly commit themselves to his safekeeping and do not hesitate to implore the assistance that he freely promises, still they are not elated by heedless confidence, as if they had cast away shame, but they so climb upward by the steps of the promises that they still remain suppliants in their self-abasement.

Thus, God’s children continue to learn a pious manner of the Christian life as they are led by his fatherly affection to pray to him in various circumstances in their lives. In this sense, Trumper states, “Prayer is, then, the principal exercise of faith whereby the adopted speak to their Father.” Prayer actually helps those adopted to deepen their relationship with the Father, growing in their piety.

Second, it is critical to pay attention to Christ’s mediatory work in the context of prayer. This is because, argues Trumper, Christ as the Most High Priest provides those adopted with

123. Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 166. Here, Trumper obviously keeps in mind the well known title of the Institutes, 3.20: “Prayer is the chief exercise of faith, by which daily we receive God’s benefits.” Also see Wallace, Calvin’s Doctrine of the Christian Life, 271 ff.
guarantee leading them to pray to God the Father for their needs. Calvin says, “In calling God our Father, we certainly plead the name of Christ. For with what confidence could any man call God his Father? Who would have the presumption to arrogate himself the honor of a Son of God were we not gratuitously adopted as his sons in Christ.”

This crucial necessity of having Christ in prayer becomes clearer as we see the main components of prayer in Calvin’s thought. It is noted by Trumper that in Calvin’s thought, petition comes first prior to thanksgiving in terms of the components of prayer. If God’s children ask for anything they need from the Father in heaven, they must pray in the name of Christ. Calvin writes:

> Who would break forth into such rashness as to claim for himself the honor of a son of God unless we had been adopted as children of grace in Christ? He, while he is the true Son, has of himself been given us as a brother that what he has of his own by nature may become ours by benefit of adoption if we embrace this great blessing with sure faith.

Furthermore, in considering that forgiveness of sin is the most crucial one among our daily needs, having Christ as the Mediator will become even more critical in terms of prayer of God’s children. Because of this Mediator, even “ungrateful, rebellious, and froward children” are able to pray to God the Father, believing he listens to their prayers.

Third, insists Trumper, it is important to focus on the Spirit’s testimony giving the filial confidence to those adopted and leading them to pray to God the Father. Calvin values this

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128. Inst., 3.20.37 [CO 2 (CR 30): 663]: “He is not only a father but by far the best and kindest of all fathers, provided we still cast ourselves upon his mercy, although we are ungrateful, rebellious, and froward children.”
testimony, writing that “He gives the Spirit as witness to us of the same adoption, through whom with free and full voice we may cry, ‘Abba, Father’ [Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15].” Furthermore, whereas the Spirit daily helps those adopted to call upon their heavenly Father, they seriously need the help from the Spirit, facing various challenges or difficulties which God gives as burden to his children. Calvin reminds us of this necessity:

Paul admonishes us that, though we are weak in every part and various infirmities threaten our fall, there is sufficient protection in the Spirit of God to prevent us from ever being destroyed or being overwhelmed by any accumulation of evils. But these resources of the Spirit instruct us with greater certainty that it is by God’s appointment that we strive with groaning and sighings for our redemption.131

Considering the Spirit’s guidance helping God’s children to pray even in their weaknesses, Trumper concludes that in Calvin’s thought, “Prayer . . . is the product of the Spirit’s grace.”132

In short, exploring Calvin’s treatment of prayer, it becomes clear that prayer, in terms of adoption, is a significant issue in which the Triune God is at work in relation to the life of those adopted. Through prayer, the adopted children are able to participate in the fellowship of the Triune God, growing spiritually and deepening the relationship with the Father in the Son through the Spirit.133

b. The Inheritance

Since the concept of adoption is related to the adoptive sonship as a legal status, it logically has relevance to the inheritance of the kingdom, in which God the Father reigns as the king. Calvin, commenting on Romans 8:17 f., saying, “When . . . God has adopted us as his children [filios],

131. CC Rom., 177 [CO 49 (CR 77): 157].
133. “The Spirit which makes itself manifest in our prayer is not some mysterious power which calls forth in us a certain religious awareness; but it is the Spirit which draws us to the Son, the Spirit through whose action God accepts us as his children for the sake of Christ.” Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, 155, quoted in Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 169.
he has at the same time also ordained an inheritance for us.” 134 Here, Trumper raises two valid questions which help us to clarify the issue of the inheritance in terms of the concept of adoption.

1) What does the inheritance mean in terms of the concept? 2) How can those adopted by God be assured of the inheritance? 135

In relation to the first question, Trumper gives two meanings to the concept of the inheritance in Calvin, although they are inseparable from each other: eternal life promised to God’s children and the goal of election. 136 While the inheritance will be fulfilled in the future, it has been already promised to those adopted, giving them hope continually on their pilgrimage to the completion of the kingdom. Here the “already/not-yetness” in the inheritance becomes manifest clearly. 137

Regarding the second question, what is at stake there is the issue of facing difficulties on the pilgrimage to the inheritance; how can God’s children be assured of the inheritance, especially in trials or challenges in their lives? Trumper refers to two grounds, in Calvin’s thought, sustaining those adopted on that pilgrimage. First, Christ the Son is a ground securing the inheritance of those adopted because he himself possesses it as the heir of the kingdom. Calvin

134. CC Rom., 171 [CO 49 (CR 77): 150]; Ridderbos, Paul, 203. Ridderbos recognizes the “heirship” of the kingdom as one of key issues which help us to understand the concept of adoption.
136. Inst., 3.24.5 [CO 2 (CR 30): 715-16]; “Now what is the purpose of election but that we, adopted [ adoptati] as sons by our Heavenly Father, may obtain salvation and immortality by his favor? . . . those whom God has adopted [assumpsit] as his sons are said to have been chosen not in themselves but in his Christ [Eph. 1:4]; for unless he could love them in him, he could not honor them with the inheritance of his kingdom if they had not previously become partakers of him.” Also see CC Gal., 105 [CO 50 (CR 78): 255]; CC Eph., 132; Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 203: “The inheritance richly conveys the meaning of eternal life, and the telos of the Father’s predestination of his sons and daughters to glory.”
137. See Inst., 3.24.5 [CO 2 (CR 30): 715-16]; “Faith believes God to be true, hope awaits the time when his truth shall be manifested; faith believes that he is our Father, hope anticipates that he will ever show himself to be a Father toward us; faith believes that eternal life has been given to us, hope anticipates that it will sometime be revealed; faith is the foundation upon which rests, hope nourishes and sustains faith.” When it comes to the “already/not-yetness” in the inheritance, what Griffith observes deserves our attention. “Calvin tends to treat the biblical term ‘adoption’ as a matter of present experience. When he comes to the ‘not yet’ of redemption, he prefers to speak of believers receiving the ‘inheritance’ of which adoption is the first fruit.” Griffith, “The First Title of the Spirit,” 145-46. Here he refers to Calvin’s CC Rom., 8:23: “Paul improperly refers here to our adoption as the enjoyment of the inheritance into which we have been adopted. He has, however, very good reason for doing so, for he means that the eternal decree of God would be void unless the promised resurrection, which is the effect of that decree, were also certain. . . . Why God is our Father, if not that we should receive a heavenly inheritance after earthly pilgrimage?” Although what Trumper argues here is right, his discussion is not deep enough, missing Calvin’s tendency of referring to the inheritance, instead of adoption, in the eschatological context.
writes, “Although glorification has as yet been exhibited only in our Head, yet, because we now perceive in him the inheritance of eternal life, his glory brings to us such assurance [securitatem] of our own glory, that our hope may justly be compared to a present possession.”  

In addition to Christ’s own heirship, Trumper further points out that believers are assured of the inheritance not only through Christ’s own heirship, but also through the way he received it, namely via the cross. More precisely, if it is recognized that those adopted, been united with Christ, participate in the cross on the pilgrimage to the kingdom, they can be assured of the inheritance in the future. 

Second, in Calvin’s thought, the Spirit is also a ground of the inheritance of the adopted ones because he is at work in the life of God’s children as the seal and guarantee of the inheritance. Calvin refers to the importance of the Spirit in relation to the inheritance, “The hope of eternal inheritance, of which the Spirit is the earnest [arrhabo] and seal [sigillum], is sealed on [believers’] hearts.” According to Trumper, there are two manners, in Calvin’s thought, in which the Spirit is at work for securing the inheritance of those adopted. First, the Spirit as a seal witnesses to the sonship of those who believe in Christ. Calvin states, “The Spirit of God is like a seal, by which we are distinguished from the reprobate, and which is impressed on our hearts that we may be assured of the grace of adoption.” Second, the Spirit is also the down-payment of the inheritance, securing its fulfillment. 

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141. *CC Rom.*, 169 [CO 49 (CR 77): 149]. Also see *Inst.*, 3.24.1 [CO 2 (CR 30): 711]: “Although in choosing his own the Lord already has adopted them as his children, we see that they do not come into possession of so great a good except when they are called; conversely, that when they are called, they already enjoy some share of their election. For this reason, Paul calls the Spirit . . . both ‘Spirit of adoption’ [Rom. 8:15] and the ‘seal’ and ‘guarantee of the inheritance to come’ [Eph. 1:13-14; cf. II Cor. 1:22; 5:5].” 

142. *CC Eph.*, 194 [CO 51 (CR 79): 212], quoted in Trumper, “An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption,” 207. Also see *CC Eph.*, 131 [CO 51 (CR 79): 153]: “The true conviction which believers have of the Word of God, of their own salvation, and of all religion, does not spring from the feeling of the flesh, or from human and philosophical argument, but from the sealing of the Spirit, who makes their consciences more certain and removes all doubt.” 

143. *CC 2 Cor.*, 23 [CO 50 (CR 78): 24]: “As the Spirit is our surety because he testifies to our
In short, those adopted, on the basis of these two grounds, can move forward on the pilgrimage to the kingdom, being assured of the inheritance. At the very end, Trumper pays attention to the point that Calvin emphasizes the inheritance not as “servants’ but sons’ inheritance [Eph. 1:18], which only they who have been adopted [cooptati] as sons by the Lord shall enjoy [cf. Gal. 4:7].” Thus, Calvin clarifies that the fundamental basis of the inheritance is love and mercy flowing from God the Father on his children.

B. Theological Framework

Despite his detailed investigation of Calvin’s works, it is regrettable that Trumper does not develop any theological framework to clarify how Calvin treats the concept of adoption in a cohesive manner. After getting into the detailed investigation of the concept of adoption, it should be expected that Trumper would, at least briefly, sketch one theological tapestry into which the concept is woven by Calvin from election to the consummation.

In what follows, we consider three possible theological frameworks Calvin uses, treating the concept of adoption in his works. They are as follows: 1) a framework which is Trinitarian oriented, 2) a framework which is union-with-Christ oriented, and 3) a framework which is redemptive-historical oriented.

Regarding the first possible framework which is Trinitarian oriented, it is possible to recognize it as viable, considering that all three Persons of the Trinity are active throughout

adoption, and our sphragis [seal, certificate in Greek] and seal because he establishes the good faith of the promises, so he is well named our ‘earnest’ [arrha] because it is his work to ratify God’s covenant [pactum] on both sides and without him it would hang in suspense.” Zachman supports this point. Zachman, The Assurance of Faith, 187.

144. Inst., 3.18.2 [CO 2 (CR 30): 604].
146. See pages 44-45 in chapter 1 of this study. Sano also proposes a possible framework, but it is only applicable to the Institutes of 1559. Sano, “Adoption in Calvin’s Theology,” 106: “The doctrine of adoption [in the Institutes] has not only the soteriological element of what we believe in Christ, but also the ecclesiological element of how we live in God, while operating in the wide range of time governed by God’s grace from predestination through the consummation.” What he contends here is based on his word study throughout the Latin text of the Institutes of 1559. Ibid., 82n2.
Calvin’s treatment of the concept of adoption.\textsuperscript{147} We have seen that each Person in the Godhead plays a crucial role respectively in various spheres, ranging from election,\textsuperscript{148} union with Christ,\textsuperscript{149} ecclesiology,\textsuperscript{150} the life of God’s children (especially prayer),\textsuperscript{151} and the inheritance of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{152} Throughout the course of treating the concept of adoption in Calvin, the most significant roles each Person plays are as follows: 1) God the Father as the Adopter who elects people to the sonship of his children,\textsuperscript{153} guiding them through his providence towards the consummation, 2) Christ the Son as the source of adoption,\textsuperscript{154} with whom God’s children are united, participating in his Sonship, and 3) the Spirit of adoption as the Applier who unites believers with Christ,\textsuperscript{155} giving the filial consciousness to them and sustaining them on the pilgrimage to the consummation.

Second, having some overlaps with this Trinitarian structure, union with Christ as a second possible framework can be recognized as also viable, in terms of a framework into which the concept of adoption is woven by Calvin.\textsuperscript{156} This chapter points out that even in the protological context, God the Father elected his children in Christ, as we have seen.\textsuperscript{157} Whereas union with Christ, in a soteriological context, functions as the source of the grace of adoption,\textsuperscript{158} those adopted, in an eschatological context, are secured of the inheritance of the kingdom in Christ,\textsuperscript{159} with whom they are united. Thus, in considering a possible framework which Calvin uses regarding adoption, it is impossible to exclude the issue of union with Christ from the list of possible frameworks.

\textsuperscript{147} Westhead, “Adoption in the Thought of John Calvin,” 102: “For Calvin, adoption is very much a privilege for which all three Persons of the Trinity are responsible, albeit in diverse ways in accordance with their respective functions in the Godhead.”
\textsuperscript{148} See pages 62-64 in this chapter of this study.
\textsuperscript{149} See pages 70-71, 76 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{150} See pages 79-80 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} See pages 83-85 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} See pages 85-88 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{154} See pages 63-65, 67-71, 75-76, 79-81, 83-84, 86-87 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{155} See pages 71, 76, 79-80, 84-85, 87-88 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} See pages 63-64 in this chapter of this study.
\textsuperscript{158} See page 69 in ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} See pages 86-87 in ibid.

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Third, when seeing the broad feature of these two possible frameworks covering from election through the consummation, we are also led to realize that both of them are significantly similar to the redemptive-historical perspective of the Pauline *huiologia*. Comparing Calvin’s treatment of the concept of adoption with the biblical sketch based on the Pauline *huiologia*, it is possible to say that the theological framework Calvin uses is basically compatible with that of the Pauline adoption, except for the new birth recognized in his treatment of the church as the kingdom. Thus, it is concluded that all the three possible frameworks are recognized as viable in terms of the theological framework Calvin uses as a whole, treating the concept of adoption in his works.

C. Conclusion

Calvin’s use of the concept of adoption is significantly broad, ranging from election through the consummation. The core of his treatment of adoption revolves around the issue of union with Christ, the source of the grace of adoption. Revolving around it, the concept of adoption vitally functions as a soteriological link between the twofold grace, i.e. justification and sanctification, showing the clear direction for which the history of salvation is heading.

Calvin’s broad treatment of the concept is characterized by a Trinitarian framework centering on union with Christ. In order to treat the concept of adoption, Calvin forms a closely similar framework to the redemptive-historical perspective of the Pauline adoption, although they are not identical with each other.

In the following chapter, we will start exploring, by using Calvin’s use of adoption as the center, the confessional documents during the Reformation Period.

160. See pages 3-6 in chapter 1 of this study: Griffith, op. cit., 140-46, 140: “How does Calvin treat the theme of adoption in terms of redemptive history? The concept continues to permeate his thinking.” Also see Westhead, “Adoption in the Thought of John Calvin,” 107: “A second major aspect of Calvin’s thought... is what we might call the ‘covenantal’ or perhaps the ‘redemptive-historical’.”

161. See pages 80-81 in this chapter of this study.
CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, by using Trumper’s dissertation strategically we clarified Calvin’s treatment of the concept of adoption in his works as a whole. In what follows in chapters 3 through 5, this study investigates eighteen important confessional documents from the Reformation Period. These documents touch upon various aspects of divine adoption, and are broken down into three groups: first, confessions written prior to Calvin, second, confessions directly or indirectly related to Calvin, and third, confessions after Calvin. This classification of the confessions revolving around Calvin is because, as shown in the previous two chapters, he was the most important theologian, at least during the Reformation Period, working on divine adoption.

The confessions in the first group, which is treated in chapter 3, are as follows: 1) the Sixty-Seven Articles (Zwingli, 1523), 2) and 3) the Large and Small Catechisms (Luther, 1529), 4) the Augsburg Confession (Melanchthon, 1530), 5) the Tetrapolitan Confession (Bucer, 1530), 6) the Fidei ratio (Zwingli, 1530), and 7) the First Helvetic Confession (Bullinger, Leo Jud, etc, 1536). The confessions in the second group, treated in chapter 4, are as follows: 8) the First Edition of the Institutes (Calvin, 1536), 9) the Geneva Confession (Calvin, 1536), 10) the Geneva Catechism (Calvin, 1541/1542), 11) the Consensus Genevensin (Calvin, 1551), and 12) the Confessions of Faith of the English Congregation at Geneva (Whittingham, approved by Calvin, 1556). The confessions categorized into the third group, treated in chapter 5, are as follows: 13) the Scottish Confession (Knox, 1560), 14) the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), 15) the Second Helvetic Confession (Bullinger, 1566), 16) the Thirty-Nine Articles (Church of England, 1571).
17) the *Canons of the Synod of Dort* (1618-1619), and 18) the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1648).

These confessional documents are selected based on the following three criteria. The confessions in the first group are selected because of their foundational importance for the Reformation in Europe, as we shall see later in this chapter. Investigation of these will help us to see whether or not the concept of adoption is treated in confessional documents prior to Calvin. After exploring them, if no relevance to adoption is recognized in any of them, it is indicated in each case. The confessions in the second group are selected because of their close relation to Calvin. Exploring them in chapter 4 will help us to clarify how the concept of adoption is treated in confessions related to Calvin. The confessions in the third group are selected because each of them has some reference or relevance to adoption, although they vary in how they treat it. Focusing on them in chapter 5 will help us to see whether or not Calvin’s influence, in terms of adoption, is recognized in those confessions. It is also necessary, each time after exploring each of the three groups, to analyze how adoption is treated in each group as a whole.

As already mentioned in chapter 1, the main purpose of this investigation is to look for instances (actual locations) where adoption was mentioned in the confessions (the first sub-question in the historical task).¹ Those instances will help us to carry out the historical and systematic-theological tasks in the concluding chapter (chapter 6), in order to answer the main research question. Now, we focus on the first group of the confessions written prior to Calvin.

A. *The Sixty-Seven Articles (Zwingli, 1523)*

1. Background: The First Zurich Disputation

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¹ See page 51, 58 in chapter 1 of this study. Regarding the method for this investigation in chapters 3-5, see pages 53-59 in ibid.
The *Sixty-Seven Articles* were written by Ulrich (or Huldrych) Zwingli in January of 1523.\(^2\) The Articles mainly have two purposes. First, they were to be debated with representatives from Constance at the so-called “First Zurich Disputation” on January 19, 1523.\(^3\) The main reason for this disputation was to resolve the dissention which “had arisen among the preachers.” The second purpose, which was related to the main reason for the disputation, was to provide preachers with a norm for preaching the gospel. Zwingli begins the invitation to the disputation this way: “For a long time much dissention and disagreement have existed among those preaching the gospel to the common people.” Then, at the end, he concludes saying that “after this [the disputation] no one shall continue to preach from the pulpit whatever seems good to him without foundation in the divine Scriptures.”\(^4\)

2. Characteristics: For Clarifying the Gospel

When it comes to basic characteristics of the Articles, it is possible to say that there are three significant features. First, the Articles are to clarify “the Gospel as the supreme revelation of the will of God,” just as Article 2 states the heart of the Gospel as: “The sum of the *Gospel* is that our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has made known to us the will of his heavenly Father, and by his innocence has redeemed us from death and reconciled us unto God.”\(^5\) In order to clarify this point, the Articles, throughout them, put special emphasis on the following two

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4. Ulrich Gäsler, *Huldrych Zwingli: His Life and Work*, trans. Ruth C. L. Gritsch (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1987), 65. Gäsler writes, “One faction thought it had faithfully preached the gospel, while the other faction called their proclamation heresy and seduction; and this state of affairs continued even though the first faction had declared its willingness to answer these charges.”


6. *CCF*, 2:209 (italics mine); *RBS*, 1/1:86; Gäsler, *Zwingli*, 66. Throughout the following three chapters, the English translations of each confessional document are almost exclusively taken from *CCF*, vol. II. The original text of each confession with which the author checks is almost exclusively taken from the *RBS* series. Where the author uses other translations or original texts, this is indicated each time.
“slogans,” namely “by Scripture alone” [sola scriptura] and “Christ alone” [solus Christus].

Second, the Articles can be recognized as principles of preaching. At the very beginning of the preface, Zwingli states, “The following Sixty-Seven Articles and opinions, I, Huldreich Zwingli, confess that I preached [geprediget haben] in the venerable city of Zurich on the basis of the Scripture.”

Third, it is noted that the Articles show ethical emphasis throughout. After pointing out that “Zwingli’s preaching had an ethical and social-ethical bent,” Gäbler quotes from G. W. Locher, “Zwingli sees before him mendacious and self-seeking human beings and the disruption of their social life.”

3. Relevant Issues

In terms of the present study it is necessary to refer to two issues in this context. First, although there is no statement of adoption in the Articles, Articles 8 and 27 appear to be filial, or minimally familial. Articles 8 states, “All who live in the head are his members and children of God [kinder Gottes].” Also, Article 27 confesses with a familial tone, “All Christians are brothers of

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7. Gäbler, Zwingli, 66. Gäbler points out that “Zwingli summarized his proclamation in an apologetical and polemical manner with the two slogans ‘by Scripture alone’ (sola scriptura) and ‘Christ alone’ (solus Christus).” Regarding the first phrase, Zwingli writes in the preface, “Where I have not now correctly understood the said Scripture, I am ready to be instructed and corrected, but only from the aforesaid Scripture.” CCF, 2:209; RBS, 1/1:86. In regard to the second slogan, see, as one example, Article 3 stating that “Christ is the only way [der einig weg] to salvation for all who ever lived, do live, or ever will live.” CCF, 2:209; RBS, 1/1:86. Schaff also recognizes “the two slogans” in saying, “They [the Articles] are full of Christ, as the only Savior and Mediator, and clearly recognize the Word of God as the only rule of faith.” Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:364.

8. CCF, 2:209 (italics mine); RBS, 1/1:86. Gäbler also points out that “these were not disputation theses at all but rather summary statements of previous sermons.” Gäbler, Zwingli, 66.


10. Although Article 2 may be relevant to the Fatherhood of God, it is clear that its content is not significant since this article does not connect “the heavenly Father” to his sons or daughters.

11. CCF, 2:209 (209; the first italics mine); RBS, 86. See Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 10. Trumper slightly refers to these Articles 8 and 27. This is the only place where he refers to the Sixty-Seven Articles.
Christ [bruder Christi] and brothers one of another and no one on earth should be called father.\textsuperscript{12}

At Article 27, it would be possible to recognize a familial relationship between Christ and Christians as well as among Christians. These places are related to ecclesiology as we shall see later.

Second, although it may not be familial, the Articles often present a significantly relational tone by using the following two Pauline metaphors of “the head” and “his body.” Obviously these are also related to ecclesiology. The first article has these metaphors in Article 7 stating, “He [Christ] might be the eternal salvation and the head [haupt] of all believers, who are his body [lychnam].”\textsuperscript{13} In other words, this article refers to believers’ union with Christ, the second lens, by the two metaphors since it states that all the believers are united to Christ as their head.\textsuperscript{14} Then, it is important to pay attention to the following article having the same relational tone in a significant way through adding a filial remark to it. Article 8 says, “All who live in the head [haupt] are his members and children of God [kinder gottes].”\textsuperscript{15} In addition to these, the following articles do have the same tone by using both or, at least one, of these metaphors: Articles 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.\textsuperscript{16} Article 27 also has the relational tone by using, not “the head”

\textsuperscript{12} CCF, 2:211; RBS, 1/1:90. With regard to the part “no one on earth should be called father,” it is assumed that this statement was written against the Roman papacy. See Zwingli: Writings, 1:208. Zwingli comments on Article 27 saying, “The Antichrist at Rome may well have said through his fat priests that they are saved. I, for one, put more trust in the truth of the simplest Christian than in that of all those popes who followed another rule and not the rule of Christ. . . . Why did they not go by the word of Christ in Mt. 23:9? They could have readily seen that they should have said, ‘follow the one teaching of Christ, do not set up for yourselves fathers, follow no one but the one Christ?’”

\textsuperscript{13} CCF, 2:209 (209; italics mine); RBS, 1/1:86.

\textsuperscript{14} The scriptural references used for Article 7 are Eph. 1:22 and John 15:5. See CCF, 2:209. Also, in the exposition of the Sixty-Seven Articles published in July, 1523, Zwingli added to them Eph. 4:15, 5:23, Col. 1:18, and 1 Cor. 12:12 for supporting the relational notion existing between the head and the body. See Zwingli: Writings, 1:39-40. The added scriptural texts are all Pauline and relevant to the issue of union with Christ.

\textsuperscript{15} CCF, 2:209 (209; italics mine); RBS, 1/1:86. Here it is interesting to see that a metaphor “his members” which is based on union with Christ and a familial terminology “children of God” go hand in hand expressing a relational tone together.

\textsuperscript{16} CCF, 2:209-10; RBS, 1/1:86-87.
4. Theological Analysis

Although there is no article devoted to adoption, it is necessary to refer to three issues in relation to the present study. First, the Articles, in Article 8, clarify the issue of believers’ sonship based on union with Christ as it states that “all who live in the head are his members and children of God.”\(^{18}\) However, it is not possible to see if sonship is based on adoption or the new birth since the original texts of Article 8 does not give us any scriptural references for it. Yet, in Zwingli’s exposition on the Articles, he provides Article 8 with some scriptural references for sonship: John 1:12, Galatians 3, 4, and Romans 5:2.\(^{19}\) Whereas in the context of Galatians 3 and 4, adoption and its related issues are articulated, it is noted that Zwingli does not distinguish the Pauline adoption from the sonship based on Johannine text because of John 1:12.\(^{20}\)

In addition to Article 8, Article 27 has relevance to the believers’ sonship as well because it is assumed, in considering the believers’ brotherhood with Christ, that they participate in his Sonship. The phrase in the middle part of Article 27 also reinforces this point by saying that “no one on earth should be called father” because this phrase clearly has the connotation that believers are sharing with Christ the same Father in heaven.\(^{21}\) In other words, what Article 27 theologically clarifies, by referring to the brotherhood with Christ and the heavenly Father, is the fact that believers’ sonship has a vertical relationship (with the Father) as well as a horizontal

\(^{17}\) CCF, 2:211; RBS, 1/1:90.

\(^{18}\) CCF, 2:209 (209; italics mine); RBS, 1/1:86.

\(^{19}\) Zwingli: Writings, 1:41.

\(^{20}\) Gal. 3:26: “You are all children of God [huioi theou] through faith in Jesus Christ.” Gal. 4:5: “We might receive adoption [huiogenesis] to sonship.” John 1:12: “Yet to all who did receive him [Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God [tekna theou].” Rom. 5:2 has no direct relevance to the issue of sonship, rather it focuses on the context of justification.

\(^{21}\) Regrettably, there are no scriptural texts for Article 27 in the Sixty-Seven Articles themselves. The exposition for Article 27 provides Heb. 2:11, 2:17, and Ps. 21 [22:22] as scriptural references to support Article 27, but they have no relevance to believers’ sonship. Zwingli: Writings, 1:206.
relationship existing between Christ, their elder brother, and believers, his brothers.

Second, it is recognized that the relational notion in the Articles is communally related to ecclesiology. For example, Article 8 articulates the definition of the church saying that “all who live in the head are his members and children of God. And this is the church or fellowship of the saints [die kilch oder gemeinsame der heyligen] . . . ecclesia catholica.”22 In the exposition of Article 8, Zwingli gives the church two more detailed definitions: “First of all, [the church refers to] the total gathering of all those who are founded and build upon the one faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Secondly, the word ‘church’ is used for the special gatherings which we call parishes or ecclesiastical communities. These are . . . conveniently to hear the word of God together and to be taught.”23 Thus, Zwingli clarifies that the church is a community united to Christ the head, and is communally listening to and taught by his word.24 This communal understanding of the church is relevant to the present study because, in terms of the concept of adoption, the church is recognized as God’s family.

Third, the Articles’ treatment of sanctification is relevant to the present study. More precisely, the Sixty-Seven Articles, in Article 13, relate the communal notion to the spiritual renewal of believers. It states, “When we listen to the head, we acquire a pure and clear knowledge of the will of God, and we are drawn to him by his Spirit and are conformed to him [in inn verwandlet].”25 In addition to this, Article 22, concerning “good works,” says, “That Christ is our righteousness, from which we conclude that our works are good in so far as they are

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22. CCF, 2:209; RBS, 1/1:86.
24. In this sense, it is possible to recognize that ecclesiology is communally treated in each article where “the head,” “the body” or any other communal issues are mentioned, even though the church is not mentioned there, such as Articles 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 27. For example, the communal notion stated in Article 27 is related to ecclesiology, as already pointed out.
25. CCF, 2:210 (210; italics mine); RBS, 1/1:87. According to Zwingli’s definition of the church, “listening to the head” is what the church is supposed to do. Here, it is worth paying attention to the original German word “verwandlet” for “conformed” because it helps us to see that the conformity to the head can be more radical. The original word can even mean “transformed.” This would be the reason why Furcha translates the German word as “deified.” Zwingli: Writings, 1:57.
of Christ.”26 In taking these two expressions into account, it is possible to gather that in the Articles, the issue of sanctification is developed into the intimate relationship existing between Christ, the head, and believers, his body. This point can be significant since, in terms of the concept of adoption, union with Christ provides the space for the adopted sons to mature and grow in participating in Christ’s Sonship and receiving various blessings from the Father through the Son, as pointed out in the previous chapters. However, while referring to the believers’ participation in Christ’s Sonship, the Articles do not refer to the notion of receiving those blessings on the basis of union with Christ from the Father. At this point, it is possible to say that the Articles lack clarity in regard to the blessings believers receive on the basis of union with Christ in terms of sanctification.

5. Conclusion

The Sixty-Seven Articles, although they have no reference to adoption, have in them the familial and communal aspects of the gospel on the basis of union with Christ. The most obvious way to describe the union in the Articles is the use of the two Pauline metaphors, the head and the body. In the Articles, the familial and communal aspects are mainly, not exclusively, treated in relation to sanctification and ecclesiology.27

B. The Large & Small Catechisms (Luther, 1529)

1. Background: The Deplorable Conditions

26. CCF, 2:210; RBS, 1/1:88.
27. The Sixty-Seven Articles do not have any articles treating justification. Gäbler points out that “there was no mention of any doctrine of justification (sola fide, by faith alone), yet the concept of salvation through Christ alone ... was his basis for every single criticism of the church.” Gäbler, Zwingli, 66. It is likely that the only possible article having direct relevance to justification is Article 22 treating “good works.” It says, “That Christ is our righteousness [gerechtigkeit], from which we conclude that our works are good in so far as they are of Christ.” CCF, 2:210 (210; italics mine); RBS, 1/1:88.
It is well known that Luther’s visitations to Saxony in 1528 and 1529 were the most significant motivation which led him to start working on *The Small Catechism (SC)* directly and, probably in an indirect manner, *The Large Catechism (LC)*. Luther faced there the “deplorable” conditions, and lamented, “The ordinary person . . . knows absolutely nothing about the Christian faith, and unfortunately many pastors are completely unskilled and incompetent teachers. Yet supposedly they all bear the name Christian . . . even though they do not know the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments!” After Luther started working on “his own catechisms,” the *LC* appeared by the middle of April, 1529. In the case of the *SC*, the parts of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer appeared in January of the same year, and its remaining parts were completed sometime in the spring of that year.


When it comes to the characteristics of these catechisms, it is necessary to refer to the following points: their sources, their orientation, their purpose, and their strengths. First, regarding the sources of the catechisms, it is recognized that both the *LC* and *SC* originated from Luther’s preaching on the basic teachings of Christianity as Arand points out, “Closely linked by timing

28. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 346; *CCF*, 2:29; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:247. Only *CCF* refers, in addition to Saxony, to Luther’s visit to Meissen as another possible place which motivated him to work on his catechisms. However, in terms of the *LC*, it is not clear how much his visits influenced Luther. *The Book of Concord* simply explains that the “publication of the Large Catechism . . . arose out of the need for instruction of the simple, often poorly trained clergy in the basics of the faith,” and it is also recognized that the *LC* took its sources from Luther’s sermons “on the basic texts of Christian teaching.” Historically, the starting point of writing the *LC* can be traced back to 1527 when “the elector of Saxony authorized an official visitation of churches in his territories.” But, the team of official visitors, including Melanchthon, did not include Luther at this point. After Melanchthon wrote in Latin the *Visitation Articles*, Luther joined a team of theologians for translating the document into German, and publishing it in early 1528. Then, it is estimated that Luther began to write “his own catechisms in late 1528.” See “Editors’ Introduction to the Large Catechism” in *The Book of Concord*, 377.


31. Ibid., 347.
and structure, the Small and Large Catechisms also share common sources.” In taking into account Luther’s preaching as the sources of the LC and SC, it is reasonable that Arand recognizes both the LC and SC as preaching documents. He insists, “The catechisms, especially the Small but also the Large, are preaching documents – aimed at cultivating trust in God and the life that flows from it.”

Second, regarding the orientation of the catechisms, it is important to pay attention to their structure. The two catechisms obviously share the same structure, having the Ten Commandments first, then the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer in the same order. Since it had been a tradition, since the Roman Catholic Church had also done so, to put the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer into catechetical documents, the orientation having these three elements in the catechisms were at this point recognized as ecumenical. On the other hand, it was new step for catechetical documents to add the two sacraments and the “confession and absolution” part to the basic three elements as the LC and SC did. According to Arand, there was another new feature in the way Luther treated the three elements. Whereas it had been the traditional order among the medieval catechisms to put the Creed first, then the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments at the end, insists Arand, Luther, nevertheless, “experientially” changed

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32. Charles P. Arand, James A. Nestingen, and Robert Kolb, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 73. Arand adds to this saying, “In May, again in September, still again in November and December of 1528, and finally in March of 1529, Luther preached series of sermons on parts of the catechism.” However, in comparing the wordings of the catechisms with those of Luther’s sermons, it is likely that his preaching as the sources is more significant in relation to the LC than the SC. After referring to the existence of “listeners’ notes” on three series of catechetical sermons of Luther, the editors of the *Book of Concord* point out, “They demonstrate a remarkable coincidence between Luther’s preaching and the text of the Large Catechism and help explain its personal, homiletical style.” *The Book of Concord*, 377.


34. Ibid., 75.

the order and put the Ten Commandments first, the Creed second and the Lord’s Prayer third. Luther in his works explains the reason for this “new” order. Although we cannot be sure whether Luther’s order is truly new in terms of the confessional history of the church, it is worth paying attention to the rationale itself which Luther uses here. “First, a person must know what to do and what to leave undone. Second, when he realizes that he cannot measure up to what he should do or leave undone, he needs to know where to go to find the strength he requires. Third, he must know how to seek and obtain strength.”

Third, it is necessary to refer to the strengths of the catechisms before getting into their texts. As the sources of the catechisms already hinted, the practical feature of the LC and SC can be the most significant strength as they treat the three elements as well as the sacraments, and confession and absolution. In particular, we need to pay attention to the effective combination of the two catechisms in which Luther assigned each catechism a distinct role, for the LC to teach pastors and teachers, and for the SC to teach families and youth. In addition to this, the simple wordings used in the SC makes the practical feature of the catechisms more effective. Schaff highly values the plain style of the SC and its success saying, Luther expresses “the deepest things in the plainest language for the common people.”

In what follows, this chapter explores the LC and SC by using the three theological lenses to find relevant issues to adoption. Since the LC and SC share the sources, the structure,

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36. Arand, *The Lutheran Confessions*, 76. This point can be argued. See the following note 37.

37. Denis R. Janz, after analysing three typical confessional documents in the late Middle Ages, points out, “These representative forerunners of the sixteenth-century catechism already call into question the traditional view of Reformation catechisms as a dramatically new departure in the history of Christian indoctrination. A wider sampling than is possible here would reinforce this conclusion. The relationship between late medieval and Reformation catechisms is one of continuity and development.” The three documents Janz uses here are as follows: 1) *Opus tripartitum de praeceptis decalogi, de confessione et de arte moriendi*, by Jean de Gerson (1363-1429), placing the Creed first, and then the Decalogue, without the Lord’s Prayer, 2) the anonymous *Spiegel des Sünders*, printed in 1470, having the Decalogue without the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, and 3) the *Christenspiegel*, by Dietrich Kolde (1435-1515), placing the Creed first, then the Decalogue, and the Lord’s Prayer. See *OER*, s.v. “Catechisms.”


40. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:250: “It is strong food for man, and yet as simple as a child. It marks an epoch in the history of religious instruction.” Arand also points out, “He (Luther) translated the faith culturally into the parlance of everyday living among the German-speaking faithful.” Arand, *The Lutheran Confessions*, 75.
and the goal with each other, it is reasonable to treat them, not separately, but simultaneously.  

3. Relevant Issues

This section presents the four findings the present author recognizes by using the theological lenses as follows: the treatment of the Fatherhood, that of believers’ sonship, union with Christ, and the new birth. Although the fourth one has nothing to do with the theological lenses, it is important to refer to this here since the treatment of the new birth would help us to see whether believers’ sonship in the LC and SC is based on adoption or the new birth.

In investigating how the Fatherhood of God is treated in the catechisms, it is recognized that there are four important aspects in their treatment. First, it is recognized that the catechisms emphasize the Fatherhood in his role as Creator as they treat this concept. The LC, in the first article of the Creed, states, “Here we see how the Father has given to us himself with all creation and has abundantly provided for us in this life.” The second aspect is the Fatherhood related to God’s providence, which is closely tied with the creative Fatherhood in the catechisms. For example, the LC, at the conclusion of the Ten Commandments, confesses that “he [God] reveals himself as a kind father and offers us every grace and blessing.” Furthermore, it is noticeable that this providential Fatherhood is often related to God’s protection of his children.

In treating the first article of the Creed, the LC states that “we also confess that God the Father . . . daily guards and defends us against every evil and misfortune. . . . All he does out of pure love . . ."

41. “His Larger Catechism is only an expansion of the Shorter.” Schaff, op. cit., 1:222.
42. This chapter uses the English translations from The Book of Concord. The original texts of Lutheran confessions in this chapter are taken from BLK, 9th ed. of 1982.
43. The Book of Concord, 433, LC II. 24 [BLK (LC), 650. 27-30]. In addition to this, similar phrases are used in the LC as follows: BLK (LC), 651. 13f.; 660.34f.; 661.40f. Also, other places which are relevant to the creative Fatherhood are as follows: BLK (SC), 510.29-31; BLK (LC), 647.4, 647.24-26, 647.28f., 648.10, 648.42-649.2, 651.42-43, 654.1.
44. The Book of Concord, 429, LC I. 323 [BLK (LC), 642.29-47] (429; italics mine). Similar cases are as follows: BLK (SC), 507.19-21, 523.6-7, 523.25-28; BLK (LC), 606.51, 682.19-20.
45. These cases are recognized particularly in the catechisms as they treat the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer since the catechisms regards knowing God the Father as a knowledge which only his children can have, and prayer as a task of his children. Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Creed, ed. Charles P. Schaum, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 67, 86; Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Lord’s Prayer, ed. Charles P. Schaum, trans. Daniel Thies (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 20.
and goodness . . . as a kind father who cares for us.” Thus, it is possible to recognize God the Father as the Sustainer as well as the Protector, as the catechisms treat the Fatherhood in relation to his providence. As the third aspect, the catechisms relate, in passing, the Fatherhood of God to his revelation in concluding the explanation of the Creed, “In all three articles God himself has revealed and opened to us the most profound depths of his fatherly heart and his pure, unutterable love.” Finally, as the fourth aspect, the Fatherhood is related to Christian life in various ways. For example, the catechisms depict God the Father forgiving our sins by grace. The SC, treating the fifth petition of the Lord’s Prayer, states, “Our heavenly Father would not regard our sins nor deny these petitions on their account, for we are worthy of nothing for which we ask, nor have we earned it.” In addition to this, God the Father is recognized as a Father replying to the prayer of his children. The LC, in the introduction part of the Lord’s Prayer, remarks that “whenever a good Christian prays, ‘Dear Father, your will be done,’ God replies from above, ‘Yes, dear child, it shall be done indeed, in spite of the devil and all the world.’”

Next, it is possible to see some significant treatments of believers’ sonship in the catechisms as they refer to the Lord’s Prayer or other issues related to prayer. In particular, it is noticeable that the catechisms emphasize prayer as one of the important tasks of God’s children as they treat the first petition in the Lord’s Prayer. For example, the LC, at the beginning of the first petition, says, “It is a matter of grave necessity about which we should be most concerned . . . that, as good children [die frommen Kinder], we pray that his name . . . may also be holy and be

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46. The Book of Concord, 433, LC II. 17-18 [BLK (LC), 648.42-50]. Also see other similar cases: BLK (SC), 511.3-5, 515.3-5, 521.25-28, 522.10-13; BLK (LC), 650.15-17, 688.25-27.

47. The Book of Concord, 439, LC II. 64 [BLK (LC), 660.28-32].

48. The Book of Concord, 358, SC III. 16 [BLK (SC), 514.17-22]. Also, see BLK (LC), 683.15-17.

49. The Book of Concord, 444, LC III. 32 [BLK (LC), 669.42-47]. The Fatherhood of God is often mentioned as the catechisms treat the issue of prayer in relation to Christian life. See BLK (SC), 512.21-24, 515.2-4, 515.13-15; BLK (LC), 670.16; 680.7-10, 678.7f.

50. Obviously, believers’ sonship tends to be closely related to the Fatherhood of God. In this section, however, the author of this work will refer to believers’ sonship when it is mentioned in the catechisms, even though they mention the Fatherhood of God in the same place.

51. See BLK (SC), 512.20; BLK (LC), 666.26. Although in the latter case any familial vocabularies, such as “the Father” or “children,” are not used, it is clear in its context that God requires believers to pray as a task which his children must do. Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Lord’s Prayer, 7-8.
kept holy on earth.”

Thus, believers’ sonship is mainly, not exclusively, treated in the catechisms as an issue of prayer in the sphere of Christian life.

Third, it is necessary to pay attention to the treatment of union with Christ in the catechisms of Luther. It is noted that union with Christ is treated in some places although those places are not as many as those of the Fatherhood and believers’ sonship. For example, in treating the second article of the Creed, the SC refers to union with Christ in relation to his saving work, “He (Christ) has done all this in order that I may belong to him [ich sein eigen sei].” In addition to this, union with Christ is mentioned in relation to the Holy Spirit’s ministry, ecclesiology, and the sacraments as well.

Finally, it is possible to see some instances of the concept of the new birth. For example, the SC, in relation to the difference between the normal use of water and baptism, refers to it, “With the Word of God it is a baptism, that is, a grace filled water of life and a ‘bath of the new birth in the Holy Spirit.’” Also, in treating “the Sacrament of the Altar,” the LC, after calling the sacrament “food of the soul,” refers to the new birth, “For in the first instance, we are born anew through baptism.” On the other hand, whereas the new birth is mentioned in some places, there is no reference to adoption. In terms of adoption, we can find a hint of it in the catechisms, although it seems not to be significant. In treating the second article of the Creed, the LC refers to Christ’s saving work, “He (Christ) has . . . restored us to the Father’s favor and grace

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52. The Book of Concord, 445, LC III. 38 [BLK (LC), 671.1-3]. See other cases related to prayer: BLK (SC), 512.20, 512.33-513.2; BLK (LC), 667.36-669.12, 669.42-47, 671.14-19.
53. BLK (SC), 513.11-14; BLK (LC), 671.44-50.
54. The Book of Concord, 355, SC II. 4 [BLK (SC), 511.33-37].
55. Regarding the Holy Spirit’s ministry, see The Book of Concord, 355, SC II. 6. “The Holy Spirit . . . makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common true faith.” [BLK (SC), 512.7-8]; also see BLK (LC), 654.39-40. Ecclesiology, see The Book of Concord, 434, LC II. 37. “He [the Holy Spirit] first leads us into his holy community, placing us in the church’s lap, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ,” [BLK (LC), 654.14-17]. The sacraments, see The Book of Concord, 445, LC III. 37. “God’s name was given to us when we became Christians and were baptized, and so we are called children of God and have the sacraments, through which he incorporates us into himself with the result that everything that is God’s must serve for our use,” [BLK (LC), 670.41-43]. In seeing the cases mentioned above, it is clear that the issue of the Spirit, that of ecclesiology, and that of the sacraments are closely connected with one another as the catechisms treat union with Christ.
56. The Book of Concord, 359, SC IV. 9-10 [BLK (SC), 516.14-21].
57. The Book of Concord, 469, LC V. 23 [BLK (LC), 712.11-14]. Also see other instances BLK (SC), 517.3-7; BLK (LC), 655.2-8.
[wiederbracht in des Vaters Huld und Gnade]." If this “restoration” includes the restoration of the filial relationship with the Father which Adam originally enjoyed in the Garden, this could be a reference to adoption because “restoration” is conceptually different from the “new” birth. Yet, we cannot be entirely sure.

4. Theological Analysis

Whereas the LC and SC keep the relational tone throughout the texts as mentioned above, there is no reference to the concept of adoption in them. However, it is recognizable that there are some filial relationships which deserve our attention. It is possible to recognize them from two perspectives—from that of God the Father and from his children.

However, before getting into the issue of the filial relationship, it is necessary to keep in mind that there is tension between God’s sovereignty and his Fatherhood as Luther treats the doctrine of God. Peters, in commenting on Luther’s catechetical sermon treating faith in relation to the Creator, says, “What stands in the center is not the word Creator, but rather the tension between the exalted ruler over everything and the goodly Father.” However, although it is possible to see the tension between these two, it is likely, as a whole, that Luther is inclined to emphasize God’s sovereignty or his Creatorship. Peters refers to the catechetical sermon preached by Luther on December 10, 1528, because this sermon “goes into detail concerning the main concepts and typical points that are made in the catechisms” in relation to the first article of the Creed. Peters insists, “The reformer is ‘insistent’ on highlighting the word ‘Creator’ and relates it to the one who is confessing the faith; within the framework of the first article, each one is to understand himself to be a ‘creature of God.’ The other two words, ‘Father’ and ‘almighty,’ fade into the background.” Thus, it is necessary to keep this point in mind as we consider how the catechisms treat the Fatherhood of God, lest their treatment of it be overestimated.

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58. The Book of Concord, 435, LC II. 30 (30; italics in English mine) [BLK (LC), 652. 6-9].
59. Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Creed, 105.
60. Ibid., 60. Here Peters refers to Luther’s sermon, “Eine kurze Form, 1520,” WA 7:216.18-29.
61. Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Creed, 61. Here Peters refers to the catechetical sermon in WA 30.1:87.4-89.5.
a. The Filial Relationship

First, the catechisms treat the filial relationship between God the Father and his children from the Father’s position. As already mentioned in the previous section, the issue of the Fatherhood of God is treated in the following four aspects: the Fatherhood in relation to 1) God’s creation, 2) his providence, 3) his revelation, and 4) Christian life of his children. Among these four, 2) and 4) seem to be the most relevant to the filial relationship in the catechisms. More precisely, in relation to God’s providence, it is noticeable that the catechisms often recognize the Father as the Sustainer providing his children with what they need or the Protector protecting them from evil or danger. 62 On the other hand, in relation to Christian life, the catechisms shed light on God’s Fatherhood by emphasizing him as the Forgiver of his children. 63 All these points are closely tied with prayer as an important task of God’s children as we shall see in what follows.

Next, when paying attention to the treatment of the filial relationship from the position of God’s children, it is noticeable that God the Father is the One to whom his children are supposed to pray. In considering this point, it is necessary to keep in mind that the catechisms recognize prayer as an important task of God’s children in their Christian life. At the very beginning of the exposition of the Lord’s Prayer, the SC clearly teaches us that God the Father expects us to pray to him by calling him “Our Father.” It says, “With these words God wants to entice us, so that we come to believe he is truly our Father and we are truly his children, in order that we may ask him boldly and with complete confidence, just as loving children ask their loving father.”

62. BLK (SC), 510.40; BLK (LC), 648.24f., 648.42-649.2, 650.27-30, 651.10-15, 661.41; Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Creed, 67-69. Peters, in commenting on the first article of the Creed, says “God acts as our gracious father, and gifts us with himself, when he provides the gift of the creation.” Also, see ibid., 79.
63. BLK (SC), 514.17-22; BLK (LC), 683.14-17.
64. The Book of Concord, 356, SC III.2 [BLK (SC), 514.20-24]. It is interesting that the LC encourages believers to pray in a harder way. The LC, in the introduction to the Lord’s Prayer, says, “We must understand that . . . he (God) will be angry and punish us if we do not pray.” The Book of Concord, 443, LC III. 18 [BLK (LC), 666.26-29]. Peters comments on this, “The Large and the Small Catechisms accentuate things differently.” Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Lord’s Prayer, 7-8. In addition, Arand, from a more fundamental perspective, refers to the reason why God’s children have some obligations in relation to God. “In the Creed this ‘ought’ grows out of a double root. The demands and conditions of creatureliness obligate service to the Creator, other creatures, and the creation – an inescapable requirement of humanity itself. At the same time God the Father’s gifts given in and through
b. “Doctrine and Life”

In order to understand prayer as a task of God’s children in the catechisms, it is significant to pay attention to the theological pattern of “Doctrine and Life” in Luther’s theology because he clearly uses this pattern to motivate believers to be focusing on prayer. There are two typical places in the catechisms where we can recognize the pattern by which Luther encourages God’s children to call him the Father in prayers. The SC answers the question “how does this (‘May your name be hallowed’) come about?” by stating, “Whenever the Word of God is taught [gelehret] clearly and purely and we, as God’s children, also live [leben] holy lives according to it.” Then, it adds to this the following remark for leading believers to pray, “To this end help us, dear Father in heaven!” Another place is in the LC where it teaches how God’s name becomes holy among his children. “The plainest answer that can be given is: when both our teaching and life are godly and Christian. Because in this prayer we call God our Father, it is our duty in every way to behave as good children so that he may receive from us not shame but honor and praise.” In exploring these remarks, it is clear that the catechisms, through the pattern of “Doctrine and Life,” encourage believers to respond to “Doctrine,” which is actually summarized in the catechisms, by living out the “holy lives” as God’s children. In order to live out the “holy lives,” prayer must play a crucial role to help God’s children to rely on him, as the SC encourages us to pray to him saying, “To this end help us, dear Father in heaven!”

such relationships . . . bring with them obligations all around.” Arand, The Lutheran Confessions, 80.

65. In treating the first petition of the Lord’s Prayer, Peters uses the phrase “Doctrine and Life [Lehre und Leben],” “The trio, Name, Word, and Sacrament, appears to be drowned out especially in the Small Catechism by the duo, Doctrine and Life.” Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Lord’s Prayer, 64. It is clear that he borrows this phrase from BLK (LC), 671.13, as we shall see in what follows. Note The Book of Concord does not use “doctrine” but rather “teaching” for Lehre.

66. The Book of Concord, 356, SC III. 5 [BLK (SC), 512.32-34].

67. The Book of Concord, 445 (445; italics mine) LC III. 39 [BLK (LC), 671.13]. Also see as another example BLK (LC), 673.12f.

68. Peters, in relation to BLK(LC), 667.36-669.12, says, “In proper prayer we recognize our basic need and carry this need before the countenance of the heavenly Father.” Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Lord’s Prayer, 7. He also refers to the natural relationship existing between God’s revelation and prayer of his children. “Since in that world-encompassing work of Creation and Redemption . . . God has revealed himself to us through the Son in the Spirit as the ‘true and beloved Father’ and given himself to us, we may therefore approach in prayer before his countenance ‘confidently and with complete assurance.’” Ibid., 19; BLK(SC), 512.21-24. Also, in the case of BLK (SC), 578.26-28,
Here, it is appropriate, in order to understand the pattern more clearly, to see how the issue of God’s name is treated and developed throughout the LC. This issue deserves our attention and would help us to recognize how significant the issue of the filial relationship is in the catechisms, especially in the LC. In the part of the Ten Commandments, the LC refers to the general way for us as his creatures, to use God’s name, but without specifying him as Father. Then, the LC, in the part of the Creed, starts referring to the Fatherhood of God with his name “the Father” in terms of soteriology as it treats the second article focusing on the Son’s ministry. Finally, in the part of the Lord’s Prayer, the LC clarifies the filial relationship between God and believers. “God’s name was given to us when we became Christians and were baptized, and so we are called children of God and have the sacraments, through which he incorporates us into himself with the result that everything that is God’s must serve for our use.” In other words, it is possible to say that the treatment of God’s name in the LC, after being treated in the course of the Ten Commandments and the Creed, reaches its climax in the Lord’s Prayer, where the LC teaches us to call God “our Father in heaven.” Thus, it is noticeable that the issue of God’s name, which is treated throughout the LC with its development, is revolving around the filial relationship. In other words, the salvation history in the catechisms can be defined as the history through which God recovered the proper way for believers to call on his name. Peters states, “As we as Christians call upon him in the Lord’s Prayer as our Father and confess ourselves as his own in the Creed, we stand up for his honor in doctrine and life, in word and deed among any familial vocabularies are not used there. But, it is clear in relation to the context that believers are calling upon God’s name as his children. Peters, *Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Creed*, 395.


70. *BLK* (LC), 652.6-9. “He (Christ) has . . . restored us to the Father’s favor and grace.” *The Book of Concord*, 434, LC II. 30.


72. However, it is worth keeping in mind what Peters points out. “In his early interpretations, the reformer [Luther] had expressed clearly that the ‘Abba-cry lies outside all human possibilities and is possible only through the God given relationship through the Son.’ Only where the ‘Spirit of Christ in the heart’ has dominion, are we able to reach up into heaven with the address ‘dear Father’ on our lips.” Then, he adds to this, “In the catechisms, Luther unfortunately let these relationships recede, just as he already toned down the Trinitarian relation in the Creed.” Peters, *Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Lord’s Prayer*, 20. Given this, the remarks of calling God the Father may be “toned down” in the catechisms.
mankind."  

Thus, in exploring how the filial relationship is treated throughout the catechisms, it is possible again to recognize prayer as a crucial issue for God’s children, as the catechisms reach their climax, in terms of prayer, at the treatment of the Lord’s Prayer where they lead God’s children to pray to “our Father” in the Son. Because of this crucial role, now it is appropriate to ask this final question, “why is prayer so important for God’s children?” Throughout the catechisms, two factors seemingly compel his children to pray. First, God’s providence or grace they experienced in the past leads them to pray. In summarizing the things “done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy” by using the one word “all,” the SC states, “For all of this [des alles] I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him.” Needless to say, in order to “thank” and “praise” him, prayer is one of the most crucial ways for God’s children. Second, as already pointed out, it is necessary for the children to pray to God to ask what they need to live out their lives as his children. The LC, in the introduction to the Lord’s Prayer, points out the importance of prayer, “In seven successive articles or petitions are comprehended all the needs that continually beset us, each one so great that it should impel us to keep praying for it all our lives.”

5. Conclusion.

In short, as analyzed above, the catechisms teach, in a significant way, the filial recognition existing between God and his children. In particular, it is noticeable that the catechisms, as they

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73. Ibid., 63 (63; italics mine). Here he refers to BLK(LC), 671.14-19.
74. Peters quotes from Jeremias, “In the Lord’s Prayer Jesus empowers his disciples to repeat ‘Abba’ after him. He gives them a portion in his position as Son and empowers them as his disciples to converse with their heavenly Father.” Joachim Jeremias, Abba: Studium zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte (Göttingen, DE: 1966), 163, quoted in Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Lord’s Prayer, 20.
75. The Book of Concord, 355, SC II. 2 [BLK (SC), 511.6-8]. Also see BLK (LC), 649.7-14; Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Creed, 67-69, 86.
76. The Book of Concord, 445, LC III. 34 [BLK (LC), 670.7-10]. Also see BLK (SC), 515.2-4; BLK (LC), 678.7f., 667.36-669.12, 680.7-10; Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Lord’s Prayer, 7, 9-10.
treat the Lord’s Prayer, value calling God the Father as seen in the development of the treatment of God’s names throughout the catechisms. Yet, it is likely that the sonship of God’s children in the catechisms is not based on the concept of adoption, but on the new birth because the catechisms have, as already mentioned, no reference to adoption, but a few to the new birth.

When it comes to the new birth model, it is necessary to clarify how to understand theologically the relationship between the adoption model and the new birth model since it is an unresolved issue, as Trumper insists. The present study will analyze in chapter 6 how this relationship is understood in confessional documents during the Reformation Period, after exploring all eighteen confessions in chapters 3-5.

Regarding the catechisms’ treatment of the Fatherhood of God, they tend, as we have seen, to emphasize the creative Fatherhood rather than the redemptive Fatherhood. Also, there is the tension between God’s sovereignty and his Fatherhood as Luther treats the doctrine of God although it is likely that he is inclined to emphasize the sovereignty or God’s Creatorship rather than God’s Fatherhood.

In addition to this, that the filial relationship revolves around prayer or Christian life would mean, in the catechisms of Luther, the instances of treating the filial relationship are mainly, if not exclusively, placed in the context of sanctification or the Christian life. Of course, the filial status is based on justification as it is generally recognized that Luther’s soteriology is justification-oriented. However, since Luther significantly values calling God the Father in treating the filial relationship in the catechisms, it is understandable that the instances of treating believers’ sonship are mainly in prayer or the Christian life, namely the sphere of sanctification.

In this sense, it is possible to say again that Luther’s treatment of the filial relationship is different.

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78. See page 105 in this chapter of this study.
79. Zachman, The Assurance of Faith, 9-10, 14. “Although Luther continually insisted upon the necessity of sanctification and of the testimony of the good conscience, within the framework of theologia crucis he could not help, but consistently subordinate the grace of sanctification to that of justification.”
from that of adoption which is mainly recognized as a soteriological issue closely tied with justification.

C. The Tetrapolitan Confession (Bucer and Capito, 1530)

1. Background: Where the Four German Cities Stand

The Tetrapolitan Confession is a confession submitted by the four cities (Strasbourg, Memmingen, Constance, and Lindau) in 1530 to the Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg, to which the Augsburg Confession written by Melanchthon and the Fidei Ratio written by Zwingli were also submitted. For the emperor who sent out the invitation to the Diet, the original intention of the Diet was political as well as religious. When facing the challenges of the Turks invading southeastern Europe, the emperor needed support from the German princes, but “religious differences in Germany concerned the emperor, not only because he accepted the Catholic Church as the one true faith, but also because these differences had shattered political unity.”

When receiving the invitation from the emperor on February 24, 1530, Strasbourg first tried to join the Lutherans for submitting a document to declare their own faith, but they were rejected by the Lutherans because the Strasbourg theologians were recognized as allies with “seditious” Swiss cities represented by Zwingli which “did not accept the political predominance of the territorial princes in the empire.” This compelled the Strasbourg delegates to ask Bucer

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81. After exploring the Augsburg Confession (Melanchthon, 1530) as well as the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (Melanchthon, 1530-31), it is recognized that it does not have relevance to the concept of adoption as well as its related issues. Because of this, this chapter skips the Augsburg Confession, and treats the next one, the Tetrapolitan Confession. When treating the original texts of the Tetrapolitan Confession, this chapter uses RBS for the German texts and Niemeyer for the Latin texts.

82. CCF, 2:49.

and Capito to write a confession in haste. Then, the *Tetrapolitan* Confession, after being signed by the four southern German cities, was submitted to the Diet.\(^{84}\)

The purpose of presenting the *Tetrapolitan Confession* at the Diet was primarily to show where the four German cities stand in terms of their faith. Besides that, the Confession had a message in relation to the other two parties which submitted their own confessions at the Diet. Here, what Eells writes deserves our attention. “The main purpose was to show the Lutherans and the Zwinglians what an ideal system of belief, especially upon the Supper, was practiced at Strasbourg, and to offer that as a platform upon which they could unite.”\(^{85}\) Historically, this makes sense in paying attention to what Bucer actually did, prior to and after the Diet, in order to unite those two parties.\(^{86}\) As we shall see in detail next, it was natural that this connotation theologically affected some characteristics of the *Tetrapolitan Confession*.

2. Characteristics: The Political Character for Unity

It is necessary to refer to the following three points as characteristics of the Confession: its political character, the confession as a theological compromise, and differences with the *Augsburg Confession*. First, whereas the Confession can be historically “the first attempt at an evangelical union symbol,” it is also said that the Confession has a political character trying to unite the Lutherans and the Zwinglians.\(^{87}\) In the Confession, the clearest place showing this character is found in Chapter 18 “Of the Eucharist.”\(^{88}\) Although early drafts by Capito deny a real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, “the final version reflects Bucer’s attempt to find a


\(^{86}\) Ibid., 103-8; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:527; Greschat, op. cit., 95-97.


\(^{88}\) *CCF*, 2:237; *RBS*, 1/1:482. “He [Christ] designs to give his true body and true blood to be *truly* eaten and drunk [seinen waren leib und wares blut warlich zuessen und trincken] for the food and drink of souls, for their nourishment unto life eternal.” (482; Italics of “truly” are mine.)
middle way between Luther and Zwingli.”

Thus, this revision shows “the political character of the Confession as a whole.” We cannot deny the possibility that because of this political nature, the *Tetrapolitan Confession* had been actually functioning as a “symbol of a generic Protestantism” within the empire until Strasbourg stopped using it in 1598.

Second, the political circumstance of the revision by Bucer made the Confession theologically compromise with “dubious language” especially in relation to the Lord’s Supper. In this regard, Eells writes, “Practically no explanation of the manner of Christ’s presence was given outside of the ambiguous word ‘truly.’ It was an effort to state what no Protestant would condemn. In this it was largely successful. But it failed to state adequately what anybody believed.” Because of this ambiguous language, according to Eells, even Bucer “was regretfully forced to admit that his own production was weak in the spine.”

Third, while it is known that when it was composed, the *Tetrapolitan Confession* basically followed the *Augsburg Confession*, there are also some differences between them. From the perspective of the *Tetrapolitan Confession*, there are three important points which depart from the *Augsburg Confession*. The first difference is that the *Tetrapolitan Confession* has

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89. *CCF*, 2:218.
90. *OER*, s.v. “Tetrapolitan Confession.” Also see *CCF*, 2:218. “The text emphasizes the spiritual nature of any nourishment from the sacrament, as well as its function as a remembrance. In this way the authors tried to satisfy the spiritual or symbolic views of the four subscribing cities without alienating the politically powerful Lutheran princes and city governments.”
91. *OER*, s.v. “Tetrapolitan Confession.” In 1598, the Synod of Strasbourg replaced the confession with the Lutheran *Formula of Concord*, *CCF*, 2:218.
92. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:528. This dubious language was “intended to comprehend in substance the Lutheran and the Zwinglian theories.”
94. Ibid., 100. The *Tetrapolitan Confession* may be theologically weak as a whole. In commenting on the design and characteristics of the *Tetrapolitan Confession*, Neuser points out, “Deutlich ist auf Polemik verzichtet; wichtige Unterscheidungslehren werden – wie in der Confessio Augustana – verschwiegen.” Wilhelm H. Neuser, “Confessio Tetrapolitana von 1530: Einleitung,” in *RBS*, 1/1:450. However, as Neuser hints, the weak features of the confession as a whole may not be because of its political character in relation to the other Protestant parties, but because of the way the confession takes its entire design from the *Augsburg Confession*.
95. Greschat, *Martin Bucer*, 95. “The twenty-three articles [the *Tetrapolitan Confession*] . . . essentially follow the pattern of Melanchthon’s confession without reproducing its dual structure of statements of doctrine on the one hand and defense of innovations on the other.”

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stronger emphasis on the authority of the Scripture as the basis for preaching. Second, in the *Tetrapolitan Confession* the doctrine of justification is emphasized in a clearer way focusing on the importance of a “living faith” as a fruit the justified believers bring about. The third difference is the rejection of using images in worship.

3. Relevant Issues

In the *Tetrapolitan Confession*, there are two relevant issues to the present study: the filial notion in the context of justification and sanctification, and the relational tone in ecclesiology and the sacraments. In exploring these relevant issues described in the text of the Confession, it is striking that the Confession frequently quotes the scriptural passages in its text to clarify issues in each chapter. In taking one of the characteristics mentioned above into account, it is possible to say that this also reflects the Confession’s emphasis on the authority of the Scripture.

a. The Filial Notion in Justification

First, it is possible to see the Confession develop with a relational tone the filial notion of believers existing in the inseparable relationship between justification and sanctification. At the beginning of Chapter 3 “Of Justification and Faith,” the Confession points to union with Christ,


97. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:528. See Chapters 3 and 4. We will return to this issue later.

98. Ibid; *CCF*, 2:218. See Chapter 22.

99. Although in passing, in addition to these two, Chapter 1 treating the authority of the Scriptures also has relevance to the present study. “For it seemed to us not improper to resort in such a crisis whither of old and always not only the most holy fathers, bishops, and princes, but also the children of God [gemeine gottes kinder] everywhere, have always resorted— that is, to the authority of the Holy Scriptures.” *CCF*, 2:221; *RBS*, 1/1:460; no reference at Niemeyer. Here the familial and communal notion is recognized in relation to one of the characteristics of the confession, namely the authority of the Scriptures.

100. Because of this, the Confession may be recognized as a thread connecting various scriptural passages with one another throughout its text.
the basis of redemption on which the Confession develops the filial notion. According to the Confession, faith and the Spirit are two links which relate believers with Christ.

In relation to “faith,” the Confession, after recognizing faith as the first link relating believers with Christ, immediately refers to “power to become the sons of God” by referring to John 1:12-13. This is to clarify the contents of the blessings which believers receive through union with Christ. It states, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God [kinder Gottes zu werden / eis potestatem filios Dei fieri], even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.” Then, the Confession, through developing this filial notion, moves to the knowledge of knowing God as the Father. “No man knoweth [kennet / novit] the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man he Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” It is clarified here that the Son has the crucial role for believers to recognize God as the Father. Immediately after this, the Confession points out that the Father also has the important role of helping believers to come to the Son. “No man can come unto me, unless my Father draw [ziehe / traxerit] him.” Thus, the filial notion of believers is treated in the intimate relationship between the Father and the Son, while their sonship seems to be based on the new birth at this point.

101. CCF, 2:222; RBS, 1/1:462; Niemeyer, 746. “In regard to those things which were commonly taught concerning the manner in which we become partakers [teilhaftig / participes] of the redemption made by Christ, and concerning duties, our preachers differ somewhat from the lately received dogmas.”

102. CCF, 2:222; RBS, 1/1:462; Niemeyer, 746. “First . . . our preachers have taught that this whole justification is to be ascribed to the good pleasure of God and the merit of Christ, and to be received by faith alone [werde von aus durch den glauben entpfangen / solaque fide percipi docuerunt].” CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:463; Niemeyer, 747. “Secondly, since ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,’ . . . he causes a beam of his light to arise at the same time in the darkness of our hearts, so that now we may believe his gospel preached, being persuaded of the truth thereof by his Spirit from above [jetz durch Gottes geist der warheyt satt beredt / sperno scilicet spiritu de eius veritate persuasi].”

103. CCF, 2:222; RBS, 1/1:462; Niemeyer, 746. Because of John 1, the sonship here is based on the Johannine text, although we cannot be sure whether or not the authors took this into account. In chapter 6, we return to the issue of using Johannine text for the filial notion.

104. CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:462; Niemeyer, 746. This is referring to Matt. 11:27.

105. CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:462; Niemeyer, 746. This is referring to John 6:44.

106. In the following context, the Confession refers to the new birth again. CCF, 2:222; RBS.
On the other hand, in relation to the Spirit, the second link relating believers with Christ, the Confession at the end of Chapter 3 refers to the “filial confidence” the Spirit brings about. “Now we . . . relying upon the testimony of this Spirit, may call upon him with filial confidence [kindlichen vertrauen / filiali fiducia] and say, ‘Abba, Father.’”107 In short, Chapter 3, after starting to treat the filial notion from the “power to become the sons of God” initially, culminates at the end with the “filial confidence” given by the Spirit.

b. The Filial Notion in Sanctification

It is significant that Chapter 4 “Of Good Works, Proceeding out of Faith through Love,” through interchangeably using “the image of the Son” or the image of God and the sonship of believers, further develops the filial notion introduced in the previous chapter.108 At the beginning of Chapter 4, the Confession refers to the image of the Son in order to clarify the direction to which God’s children are growing. “‘For whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son [dem bild seins sons gleichförmig zu werden / conformes fieri imaginii filij sui] . . . for we are his workmanship, created unto good works.’”109 Here “the image of the Son” is recognized as a basis for believers to do “good works.”110

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107. *CCF*, 2:223; *RBS*, 1/1:463; Niemeyer, 747. Here *RBS*, as the scriptural basis for this statement, refers to Rom. 8 [16], in which *huiothesia* is used in its immediate context. “The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” (Rom. 8:15b-16, italics mine).

108. The title of Chapter 4 in German is different from its Latin title. In *Niemeyer* it is “De BONIS OPERIBUS, EX FIDE PER DIRECTIONEM PROVENIENTIBUS,” while in *RBS* it is “Was glauben die rechtvertigung werde zugeben.” Incidentally, “the image of God” has some relevance to the adopted sonship in Calvin. Page 64n22 in chapter 2 of this study.

109. *CCF*, 2:223; *RBS*, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747. This statement is referring to Rom. 8:29 and Eph. 2:10.

110. As we shall see later, the Confession also uses the sonship of believers as another basis for good works. This is why the present study points out that the Confession interchangeably uses “the image
In the middle part of Chapter 4, it is stated that faith is necessary for believers not only to be justified, but also to grow as God’s children bearing a fruit. “We cannot be otherwise justified . . . than by being endued chiefly with faith, whereby . . . being persuaded that God has adopted us as his children [Gott zu kinder hat angenommen / Deum nos in filios adoptasse], and that he will ever bestow his paternal kindness upon us, we wholly depend upon his pleasure.” Then, the Confession, by referring to Augustine, calls this faith “evangelical” which is “efficacious through love.” In other words, this “faith” requires the adopted children, after being justified, to make their own faith “efficacious through love.” This is clearly an issue related to sanctification.

Here we need to pay attention to the future tense in the statement, “He will ever bestow his paternal kindness upon us [väterliche gute ewiglich beweisen will / paternamque benevolentiam in sempiternum nobis exhibiturum esse].” What this future tense means here is that God’s paternal kindness is necessary for God’s children to continue to work for making their faith “efficacious through love” because “by this only are we regenerated and the image of God is restored in us.” In short, when carefully exploring this continual context, it is clear that faith has not only the role for believers to be justified, but also the ongoing role to help the adopted children who know the “paternal kindness” to make their faith “efficacious through love.” In going through this process, “the image of God is restored” in them.

Furthermore, Chapter 4, in the following context, shows the sonship of God’s children.

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111. CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747.
112. CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747. “This faith St. Augustine in his book De fide et operibus calls ‘evangelical [evangelischen glauben / evangelicam]’ – to wit, that which is efficacious through love [der dann durch die libe thetig ist / efficacem videlicet per dilectionem].”
113. CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747.
114. CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747. “Wir new geboren werden, und in uns die bultnuß Gottes wiederbracht wirt.” Also see Niemeyer; “regeneramur, et restitutur in nobis imago Dei.” According to the context, it is clear that Chapter 4 treats “regeneration” and “restoration of the image of God” as issues related to the ongoing growing process of God’s children, namely sanctification.
as another basis for doing good works, just as the image of God. “We . . . show ourselves as gods – that is, true children of God [ware kinder gottes / germanos Dei filios] – by love striving for their advantage so far as we are able. For ‘he that loveth his brother abideth in the light’ and ‘is born of God [ist aufß gott geboren / ex Deo natus est].’”¹¹⁵ Here the impressive phrase “show ourselves as gods [uns als bald anderen menschen als götter / max alijs nos deos quosdam]” would surprise us because we may not familiar with a phrase used in a confessional document. But this is biblically based on 1 John 4:7, and reminds us of Psalm 82:6 or John 10:34.¹¹⁶ In short, as compared with the use of “the image of God” in Chapter 4, it is clear that the Confession interchangeably uses the two phrases of the image of God and the sonship of God’s children as bases for believers to do good works. This point is reinforced by observing that at the end of Chapter 4 and at the beginning of Chapter 5, the Confession refers again to these two phrases respectively.¹¹⁷

c. The Relational Tone in Ecclesiology and the Sacraments

Second, in exploring ecclesiology and the sacraments of the Confession, it is noted that some statements have a significantly relational tone. For example, in Chapter 15 “Of the Church,” the Confession, in relation to various gifts of the church members, states that “it is a body compacted of various members [eyn leib Christi ist, auß vilen glider zusamen gesetzt / Corpus siquidem est

¹¹⁵. CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747-48.
¹¹⁶. CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464. Niemeyer does not refer to the scriptural basis. 1 John 4:7, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”; Ps 82:6: “I said, You are ”gods”; you are all sons of the Most High.”; John 10:34: “Jesus answered them, ”Is it not written in your Law, I have said you are ”gods”?”
¹¹⁷. In Chapter 4, “For whatever the law of God teaches has this end and requires this one thing, that at length we may be reformed to the perfect image of God [zu der bildnus gottes volkommen reformiert und ernewert werden / ad Dei imaginem solidam reformemur], being good in all things, and ready and willing to serve the advantage of men.” CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 748. Also see in Chapter 5 “To Whom Good Works Are to be Ascribed and How They Are Necessary,” “But since they who are the children of God are led by the Spirit of God [qui filij Dei sunt] . . . whatsoever things we do well and holily are to be ascribed to none other than to this one only Spirit, the Giver of all virtues.” CCF, 2:224; Niemeyer, 747; no reference at RBS.
ex varijs membris], where of each has his own work." In Chapter 18 “Of the Eucharist,” the
Confession refers to a union which the Lord’s Supper brings about among believers. “We who
partake of one bread in the holy supper may be among ourselves one bread and one body [ein
brott und ein leib / unus panis, unum corpus].”

In addition, some statements in this Confession are related to mystical union with
Christ. In Chapter 17 “Of Baptism,” it says, “By it we are buried into Christ’s death, are united
into one body [in den leib Christi gefasset / coagmentari in unum corpus] and put on Christ [mit
Christ bekleidet werden / Christum induere]; that it is the washing of regeneration, that it washes
away sins and saves us.” In the context of the Eucharist, after stating the phrase “he [Christ]
deigns to give his true body and true blood be truly eaten and drunk for the food and drink of
souls,” Chapter 18 confesses that “so that now he may live and abide in them [das sie in ihm, und
er in ihnen bleibe / ut iam ipse in illis, et illi ipso vivant et permaneant].”

Furthermore, some phrases are not only relational, but also familial. In the context of
ecclesiology in Chapter 15 it states:

When it is called the house of God [eyn haub Gottes / domus Dei], the pillar and of the
truth, Mount Zion . . . these encomiums pertain only to those who have truly obtained a
place among the children of God [under die kinder Gottes getzelet / inter filios
Dei nacti sunt] because they firmly believe in Christ. Since in these the Savior truly
reigns, they are properly called the church and the communion [gemein der heiligen /
sanctorum convovia].

118. CCF, 2:235; RBS, 1/1:480; Niemeyer, 759.
119. CCF, 2:237; RBS, 1/1:482; Niemeyer, 760.
120. CCF, 2:236; RBS, 1/1:481; Niemeyer, 759-60. This statement is significantly Pauline with
four scriptural references as its basis: Rom. 6:4 for “buried in to Christ’s death,” 1 Cor.12:12 for “united
into one body,” Gal. 3:27 for “put on Christ,” and Tit. 3:5 for “the washing of regeneration.”
121. CCF, 2:237; RBS, 1/1:482; Niemeyer, 760. The phrase “truly eaten and drunk” is one of
the focal points in the Tetrapolitan Confession. Page 113r92 in this chapter of this study.
122. CCF, 2:235; RBS, 1/1:479; Niemeyer, 758.
4. Theological Analysis

There are three issues which need to be pointed out as we theologically analyze the Tetrapolitan Confession. First, the Tetrapolitan Confession treats the sonship of believers throughout the inseparable relationship between justification and sanctification or, in the language of the confession, “good works which proceed out of faith through love.” Although the Confession devotes Chapter 3 to justification and Chapter 4 to sanctification respectively, the fact that Chapter 4 also refers to “justification by faith alone” emphasizes the inseparable relationship between these two, under which the sonship of believers functions as their underlying theme or foundation.123 As we have seen, after starting to treat justification by referring to the “power to become the sons of God,” the Confession, through the inseparable relationship, elaborates on the lives of God’s children led by the Spirit.124 This treatment reminds us of Calvin’s treatment of adoption where the concept of adoption functions as a link between justification and sanctification.125

Second, it is possible to say that the terminology of “new birth” or “regeneration” used in Chapter 4 is almost synonymous with, or at least very similar to, sanctification as an ongoing process of salvation, rather than justification as a once-for-all event. For example, while using the word “adoption” for describing justification which entails a change of status, the Confession uses the word “regeneration” in relation to the ongoing-task for the adopted children to make their faith “efficacious through love,” as we have seen.126 After referring to this task of the adopted

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123. CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747.
124. At the beginning of Chapter 5, just after concluding chapter 4, it says, “But since they who are the children of God are led by the Spirit of God [qui filii Dei sunt] . . . whatsoever things we do well and holy are to be ascribed to none other than to this one only Spirit, the Giver of all virtues.” CCF, 2:224; Niemeyer, 748; no reference at RBS.
125. See pages 75-76 in chapter 2 of this study.
126. Regarding adoption, see CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747. “We cannot be otherwise justified . . . than by being endued chiefly with faith, whereby . . . being persuaded that God has adopted us as his children.”
Chapter 4 states, “By this only are we regenerated [new geboren werden / regeneramur] and the image of God is restored in us.” However, in the context of showing “ourselves as gods – that is, true children of God – by love,” Chapter 4 clarifies the reason we show ourselves that way, “For ‘he that loveth his brother abideth in the light’ and ‘is born of God.’” However, we cannot be entirely sure if the Confession uses the word “new birth” exclusively as a term synonymous with sanctification. This is because the new birth is mentioned at some places in Chapter 3 focusing on justification, although there it is difficult to see clear signs showing that Chapter 3 intends to use the new birth as synonymous with justification. In short, although the authors may not be so clear in theologically putting the new birth and adoption in their proper order, it is possible to say, at least, that the new birth or regeneration in the Confession as a whole is more relevant to sanctification.

Third, the treatment of the sacraments in the Confession is significantly relational as well as communal. This relational and communal tone may reflect the political character of the Confession trying to unite the Lutherans and the Zwinglians in terms of the Lord’s Supper. It is interesting to see that Chapter 18 even refers to the spiritual nourishment which Christ brings about through the Lord’s Supper although the language used in the Confession can be

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127. CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747.
128. CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747 (747; italics mine). Here the Confession refers to 1 John 4:7 as the scriptural basis.
129. There are three places which have relevance to the new birth in Chapter 3. First see CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:462; Niemeyer, 746. Here, it refers to John 1:12-13. “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, but of God.” Next see CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:462; Niemeyer, 746. It refers to John 3:3. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Third see CCF, 2:223; RBS, 1/1:463; Niemeyer, 747. In the context of knowing “God and Jesus Christ,” it states, “It is necessary for this to be born again.”
130. Here what Aoki writes may deserve our attention. “The main focus of the Tetrapolitan Confession is on issues related to sanctification, and the treatment of those issues has some specific features. After recognizing ‘loving others’ as a task of Christians, the Confession develops it in the public context of the state, and at the end, clarifies its potential of helping people to develop their sociality in their society.” Yoshinori Aoki, “Yontoshi-Shinkou-kokuhaku no Seika-ron” (Sanctification in the Tetrapolitan Confession) (Research Thesis, Tokyo Christian Theological Seminary, 2003), 104.
“ambiguous” as well as “weak.” In short, it is possible to say that here the *Tetrapolitan Confession* shows a middle way between Luther and Zwingli in terms of the Lord’s Supper by creating a relational and communal tone.

5. Zwingli’s *Fidei ratio* (1530)

Among the three confessional documents submitted to the Diet of Augsburg, first the *Augsburg Confession* has no relevance to the concept of adoption itself as well as its related issues. Second, the *Tetrapolitan Confession* treats adoption, and we treated it in the preceding section. Now we move on to the third one, Zwingli’s *Fidei ratio*. Since it touches upon the concept of adoption and its relevant issues, it is worth paying attention to those instances and briefly making a comparison between the *Tetrapolitan Confession* and the *Fidei ratio*.

a. Background: Third Document Submitted to the Diet of Augsburg

After Charles V sent out his invitation to the Diet in January, 1530, it is likely that, whereas the cities of Mühlhausen, Constance, and Strasbourg were officially invited to the Diet, Zurich with other Swiss cities were included “in a general way in the Emperor’s desire to hear all opinions.” During that stressful period of time, Jakob Sturm, a representative of Strasbourg, urged Zwingli to write a statement of faith representing the Christian Civic Union. Although Sturm’s motives can be argued, after being encouraged by him Zwingli started composing a statement and finished it in a few days. That was the *Fidei ratio*, which we need to examine.

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131. CCF, 2:237; RBS, 1/1:482; Niemeyer, 760. “He deigns to give his true body and true blood to be truly eaten and drunk for the food and drink of souls, for their nourishment unto life eternal [zur speß irer seelen und ewigem leben / illae in aeternam vitam alantur].”

132. CCF, 2:249. By May in that year, “Strasbourg had already sent two representatives to Augsburg.” But Zwingli “may have been waiting for an official invitation that never came.” Here CCF refers to see CR 93/2:754-56.

133. In the year of the Diet, the Christian Civic Union consisted of Zurich, Constance, Biel, Mühlhausen, Bern, Basel, Schaffhausen, Strasbourg, and St. Gallen. CCF, 2:249n1; CR 93/2:790n; RBS, 1/1:421.
b. Characteristics: Christ’s Spiritual Presence in the Supper

Here it is necessary to refer to two characteristics of the *Fidei ratio*. First, whereas in the *Fidei ratio* Zwingli polemically criticizes both Lutheran and Catholic views of the Lord’s Supper, the *Fidei ratio* can be recognized as the first document in which Zwingli articulates Christ's spiritual presence in the Lord’s Supper. Second, it is noticeable that in his arguments, Zwingli uses primarily numerous scriptural texts, and secondarily patristic sources, for making his points. Here, “his classical training is evident in the rhetorical style and his several allusions to Greek and Roman literature.”

c. Relevance

There are four issues we need to point out here as relevant to adoption. First, in Article 2 treating God’s eternal counsel, the *Fidei ratio* shows both familial and relational tones. In the context of focusing on the Incarnation as a realization of his counsel, the *Fidei ratio* states, “When the time came to publish his goodness, which he had determined from eternity to display no less than his justice, God sent his Son to assume our nature in every part . . . in order that, being made our

134. Sturm’s motives can be explained in the following two different ways. First, it is said that Sturm hoped to see that “the Lutheran and Zwinglian views on the Eucharist could co-exist.” On the other hand, it is also explained differently that Sturm was politically motivated by the desire to make Strasbourg’s *Tetrapolitan Confession* more moderate by letting Zwingli submit his own document. *CCF*, 2:249n3.

135. Wilhelm H. Neuser, “Zwinglis *Fidei ratio* von 1530: Einleitung.” in *RBS*, 1/1:423. “Weil Zwingli in der FIDEI RATIO erstmals eine Präsenz des Leibes Christi im Glauben lehrt.” See *CCF*, 2:263; *RBS*, 1/1:437. In the article on the Lord’s Supper, Zwingli writes, “Here the presence of the body alone is denied, for according to his divinity he is always present [secundum divinitatem semper adest, quia semper ubique est iuxta].” In comparing the *Tetrapolitan Confession* with the *Fidei ratio* in terms of the Lord’s Supper, it is said that the *Tetrapolitan Confession* “could be interpreted as reflecting a more Lutheran position.” *CCF*, 2:250. Regarding Zwingli’s polemical style of argument, it is recognized, for example, in the context in which he calls both Catholics and Lutheran “the papists and some who long for the fleshpots of Egypt.” *CCF*, 2:262; *RBS*, 1/1:437.


137. Ibid.
brother and equal [frater et par nobis factus], he could be a mediator to make a sacrifice for us to
divine justice.”

It is clear that Christ’s brotherhood is closely related to the sonship of believers
as well as his own Sonship.

Second, in Article 3 treating soteriology, the *Fidei ratio*, in relation to election,
conceptually refers to the adoptive act by God. In referring to Ephesians 1:4, it states that “God’s
election is manifest and remains firm; for whom he has elected before the foundation of the
world, he has so elected, as through his Son, to receive him to himself [ut per filium suum sibi
cooptaret].” Then, in the following lines, it actually refers to adoption in relation to
justification. “It is his goodness that he has elected whom he will; but it is of his justice to adopt
and unite the elect to himself through his Son [electos sibi adoptare et iungere per filium
suum].” It is clear here that the *Fidei ratio* treats adoption as an inseparable aspect of his act
justifying the elect, while relating election to God’s goodness. In exploring these instances, it is
possible to recognize Article 3 in the *Fidei ratio* as treating adoption in the most succinct manner.

Third, it is interesting to see that even in Article 4 dealing original sin the *Fidei ratio*
refers to God’s adoptive act. At the end of Article 4 it states, “I know that we are by nature the
children of wrath, but I doubt not that we are received among the sons of God by grace [casum
restituit, inter filios dei recipi], which through the second Adam, Christ, has restored what was
lost in the Fall.” Here the concept of restoration deserves our attention. Zwingli recognizes
“being received among the sons of God” as the restoration of what was lost in Adam. In other

138. *CCF*, 2:255; *RBS*, 1/1:429. In the following context, it refers to the relational point that the
Son came “to be ours.” “What is it that we ought not to promise ourselves concerning him who humbled
himself so as not only to be our equal, but to be altogether ours? [totus quoque noster esset].”

139. *CCF*, 2:255; *RBS*, 1/1:429. As we have already seen, “accepting” or “receiving” in the
context of soteriology is almost synonymous with justification in Calvin. See 72n60 in chapter 2 of this
study. In taking this and Eph 1:4 into account, it is possible to say what the *Fidei ratio* means here is
actually God’s adoptive act bringing believers into his family. Calvin also uses the Latin verb coopto for
describing adoption. For example see *Inst.*, 2.10.1 [CO 2 (CR 30): 313].


words, Zwingli acknowledges the sonship of Adam in his original state. This helps us to see how Zwingli understands adoption in his *Fidei ratio*.

Finally, in Article 6 treating ecclesiology, the *Fidei ratio* refers to some issues significantly relevant to the concept of adoption. For example, in the context of knowing God as the Father through the Spirit, it says:

According to the apostle’s word, he [the Christian] has the seal of the Spirit, espoused and sealed, by which he knows that he is truly free, made *a son of the family* [*filium familiae*], and not a slave. For the Spirit cannot deceive. If he tells us that *God is our Father*, and we with certainty and confidence *call him Father*, secure of *eternal inheritance*, it is certain that God’s Spirit has been shed in our hearts.143

Here four issues emerge that are relevant to the concept of adoption. According to the *Fidei ratio*, the Spirit leads a Christian to know 1) that “he is . . . made a son of the family,” 2) that “God is our Father,” 3) that we can “call him Father, and 4) that “eternal inheritance” is secured.144 Whereas the first three points are clearly relevant to adoption, the fourth one needs further explanation. Regarding “eternal inheritance,” it is necessary to see Galatians 4:5 and Romans 8:15, in which *huiothesia* is used. In these contexts, Paul clearly relates the concept of inheritance to the adoptive status.145

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142. See pages 64-65 in chapter 2 of this study.
143. *CCF*, 2:258 (258; italics mine); *RBS*, 1/1:433.
144. Furthermore, in the following context of Article 6, the *Fidei ratio* says, “I believe that there is one church of those who have the same Spirit, who testifies to them that they are true children of God’s family [quod veri filii familiae dei sint].” *CCF*, 2:259; *RBS*, 1/1:434. Also see Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:367.
145. See pages 4-6 in chapter 1 of this study. Although we do not treat the matter here, it is interesting to see that at the very end of the *Fidei ratio*, Zwingli concludes it with the filial tone. “Consider not what you most of all desire, but what the world requires in regard to the gospel. Take this, such as it is, in good part, and by your disposition show that you are children of God [*filios dei vos esse studis vestris ostendite*].” *CCF*, 2:271; *RBS*, 1/1:446.
d. Comparison and Analysis

First, in comparing the *Tetrapolitan Confession* with the *Fidei ratio*, it is possible to say that the most significant difference between them is the way each treats adoption. It is recognized that, whereas in the *Tetrapolitan Confession* the filial notion mainly revolves around soteriology consisting of justification and sanctification, in the *Fidei ratio* the filial notion is treated in a wider way covering four areas in its theological framework. Although the *Fidei ratio* does not necessarily treat the adoption in a theologically orderly way, it is noticeable that it refers to adoption in various ways at different places in its framework. 146 Of course it may be difficult to say that the *Fidei ratio* significantly deepens the concept of adoption because most of the references are in passing. But it is possible to say minimally that Zwingli understands the multiple aspects which adoption has in the theological framework.

Second, while the *Fidei ratio* treats adoption in the four theological areas mentioned above, it is recognized that among the four, election plays a relatively more important role than the others. In particular, that Article 3 treating adoption in the clearest way always relates it to election shows its election-oriented treatment of adoption. The comparison with the *Tetrapolitan Confession* which is characterized for its soteriology-oriented treatment also helps us to see in a clearer way the theological orientation the *Fidei ratio* takes in terms of adoption. 147

Third, it is possible to say that as a whole the treatment the *Fidei ratio* takes for adoption is clearer than the *Tetrapolitan Confession*, even though it is not so simple to compare these two because of the difference of the theological orientation between them. 148

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146. What “not theologically orderly way” means here is, for example, Article 2 treating God’s eternal counsel. There the *Fidei ratio* unexpectedly starts treating the issue of the Incarnation in which it refers to Christ’s brotherhood as we have seen. Then, after treating soteriology in Article 3, the *Fidei ratio* moves to the issue of original sin, in which at the end, it refers to God’s adoptive act, as already mentioned.

147. Ecclesiology in the *Fidei ratio* reinforces this election-oriented treatment. Whereas Zwingli’s ecclesiology revolves around election, he variously relates it to the filial notion of believers. See the first definition of the church Zwingli shows us in Article 6. “Of the church, therefore, we thus think in the Scriptures the word ‘church’ is received in various significations. It is received for the elect who have been predestinated by God’s will to eternal life,” CCF, 2:258; *RBS*, 1/1:432. In relation to this, Schaff says, “He distinguishes between the internal or invisible, and the external or visible church; the former is the company of the elect believers and their children.” Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:367.

148. On the other hand, the *Tetrapolitan Confession* also makes some points which the *Fidei ratio* does not have, as we have seen. For example, the *Tetrapolitan Confession*, in a clearer way, shows the ongoing growing process of God’s children. In addition to this, it gives us a hint which could help us to
important factor leading us to recognize this is the treatment seen in Article 3 of the *Fidei ratio*. In this article, there are three points which are significantly relevant to the concept of adoption seen in Ephesians 1:5 as follows: 1) adoption is rooted in predestination, 2) the goodness of God generates predestination, and 3) believers are brought into God’s family solely through the Son.\(^\text{149}\) Because of these, what Article 3 articulates is significantly justified in Ephesians 1:5.\(^\text{150}\)

Fourth, the *Fidei ratio*, in Article 4, hints that Zwingli understands adoption as the restoration of the sonship which Adam had in his original state. On the other hand, in the *Fidei ratio* we do not see any sign of elevating, through this restoration, what we had in Adam to a higher status which we have in Christ.\(^\text{151}\)

6. Conclusion

Here, three points need to be pointed out in concluding this section treating the *Tetrapolitan Confession*. First, in the Confession the treatment of filial notion is characterized for its soteriology-oriented way. In that theological orientation, the filial notion of God’s children functions as a basis for them to do good works. On the other hand, the *Fidei ratio* has a wider way of treating adoption than the Confession as a whole, and its treatment is characterized for the election-oriented way. In chapter 6 we will return to these two ways of treating adoption as we historically evaluate the confessions in the Reformation Period.\(^\text{152}\)

Second, the *Tetrapolitan Confession* has, in its treatment of ecclesiology and the consider the difference between adoption and the new birth in the confessions during the Reformation Period.

\(^\text{149}\) “God’s election is manifest and remains firm; for whom he has elected before the foundation of the world, he has so elected, as through his Son, to receive him to himself; for as he is kind and merciful, so also is he holy and just. All the works, therefore, of this mercy savor of mercy and judgment. Therefore, justly, his election also savors of both. It is his goodness that he has elected whom he will; but it is of his justice to adopt and unite the elect to himself through his Son.” *CCF*, 2:255; *RBS*, 1/1:429.

\(^\text{150}\) See pages 3-4 in chapter 1 of this study.

\(^\text{151}\) See page 65 in chapter 2 of this study. According to Trumper, Calvin actually recognizes the elevation in adoption from the sonship which Adam had in his original state to a higher status which we have in Christ.

\(^\text{152}\) As we have seen, Calvin’s treatment of adoption in his works seemingly includes both ways.
sacraments, a significantly relational as well as communal tone. But we do not see this in the *Fidei ratio* in the same level as with the *Tetrapolitan Confession*. What we have seen in the *Fidei ratio*, in relation to the sacraments, is Zwingli’s first reference to Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper.

Third, in comparing the *Tetrapolitan Confession* and the *Fidei ratio* in terms of the concept of adoption, it is recognized that the latter has a biblically clearer way of treating adoption. We will return this point in chapter 6 as we compare the confessions with the redemptive-historical perspective of *huiothesia*.

Finally, it is necessary at the end of this treatment to pay comprehensive attention to all the confessions submitted to the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. Whereas the *Augsburg Confession* does not have relevance to adoption, the other two documents treat it, even though each of their treatments is distinct. In concluding this section we need to consider what this means. Of course, we cannot be entirely sure, but the fact that the latter two, in which the Reformed tradition has its roots, have some treatments of adoption at this point of the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 would lead us to think that the concept of adoption is distinctive in the Reformed tradition. 

We will return to this issue in chapter 6.

**D. The First Helvetic Confession (Bullinger and Leo Jud, 1536)**

1. Background: The First Reformed Confession of National Authority

Among the several factors which led the authors to write the *First Helvetic Confession*, the most influential one must be Pope Paul III’s call for a church council which was originally scheduled

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153. Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 10. After focusing on all of the six confessions setting a chapter on adoption, Trumper also states, “A *prima facie* glance at this survey demonstrates that adoption is mainly, but not exclusively, a Reformed distinctive.”
This call led the Lutheran and the Reformed churches to prepare for their own statements of faith. Whereas the Lutheran churches prepared the *Schmalkaldische Artikel* (1537) for the council, what the Swiss Reformed churches prepared was the *First Helvetic Confession*.  

Besides the call to the council in Mantua, the following three things can be recognized as other factors which led to the *First Helvetic Confession.* First, it was politically necessary for the Swiss Cantons, by subscribing the *Tetrapolitan Confession*, to be united through joining the Schmalkaldic League in order to oppose the Habsburg Emperor. However, the fact that Zurich and Bern refused to subscribe to it caused a need for the Swiss churches to have a new confessional document in which they could unite. Second, that Luther in his commentary on *Galatians* in 1535 criticized the Zwinglian understanding of the Lord’s Supper strongly triggered Bullinger to think of formulating a confessional document in order to present their common understanding of it. The third factor, although it might be relatively indirect, is the continued efforts of Bucer and Capito, the Strasbourg reformers, to unite the Lutheran and the Swiss churches.  

As a response to the call of the pope to the council and the other factors mentioned above, the political leaders of most of the Reformed cities in Switzerland came to the conclusion to be held in Mantua in 1537. This call led the Lutheran and the Reformed churches to prepare for their own statements of faith. Whereas the Lutheran churches prepared the *Schmalkaldische Artikel* (1537) for the council, what the Swiss Reformed churches prepared was the *First Helvetic Confession.*  

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155. The *Schmalkaldische Artikel* were written by Luther and have been known for its polemical style using “anti-papal language.” *CCF,* 2:119. The present study, when exploring the *Schmalkaldische Artikel*, does not recognize any relevance to the concept of adoption in it. At that point when hearing the call to the council in Mantua, in the Swiss churches there were no statements of faith, like the *Augsburg Confession* in Germany, which would unite all those churches. This was because the Reformation came to the Swiss city by city, and each city adopted themselves their own statements of faith such as Zwingli’s *Sixty-seven Articles* in Zurich. *CCF,* 2:280.  

156. *RBS,* 1/2:33.  

157. Ibid.  

to let their theologians go to Basel and prepare a confessional document in which they could unite.\textsuperscript{159} The committee for preparing a confession consisted of Oswald Myconius and Simon Grynaeus from Basel and Heinrich Bullinger from Zurich.\textsuperscript{160} However, it is likely that at a practical level, Bullinger and Jud took an important role in leading the Swiss theologians.\textsuperscript{161}

Besides these Swiss theologians, it is necessary to pay attention to Bucer and Capito, who later joined the meeting in Basel, and tried to use the Confession in order to mediate between the Lutheran and the Swiss churches in terms of the Lord’s Supper.\textsuperscript{162} Grynaeus referred to the unique role they took in the process of preparing the Confession, “Bucer and Capito brought it about that we explicitly inserted into our confession those forms which Luther required.”\textsuperscript{163} Because of their role, it was natural for the Swiss theologians to ask Bucer and Capito to bring the \textit{First Helvetic Confession} to Luther.\textsuperscript{164}

The response from Luther to the Confession was positive because of the way the Confession treated the Lord’s Supper in Article 22 (23 in Latin).\textsuperscript{165} However, although at the

\textsuperscript{159} \textit{CCF}, 2:280; \textit{RCE}, 1:342; \textit{RBS}, 1/2:34. Those theologians representing cities were as follows: Bullinger and Leo Jud from Zurich, Myconius and Grynaeus from Basel, and Casper Megander from Bern, Johann Valentin Furtmüller from St. Gallen, Erasmus Ritter and Benedikt Burgauer from Schaffhausen, Augustin Gemsaueus from Mühlhausen, and Rudolf Rädstock from Biel. These theologians went to Basel on January 30, 1530.

\textsuperscript{160} \textit{RBS}, 1/2:34.

\textsuperscript{161} It is recognized that, when dealing with some difficult issues, Bullinger and Jud took the lead in solving them. For example, see \textit{RBS}, 1/2:37. After hearing from Konrad Zwick and Thomas Blaurer of Constance some disagreements with the Confession, those who actually set a meeting on March 27 for dealing with them were Bullinger and Jud. Also, it is known that Jud translated the Confession into German for the German version which has equal authority with the Latin version. These things lead us to assume that these two took a particularly important role in preparing the Confession.

\textsuperscript{162} \textit{CCF}, 2:280; \textit{RCE}, 1:342.

\textsuperscript{163} \textit{CCF}, 2:280. At the beginning, the efforts of Bucer and Capito were seemingly suspect by the Swiss theologians, especially Bullinger. The vain effort Bucer and Capito made in the past for uniting Basel and Constance might affect the way the Swiss theologians thought about them. Because of this, the Swiss theologians first decided to meet in Basel without having them present. On February 1, two days later after the start of the meeting, Bullinger decided to invite them to Basel. See \textit{RBS}, 1/2:33-34.

\textsuperscript{164} \textit{RBS}, 1/2:38.

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{CCF}, 2:289. Article 22 starts the following way, “In regard to the Lord’s Supper we hold, therefore, that in it the Lord truly offers his body and his blood, that is, himself, to his own, and enables them to enjoy such fruit that he lives ever more and more in them and they in him.” See Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:389. “Luther . . . expressed unexpectedly, in two remarkable letters, his satisfaction with the earnest Christian character of this document, and promised to do all he could to promote union and
beginning Luther also had a hope of peace between the Lutheran and the Swiss churches, it was not realized for both sides to unite in the Confession because the Swiss churches were not willing to sign the Wittenberg Concordia (1536).  

Although it did not succeed in bringing the Lutheran and the Swiss churches together through the Confession, the First Helvetic Confession was officially approved on March 27, 1536, by the nine cities (Basel, Bern, Biel, Constance, Mühlhausen, St. Gallen, Strasbourg, Schaffhausen, Zurich), and united “the Protestants of German-speaking Switzerland.” According to Schaff, “The First Helvetic Confession is the first Reformed creed of national authority.” Thus, the Confession had been the first official confessional document uniting those Swiss churches until it was replaced by the Second Helvetic Confession in 1566. 

The First Helvetic Confession was first published in Latin in February of 1536. Then Jud, adding some to the Confession, prepared the “augmented German edition” for wider use in the Swiss churches. These two texts have been historically authoritative on an equal level.

2. Characteristics: The Conciliatory Approach

There are two characteristics of the First Helvetic Confession which need to be pointed out here: first the understanding of the Lord’s Supper, and second the authority of the Scriptures emphasized in the Confession. Concerning the first point, although the Confession keeps...
basically the Zwinglian understanding of the Lord’s Supper, it is recognized that the Confession, by referring to the “real spiritual presence of Christ” in the Supper, takes a “conciliatory” approach for the Lutheran churches to accept it.\(^\text{172}\) It is very likely that this approach was not brought about by Bullinger or other Swiss theologians, but by Bucer and Capito, in considering the remarks Grynaeus makes, as already mentioned. Because of this conciliatory approach referring to Christ’s real, spiritual presence in the Supper, the Confession strengthens the relational tone in it.

Concerning the second point, the *First Helvetic Confession* is known for its emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures.\(^\text{173}\) It is noticeable in the Confession that within a total of 27 articles (28 in Latin), the confession devotes three articles to treating the authority of the Scriptures and its related issues.\(^\text{174}\)

3. Relevant Issues

In the *First Helvetic Confession*, there are two issues relevant to the present study: first its treatment of adoption, and second its relational tone recognized in various ways throughout the Confession. Regarding the first issue, it is recognized that at two areas in its theological framework, the *First Helvetic Confession* treats the concept of adoption namely in Christology and the sacraments. In Article 11 treating Christ and his work the Confession, by referring to the

\(^{172}\) *CCF*, 2:280; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:389; *RBS*, 1/2: 35. It is noted that this “conciliatory” approach is clearer in the Latin edition than in the German edition. See *CCF*, 2:280. “The Latin version in particular expresses the understanding of the Eucharist in terms more conciliatory to the Lutheran view, calling the bread and wine ‘symbols by which the true communication of his body and blood is exhibited.’” In relation to this, what Saxer writes deserves our attention. “Leo Jud interpretetierte . . . in seiner deutschen Übersetzung . . . die eindeutig zwinglische Abendmahlslehre in das Bekenntnis hinein.” Ernst Saxer, “Confessio Helvetica Prior von 1536: Einleitung,” in *RBS*, 1/2: 36.

\(^{173}\) *RBS*, 1/2: 35.

\(^{174}\) The titles of those three articles are as follows: Article 1, “Concerning Holy Scripture;” Article 2, “Concerning the Interpretation of Scripture;” and Article 3, “Concerning the Early Teachers.” *CCF*, 2:282. Article 3 recognizes the church fathers as correct interpreters of the Scriptures using the correct methods of interpretation.
Incarnation, conceptually relates it to adoption, although it does not use the exact word of adoption. It states, “This Christ . . . was made our brother, when at the appointed time he assumed a complete, uniform human nature . . . so that he might restore us who are dead to life and make us joint heirs of God [er uns, die tod warend, wider lebendig, und mitterben gottes machete / vitae mortuos nos restitueret, et dei cohaeredes faceret].” Here “Christ’s brotherhood,” the “the restoration to life,” and the “joint heirs of God” are significantly relevant to the concept of adoption, as previously mentioned.

Also in Article 21 “Of the Power and Efficacy of the Sacraments,” it is interesting to see the combination of regeneration and adoption as the Confession recognizes the sacraments as “symbols of hidden things.” In relation to baptism, it says, “For in baptism, the water is the sign, but the thing itself is regeneration and adoption into the people of God [die wydergenurt und die uffnemung inn das volck gottes / regeneratio adoptioque in populum dei].” Here it is noted that the Confession creates a communal tone by relating the combination of regeneration and adoption to “the people of God.” However, although it is worth considering the relationship between regeneration or the new birth and adoption, it is not easy to clarify what the relationship means theologically, considering that the reference is in passing. We will return to this issue as we analyze the First Helvetic Confession in terms of the concept of adoption.

Regarding the second issue, it is noticeable that the Confession maintains a relational
tone between God the Father or Christ and man throughout its articles in various ways. For example in Article 10 “The Eternal Counsel of God Concerning the Renewal of Man,” after referring to the Fall of man, it says that “nevertheless, God the Father [gott, der gnedig vatter / deus pater] never ceased to care for him.” When glancing at this, it appears that a relational tone is not so strong here. But, in considering the theme of this article and Ephesians 1 as one of its scriptural bases, it becomes clear that this article relates predestination to the paternal care of God for the elect. Also, in relation to ecclesiology, Article 19 “Who is Pastor” clarifies a mystical union between Christ and the church by recognizing him as the “Head.” It states, “Christ himself alone is the true Head and Pastor of his church [das war und recht houpt unnd hyrtt siner kilchen / verum suae ecclesia caput ac pastor].” Furthermore, in the Confession, the articles related to the sacraments contain the richest relational tone. For example, in Article 21 “Of the Power and Efficacy of the Sacraments,” it states, “In the Eucharist, the bread and the wine are signs, but the thing is the sharing of the body of the Lord [gemeinschaft des lips Christi / communicatio corporis domini], salvation and remission of sins having been procured.” In relation to this, it deserves our attention that Nevin, making comments on this article, recognizes this sharing as real. “Here we are taught expressly, that the sacraments are not simply signs, nor yet pledges merely, of a grace in no way bound to their particular constitution. But they consist of real things in the ordinances themselves.” Also, the first sentence in Article 23 “The Eucharist” says, “But the mystical supper is that in which the Lord offers his body and his blood,”

178. RCE, 1:345; RBS, 1/2:46 (German); 59 (Latin). Also see Article 20 in CCF, 2:288. “Yet, God, the gracious Father, has never ceased to be concerned about him.”
179. Besides Eph. 1, Article 10 refers to Rom. 7 as another basis.
180. RCE, 1:348; RBS, 1/2:51 (German, the italics of houpt and siner kilchen are in RBS); 63 (Latin, the italics of verum are mine). Also see Article 18 in CCF, 2:287. “Christ himself is the only true and proper Head.”
181. RCE, 1:349; RBS, 1/2:52 (German); 64 (Latin). Also see Article 20 in CCF, 2:288. “In the Lord’s Supper the bread and wine are the signs, but the spiritual substance is the communion of the body and blood of Christ, the salvation acquired on the cross, and forgiveness of sins.”
that is his own self truly to his own, for this purpose, that he might live more and more in them and they in him.”

4. Theological Analysis

In the First Helvetic Confession there are four issues to which we need to pay attention in terms of the present study. First, although the treatment of adoption throughout the articles is not pervasive, the concept of adoption is actually treated in relation to Christology and the sacraments. In these two areas, the Confession also refers to three issues which are relevant to adoption, namely the restoration to life, being joint heirs with Christ, and the admission into the people of God. Thus, the confession clarifies soteriological, eschatological, and communal aspects by referring to them respectively.

Second, although the Confession treats the concept of adoption to some extent, it is difficult to say that the Confession treats the concept in a comprehensive manner. This is because the treatment of adoption in the Confession lacks some key issues which are important to the concept. For example, as already mentioned, the Confession in Article 10 relates predestination to the paternal care of God for the elect but does not relate it to adoption itself, in the manner that Ephesians 1:5 does. Furthermore, the Confession does not refer to both the ministry of the Spirit helping the adopted to call the Father, and the consummation described as “the redemption of our bodies” when the adoptive status be completed.

Third, in Article 21, when the Confession refers to the combination of regeneration and

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183. *RCE*, 1:349; *RBS*, 1/2:53 (German); 65 (Latin). See Article 22 in *CCF*, 2:289. In the following context of this article, there are two more places which significantly show a relational tone. “The bread and wine are symbols, by which from the Lord himself by the ministry of the church, the true sharing of his body and blood is exhibited” (289; italics mine). Also, at the end of this article, it states, “They [the sacred symbols] furnish help and support to faith itself, and finally they bind us together after the manner of an oath on account of Christ our head and the church having admitted us to sacred rites.”

184. See pages 3-4 in chapter 1 of this study.

185. Regarding the ministry of the Spirit, see Rom. 8:14-15; page 5 in chapter 1 of this study. With regard to the consummation, see Rom. 8:22-23; pages 5-6 in chapter 1 of this study.
adoption in relation to baptism, it is important to consider what the relationship between them means, although it is not easy to clarify it. Theoretically, there are two possible ways to understand this relationship. As the first one, it is possible to say that regeneration and adoption are synonymous. Given this, the essential meaning these two have must be the admission into the people of God because of the inseparable connection of the following phrase “into the people of God” to regeneration and adoption. Another possible way to understand what this relationship means is that each of them has a distinct meaning. Given this, what adoption signifies here is the admission into God’s people since it is assumed that the following phrase be related only to adoption because of its word order, and terminologically speaking, adoption into God’s people is the same with admission, as CCF translates *uffnemung* as “admission.” In this case, regeneration may be related to the state of the adopted, whereas adoption is related to the change of their status, namely the adoptive act.

Fourth, the *First Helvetic Confession* has a communal as well as relational tone in a pervasive way, whereas the references to adoption are in passing. As already pointed out, it is possible to see a communal or relational tone throughout the articles in the following five areas in the whole theological framework: the eternal counsel of God, Christology, ecclesiology, baptism, and the Eucharist. Among them, the articles related to the sacraments, in particular the Eucharist, is the richest area having a communal or relational tone. As we have seen, in these places related to the Eucharist, what confession clarifies is not just the remembrance of Christ, but his real presence through the Eucharist in which believers are united to him in a mystical way.

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186. “For in baptism, the water is the sign, but the thing itself is regeneration and adoption into the people of God [*die wydergenurt und die uffnemung inn das volck gottes / regeneratio adoptioque in populum dei*].” *RCE*, 1:349; *RBS*, 1/2:52 (German); 64 (Latin). *CCF*, 2:284. “For in baptism the water is the sign, but the substance and spiritual thing is rebirth and admission into the people of God.”

187. Although we cannot be entirely sure, if what adoption signifies in Article 21 is solely the adoptive act, regeneration would be related to the adoptive state, namely sanctification. This is because the adoptive act or acceptance into God’s family is inseparably related to justification. See page 72n60 in chapter 2 of this study; Barbara Pitkin, “Faith and Justification,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, 295; Gaffin, “Justification and Union with Christ,” in *Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes*, 260.
5. Conclusion

In the *First Helvetic Confession*, the concept of adoption is treated in relation to Christology and the sacraments, but the richness of the concept is not fully described yet at this point of time in the confessional history during the Reformation Period. With regard to the relationship between the new birth and adoption, we are forced to recognize it as a theologically pending issue. Finally, it is worth noticing that the Confession pervasively shows communal and relational aspects throughout the articles, although the references to adoption itself are in passing.

### E. Analysis of the First Group (Prior to Calvin)

#### 1. Introduction

In concluding this section treating the confessions in the first group, there are three points which help us to see how the concept of adoption is treated in these six confessional documents written prior to Calvin: 1) The distinctive treatment of Luther’s *Large* (LC) & *Small Catechisms* (SC) in terms of the filial notion, 2) The development of treating adoption recognized between Zwingli’s *Sixty-Seven Articles* (1523) and his *Fidei ratio* (1530), and 3) The comparison of the *Tetrapolitan Confessions*, the *Fidei ratio*, and the *First Helvetic Confession*.

#### 2. The Distinctive Treatment of Luther’s *Large & Small Catechisms*

In the six confessional documents which this chapter treats in detail, there are three documents which have no reference to adoption, namely Zwingli’s *Sixty-Seven Articles* and Luther’s *Large & Small Catechisms*.\(^{188}\) When considering only this point, it may be possible to distinguish these

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\(^{188}\) The *Augsburg Confession* also does not mention adoption. Besides that, that any relevant issues are not recognized in it led us to skip referring to the *Augsburg Confession* in this chapter. See page
three from others, but it is noted that Luther’s two catechisms are clearly distinct from the other four in terms of the filial notion, including the *Sixty-Seven Articles*, because of the following two reasons.

First, it is noticeable that the treatment of filial notion in the *LC* and *SC* almost exclusively revolves around the relationship between God the Father and his children, whereas the treatments of the other four, in relation to filial notion, are basically based on union with Christ. Because of this, it is understandable that Luther’s catechisms, as already pointed out, significantly value calling God the Father through giving prayer a key role helping God’s children to call on the name of the Father. Furthermore, since prayer plays a key role in the relationship between the Father and his children, it is noted that the instances of treating the filial relationship revolve around sanctification or Christian life in which the catechisms emphasize living out the faith of God’s children.

On the other hand, as second reason, the fact that the other four documents take a relatively balanced way in treating the filial notion helps us to recognize again how distinct Luther’s two catechisms are in terms of treating the filial notion. More precisely, those four documents through treating the filial notion based on union with Christ, have a broader theological framework ranging from God’s eternal counsel through eschatology, although there are some differences between those four. Thus, it is possible to see the distinct treatment of

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111n81 in this chapter of this study.

189. Pages 102-11 treating the *LC* and *SC* in this chapter of this study. As compared with the various and rich treatments of the relationship between the Fatherhood of God and believers, the treatment of union with Christ in these catechisms is relatively sparse. See also page 104, 104n55 in ibid. The instances where the *LC* and *SC* treat union with Christ are not directly related to the filial notion. On the other hand, in the other four documents, the filial notion is basically related to union with Christ as they treat the sonship of believers. For example, see Articles 8 and 27 in the *Sixty-Seven Articles*; Chapter 3 in the *Tetrapolitan Confession*; Articles 3 and 4 in the *Fidei ratio*; Article 11 in the *First Helvetic Confession*.

190. See pages 107-9 in this chapter of this study.

191. For example, the *Sixty-Seven Articles* is known for its ethical emphasis, whereas the *Tetrapolitan Confession* can be recognized as being sanctification-oriented in its theological orientation. See pages 93-94, 120-22, 121n130 in ibid.
Luther’s LC and SC in terms of the filial notion.

In concluding this section, it is also necessary to refer to the possible basis for the believers’ sonship in the LC and SC, which would reinforce the distinct treatment in them. Strictly speaking, regarding the believers’ sonship in the LC and SC, it is difficult to specify if sonship is clearly based on the new birth, even though there is no reference to adoption in these two catechisms. However, the fact that the catechisms refer to the new birth, although in passing, would allow us to assume that the concept of sonship may be based on the new birth in the LC and SC.192 At any rate, Luther’s catechisms do not pay attention to the concept of adoption as such. In addition to this, the fact that the Augsburg Confession does not mention either leads us to think that in the Lutheran catechisms, at this point in the confessional history, the concept of adoption is not recognized as crucial.193

3. The Development from the Sixty-Seven Articles (1523) to the Fidei ratio (1530)

It is worth comparing the two confessional documents written by Zwingli because it helps us to see the development of treating the filial notion from the Sixty-Seven Articles to the Fidei ratio. In the Sixty-Seven Articles, although there is no reference to adoption, it is noted that the Articles have some significant references which are recognized as familial or relational in the context of ecclesiology.194 Among them, it is noticeable that Article 27, through referring to the believers’ sonship, points to their participation in the Sonship of Christ, although it is not clear if their

192. See page 110 in this chapter of this study.
193. This chapter, when treating the First Helvetic Confession, does not recognize any relevance to adoption in the Schmalkaldische Artikel which was also written by Luther for a church council in 1537 under the same circumstance with the First Helvetic Confession. Also, regarding the Augsburg Confession, it is assumed that its moderate approach is one of the reasons the Confession has no relevance to adoption. It is said by Schaff that Melanchthon, through the Confession, left “the door open for a possible reconciliation with Rome.” See Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:234. Also see CCF, 2:49. The confession does not put sola before faith when referring to “faith” as the basis of salvation. Furthermore, “sola scriptura” is not, in an explicit way, mentioned either in the Confession.
194. In particular, see Articles 7, 8, and 27 in the Sixty-Seven Articles.
sonship is based on adoption or the new birth. It is assumed that these references have seminal importance for the Fidei ratio written by the same author in 1530.

In exploring the Fidei ratio, it is possible to see the familial, filial or relational notion, which the Sixty-Seven Articles have only in the context of ecclesiology, in wider areas of its theological framework, such as Article 2 treating God’s eternal counsel, Article 3 treating soteriology, Article 4 treating original sin, and Article 6 treating ecclesiology. In considering these various places having filial or familial notion, it is natural for the Fidei ratio to have sufficient opportunity to articulate adoption in Article 3, and to refer conceptually to the adoptive act in Article 4 and the four significantly related issues to adoption in Article 6, as previously mentioned in this chapter.

In comparing the Sixty-Seven Articles and the Fidei ratio, it is noted that the only possible factor in the former which leads to the concept of adoption in the latter would be union with Christ, to which the former refers through the two Pauline metaphors, namely the head and body, or through Christ’s brotherhood in Article 27.

As compared with Luther’s treatment in the LC and SC that the filial notion revolves around the Fatherhood of God, it becomes clearer that union with Christ in Zwingli’s documents has a seminal importance which leads to adoption because union with Christ has the potential to help believers to participate in his Sonship, as we have seen.

4. The Comparison among the Tetrapolitan Confessions, the Fidei ratio, and the First Helvetic Confession

195. Article 27: “All Christians are brothers of Christ and brothers one of another and no one on earth should be called father.” CCF, 2:211; RBS, 1/1:90. This article clearly presupposed that believers are sharing with Christ the same Father in heaven.

196. In relation to the Fidei ratio, it is worth paying attention to the more detailed treatment of Christ’s brotherhood in Article 2 treating God’s eternal counsel. It is possible to say, the Fidei ratio not only keeps his brotherhood described in Article 27 of the Sixty-Seven Articles, but also develops it to some extent in its Article 2.
When comparing these confessional documents in terms of the concept of adoption one common feature is shared by all of them and three major differences are seen in terms of treating adoption. In regard to the common feature, it is clear that all these three documents value and keep the relational, and familial or communal tone based on union with Christ, although there are some differences in them keeping it.\textsuperscript{197} In particular, it is noticeable that in the cases of the Tetrapolitan Confession and the First Helvetic Confession, the relational tone is significantly kept in the context of treating the sacraments.\textsuperscript{198}

When it comes to the differences, first of all, there are mainly three different theological orientations in these three in terms of treating adoption, although each one of these is not yet fully developed at this point. The first type of orientation is recognized in the Tetrapolitan Confession, and it is characterized by the soteriological-oriented manner revolving around the inseparable relationship between justification and sanctification.\textsuperscript{199} The second type of orientation which is recognized in both the Fidei ratio and the First Helvetic Confession can be called the more balanced way of treatment covering their theological framework as a whole, although it also is not yet fully developed.\textsuperscript{200} The third type of orientation which is recognized in the Fidei ratio is the election-oriented way, although it likely has only seminal importance at this point of the confessional history.\textsuperscript{201} It is worth noticing that these three theological orientations of treating adoption were already in existence at this point of the confessional history prior to Calvin.

\textsuperscript{197} For example, see Chapters 3, 4, 15, 17, and 18 in the Tetrapolitan Confession; Articles 2, 3, 4, and 6 in the Fidei ratio; Articles 10, 11, 21, and 23 in the First Helvetic Confession.

\textsuperscript{198} See Chapters 17 and 18 in the Tetrapolitan Confession; Articles 21 and 23 in the First Helvetic Confession.

\textsuperscript{199} In this confession, although the concept of adoption actually revolves around justification and sanctification, the references to adoption itself or its related issues are in passing. See page 117 in this chapter of this study. The actual reference to adoption itself is recognized only once.

\textsuperscript{200} In the case of the Fidei ratio, while treating the four areas of theology (God’s counsel, soteriology, original sin, and ecclesiology), it puts more emphasis on election as we have seen. See page 126 in ibid. In the case of the First Helvetic Confession, it does not relate predestination to adoption in treating Eph 1:5. Also, it does not refer to the Spirit’s ministry helping believers to call God the Father.

\textsuperscript{201} See page 126 in ibid.
The second difference among the three documents is related to the issue of the new birth. Whereas the *Tetrapolitan Confession* and the *First Helvetic Confession* have some references to the new birth or regeneration, there is no reference to it in the *Fidei ratio*.\(^{202}\) Also, in comparing the treatment of the new birth in the former two, it is noted that both do not yet theologically distinguish the new birth from the concept of adoption in a clear way. Thus, it is concluded that the theological distinction between the new birth and adoption is not made yet at this point of the confessional history.

The third difference is related to the common feature shared by the *Fidei ratio* and the *First Helvetic Confession*, namely the way of conceptually referring to adoption without using the exact word “adoption.” The *Tetrapolitan Confession* does not have this. For example, Article 4 of the *Fidei ratio* does this by referring to the restoration of what was lost in Adam.\(^{203}\) Article 6 in the *Fidei ratio* also, through pointing to four issues which are relevant to adoption, conceptually treats adoption.\(^{204}\) In the case of the *First Helvetic Confession*, Article 11 does this either by referring to the three relevant issues.\(^{205}\) In short, these two confessional documents show that the earlier stage of the confessional history during the Reformation already had the way of describing the concept of adoption, even though the exact word adoption was not used.

5. Conclusion: The Treatment of Adoption Prior to Calvin

In comparing the six confessional documents written prior to Calvin, the following conclusions can be made. First, in comparing the two Lutheran documents and the other four in which the

\(^{202}\) See Chapters 3 and 4 in the *Tetrapolitan Confession*, Article 21 in the *First Helvetic Confession*. Although the *Fidei ratio* in Article 8 treating the Eucharist refers to John 3:6, it has no relevance to the new birth since the purpose for referring to it is to refute the bodily or physical presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

\(^{203}\) See pages 124-25 in this chapter of this study.

\(^{204}\) Page 125 in ibid.

\(^{205}\) See pages 132-33 in ibid. It refers to Christ’s brotherhood, the restoration to life, and becoming joint heirs of God.
Reformed tradition has its roots, it is noted that the Lutheran perspective in terms of the filial notion is different from the Reformed perspective. Whereas Luther’s two catechisms revolve around the relationship between God the Father and his children, the treatment of the filial notion in the Reformed documents is based on union with Christ as a whole.

Second, the relational or familial tone based on union with Christ is significantly maintained in the four Reformed documents as they treat adoption or the filial notion in their theological framework. Although the treatment of the concept of adoption is not fully developed yet at this point, it is assumed that the relational or familial tone has importance for the subsequent confessional documents of Calvin and after him.

Third, the theological orientation recognized in the Tetrapolitan Confession, the Fidei ratio, and the First Helvetic Confession also has importance for the following confessional documents in terms of the concept of adoption. In exploring these three documents, we recognize the following three ways of treating adoption: the soteriological-oriented way, the election-oriented way, and the balanced way.
CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

~Family Life in 16th Century Geneva~

In the previous chapter we explored the confessional documents written prior to Calvin. In this chapter the present study investigates the following confessional documents written by Calvin or related to him: the first edition of the Institutes (1536), the Geneva Confession (1536), the Geneva Catechism (1541/1542), the Consensus Genevensis (1551), and the Confession of Faith of the English Congregation at Geneva (1556).

However, before looking for the concept of adoption in these documents, it is worth taking a look at some issues of family life in 16th century Geneva during the time of Calvin. Of course, some would think that those issues have no theological relevance to divine adoption. Nevertheless, it is still meaningful to see the familial landscape in that period because it will provide us with the practical background in which Calvin, the theologian of adoption, spoke about the concept of adoption or its related issues through the confessional documents. What J. Witte writes deserves our attention. He states:

John Calvin transformed the Western theology and law of sex, marriage, and family life. Building on a generation of Protestant reforms, Calvin constructed a comprehensive new theology and law that made marital formation and dissolution, children’s nurture and welfare, family cohesion and support, and sexual sin and crime essential concerns for both church and state. He drew the Consistory and Council of Geneva into a creative new alliance to guide and govern the reformation of the intimate
domestic sphere.  

What we can learn from this quote is that among the various issues Calvin and his colleagues dealt with, there were some significant issues related to family life in that city.

In what follows, this chapter tries to grasp the basic landscape of family life in 16th century Geneva through focusing on four issues: the institutions dealing with family life, practices of marriage, the treatment of children, and practices of human adoption.

1. The Institutions Dealing with Family Life: The Consistory and the Council

In order to understand family life in 16th century Geneva, first of all it is necessary to know how the Consistory, created by Calvin, functioned in that city in his time. R. Kingdon refers to the importance of the Consistory. “Its creation was particularly important to him [Calvin], and of all the institutions he built it was the one he defended with the greatest tenacity. . . . The Consistory was the mechanism he devised to help the people of Geneva live truly Christian lives.” In exploring minutes of the Consistory, it is clear that the Consistory, by dealing with various issues such as marriage and divorce, played the most important role practically to help people to live out the Christian faith.

1. John Witte Jr., “Marriage and Family Life,” in The Calvin Handbook, 455. Witte is recognized as one of the specialists working on family life in 16th century Geneva. After the Reformation was started in Geneva, there was the city government which was “a hierarchy of councils and the committees dependent on those councils.” John Witte Jr. and Robert M. Kingdon, Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin’s Geneva: Courtship, Engagement, and Marriage (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 1:63. As we shall see, under the Council or the Small Council, the executive of the city government, there were two semi-religious committees. They were the board of procurators for the General Hospital and the Consistory. The latter was created by Calvin, and basically functioned as the church government dealing with various issues including those related to family life. See more details about the co-operation between the Council and the Consistory in terms of family life. Ibid., 1:62-71.  


3. Witte, Sex, Marriage, and Family, 1:65. “Calvin created this institution in his 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances.” As we see their contents, these Ecclesiastical Ordinances are very practical. Their English translation is available in ibid., 1:87-93 [CO 10 (CR 38): 15-30]. Some sections are very
In order to understand how the Consistory functioned, it is also important to see how this body worked with the Council in treating marital or familial issues in the city. Regarding the co-operation between the Consistory and the Council, Witte’s important work, *Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin’s Geneva*, treats various actual cases in which the Consistory and the Council worked together. It is beyond the purpose of the present study to pay attention to each of these cases, but Witte helpfully summarizes how they cooperated in treating these cases. “The Small Council adjudicated cases that arose under these statutes on sex, marriage, and family life in cooperation with the Consistory. The Consistory . . . was a hybrid of spiritual and civil authority. . . . It was the church’s responsibility to teach aspirational spiritual norms for marriage and family life. It was the state’s responsibility to enforce mandatory civil laws.” Furthermore, Kingdon categorizes the cases treated by the Consistory into four areas: 1) religious behavior, 2) respect for authority, 3) quarrels, and 4) marital cases. The forth area, namely marital cases including sexual issues, according to Kingdon, were “the most lurid ones, the ones most commonly described when scholars talk about the Consistory.”

In short, in 16th century Geneva, those issues related to family life were treated through this cooperation between the Consistory and the Council. This was the system to help people to live out their faith during the Reformation in that city.

2. Marriage

When it comes to the work of the Consistory, it is important to pay attention to marriage because

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4. Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family*, 1:62-93, 1:174-80, 1:228-36, 1:323-28, 1:361-63, 1:457-62. In this work, there are numerous minutes of the Consistory recording how each case was treated.
5. Ibid, 1:77, 79. The Consistory “consisted of two benches, one of ministers including Calvin, the other of elders or magistrates, including a syndic who served as the Consistory’s moderator.” Ibid., 77.
various cases treated by the Consistory show that Calvin and his colleagues were significantly involved in marital issues. Why were marital issues so important for the reformers? Two reasons need to be pointed out: a theological reason and an historical or cultural reason.

First, marriage is to Calvin theologically important. Here a sermon helps us to see how he theologically recognizes marriage. In his sermon on Genesis 2:22-24 (1559), Calvin states:

“By this act, behold bone of my bones,” he [Adam] says; he knows that . . . it was necessary for a woman to be given him who was of his own substance. Moreover, this applies to Our Lord Jesus Christ and to his church, as Saint Paul shows in the fifth chapter of Ephesians, for he cites this passage, not in a literal sense but by a similitude, as if he said that what was done in the man and the woman when God created them is today accomplished spiritually and in Jesus Christ and his church. For we must be joined with him in such a union, as if we were bone of his bone. We recognize that Calvin theologically relates the creation of marriage to the believer’s union with Christ. In exploring his other references to marriage, we are also led to realize that in his thought various familial images are theologically related to the believer’s union with Christ, and marriage is a basis of those familial images.

Second, some historical and cultural background compelled Calvin and his colleagues to deal with marital issues seriously. Here we need to pay attention to two phenomena in that era, celibacy of clerics and the bachelor merchants. Regarding the former, celibacy as a life style was

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7. Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family*, 1:62-93. Among the practical cases in this work, many of them are related to marriage.

8. Ibid., 1:241. Calvin also insists, “This may be, marriage is an image and figure of the union there should be between Our Lord Jesus Christ and all the faithful.” This sermon is originally from John Calvin, *Sermons sur la Genèse*, ed. Max Engammarre, 2 vols. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000), 1:139-49.

very common before the Reformation in Geneva because “chastity and virginity were highly praised by almost all medieval theologians and were required by church law of all priests and of all in religious orders.”\(^{10}\) However, there was also a shadowy side because celibacy had been often and seriously violated by priests and monks. As a result, many of them had concubines and children born out of wedlock. Because of this, “The chronicles of pre-Reformation Geneva are full of this type of scandal.”\(^{11}\)

Regarding the bachelor merchants, although their single lifestyle was not encouraged as a form of celibacy, it was practically tolerated by the church. Those bachelor merchants traveled across Europe for their business, and after reaching middle age, tended to marry younger women. At that time, this lifestyle was so common that there were many prostitutes to meet the sexual needs of those bachelor merchants, and city governments, surprisingly, supervised those prostitutes.\(^{12}\) According to Kingdon, “Fifteenth-century Geneva had a group of prostitutes organized into what amounted to a guild.”\(^{13}\) It is clear that these two historical and cultural lifestyles had a negative ethical effect on 16th century Geneva.

In seeing how those alternative lifestyles negatively affected the moral lives of people in Geneva, Calvin and his colleagues, through the Reformation in Geneva, tried to reform relational life by abolishing monasticism, arguing against the celibacy of clergymen, and strongly encouraging all adults, if it was possible for them, to get married.\(^{14}\) In other words, restoring marriage in a healthy way was recognized as an important aspect of the Reformation in Geneva.\(^{15}\)

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 14.
\(^{12}\) Ibid.
\(^{13}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) Witte, Sex, Marriage, and Family, 1:455.
\(^{15}\) Kingdon points out that what those reformers did “left the nuclear family, husband and wife and children plus some resident domestic servants, as the only approved kind of life style in Reformation Geneva. And the Consistory was the most important institution charged with implementing this ideal.”
According to Calvin, marriage has three main purposes which are all based on the Scriptures. First, “It fosters the mutual love and support of husband and wife.” Second, “It enables the licit protection and nurture of children.” Third, “It protects both husband and wife from sexual sin and temptation.” For realizing these purposes, Calvin himself in 1545 and 1546 wrote a Marriage Ordinance which has detailed rules for “weddings, marital property, household relations, spousal care and responsibilities, impotence, abuse, adultery, desertion, separation, and divorce.” Although the Genevan city government at that time did not officially accept this Marriage Ordinance, Witte points out, “Our research reveals that many of its provisions did in fact guide the Consistory and Council in the succeeding years.” In addition to this, in order to guide people’s married life, what Calvin did was not only drafting statutes including the Marriage Ordinance, but he and his colleagues also made practical efforts in various ways. Thus, it is clear that insistence on marriage or family life actually played an important role in the Reformation in Geneva society.

3. Children

Next, we will pay attention to the issue of how children were treated in the 16th century in Geneva. The following three points will help us to see this: religious education for children, their legal protection, and legitimacy.

Kingdon, “Calvin and the Family,” 15. Furthermore, besides abolishing those two lifestyles, reformers strictly prohibited immoral behaviors or sins related to marriage or family life, such as adultery, fornication, premarital sex, incest, and polygamy. Those actual cases are reported in detail. See Witte, Sex, Marriage, and Family, 1:251-61, 1:299-309, 1:342-53, 1:375-82, 1:432-44.


17. Ibid. What Witte Jr. summarizes here is based on Calvin, Commentary, and Lecture on Gen. 1:27-28, 2:18, 2:21-22; Commentary, and Sermon on 1 Cor. 9:11; Commentary, and Sermon on Eph. 5:22-31.

18. Witte, Sex, Marriage, and Family, 1:12.


20. Those practical efforts are such as working as matchmakers (ibid., 1:107), protecting the consent of women for marriage (ibid., 1:127), being heavily involved in divorce and remarriage issues (Witte, “Marriage and Family Life,” 464). In regard to the statutes Calvin drafted, see ibid., 456.
First, it is well known that in the Reformation in Geneva, religious education through
the catechism was strongly emphasized. The Ecclesiastical Ordinances in 1541 state, “At noon
on Sundays all citizens and inhabitants shall take or send their children to catechism.”²¹ The
Ordinances add to this, “When a child has been sufficiently instructed to pass on from the
catechism, he shall solemnly recite the sum of what is contained in it, and he shall do this as a
profession of his Christianity in the presence of the church.”²² This instruction was valued since
it was related to the admission to participation in the Lord’s Supper, and the responsibility of
fathers, in that context, was clarified.²³ In addition to this religious education, the Ordinances set
a section about “Establishing of a College,” and say, “it will be necessary to build a college for
the purpose of instructing them [children] with a view to preparing them both for the ministry
and the civil government.”²⁴ Here, it is noted that, besides religious education at the church
through the use of the catechism, public education for children was also taken into account in
Geneva.

Second, through exploring various marital cases treated by the Consistory and the
Council, it is recognized that the Consistory and the Council tried to protect children legally since
they tended to be taken lightly.²⁵ Also, it is noted that in treating marital property cases, how to

²¹ Witte, Sex, Marriage, and Family, 1:91 [CO 10 (CR 38): 15-30]. In “Marriage and Family
Life,” Witte also states, “They [reformers] put firm new stock in catechesis and education of children, and
created new schools, curricula, and teaching aids for boys and girls. They provided new sanctuaries and
Also see Karen E. Spierling, Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community,
Consistory and Council placed on establishing schools and holding regular catechism services does not set
Geneva apart but, rather, places it firmly within a general trend of the Reformation period.” Then, Spierling
refers to practices of education in Germany and France. Furthermore, Spierling points out that there were
some struggles practically for the Genevan authorities to “enforce catechism attendance.” Ibid., 203.
²² Ibid., 1:91.
²³ Ibid. At the end of this section, the Ordinances warn, “Those who contravene this order shall
be called before the Company of elders and delegates (commis). And if they are unwilling to comply with
good counsel the matter shall be reported to the Council.”
²⁴ Ibid., 1:90.
²⁵ Robert M. Kingdon, Adultery and Divorce in Calvin’s Geneva (Cambridge, MA / London:
Harvard Univ. Press, 1995), 45, 87, 92, 94, and so on. For example, among numerous cases of divorce in
support children financially often became an important issue. In relation to cases of inheritance of children, Calvin and his colleagues insisted that each child needed to be treated fairly and equally. In short, in treating various cases which were related to family life or marriage, the basic attitude of the Consistory and the Council was to protect children as well mothers.

Third, while trying to protect children as mentioned above, Calvin paid attention to the legitimacy of children. If a child was born through illegitimate marriage such as polygamy, that child would not have legitimacy. Calvin, in his lecture on Malachi 2:15-16 (1559) states: “He [God] sought then the seed of God, that is, he instituted marriage so that legitimate and pure offspring might be brought forth. Thus the prophet indirectly shows that all children born of polygamy are bastards. They cannot be deemed legitimate children; only those who are born according to God’s institution for marriage are legitimate.” This clarifies that in Calvin’s thought sonship is a forensic status, and needs to be legitimate. In Geneva, this thought was actually put into practice. The reason Calvin and his colleagues put this into practice was to protect the purity of marriage and build it on a biblical basis. But, this does not mean that they neglected or ignored illegitimate children. Witte points out, “In Geneva, principal responsibility

16th century Geneva, Kingdon refers to a case related to the legal protection for children, “This situation came to the attention of the Small Council when they received a petition from Benoite’s relatives [wife’s side] to take legal steps to appoint a guardian for her children.” Ibid., 45. Also, see Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family*, 1:38.

27. Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family*, 1:389. “Calvin endorsed a proposed engagement contract where a man . . . required her not to pick favorites among the children in distributing her inheritance, particularly not children from a subsequent marriage.” This case is recorded in ibid., 1:402-3. Also ibid., 1:410 refers to a similar case.

30. For example, see Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family*, 1:267-68, 292, 421-22. These cases were treated by the Consistory or the Council, and show that they pay attention, in their treatment, to the legitimacy of children.

32. Regarding the treatment of illegitimate children in Geneva, an interesting case is reported. See the case of De la Mar in E. A. de Boer, The *Genevan School of the Prophets: The Congrégation of Pastors and Their Influence in the 16th century Europe* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012), 100: “In August 1551 Philibert De la Mar was accused of having fathered a child out of wedlock. The fifteen day old child was placed on his doorstep.” Regarding this case, E. A. de Boer further wrote to the present writer: “The
for an illegitimate child lay with the father and his family.”

4. The Practice of Adoption

a. Geneva

Unfortunately, it is not clear how human adoption was practically treated in that era. Even Witte’s *Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin’s Geneva*, recognized by many as the best work focusing on family life in Geneva, does not refer to adoption.

But it is clear that there were practices of adopting children in 16th century Geneva. For example, “the canon law,” a comprehensive law of marriage set by the medieval church, refers to two types of impediments of marriage. Under the second impediment which was called “absolute impediments” rendering “the putative marriage void,” the canon law states, “Parents could not marry their adopted children or grandchildren, nor the spouses of their adopted children.” This is a clear evidence of practices of adoption, at least, prior to the Reformation in

consistory records reveal more details on the case. A report was made to the police by a Martin Bellen that in his barn, ‘they had found a small child, recently born, in a basket and also in it was a note saying that this child was to be given to Philibert de la Mar.’ The minutes further state that De la Mar, being summoned to the barn, had taken the child and did not want to return it, saying that he wanted to show it to his brother and meanwhile would care for the child. Yet Philibert denied that the child was his. . . . The minutes of the City’s Council show that at an early stage Calvin was anxious to have the matter resolved since the baby was not yet baptized. The council decided already in August that the child should be baptized and be cared for at the expense of the one who would turn out to be the father. While De la Mar kept denying paternity, on 15 September he states ‘that if anyone wants to say and declare that the said child is his, he is ready to answer and do his duty.’ No further record of a legal acknowledgement of paternity is kept. The story of Philibert de la Mar, a man from prominent family, and his supposed illegitimate child brings us close to the concept of adoption in Genevan society.” E. A. de Boer, e-mail message to the present writer, June 23, 2015.

33. Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family*, 1:267. Karen Spierling also refers to the issue of how illegitimate children were treated in Europe, although not specifically in Geneva. “By the mid-sixteenth century, then, illegitimate children were more or less accepted as a part of society across Europe. Official attitudes toward illegitimacy may have been harsh, but practice generally seems to have been attuned more to providing for such children than to excluding them from church or society.” Spierling, *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva*, 162. Spierling also points out that even illegitimate children were accepted by the church for baptism. Ibid., 192.

34. Spierling’s work *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva* does not refer to “adoption” either, although it treats illegitimate children in relation to infant baptism.

35. About the canon law, see Witte, *Sex, Marriage, and Family*, 1:32-38.

Geneva. With regard to practices of adoption after the Reformation, Witte, in listing what Calvin and his colleagues did in relation to family life, writes as follows: “They reformed the laws of marital property and inheritance, dowry and dower rights, guardianship and adoption.” In addition to this, in relation to the three purposes of marriage mentioned above, Calvin and his co-workers set five practical lessons to realize the three purposes. As a fourth lesson, summarizes Witte, “Calvin counseled married couples to retain a healthy sex life, even after their child bearing years.” Then he continues, “If a couple proved barren, Calvin urged them to accept this as an opportunity to love otherwise. Those who are barren should sponsor or adopt orphans, nurture and care for their nephews and nieces, or find other ways of serving the next generation.” In short, although exactly how adoption was concretely treated is not clear, it is assumed that there were practices of adoption in Calvin’s 16th century Geneva.

b. Disuse of Adoption in 16th Century France?

Interestingly, no report on human adoption in the Consistory minutes, at least on the basis of Witte’s comprehensive work, fits in with the historical situation which the society of early modern France faced in 16th and 17th centuries. According to K. E. Gager’s work Blood Ties and Fictive Ties, Denis Le Brun, an influential jurist in 17th century France, states that “while

37. Witte, “Marriage and Family Life,” 455. Cf. see page 7n17 in chapter 1 of this study. Hammond, The Institutes of Justinian, 103-11. It is pointed out that the practice of adoption was already established in the Roman law. The right of those adopted was legally protected and secured. Besides this, in considering Calvin’s educational background majoring in law, it is possible to assume that, when using the word “adoption” in his confessions, he had in mind the concept of the Roman adoption which was legally protected and secured. Regarding his educational background, see Wulfert de Greef, The Writings of John Calvin: An Introductory Guide, trans. Lyle D. Bierma (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 4-5.

38. Witte, “Marriage and Family Life,” 463 (463; italics mine). This is based on Comm. and Lect. On Gen. 1:28; Comm. on Ps. 127:3, 128:3; Comm. and Serm. on 1 Tim. 5:14. Also, four other practical lessons are as follows: 1) setting norms for courtship (Comm. and Lect. On Gen. 6:2), 2) teaching people not to court and marry non-believers (Comm. and Serm. on 1 Cor. 7:12-16), 3) recognizing “sexual dysfunction as a serious impediment” (Comm. on Gen. 2:22-24; Comm. and Serm. on 1 Cor. 6:16; Comm. Harm. Gosp. Matt. 19:12), 4) emphasizing the good purposes of marriage to “deal with the hard questions of divorce on grounds of adultery and malicious desertion” (Comm. Harm. Gosp. Matt. 19:3-9; Serm. on Deut. 24:1-4). See Witte, “Marriage and Family Life,” 461-64.
adoption had been common in antiquity and even in the early Middle Ages, the institution [of adoption] was no longer commensurate with the structure and goals of the early modern family and consequently had fallen into disuse beginning in the sixteenth century.\(^{39}\) Although the investigation Gager does in her work is related to early modern France, it is worth noting in terms of the practice of adoption in 16th Geneva, in considering the close relation of Calvin as well as Geneva to France, especially in the context of the reformation in that country.\(^{40}\) Gager’s work provides us with a sociological background in which the practice of adoption was almost rejected in the customary law of early modern France. Other countries in western Europe were also part of that sociological phenomenon.

Regarding this disuse of adoption in 16th century France, while various factors behind it need to be taken into account,\(^{41}\) the most influential factor, on the basis of the research done by Gager, was the sociological or cultural perspective of the era in that adoption was recognized as “unnatural” to the laws of Nature as well as to Christianity. More precisely, in that era, it was culturally general for the society of early modern France to regard the rights of natal fathers over their children as “sacred” or “inalienable.”\(^{42}\) Besides this social or cultural factor, the religious perspective from the Catholic and Protestant sides, because of their stance against extramarital sex, reinforced this tendency of disusing adoption. This is because “adoption had been employed historically as an avenue for fathers to bring their illegitimate sons surreptitiously into the legitimate family fold.”\(^{43}\) Considering this, it is understandable that the practice of adoption


\(^{41}\) Gager, op. cit., 3. Other important factors are as follows: people were afraid 1) of exposing, through adoption, their barren state to publicity, 2) of being perceived as not accepting the will of God by “challenging the natural order of things,” 3) of causing any complexity in the case that a biological child was born in the future after adopting a child, and 4) people, especially noble or wealthy families, tended to adhere to keep their family bloodline.

\(^{42}\) Ibid.

\(^{43}\) Ibid.
could be a threat to the emphasis by church leaders, especially the reformers, that “marriage stand as the sole arena for sexual activity and as the sole avenue to the creation of a family.”

Gager further argues that in terms of the legal perspective of modern Europe as well, the same tendency is also recognized, according to her research of legal documents in that era. Then, after referring to the official denial of the inheritance rights of the adopted child in early modern France, Gager writes, “The rejection of adoption by early modern civil law codes in France and in most other western European countries persisted until the twentieth century.”

c. Adoption Survived

This phenomenon of the disuse of adoption across France and western Europe also fits in with the historical context of 16th Geneva, in which the nuclear family style was strongly recommended and the legitimacy of children was significantly valued by reformers. Furthermore, considering that human adoption was used as a secular avenue to bring illegitimate children into their legitimate status, it was imaginable that the practice of adoption could be also a threat to the Reformation in Geneva, in which those reformers tried to restore a healthy family

44. Gager, Blood Ties and Fictive Ties, 3-4. Although Gager does not get into its detail, according to her, the tendency of disusing adoption appeared to be seen in Geneva as well. She, in passing, refers to Beza, saying that “Theodore Beza in Geneva simply assumed that adoption had ceased to be practiced in that sixteenth-century community.” Her remark is based on Theodore Beza, Tractatio de repudiis et divorciis (Geneva, 1573), 204, cited in Natalie Z. Davis, “Ghosts, Kin and Progeny. Some Features of Family Life in Early Modern France,” Daedalus 106, no. 2 (Spring 1977), 113n56. It is regrettable that Gager does not quote anything directly from Beza.

45. Gager, op. cit., 6: “Early modern French civil law stopped short of embracing adoption as a legitimate avenue for creating primary ties of filiation. The most concrete manifestation of the legal prejudice against adoption appears in the multitude of regional customary law codes . . . which explicitly denied adopted children the same inheritance rights accorded to legitimate, biological children. The jurist Jean Imbert put it quite succinctly when he commented that ‘in France, an adopted child cannot inherit.’” Gager refers to Jean Imbert, Enchiridion ou recueil de droit écrit (Paris, 1611), 103.

46. Ibid., 7.

47. Kingdon, “Calvin and the Family,” 15. According to Kingdon’s research, the nuclear family style was “the only approved kind of lifestyle in Reformation Geneva.” Also see Robert M. Kingdon and Thomas A. Lambert, Reforming Geneva: Discipline, Faith and Anger in Calvin’s Geneva (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012), 78: “The lifestyle of the nuclear family had been the most common in Europe before the Reformation, in both rural and urban areas. After the Reformation it becomes the only lifestyle that was encouraged.” Also see Gager, op. cit., 18.
lifestyle in their city, emphasizing the importance of marriage and of sexual purity, as we have seen.

Then, did the practice of adoption completely disappear in western Europe in that era? Whereas from the legal perspective, some convincing claims of the disappearance were made historically in the past, the disuse of adoption is just one side of the story, at least in early modern France. Gager, by providing actual cases of practicing adoption, argues that despite the legal rejection of adoption with the termination of “inheritance rights for the adopted children in the sixteenth-century customary law codes,” adoption practically survived among individuals who desperately needed it.48 There were two major areas facilitating the practice of adoption in early modern France. First, adoption was necessary for ordinary or poor families who had no child but needed to maintain their family line by adopting a child. According to Gager, those families were mostly from the laboring, merchant, and artisan classes since they did not need to care about the inheritance of their wealth or blood line just as notable families did, but needed to keep “the continuity of their family line into the next generation.”49 The avenue they used to secure the family line was private adoption between two households which was often found in the registers recorded by notaries in early modern France.50 Second, adoption was also crucial for helping numerous foundlings in that era, and charity hospices were used as the most viable avenue for this purpose.51 Those cases of fostering orphaned or abandoned children to local families have

49. See ibid., 103. Gager points out that people from those classes had a different perspective of family life: “This model of parenthood [derived from adoption] formed part of an alternative, though complementary, culture of family life, which . . . was characterized by flexible domestic boundaries by which a child from another family could become an affiliated family member and an heir to the family name and property.” On the other hand, “With few exceptions, due to the concrete legal obstacles and to their firm belief in the biological basis of family lineage, noble families rejected this model of adoptive reproduction.”
50. Ibid., 8-10, 71-104. Although because of the issue of inheritance, the practice of adoption was legally rejected, Gager points out that the legal rejection could be loosely interpreted and local notaries “were adept at interpreting the law in such a way to meet the needs of their clients” who needed to adopting a child. Ibid., 104.
51. Ibid., 8, 105-123, 156: “This system [of charity hospice] persisted in large measure because
also been recorded in the registers of various notaries in that era.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, Gager, by exploring those notary registers, digs out numerous cases of the practice of adoption, offering “a social and cultural portrait of adoption and family life in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century Paris.”\textsuperscript{53}

Of course, it is beyond the scope of the present study to get into those actual cases of adoption presented by Gager in the context of early modern France, but here is an issue relevant to family life in 16th century Geneva. Whereas Witte and Kingdon do a fairly comprehensive investigation, delving into the Consistory minutes, the numerous cases of adoption discovered by Gager help us to know what Witte and Kingdon lack in terms of family life in 16th century Geneva. What they do lack is the investigation into the registers recorded by local notaries in that era of Geneva. Considering that there must have been poor families and foundlings in Geneva in Calvin’s era, it is highly plausible that investigation of notary registers will throw light on practices of adoption which the Consistory minutes do not record.

5. Conclusion

As we have seen, the Reformation in Geneva practically had some significant aspects related to family life. Some would think that what those reformers put into practice might not have any theological relevance to the present study, but it is still significant that in the midst of their various efforts for restoring healthy family life, Calvin spoke in a theological context to the people in that city about the grace of God the Father, his adoptive act, the grace of joining God’s family as his children, and other issues inseparable from divine adoption. Here it should be noted that those who heard directly from Calvin about the grace of adoption were the brothers and sisters in adoption offered a solution to the dilemma of rapidly growing numbers of orphaned and abandoned children assigned to the care of the city’s charity hospices.” Regarding the basic function of charity hospices in that era, see Gager, \textit{Blood Ties and Fictive Ties}, 105-6.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. 8-10.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 11.
Geneva whom he and his colleagues tried to help to build healthy families based on the biblical values. If we take this familial aspect into account, not only the familial landscape in Geneva, but also its theological landscape would be changed in exploring the confessional documents written by Calvin.

A. The First Edition of the Institutes (Calvin, 1536)

1. Background: For Pleading to the French King

The first (Latin) edition of the Institutes (hereafter “the 1536 Institutes”) was published in 1536 in Basel.\textsuperscript{54} At that time the following two things motivated Calvin to write this first edition: to plead with the French king that persecution towards the evangelicals in France might be stopped and to provide catechetical material for his colleagues in his country.\textsuperscript{55}

First, it is well known that the first edition of the 1536 Institutes starts with a letter to Francis, the French king. The circumstance behind this letter was the severe persecution against evangelicals in France. This situation compelled Calvin to write the 1536 Institutes with a letter to the king in order to show the king that the evangelicals should not be identified with Anabaptists, and ask him to stop the persecution by clarifying through the 1536 Institutes what those evangelicals believed.\textsuperscript{56} This circumstance naturally led Calvin, in writing the 1536 Institutes, to

\textsuperscript{54} De Greef, The Writings of John Calvin, 182-83. The work of this first edition itself was finished in 1535 with a letter dated August 23 in that year. It is assumed that Calvin collected all the necessary materials for this edition when he stayed in the south of France at the house of Louis du Tillet, pastor in Claix and a canon of the cathedral in Angoulême. Louis du Tille personally owned a large library. Also see, Willem van’t Spijker, Calvin: A Brief Guide to His Life and Thought, trans. Lyle D. Bierna (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 28; Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536 Edition), trans. Ford L. Battles (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), xxxvii.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., xlv. In the letter to the French king, Calvin calls the 1536 Institutes a confession. “Consequently, it seemed to me that I should be doing something worthwhile if I both gave instruction to those I had undertaken to instruct and made confession [confessionem] before you with the same work.” Ibid., 1 [CO 1 (CR 29), 9]; Maruyama, Calvin’s Reformation Ecclesiology, 116.

\textsuperscript{56} De Greef, The Writings of John Calvin, 183; Van’t Spijker, op. cit., 29. Van’t Spijker points out that many of the evangelicals were forcefully put by the king into the same camp with the “Münster
choose a theological path as a middle path between the Roman Catholic Church and Anabaptists.57

Regarding the second motivation, after his conversion, Calvin started having opportunities to teach people and this led him to notice the catechetical need of the people in his country.58 “Many of them hungered and thirsted after Christ, but only a few had even a mediocre knowledge of him.”59 Thus, keeping this need in mind, Calvin prepared the 1536 Institutes as a catechetical tool.60

2. Characteristics: Written as a Catechism

In the present study, there are two characteristics of the 1536 Institutes which we need to take into account: 1) its sources and 2) its structure. First, there are various possible sources Calvin used. Ganoczy lists the following works, “systematic works of Melanchthon and Zwingli,” “the

Anabaptists, who had been defeated by the German princes.” Because of this situation, the Institutes, at least at this edition, can be recognized as a “confessional defense to the king for the evangelicals in France.” De Greef, op. cit., 183.

57. Battles, “Introduction,” in Inst. (1536), xlv, xlviii. Battles also points out that this circumstance influenced on Calvin’s future theological orientation as well. “Hence, Calvin’s future theological course was determined: to hold a middle direction between the right and left. This was not a prudent compromise, but a judgment securely grounded on Calvin’s own independent study of Scripture. The later development of his theological system is an extending and perfecting of this initial polarity.” Ibid., xlv.

58. Ibid., xxxvii. Regarding the time of his conversion (subita conversio), there are different opinions about when it was. Even among recent works, there is some variety. Neuser dates it to the years 1528-1529, while introducing other possibilities. W. Neuser, “Person” in The Calvin Handbook, 25-26. De Greef dates it to the year of 1533. De Greef, op. cit., 7. It is likely that Van’t Spijker dates it to the year around 1533-1534, although explaining what “subita conversion” meant for Calvin is more important than when it was. Van’t Spijker, Calvin, 18-24.

59. Ibid., 30.

homilies and treatises of Luther” and “the commentaries of Bucer.” On the other hand, Battles refers to Luther’s works, especially his Small and Large Catechisms, as the most possible sources for the 1536 Institutes. However, both Battles and Ganoczy have in common at the point that Calvin, while learning from other sources, always takes his own way.

Second, regarding its structure, it is recognized that the 1536 Institutes follows Luther’s catechism putting the Decalogue, the Apostle’s Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Sacraments in the same order. But according to Battles, catechetical literature in the late Middle Age could be also a possible source of this order. In other words, it is possible to say that although he might add the sacraments to it, Luther takes this late medieval order, and Calvin just follows him. At any rate, the fact that the 1536 Institutes has this order in the first four chapters indicates that it was written originally as a catechism.

3. Relevant Issues

In considering the contents of the 1536 Institutes, it is difficult to treat every possible issue related to the concept of adoption. In the 1536 Institutes, there are five places with direct reference to adoption: two places in Chapter 1 treating the law, two in Chapter 2 relating to the Creed, and one

61. Ganoczy, The Young Calvin, 135. De Greef also refers to the theologians’ names mentioned above. De Greef, The Writings of John Calvin, 185. Also, Ganoczy adds Erasmus and Jacques Lefèvre to the lists as “an excursus” which might have influenced the 1536 Institutes.
63. Ibid., xlvii-xlxi; Ganoczy, op. cit., 135. Battles writes, “In dealing with these basic documents of the faith, Calvin quite often seems to follow, but always in his own independent way, Martin Luther. This is especially true in his treatment of the Decalogue.” Also, Ganoczy, “Calvin used these authors only to understand the Bible. . . he then used the Bible to judge the works he was reading. At the end of this time of reflection, Calvin’s fruitful mind gave birth to the first edition of the Institutes.”
64. Battles, “Introduction,” xlviii-xlxi; De Greef, op. cit., 185; Van’t Spijker, Calvin, 30.
65. Battles, “Introduction,” xlvii-xlvi. Also, see OER, s.v. “Catechisms.” D. Janz, after analysing three typical confessional documents in the late Middle Ages, points out, “The relationship between late medieval and Reformation catechisms is one of continuity and development.”
66. The Geneva Confession (1536) also shares this structure with the 1536 Institutes.
67. Here, the English translations of the 1536 Institutes are taken from Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536 Edition), trans. Ford L. Battles, and the original texts are from CO (CR 29) 1:10-247. In his translation, Battles himself refers to page numbers in CO.
in Chapter 3 concerning the Lord’s Prayer. Here we focus on three of these five references. In exploring them, it is noticeable that each context has, in addition to the concept of adoption itself, some issues inseparable from the concept forming a small theological framework.

a. In the Context of Justification

In Chapter 1, after explaining the Decalogue and before entering Chapter 2, the 1536 Institutes treats the doctrine of justification. Calvin, after referring to election and redemption, has a reference to both the concept of adoption and becoming heirs of the kingdom. In clarifying what “the foundation” mentioned by Paul means, Calvin states, “It is that we have been adopted unto him as sons and heirs by the Father [in ipso adoptati a patre summus, in filios et haeredes] [cf. Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:5-7].” Then, the following context deserves our attention because it has numerous issues which are related to this concept of adoption, such as Christ’s brotherhood, predestination, and our conforming to the image of the Son. Furthermore, in treating the good works of God’s children, the 1536 Institutes refers to union with Christ, the communal aspect of

68. Although there is no reference to adoption in Chapter 4 treating the sacraments, it has numerous relational issues, such as union with Christ, the wonderful exchange, and so on. See Inst. (1536), 93-96, 98, 100-3, 109-10; CO 1, 109-11, 114, 116-17, 119, 126-27. On the other hand, Chapter 5 dealing with “The Five False Sacraments” has one place which has a direct reference to adoption, but this section skips it. This is because the location in Chapter 5 does not sufficiently deepen the meaning of the concept of adoption in the context of refuting the false sacraments. Inst. (1536), 161 [CO 1 (CR 29), 180], “For He is elsewhere called ‘the Spirit of life’ [Ezek. 1:20, Vg.], ‘of sanctification’ [Rom. 1:4, Vg.], ‘of adoption of sons [adoptionis filiorum discitur]’ [Rom. 8:15, Vg.]; while he is there called ‘the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, and fear of the Lord.’ [Is. 11:2].”

69. Prior to the context of justification, the 1536 Institutes directly refers to the concept of adoption in the context of God’s love in Christ in Chapter 1 treating the law. See Inst. (1536), 18 [CO 1 (CR 29), 30]. In explaining what Christ has done for us, and our new way of life based on salvation, it states: “Through him we are reborn, wrested from the power and chains of the devil, freely adopted as children of God [in filios Dei gratuato adoptamur], sanctified for every good work.” In this context, a small theological framework is formed ranging from the Incarnation through the consummation around the concept of adoption.

70. Inst. (1536), 37 [CO 1 (CR 29), 51].

71. Inst. (1536), 38 [CO 1 (CR 29), 52]. “He laid down his life for his brothers [animam suam pro fratribus posuit] [John 10:15, cf. John 15:13],” and “The Father has predestined [praedestinarit] those whom he has chosen in himself to conform to the image of his Son that Christ himself may be the first born among many brethren [Rom. 8:29].”
the union, and the characteristics of God’s children.\textsuperscript{72} Then, at the end of this context, the concept of adoption appears again through referring to the inheritance of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{73} In short, here the concept of adoption with its inseparable issues covers the concepts of predestination, justification, and sanctification, forming a soteriological framework.

b. In the Context of Christology

In Chapter 2, Calvin, in the second part treating Christology, uses the concept of adoption for distinguishing the relationship between God the Father and the Son from that existing between the Father and believers. This reference helps us to see a way in which Calvin uses the concept. “He is the Son, not as believers are – by adoption and grace only [\textit{non ut fideles, adoptio duntaxat et gratiae}] – but by nature, begotten of the Father from eternity.”\textsuperscript{74} Here it is clear that what adoption describes is a relational concept clarifying the difference between our relation to the Father and the Son’s natural relation to him. In the following context of describing the Incarnation and the Mediator’s role, the 1536 \textit{Institutes} conceptually depicts adoption without using the exact word.\textsuperscript{75} Furthermore, at the end of this context, the 1536 \textit{Institutes} describes adoption and the inheritance of the adopted through referring to the wonderful exchange. “What was ours, he [the Son] willed to belong to himself, so that what was his might belong to us . . . . This is our hope, that the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom may be ours, because God’s only

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Inst.} (1536), 39-40 [\textit{CO} I (CR 29), 53-54]. “If men have to be aroused to good works no one could put sharper spurs to them than Paul admonishes . . . when he [Christ] enjoys us, after we are the one body of Christ [\textit{unum corps Christi}] . . . that we are members of the same body. . . . God’s children [\textit{filios Dei}] differ from the devil’s children as children of light . . . because they abide in love.”

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Inst.} (1536), 40 [\textit{CO} I (CR 29), 54]. “Indeed the kingdom of heaven is not servants’ wages but sons’ inheritance [\textit{filiorum est haereditas}], which only those who have been adopted [\textit{cooptati}] as sons by the Lord will obtain; and for no other reason than this adoption [\textit{hanc adoptionem}] [Eph 1:18].”

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Inst.} (1536), 50 [\textit{CO} I (CR 29), 64].

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Inst.} (1536), 51 [\textit{CO} I (CR 29), 65]. “The Mediator was . . . to make children of God [\textit{filios Dei faceret}] out of children of men; out of heirs of Gehenna to make heirs of the heavenly kingdom [\textit{coelestis regni haeredes}].”
Son . . . has adopted us as his brothers."76 Here it is important to notice that Calvin, besides using the concept of adoption for distinguishing the Son’s relation to the Father from our relation to him, also uses it to clarify the relationship between the Son and believers by the phrase “God’s only Son . . . has adopted us as his brothers.”77 In short, while focusing on Christology, here the concept of adoption functions as a relational concept clarifying the relationship between the Father, the Son, and God’s children.

c. In the Context of the Lord’s Prayer78

In Chapter 3, the concept of adoption is closely related to the Fatherhood of God in the exposition of the Lord’s Prayer. “If we had not been adopted to Christ as children of grace [nisi in Christo adoptati essemus in filios gratiae], with what assurance would anyone have addressed God as the Father?”79 This clarifies that adoption is a crucial issue for believers to call God the Father. Immediately after this, adoption is mentioned again as an important factor for us to be partakers of what belongs to the Son.80 Furthermore, in the following context, the 1536 Institutes shows the communal aspect of calling our Father.81 In short, here the concept of adoption is

76. Inst. (1536), 51 [CO 1 (CR 29), 65]. Here Battles adds Rom. 8:17 as a biblical reference to this reference.
77. It is also worth noticing that Calvin describes the adoptive act here as the Son’s act. So far as the author of this study knows, this is the only place where the Son takes the role of the adoption agent.
78. Prior to this context, the 1536 Institutes directly refers to the concept of adoption twice in the context of ecclesiology, in the fourth part of chapter 2 treating the Creed. See Inst. (1536), 58-60 [CO 1 (CR 29), 73-74]. In explaining what the church means, it says, “It [the church] is also holy, because as many as have been chosen by God’s eternal providence to be adopted [cooptarentur] as members of the church—all these are made holy by the Lord.” Then, the concept appears again when the 1536 Institutes refers to the brotherhood with Christ, “We also through him have been adopted [per ipsum in Dei filias sumus adoptati] as children of God, and are his brothers and companions [fratres ac consortes] in such a way as to be partakers of the same inheritance.” Around the concept of adoption, a small framework is formed ranging from predestination through the inheritance of God’s children.
79. Inst. (1536), 76 [CO 1 (CR 29), 90]. Here it is noted that we are adopted to Christ. Christ is recognized as the object to which believers are adopted by God. This also reinforces the way Calvin uses adoption as a relational concept between the Father, the Son, and God’s children, as mentioned above.
80. Inst. (1536), 76 [CO 1 (CR 29), 90]. “Christ, the true Son, has been given to us as our brother by him in order that what belongs to him by nature may become ours by benefit of adoption [adoptionis beneficio].”
81. Inst. (1536), 77 [CO 1 (CR 29), 91]. “He willed that we call him not only ‘Father’ but
related to other relevant issues, such as the assurance of the adopted children of God, the grace of calling the Father, becoming partakers of Christ’s benefits, and the communal aspect of calling the Father although the theological framework here is not as extensive as the others mentioned above since the context here revolves around the issue of prayer.

4. Theological Analysis

Here are five issues we need to take into account for analyzing the 1536 Institutes. First, the 1536 Institutes treats adoption in a balanced way. Its treatment surfaces in three main elements in catechetical documents – the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer – and in these treatments we recognize the multiple aspects of adoption relating to various theological issues.82

Second, the next issue is related to the multiple aspects of adoption. As we have seen, the concept of adoption theologically forms a small framework, relating to other inseparable issues. This clearly shows that the concept functions, like a unifying thread, as an underlying theme or an overarching principle which has the potential to connect other theological issues with each another.83 Furthermore, this theological thread is very flexible in forming a theological framework. It covers five different contexts: the Decalogue, justification, Christology, ecclesiology, and prayer, and is interconnected with other issues.

Third, the treatment of the Fatherhood of God is also worth noticing here. The Fatherhood, in the soteriological context, appears ninety-six times covering its entire text from explicitly ‘our Father’ [non modo pater sed nominatim noster dici voluit].”

82. A word search also shows this balanced way of treating adoption. The word adoptio including its verb form adopto appears eight times throughout the 1536 Institutes as follows: CO 1, 30 (in the context of the law); 51, 54 (justification); 65, 74 (the Creed); 90 twice (the Lord’s Prayer); 180 (ecclesiastical orders in the five false sacraments). Also, among the three other verbs (coopt, ascisco, and assumo) which Calvin uses for describing the adoptive act in the Institutes (1559), only coopto appears three times in the 1536 Institutes referring to the concept of adoption. See CO 1, 54 (justification); 73, 76 (the Creed). On the other hand, there is no mention of adoption in the sacraments although they keep the relational tone by repeatedly referring to union with Christ or other relational issues.

83. See pages 29-30, 41-42 in chapter 1 of the present study.
Chapters 1 through 6. In particular, it is noted that forty cases of them appear in Chapter 3 treating the issue of prayer. This fact leads us to recognize that in Calvin’s thought, the Fatherhood plays an important role in the soteriological context, especially prayer. This reminds us of Luther’s treatment as well, which is significant in the context in which Luther treats prayer in his catechisms. However, in considering that Luther’s emphasis is relatively more on God’s sovereignty or his Creatorship, rather than the redemptive Fatherhood, the way Calvin treats the Fatherhood differs from Luther’s. In the soteriological context, Calvin’s treatment of the Fatherhood takes a balanced approach, whereas it plays a more significant role in relation to prayer.

Fourth, as we have seen in Christology, Calvin uses adoption as a relational concept for clarifying the relationship between the Father, the Son, and believers. Although the concept of adoption entails some forensic aspects, such as becoming heirs and a change of status, Calvin’s use of the concept here clearly shows that adoption is not only forensic but also significantly relational. Other confessional documents written prior to Calvin also have this relational concept but they do so in a subtle way. So far as this study explores confessional documents, here Calvin, in the clearest manner, uses adoption as a relational concept giving clarity to the relationship between the Father, the Son and believers.

Finally, it is generally recognized that Calvin’s treatment of adoption is characterized as

84. See page 109 in chapter 3 of this study.
85. See page 105 in ibid. In Luther’s thought, there is tension between God’s sovereignty and his Fatherhood as Luther treats the doctrine of God. Peters, Commentary on Luther’s Catechisms: Creed, 60. Here Peters refers to Luther’s sermon, “Eine kurze Form, 1520,” WA 7:216.18-29.
86. This does not mean that in Calvin’s thought, God’s sovereignty or his Creatorship is treated lightly. As the Book 1 of the Institutes (1559) clearly shows, they are critical issues for him in treating the doctrine of God.
87. The following documents show it by referring to Christ’s brotherhood. See Articles 8, 27 in Zwingli’s Sixty-Seven Articles, Article 2 in Zwingli’s Fidei ratio, Article 11 in the First Helvetic Confession. But they focus on only the relationship between the Son and believers, and do not terminologically use “adoption.” Also, they do not describe the difference between the Sonship of Christ and the sonship of believers.
88. The Heidelberg Catechism takes the same way in HC 33-34.
Trinitarian as Westhead insists, “For Calvin, adoption is very much a privilege for which all three Persons of the Trinity are responsible.” However, in exploring the 1536 *Institutes*, it is difficult to see how the work of the Spirit of adoption is described in a significant way. In this research, the only place Calvin relates the filial notion to the Spirit is in the fourth part of Chapter 2 treating ecclesiology. “For here Paul . . . is describing to us the children of God [*tales nobis Dei filios*] in such a way that they can be recognized by us, namely those who are moved by the Spirit of God [Rom. 8:1, 14].” Although the Spirit is mentioned in the context in which the concept of adoption appears, and a scriptural reference here (Rom. 8:14) has relevance to the concept, the Spirit is not directly related to it. In this sense, it may be possible to say that Calvin at this point in time has not yet fully developed his Trinitarian orientation. But we shall return to this issue at the end of this chapter.

5. Conclusion

Even in the 1536 *Institutes*, Calvin already treats adoption in a rich manner. The 1536 *Institutes* shows the multiple aspects of adoption in the different contexts, through relating the concept to other relevant issues and by forming a theological framework at each of its appearances. It also treats the Fatherhood of God in the soteriological context in terms of the concept of adoption through using adoption as a relational concept giving clarity to the relationship between the Father, the Son, and believers.

**B. The Geneva Confession (Calvin, 1536)**

89. Westhead, “Adoption in the Thought of John Calvin,” 102. Then, Westhead says quoting from Calvin, “Our Assurance of God’s paternal care for us ‘is made certain by the Spirit of adoption’. In fact, says Calvin, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of adoption precisely ‘because he is the witness to us of the free benevolence of God’ (*Inst.*, 3.1.3).” The former quotation is from *Comm.* on Exod. 4:22f.

90. *Inst.* (1536), 59 [CO 1 (CR 29), 73].
1. Background: For Requiring Pledge

The *Geneva Confession* [*Confession de la Foy*] was published in Geneva in 1536 or 1537.\(^{91}\) In fact, Calvin’s first catechism, the *Instruction et confession de foy dont on use en l'eglise de Geneve* (hereafter the *Instruction* of 1537) also appeared in 1537.\(^{92}\) Since these two documents appeared during a short period of time, some would think about how they were used at that time. De Greef refers to the background of how the *Geneva Confession* was written. “The aforementioned *Instruction et confession de foy* had not been considered suitable for the inhabitants of Geneva as a confession of faith.”\(^{93}\) In fact, it is known that Calvin and Farel tried to enforce all the inhabitants to take oaths to the Confession.\(^{94}\) Regarding subscribing to the Confession, the way these reformers took was likely forceful, since they did not allow those who refused to consent to it to receive the Lord’s Supper.\(^{95}\) The purpose of reserving the Supper from those people was to make sure every citizen in the city had a genuine, evangelical faith.\(^{96}\) This purpose helps us to know the different role each of the *Geneva Confession* and the *Instruction* of 1537 played. The former functioned as a declaration of faith to which the inhabitants would need to consent, and the latter a teaching tool for the instruction of faith just as its title describes.\(^{97}\) However, the manner of withholding the Supper might have been so forceful that it did not

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91. The original title is “*Confession de la Foy laquelle tous bourgois et habitans de Geneve et subiez du pays doivent iurer de garder et tenir.*” CO 22 [CR 50], 86-95. It was published “without mention of either the name of the author or the date of publication.” De Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin*, 109.


93. Ibid. It is assumed that the brief style of the Confession was considered to be more suitable for people to understand, and consent to it. Kayayan, “Instruction of Faith in Geneva,” 628.


96. Watanabe, *The Instruction in Faith*, 140.

succeed in leading the people in the city to take the oath. In this process, the different stance between the reformers and the city government became obvious, and it led to the expulsion of Calvin and Farel from Geneva in April of 1538.98

With regard to the source, it is said that the Confession is based on the 1536 Institutes.99 This may be true, but possibly not so accurate. More precisely, it is noticeable that the Instruction of 1537 was written on the basis of the 1536 Institutes since they share the same structure.100 Then, Calvin wrote the Geneva Confession after summarizing and adding some changes to the Instruction of 1537.101

2. Characteristics: The Brief Style

Here we need to take into account the brief style of the Geneva Confession as relevant in terms of the present study.102 Since Calvin and Farel tried to use this Confession in order to require the inhabitants in Geneva to take oaths to it, it was necessary for the Confession to be brief and readable.103 This point is important for analyzing the confession as we shall see later.

3. Relevant Issues

In the texts of the Geneva Confession there is no place in which the word “adoption” is used for

99. CCF, 2:311.
100. Schaff, op. cit., 1:467-68; Watanabe, op. cit., 137.
101. The most obvious change was to add the first article “The Word of God.” Ibid., 140; CCF, 2:313; CO 22 [CR 50], 86. Both the 1536 Institutes and the Instruction of 1537 do not have this. In fact, there are some arguments regarding the authorship of the Confession. De Greef, op. cit., 109: “On the authority of Nicolas Colladon and Theodre Beza, it has long been accepted that Calvin was responsible for the confession of faith. But Labarthe has pointed out the great resemblance between the confession of faith and two earlier works by Farel.” Kayayan attributes it to Farel. Kayayan, op. cit., 623. At any rate, it is clear that the two reformers closely worked together in composing it. Maruyama, Calvin’s Reformation Ecclesiology, 157, 157n69.
describing its concept. This leads us to wonder why, since the 1536 Institutes, which treats adoption in a rich way, is one of the most important sources of the Confession. On the other hand, in the Confession, there are three relevant issues to the concept of adoption, i.e. the familial and filial notion in baptism, the Fatherhood of God in the soteriological context, and the treatment of the new birth. With regard to the reason the Confession lacks the wording “adoption,” we shall return to it as we analyze the Confession.

First, although the Confession does not directly refer to adoption, the familial and filial notion is significantly recognized in the context of baptism. Here Article 15 deserves our attention since it conceptually depicts the grace of adoption. “Baptism is an external sign by which our Lord testifies that he desires to receive us for his children, as members of his Son Jesus [pour ses enfans, comme membres de son Fils Jesus].” According to this article, it is possible to say that having union with Christ as his members is equal with entering the filial as well as familial relationship with God. Thus, the sign of baptism is clearly related to the filial notion of believers.

Second, the Fatherhood of God is treated at three places in the context of “Salvation in Jesus,” “Faith,” and “Prayer Intelligible.” Here we pay attention to the first one which is more significant than the other two. After referring to man’s fallen nature, and before describing

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104. Although we do not refer to it here, it is worth paying attention to union with Christ in the Supper. Article 16 refers to union with Christ: “The Supper of our Lord is a sign by which under bread and wine he represents to us the true spiritual communion [la vraye communication spirituelle] which we have in his body and blood.” CCF, 2:316 [CO 22 (CR 50): 91-92]. While baptism is related to the filial notion, the Confession, in treating the Supper, emphasizes the relational as well as communal aspect of it.

105. As we have seen, the 1536 Institutes also does not directly refer to the concept of adoption in the context of the sacraments. CCF, 2:313 [CO 22 (CR 50): 91].

106. CCF, 2:313 [CO 22 (CR 50): 91].

107. The following context also refers to union with Christ again in relation to “the mortification of our flesh.” “Since our children belong to such an alliance with our Lord [alliance de notre Seigneur], we are certain that the external sign is rightly applied to them.” CCF, 2:313 [CO 22 (CR 50): 91].

108. Article 11 treating “Faith” refers to the Father as follows, “In certain confidence and assurance of heart, we believe in the promises of the gospel, and receive Jesus Christ as he is offered to us by the Father [du Pere] and described to us by the Word of God.” CCF, 2:316 [CO 22 (CR 50): 90]. Article 13, after clarifying what prayer is, introduces the Lord’s Prayer, as follows. “And for this reason, we
justification, Article 6 clarifies Jesus as the only basis of our salvation. “We confess then that it is Jesus Christ who is given to us by the Father [du Pere], in order that in him we should recover all of which in ourselves we are deficient [recouvriers tout ce qui nous defaut en nousmesnes].”

Here, in the three places mentioned, the name of the Father is used in the soteriological context, and since Article 6 refers to recovering what we have lost, it clarifies its relevance to adoption. Thus, it is noted that the Fatherhood of God is mentioned here only in the soteriological context.

Finally, the third issue is related to the meaning of the new birth in the Geneva Confession. The confession, from Articles 7 “Righteousness in Jesus” through 9 “Remission of Sins Always Necessary for the Faithful,” counts three graces given to us in Christ: justification, regeneration, and remission of sins. In relation to the second and third graces, the Confession uses the concept of new birth, and it helps us to understand how Calvin uses it. Article 8 states, “We acknowledge that by his Spirit we are regenerated into a new spiritual nature [sommes regeneres en nouvelle nature spirituelle].” Then, Article 9 says, “This regeneration is so effected in us that, until we slough off this mortal body, there remains always in us much imperfection and infirmity . . . We ought day by day to increase and grow in God’s righteousness.” Here the following two things become clear in terms of the meaning of the new birth. First, regeneration is related to the change of our nature. Next, it is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process. In short, the confession uses the new birth in relation to sanctification of God’s children.

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hold the prayer of our Lord to show fittingly what we ought to ask of him: Our Father [Nostre Pere] which art in heaven . . .” CCF, 2:316 [CO 22 (CR 50): 91].
110. As we have seen, the concept of “recovering” or “restoring” is significantly related to the concept of adoption. Pages 117, 120-21, 124-25, 127, 132-33, 135, 142 in chapter 3 of the present study.
111. CCF, 2:314 [CO 22 (CR 50): 89].
112. CCF, 2:315 [CO 22 (CR 50): 89].
113. This reminds us of what Beeke writes regarding the difference between adoption and the new birth in the context of the Puritans. “These are two distinct blessings, though all who are born again are adopted, and everyone who is adopted is born again. . . . Regeneration and adoption deal with two different problems. Adoption deals with our status, taking us from alienation to cherished children. Regeneration
4. Theological Analysis

Here are three issues for analyzing the *Geneva Confession*. First of all, it is necessary to consider how to understand “no reference to adoption” in the confession, although the 1536 *Institutes*, one of the main sources of it treats the concept of adoption, as we have seen. Here the issue of brevity needs to be taken into account.\(^{114}\) After exploring the 1536 *Institutes*, the *Instruction* of 1537, and the *Geneva Confession*, Kayayan writes, “This comprehensive character of *Institutio* does not conflict with that of *facilis brevitas* (at least at this stage of Calvin’s theological reflection and expression) and the *Christian Instruction of 1537* [the *Instruction* of 1537] bears ample testimonies to this.”\(^{115}\) He then concludes:

What perhaps the most interesting element regarding Calvin’s ways of dealing with this matter is that one cannot really speak of a progress[ion] from the one version to the other: both [the *Instruction* of 1537 and the *Geneva Catechism* (1541/1542) in this context] have their internal cohesion in terms of *Institutio*, both have a *confessio* as [their] primary goal, both read with equal facility, taking into account the different

deals with our nature, changing us from God-haters to lovers of the heavenly Father.” Beeke, “The Puritans on Adoption,” 540.

114. Kayayan points out that Calvin values brevity [*facilis brevitas*] for writing his works. Kayayan, “Instruction of Faith in Geneva,” 621-22; Calvin, *Lettres de Jean Calvin*, recueillies pour la premiere fois et publiees d’apres les manuscrits originaux par Jules Bonnet, *Lettres francaises, tome second* (Paris: Libriae de Ch. Meyrueis et compagnie, 1854), 576-77. In his article, Kayayan uses his own translations. “As for my teaching, I did it faithfully, and God gave me the gracious gift of writing, which I did as faithful as I could. I did not corrupt or distort wilfully a single portion of Scripture; and whereas I could have brought forward many subtleties, I suppressed this inclination and always strove for simplicity [*me suis toujours estudie à simplicité*].” A similar expression is found in *CO* 20, 298-301. The English translations of *CO* 20, 298-301 are available in *Letters of John Calvin*, 4 vols., ed. Jules Bonnet, trans. Marcus R. Gilchrist (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972), 4:365-68. In his testament, Calvin states, “In all the disputes I have had with the enemies of the truth, I have never made use of subtle craft nor sophistry, but have gone to work straight-forwardly in maintaining his quarrel [*mais ay procede rondement a maintenir sa querelle*].”

115. Kayayan, op. cit., 628. In this article, Kyayan uses the Latin word “*Institutio*” as the specific terminology having a comprehensive meaning which entails confessing or articulating of faith, transmitting of faith to the younger generation, and teaching of faith. See ibid. 626.
layout of the material presented. The difference[s] noted are more a tribute to Calvin’s ability to render his material with great flexibility.116

Principally, what he writes here is also applicable to the relationship between the 1536 Institutes, the Instruction of 1537, and the Geneva Confession since they are closely related to one another in terms of their structure and contents.117

Given this, it is not appropriate to see a lack of consistency between the 1536 Institutes and the Confession in terms of treating the concept of adoption. Even though the Confession does not use the word “adoption,” it conceptually does have it. What we can say is that both the 1536 Institutes and the Geneva Confession have respectfully distinct purposes and the word “adoption” was not used in writing the Confession because its amount was necessary to be brief as a whole according to its purpose. However, this does not mean Calvin takes it lightly, but shows his ability to treat his material “with great flexibility.”

Second, in the Geneva Confession, the Fatherhood of God is always treated in a soteriological context including sanctification. This contrasts with Luther, whose treatment tends to put, as a whole, more emphasis on God’s Creatorship or sovereignty in treating the doctrine of God. Thus, the treatment we see here can be a characteristic of Calvin’s treatment of the

117. As already mentioned, the Instruction of 1537 is, in its contents, recognized as a summary of the 1536 Institutes. This is also applicable to its treatment of adoption. My research shows, in regard to treating adoption, the Instruction of 1537 is similar to the 1536 Institutes. The Instruction of 1537 has three places which directly refer to adoption: Article 18 “Repentance and Regeneration” [CO 22 (CR 50): 50], the section of Christology in Article 20 treating the Creed [CO 22 (CR 50): 53], and the section of ecclesiology in Article 20 [CO 22 (CR 50): 57]. In particular see the second one treating Christology. There, adoption is used as a relational concept, as we have seen in the 1536 Institutes. “Besides all this, Jesus Christ is called Son of God – not, however, like the believers by adoption and grace merely, but truly and by nature [non pas comme les fideles par adoption et grace seulement, mais vray et naturel].” Here the English translations are from Calvin, Instruction in Faith (1537), trans. and ed. Paul T. Fuhrmann (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 48. In addition, the Instruction of 1537, at the following three places, conceptually refers to adoption: Article 13 “election and Predestination” [CO 22 (CR 50): 46], Article 15 “Faith is a Gift of God” [CO 22 (CR 50): 49], and the section of ecclesiology in Article 20 [CO 22 (CR 50): 57]. Furthermore, see the following two places which are familial entailing the filial notion: Article 23 “What One Must Consider in Prayer” [CO 22 (CR 50): 61], and the section treating the Fifth Petition in Article 24 “Exposition of the Lord’s Prayer” [CO 22 (CR 50): 66].
Fatherhood at least in relation to this Confession.

Third, according to the use of the new birth, it is noted that Calvin distinguishes its meaning from adoption. In considering that in the past, the conflation of adoption with the new birth had been one of the serious issues in treating the concept of adoption, it is worth noting that Calvin uses here the new birth, not as the change of our status, but as that of our nature.\textsuperscript{118}

Finally, it should be noted that the Confession does not refer to the work of the Holy Spirit as it mentions the filial notion throughout its text. We have seen the same issue in relation to the 1536 \textit{Institutes}. It is necessary to return to this issue at the end of this chapter as we analyze the documents related to Calvin.

5. Conclusion

When it comes to the \textit{Geneva Confession}, it is not possible to say that it neglects the concept of adoption. Although it does not use the exact word “adoption” in its texts, it does conceptually refer to the term, and maintains the filial notion by treating some relevant issues to the concept.

\textit{C. The Geneva Catechism (Calvin, 1541/42)}

1. Background: After the Expulsion

After returning from Strasburg, where he stayed from 1538 through 1541 after his expulsion from Geneva, Calvin wrote the \textit{Geneva Catechism (Le Catéchisme de l’église de Genève, c’est a dire le Formulaire d’instruire les enfants en la chrestienté)} in 1541, and published it in 1542.\textsuperscript{119} In relation to his return to Geneva, it is known that Calvin asked the city authorities to value the

\textsuperscript{118} Beeke, \textit{A Puritan Theology}, 540.

\textsuperscript{119} De Greef, \textit{The Writings of John Calvin}, 116; Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:468. It was written in a short period of time because the printer did not give him enough time to revise it.
following things: accepting a confession of faith, securing church discipline, and practicing catechetical instruction. These three things were not negotiable for Calvin since all of them were crucial for building up the true church in Geneva. However, they were not new because Calvin, even before his expulsion, had been emphasizing them. In order to explore the Geneva Catechism, it is important to take this historical background into account. More precisely, it is necessary to pay attention to both what is shared by the 1536 Institutes, the Geneva Confession, the Instruction of 1537, and the Catechism, and what the Catechism had as new additions when compared with the three written prior to the expulsion.

In regard to what all these three documents have in common, all of them reflect Calvin’s emphasis on catechetical instruction for people. This emphasis on using the catechism did not change throughout the rest of his life. On the other hand, Calvin brought some new things to the Geneva Catechism. We need to take into account two things here: the question-answer style and the order placing the Creed before the Law. First, Calvin takes the question-answer style for this Catechism. Although the question-answer style including its

120. Matthias Freudenberg, “Catechisms,” in The Calvin Handbook, 209; Kayayan, “Instruction of Faith in Geneva,” 625-26; Van’t Spijker, Calvin, 77. What Calvin requested, before return, was not only these three, but also things which were related to the organization of the church. As we have seen, the Consistory, created by Calvin, was a critical institution for the Reformation in Geneva to move forward. Kingdon, “Calvin and the Family,” 5.
122. De Greef, op. cit., 116. De Greef points out, “In this catechism one notices the influence of Martin Bucer, under which Calvin had come in Strasbourg.”
125. Saxer, op. cit., 279; Van’t Spijker, op. cit., 75-76; De Greef, op. cit., 117. It is assumed that Bucer’s catechisms, especially Der kurzer Katechismus und erklaranng der XII stucken Christlich glaubens, Des Vatter unsers und der Zehen gepotter . . . (Strasbourg, 1537), influences this question-answer style. Shigehiro Haga, “Calvin’s 1542 Catechism and Bucer’s 1537 Catechism,” in Calvin in Asian Churches, vol. 1, Proceedings of the Asian Congress on Calvin Research, ed. Sou Yong Lee (Seoul: 2002), 13-27. But, according to Haga, Bucer’s catechisms are basically the “educational type,” whereas Calvin’s the “confessional type.” For the texts of Bucer’s catechisms, see Martin Bucers Deutsche Schriften, vol. 6/3, Martin Bucers Katechismus aus den Jahren 1534, 1537, 1543, ed. Robert Stupperich (Gutersloh, 1987). In fact, the Geneva Catechism is not the first work in which Calvin uses the question-answer style. He wrote sometime between 1538-1541 L’Institution puérile de la doctrine
typical wordings may look like childlike as some would say, the intention is to make the Catechism more educationally effective.126

Second, Calvin changed the order of the Catechism from one with the order of the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer as seen in the 1536 Institutes, the Instruction of 1537, and the Geneva Confession to the new one placing the Creed first prior to the Decalogue.127 We shall return to this issue as we see the characteristics of the Catechism.

2. Characteristics: The New Order

There are three issues on which we need to focus here: the new order, the practical and educational nature, and the leading principle. First, it is noted that Calvin takes a new order placing the Creed first, prior to the Law. Although most secondary sources pay attention to this, it is not so clear even among them about what the order signifies theologically.128 However, it is natural, at least, for this order to affect the treatment of the Law in the Catechism. When placing the Law before the Creed, it is clear that the pedagogical use of the Law, leading believers to Christ, is more emphasized.129 On the other hand, when the Creed comes first, the position of the Law leads the Catechism to put more emphasis on the so-called third use of the Law as a norm for gratitude for God’s saving grace.130 This is because the Catechism treats the Law, after saving

chrestienne faicte par manièrie de dyalogue (OS 2:152-156). This was used in both Strasbourg and Geneva. De Greef, The Writings of John Calvin, 116.

126. Van’t Spijker, Calvin, 75. He writes, “Calvin now changed his method by working with questions and answers, thus making the material more accessible.” Also, see Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:469; Kayayan, “Instruction of Faith in Geneva,” 631. Kayayan refers to the possibility that the expulsion in 1538 directly or indirectly influenced this question-answer style.


128. Ibid.; De Greef, op. cit., 117; Van’t Spijker, op. cit., 75. Saxer points out that Bucer also influences Calvin in terms of this order.

129. See Articles 9-11 of the Instruction of 1537 in Instruction in Faith (1537), 35-37 [CO 22 (CR 50): 44-46]. Particularly, the emphasis of the pedagogical use is clarified in the title of Article 11, “The Law is a Preparation to Come to Christ [Que la Loy est un degre pour venir a Christ].” As we have seen, the Instruction of 1537 is the main source of the Geneva Confession, and shares the order with it.

130. Some QAs clearly show this emphasis on the third use. QAs 137-139 (the introduction to
Second, it is necessary to take into account the practical and educational nature of the Catechism. Two things give the Catechism that nature. The first thing is its entire structure. As Saxer points out, the Catechism, after starting from faith (the Creed), goes through the norm of a life of thanksgiving (the Law), the life of prayer (the Lord’s Prayer), and the life of worship (the sacraments). This structure practically depicts the direction of Christian life based on God’s saving grace. Furthermore, in its structure, the Catechism relates Christian life to Christ’s threefold office through QA 34-45. This is to encourage believers to live out the life Christ modelled. The next thing which makes the Catechism practical is its educational approach as seen in the question-answer style. Schaff writes, “Calvin . . . did not consider it beneath his dignity, but rather a duty and a privilege, to utilize his profound learning for the benefit of children by adapting it to their level of simplicity.” In fact, Calvin not only took this approach to teach children, but also made numerous other efforts in order for the Catechism to function practically and educationally.

Finally, the starting point of the Catechism needs to be noted since it functions as its leading principle. QA 1 states: “Minister (hereafter M). What is the chief end of human life?

...
Child (hereafter C). To know God.¹³⁶ Here, what this first QA signifies is that the relationship between God and man functions as the leading principle throughout the Catechism.¹³⁷ This principle is relevant to the present study since what the concept of adoption depicts theologically is all about the relationship between God and man.

3. Relevant Issues

There are three relevant issues in the Geneva Catechism: its treatment of the Fatherhood of God including his relation to God’s children, the emphasis on union with Christ in the sacraments, and its treatment of adoption. First, the treatment of the Fatherhood in the Catechism is so rich that it is recognized as its most significant issue. In what follows, we will pay attention to some significant cases in each of its chapters.

In the first chapter treating the Creed (QAs 1-130), it is necessary to see QA 12 since it treats the Fatherhood as one of the important points for knowing God. After QA 9 clarifies knowing God as “almighty and perfectly good,” QA 12, in the context of having faith in him, continues as follows: “M. What more then is required? C. That we be certain that he loves us, and desires to be our Father [nous veut ester Pere / patrem esse velle], and Savior.”¹³⁸ Here it is worth noticing that the Catechism at the beginning refers to the knowledge of the Father as an important basis for having faith in God. Then, it is also necessary to see QA 22 explain why “do you call him Father?” It answers: “Since God is the Father of Jesus Christ, it follows that he is our Father also [qu’il est aussi le nostre / nobis quoque esse patrem].”¹³⁹ Since QA 22 mentions the concept of “becoming our Father because of Christ,” it is almost the same as referring conceptually to the

¹³⁶ CCF, 2: 320 [CO 6 (CR 34): 9-10].
¹³⁸ CCF, 2:321 [CO 6 (CR 34): 11-12]. Here the Catechism refers to the Father in the redemptive context since next QA (13) relates “knowing God as the Father” to his mercy in Christ.
¹³⁹ CCF, 2:322 [CO 6 (CR 34): 15-16].
concept of adoption. Furthermore, in the following context, the Catechism relates the Fatherhood to other soteriological issues through weaving it into its text, such as Christ’s threefold office, Christ’s ministry and justification, and so forth.  

Next, in the third chapter treating the Lord’s Prayer (QAs 233-295), the Fatherhood and filial consciousness go hand in hand.  

QA 250, after asking about how to pray, gives the answer as follows: “C. If we are children of God [enfans de Dieu / filii Dei], he induces and urges us by his Holy Spirit to betake ourselves to him familiarly, as to our Father [à nous retirer familierement à lui, comme à nostre Pere / ad eum, tanquam ad patrem, familiariter nos recipere].” This QA depicts the way we pray to the Father. We pray to the Father familiarly as his children through the Spirit’s help. Also, the Catechism, in the following context, variously weaves the Fatherhood with the filial notion into its text.

140. QA 34: “M. What, next, is meant by the name Christ? C. By this title his office is still better expressed – for it signifies that he was anointed by the heavenly Father [il a esté oinct du Pere celeste / unctum esse a patre].” CCF, 2: 323 [CO 6 (CR 34): 19-20]. QA 39: “M. In what sense do you call Christ a prophet? C. Because . . . he was the sovereign messenger and ambassador of God his Father [de Dieu son Pere / patris].” CCF, 2: 324 [CO 6 (CR 34): 19-22]. QA 41 “He [Christ] received the Holy Spirit in full perfection with all his graces, that he may lavish them upon us and distribute them, each according to the measure and portion which the Father knows to be expedient [Dieu cognoist ester expediente / nobis convenire novit pater].” CCF, 2: 324 [CO 6 (CR 34): 21-22]. QA 43: “M. What about his priesthood? C. First, by means of it he is the Mediator who reconciles us to God his Father [pour nous reconcilier à Dieu son Pere / nos patri reconcilei].” CCF, 2: 324 [CO 6 (CR 34): 21-22]. Also see QA 44 (prophetic office); CCF, 2: 324-5 [CO 6 (CR 34): 21-22]; QA 48 (the Incarnation): CCF, 2: 325 [CO 6 (CR 34): 23-24]; QA 50 (the Incarnation) CCF, 2: 325 [CO 6 (CR 34): 23-26]; QA 54 (the Lordship of Christ): CCF, 2: 326 [CO 6 (CR 34): 25-26]; QA 126 (justification): CCF, 2: 334 [CO 6 (CR 34): 49-50]. The catechism does not refer to the Fatherhood as it treats Christ’s office as the king in QA 37, 42. CCF, 2: 324 [CO 6 (CR 34): 19-20].

141. In the second chapter treating the Law (QAs 131-232), there are two places (189, 218) referring to the Fatherhood, although we do not refer to them here. CCF, 2: 341 [CO 6 (CR 34): 67-68]; CCF, 2: 343-44 [CO 6 (CR 34): 77-78]. QA 218 refers to the Fatherhood as one of the three aspects for loving God: “M. What is meant by the love of God? C. To love him as God is to have and hold him as Lord, Savior, and Father [Pere / pater], and this requires reverence, honor, and obedience along with love.”

142. CCF, 2: 348 [CO 6 (CR 34): 89-90]. QA 250 continues as follows: “And lest we, who are poor worms of the earth, and miserable sinners, should be afraid to appear before his glorious majesty, he gives us our Lord Jesus Christ as a Mediator, that through him we may have access and have no doubt of finding grace.” Thus, this QA treats the filial notion in a Trinitarian way since all the three Persons appear here to help God’s children to pray.

143. For example, see QA 261: “M. Shall we then dare to go to God familiarly, as a child to his father [comme un enfant à son pere / ut filii parentes solent]? C. Yes . . . For if we, being evil, cannot refuse our children bread and meat, when they ask, how much less will our heavenly Father, who is not only good, but sovereign goodness itself?” CCF, 2: 349 [CO 6 (CR 34): 93-94]. QA 263 refers to the
Then, in the fourth chapter relating to the sacraments (QAs 296-373) the Catechism, after treating divine worship in terms of the filial notion, refers to the sacraments familiarly in QA 323: 

M. What likeness and differences is there between them [baptism and the Supper]?

C. Baptism is for us a kind of entrance into the church of God, for it testifies that instead of our being strangers to him, God receives us as members of his family [nous receoit pour ses domestiques / in Dei familiam recipi]. The Supper testifies that God as a good Father carefully feeds and refreshes the members of his household [comme un bon pere de famille a le soing de nourrir et refectionner ceux de sa maison / Deum se nobis, animas nostras alendo, patrem exhibere].

It is clarified here that the sacraments have the familial as well as filial aspects through conceptually showing the concept of adoption by the phrase “receives as members of his family,” and “feeds and refreshes the members of his household.”

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144. CCF, 2: 359 [CO 6 (CR 34): 115-18].

145. CCF, 2: 357 [CO 6 (CR 34): 115-18].

146. In addition to this, in the context of treating the necessity of the Supper, QA 343 mentions, in passing, the Fatherhood and union with Christ. CCF, 2: 359 [CO 6 (CR 34): 123-24].
Second, while keeping the relational tone throughout its entire text, the Geneva Catechism has that tone particularly in the first (the Creed) and fourth (the sacraments) chapters.\textsuperscript{147} Here we pay attention to QA 344 in the fourth chapter because the notion of union with Christ appears most significantly in the context of the Supper.\textsuperscript{148} After QA 340 articulates the significance of the Supper as the communication with Christ’s body and blood, QA 344 deepens the notion of the union as follows: “\textit{M. Is not the way to receive him by faith? C. . . . he [Christ] dwells in us, and is conjoined with us in a union as the head with the members [\textit{telle union que le chef avec ses membres / eo unitatis genere, quo membra cum capite suo cohaerent}], that by virtue of this conjunction he may make us partakers of his grace.”\textsuperscript{149} Here it is worth noticing that this QA describes the union as an organic one as seen in the phrase “the head with the members,” and relates it to the notion of becoming “partakers of his grace.” Then, in the following context, the Catechism variously treats the union, such as other ways for having the union (QAs 345, 346), participation in Christ’s death, passion (349), and himself (353, 354), spiritual nourishment (356), examination about the union (358), and the way to be sure of having union with Christ (359).\textsuperscript{150}

Third, the Catechism has only one place (QA 46) which directly refers to the concept of adoption, although familial and relational issues are treated in a rich way as we have seen.\textsuperscript{151}

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\textsuperscript{148} Prior to QA 344, QA 336 refers to becoming partakers of Christ’s grace in the context of baptism (\textit{CCF}, 2: 358 [\textit{CO 6} (CR 34): 121-22]), and QA 342 depicts union with Christ as a true communication in the context of the Supper (\textit{CCF}, 2: 359 [\textit{CO 6} (CR 34): 123-24]).


\textsuperscript{151} In fact, besides QA 46, the Catechism at two places (100, 365) uses the Latin verb
QA 46, in treating Christology in the first chapter, articulates the concept: “M. Why do you call him the only Son of God, seeing that God calls us all his children? C. We are the children of God not by nature, but only by adoption and by grace [mais seulement par adoption et par grace / sed adoptione et gratia duntaxat].” Whereas the key idea of adoption as a relational concept is recognized here as seen in the 1536 Institution and the Instruction of 1537, we are led to consider why the reason the Catechism only has one direct reference to it. We will return to this question as we analyze the Catechism.

4. Theological Analysis

Here we have four issues for analyzing the Geneva Catechism. First, it is recognized that the treatment of the Fatherhood of God is significant throughout the Catechism. Whereas the creative Fatherhood is mentioned from QAs 21 through 29, the Catechism treats the Fatherhood more significantly from the redemptive perspective in the soteriological context covering all the four chapters, as we have seen. Thus, the Catechism weaves the issue of the Fatherhood into its entire text. In terms of the present study, the Fatherhood of God is the most important issue in the Geneva Catechism.

“adopto.” But this is not about being received into God’s family, but salvation (100) and the church (365). QA 100: “M. Can this church be known in any other way than by believing in her? C. There is indeed the visible church of God . . . but here we speak properly the fellowship of those whom he has elected to salvation [Dieu a eleu pour les sauver / arcana sua electione adoptavit in salutem] which cannot been seen by the eye.” CCF, 2: 331 [CO 6 (CR 34): 41-42]. Also, in the context of baptism, QA 365 says: “C. By baptism God introduces and receives us into his church [Dieu nous introduit reçoit en son Eglise / nos adaptat, et in ecclesiam suam allegit Dominus].” CCF, 2: 361 [CO 6 (CR 34): 131-132]. It is likely that QA 365 has a relevance to the concept of adoption, if the church, in this context, should be understood familiarly.

152. CCF, 2: 325 [CO 6 (CR 34): 23-24].

153. It is clear here that the Geneva Catechism uses adoption as a relational concept between the Father, the Son, and believers. The following QA 47, by referring to Christ’s brotherhood, reinforces this point: “He [Christ] is called elsewhere ‘the First-born among many brethren [le premier nay entre plusieurs freres / primogenitus inter multis fratres],’” CCF, 2: 325 [CO 6 (CR 34): 23-24].

Second, in addition to the Fatherhood, the filial notion is also woven into the text of the Catechism. As we have seen, the Fatherhood of God and the filial notion of believers go hand in hand throughout the Catechism. Especially, the third chapter related to prayer is recognized as the clearest place in which the Catechism treats the filial notion. As seen in QA 250, the Catechism, in a Trinitarian manner, relates the filial notion to the Father in the context of the life of prayer through which God’s children can present themselves before him. In this QA all the three Persons of the Trinity appear to help God’s children to pray to the Father: “If we are children of God, he induces and urges us by his Holy Spirit to betake ourselves to him familiarly, as to our Father. . . . he gives us our Lord Jesus Christ as a Mediator, that through him we may have access and have no doubt of finding grace.”

Third, we have seen that the relational tone is maintained especially in the context of the Supper. In that context, not only “union with Christ,” but the Fatherhood of God and the filial notion of believers are also woven into the text. This makes the Catechism relational as well as familial.

Finally, it is necessary to return to the question why the Geneva Catechism only has one direct reference to the concept of adoption. However, what we concluded in relation to the Geneva Confession is applicable to the Geneva Catechism as well. Again, what Kayayan writes deserve our attention. “One cannot really speak of a progress[jion] from the one version to the other . . . The differences noted are more a tribute to Calvin’s ability to render his material with great flexibility.” Even though the direct reference to the concept of adoption is fewer than in

155. QA 250, CCF, 2: 348 [CO 6 (CR 34): 89-90].
156. For example, see QA 323: “M. What likeness and difference is there between them? C. Baptism is for us a kind of entrance into the church of God, for it testifies that instead of our being strangers to him, God receives us as members of his family. The Supper testifies that God as a good Father carefully feeds and refreshes the members of his household.” CCF, 2: 357 [CO 6 (CR 34): 115-18]. Also see QA 299, CCF, 2: 354 [CO 6 (CR 34): 107-8]; QA 320, CCF, 2: 356 [CO 6 (CR 34): 115-16]; QA 342, CCF, 2: 359 [CO 6 (CR 34): 123-24].
other documents, it is wrong to judge that Calvin, in the Catechism, takes the concept lightly. This is because we have seen the key relational concept between the Father, the Son, and believers in QA 46.\textsuperscript{158} This relational concept is crucial for Calvin, as seen in the 1536 \textit{Institutes} and the \textit{Instruction} of 1537.\textsuperscript{159} In addition to this, that the Catechism treats the Fatherhood and the filial notion leads us to understand that Calvin conceptually takes adoption into account, even though the direct references to the concept are few. In short, it is possible to say in seeing the various treatments of the Fatherhood and the filial notion, that the Catechism puts its emphasis, in terms of the present study, not on the adoptive act, but on the adoptive life of believers. The cases in which the Fatherhood and the filial notion go hand in hand show the familial focus of the Catechism paying attention to the actual life of God’s children.\textsuperscript{160} This has relevance to the leading principle which is manifested in QA 1, i.e. the relationship between God and man, and practically reflects the Reformation in Geneva by which Calvin and his colleagues tried to restore healthy Christian life including family life in that city.\textsuperscript{161}

5. Conclusion

When it comes to the concept of adoption in the \textit{Geneva Catechism}, the main focus is not on the adoptive act, but on the life of God’s children.\textsuperscript{162} The various cases show that the Catechism treat the Fatherhood including his relation to his children significantly. Through focusing on their life, the Catechism depicts its richness covering four aspects of the Christian life: faith, life as thanksgiving (the Law), prayer, and divine worship (the sacraments).

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{158} \textit{CCF}, 2: 325 [\textit{CO} 6 (CR 34): 23-24].
\item \textsuperscript{159} \textit{Inst.} (1536), 50 [\textit{CO} 1 (CR 29), 64]; \textit{Instruction in Faith} (1537), 48 [\textit{CO} 22 (CR 50): 53].
\item \textsuperscript{160} The structure of the Catechism placing the Creed prior to the Law possibly affects this focus. Since the treatment of the Creed (faith or salvation) comes first, the Catechism, as a whole, tends to focus on the Christian life. As already mentioned, it is known for its practical character.
\item \textsuperscript{161} See pages 144-58 in this chapter of the present study; Saxer, “Einleitung.” 281.
\item \textsuperscript{162} However, it is always important to take into account the unity of adoption, although its concept actually has two aspects: adoption as a soteriological act by the Father and adoption as a life of the adopted, as we have seen in chapter 2 of this study.
\end{itemize}
D. The Consensus Genevensis (Calvin, 1551)

1. Background: The Bolsec Controversy

The Consensus Genevensis (Congrégation sur l’élection éternelle de Dieu of 18 December 1551) has a different character from the other confessional documents written by Calvin. This is because this document had the specific purpose of defending and explaining God’s eternal election in the midst of a theological debate, the so-called “Bolsec Controversy” which took place in 1551. In order to explore this document, it is necessary to pay attention to the historical background in which it was drafted.

First of all, we need to understand about the “congrégations,” the weekly Bible study meetings held in Geneva on Friday mornings. The congrégations was introduced by Farel and Calvin to the City in 1536. The original model of the congrégations was likely taken from Zurich, and its purpose was to train the ministers in and around Geneva, and to maintain...
doctrinal unity among them. All the ministers were required to attend the *congrégations* every Friday, and needed to explain exegetically, in turn, selected scriptural passages. After the exposition was presented, the ministers would start discussing those chosen passages. In the *congrégations*, laypeople were also allowed to attend, and to listen to expositions and discussions led by ministers.

At the *congrégations* meeting on October 16 in 1551, the Bolsec Controversy took place, and it compelled Calvin to prepare the *Consensus Genevensis*. This controversy was caused by Jerome Bolsec, a physician working around Geneva at that time. At the meeting, although Jean de Saint-André led the discussion on John 8:47, Bolsec took advantage of the meeting, and started criticizing the doctrine of election. Since what was at stake there for Calvin was God’s sovereign grace for salvation, he reacted to Bolsec in a very serious manner, and then, prepared the *Consensus Genevensis* for the special *congrégation* meeting on December 18 focusing on the issue originated by Bolsec. At the meeting on December 18, the ministers

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165. Each time, approximately sixty people attended the *congrégations*.

166. Regarding more details, see De Boer, “The Presence and Participation of Laypeople in the *Congrégations*,” 651-70. As we shall see in the case of the Bolsec Controversy, laypeople were also allowed to participate in discussions by raising questions or sharing some comments or thoughts.

167. In relation to the Bolsec Controversy, Holtrop’s work should be recognized as important. Philip C. Holtrop, *The Bolsec Controversy on Predestination, from 1551-1555: The Statements of Jerome Bolsec, and the Responses of John Calvin, Theodore Beza, and Other Reformed Theologians* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993). The most significant contribution in this work is Holtrop’s English translations of the *Congrégation sur l’élection éternelle de Dieu* of December, 1551. The translations themselves are fine, however, we need to be cautious about his own understandings on the controversy. This is because Holtrop is clearly sympathetic to Bolsec and negative to Calvin. For example, he writes, “The theological responses to Bolsec at Geneva can only be understand within the political, social, and psychological milieu in that city in the first half of the 1550s.” Ibid., 47.

168. Jerome Bolsec was a Carmelite monk who held a doctorate in theology from the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1545 Bolsec became a Protestant Christian, and left Paris. Then, he studied medicine in Italy. It is likely that he started living near Geneva sometime between 1548-1550, and worked as the personal physician of some people who were friends of Calvin, such as Jacques de Bourgogne.

169. In the past, some theologians recognized *De aeterna praedestinatione Dei* in early 1552 as the *Consensus Genevensis* (CO 8: 249-366). But De Boer, in “The ‘Consensus genevensis’ revisited,” argues for *Congrégation sur l’élection éternelle de Dieu* of December 1551, and identifies it as the true *Consensus Genevensis* because of the following main reasons: 1) the polemical style of *De aeterna . . .* is not appropriate as a public consensus, 2) the *Congrégation sur l’élection éternelle de Dieu* was the one approved by the ministers at the public meeting on December 18, 1551, and 3) according to the recent historical analysis, *De aeterna . . .* should be recognized as a work written by Calvin on the basis of the
there articulated their consensus on God’s election by approving, in a unified way, the doctrine as presented by Calvin.

2. Characteristics: Revolving around God’s Election

Here we need to keep two issues in mind briefly. First, the Bolsec Controversy theologically affects the basic feature of the Consensus Genevensis. Since it was written by Calvin as a specific reaction to the controversy focusing on election, what the Consensus describes is not a summary of the Christian belief as seen in the 1536 Institutes, the Geneva Confession, and the Geneva Catechism. All the references or discussions within the Consensus revolve around the one issue, God’s election, as we shall see in what follows.

Second, in terms of the present study, it is worth exploring the Consensus since it helps us to see how the concept of adoption is related to election. Although it is generally recognized, because of Ephesians 1:5, that there is an inseparable relationship existing between the two, it is not so clear that how they are precisely connected with each other in the context of the confessional documents during the Reformation Period.170

3. Relevant Issues

There are three relevant issues we need to note here: adoption as a concept clarifying God’s grace in election, adoption as part of the meaning of election, and adoption as a basis for assurance.172
First, the *Consensus Genevensis*, in the first discussion focusing on Ephesians 1:3-6, clarifies adoption as a concept expressing God’s grace in the context of election. Since this reference is in the first discussion, it is possible for us to grasp the basic understanding the Consensus has for the concept of adoption at the beginning. After stating our unworthiness for salvation, the Consensus refers to the possible problem which we would easily have in thinking as if we had something worthy in ourselves. Then, in order to deal with that sort of pride the Consensus says, “Consequently, he [Paul] added that he has adopted us in his well-beloved Son [*qu’il nous a adoptez en son Fils bien-aimé*].” Then, it adds to this, “In ourselves we are hated and worthy of God’s holding us in abomination. But he looks on us in his Son – and therefore he loves us.”

Thus, the Consensus explains that the reason Paul adds adoption to this context is to clarify it as a concept expressing God’s saving grace for us who are unworthy for salvation. Here, it is also noted that the Consensus contrasts believers as the adopted children with the “well-beloved Son.” This shows us that the Consensus uses adoption as a relational concept distinguishing the adopted ones from God’s natural Son, as seen in the 1563 *Institutes*, the *Instruction* of 1537, and the *Geneva Catechism*.

Second, what the concept of adoption signifies is pointing to not only God’s saving grace, but also to a significant part of what election means theologically. In the discussion refuting the claim that the holy life is unnecessary for believers because of election, the Consensus uses the concept of adoption: “What is the meaning of God’s election? That we are adopted as his children [*nous sommes adoptez pour ses enfans*], and that once he has chosen us he gives us the Spirit of adoption to govern us [*il nous donne l’Esprit d’adoption pour nous*]

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governor] – as it is written in the first chapter of Saint John.\textsuperscript{175} Here, the concept plays an important role for clarifying the meaning of election. In other words, the Consensus cannot explain what it is without using the concept. It is also worth noticing here that after mentioning the concept of adoption, the Consensus refers to the gift of the Spirit of adoption who governs the life of the adopted children. Thus, taking its starting point in Ephesians 1, the concept actually forms a theological framework covering election which took place prior to the creation, the gift of the Spirit, and the adoptive life led by him.

Third, the Consensus recognizes adoption as a basis of assurance for believers. In the discussion focusing on faith and assurance, the Consensus lists some crucial elements for believers to be assured of their salvation: faith, fellowship with Christ, and union with Christ.\textsuperscript{176} These elements are to help believers to be assured of their election by God and of their sonship. Then, the Consensus summarizes what assurance is all about by using the concept of adoption in the context of election: “God lowers himself to us. He shows us why in his Son – as though he says, ‘Here I am. Contemplate me. And realize how I have adopted you to be my children [cognoissez comment je vous ay adoptez pour mes enfans].’”\textsuperscript{177} In short, the Consensus here recognizes adoption as a suitable concept for explaining what assurance is for believers.\textsuperscript{178}

\textsuperscript{175}“Congregation on Eternal Election,” 711 [CO 8 (CR 36): 107].

\textsuperscript{176}“Do you want to know for certain if you are elect? Look at yourself in Jesus Christ. For those who – by faith – commune freely in Jesus Christ can be assured that they belong to God’s eternal election and are his children. Whoever finds himself in Jesus Christ – and is a member of his body by faith – is therefore assured of his salvation.” “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 717 [CO 8 (CR 36): 114].

\textsuperscript{177}“Congregation on Eternal Election,” 717 [CO 8 (CR 36): 114].

\textsuperscript{178}In addition to these three issues, it is worth noting that the Consensus, while revolving around election, relates it at the same time to various issues which are relevant to adoption, such as the familial notion, heirs of his kingdom, the filial notion, union with Christ, the communal notion, and so on. In regard to the familial notion, the Consensus, in the discussion of John 6:44f. and 10:28f., says: “Let us realize that this promise is particular, and that God is only concerned about those in his own household.” “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 703 [CO 8 (CR 36): 99]; Regarding heirs of the kingdom, the Consensus, in the discussion on Romans 9:6-20, states: “They [Israelites] are ‘not included’ or comprised in God’s election, to be truly heirs of God and his kingdom.” “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 705 [CO 8 (CR 36): 100]. Also see “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 705 [CO 8 (CR 36): 100-1]; Concerning the filial notion, the Consensus, in its general comment, relates it to the revelation: “All God’s children receive … what they hear proceeding from his mouth, and therefore affirm: ‘We must hold to this, since God has
4. Theological Analysis

We refer to three issues for theologically analyzing the *Consensus Genevensis*. First, it is clear that adoption is inseparably related to election in various ways. As we have seen, the Consensus uses the concept of adoption for emphasizing that Christians are saved by grace alone.\(^{179}\) The concept also functions as a crucial part of what election signifies.\(^{180}\) Furthermore, the Consensus uses the concept for summarizing what election is for believers. It is not just election to salvation, but election into God’s family in order to walk with him.\(^{181}\) Thus, in seeing this inseparable relationship between election and adoption, it is possible to recognize adoption as another aspect of election, although it is more than that, as we shall see in the following paragraphs.

Second, the concept of adoption functions as an underlying theme by taking multiple roles throughout the text. More precisely, the Consensus uses the concept of adoption to depict the Christian life which starts with election, is received into God’s family, and is led by the Spirit of adoption.\(^{182}\) This adoptive life will finally reach its completion by receiving the kingdom as heirs.\(^{183}\) Here is the reason to say adoption is more than another aspect of election. The Consensus, while revolving around election, mentions the concept to form a theological framework which starts from election and ends with the completion of the kingdom.

Finally, the concept of adoption in the Consensus clearly shows that election is not a cold and fatal doctrine as the stereotyped-caricature about Calvin tends to claim, but a warm and pronounced it.”” “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 708 [CO 8 (CR 36): 104]; With regard to union with Christ and the communal notion, the Consensus, in the context of refuting wrong claims, states: “For he is the head of the church. Therefore we must begin with him when we want to know how God works in his lesser members.” “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 712 [CO 8 (CR 36): 108]. Regarding the fatherly goodness of God receiving the elect into his family, see “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 714 [CO 8 (CR 36): 114].

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familial one. The concept of adoption entailing the familial aspect of salvation makes it possible for us to understand that election is a significantly familial doctrine in various ways.

5. Conclusion

The Consensus Genevensis clarifies how election relates to adoption theologically. Adoption is not only another aspect of election, but also an important concept to let the Consensus form a theological framework in which the doctrine of election itself is deepened. The concept also helps us to recognize the doctrine of election as familial. This familial treatment of election shows that the Consensus was written not for merely dealing with a theoretical issue, but for educating people and helping pastorally the church facing the serious issue caused by Bolsec in 1551.

E. The Confession of Faith of the English Congregation at Geneva (approved by Calvin, 1556)

1. Background: A Congregation of Refugees

In July of 1553, after Mary I (Mary Tudor) of England ascended to the throne, Protestants were seriously persecuted and forced to leave the country, seeking refuge in cities of the Continent, such as Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Emden, Zurich, and Geneva. Among these cities, it is known

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184. Griffith, “The First Title of the Spirit,” 138. “Election was dangerous and only a snare when considered abstractly. But if for the sake of the analysis of Calvin’s own thinking, we think of it first, it is fascinating to notice that Calvin repeatedly refers to election as God’s adoption of the believer. This is not just the slip of a pen: Calvin repeats it often.” Here Griffith refers to Inst., 3.22.1, 2, 7, 10; 3.24.4, 5; Sermons on Ephesians (Reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973), 35-37.
186. De Boer, “The ‘Consensus genevensis’ revisited,” 60. Here De Boer quotes from the minutes of the Company of the ministers (Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Geneve, 1:131; CO 21, 495f) which tell the pastoral reason for giving the special role to the congrégations meeting on December 18: “Because the celebration of the Lord’s Supper approaches, it will be good to remedy this havoc, caused by master Jerome, so that, when there are some who are infected by his aberration, this can be averted and that the sacrament shall not be polluted by them.”
that Geneva, under Calvin’s leadership, welcomed those refugees, and even provided them with city citizenship. Meanwhile, those refugees started establishing small congregations in those cities, and the English congregation at Geneva was one of them. In August of 1555, John Knox started serving as a minister of the congregation at Geneva, although from August through September in 1556 he was absent as he returned to his own country of Scotland. This congregation existed for five years until it dissolved after Elizabeth I, Mary’s half-sister, ascended to the throne in 1558.

During this period of time when the congregation existed in Geneva, it produced “The Form of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments” including this confession of faith and the church order. It is recognized that the Form of Prayers influenced the Reformation in Scotland including the Scottish Confession of 1560 (Knox) as well as on various practices of the Puritans.

Confessional documents written by Calvin influence much of the Confession by providing much of its source material. Although Knox wrote most parts of the Form of Prayers, the Confession itself was written by W. Whittingham and approved by Calvin.

2. Characteristics: An Example of Calvin’s Influence

from 1553 through 1558.
189. Ibid.
192. Heron, “Einleitung,” RBS, 1/3:340; Reformed Confessions, ed. Cochrane, 127-29. William Whittingham (c. 1524-1579) was a biblical scholar, and known as a publisher of the Geneva Bible of 1560. See OER, s.v. “English Bible.” Regarding Whittingham in detail, see Dan G. Danner, Pilgrimage to Puritanism: History and Theology of the Marian Exiles at Geneva, 1555-1560 (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 43-48. The committee of the Form of Prayers consisted of the following members: Knox, Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, John Foxe (or Fox), and Thomas Cole.
The *Confession of the English Congregation* is known for its polemical style, which is in common with the *Scottish Confession*. This reminds us of the historical background in which it was written—for those who were suffering serious persecution and kept their faith by opposing and not compromising with it.\(^{193}\)

Since the Confession was not written by Calvin, but approved by him, it can be an example for us to see how he influenced other confessional documents in terms of the concept of adoption. That the Confession was drafted by Whittingham at Geneva in close relationship between Calvin and him\(^{194}\) would provide us with some possible patterns of how the concept of adoption and familial issues were passed on by Calvin on to a subsequent confession.

3. Relevant Issues

Throughout the text of the *Confession of the English Congregation*, although there is no direct reference to adoption, three of the four articles (Articles 2-4) treat some familial issues, keeping the relational tone in the text.\(^{195}\) In what follows, we examine those issues in each article. First, in Article 2, it is worth noticing that the Confession describes salvation as the change of status from “childrene of perdition” to “childrene of God.” In the context of referring to the reason for the Incarnation, it states: “For when through our father Adam[’]s transgression we were become childrene of perdition, there was no means to bring us from that yoke of synne and damnation, but onely Jesus Christe our Lord: who givinge us that by grace, which was his by nature, made

\(^{193}\) Heron, “Einleitung,” *RBS*, 1/3:342.

\(^{194}\) Danner, *Pilgrimage to Puritanism*, 43.

\(^{195}\) In the case of Article 1 treating God the Father, it relates the Fatherhood to his providence, although this is not in the soteriological context. “I believe, and confesse my Lorde God eternal, infinite, unmeasurable, incomprehensible, and invisible, one in substance, and three in persone, Father, Sonne, and Holy Goste, who by his almightie power and wisdom, hathe not onely of nothinge created heaven, earthe, and all things therein conteyned, and man after his owne image, that he might in hym be glorified: but also by his fatherlye providence, governeth, maynteyneth, and preserveth the same, accourdinge to the purpose of his will.” *RBS*, 1/3:348.
us (through faith) the childrene of God.”196 Here, this article, by putting the phrases “by nature” and “through faith,” clearly distinguishes the sonship of believers from the natural Sonship of Christ, just as Calvin does in his confessional documents. In addition to this, in seeing that this article recognizes salvation as becoming God’s children, the Confession conceptually refers to the adoptive act without actually using the word “adoption.”197

Second, Article 3 focusing on pneumatology conceptually describes the ministry of the Spirit of adoption without using that title: “I believe, and confesse the holy Ghoste . . . persuadinge moste assuredly in our consciences, that we be the childrene of God, bretherne to Jesus Christe, and fellowe heires with him of lyfe everlasting.”198 Here it is noted that some points are significantly relevant to the concept of adoption, such as the Spirit as the witness of the believer’s sonship, brotherhood with Christ, and co-heirs with Christ. In short, Article 3, in describing who the Spirit is, concentrates on his ministry as the Spirit of adoption.199

Third, Article 4 focusing on ecclesiology, in treating the sacraments, entails the familial notion. In relation to baptism, it states: “For as by baptisme, once received, is signified that we . . . being straungers from God, by original synne, are received into his familie and congregation.”200

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196. *RBS*, 1/3:348. As scriptural references, the following passages are mentioned here: Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:14; John 1:12; Eph. 1:15. In Article 2, the Confession, in the context of Christ’s resurrection, refers to the new birth also. “The which death, albeit it did sufficiently reconcile us to God, yet the Scriptures comonly do attribute our regeneration to hys resurrection.” *RBS*, 1/3:349. It is likely that “regeneration” here is relevant to the change of our nature (sanctification), not our status, because it is related to Christ’s resurrection. Cf. Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 540. Furthermore, in the following context of Christ’s sitting at the right hand of the Father, the Confession has a reference which is relevant to union with Christ. “Yet is he present with us his membres, even to the ende of the world, in preserving and governynge vs with his effectuall power and grace.” *RBS*, 1/3:350.

197. Three of the scriptural passages (Gal. 3:26, Rom. 8:14, Eph. 1:15) mentioned here are in the context of using *huiothesia*.

198. *RBS*, 1/3:350. This reference has two passages for scriptural references which are relevant to the concept of adoption: Rom. 8:13-17; Gal. 4:6-7.

199. At the beginning of this article, the Confession mentions “regeneration” which is coupled with sanctification: “I believe, and confesse the holy Ghoste . . . whoe regenerateth and sanctifieth us, ruleth and guideth us into all truet.” In considering the location of this article in the Confession, its close context in this article, and its contents, it is assumed that here “regeneration” is related to sanctification which the Spirit brings out in the Christian life.

200. *RBS*, 1/3:351. Here the phrase “being straungers from God” reminds us of the phrase in QA 323 of the *Geneva Catechism*: “Baptism is for us a kind of entrance into the church of God, for it
Also, in the following context, the Supper has the familial notion as well: “The Supper declareth that God as the moste provident Father, doth not onely fede our bodies, but also spiritually nurisheth our soules with the graces and benefits of Jesus Christ.”201 In seeing the context in which the Confession treats the Supper immediately after baptism, it is clear that here this feeding and nourishment provided by the Father is exclusively for his children whom he received into his family through baptism.202 Furthermore, Article 4, in treating “the resurrection of the bodie,” relates the Fatherhood of God to the inheritance of the kingdom: “Then we which have forsaken all mans wisdome, to cleave unto Christ, shall heare that joyfull voice, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherite ye the kingdome prepared for you frome the beginning of the worlde [Matt. 25:21-46].”203 Thus, Article 4, in various ways, treats ecclesiology by keeping the familial and relational tone in it.

4. Theological Analysis

There are three issues in the Confession of Faith of the English Congregation we need to note. First, the Confession, in a pervasive way, keeps the familial and relational tone throughout its text. As we have seen in each article from 2 through 4 uses some familial or filial language as it treats important issues. For example, the Confession defines salvation as the change of status from “childrene of perdition” to “childrene of God.”204 In describing the actual ministry of the Spirit, the Confession first refers to his witness which leads believers to be conscious of their sonship,
having brotherhood with the Son. In relation to ecclesiology, the Confession, treating the sacraments and eschatology, repeatedly uses familial language which is related to the Fatherhood. In seeing these instances, it is possible to say that, even though the Confession does not have direct reference to adoption, it conceptually and linguistically depicts the concept of adoption covering Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology.

Second, the Confession, in terms of the familial or filial languages, clearly has some similarities to the confessional documents written by Calvin. Since the Confession of the English Congregation was written by Whittingham, it is necessary here to pay attention to those similarities in order to see if Calvin influences the Confession in terms of the concept of adoption. It is noted, as the first example, that it distinguishes the believer’s sonship from the Sonship of Christ. The most obvious instance is recognized in Article 2 using the phrase “by nature.” This treatment, as already mentioned, reminds us that Calvin uses adoption as a relational concept for clarifying the relationship between the Father, the Son, and believers. As the second example, it is recognized that there is some similar wording between Article 4 of the Confession and QA 323 of the Geneva Catechism in the context of the sacraments. Here, it is significant to see that the Confession shares some familial language with the documents written by Calvin.

Third, the Confession distinguishes the meaning of becoming God’s children (related

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205. *RBS, 1/3*: 350: “The holy Ghoste . . . persuadinge moste assuredly in our consciences, that we be the childe:rene of God, bretherne to Jesus Christe, and fellowe heires with him of lyfe everlasting.”
206. Ibid., 353.
207. Ibid., 348.
209. *RBS, 1/3*: 351-2; *CCF*, 2: 357 [CO 6 (CR 34): 115-18]. In regard to baptism, although the wordings are not so similar, the idea of receiving believers into God’s family or as his children are recognized as well in the *Geneva Confession*, *CCF*, 2:313 [CO 22 (CR 50): 91]. In relation to the Supper, the idea of spiritual nourishment is recognized as well in the *Instruction of 1537*, Article 29, *Instruction in Faith*, 69 [CO 22 (CR 50): 70].
210. Although this is not as significant as these two instances at this point, the idea of the Spirit as the witness of becoming God’s children in Article 3 is also recognized in the 1536 Institutes and the *Geneva Catechism*, *Inst.* (1536), 59 [CO 1 (CR 29), 73]; the *Catechism*, *CCF*, 2: 348 [CO 6 (CR 34): 89-90]. Cf. pages 165-66 in this chapter in relation to Calvin’s Trinitarian orientation in the 1536 *Inst.*
to justification as acceptance) from that of being regenerated (ongoing process related to sanctification), although at this distinction, the Confession may not be as clear as Calvin’s documents.\textsuperscript{211} This can also be recognized as a possible sign of influence of Calvin on the \textit{Confession of the English Congregation}, since this distinction is not so clear among the confessional documents written prior to Calvin, as noted in the previous chapter.

5. Conclusion

The \textit{Confession of Faith of the English Congregation}, although it does not have any direct reference to the concept of adoption, weaves those familial issues into its text from Articles 2 through 4, and by doing that conceptually entails the meaning of the concept. Furthermore, the confessional documents written by Calvin influenced to some extent the Confession in terms of the familial notion. This case will help us to see in the following chapter in the documents written after Calvin as we analyze whether or not he appeared to influence them.

\textit{F. Analysis of the Second Group (Written by Calvin or Related to Him)}

1. Survey and Comparison

Before concluding this chapter by analyzing the confessions in the second group, we briefly review what we found in exploring the first group of the confessions written prior to Calvin. As we have seen even then, basic issues related to the concept of adoption are treated in those documents. While the filial notion in Luther’s catechisms revolves around the relationship


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between God the Father and believers, in the Reformed confessions union with Christ is at the
center in terms of treating adoption or its inseparable issues.\textsuperscript{212} We have also seen in the
Reformed confessions a Trinitarian way of treating the concept of adoption in its seminal form
and the multiple roles the concept plays for constructing theology.\textsuperscript{213} Furthermore, there are
basically three ways of treating the concept: 1) the soteriological-oriented way, 2) the
election-oriented way, and 3) the balanced way.\textsuperscript{214} Thus, basic issues which are related to the
concept are present in those confessions, but we have seen at the same time that they are not yet
fully developed or sufficiently exposited in terms of what adoption signifies in the biblical
sense.\textsuperscript{215}

After taking these points into account it becomes possible to clarify, by comparing the
first and second groups, what the confessions in the second group make in terms of the concept
of adoption. When comparing them, it is clear that the second group of confessions written by or
related to Calvin has more developed instances of treating adoption. There are three points to
note in analyzing the second group. First, as we have seen in the 1536 \textit{Institutes}, the \textit{Geneva
Catechism}, and the \textit{Consensus Genevensis}, the confessional documents written by Calvin have a
clear framework into which the concept of adoption or the filial notion is woven. This framework
covers all the three ways of treating adoption which are recognized in the first group, takes a
Trinitarian way of treating the concept of adoption, and uses the concept as a thread connecting to

\textsuperscript{212} Regarding Luther’s catechisms see \textit{BLK} (SC), 510.40, 514.17-22; \textit{BLK} (LC), 648.24f.,
648.42-649.2, 650.27-30, 651.10-15, 661.41, 683.14-17, and so on. In regard to the Reformed confessions
written prior to Calvin, see Chapters 3, 4, 15, 17, and 18 in the \textit{Tetrapolitan Confession}; Articles 2, 3, 4, and
6 in the \textit{Fidei ratio}; Articles 10, 11, 21, and 23 in the \textit{First Helvetic Confession}.

\textsuperscript{213} For example, see Chapter 3 of the \textit{Tetrapolitan Confession}, CCF, 2:223; \textit{RBS}, 1/1:463;
\textit{Niemeyer}, 747; Articles 3 of the \textit{Fidei ratio}, CCF, 2:255; \textit{RBS}, 1/1:429; Article 6 of the \textit{Fidei ratio}, CCF,
2:258; \textit{RBS}, 1/1:433; Article 11 of the \textit{First Helvetic Confession}, RCE, 1:345; \textit{RBS}, 1/2:46 (German); 59
(Latin); Article 21 of the \textit{First Helvetic Confession}, RCE, 1:349; \textit{RBS}, 1/2:52 (German); 64 (Latin).

\textsuperscript{214} See page 141 in chapter 3 of this study.

\textsuperscript{215} For example, in the first group, we do not see yet any clear theological framework in
relation to adoption, covering election through the consummation. Also, in those confessions, the
distinction between Christ’s Sonship and believers’ sonship is not explicit. This is also applicable to the
distinction between adoption and the new birth.
other important issues in creating a theological tapestry.

Second, it is recognized that the confessions in the second group have clearer understanding of what adoption signifies theologically. For example, Calvin, in his confessions, uses adoption as a relational concept which distinguishes Christ’s Sonship from believers’ sonship in clarifying the relationship between the Father, the Son, and believers as God’s children. The confessions prior to Calvin do not have this concept in a succinct manner. Furthermore, it is also Calvin who shows that adoption has two inseparable aspects, namely the adoptive act and life, which are related to the twofold grace. It is further recognized in the second group that those confessions, in a more overt manner, describe how the concept of adoption relates to other relevant issues such as its relation to union with Christ, election, and the sacraments. Also, this clearer understanding of adoption makes it possible to distinguish adoption from the new birth. While adoption is related to the change of status, the new birth has relevance to the change of nature of God’s children.

Third, it is noted that the Fatherhood of God is treated, in a significant manner, mainly in the soteriological context. As Canlis points out, a familial way of constructing soteriology is one of the characteristics of Calvin’s theology as he speaks about salvation.


217. As already pointed out, we need to be careful not to neglect the oneness of adoption. Pages 75-76 in chapter 2 of this study; Zachman, The Assurance of Faith, 11; Billings, Union with Christ, 28.


219. When it comes to the Fatherhood in the soteriological context, the most obvious cases are found in the Geneva Catechism. See QA 12, CCF, 2: 321 [CO 6 (CR 34): 11-12]; QA 22, CCF, 2: 322 [CO 6 (CR 34): 15-16]; QA 218, CCF, 2: 343-344 [CO 6 (CR 34): 77-78]; QA 250, CCF, 2: 348 [CO 6 (CR 34): 89-90]; QA 323, CCF, 2: 357 [CO 6 (CR 34): 115-18].

220. Julie Canlis, “Calvin’s ‘Institutes’: Primer for Spiritual Formation,” Crux 47, no. 1 (2011): 20. “For Calvin, God becoming our Father is perhaps the best summary of the gospel. . . . his theology is better known as filial. In nearly every possible way, and at every critical theological juncture, Calvin paints the Christian life in familial terms, as children with their loving Father.”
2. The Concept of Adoption in the Second Group of Confessions

Besides these three points, it is also necessary to think about how we should understand the relationship between the confessional documents in the second group. In the second group, there are various ways of treating the concept of adoption. However, as Kayayan points out, it is difficult to see, in a strict sense, any progression between those documents. Even in the 1536 Institutes, the earliest one, Calvin uses the concept of adoption to form a theological framework which is characterized in a balanced manner covering various theological issues. If we could say anything about “progression,” the possible case, as far as the present writer notices, would be the Trinitarian way of treating adoption which was sparsely presented in the 1536 Institutes, and deepened by the following confessional documents, especially the Geneva Catechism.

In order to understand the relationship between the documents in the second group, it is more appropriate, instead of seeing progression among them, to recognize those various approaches as Calvin’s “flexibility,” as Kayayan writes. For example, it is more appropriate to understand the way the Geneva Catechism uses, not as a progression, but as an adjustment to the situation of Geneva at that time, in considering it was written after Calvin’s return. The case of the Consensus Genevensis is even more obvious since it was a pastoral motivation which compels Calvin to focus exclusively on election in order to deal with the Bolsec controversy.

Finally, it is also necessary to refer to the Confession of Faith of the English Congregation as an example in which we can see how the confessional documents written by

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222. See page 164n82 in this chapter of this study.
223. In the 1536 Institutes, the reference to the Spirit’s ministry is in passing. Inst. (1536), 59 [CO 1 (CR 29), 73]. We do not see a Trinitarian treatment, in a clear way, until the Geneva Catechism appears. QA 250 of the Geneva Catechism, CCF, 2: 348 [CO 6 (CR 34): 89-90].
224. “The differences noted are more a tribute to Calvin’s ability to render his material with great flexibility.” Kayayan, op. cit., 640.
225. The Geneva Catechism is characterized for its focus on the adoptive life, rather than the adoptive act. Also see ibid., 628-32. He pays attention to the situation of Geneva in detail when the Catechism was written.
Calvin influenced others. Although it may be in passing, it is recognized that there are some similarities or influence from Calvin to the Confession. This case will help us to see in the following chapter the confessional documents written after Calvin.

3. The Second Group in Comparison with the *Institutes* of 1559

At the end of this chapter, we need to see if there are any issues the second group of confessions misses or neglects, compared to the *Institutes* of 1559 as the most exhaustive work in terms of the concept of adoption. Here, in addition to chapter 2 of this study, Y. Sano’s work “The Doctrine of Adoption in Calvin: Upon the Final Edition of the ‘Institutes’” helps us to compare the second group of confessions and the *Institutes* of 1559. In comparing the second group of the confessions and the *Institutes* of 1559, while most of the issues treated by the former are in the same lines with the latter as a whole, there is one issue the former does not treat, namely the church as a “mother” for those adopted. Calvin states in *Institutes*, 4.1.1:

> I shall start, then, with the church, into whose bosom God is pleased to gather his sons, not only that they may be nourished by her help and ministry as long as they are infants and children, but also that they may be guided by her motherly care until they mature and at last reach the goal of faith. . . . so that, for those to whom he is Father the church may also be Mother.

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227. See pages 192-94, 193n200, 194n202, 195 in this chapter of this study.
228. This study does not explore the *Institutes* of 1559 because of the following two reasons. First, it is difficult to recognize the *Institutes* of 1559 as a confession in considering its exhaustive contents. Second, even though it may be still possible to take the final edition as a confession, there are already some important works which explore the *Institutes* of 1559 in terms of the concept of adoption as already mentioned.
229. Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 82-107. As far as the author of this study knows, at this point of time this is still the newest work exclusively focusing on the concept of adoption in the *Institutes* (1559).
230. Ibid., 101; *Inst.*, 4.1.1 [CO 2 (CR 30): 746]; Pages 78-79 in chapter 2 of this study.
As we have already seen, Calvin, by using a metaphor, recognizes the role of the church as significantly similar to a mother’s role.\(^{231}\) Although as Calvin does as a whole in his works,\(^{232}\) the confessions of the second group also identify the church as the place in which God’s children are spiritually nurtured by Christ through the means of grace including the sacraments,\(^{233}\) only the *Institutes* of 1559 refers to her as a mother for God’s children.\(^{234}\)

### 4. Conclusion

In the confessions in this second group, it is difficult to see any newness in terms of treating adoption since its basic issues were already present in the first group. However, it is true that the confessional documents in the second group develop the concept of adoption, in various ways, through forming a theological framework into which the concept is woven. Furthermore, we see that the concept of adoption treated in the second group does not differ substantially from Calvin’s treatment of the concept throughout his works as a whole. We also see a possibility, in the *Confession of Faith of the English Congregation*, about how Calvin’s treatment of adoption influenced the other confessions written after Calvin.

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231. Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 101; Pages 78-79 in chapter 2 of this study.
232. Pages 77, 79-80 in chapter 2 of this study.
233. See pages 145n3, 146-49, 152n33, 162n72, 163n78, 163n81, 169n104, 179, 180n151, 182n156, 193n200 in this chapter of this study. Cf. *Inst.*, 4.1.4, 4.17.5: “None but the utterly irreligious deny that Christ is the bread of life by which believers are nourished into eternal life.”
CHAPTER V

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we explored the confessional documents written by or related to Calvin. In this chapter we will examine the third group of the documents written after Calvin: the *Scottish Confession* (1560), the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), the *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1571), the *Canons of the Synod of Dort* (1618-1619), and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1648). Since it is generally recognized that the Reformed confessions reached their maturity in 1560s, it is important to note how the concept of adoption, after being developed by Calvin, is treated in these matured confessions that comprise the third group.

A. The *Scottish Confession* (Knox, 1560)

1. Background: For Establishing the Church of Scotland

After Mary I of England died, Protestant leaders who had been living on the Continent, including John Knox, began to return to Scotland. Then, the series of sermons by Knox impacted churches and people in Scotland and eventually led them to submit a petition to Parliament in 1560. This petition was to ask Parliament to take action to abolish the erroneous doctrines and

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1. For example, see Cornelis P. Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination: Author of ‘the Other Reformed Tradition’?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 60-61. Venema recognizes the *Second Helvetic Confession* of 1566 as “normative” in the “Reformed confessions and theological systems.”
3. *Reformed Confessions*, ed. Cochrane, 160. The timing of submitting the petition was important. It was on August 1 of 1560, which was after the death of Mary of Guise, the Queen Regent, and the expulsion of both French and English troops, but before the arrival of Mary Stuart, the Queen of
idolatry which was formed under the papacy. Then, Parliament assigned a committee consisting of six ministers to write a confession to clarify what they believe. The committee in haste composed a confession in four days. It was adopted, according to Knox, on August 17, 1560, by Parliament, “with almost no objections,” although this is likely exaggerated.

In spite of the adoption of the Scottish Confession in that year, the Church of Scotland was not legally established until the Confession was ratified in 1567 after Mary Stuart, the Queen of Scotland, abdicated. In 1572, all the ministers in Scotland were required to subscribe to the Confession. Later, the Confession was supplemented by “the more rigidly predestinarian Aberdeen Confession” of 1616, and superseded by the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647.

When it comes to the sources of the Scottish Confession, there are many possible sources, such as the Confession of Faith of the English Congregation at Geneva (1556), the

Scotland. At that time, an interim Protestant government by council took leadership in Scotland, and convened Parliament to “settle the new state of things in this transition period.” RBS, 2/1: 209-10; Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:681.

5. Those six members were: John Knox (c. 1514-1572), John Winram (c. 1492-1582), John Spottiswoode (1510-1585), John Douglas (c. 1494-1574), John Row (c. 1525-1580), and John Willock (d. 1585). Regarding the diverse backgrounds of those ministers, see OER, s.v. “Scottish Confession.” Among them, it is worth noting the role John Winram played, who used to be a leading Catholic inquisitor and was familiar with both the old and new theologies. “The diverse influences, direct and indirect, to which the six Johns had been subjected, especially abroad, were likely echoed in their composition.” RBS, 2/1:211-12. Hazlet makes a comment on the reason of assigning the committee. “In the political circumstances, an explicitly single-handed confession by Knox, . . . might not have been welcomed by the English government in particular, since his standing with Elizabeth had been comprised with his 1558 tracts on resistance to female rulers, . . . The Scottish government intervened at a late stage to tone some things down in the Confession remembering the needs of the external audience. Ibid., 211.

6. RBS, 2/1:210. Prior to the adoption of the confession, it appears that the Confession of Faith of the English Congregation at Geneva with the Liturgy of Edward VI was used in the church. Reformed Confession, ed. Cochrane, 159.

7. CCF, 2:387: “Knox records that only three lords dissented and the bishops said nothing. The record shows that the number was probably closer to nine, with five lords, three bishops, and one commendator either abstaining or disagreeing out of the body of 191 members.” Hazlet points out that there were some controversial issues, such as its polemical language and its attitude toward the civil magistrate, in the confession before Parliament adopted it. See RBS, 2/1:210-11.

8. CCF, 2: 387; Reformed Confessions, ed. Cochrane, 161. It legally became valid in the name of James VI. RBS, 2/1:217.


10. Ibid; OER, s.v. “Scottish Confession.” But there has been no official decision to abrogate it.
Institutes (1559), the French Confession of Faith (1559), the First Helvetic Confession (1536), and the Augsburg Confession (1530). On the other hand the Calvinistic influence on the Confession has been traditionally recognized. Although Calvin’s influence should not be questioned, what Hazlett writes is the most plausible. “We have absolutely no idea about the committee’s modus operandi, but overall, the literary and linguistic style as well as the theological content suggests strongly that the major input came from Knox himself.”

2. Characteristics: Preaching for Motivating People

There is one characteristic worth noting relating to the writing style of the Confession. When the Confession was composed, the situation of haste affected its style since it is “other than ‘academic’ and ‘systematic.’” But, the hurried situation is not the only factor affecting the style. The political situation in that era is also worth considering. Hazlett points out, “The Confession’s immediate aim was to move, sway, persuade and seek the commitment of pugnacious politicians, turbulent nobles, city councilors, and backwoods gentry assembled in Parliament.” In other words, it would be possible to say that the committee, especially Knox, speaks through the

11. CCF, 2:387; OER, s.v. “Scottish Confession.” Other possible sources are as follows: the First Confession of Basel (1534), the Geneva Catechism (1541/42), the Forty-Two Articles of the Church of England (1553), and John of Lasco’s Summa doctrinae.


13. RBS, 2/1:211. After referring to Calvin as “the chief, identifiable” influence on the Confession, he also writes: “While there is no obvious dependency on other contemporary confessions, there are some easily identifiable parallels and replications from Swiss, French, Genevan, and English forerunners.” Ibid., 216-17. Also see DSCHT, s.v. “Scots Confession”: “While the most discernible basic theological influence on the Confession is Calvin’s Institutes, his voice in it is less exclusive than many maintain. Theologically the document is relatively syncretistic.”

14. RBS, 2/1:214. “Signs of precipitous composition or inadequate editing in the first section are first: the slightly confusing lay out and headings of articles 6-9 that wrap up together Christology, election, and atonement, and secondly, the separation of articles 8 and 9 in mid-sentence, so that the last sentence of article 8 should really be the first sentence of article 9.”

15. Ibid., 215.
Confession, not only as theologians, but also as passionate preachers for motivating people. In this sense, it is worth seeing, in what follows, how the concept of adoption or filial notion is treated in this Confession which appears to be a preaching document by Knox, who was theologically influenced by Calvin.

3. Relevant Issues

Whereas the Scottish Confession has no direct reference to adoption, there are three issues which are worth noting here: the redemptive-historical perspective, sanctification, and the new birth.

First, it is necessary to pay attention to Chapter 8 in which the Fatherhood as well as other relevant issues to the concept of adoption are treated in the redemptive-historical perspective. “For that same eternall God and Father, quha of grace electit us in Christ Jesus, his Sone, befoir the foundatioun of the wurd was laid, appointit him to be our heid, our brother.”

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16. RBS, 2/1:215. “The general character of the Confession as an occasional and pragmatic document is determined partly by this situation and partly by the style of probably the chief contributor to its text, Knox.” T. F. Torrance also writes, “John Knox himself was essentially a preacher-theologian, one who did not intend to be a theologian, but who could not help being a theologian in the fulfilment of his vocation.” Torrance, Scottish Theology, 2.

17. In what follows, the text of the Scottish Confession is from RBS, 2/1:240-90. Hazlett makes a comment on its language. “The language of this edition can be described as hybrid of Late Middle Scots and Early Modern English. The long-term literary tendency in Scotland after the Reformation was towards increasing anglicisation, and this text illustrates the process of transition.” Ibid., 224. Since some vocabularies are unfamiliar for us, meaning is explained in notes each time as needed.

18. Although we do not refer to the sacraments here, their treatment in the Confession, while revolving around union with Christ, relates them to the filial notion. Chapter 21: “And thir [these, RBS, 2/1:281] sacramentis, aswell of the auld as [both the old and, ibid.] of the new Testament, [war] institutit of God not onelie to make ane visibil difference betwix his peple and thay that was without his leigue [covenant, ibid.], but alswa [also, CCF, 2:400] to exerce the faith of his children – and be participatioun of the same sacramentis to seill [seal, RBS, 2/1:282] in thair heartis the assurance of his promise, and of that maist bressit conjonctioun, union and societie, quhilk the elect have with thair heid Christ Jesus.” Chapter 21 relates baptism to “ingraftit in Christ” and “partakeris of his justice,” and the Supper to the spiritual nourishment based on union with Christ. RBS, 2/1:281-82. Besides Chapter 21, it is possible to see union with Christ in Chapter 11 treating “the Ascension,” and Chapter 16 “the Kirk.” Ibid., 257-58; 268.


20. “Mere,” “absolute” or “sheer,” ibid.

21. Ibid. As a supporting text in the Scriptures for the description of Jesus Christ as “our brother,” the text of the confession in RBS, 2/1 refers to Heb. 2:11b-12 in square brackets: “Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises.”” It is noted that, although Jesus calls believers his brothers and sisters,
Here the reference to the “Father” is not related to the creative Fatherhood, but to the soteriological one since the phrase “befoir the foundatioun of the world was laid” is from Ephesians 1:4, which has *huiothesia* in the following verse.\(^2\) It is also noted that union with Christ and his brotherhood are mentioned here. Then, in the following context, Chapter 8 refers to the purpose of the Incarnation. “It behuiefit\(^2\) that the Sone of God suld descend unto us, tak\(^2\) himself a body of our body, flesche of our flesche, and bane\(^2\) of our banis – and sa become the perfyte mediator betwix God and man, giving power to sa mony as\(^2\) beleif in him to be the *sonis of God*. . . Be quhik maist halie fraternitie\(^2\) quhatsaever we have tynt\(^2\) in Adam is restorit to us againe.”\(^2\) In this context, the chapter recognizes our becoming the sons of God as the purpose of the Incarnation, and relates restoration of what we have lost in Adam, through Christ’s brotherhood, to our sonship.\(^3\) Furthermore, in what follows, the chapter refers to the issue of calling God the Father, again through Christ’s brotherhood.\(^3\) Thus, the chapter conceptually depicts what adoption signifies from the redemptive-historical perspective, although it is not fully the another direction, i.e. Jesus as their brother, is not mentioned here. This is important since here is a thrust which the Confession makes by using the stronger wording in it than Heb. 2:11b-12 actually use.

22. Torrance, in commenting on the *Scottish Confession*, writes, “Here for example God is *Father*, and Christ is our *Brother*, but we may now think of God as our Father, not so much on the basis of creation as on the basis of redemption.” Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 13 Also, in referring to Knox’s theology, Torrance writes, “Fatherhood is defined in terms of redeeming grace toward us and free adoption of us as his children.” Ibid., 7; Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine of Westminster Soteriology,” in *Reformed Theology in Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Lynn Quigley (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1997), 93-94.

27. “By this most holy brotherhood,” ibid.
29. Ibid., 252-53
30. W. G. Bromiley, “The Reformers and the Humanity of Christ,” in *Perspective on Christology: Essays in Honor of Paul Jewett*, ed. Marguerite Shuster and Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 92. “It [the Confession] links Christ’s taking of ‘body of our body’ . . . to the power given to believers to be sons of God, ‘by which most holy fraternity’ what we lost in Adam ‘is restored unto us again.’”
31. “And for thi cause ar we not affryait to cal God our ‘Father’, not sa melke [much, *CCF*, 2: 392] because he hes creatit us . . . as for that [rather for the reasons, *RBS*, 2/1:253], that he hes gevin to us his onelie Sone to be our brother.” Ibid.
described.\textsuperscript{32} Second, it is also necessary to study Chapter 13 about “the cause of good works” since it treats the filial notion in relation to the spiritual battle God’s children face:\textsuperscript{33}

For how sone that ever\textsuperscript{34} the Spirite of the Lord Jesus . . . takis possessioun in the hart of ony man, as sone\textsuperscript{35} does he regenerate and renew the same man – sa that he beginnis to hait that quhilk\textsuperscript{36} befoir he luifit\textsuperscript{37}, and beginnis to luif that quhilk befoir he hatit. And frathine\textsuperscript{38} cumis\textsuperscript{39} that continuall battell quhilk is betwix the flesche and the Spirite in Goddis children. . . . Bot the Spirite of God, quhilk gevis witnessing to our spirite that we ar sonis of God makis us to resist fylthie.

In the context of this spiritual battle, it is worth noting that this chapter refers to the witness of the Spirit leading God’s children to have the filial consciousness. What this remark shows is that the Confession has the Trinitarian treatment of the filial notion by referring to the Spirit’s role helping God’s children to live out faith in the world. Thus, Chapter 13 depicts a part of what the concept of adoption signifies.

Finally, it is noted that the new birth in the Confession is related to the restoration of the image of God in man. Chapter 3 states, “Be quhilk\textsuperscript{40} transgressioun, commounlie callit originall sin, was the image of God utterlie defaciit\textsuperscript{41} in man and he and his posterity of nature become

\begin{footnotes}
\item[32] Chapter 8 does not refer to the Spirit’s ministry helping believers to address the Father as such, although it does pay attention to the issue of calling him “our Father.” Also see Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 94-95.
\item[33] \textit{RBS}, 2/1:261.
\item[34] “As soon as” or “once,” \textit{RBS}, 2/1:261.
\item[37] “Loved,” ibid.
\item[38] “Thence,” \textit{RBS}, 2/1:261.
\item[40] “By this,” \textit{CCF}, 2:390.
\item[41] “Defaced,” ibid.
\end{footnotes}
enimmeis to God . . . Quhilk regeneration is wrocht be the power of the halie Gaist, wiking in the hartis of the elect of God ane assurit faith in the promeis of God revelit to us in his worde.” 44 In this context, it is clear that “regeneratioun” is related to the restoration of the nature which man originally had because of the image of God. Besides this article, the new birth, in Chapters 12, 13, and 15, is also relevant to the nature of man. 45 In short, the Confession, in treating the new birth, conceptually distinguishes it from adoption which is related to the status of God’s children.

4. Theological Analysis

Here are three issues for analyzing the Scottish Confession: first, the framework of salvation history, second, the fact that the covenant, justification, and inheritance are not mentioned, and third the new birth as distinguished from adoption. First, although the Confession does not use the word “adoption,” it, to some extent, depicts the framework of salvation history which huirothesia forms in the Scriptures. 46 As we have seen in Chapter 8 of election, the Confession, while treating the Fatherhood in the context of redemption, relates the purpose of the Incarnation to the sonship of believers. 47 Furthermore, the Confession in Chapter 13, through referring to the Spirits’ witness reminding believers of their filial status, refers to the spiritual battle of God’s

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42. “This,” CCF, 2:390.
44. RBS, 2/1:246-47.
45. Chapter 12: “Sa alswa [so also, CCF, 2:394] do we confess that the haly Gaist doth sanctifie and regenerat us without all respect of ony [any, ibid] proceding fra [from, ibid] us, be it before, or be it etter [after, ibid] our regeneratioun.” RBS, 2/1:259; Chapter 13: “For how sone that ever [as soon as or once, ibid., 261] the Spirit of the Lord Jesus . . . takis possessioun in the hart of ony man, as sone [then, ibid] dois he regenerate and renew the same man – sa that he beginnis to hait that quhilk [what, CCF, 2:395] befoir he luifit [loved, ibid], and beginnis to luif that quhilk befoir he haitit.” RBS, 2/1: 261; Chapter 15: “But our nature is sa corrupt, sa waik and sa unperfyte [imperfect, ibid., 266] that we ar never habill [able, CCF, 2:396] to fulfill the warkis of the law in perfectioun. Yea, gif [if, ibid] we say we have na sin – even etter we ar regeneratit – we dessai [deceive, RBS, 2/1:266] our selfis and the veritie [of God] is not in us.” RBS, 2/1:266.
46. In regard to the framework of the salvation history or the redemptive-historical approach in which huirothesia is treated, see Ridderbos, Paul, 197-204; pages 2-6 in chapter 1 of the present study.
47. RBS, 2/1:252-53.
children in the sphere of sanctification.\textsuperscript{48} In addition to this, the Confession, in the context of ecclesiology, relates the sacraments to the filial notion revolving around union with Christ.\textsuperscript{49} This redemptive-historical approach even compels Trumper to say, “What is reminiscent of the Reformer’s [Calvin] theology . . . is the redemptive-historical atmosphere characteristic of the Scots Confession. . . . In spite, then, of the absence of any reference to adoption the above certainly suggests the indirect influence of Calvin upon the Scots Confession.”\textsuperscript{50}

Second, it is necessary to explain here the reason of using the phrase “to some extent” in the previous paragraph referring to the framework of the salvation history. This is because, in terms of the concept of adoption, the Confession does not fully depict this framework since it lacks the following three issues in relation to the filial notion: God’s covenant, justification (the adoptive act), and the inheritance of the kingdom which is relevant to eschatology.\textsuperscript{51} Here, it is worth comparing the Scottish Confession in terms of justification, to the Confession of Faith of the English Congregation at Geneva, one of the sources of the Confession. It is noted that the latter treats justification in the context of Christology, in terms of the filial notion.\textsuperscript{52} In considering the close relationship between these two confessions, we are forced to recognize the

\textsuperscript{48} RBS, 2/1:261.  
\textsuperscript{49} See page 205n18 in this chapter; RBS, 2/1:281-82.  
\textsuperscript{50} In referring to Chapters 8, 15, 16, 21, and 23 of the Confession, he makes this remark. Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 94-95. Actually, what he should have seen here is not the indirect, rather the direct influence of Calvin. It is regrettable that Trumper does not recognize the conceptual reference to adoption since he adheres to treating adoption as a \textit{locus}. Also see Torrance, \textit{Scottish Theology}, 28. “Throughout the theology of the Scottish Reformation, there is the strongest sense of the continuity of the Christian Church with Israel, the Old Testament people of God, for it is the same mighty acting living God who acts in both. But there is a difference marked by the Incarnation.” According to Schaff, the \textit{Scottish Confession} is “Pauline, rather than Johannine.” Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:681n2.  
\textsuperscript{51} Chapter 5 does treat the covenant in the context of the Old Testament, but does not relate it to the filial notion. See RBS, 2/1:248-50.  
\textsuperscript{52} RBS, 1/3:348-49. “For when through our father Adam[,]’s transgression we were become childrene of perdition, there was no means to bring us from that yoke of synne and damnation, but onely Jesus Christ our Lord who giving us that by grace, which was his by nature, made us (through faith) the childrene of God.”
non-existence of the adoptive act (or justification) in the *Scottish Confession* as important.\textsuperscript{53}

Finally, in considering the conflation between the new birth and adoption in the past, it is important to notice that the *Scottish Confession* relates the former to the change of nature.\textsuperscript{54} Even though there is no reference to adoption, the Confession has minimally the concept of adoption which is distinct from the change of nature, even without overtly articulating it.

5. Conclusion

The *Scottish Confession* depicts the framework of salvation history in which *huiothesia* functions as the underlying theme, although it does not do full justice to the framework by lacking some important issues such as justification in terms of the filial notion. It is also worth noting that the Confession theologically distinguishes the new birth from the concept of adoption, even though there is no direct reference to the concept.

B. The Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

1. Background: For Having Unity

It is well known that the controversy around the Lord’s Supper was, at the beginning, the most immediate cause which compelled Frederick III (1516-1576), the elector of the Palatinate, to commission the writing of a new catechism for the purpose of having unity in his realm in terms of the Christian belief.\textsuperscript{55} What he tried to realize in the Palatinate, through the catechism, was a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} *Reformed Confession*, ed. Cochrane, 159. As mentioned above, it is likely that, prior to the adoption of the *Scottish Confession*, the *Confession of Faith of the English Congregation at Geneva* was used in churches in Scotland.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 540.
\item \textsuperscript{55} *CCF*, 2:427; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:531-32. At that time, because of the policy taken by Otto Henry, the predecessor of Frederick III, there were Lutherans, Philippians, and Calvinists in the Palatinate, and this made it difficult to have unity among them, especially in relation to Christ’s presence in the Supper. *OER*, s.v. “Frederick III of the Palatinate.”
\end{itemize}
“way that reflected the core of evangelical faith and also eschewed the scholastic quibbling of the Gnesio-Lutherans and the Philippists.”\textsuperscript{56} After the hard work of the committee of the new catechism, during the year of 1563 its four German editions and one Latin edition appeared.\textsuperscript{57}

When it comes to the sources of the catechism, it is difficult to identify just one or two important documents which give major impact to the Catechism since there are many possible sources.\textsuperscript{58} On the other hand, it is known that there are two preparatory documents for composing the Catechism: Ursinus’ \textit{Larger Catechism (Summa theologiae or Catechesis maior)} and \textit{Smaller Catechism (Catechesis minor)}.\textsuperscript{59} Besides these two, Neuser insists that the Catechism has four fathers whose influences are discernible in it: Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin,

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\textsuperscript{56} CCF, 2:427. Although the \textit{Heidelberg Catechism} is generally classified as a Reformed confession now, Frederick III himself was a subscriber to the \textit{Augsburg Confession} even after the Catechism was completed. It is also known that he had asked advice from Melanchthon in order to deal with the controversy in the Palatinate. \textit{OER}, s.v. “Frederick III of the Palatinate.”

\textsuperscript{57} In regard to the authorship of the Catechism, it had been traditionally claimed that Zacharias Ursinus (1534-1583) took the primary role, and Kasper Olevianus (1536-1587) the secondary role. Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:533-35. However, according to the current scholarly debate on the authorship, it is concluded that Olevianus’s role was not as important as it was thought in the past. Lyle D. Bierma, “The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism,” in \textit{An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology}, ed. Lyle D. Bierma (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 57-67. Currently, the scholarly debate tends to emphasize the aspect of team work as the committee in terms of the authorship. Ibid. 53-57. In considering the immediate cause of composing the Catechism, it was necessary to attribute the Catechism, not to a few theologians, but to a committee because its purpose was to unify theologians whose backgrounds were various. In addition to this, the role and leadership of Frederick III is valued, as clearly shown in his preface to the Catechism. \textit{RBS}, 2/2:167, 174-75. Regarding English translations of his preface, see George W. Richards, \textit{The Heidelberg Catechism: Historical and Doctrinal Studies} (Philadelphia: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1913), 183-99. With regard to those five editions which appeared in 1563, it is noted that the addition to the second German edition was to condemn the Roman Mass. This addition, after the third German edition added 27 words for elaboration, was numbered as QA 80. Ever since then, the third edition has been used as the standard text. Fred H. Klooster, \textit{The Heidelberg Catechism: Origin and History} (Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Theological Seminary, 1981), 186-89; \textit{CCF}, 2:427. In regard to reactions, including attacks, to the Catechism, see Klooster, \textit{The Heidelberg Catechism}, 195-230; \textit{RBS}, 2/2:171.

\textsuperscript{58} In the letter Olevianus wrote to Bullinger on April 14, 1563, he writes, “\textit{Nicht die frommen Gedanken eines Mannes, sondern vieler sind [in ihm] vereinigt}.” \textit{RBS}, 2/2:169. Bierma writes, “When it comes to the sources and theological orientation of the HC, we have to be careful how we use labels.” Bierma, “The Sources and Theological Orientation,” in \textit{An Introduction to the HC}, 101-2.

\textsuperscript{59} “The Smaller Catechism (Catechesis minor) of 1562 brings us into the immediate vicinity of the HC, since around 90 of the HC’s questions and answers are based on it.” Bierma, “The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism,” 72. Because of these two catechisms as well as other reasons, it is recognized that Ursinus served as the primary author for composing the HC. Regarding the detailed discussion about his primary role, see ibid., 71-74; Lyle D. Bierma, “Ursinus and the Theological Landscape of the Heidelberg Catechism,” in \textit{The Spirituality of the HC}, 9-22.

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and Zwingli.\textsuperscript{60} Thus, Neuser himself sees various influences on the Catechism, but it is worth noting, in considering the special role Calvin plays in terms of the concept of adoption, that he writes, “Den größten Einfluß auf den Katechismus hat der Genfer Katechismus Calvins.”\textsuperscript{61}

2. Characteristics: Its Synthetic Feature

There are three issues we need to keep in mind here: the synthetic feature, the careful avoidance of controversial issues, and the main purposes. First, it is generally recognized that the Heidelberg Catechism has some well-known features, such as its threefold structure consisting of misery [elend], deliverance [erlösung], and gratitude [dankbarkeit], its emphasis on the third use of the law in Part III, and its warm and pastoral tone represented by the underlying theme of comfort [trost]. However, as it is clarified by Bierma, none of these are new or original to the Heidelberg Catechism, but “part of the common property of the Protestant world” in that era.\textsuperscript{62} This synthetic feature using the “common property” fits into the political situation in the Palatinate which motivated Frederick III. Indeed, “the HC forges a remarkable consensus by highlighting common theological ground among the followers of Zwingli and Bullinger, Calvin and Melanchthon.”\textsuperscript{63} In terms of the present study it is worth seeing how the concept of adoption is treated in the Catechism using “the common property of the Protestant world” in that era.

Second, this political as well as religious situation was also related to the careful avoidance of referring to controversial issues throughout the Catechism. It is noted that it is silent on some important issues which are recognized as typically Calvinistic or Reformed, such as


\textsuperscript{61} \textit{CCF}, 2:427. He recognizes, in relation to QA 29-52 and 92-115 of the Catechism, some reliance on or relationship with the \textit{Geneva Catechism}. Bierma also recognizes some similarities between these two catechisms. Bierma, “The Sources and Theological Orientation,” 90, 92-93, 95, and 100.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 81-94, 101-2.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 81.
predestination and covenant, which are also relevant to the concept of adoption.\textsuperscript{64} Furthermore, in treating the most sensitive issue in that era, namely the sacraments, the Catechism tries to take the middle way of the major traditions in the Palatinate.\textsuperscript{65} In short, regardless of addressing or being silent on some specific issues, it is clear that the Catechism was written to unify believers of differing viewpoints by clarifying the common ground of faith on which they could stand together.\textsuperscript{66}

Finally, there were three main purposes for composing the Catechism: 1) for teaching youth, 2) for presenting a norm for preaching, and 3) for promoting a confessional unity in the Palatinate. In particular, the first and second purposes are clearly stated in the preface to the Catechism written by Frederick III.\textsuperscript{67}

3. “\textit{Christ eigen bin}” as the Underlying Theme

Before getting into relevant issues in the \textit{Heidelberg Catechism} (HC), it is necessary to pay attention to HC 1 describing the \textit{comfort} of belonging to Christ [\textit{Christi eigen bin}] as the theme of the entire HC.\textsuperscript{68} Commenting on HC 1, Ursinus states that the substance of this comfort is “that we are \textit{ingrafted} into Christ by faith, that through him we are reconciled to, and beloved of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} Bierma, op. cit., 94-98; \textit{CCF}, 2:427. The \textit{HC} is also silent on the doctrine of Scripture because of various understandings of it in that era. See Willem van Vlastuin, “The Doctrine of Scripture in the Heidelberg Catechism,” \textit{International Journal of Systematic Theology} 17, no. 1 (2015): 32.
\item \textsuperscript{65} “On theological issues where such angularities might most be expected to surface – predestination, covenant, the relationship between sign and signified in the sacraments – the HC is either muted or silent. The focus is nearly always on common theological ground among the followers of Melanchthon, Calvin, and Bullinger.” Bierma, op. cit., 102.
\item \textsuperscript{66} But, this does not mean that the Catechism is an \textit{ecumenical} document signified in the modern terminology since the Catechism was also written to set boundaries which led to exclude some extremes, such as the Roman Catholics, the Gnesio-Lutherans, and the Anabaptists. Ibid., 81, 102.
\item \textsuperscript{67} It is possible to recognize his preface as the only primary source to understand the backgrounds of the Catechism. This is because somehow the Catechism committee left no official record of their work. \textit{RBS}, 2/2:168.
\item \textsuperscript{68} \textit{RBS}, 2/2:175; Klooster, \textit{Our Only Comfort}, 1:25-28; Van Vlastuin, “The Doctrine of Scripture in the Heidelberg Catechism,” 37.
\end{itemize}
Then, he clarifies its details. “This comfort consists of six parts: 1. Our reconciliation with God through Christ, so that we are no longer the enemies, but the sons of God; neither are we our own, but we belong to Christ.” It is clear here that at the first part, the notion of becoming God’s sons comes hand in hand with “reconciliation with God” and “belong to Christ,” namely union with Christ.

In considering the importance of “Christi eigen bin” in the HC, it may be surprising that “eigen” including its derivative word [eigenthumb] is used only twice (HC 1, 34) throughout the text. In fact, the HC, instead of using eigen repeatedly, takes another way to describe the same concept by using various expressions, such as “grafting,” “members of Christ,” “share in Christ,” and so on. Thus, union with Christ is variously confessed throughout the Catechism relating to adoption or its inseparable issues. Being woven throughout the text, union with Christ provides the space where believers participate in the Sonship of Christ.

4. Relevant Issues

In what follows, we pay attention to some key QAs referring to union with Christ. This helps us to see how union with Christ, like a thread, relates to important issues in the HC. 

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69. Ursinus, Commentary, 17 (17; italics mine).
70. Ibid., 18 (18; italics mine).
72. HC 34. “[34.] Frag. Warum nennestu in unsern Herrn? Antwort. Daß er uns mit leib und seel von der sünden, und auß allem gewalt des Teufels, nicht mit golt oder silber, sonder mit seinem thewern Blut, ihm zum eigenthumb erlöset und erkaufft hat.” RBS, 2/2: 184; Thorsten Latzel, Theologische Grundzüge des Heidelberger Katechismus: Eine fundamentaltheologische Untersuchung seines Ansatzes zur Glaubenskommunikation, Marburger Theologische Studien 83 (Marburg, DE: N. G. Elwert Verlag Marburg, 2004), 49. Here it is also noted that in HC 34 treating redemption, redemption does not end at itself, but at the change of believers’ status, namely becoming Christ’s.
74. In this section, the English translations of the HC are from “Heidelberg Catechism,” in
a. HC 20

In order to answer whether all are saved through Christ, HC 20 uses the phrase “im werden eingeleibet” for clarifying that only those who are “grafted into Christ” are saved. It is important to note here that union with Christ is mentioned within the introductory part (HC 12-22) to the Creed, after clarifying who the Mediator is (18) and how to know him (19). Furthermore, HC 20 is located at the starting point of the thread relating to other relevant issues throughout the HC. In noting these points, it is natural to recognize the importance of the union in HC 20. The fact that the following HC 21 refers to the two links, the Spirit and faith, leading believers to be grafted into Christ also reinforces the importance of the union here.

b. HC 26

In answering what we believe regarding God the Father, HC 26 uses the phrase “umb seines Sons Christi willen.” In the HC, there are five QAs treating God’s Fatherhood in a relevant way to the familial aspect of soteriology, though there are differences among them in their degree. Among them, HC 26 hints at adoption by using an appropriate phrase describing it, “umb seines Sons Christi willen . . . mein Vater sey.” Thus, HC 26 creates the familial tone, in passing, at the beginning of the part (26-28) treating God’s Fatherhood.

Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions (Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 1988).

75. RBS, 2/2:180; Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions, 19; Willem van Vlastuin, “Personal Renewal between Heidelberg and Westminster,” 52: “The 20th question makes clear that we are not only saved by Christ, but in Christ.” Also see ibid., 62; Biema, Theology of the HC, 55.

76. RBS, 2/2:181-82.

77. HC 26, 27, 28, 119, and 120. See Arnold Huijgen, “Practicing Gratitude: The Spirituality of Prayer in the Heidelberg Catechism,” in The Spirituality of the HC, 219-20: “The Heidelberg Catechism focuses obviously . . . on a strong bond between the twofold confessions of God as Father and God as King, . . . while the outer ring structure of HC 120 and 129 focuses on God’s Fatherhood (Latzel 2004, 128).” See Biema, Theology of the HC, 48-49. Biema recognizes having God as the Father “because of Christ” as another way of stating that “I belong to Christ” (HC 1). Also see ibid., 46. Biema recognize a similarity between the wording of the Geneva Catechism (GC) 22 and that of HC 26.
c. HC 31-33

In answering the question “Warum... wir auch kinder Gottes sind,” HC 33 uses the phrase “wir... auß gnaden zu kindern Gottes angenommen sind.” Whereas HC 33 is the key QA at this point, it is necessary to see HC 31-33 as a set describing what believers are sharing with the Son. In the first place, HC 31 treats Christ’s threefold office in a preparatory way to the following QAs. Then, HC 32 articulates that by becoming his member, each Christian shares the Son’s threefold office with him as well as his anointing. Finally, HC 33 declares that Christians even participate in Christ’s Sonship by grace. Here it is worth noting that HC 33 distinguishes the sonship of believers from his Sonship by using the phrase “der ewig natürlich Son Gottes.” What this signifies is that even though the Catechism does not use the word “adoption,” it conceptually connotes it here as a relational concept clarifying the relationship between the Father, the Son, and believers. Thus, focusing on HC 31-33 helps us to see the richness of that which believers receive through union with Christ.

d. HC 53

In clarifying the Holy Spirit’s ministry, HC 53 uses the phrase “Christi und aller seiner walthaten

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78. RBS, 2/2:183; Van Vlastuin, “Personal Renewal between Heidelberg and Westminster,” 52: “In question 32 and 33 the mystery of the unio mystica cum Christo...is developed in a remarkable way.”
79. Ursinus, Commentary, 180; Billings, Union with Christ, 160-65.
80. Bierma, Theology of the HC, 55. In the sentence “wir... auß gnaden zu kindern Gottes angenommen sind,” it is clear that the verb “angenommen” describes God’s adoptive act. In the HC, this appears to be the only verb describing the act of adoption.
81. See Inst. (1536), 50 [CO 1 (CR 29), 64]; Instruction in Faith (1537), 48 [CO 22 (CR 50): 53]; QA 46 of the Geneva Catechism, CCF, 2: 325 [CO 6 (CR 34): 23-24]; cf. Article 2 of the Confession of Faith of the English Congregation, RBS, 1/3:348. This is a key issue found in the confessional documents written by or related to Calvin.
82. In the following context after HC 33, the HC, in relation to the Son’s saving work, deals with the details of other benefits Christians receive through the union, such as redemption (HC 34), the Incarnation (35), the cross (43), resurrection (45), ascension (47, 49), the glory of Christ (50, 51), and the hope of the second coming (52).
83. RBS, 2/2:188.
theilhaftig macht.” HC 53 is recognized as a turning point of treating the union. After clarifying the Spirit as the Agent making Christians “share in Christ and all his blessings,” the HC starts treating some key issues from the Spirit’s perspective in Part II, such as ecclesiology (HC 54-55), eschatology (55, 57), and justification (59, 60, 61).84

e. HC 6485

HC 64 uses the phrase “Christo durch waren glauben sind eingepflanzt” for clarifying the impossibility for those grafted into Christ “not to produce fruits of gratitude.”86 At the end of the section of the Creed, the HC again focuses on an important role of union with Christ helping those united with him to bear fruits of gratitude. Thus, HC 64 structurally sets a theological basis for Part III treating Christian gratitude.87

f. HC 8088

Within the section of the sacraments (HC 65-85), by using the phrase “wir durch den Heiligen

84. Ursinus, Commentary, 278; Klooster, Our Only Comfort, 2:669, 674; Cornelis van der Kooi, “De Heilige Geest volgens de Heidelbergse Catechismus,” in Handboek HC, 244-45; Kyle J. Dieleman, “The Heidelberg Catechism, Calvin’s Genevan Catechism, and Spirituality,” in The Spirituality of the HC, 67; Van Vlastuin, “Personal Renewal between Heidelberg and Westminster,” 54-55: “By the Spirit we participate in all Christ’s benefits.” Biema recognizes a communal aspect in HC 53. Biema, Theology of the HC, 65. Also see ibid, 67: “The HC is replete with other references to the assisting role of the Spirit in the work of Christ.” See Huijgen, “Practicing Gratitude,” 218-22. Huijgen recognizes an eschatological aspect in treating the Lord’s Supper in the HC. In the following context, it is necessary to recognize “Erb des ewigen lebens” in HC 59 as relevant to adoption. In Gal. 4:1-7 and Rom. 8:15-17, huiothesia is treated in relation to heirship of the adopted children. At this point the writer is indebted to advice from Bierma.


86. Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions, 40.


88. RBS, 2/2:195-96. Although HC 80 is important with its theological clarity of the union, its place may be odd because other important key QAs, as already seen, are located at structurally significant places. This oddness may be because HC 80 is a later addition to the HC text, as is well known.
Geist Christo werden eingekehlt,” HC 80 describes “with great clarity” that the Holy Spirit unites believers to Christ. At this point, HC 80 can be recognized as the key, not only in the section of the sacraments, but also in the whole Catechism. This is because it may be possible, in HC 20 and 64, to understand that faith, not the Spirit, unites believers to Christ.

Throughout the section of the sacraments, union with Christ is mentioned in some transitional QAs, such as the introduction to the sacraments (65), to baptism (69), and to the Supper (75). Also, the union is mentioned in relation to spiritual renewal of believers (70) and God’s covenant (74). Then, it is, in terms of the Supper, deepened in HC 76, 77, and 79.

5. Theological Analysis

Here, four issues deserve our attention as we analyze the Catechism. First, union with Christ not only relates to other important issues as a thread, but also forms a theological framework as an organizing principle. As a response to this, some would say, although the union appears to form a framework, it is not the union, but the Creed, which forms a framework because the union is mainly found in Part II treating the Creed. However, it should be recognized that the union actually forms a framework because of the following three reasons. As the first reason, it is clear that union with Christ relates to various issues throughout the text, as already seen. It is necessary,

91. It may be possible to call union with Christ in the section of the Supper “the sacramental union.” Among the treatments of this sacramental union, HC 76 can be its climax. “What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and drink his poured-out blood? It means . . . through the Holy Spirit we are united more and more to Christ’s blessed body [mit seinem gebenedeyten leib je mehr und mehr vereinigt werden]. And so . . . we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone.” Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions, 46. Incidentally, in the following Part III (HC 86-129), there are only four QAs (86, 87, 115, 120) referring to union with Christ. It is likely that these four are not significant as much as the QAs mentioned in Part II.
as the second reason, to point out that the union is always mentioned in a transitional or structurally important manner. As the third reason, union with Christ, as seen in HC 64, provides a theological basis supporting Part III treating Christian gratitude. In considering the “fruits of gratitude” produced by “those grafted into Christ,” it is clear that the concept of union with Christ structurally as well as theologically supports Part III. In other words, Part II relates to Part III not through the Creed but through union with Christ.

Second, whereas the treatments of union with Christ are concentrated in Part II, there are two basic categories of treating it: soteriology and ecclesiology, including the sacraments. In structurally moving from the former to the latter, HC 53 is located at the top of the transitional QAs in which the union plays an important role clarifying what the church is.

Third, it is important to see how adoption is treated in the Catechism. Although seemingly the Catechism has only two QAs (HC 33, 120) having direct relevance to adoption, the fact that the Catechism keeps the relational tone in its text, pervasively referring to the union, leads us to conclude that believers’ sonship in the Catechism is based, not on the new birth, but on adoption. This would also lead us to think that the distinctive treatment, for which the

92. See HC 1 as the theme of the catechism, HC 20 the introduction to the Creed, HC 26 the first QA of treating God’s Fatherhood, HC 53 the introduction to the Spirit’s ministry, and HC 64 at the end of the section of the Creed. Latzel writes, “Die Begriffe,einleiben’und,einpflanzen’finden sich insgesamt nur viermal im HK, aber immer an kompositorisch besonders betonten Stellen, vor allem bei der Behandlung kontroverstheologischer Problempunkte.” Latzel, Theologische Grundzüge, 52; Bierma, Theology of the HC, 56; Van Vlastuin, “The Promise of Unio Mystica,” 169: “The presence of this skeleton is particularly apparent of this catechism.” Van Vlastuin acknowledges that Burger denies the central position of union with Christ in the HC. See ibid., 169n3. Cf. Hans Burger, Being in Christ: A Biblical and Systematic Investigation in a Reformed Perspective (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008).

93. HC 64. Klooster says, “Since the entire Third Part . . . is devoted to those fruits of gratitude, they should be viewed as the results of our union with Christ.” Klooster, Our Only Comfort, 1:201.


95. See HC 54, 55; Latzel, Theologische Grundzüge, 52-53. Cf. Van Vlastuin, “Personal Renewal between Heidelberg and Westminster,” 52. Van Vlastuin emphasizes the importance of the union in relation to the Christian life, which is also relevant to soteriology and ecclesiology.

96. Ursinus, Commentary, 182, 628. There are three QAs (8, 71, 73) which have relevance to the new birth in the Catechism. According to what the consecutive QAs of HC 7-8 mention, the Catechism relates the new birth to the renewal of the nature of man. After HC 7 clarifies the Fall of Adam and Eve as the corruption of our nature [da unser Natur also vergiftet worden], the following QA, HC 8, refers to the
Westminster Confession is known, is not the only way of treating adoption as significant. Instead, the theological orientation of the HC is the union-oriented way which is reminiscent of Calvin.97

Finally, it is noted that the Catechism understands the union not as a functional transaction for receiving Christ’s benefits, but as a participation in his person. Canlis, in analyzing two “trends” of the Spirit’s ministry, refers to two different understandings of union with Christ. The first one understands it as a functional link where the Spirit serves as “the instrument” for receiving Christ’s benefits.98 In the second understanding, the union is understood as “communion” where believers participate in Christ’s person by the Spirit as the Agent. Canlis points out a danger of the first understanding, where “Christ is made an instrument of a process rather than the person in whom adoption is found.”99 She adds to this, “Correspondingly, the benefits of Christ often become detachable from the person of Christ, to be transferred to us by the Spirit.”100 In this regard, the Catechism is clearly allied to the second one emphasizing personal communion with Christ. In explaining “eingeleibt” and “eingepflanzt” in the Catechism, Latzel says, “Da die Teilhabe nicht nur sachorientiert als Teilhabe an den ‚gaben‘ und ‚wolthaten‘ Christi verstanden wird, sondern auch personenorientiert als Teilhabe an Christus selbst.”101 Because of the emphasis on this “communion,” it is natural that the Catechism, in

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97. It is recognized that union with Christ can be at the center of soteriology in Calvin’s thought. Inst., 3.1.1. Billings’ remark deserves our attention. “Calvin’s theology of union with Christ is articulated with reference to participation, adoption, imputation, and the wondrous exchange. It is a multifaceted doctrine, utilizing both legal and transformative images.” Billings, Calvin, Participation, and the Gift, 23. Also see Van Vlastuin, “The Promise of Unio Mystica,” 168-85.

98. Canlis, Calvin’s Ladder, 155.

99. Ibid., 157.


treats ecclesiology, emphasizes the church as the body of Christ rather than as an institution.102

6. Conclusion

Although the Heidelberg Catechism seemingly has only two QAs (HC 33, 120) which have direct relevance to the concept of adoption, it clearly shows that the believers’ sonship is based on adoption by maintaining the relational tone, pervasively referring to union with Christ as the source of the blessing of adoption.103 In the Catechism, union with Christ is understood as participating in Christ’s person including his Sonship, and forms a theological framework, throughout the text, consisting of two main categories, soteriology and ecclesiology. Thus, the Catechism shows another way of treating adoption which revolves around the union, instead of distinctively treating it as a locus.

C. The Second Helvetic Confession (Bullinger, 1566)

1. Background: For Helping the Elector

Historically speaking, there were two factors which led Bullinger to prepare the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566. First, the Council of Trent in 1563 significantly impacted the Reformed churches since it helped the Roman Catholics to be united in confronting the Protestant churches.104 The Protestants felt compelled to draft a new confession which would have sufficient catholicity for uniting all the Reformed churches in Europe, and eventually led them, in

102. See HC 54, 55; Ursinus, Commentary, 304-5.
103. Since we intentionally focus, in this section, only on Part II pervasively referring to union with Christ, we skip here to refer to HC 120 treating the Fatherhood of God in the context of the Lord’s Prayer. In fact, HC 120 shows that the Fatherhood relates to the life of prayer of God’s children whose sonship is based on union with Christ. RBS, 2/2: 207; Klooster, Our Only Comfort, 2:1069-77.
104. Emidio Campi, “Confessio Helvetica posterior, 1566: Einleitung,” in RBS, 2/2:243; OER, s.v. “Helvetic Confessions.” “The resurgence of Tridentine Catholicism presented the Reformed churches with a united front committed to an aggressive and well-defined Counter Reformation.”
the broad historical context in that era, to accept the *Second Helvetic Confession* as an important Reformed symbol.\(^{105}\) Second, the most immediate cause which moved Bullinger was the specific necessity in the churches in the Palatinate. Because of the *Heidelberg Catechism* published in the Palatinate in 1563, Frederick III, the elector, and the churches in his realm were politically as well as religiously under severe attacks from his Lutheran allies or its parties, and this forced him to defend the Catechism at the Diet of Augsburg in 1566.\(^{106}\) The elector asked Bullinger to help him by providing a confessiona\(l \) document which showed the catholicity of the Reformed faith. The elector prepared himself well, and succeeded in defending the Catechism.\(^{107}\) Needless to say, this document became called the *Second Helvetic Confession*.

When it comes to the sources of the Confession, it is based on a statement of faith which Bullinger personally prepared in 1561.\(^ {108}\) In facing the serious situation in the Palatinate, he, after revising and expanding the statement of faith, forwarded it to Frederick III. Then, the Confession was accepted by all the Swiss cantons except Basel during 1566 because of the

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\(^{105}\) Campi, op. cit., in *RBS*, 2/2:243: “Eine angemessene Antwort auf derartige Veränderungen sowie auf die Frage nach der inneren Einheit des zestreuten reformierten Protestantimus mußte nun erst entwickelt werden.”

\(^{106}\) *RBS*, 2/2:244; *CCF*, 2:458; *OER*, s.v. “Helvetic Confessions.” Because of the Peace of Augsburg (1555), only Catholics and Lutherans were legitimate believers in the Holy Roman Empire. Therefore, the elector needed to prove that the *Heidelberg Catechism* was compatible with the Augsburg Confession. See *OER*, s.v. “Augsburg, Peace Of.”

\(^{107}\) Since Frederick III used the document in the process of preparation, the actual role it played at the Diet was not recognizable, but a tacit one. *RBS*, 2/2:248: “Weder Bullingers Gutachthen noch die Confessio Helvetica Posterior spielten in den großen politischen und religiösen Auseinandersetzungen der Versammlung eine sichtbare Rolle.”

\(^{108}\) This document is generally recognized as the main source of the confession. *CCF*, 2:458; *RBS*, 2/2:245-46. In regard to the purpose of this statement of faith, it is said that it was personally prepared, when Bullinger was seriously ill during the plague epidemic, and attached to his illness as a “kind of bequest to the Reformed churches among which he had served as *Antistes*.” Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger*, 89; Edward Dowey, “Heinrich Bullinger as Theologian: Thematic, Comprehensive, and Schematic,” in *Architect of Reformation: An Introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 60-61; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:392-93; *Reformed Confessions*, ed. Cochrane, 221; *OER*, s.v. “Helvetic Confessions.” However, it can be argued that the original purpose of preparing the statement of faith was merely personal. Dowey insists that although it was personally prepared at first, it was also intended to be used publicly for the church. Dowey, “Heinrich Bullinger as Theologian,” 56; Edward Dowey, “Der Theologische Aufbau Des Zeiten Helvetischen Bekenntnisses,” in *Glauben und Bekennen*, hrsg. J. Staedtke (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966), 206-7. Venema himself leans toward this view. Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger*, 90n3.
necessity of having a confession for unifying them. After the Confession was published in that year, it was also adopted by other Reformed churches officially in the following countries: France, Hungary, Poland, Scotland, the Netherlands, Austria, and England.

2. Characteristics: Its Comprehensiveness and Catholicity

There are three characteristics which are worth noting in the Confession. First according to its contents and structure, the Second Helvetic Confession, as compared to other confessional documents written during the Reformation period, is recognized as one of the most comprehensive creeds entailing catholicity. It is noted that, because of its mature content and structure, the Second Helvetic Confession was used as “the organizing document” of the Harmony of Confessions in 1581.

Second, the Confession is not only recognized as comprehensive among the confessions in the Reformation period, but also the most influential as well as a mature work among his own works written by Bullinger. Venema writes that the Second Helvetic Confession


111. Although we will not examine it in detail, the textual history of the Second Helvetic Confession is seriously complicated. “Unfortunately, there is no modern critical edition to sort out all the variants.” CCF, 2:458-59. Even at its first edition, there are two versions. About the detailed discussion of the textual history, see RBS, 2/2:256-61.

112. Dowey, “Heinrich Bullinger as Theologian,” 60-61; Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1:394; Venema, Heinrich Bullinger, 91. Venema points out, “In its structure, the Second Helvetic Confession coincides closely with what would become the normative and traditional ordering of doctrines in the Reformed confessions and theological systems.” He also says, “A comparison of the structure of the Second Helvetic Confession with, for example, the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession of Faith, illustrates that this order is typical of the classic Reformed confessions of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century.” Ibid. n6. Note; The Harmony of Confessions [Harmonia confessionum fidel] of 1581 is a work collecting the confessions of the Protestant churches in Europe. It contains the following documents: the Augsburg Confession (1530), the Tetrapolitan Confession (1530), the Basel Confession (1534), the First (1536) and Second (1566) Helvetic Confessions, the Seven Confession (1551), the Württemberg Confession (1552), the Gallican Confession (1559), the Belgic Confession (1561), the Anglican Confession (1562), and the Bohemian Confession (1573). OER, s.v. “Harmony of Confessions.”
“represents the most mature and complete statement of Bullinger’s theology.” He adds to this, “Among Bullinger’s writings, none is as well known or far-reaching as this confession in its influence upon the Reformed tradition.”

Third, it is worth noting, in relation to its theological orientation its treatment of predestination is known for its focus on union with Christ. As we shall see later, Chapter 10 on predestination is located, instead of in the context of God’s eternal counsel, in that of soteriology between Chapters 8-9 focusing on the Fall of man, and Chapter 11 treating Christology. What this placement signifies is the soteriological-oriented way of treating predestination which revolves around union with Christ. In addition to this, it is also noted that the Confession does not emphasize double predestination as Calvin does. This also shows us that the focal point of predestination in the Confession is not on God’s counsel, but on union with Christ, by which the Confession leads us to focus on Christ, the source of our adoption.

3. Relevant Issues

As we have seen in other Reformed confessions the issue of union with Christ in the Second Helvetic Confession is often treated, especially in the two spheres of its framework, namely in the

113. Venema, Heinrich Bullinger, 89-90. The Confession, “subsequent to its writing, was translated into 15 languages and published in more than 115 editions. It is arguably the most widely disseminated of the Reformed symbols of the sixteenth century.” Ibid. n2.
114. RBS, 2/2:252.
115. RBS, 2/2:250; Ernst Koch, Die Theologie der Confessio Helvetica Posterior (Neukirchen-Vluyn, DE: Neukirchner Verlag, 1968), 92; Venema, Heinrich Bullinger;92-93, 95-97; Dowey, “Der Theologische Aufbau,” 219; Paul Jacobs, “Die Lehre von der Erwahlung,” in Glauben und Bekennen, 271. Note: Although Koch’s work is recognized as one of the most comprehensive commentaries on the Second Helvetic Confession, we need to be careful in using it since he insists that Bullinger’s view of predestination is “incompatible with that of Calvin.” See Koch, Die Theologie der Confessio Helvetica Posterior, 104. This is the view to distinguish Bullinger from the Reformed tradition by making him the “Author of another Reformed tradition.” Venema, Heinrich Bullinger, 22.
116. In treating the text of the Second Helvetic Confession, references to the text of RBS in what follows are by page number and line number (e.g. 289. 8 refers to page 289, line 8). Also, in referring to the English translations of CCF, the writer refers to page number with paragraph number which CCF numbers by using square brackets [ ] (e.g. 487. 4 refers to page 487, paragraph [4.]).
contexts of soteriology and ecclesiology. Among these two, the most significant treatment is found in ecclesiology including the sacraments. In addition to union with Christ, the Confession treats the Fatherhood of God mainly but not exclusively in soteriological and ecclesiological contexts.

However, in this section on relevant issues, our attention needs to go to Chapters 10 and 20 because they have direct references to the concept of adoption. First, in Chapter 10, focusing on predestination, the Confession, in the context of explaining a “definite purpose” of predestination, refers to adoption by quoting from Ephesians 1:4-6:

117. In relation to soteriology, it is necessary to pay attention to Chapters 10 treating election and 15 treating justification. In Chapter 10, for example, see CCF, 2:473.2; RBS, 2:289.28: “God has elected us, not directly, but in Christ, and on account of Christ, in order that those who are now engrafted into Christ by faith [qui iam sunt in Christo insiti per fidem] might also be elected.” Also see, RBS, 2:291.7-8, 12. In Chapter 15, for example, see CCF, 2:487.4; RBS, 2:306.13-14: “For as we receive food by eating, so we participate in Christ by believing [ita credendo participamus Christo].” In Chapter 15, also see RBS, 2:306.29-30, 307.1.

118. In Chapter 17, related to the definition of the church, see CCF, 2:491.1; RBS, 2:310.17-18, 21: “The church is . . . a communion . . . of those . . . who by faith are partakers of all benefits which are freely offered through Christ [omnia bonis per Christum gratuio oblatis fide participant].” In Chapter 17, also see the following cases: RBS, 2:311.18-19; 312.2, 3-15; 314.1-2, 15-16. In Chapter 19 treating the sacraments, for example, see CCF, 2:502.10; RBS, 2:326.14; (in the context of treating the “Sacramental Union”), “They should spiritually partake of the things signified, and by faith be truly cleansed from their sins, and partake of Christ [Christo participant].” Also see RBS, 2:325.25. In Chapter 20 regarding baptism, RBS, 2:328.17-18. In Chapter 21 treating the Supper, see CCF, 2:512.5; RBS, 2:330.31-33: “Christ lives in us and we live in him [Christus in nobis vivat, et nos in ipso vivamus], and he causes us to receive him by true faith to this end [vera fide percipiamus] that he may become for us such spiritual food and drink, that is, our life.” Also see RBS, 2:331.11-12, 26; 332.1, 8, 26-27; 333.2-3.


120. “In the Second Helvetic Confession, the scriptural references which are put, in a broad way, into its text are not mere lists of biblical passages, but are embodied into the text, and clearly show that the whole theology of the confession itself is a biblical theology.” Masaru Asaoka, “Daini-Swiss Shinko-kokuhaku no Yotei-ron: Erabi no Tashikasa wo Chaushin tsoshite” (Election of the 2nd Helvetic), Reformed Theology 34 (2007): 88 (translations mine). Asaoka quotes this from Wataru Mizugaki, “Daini-Swiss Shinko-kokuhaku no Kohsei to Naiyo ni-tsuite: Shinjoh-shi no Shiten karano Joronteki-kohsatsu” (The Structure and Contents of the 2nd Helvetic), Reformed Theology 25 (1997): 35.
The saints are chosen by God for a definite purpose, which the apostle himself explains when he says, “He chose us in him [for adoption] that we should be holy and blameless [ut essemus sancti et irreprehensibiles] before him in love. He destined us for adoption to be his sons through Jesus Christ [praedestinavit nos, ut adoptaret in filios per Iesum Christum, in se, ut laudetur gloria gratiae suae] that they should be to the praise of the glory of his grace.”

Here, although the text uses the word “purpose [finem]” in its singular form, grammatically speaking, the Confession appears to mention three purposes of predestination. More precisely, the Confession recognizes, besides the holiness of God’s children and the praise of his glory, “adoption” as one of the three purposes. At any rate, it is possible to say that, at least in terms of the purpose of predestination, adoption plays a crucial role in the Second Helvetic Confession.

In exploring Chapter 10, as already mentioned above, it should be also noted that the Confession treats predestination, not in the context of theology proper or God’s counsel, but in that of soteriology or Christology. Especially, the Confession’s view of predestination is

121. CCF, 2:473.3; RBS, 2/2:289.33-290.2. Although the English translations in CCF use the word “adoption” twice, the Latin text of RBS only once as shown above.

122. Grammatically speaking, there are three subjunctive verbs describing purposes of predestination: “ut essemus sancti et irreprehensibiles,” “ut adoptaret in filios per Iesum Christum,” and “ut laudetur gloria gratiae suae.” Jacobs also counts three here. “Das Ziel der Erwählung ist die Heiligkeit in der Liebe, die Kindschaft, das Lob seiner herrlichen Gnade.” Jacobs, “Die Lehre von der Erwählung,” 271. Also, in the following context, it is worth noting that the Confession refers to some relevant issues to adoption, such as union with Christ and the Fatherhood of God. See RBS, 2/2:291.7-8, 12.

123. “Thus, the doctrine of predestination belongs, within the structure of the Second Helvetic Confession, not to theology proper, but to soteriology. Predestination is Christologically defined as an election in Christ, and is not treated within the context of a consideration of the divine decretum as part of the doctrine of God.” Venema, Heinrich Bullinger, 92. Also see ibid., 93; Dowey, “Der Theologische Aufbau,” 219; Jacobs, “Die Lehre von der Erwählung,” 258. It should be noted that the following Chapter 11 treats Christology, “De Iesu Christo vero Deo et Homine, unico mundi Salvatore.” RBS, 2/2:291-97. In relation to Chapter 11, it is worth noting that the Confession, in terms of Christology, refers to adoption again, though in passing, for clarifying what Christ’s divinity signifies. “With respect to his divinity the Son is coequal and cosubstantial with the Father; true God, not only in name or by adoption [aut adoptione] or by any merit, but in substance and nature.” CCF, 2:475.2; RBS, 2/2:291.26. This use of adoption is recognized as a relational concept.
characterized for its soteriological-oriented manner revolving around union with Christ. For example, prior to the reference to adoption, Chapter 10 mentions “being engrafted into Christ.” Then, Chapter 10, recognizing adoption as a purpose of predestination, clarifies that it takes place “through Jesus Christ [per Iesum Christum].” Also, the notion of union with Christ is found in the following context. Thus, it is natural for Chapter 10, in the context of treating predestination revolving around the theme of union with Christ, to refer to the grace of adoption, which flows from the union.

Second, Chapter 20, focusing on baptism, also has references to adoption. In the context of treating “One Baptism,” Chapter 20 refers to adoption. “There is but one baptism in the church of God; and it is sufficient to be once baptized or consecrated unto God. For baptism once received continues for all of life, and is a perpetual sealing of our adoption [perpetua obsignatio adoptionis nostrae].” Immediately after this, the Confession, in terms of the precise meaning of baptism, describes the richness of the adopted life sealed by baptism, referring to some relevant issues, such as the covenant, God’s family, and the inheritance of his children. Then, in explaining how it is possible for us as “children of wrath” to receive such blessings, the Confession elaborates God’s grace, and again refers to adoption. “But God, who is rich in mercy, freely cleanses us from our sins by the blood of his Son, and in him adopts us to be...”

124. Venema points out, “For Bullinger, ‘being-elect’ and ‘being-in-Christ’ are correlated, just as ‘being-rejected’ and ‘being-outside-of Christ’ through unbelief are correlated.” Venema, Heinrich Bullinger, 97. Also see ibid., 95-96; Koch, Die Theologie der Confessio Helvetica Posterior, 92.
125. CCF, 2:473.2; RBS, 2/2:289.28: “God has elected us, not directly, but in Christ, and on account of Christ, in order that those who are now engrafted into Christ by faith [qui iam sunt in Christo insiti per fidei] might also be elected.”
126. RBS, 2/2:290.1.
127. Ibid., 291.7-8, 12.
128. CCF, 2:509.2; RBS, 2/2:327.30. It is noted that the Confession here refers to a basic meaning of baptism as a seal of adoption. Then, in what follows, it continues to explain what baptism means in detail.
129. “Now to be baptized in the name of Christ is to be enrolled, entered, received into the covenant and family [recipe in foedus, atque familia], and so into the inheritance of the sons of God [in haereditatem filiorum Dei]; yes, and in this life to be called after the name of God; that is to say, to be called a son of God [appelari filium Dei].” CCF, 2:509.2; RBS, 2/2:327.31-33.
his sons [in hoc adoptat nos in filios], and by a holy covenant joins us to himself, and enriches us with various gifts, that we might live a new life [possimus novam vivre vitam].”

Here two issues are worth noting. First, it is noted that the Confession, in the context of twice referring to adoption, clearly shows that salvation does not end at the cleansing of sin, but further bears rich fruits generated from the sonship of believers, such as joining to God himself and his family, having various gifts, and living a new life. Second, it is necessary to keep in mind that baptism as a sacrament itself functions not to bring about these blessings, but to show visibly and confirm the blessings which already happened or will happen, just as the Confession clarifies that baptism is a “perpetual sealing of our adoption [perpetua obsignatio adoptionis nostra].” Since baptism functions as a seal confirming the richness of the blessings God’s children receive, it is natural for Chapter 20 to be able to treat adoption in a richer way than Chapter 10 does, since the latter treats adoption exclusively in relation to predestination.

130. CCF, 2:509. 3; RBS, 2/2:328.1-4.
131. “Die Taufe verpflichtet, wie es dem stadium innocentiae virtutumque entspricht, zur Buße per omnem vitam . . . wie auch die durch sie bezeichnete Reinigung und adoptio für immer (perpetua obsignatio) gilt.” Koch, Die Theologie der Confessio Helvetica Posterior, 292. In the following context, the Confession states, “All these things are assured by baptism. For inwardly we are regenerated, purified, and renewed by God through the Holy Spirit; outwardly we receive the assurance of the greatest gifts in the water.” CCF, 2:509; RBS, 2/2:328.4-6. Also, it is noted that, as this text shows, the Confession relates “regeneration” or the “new birth” to the inward change of our nature.
133. In this context of treating baptism, it is noted that the Confession refers to the covenant. As compared with other confessions during the Reformation Period, it is necessary to notice that the Confession relates baptism to both the covenant and adoption, in considering that in Romans 9:3-4, the covenant is relevant to huiothesia. See pages 2, 4 of chapter 1 of this study. Yet, we need to be careful not to overestimate the covenant in the context of the Second Helvetic Confession. Although Bullinger is generally known as a covenant theologian, the reference to the covenant in the Confession is fewer as compared with other works written by him. After pointing out that the Confession uses foedus only five times throughout the entire text, Dowey, through criticizing Koch, comes to the conclusion that it is difficult to see the covenant as an organizing principle in the Second Helvetic Confession. Dowey, “Heinrich Bullinger as Theologian,” 37-43. Dowey, in a convincing way, argues this against Koch, who takes the covenant as an organizing principle in the Confession. Regarding Koch’s understanding, see Koch, Die Theologie der Confessio Helvetica Posterior, 285, 388-99, 415-17. We will return to this issue in the following chapter as we analyze the confessions in the Reformation period as a whole.
4. Theological Analysis

There are three issues which are worth noting here. First, the Second Helvetic Confession, when treating baptism, shows a theological framework in the context in which the concept of adoption is mentioned twice.134 Through describing what baptism as a seal confirms, the Confession does show us a framework covering, in a rich way relevant issues to adoption, such as being brought into the covenant and God’s family, having the inheritance, being called “after the name of God,” living a new life as his children, and so on.135 In other words, the Confession, by showing the richness in this framework, helps us to see that salvation does not end at cleansing our sins.136 In this framework, the concept of adoption plays an important role since at the beginning of the framework, the Confession regards it as a basic meaning of baptism.137

Second, as already mentioned at the beginning of the section treating the relevant issues, the two relevant issues to the concept of adoption, the Fatherhood of God and union with Christ, are woven into the text of the Second Helvetic Confession.138 Also, it is noted that the Fatherhood of God is mainly treated in the soteriological and ecclesiological context. Thus these

134. Although Chapter 10 seemingly does not show a framework as Chapter 20 does, it is still noted that the Confession values adoption as a purpose of predestination.
135. RBS, 2/2:327.31-33, 328.1-4. It needs to be noted here that the Confession relates “regeneration,” “new life,” or “new birth” to the change of our nature, not to our status, as we have seen. RBS, 2/2:327.30-328.5. Also see RBS, 2/2:287.24, 30; 288.2; 15, 21, 289.4-5; 308.29; 325.22. All these cases are related to the renewal of the human nature.
136. In seeing these various relevant issues, it would be possible to say that the Confession, by showing this framework, summarizes its soteriology treated throughout Chapters 10 (predestination), 11 (Christology), 12 (the law), 13 (the gospel), 14 (repentance), 15 (justification), and 16 (faith and good works). In terms of the structure of the Confession, after finishing soteriology in Chapter 16, it starts treating ecclesiology in Chapter 17. RBS, 2/2:251-52.
137. “Baptism . . . is a perpetual sealing of our adoption [perpetua obsignatio adoptionis nostrae].” CCF, 2:509.2; RBS, 2/2:327.30.
two issues help the Confession, throughout the soteriological and ecclesiological context, maintain the relational as well as familial tones.

Third, contrary to the second issue mentioned above, it is also noted that, although the Confession preserves the familial tone in the soteriological and ecclesiological context, references to the filial notion, such as becoming God’s children, are fewer than would be expected, except for Chapters 10 and 20 which refer to the concept of adoption. As far as the writer of the present study notices, Chapter 14 treating repentance is the only chapter other than Chapters 10 and 20, which refers to the filial theme.\textsuperscript{139}

5. Conclusion

The Second Helvetic Confession, although not in a pervasive manner, treats adoption in the context of predestination and baptism. In treating baptism it, in referring to adoption, forms a theological framework which shows the richness of salvation. In addition to this, throughout the text, the Fatherhood of God and union with Christ help it to maintain the familial and relational tones.

D. The Thirty-Nine Articles (The Church of England, 1571)

1. Background: Under the Long Political Changes

When it comes to the background to the Thirty-Nine Articles, it is possible to see its earliest roots in the Thirteen Articles of 1538 drafted by Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury.\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{139} At the very end of Chapter 14, in the context of treating the significance of mortification, the Confession states, “We add, however, that this mortification is not to be proudly obtruded upon God as a satisfaction for sins, but is to be performed humbly, in keeping with the nature of the children of God \textit{pro ingenio filiorum Dei}, as a new obedience out of gratitude for the deliverance and full satisfaction obtained by the death and satisfaction of the Son of God.” \textit{CCF}, 2:486.13; \textit{RBS}, 2/2:304.26.

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{CCF}, 2:526; W. J. Torrance Kirby, “The Thirty-Nine Articles (1563/1571): Einleitung,” in
Although these articles were never ratified and published, Cranmer wrote them, being influenced by the Lutheran ministers whom Henry VIII invited.\textsuperscript{141}

During this extensive background there were two important “recensions” leading to the Thirty-Nine Articles: the Forty-Two Articles of 1553 drafter by Cranmer, and the Thirty-Eight Articles of 1563 in Latin presented by Archbishop Matthew Parker.\textsuperscript{142} The Forty-Two Articles, the main source of the Thirty-Nine, appeared in 1553 at the very end of the reign of Edward VI.\textsuperscript{143} Although these articles were nullified during the reign of Mary I (Tudor, 1553-1558), they were revised and reintroduced by Parker at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth I. Then, the Church of England, in terms of its liturgy and church law, returned to the Book of Common Prayer which was written in 1552.\textsuperscript{144}

During the reign of Elizabeth I, responding to the necessity of having a doctrinal statement for the church, Parker drafted in 1563 the Thirty-Eight Articles in Latin, based on the Forty-Two Articles he himself introduced in 1558.\textsuperscript{145} Then, with an addition of Article 29 to the Thirty-Eight, the Thirty-Nine Articles appeared in English in 1571.\textsuperscript{146} After that, the Thirty-Nine

\textsuperscript{RBS, 2/1:372.} Kirby writes, “The mid-sixteenth century was a remarkably rich period for the production of Reformed Confessions. . . . The gestation of the Thirty-Nine Articles covers this entire period.”

\textsuperscript{141.} Kirby, “The Thirty-Nine Articles,” 372. After Henry VIII was excommunicated by Pope Paul III in 1538, the king, in leaning toward Lutheranism, invited three Lutheran ministers to work with Cranmer and other two English bishops for preparing a “mutually agreed formula” of faith. This resulted in the Thirteen Articles. At that time, the Augsburg Confession was used to provide a basic format. The Thirteen Articles is recognized as a historical link which relates the Augsburg Confession to the Thirty-Nine Articles. Ibid. 372-73.

\textsuperscript{142.} The basic timeline until 1571 is described as follows: the Thirteen Articles of 1538 (Cranmer), the Book of Common Prayer of 1549, the reform of church law [Reformatio legum ecclesiasticarum] of 1551 (the committee led by Cranmer), the Forty-Two Articles of 1553 (Cranmer), the revised Forty-Two Articles of 1558 (reintroduced by Matthew Parker after the death of Mary Tudor), the Thirty-Eight Articles of 1563 (in Latin based on the Forty-Two, presented by Parker), the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571 (in English, with addition of Article 29 on the Supper to the Thirty-Eight). Ibid., 372-74; Oliver O’Donovan, On the Thirty Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity (London: SCM Press, 2011), 4. All the documents prior to 1571, directly or indirectly, influenced the Thirty-Nine Articles.

\textsuperscript{143.} Ibid.; RBS, 2/1:372-73, 375; CCF, 2:526.

\textsuperscript{144.} The Book of Common Prayer of 1552 is based on that of 1549. It is the more “Reformed revision” of 1549. Ibid.; RBS, 2/1:372-73, 375.

\textsuperscript{145.} CCF, 2:526; RBS, 2/1:374-75.

\textsuperscript{146.} This Article 29 which treats the “non-participation of the wicked in the Supper” was originally in the Thirty-Eight of 1563, but deleted from them because of “nervousness about
Articles were officially approved, and all Anglican clergy have been required to subscribe to the Articles or, since 1974, to acknowledge them until the present.\textsuperscript{147}

In regard to the sources of the Articles, although they were revised by Parker a couple of times, Cranmer is still recognized as the primary person with a major influence, through his \textit{Forty Two Articles} reflected in the \textit{Thirty-Nine Articles}.\textsuperscript{148} Also, in considering the early background of the Articles, it is understandable, as Kirby points out, that some of the \textit{Thirty-Nine Articles} still maintain Lutheran influences through the \textit{Augsburg Confession}.\textsuperscript{149} However, although it is possible to recognize some Lutheran influence on the Articles, the Lutheran view on the Supper, which distinguishes Lutherans from others, is not recognized in the \textit{Thirty-Nine Articles}.\textsuperscript{150} On the other hand, Reformed influence is claimed by some on Article 17 treating predestination.\textsuperscript{151} However, in considering the overall feature of the Articles, it is most plausible Catholic-leaning sentiment” in the Church of England. However, it was restored in the Articles in 1571. O’Donovan, \textit{On the Thirty Nine Articles}, 4; \textit{CCF}, 2:526-27. The intention of exclusion of Article 29 in 1563 is not so clear. Some insist that Elizabeth I wanted to keep possible room for having negotiation with the Lutherans. See \textit{ODCC}, 1161. About more detailed discussion, see O’Donovan, op. cit., 131-33. At any rate, “the differences between the two Elizabethan versions [Latin and English] are not of great moment.” Ibid., 4. In terms of the canonical authority, both texts are equal. \textit{CCF}, 2:527n5.

147. \textit{CCF}, 2:527; \textit{RBS}, 2/1:374. The way Anglican clergy have needed to accept, in relation to the \textit{Thirty-Nine}, historically changed to some extent. “During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many Anglican clergy were reluctant to do so, and in 1865 it was decided that they would have to declare only that the doctrine in the Articles is ‘agreeable to the word of God,’ something less than an oath of personal belief in each article.” \textit{OER}, s.v. “Articles of Religion.”

148. O’Donovan, op. cit., 4: “Cranmer is in effect, the ‘author’ of our Thirty Nine Articles; for although Parker’s revisions were extensive, especially in the second half of the document, Cranmer’s conception and order was preserved, and his theological personality continued to give the Articles their distinctive character.”

149. \textit{RBS}, 2/1:372: “Some of Cranmer’s ‘Thirteen Articles’ were virtually identical to their counterparts in the ‘Augsburg Confession,’ and this may be said to constitute the high-water mark of Lutheran influence on the doctrine of the Church of England.” There are, besides the \textit{Augsburg Confession}, some other Lutheran sources which possibly influence the Articles, such as Luther’s \textit{Ninety-Five Theses}, and the \textit{Confession of Württemberg} (Johannes Brenz). See \textit{OER}, s.v. “Articles of Religion.”

150. O’Donovan, \textit{On the Thirty Nine Articles}, 5. For example, see Article 28 treating the sacraments: “The body of Christe is geuen, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual maner.” \textit{Evans and Wright}, 167. In what follows, the text of the \textit{Thirty-Nine Articles} is from \textit{Evans and Wright}.

to say that the Articles, in terms of their sources, do not have any major sources which influence and lead them, in a specific way, to have a theological label on them.\textsuperscript{152}

2. Characteristics: Scriptural and Catholic

As we have seen from English history prior to 1571, it is clear that the \textit{Thirty-Nine Articles} were significantly affected by the continual change of political circumstances covering Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. Because of that the Church of England tried to stand mid-way through the Articles, chartering a center course between Catholics and Reformed or Protestant churches in the Continent. In the Articles, their political intention is clearly recognized since they were written to “define its attitude toward contemporary Rome and the Reformed Protestant churches,” and to “assert the power and independence of the English state in its relation to the church.”\textsuperscript{153}

Theologically speaking, their contents, while trying to be comprehensive on the one hand, are organized, on the other hand, to avoid “diversities of opinions, and for the [e]stablishing of consent touching true Religion.”\textsuperscript{154} In other words, the theological orientation of the \textit{Thirty-Nine Articles} is characterized as scriptural as well as catholic in order not to adhere to any specific tradition on the Continent, but to comply with the ecumenical creeds, as the Articles state.\textsuperscript{155} In this sense, it is worth exploring the Articles to see how the concept of adoption is

\textsuperscript{152} O’Donovan writes, “One might almost say that Anglicans have taken the authority of the Scriptures and the Catholic creeds too seriously to be comfortable with another single doctrinal norm.” O’Donovan, \textit{On the Thirty-Nine Articles}, 6.

\textsuperscript{153} \textit{OER}, s.v. “Articles of Religion.”

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{RBS}, 2/1:371.

\textsuperscript{155} O’Donovan, op. cit., 6. Article 8 “Of the three Credes”: “The three Credes, Nicene Crede, Athanasius Crede, and that which is commonly called the Apostles Crede, ought throughlye to be receaued and beleued: for they may be proued by moste certayne wammautes of holye scripture.” \textit{Evans and Wrights}, 159. O’Donovan writes, “The Anglican doctrinal tradition, born of an attempt (neither wholly successful nor wholly unsuccessful) to achieve comprehensiveness within the limits of a Christianity both catholic and reformed, is not susceptible to the kind of textual definition which the Confessions (on the Protestant side) and the conciliar decrees (on the Catholic) afford.” O’Donovan, op. cit., 6.

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treated in them which are “scriptural as well as catholic” in their characteristics.

3. Relevant Issues

Here our attention is directed to Articles 17 and 27 which have direct references to the concept of adoption. First, it is worth noting that the Thirty-Nine Articles first refer to adoption, not in relation to justification, but in relation to predestination as treated in Article 17. However, it is also noted that the Articles treat predestination not in the context of theology proper, but in that of soteriology. In commenting on Article 17, Griffith counts seven stages which predestination involves. In those stages, the Articles, after mentioning justification, refer to adoption:

Wherefore they which be indued with so excellent a benefite of God, be called accordyng to God’s purpose by his Spirit workyng in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sonnes of God by adoption; they be made lyke the image of his onelye begotten sonne Jesus Christe; they walke religiously in good workes, and at length by God’s mercy, they attaine to euerlastyng felicitie.

Here it is necessary to pay attention to the communal emphasis the Articles put on adoption by using “sonnes of God,” and the placement of adoption put between justification and sanctification (good works). In addition to these points, it is noted that Article 17, by placing

158. Thomas W. H. Griffith, The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles (London: Church Book Room Press, 1951), 239-40. The seven stages are as follows: 1) “called according to God’s purpose by his Spirit,” 2) obeying the calling, 3) justification, 4) adoption, 5) conforming to the image of the Son, 6) doing good works, and 7) attaining to “everlasting felicity.” It is clear that all these are relevant to the soteriological context.
159. Evans and Wright, 162. Although Evans and Wright use colons (:) in Articles 17 and 27, the present writer uses semi-colons (;) are appropriate in the modern English.
160. The inseparable relationship between justification, adoption, and sanctification reminds us of Calvin’s treatment as we have seen in chapter 2 of this work. Furthermore, as we shall see later in this
the two phrases “be made lyke the image” and “walke . . . in good works” between justification and the consummation, makes clear that sanctification of God’s children is an ongoing process. In short, the Articles, while treating predestination in the soteriological context, show us the soteriological framework in which the concept of adoption is placed between justification and sanctification.

Regarding baptism, Article 27, at the beginning, clarifies the basic three meanings of baptism: a sign of profession, a mark which differentiates Christians from others, and a sign of the new birth.\(^{161}\) Then, the Articles, recognizing baptism as an instrument as well as a sign of the new birth, elaborates on it by referring to five aspects which the new birth involves.\(^{162}\) “As by an instrument, they that receaue baptisme rightly , are grafted into the church; the promises of the forugeunesse of sinne, and of our adoption to be the sonnes of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; the faith is confyrmed; and grace increased by virtue of prayer vnto God.”\(^{163}\) Here it is noted how the Thirty-Nine Articles understand adoption in the context of treating these five aspects of the new birth. While recognizing the new birth as an ongoing process covering these five, the Articles clearly understand adoption as a once-for-all event. Thus, the Articles theologically distinguish adoption from the new birth, although in the soteriological context, they are related to each other.

4. Theological Analysis

\(^{161}\) Baptisme is not only a signe of profession, and marke of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from other that be not christend: but is also a signe of regeneration or newe byrth.” Evans and Wright, 167.

\(^{162}\) Griffith, The Principles of Theology, 375. According to Griffith, baptism, in the Articles, is “an instrument of regeneration under five aspects: (a) incorporation with the church; (b) ratification of the promise of remission; (c) ratification of the promise of adoption; (d) strengthening of faith; (e) increase of grace.”

\(^{163}\) Evans and Wright, 167.
There are five issues we need to take into account in analyzing the *Thirty-Nine Articles*. First, it is necessary to pay attention to the Christ-centered treatment of predestination in that the concept of adoption is mentioned. As Article 17 mentions at its beginning, what predestination signifies is “the euerlastyng purpose of God” which is to deliver “those whom he has chosen in Christe,” and to bring them “by Christe to euerlastyng saluation.”

Here what O’Donovan writes deserves our attention. “Just as our justification means our participation in his righteousness, so our predestination, our ‘election’, means our participation in his position as the object of the Father’s favor from eternity.” In other words, in the Christ-centered treatment of the Articles, predestination includes a similar notion to adoption, since it soteriologically means participating in the Sonship of Christ. Thus, it is important to note that the Articles, in their Christ-centered treatment of predestination, recognize adoption as a significant stage for the promise for everlasting life to be realized.

Second, in relation to Article 17, it is also possible to recognize the treatment of predestination not only as Christ-centered, but also as soteriological since, as we have seen, the article shows the soteriological framework in which justification, adoption, and sanctification are connected with one another inseparably. Therefore, it is necessary to keep in mind that the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, as some other confessions also do, have a theological framework in which the concept of adoption is treated.

Third, it is noticeable, in the two articles mentioned above, that the concept of adoption is treated in a Trinitarian manner. Article 17 refers to the Spirit’s role leading God’s children to

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164. “Presestination to lyfe, is the euerlastyng purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were layd) he hath constantly decreed by his councell secrete to vs, to deliuer from curse and damnation, those whom he has chosen in Christe out of mankynde, and to bring them by Christe to euerlastyng saluation, as vessels made to honour.” Evans and Wright, 162.

165. O’Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 83. Prior to this, he also states, ‘The key to the doctrine as Cranmer sees it lies in the two phrases ‘everlasting purpose’ and ‘chosen in Christ.’ Predestination, like justification, is salvation in Christ; but where justification associates with the righteousness of Christ manifest in his human life, predestination associates us with the eternal relation between the Son and the Father.” Ibid., 82.

166. Also see E. J. Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty Nine Articles* (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1955), 373: “It is as being members of Christ that we share his Sonship.”


168. Evans and Wright, 162.
respond to the calling from God. In addition to this, adoption is, through predestination, inseparably related to the relationship existing between the Father and the Son. In the case of Article 27, it refers to the Spirit’s ministry who signs and seals the promise of adoption for believers to be the sons of God the Father. Thus, the Articles are recognized as Trinitarian as they treat the concept of adoption.

Fourth, as Article 27 understands the new birth as an ongoing process, they theologically distinguished it from adoption. Although references to the new birth in the Articles are in passing, it is important to know that they understand adoption distinct from the new birth in considering the past history in which the conflation of these two took place sometimes.

Finally, it is recognized that a pervasive way of referring to union with Christ is not found throughout the text. Besides Article 27 treating baptism, Article 28 on the Supper is the only article which refers to union with Christ in a significant way. In considering that many other Reformed confessions often treat it throughout their texts, it is necessary to pay attention to this scant reference to union with Christ in the Articles.

5. Conclusion

Although the pervasive treatment of union with Christ is not found there, the Thirty-Nine Articles, through showing a soteriological framework in relation to predestination, treat adoption in a Christ-centered as well as in a Trinitarian manner. It is also important to know that the Articles, although only in passing, theologically distinguish adoption from the new birth.

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169. Evans and Wright, 162.
171. Ibid., 167.
172. Besides Article 27, Article 9 treating original sin understands both original sin and regeneration in relation to our nature, not our status. “And this infection of nature [original sin] doth remayne, yea in them that are regenerated . . . is not subject to the lawe of God. Evans and Wright, 159.
174. “The bread whiche we breake is a part takynge of the body of Christe, and likewyse the cuppe of blessing, is a part takynge of the blood of Christe.” Evans and Wright, 168.
E. The Canons of the Synod of Dort (1618/19)

A Brief Introduction to Family Life in the 17th Century

~A Glance at a Heated Debate of the Salvation of Infants~

a. Prior to the Synod of Dort

Before looking for the concept of adoption in the Canons of the Synod of Dort, we briefly glance at an aspect of family life in the seventeenth century in the Netherlands through an article “O, ye Women, Think of Thy Innocent Children, When They Die Young,” written by Erik A. de Boer.\(^{175}\) It is reported, in that article, that there was a heated discussion, prior to and during the Synod of Dort, over the salvation of children who die in their infancy. The main issue in this debate was of how to understand predestination, the focal point discussed at the Synod, in relation to the salvation of infants who die before the age of reason.\(^{176}\)

Before this issue was intensively debated, there had been numerous “popularized impressions of the doctrine” of predestination. In its conclusion the Canons of Dort refer to one of those typical impressions: “Many children of believers are snatched in their innocence from their mother’s breasts and cruelly cast into hell so that neither the blood of Christ nor their baptism nor the prayers of the church at their baptism can be of any use to them.”\(^{177}\) Here, it is necessary to take into account that how shocking this kind of mistaken or inaccurate impression was to many parents who lost their infants in that era, in considering the much higher rate of


\(^{176}\) Ibid., 261.

infant mortality in seventeenth century Netherlands. Numerous parents struggled with infant mortality, having an “agonizing question” asking whether or not their children were accepted as God’s children in the kingdom.

During the discussion over the issue of the salvation of infants, the Remonstrants (Arminians), on the one hand, took advantage of this “agonizing question” those suffering parents had, in order to attack the doctrine of predestination in an exaggerated fashion. From the perspective of the Remonstrants, there was no election of “little children before the age of reason” since, according to their understanding, God’s election is based on foreseen faith of man. If there were an election or reprobation of infants, claimed the Remonstrants, children before their age of reason would be condemned because of their original sin. On the other hand, the Contra-Remonstrants (Calvinists), on the basis of God’s covenant, tried to solve the issue of the salvation of infants, especially at the Conference in The Hague in March of 1611, but the issue remained unresolved. Thus, the debate was finally brought to the Synod of Dort in 1618.

178. De Boer, op. cit., 264. In order to show the frequency of infant death in that era, he refers to one example: “On his deathbed a certain David Coornwinder looked back on a marriage that had lasted 21 years and in which twelve babies were born ‘of which nine little souls are in heavenly glory and three still remains on this earth.’” De Boer quotes this from A. Th. van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen. Het ‘kopergeld’ van de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1992), 113.


180. Ibid., 269-74. See ibid., 271: “This sorrow over infant deaths provided an emotional weapon that was wielded time and time again in the propaganda of the Remonstrants.” They wrongly summarized the opinion of the Contra-Remonstrants in an overly simplified way as follows: “God condemns some infants before the age of understanding.” Ibid. 274, quoted from G. Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie en andere kerkelijke geschiedenissen in en omtrent de Nederlanden*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam and Rotterdam, 1671-1704), 2:957.


182. Theologically speaking, the debate over the salvation of infants has its roots in the issue of original sin and baptism. See De Boer, op. cit., 265-68. De Boer refers to some examples in which the issue of original sin made it complicated for some to deal with the salvation of infants. Furthermore, it is worth noting the perspective Jacobus Arminius had about how predestination would make baptism useless, if there were an election and reprobation of little children before the age of reason. “By this [presentation of] predestination it is said that baptism, when administered to many little children of the faithful and of members of God’s covenant, that is the rejected ones, does not seal anything at all and is therefore useless (when confronted with God’s first and exact intent), without any guilt on the part of the innocent infants themselves, to whom baptism is administered in obedience to the divine command.” Ibid., 268; G. J. Hoenderdaal, ed. *Verklaring van Jacobus Arminius, afgelegd in de vergadering van de Staten van Holland op 30 oktober 1608* (Lochem, 1960), 89.

183. De Boer, op. cit., 269: “Yet, this specific point does not seem to have been extensively discussed during March, April and May, 1611, at the Conference in The Hague.”
b. At the Synod of Dort

At the Synod the salvation of infants was intensively discussed by the delegates as one of the issues related to predestination. Then, the delegates, regarding the salvation of children who die in their infancy, agreed with the following three points: 184

a. All children of men are subject to judgment by reason of original sin. God would indeed be in the right if he were to damn all.
b. There is certainly an election and reprobation even among little children (who die in their infancy before the age of reason).
c. On the basis of God’s promises in Scripture children [of believing parents] are comprehended in the covenant and are sanctified in Christ. They ought therefore to be regarded as chosen and as saved in heaven. There is no reason why believing parents should doubt this. 185

After that, these three points were developed, through further discussion at the Synod, into I-17 186 in the Canons of Dort:

Article 17. [The Salvation of the Infants of Believers]. 187

Since we must make judgments about God’s will from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parents ought not to doubt

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185. Among the delegates, there was a difference regarding “whether the little children of unbelievers who die in their infancy ought to be reckoned among the reprobates (Drenthe) or that one ought to leave such judgment to God (Polyander, Thysius, Waleus).” Ibid.
186. In this section treating the Canons, references to the text of the Canons are by the number of the main points and article number (e.g. I-17 refers to the Main Point I, Article 17).
187. CCF, 2:575. The English translations De Boer uses are as follows: “We must judge concerning the will of God from his Word, which declares that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they are included with their parents. Therefore, God-fearing parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in their infancy.” De Boer, op. cit., 263.
the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy.

Thus, the Synod, through I-17, clarified the salvation of infants of believing parents on the covenantal basis justified on the Word. However, it even took some time after the Synod for the “popularized impressions” of predestination to fade.\(^{188}\) This clearly shows that how emotionally delicate the issue was for suffering parents who lost their children in the era when infant mortality was very high.

c. A Pastoral or A Doctrinal Issue?

At the end of the twentieth century, Donald Sinnema’s historical investigation of the *Canons of Dort*, which “unveiled the development of canon seventeen,” caused a debate over the feature of canon seventeen (I-17), discussing what I-17 provided was a pastoral answer or a doctrinal as well as definitive answer to the question of the salvation of infants who die in their infancy.\(^{189}\) In other words, this debate is related to the original intention of drafting I-17. Sinnema points out that I-17 avoids referring to God’s hidden counsel in terms of the salvation of infants since treating it may lead some to conclude that “some children of believers could have been rejected in God’s hidden counsel.”\(^{190}\) Therefore, it is concluded by Sinnema that “the prime intent was to provide pastoral assurance to believing parents whose children die young.”\(^{191}\)

Then, Niek Gootjes, as a reaction to Sinnema, argues that “canon seventeen must have provided a definitive answer, as the Synod would otherwise have remained silent on this point.”\(^{192}\)

In order to clarify the original intention of I-17, De Boer first pays attention to the fact that Romans 9:6 was not used in I-17, although the delegates of the Palatinate asked the

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\(^{188}\) De Boer writes, “Even after the enacting of the doctrines and thus also of canon seventeen, the popular myth only gradually faded.” De Boer, “O, ye Women,” 286.

\(^{189}\) Ibid., 264-65.

\(^{190}\) Ibid., 264. Logically speaking, “on the level of God’s hidden counsel . . . a rejection of children of believers who died in infancy is conceivable.”

\(^{191}\) Ibid., 265, quoted from Donald W. Sinnema, “The Issue of Reprobation at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) in Light of the History of This Doctrine” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, 1985; available from University Microfilms International), 415.

committee to add it to the canon. This was because “a reference to Rom. 9:6 in the text of the canon would have emphasized the possibility of reprobation,” focusing on God’s eternal counsel. Instead of focusing on the counsel, the Canons, by relating I-17 to the Word, emphasized the Word as “the source of declaring ‘the good pleasure, purpose, and counsel of the divine will’ (Canon Eight) and the assurance pointed out in the Word (Canon Twelve).” In addition to this, De Boer refers to the basic approach of I-16 “showing how people should not be discouraged by the doctrine of reprobation.” Thus, De Boer, by clarifying a good balance of I-17 treating both pastoral and doctrinal issues, concludes that “this is a doctrinal response (here Gootjes is correct) to a religious question with pastoral intensity (as Sinnema suggests).”

d. Relevance to the Present Study

When reading this introductory part, some may be wondering how this part has relevance to this section treating the concept of adoption in the Canons of Dort. Just as the introduction treating “Family Life in 16th century Geneva” in the previous chapter, this introduction helps us to glance at an aspect of family life in seventeenth century Netherlands, in which numerous suffering parents struggled with infant mortality. In exploring the text of the Canons, we need to take into account that it was critical for those believing parents to ask whether or not their little children who died in their infancy were adopted by the Father into the household of God in heaven. This question was so delicate that the Remonstrants could take advantage of it in order to criticize, by using “the popularized impressions,” the doctrine of predestination. Furthermore, the question was so emotional that “the popular myth only gradually faded” even after the Synod of Dort.

Because of this serious issue numerous families faced in that era, we should keep in mind that the Canons of Dort were drafted not only for doctrinal reasons, but also for pastoral reasons, in order to heal the pain those suffering families had in the seventeenth century. This

193. De Boer, op. cit., 288: “Rom. 9:6 ‘for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.’”
195. Ibid.
196. Ibid.: “Against this background [of I-16] Canon Seventeen offers more than reassurance.”
197. Ibid. Although we skip here, De Boer also pays attention to the comprehensive feature of the covenant incorporated in I-17, keeping the administration of baptism and prayer, the parents and the Christian community in its scope. See ibid., 289-90.
would help us to understand both familial and theological landscapes in the Netherlands in this century, in which the Canons have their roots.

1. Background: Arminianism

When it comes to the Canons of the Synod of Dort, it is recognized that their historical background significantly affects their contents. Because of this, its background, in what follows, needs to be elaborated on in more detail than the other documents.

a. The Doubts about Predestination

Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) is the originator of Arminianism that eventually led to the Remonstrance (1610), a document criticizing the Reformed view of predestination. The Canons of Dort were written against this Remonstrance document.

Arminius gradually developed his theology including his view of predestination, going through the following three main incidents in his life. First, Arminius, when serving as a local pastor in Amsterdam, was asked by the Amsterdam consistory to refute Coornhert who criticized Beza in terms of predestination.

Then, Arminius, although he was a pupil of Beza, discovered that he could not refute Coornhert’s view, and “his convictions with respect to predestination

198. With regard to precursors of Arminianism, see the following works: Louis Praamsma, “The Background of the Arminian Controversy (1586-1618),” in Crisis in the Reformed Churches: Essays in Commemoration of the Great Synod of Dort, ed. Peter Y. De Jong (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Fellowship, Inc., 1968), 23-27; Yoshikazu Makita, Dordrecht Shinko-Kijun Kenkyu (A Study of the Canons of the Synod of Dort) (Sapporo, JP: Ichibak, 2012), 17-18. According to them, important precursors are as follows: Dirk Volkertszoon Coornhert (1552-1609), Hubertus Duithuis (1531-1581), Casper Coolhaes (1536-1615), Herman Herberts (1540-1607), Cornelis Wiggerts (d. 1624), Adolphus Venator (d. 1619), Taco Sybrants (d. 1613), and Jelle Hotzes Sneecanus (1540-1600). Among them, it is worth noting D. V. Coornhert because the actual origin of Arminianism can be traced back to the time when Jacobus Arminius was asked to refute Coornhert criticizing Beza’s view of predestination. Fred H. Klooster, “The Doctrinal Deliverances of the Canons of Dort,” in Crisis in the Reformed Churches, 53. Those precursors, insist both Praamsma and Makita, have in common the following tendencies or characteristics; 1) they had some disagreements with confessional documents used among confessional churches because they adhered to freedom of conscience, 2) they had objections to predestination, 3) they had a tendency of Erastianism which recognizes the supremacy of the state over the church, and 4) their understanding of predestination affected other issues in the theological framework which they had.

199. CCF, 2: 569; Makita, A Study of the Canons, 23.

200. Ibid., 19-20. Since by 1588 he had served as a pastor in Amsterdam for fifteen years it is not clear when he was asked to do this.
began to waver and his doubts increased." The second incident was when Arminius was involved in the committee for composing the state-church order [staatskerkorde] in the States of Holland. In dealing with the issue of political authority in relation to Romans 13, Arminius came to the conclusion that the state is supreme in the church. This clearly shows his Erastian understanding of the relationship between the state and the church. This Erastian tendency may not be directly related to his view of predestination, but eventually affected, through his successors, the later controversies between Arminians and Calvinists because the political authority behind Arminians significantly supported it. Third, Arminius, after becoming a professor of theology at Leiden in 1603, started influencing his students in terms of his view of predestination. This led to serious controversies between Arminius and F. Gomarus (1563-1641), a professor in the faculty of theology at Leiden, who was well known as supralapsarian.

b. The Remonstrance vs the Contra-Remonstrance

After his early death in 1609, a party was formed for defending Arminius, and developed his thought as Arminianism. After his death there were two major incidents leading to the Synod

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201. Klooster, “The Doctrinal Deliverances of Dort,” 53. In addition to this, in 1591 Arminius was once criticized from his colleague Plancius as Socinian since he expressed his doubts about Article 16 of the Belgic Confession treating election. At that time, although he promised to adhere to the Confession, Arminius still had his doubts until his death in 1609. Makita, A Study of the Canons, 20; Praamsma, “The Background of the Arminian Controversy,” 27-28. Praamsma quotes from Roger Nicole: “His attitude toward confessional standards was open to question, for a theologian of his caliber must have realized that there was a substantial rift between his views and the system of teaching as well as the express utterances of the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession. Nevertheless, he paraded under the flag of allegiance and under the vows of conformity from the time of his ordination to his death.” Ibid., 28, quoted from Encyclopedia of Christianity, s.v. “Arminius, James.”


203. Praamsma, op. cit., 27; OER, s.v. “Erastianism.” Erastianism is named after Thomas Erastus (1524-1583), a professor in the medical faculty at Heidelberg. He insisted that “the civil magistrate exercised all sovereignty within the states, that the church possessed no coercive power.” In the late 1560s, the controversy over the relationship between the state and the church originated in relation to the issue of church discipline.

204. Makita, op. cit., 22-30; Praamsma, op. cit., 31-33.

205. Makita, op. cit., 20-21. In the midst of the controversies with Gomarus, a discussion meeting for settlement was officially held on May 30, 1608 in The Hague, but it resolved nothing. Another meeting was planned on August 12, 1609, but it was not held since Arminius was seriously ill. Without recovering, Arminius died on October 19 that year. Ibid., 21.

206. Main figures who formed the party were Simon Episcopius (1583-1644), and Johannes Uyttenbogaert (1557-1644). Besides them, Oldenbarnveldt (1549-1619) and Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) politically supported Arminians. Klooster, “Doctrinal Deliverances of Dort,” 53-54.
of Dort. The first one was the Remonstrance which was drawn up by Arminians in 1610 by insisting that they did not depart from the Reformed faith. The Remonstrance consists of five points, and eventually affected the format of the *Canons of Dort* since they respond to each of those five points. The second major incident was the Conference at The Hague in 1611, to which the Contra-Remonstrance was submitted by Calvinists. This conference was held by the States of Holland, which were closer to the Remonstrants, for settlement between the Remonstrants and Calvinists. But it did not result in any improvement to the tense situation between them.

While those efforts were made, the Remonstrants were getting politically more powerful and forced the Contra-Remonstrants to face a serious situation. For example, some ministers, such as Geselius in Rotterdam and Rosaeus in The Hague, were deposed or suspended from their office by the magistrates because of their theological position. In seeing this serious situation which could be interpreted as persecution, Prince Maurice, after his long reluctance to take any action, took a stand on the side of the Contra-Remonstrance, and finally began exerting his political power. This significantly changed the situation, and led the States General in the

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209. Makita, op. cit., 26-28. The main composer of the Contra-Remonstrance was F. Homius. The Contra-Remonstrance has seven points against the Remonstrance, insisting: 1) total depravity, 2) children of Christian families as God’s children who are in the covenant, 3) unconditional election, 4) limited or particular atonement, 5) the Spirit’s ministry renewing believers, 6) perseverance of believers, and 7) the fruits of gratitude brought by believers. After the Conference at The Hague, although they were not effective, some other efforts for settlement were made by the States of Holland, such as the Conference at Delft in 1613, and the “Resolution for Peace in the Churches” written by Grotius in 1614 from the perspective of the Remonstrants. Ibid., 28; De Jong, “Chronological Table,” in *Crisis in the Reformed Churches*, 199. The English translations of the Contra-Remonstrance, under the name of “the Counter Remonstrance” of 1611, are available in ibid., 209-17. Makita points out that behind the controversies between these two parties, there was also a political tension between the States of Holland and Utrecht where Arminianism was influential, and the city of Amsterdam on which Calvinism was influential. Makita, op. cit., 28-29.
210. Praamsma, “The Background of the Arminian Controversy,” 32; Makita, op. cit., 28-30. It is well known that under this serious circumstance, the so-called “doleerende” church (the church in “mourning”) was formed by those persecuted in Oudewater, Hoorn, Alkmaar, and so on. It was reported that at the congregation of the “doleerende” church in The Hague, approximately 1,200 people gathered for worship. Ibid., 30.
Netherlands to call a national synod, namely the Synod of Dort in 1618, for bringing the long controversies and persecution to an end.211

c. The Synod of Dort

The Synod began on November 13, 1618 and ended on May 29, 1619. It is reported that approximately 180 meetings including committee meetings were held during this period.212 In the Synod, the Remonstrants strategically focused their attacks on the issue of reprobation in order to cause a split between the supralapsarian and the infralapsarian among the Contra-Remonstrants. Thus, “the Remonstrants took the negative way for the argument in the Synod by focusing on what they did not believe, not on what they believed.”213 In discerning the intention of the Remonstrants, the Synod insisted that the church stands on the grace of predestination, not reprobation, and asked them to clarify their view of predestination. Nevertheless, the Remonstrants refused to do that.214 After the repeated efforts of the Synod to persuade them to declare what they believed, they continued to refuse, and were finally expelled from the Synod because of their disobedience to it. Then, the Synod condemned their teachings.215

After the expulsion of the Remonstrants on January 14, 1619, the Synod, under the

211. Makita, A Study of the Canons, 30-31; Praamsma, op. cit., 32-33; CCF, 2: 569. Because of the political actions taken by Prince Maurice, Oldenbarnevelt, Grotius, and other four Arminian leaders were taken into custody at the end. Praamsma, op. cit., 32-33. In considering that the Contra-Remonstrants were against the Erastian tendency of the Remonstrants, it is ironic that the Synod was called by the political leadership of Prince Maurice as well as the States General in the Netherlands. Ibid.; Makita, op. cit., 57: “Historically speaking, even orthodox Calvinists were not free from political power.”

212. It is noted that the Synod consisted of delegates having various backgrounds. The delegates from the Netherlands were as follows: 37 ministers, 19 elders, and 5 theologians. These theologians were from universities of Leiden, Franeker, Groningen, Harderwijk, and Middelburg. The Synod also had 26 delegates from other countries: 5 from Great Britain, 3 from the Palatinate, 4 from Hessen, 5 from Switzerland, 2 from Geneva, 3 from Bremen, 2 from Emden, and 2 from Nassau-Wetteravi. These foreign delegates were also able to vote, and participate in committee meetings. In this sense, the Synod had an ecumenical character. Makita, op. cit., 32-33; De Jong, “Delegates to the Synod of Dort,” in Crisis in the Reformed Churches, 215-20. Note; the list of delegates in De Jong’s work lacks the theologian from Franeker. The list which Makita put in his work is based on Hendrik Kaajan, De Pro-Acta der Dordtsche Synode in 1618 (Rotterdam: T. de Vries, 1914), 19-20, 50-51.


214. It is said that the goal of the Remonstrants at that time was not to win the argument, but negotiate a settlement “that might accommodate theological differences.” The Synod did not allow them to accomplish that purpose. CCF, 2: 569.

leadership of its chair Johanness Bogerman (1576-1637), started composing the Canons of Dort in order to clarify what they believed. After three months hard work, all the delegates subscribed to the Canons of Dort on April 23. The Synod finished working on them on May 6 with prayer by the chair and the public reading of the Canons.

2. Characteristics: The Five Points Reacting to the Remonstrance

Three issues summarize the Canons of Dort. First, the Canons are known for their specific format reacting to the five points which the Remonstrance of 1610 makes. Therefore, the Canons also consist of five main points treating: 1) predestination, 2) Christ’s death and man’s redemption, 3) and 4) the corruption and conversion of man, and 5) the perseverance of believers. In each main point, the Canons first describe what they believe on the biblical bases, and then refute what the Remonstrants believed to be unscriptural. The intention of taking this way was educational, and to help believers distinguish what is scriptural from what is erroneous.

Second, although the discussions of the Canons center around predestination, what

216. Makita, A Study of the Canons, 47-50. Makita describes the whole process of the Synod, including “Pro- and Post Acta,” in detail. See ibid., 32-58. The leadership of Bogerman was significant during the Synod. With regard to his background, see Simon Kistemaker, “Leading Figures at the Synod of Dort,” in Crisis in the Reformed Churches, 39-41. Other important figures whom Kistemaker mentions are as follows: Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), Francis Gomarus (1563-1641), Sibrandus Lubbertus (1555-1625), Johannes Uytenbogaert (1557-1644), Gijsbertus Voetius (1589-1676), and Conrad Vorstius (1569-1622).

217. Makita, op. cit., 50. The text of the Canons was written in Latin first. Then, it officially appeared in Latin, Dutch, and French. CCF, 2:569. After the 26 delegates from other countries left, the Synod resumed for working on other issues, such as revising the church order, deciding the official text of the Belgic Confession, revising the unified liturgy in the Netherlands, and so on. This process called the “Post-Acta” ended on May 29, 1619. Makita, op. cit., 53-55.

218. What this format theologically signifies is that the Canons are not the exhaustive study of predestination, although they are famous for their focus on it. It is important to keep in mind that they were written as a reaction to the Remonstrance of 1610. Ibid., 139-40.

219. Makita, A Study of the Canons, 50-51; CCF, 2:569. It is noted, however, that the Canons treat their third and fourth main points in a combined manner. This is to help readers understand, in a clearer way, what the main issues are in the third and fourth points of the Remonstrance of 1610. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., A Place to Stand: A Reformed Study of Creeds and Confessions (Grand Rapids, MI: The Board of the Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, 1979), 150; Makita, op. cit., 146. Both Plantinga and Makita point out that if we pay attention only to the third point of the Remonstrance treating human corruption, it is not so clear that their teaching is not justified on a biblical basis since even Arminians appear to agree with the point that man cannot be saved without God’s grace.

220. Ibid., 145.
they actually treat throughout the text is not limited to it, but the entire system of the gospel, or more simply, the gospel itself. Since the Remonstrance seriously affects the whole gospel, the Canons, as a reaction to it, treat various issues related to the salvation of man.221

Third, it is important to notice that the Canons were written not to discuss mere theoretical concerns, but to treat practical as well as pastoral issues related to local churches in the Netherlands. As we have seen in the background of the Canons, the controversies between the Remonstrants and the Contra-Remonstrants took place in the context of the church of the Netherlands at that time.222 Thus, as we shall see in what follows, the important issues behind the five main points are relevant to pastoral and practical issues in the church.223

3. Relevant Issues224

In terms of the concept of adoption, three issues are worth noting. First, the Canons, in three articles (I-7, 10, and V-6), directly or conceptually refer to adoption. At the beginning of I-7, the Canons show the basic meaning or main purpose of election through repeating the key phrase “chosen in Christ,” or its similar phrases.225 Here it is noted that God not only chose a “definite

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221. Pages 239-42 in this chapter of the present study; Makita, A Study of the Canons, 56.
223. For example, Article 6 in the Main Point V refers to God’s “unchangeable purpose of election.” As this shows, the “certainty of salvation” based on divine election is one of the repeated thrusts the Canons make in the text. Klooster, “The Doctrinal Deliverance of Dort,” 80-81; Makita, op. cit., 162-65, 179-86. Makita insists that, besides the certainty of salvation, there are some similar themes on which the Canons put their emphasis, such as the “preservation” of believers in salvation, the “unchangeable nature” of God, the “assurance” generated from election, and so on. It is worth noting that the Canons refer to the unchangeable nature of God or his election in the following articles: I-7, 11, 12, I-R5-7, III/IV-6, 8, V-6, and so on. In regard to the pastoral and practical aspects of the Canons, see, Peter Y. De Jong, “Preaching and the Synod of Dort,” in Crisis in the Reformed Churches, 115-36; Edwin H. Palmer, “The Significance of the Canons for Pastoral Work,” in Crisis in the Reformed Churches, 137-49; Cornelius P. Venema, But for the Grace of God: An Exposition of the Canons of Dort (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Fellowship, 1994), 83-93, 111-13. Note: references to the text are by the number of the main points and article number (e.g. I-14 refers to the Main Point I, Article 14; II-R1 refers to the Main Point II, Rejection of the Errors 1).
225. I-7: “Election [or choosing] is God’s unchangeable purpose by which he did the following: before the foundation of the world, by sheer grace, according to the free good pleasure of his will, he chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire of human race, which had fallen by its own fault from its original innocence into sin and ruin. . . . He did this in Christ, whom he also appointed from eternity to be the Mediator, the Head of all those chosen [omniae Electorum Caput], and the foundation of their salvation. And so he decided to give the chosen ones to Christ, to be saved, and to
number of particular people” to salvation, but also determined the way to save those chosen ones, namely “in Christ.”226 This clarifies that the Canons take the soteriological way to treat the grace of election.227 In the following context, the Cannons elaborate on what election brings about, through referring to justification, sanctification, and glorification.228 Then, in order to support these three blessings, the Canons quote from Ephesians 1: 4-6: “He predestined us whom he adopted as his children through Jesus Christ [praedestinavit nos quos adoptaret in filios, per Iesum Christum], in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, by which he freely made us pleasing to himself in his beloved.”229 Thus, the Canons, through referring to Ephesians 1: 4-6, actually recognize adoption as one of the blessings rooted in eternal election.230

The next article (I-10) treats “election based on God’s good pleasure.”231 After declaring that the cause of election is “exclusively the good pleasure of God,” the article clarifies election as unconditional in referring to God’s adoptive act. “This does not involve his choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation, but rather involves his adopting certain particular persons from among the common mass of sinners as his own possession [certas quasdam personas ex communi peccatorum multituidine sibi in

227. Ibid., 159-61; Klooster, op. cit., 66-67. Klooster points out that even the Main Point I treating predestination starts with stating the Fall in Adam in I-1. This clearly means that the Canons take the soteriological-oriented way to treat predestination.
228. “In other words, he decided to grant them true faith in Christ, to justify them, to sanctify them, and finally, after powerfully preserving them in the fellowship of his Son [Filii sui communione], to glorify them.” CCF, 2: 572; Bakhuizen, 232.
229. CCF, 2:572; Bakhuizen, 232. Klooster pays attention to the way the Canons quote scriptural passages. Instead of putting the chapter and verse reference of scriptural passages in margins, the way the Canons take is to weave them into the text. “These biblical references are an integral part of the text of the confession, being woven into the doctrinal statements in a variety of ways.” Klooster, op. cit., 89.
230. Venema, But for the Grace of God, 24. According to Venema, the Canons recognize election as the source of adoption. “Indeed, all of these blessings flow from God’s gracious election.” In this sense, it is interesting to compare the Canons with Calvin’s Institutes, 3.1.1 because Calvin emphasizes “union with Christ” as the source of the soteriological graces. Klooster recognizes, in the Canons of Dort, union with Christ as the means of saving grace. Klooster, “The Doctrinal Deliverances of Dort,” 69.
231. CCF, 2:573.
peculium adscivit." Although the article does not use the exact verb “adopto” here, the concept it depicts is to bring those chosen into God’s own possession, namely his family.

In V-6, the Canons, in the context of describing unchangeable election, refer to the certainty of the status of God’s children. “For God, who is rich in mercy, according to his unchangeable purpose of election does not take his Holy Spirit from his own completely, even when they fall grievously. Neither does he let them fall down so far that they forfeit the grace of adoption and the state of justification [ut gratia adoptionis ac iustificationis statu excidant].”

In the Main Point V treating the perseverance of the saints, V-6 is the first article which explains what the perseverance actually means. Because of that, it is worth noting that the Canons recognize adoption and justification as two major salvific blessings in the context of God’s preserving grace. In this context, the Canons articulate not only the certainty of salvation, but also the stability of the status which the adopted have. This preservation of the adopted is exclusively based on God’s sovereign and unchangeable election, as the article states.

Second, it is recognized that the Canons significantly treat the filial notion throughout the text. For example, after mentioning the assurance of the elect in I-12, the Canons in I-13 refer to the life of those assured in God’s election in terms of the filial notion. “In their awareness and assurance of this election, God’s children daily find greater cause to humble themselves before God [filii Dei meiorem indies sese coram Deo humiliandi] . . . . This is far from saying that this teaching concerning election and reflection upon it, make God’s children lax in observing his commandments or become carnally self-assured.”

Furthermore, in V-10 treating the ground

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232. CCF, 2:573; Bakhuizen, 232-33.
233. CCF, 2:592; Bakhuizen, 268.
234. Regarding the contents the Main Point V treats, argues Makita, it is more appropriate to recognize them as God’s preserving grace, rather than the perseverance of the saints since the Canons makes the point that the perseverance is totally dependent on his grace of preserving his own. Makita, A Study of the Canons, 180.
235. What is at stake in the Remonstrance is actually this stability of the status of God’s children. Ibid., 177-78.
236. Klooster, op. cit., 80; Venema, But for the Grace of God, 73-74; Feenstra, Unspeakable Comfort, 162-63.
237. CCF, 2:574; Bakhuizen, 234. In fact, the Latin text uses “filii Dei” only once in the article I-13. Also see I-12: “Such assurance comes . . . by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God’s word – such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness.” CCF, 2:573 (573; 250
of the assurance of the elect, the Canons mention the Spirit testifying to the sonship of the elect. According to the article, this assurance comes from “the testimony of the Holy Spirit testifying with our spirit that we are God’s children and heirs [nos esse Dei filios et haeredes].” In seeing these two and other cases, it is noted that the Canons always refer to the filial notion in relation to the assurance which the elect have. In addition to this, the fact that all the references to the filial notion are gathered in the Main Points I and V shows that the Canons relate the filial notion intensively to the graces of election (I) and God’s preserving work for the elect (V).

Third, in the Main Points III/IV which treat human corruption and conversion, it is noted that the Canons often refer to regeneration or the new birth. What this signifies is theologically important because, as the Canons show throughout the Main Points III/IV, both human corruption and conversion are relevant to human nature, rather than to the status of man. In short, the Canons treat regeneration or the new birth in relation to our nature. For example, in III/IV-3 treating the “total inability” of man, the Canons clarify that the Spirit’s regenerating work is related to human nature. “Without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit [Spiritus Sancti regenerantis gratia] they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature [naturam depravatam corrigere] or even to dispose themselves to such reform.” In addition to this, III/IV-11 regarding the Spirit’s work in conversion, also treats

italics mine); Bakhuizen, 234.

238. Here the Canons refer to three grounds of assurance: 1) “faith in God’s promises,” 2) the testimony of the Holy Spirit,” and 3) “a serious and holy pursuit of a clear conscience and good works.” CCF, 2:593; Bakhuizen, 268; Plantinga, A Place to Stand, 157. Also see Venema, But for the Grace of God, 77-78. Venema also pays attention to the Spirit’s work in relation to “participation” or “union with Christ” in the context of the Canons.

239. Besides I-12, 13, and V-10, the filial notion is mentioned in the following articles: I-16 about reprobation (after referring to the assurance of the elect) in CCF, 2:575; Bakhuizen, 235, V-12 treating the assurance as “an incentive to godliness” in CCF, 2:594; Bakhuizen, 270, V-13 of the “assurance no inducement to carelessness” in CCF, 2:594; Bakhuizen, 270, V-R 5 treating the sources of the assurance in CCF, 2:596-97; Bakhuizen, 274, and V-R 6 about the effect of the assurance in CCF, 2:597; Bakhuizen, 274. See Venema, op. cit., 74; Plantinga, op. cit., 157. Note: The filial notion mentioned in V-R 6 is Johanne.

240. In relation to III/IV-3, III/IV-R 1-5, Klooster writes, “Without the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, or to dispose themselves to reformation.” Klooster, “The Doctrinal Deliverances of Dort,” 61; Venema, op. cit., 52.

241. CCF, 2:584; Bakhuizen, 252. Whereas the Canons emphasize regeneration as the work of the Spirit, this does not mean that the Canons do not take into account human responsibility in the soteriological context. See Klooster, “The Doctrinal Deliverances of the Canons,” 83-88. Klooster elaborates the issue of the relationship between “divine sovereignty and human responsibility” in the
regeneration in relation to human nature. “By the effective operation of the same regenerating Spirit [Spiritus regenerantis], he also penetrates into the inmost being of man . . . . He infuses new qualities [novas qualitates] into the will, making the dead will alive, the evil one good, the unwilling one willing, and the stubborn one compliant.”

4. Theological Analysis

There are four issues we need to note in analyzing the Canons of Dort. First, it is noted that the Canons treat the concept of adoption in the context of emphasizing the certainty of salvation. This clarifies that, as we have seen, the status of the adopted ones is stable in the same manner as the certainty of salvation is, since it is also based on “his unchangeable purpose of election” and God’s preserving grace for the chosen. It is important to note this because the certainty of salvation is one of the thrusts the Canons make throughout the text. Therefore, it is also natural that the Canons refer to the filial notion always in the context of treating assurance which the elect enjoy.

Second, whereas the Canons are known for their focus on predestination, their treatment of it is soteriologically oriented. Even in the very first article of the Main Point I treating the unconditional election, the Canons start, not from God’s eternal decree, but from the fact of

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Canons of Dort. According to him, in the context of the Canons, those saved have two duties: 1) praying to God for those “who have not yet been called” (III/IV-15) and 2) using means (the gospel, the sacraments, and discipline in the context of III/IV-17) for God’s grace to work in them. Ibid., 65-66.

242. CCF, 2:586; Bakhuizen, 256. Besides III/IV-3, 11, the following articles treat the new birth in relation to human nature: III/IV-12 in Bakhuizen, 256, III/IV-16 in ibid., 258, III/IV-17 in ibid., 258, III/IV-R 4 in ibid., III/IV-R 8 in ibid., 263-64. The Main Point V also has some references to the new birth in terms of human nature: V-1 in ibid., 266, V-R 3 in ibid., 272, V-R 4 in ibid., 274, V-R 8 in ibid., 276.


244. I-7, 11, 12, I-R5-7, III/IV-6, 8, V-6, and so on. Makita points out that in the Canons, the unchangeable nature of God or his election centers on the Main Points I and V, in which the concept of adoption is mentioned three times. According to Makita, there is no reference to God’s unchangeable nature in the Arminian catechism which was published after the Synod of Dort. Makita refers to J. Kamphuis, Katholieke vastheid: enkele opmerkingen met betrekking tot de leer der onveranderlijkheid Gods (Goes, NL: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1955), 20.


246. I-12, 13 in Bakhuizen, 234, I-16 in ibid., 575, V-10 in ibid., 268, V-12, 13 in ibid., 270, V-R 5, 6 in ibid., 274.
the Fall in Adam.\textsuperscript{247} This reminds us of some other confessional documents, including Calvin’s, which treat predestination in a soteriologically oriented manner.\textsuperscript{248}

Third, in seeing that the references to the new birth or regeneration center on Main Points III/IV, it is clear that the Canons theologically distinguish the new birth, which is related to human nature, from adoption which is relevant to the status of those chosen.\textsuperscript{249} This is because the Main Points III/IV treat human depravity and conversion from that perspective. Each of the references to the new birth in the text also shows this point.

Fourth, in exploring the text of the Canons, it is recognized that the references to both the Fatherhood of God and union with Christ are not pervasive.\textsuperscript{250} What this signifies theologically is that, in terms of the concept of adoption, their treatment is neither Fatherhood-oriented, nor union-oriented, but rather predestination-oriented.

5. Conclusion

The \textit{Canons of Dort}, while emphasizing the certainty of salvation of the elect, also clarify the stability of the status of the adopted ones. This clearly shows that these two points are inseparably connected with each other. Because of that, it is natural that the filial notion in the Canons is always in the context of the assurance of the elect. In regard to the theological orientation of the Canons, their treatment of predestination is recognized as being soteriologically oriented, but their treatment of adoption is predestination oriented. This is because the Canons recognize predestination as the source of the soteriological graces. Furthermore, the Canons theologically

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item 247. Klooster, “The Doctrinal Deliverance of Dort,” 66-67. It is interesting that, says Klooster, the beginning part of the Main Point I (I-1-3) is elaborated on throughout the whole III/IV. This also shows us the soteriologically nature of the Canons. Because of that, Klooster, in commenting on the Canons, begins from III/IV, instead of I. Ibid., 60-66. Makita also supports this. Makita, \textit{A Study of the Canons}, 154.
\item 248. Most obvious cases are found in the Consensus Geneva\textit{sis} of 1551, and in the Second Helvetic \textit{Confession} of 1566.
\item 249. III/IV-3 in Bakhuizen, 252, III/IV-11, 12 in ibid., 256, III/IV-16, 17 in ibid., 258, III/IV-R 4 in ibid., 260, III/IV-R 8 in ibid., 263-264. Also, V-1 in ibid., 266, V-R 3 in ibid., 272, V-R 4 in ibid., 274, V-R 8 in ibid., 276.
\item 250. In regard to the Fatherhood which is in the soteriological context: I-R 6, 8, II-R 1-4, V-5, 11, 13, 15, V-R 3, 9. Most of these references are in passing. Also, the Canons do not refer to the Fatherhood in I-7, 10, and V-6 in which the concept of adoption is mentioned. With regard to union with Christ: I-7, V-1, V-R 5. Among them, I-7 refers to union with Christ in the context of treating soteriological blessings including adoption.
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F. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)

1. Background: The Struggles over Power

Like other confessions we have seen, the Westminster Confession of Faith (hereafter the WCF) is also a confession which was written under specific political as well as religious circumstances in that era. In particular, it is known that there was a struggle over power between Charles I and the Parliament of England.²⁵¹ That Charles I, dreaming of unifying Scotland liturgically according to the Anglican model, tried to force the Church of Scotland to use the Book of Common Prayer. This caused opposition, and led to the Bishop’s Wars of 1639 and 1640.²⁵² After being financially ruined because of these wars, Charles I was forced to summon the so-called “Long Parliament” in order to ask for financial assistance.²⁵³ Then civil war in England took place in 1642. Through these events, Parliament succeeded in seizing power in England.²⁵⁴

That Parliament had power over the king was a turning point in the history of the Church of England as well. Although the king forbade gatherings of clergy, the Assembly was summoned by Parliament, and opened by a sermon of William Twisse, the Prolocutor, on July 1, 1643.²⁵⁵ This was the beginning of the Westminster Assembly. In considering the characteristics of the Assembly, it is important to pay attention to the fact that it was convened by Parliament, and directed, not under ecclesiastical, but under parliamentary authority.²⁵⁶ The purpose for

²⁵¹ DSCHT, s.v. “Westminster Assembly and Documents”; CCF, 2:601.
²⁵³ In regard to the details of the struggle between the king and Parliament, see Rogers, “Westminster Confession,” 149-53.
²⁵⁴ DSCHT, s.v. “Westminster Assembly and Documents”; CCF, 2:601.
Parliament to have an assembly was to “bring the Church of England more in line with the Church of Scotland and the Reformed churches of Europe.”

When it comes to the members of the Assembly, it was also Parliament which selected them as well as its officers. The Assembly was composed of 121 Puritan ministers consisting of mostly Presbyterians, some Congregationalists, and a few Episcopalians. Besides these ministers, there were also thirty lay members from Parliament and six Scottish advisors. In order to understand the bigger picture of how the Assembly, in terms of those members, functioned as a whole, what Leith analyzes is worth noticing. “The Assembly did not include a theologian whose brilliance would entitle him to a great place in the history of thought.” But he adds to this, “The Assembly was composed of highly competent men who were fully able to utilize the accumulated theological work of more than a century.” Then, it is concluded that the Assembly was not a group of authors creating a new theology, but that of “summarizers and interpreters of the existing tradition.” It is necessary to keep this in mind as one of the basic characteristics the Assembly had as it wrote the WCF.

With regard to the original tasks Parliament gave to the Assembly, S. B. Ferguson, in the Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology, refers to the following three tasks: 1) “a reformation of liturgy, discipline and government of the Church of England,” 2) “the promotion of church unity with Scotland and the Continent,” and 3) the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles. The Assembly started working on revising the Thirty-Nine Articles. However, the

257. *CCF*, 2:601. What Parliament wanted to see was to have “a national church, embracing all people, with a simple, and a Reformed creed. Their vision did not include toleration of religious groups other than those represented in the Assembly,” Rogers, “Westminster Confession,” 153-54.

258. Ibid., 154. Besides the members and officers, the topics and tasks at the Assembly were also set by Parliament, as we shall see later.

259. Regarding the numbers of these minor groups, there are some differences among secondary sources. Rogers, op. cit., 53; Leith, *Assembly at Westminster*, 45.

260. Those members from Parliament included some Erastians. Ibid. Those Scottish advisors were elected, and sent by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. They played an important role, especially in relation to the Solemn League and Covenant, as we shall see later. *CCF*, 2:601; Leith, op. cit., 45. “The Scots Commissioners . . . served as an advisory body, with considerable *de facto* powers, and met frequently with a committee from the Assembly and Parliament to discuss the acceptability to the Scottish Kirk and nation of the work in progress.” *DSCHT*, s.v. “Westminster Assembly and Documents.”


262. Ibid.

revision was brought to an end in October of 1643 when Parliament signed the Solemn League and Covenant, a contract for strengthening the co-operation between the English Parliament and Scotland.\textsuperscript{265} Then, Parliament ordered the Assembly, instead of revising the \textit{Thirty-Nine Articles}, to compose new confessional documents for the churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland.\textsuperscript{266} These documents became called the \textit{Westminster Standards} consisting of the \textit{WCF}, \textit{Larger Catechism} (\textit{WLC}), and \textit{Shorter Catechism} (\textit{WSC}).\textsuperscript{267}

When it comes to the sources of the \textit{WCF}, the following three British documents are used as its direct sources: the \textit{Irish Articles} of 1615, the \textit{Scottish Confession} of 1560, and the \textit{Lambeth Articles} of 1595.\textsuperscript{268} In addition to these three, the \textit{Second Helvetic Confession} and the \textit{Heidelberg Catechism} are recognized as influential to the \textit{WCF}.\textsuperscript{269} Furthermore, in order to understand the theological landscape in which the \textit{WCF} was written, it is important to refer to some theological factors surrounding the Assembly in that period of time. First of all, it is necessary to take into account British theological tradition. According to Leith, it is characterized by “a strong biblical understanding of reality,” “an Augustinian theology” interpreted through

\textsuperscript{264}Rogers, “\textit{Westminster Confession},” 154: “The first task given the Assembly by Parliament was to revise the Thirty-Nine Articles, the creed of the Church of England.” Leith also points out, “The Assembly met on July 1, 1643, and immediately began work on the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles.” Leith, \textit{op. cit.}, 46.

\textsuperscript{265}Ibid., 59. According to Leith, the basic aims of the Solemn League and Covenant are as follows: 1) prohibiting Popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, and profaneness, 2) sustaining the Reformation in Scotland, England, and Ireland, and 3) bringing the churches in those three kingdoms to uniformity in “religion, confession of faith, form of church government, directory for worship and catechising.”

\textsuperscript{266}\textit{CCF}, 2:601. Norris, by examining the actual work of revising the Articles, and comparing it with the work on the \textit{Westminster Standards}, analyses the significance of the former task. Norris, “\textit{Thirty-Nine Articles at the Westminster Assembly},” 139-73. In short, it is concluded that the revision helped the Assembly to clarify what important issues are for composing a confessional statement, and function more effectively as it worked on the \textit{Westminster Standards}.

\textsuperscript{267}In addition to these three documents, the other documents composed by the Assembly are as follows: the Directory for the Public Worship of God, the Form of Presbyterian Church-Government, and the Psalter (by Francis Rous). Leith, \textit{Assembly at Westminster}, 55. In regard to the basic timeline of composing the \textit{WCF}, see ibid., 60-62. The committee for the \textit{WCF} was appointed on August 20, 1644, and its final work for adding the proof texts to the \textit{WCF} was completed in April of 1647.

\textsuperscript{268}\textit{CCF}, 2:601-2. Trumper, by quoting from Schaff, recognizes the \textit{Irish Articles} as “the chief basis” for the \textit{WCF} in considering that both documents “have the general order in common, including the headings of chapters” in them except for the chapter on adoption. Schaff points out that there are some “literal agreement of language” among important doctrines in these two confessional documents. Trumper, “\textit{Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine},” 92; Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:664-65. Regarding the concept of adoption, the \textit{Irish Articles} refers to it twice in Article 15 of predestination, and Article 89 of baptism. \textit{CCF}, 2:555, 566. There is no mention of adoption in the \textit{Lambeth Articles}.

\textsuperscript{269}\textit{CCF}, 2:602.
Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Bradwardine, John Wycliffe, and the British empiricism.\textsuperscript{270}

Second, it is clear that the authors of the \textit{WCF} composed it based on the Reformed tradition on the Continent, as already mentioned as one of the basic attitudes the Assembly had.\textsuperscript{271} Third, it is also necessary to keep in mind that covenant theology of the Puritans impacted, in particular, the \textit{WCF}'s treatment of God’s decree, besides its overall impact on its theological orientation.\textsuperscript{272}

2. Characteristics: Clarity, Preciseness, and Accuracy

There are five characteristic issues we need to keep in mind. First of all, in terms of the present study, it is important to emphasize again that the \textit{WCF} is the first confession in church history which treats adoption as a \textit{locus} by devoting a chapter to it.\textsuperscript{273}

Second, the \textit{WCF} is characterized by its clarity, preciseness, and accuracy in its style for explaining doctrines. All of them are related to the historical situation in that era that after over a hundred years of various efforts, and struggles through the Reformation, the development of the Reformed tradition reached, in the \textit{WCF}, “the final fixing in confessional language of the principles and teachings of evangelical religion.”\textsuperscript{274}

\textsuperscript{270} Leith, \textit{Assembly at Westminster}, 38-39.

\textsuperscript{271} Ibid., 46. Leith refers to Zurich and Geneva as the most significant places in the Continent which influenced the \textit{WCF}. Ibid., 40. In regard to the Reformed tradition which is influential to the \textit{WCF}, Rogers also points out, “The English Reformation underwent a development quite distinct from that on the Continent. . . . The Westminster Divines still belonged to the Reformation era in England. They had more in common with Calvin and the authors of the sixteenth-century confessions than they did with the Post Reformation Scholastics who soon succeeded them.” Rogers, \textit{“Westminster Confession,”} 142-43.

\textsuperscript{272} Leith, op. cit., 41-42; DSCHT, s.v. \textit{“Westminster Assembly and Documents”}: “The composition of the Confession of Faith constitutes the central accomplishment of the Assembly. Calvinistic in emphasis, its theology is covenantal in orientation, and its soteriology evangelical.” In addition to these three factors surrounding the Assembly, Leith refers to the other two as significant, though in a negative or reactionary way: Roman Catholicism on the continent and the Antinomianism. Leith, op. cit., 42-43.

\textsuperscript{273} Trumper, \textit{“Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,”} 95-96. Trumper describes the process of including a chapter on adoption, although he himself admits that “we do not have the answer” about the reason of this inclusion. On July 16, 1645, the third committee in the Assembly was assigned to compose a chapter on adoption. On November 20, the committee submitted a report to the Assembly. The chapter on adoption was reviewed and ordered on July 23, 1646 by the Assembly. This timeline is based on A. F. Mitchell and J. Struthers, eds., \textit{Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines while Engaged in Preparing their Directory of the Church Government, Confession of Faith, and Catechisms (November 1644 to March 1649)} (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874).

\textsuperscript{274} B. B. Warfield, \textit{The Significance of the Westminster Standards as a Creed} (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898), 13. Warfield also writes, “In the same sense in which the Nicene and Athanasian creeds attained the final expression of the Trinity, and the Chalcedonian definition the final expression of the doctrine of the Person of Christ, the \textit{Westminster Standards} attained the final expression
Third, scholasticism, which also has a relevance to the second point, needs to be noted as a characteristic of the WCF. In the broad historical background in which the WCF was put, Leith recognizes the Council of Trent (1543-1563) as an external force influencing it in terms of its style for describing its theology. This is because the canons and decrees of the Council using scholastic methods are known for their “theological definitions that were relatively clear, precise, and exact.” Therefore, it was natural for Reformed confessions after Trent to be required to articulate what they believe in a clearer and more precise way, and in the case of the Assembly, it is understandable that they needed to take scholastic methods for writing their theology as a reaction to the confessional current in that era.

Fourth, in terms of its theology, the generic contents of the WCF need to be recognized as a defining characteristic. It is said that “the members of the Assembly deliberately sought to avoid the peculiar theologies of particular schools.” This fits in with their basic attitude which tried to use the accumulated tradition for writing their confessional documents.

of the elements of evangelical religion.” Ibid., 24 (24; italics mine). Also see Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 71: “The desire for precise and exact theological definitions caused the Westminster theologians to give up history and imagery drawn from life as tools for writing theology.” What he writes here also has relevance to the following characteristic.

275. Ibid., 66.

276. Ibid: “Westminster theologians who personally disliked scholastic methods found that they had to make use of those methods in order to deal with their theological opponents.” Here Leith uses “the four tendencies of Protestant Scholasticism” given by Brian G. Armstrong for explaining what it means: 1) a tendency using “deductive ratiocination from given assumptions or principles,” 2) a tendency employing reason at an equal level with faith in theology, 3) a tendency believing that “the scriptural record contains a unified, rationally comprehensible account,” and 4) a tendency being interested in metaphysical and abstract issues, particularly, related to the doctrine of God.” Ibid., 67-68. Because of the Protestant Scholasticism the WCF uses, some theologians, such as K. Barth, J. B. Torrance, and T. F. Torrance criticize its methods, and insist that there is discontinuity between the WCF and Calvin. In order to see a summary of this debate, see A. T. B. McGowan, “Was Westminster Calvinist?” in Reformed Theology in Contemporary Perspective, 46-65. While recognizing it historically understandable for the Assembly to use scholastic methods, Leith insists that in the WCF there are some implicit assumptions that need to be challenged: 1) “Christian faith can be adequately embodied in propositions,” 2) “human reason . . . can take the inalterable materials of the Bible and radically abstract them into precise propositions” and 3) “truth is more adequately expressed in dogmatic pronouncements than in the dialectical tension of opposing views.” Leith, op. cit., 72.

277. Ibid., 38: “They intended to give expression to a generic Reformed faith that could be agreed upon by the Reformed everywhere.” Also see David F. Wright, “Westminster: Reformed and Ecumenical?” in Reformed Theology in Contemporary Perspective, 162-77; McGowan, “Was Westminster Calvinist?” 46-65.

278. Leith, op. cit., 46. He pays attention to the conservative attitude of the Assembly in the midst of the English theological landscape radically changing in that era. “The only conclusion that seems possible is that the Westminster Assembly stands at the climax of an epoch, and that those members, who
Finally, it is necessary to keep in mind that the WCF, although recognized as the main branch, is a part of the Westminster Standards, and was supplemented by the WLC andWSC as needed. As we shall see later, its treatment of adoption is supplemented by these catechisms.

3. Relevant Issues

There are three relevant issues here worth noting: the treatment of adoption in Chapter 12 (WCF 12), other places referring to adoption, and union with Christ in the WLC.

a. WCF 12

WCF 12 describes, in a compact way, what the grace of adoption basically signifies.

WCF 12: Of Adoption

All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided

must have been aware of the changes that were underway, did not significantly relate these changes to the theological task.” Ibid., 43.


280. In this chapter all the texts of the Westminster Standards (WCF, WLC, WSC) are from Westminster Confession of Faith (Glasgow, UK: Free Presbyterian Pub., 1994). The texts in this volume are based on the Critical Text of S. W. Carruthers with some corrections on misprints and minor amendments in punctuation and capitalization.

282. Eph. 1:5.
283. Gal. 4:4, Rom. 8:17, John 1:12.
284. Jer. 14:9, 2 Cor. 6:18, Rev. 3:12.
285. Rom. 8:15.
286. Eph. 3:12, Rom. 5:12,
for, and chastened by him as a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

“All those that are justified”: What this phrase describes is an inseparable relationship existing between justification and adoption, and shows that adoption is a crucial part of ordo salutis, and has a legal aspect, just as justification has.

“vouchsafteth”: This rare verb signifying “grant” or “give” clarifies that the grace of adoption is a free gift from God. That this verb also means “warrant” or “guarantee” shows that the grace of adoption can have a covenantal aspect.

“in and for his only Son Jesus Christ”: “In . . . Christ” describes that the grace of adoption is related to union with him including the participation in his Sonship, as the following phrase “partakers of the grace of adoption” supports. What “for . . . Christ” means here is that the grace of adoption becomes possible on account of Christ.

“taken into the number,” “have his name put upon them”: What these two phrases describe is a familial and communal aspect of adoption. The adopted ones are taken into the household of God and counted as a part of its number. Also, as members of the household, they have the name of the family upon them.

“enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God”: While “taken into the

292. Lam. 3:31.
293. Eph. 4:30.
294. Heb. 6:12.
297. Spear, Faith of Our Fathers, 67. In addition to these two meanings, Spear points out that “vouchsafteth” also has “the idea of condescension” generated from unmerited love.
number” has relevance to the adoptive act by God, what this phase depicts is related to the adoptive life or state which is relevant to the sphere of sanctification in which God’s children grow.302 Here “liberties and privileges” are used synonymously, and have relevance to a legal status which provides the adopted with various privileges.303

“receive the Spirit of adoption”: By referring to “the Spirit of adoption,” WCF 12 makes clear the point that the Spirit plays an important role for helping the adopted to enjoy their adoptive life as God’s children, as we shall see in what follows.

“have access to the throne of grace with boldness . . . cry, Abba, Father”: The grace of adoption has a significant aspect of the life of prayer.304 To whom the adopted ones pray is not only God, but also their Father. Here, the Spirit of adoption helps them to pray to the Father. Thus, it is crucial for them to know him as “Abba, Father.”

“pitted, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a Father”: What this phase depicts is the richness of the filial relationship between the adopted ones and the Father.305 This filial relationship has various aspects in it and is to experience God’s fatherly mercy, protection, providence, and even chastisement with which he provides his children as a father.306

“yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption”: This phrase is related to the certainty of the status of God’s children, and shows a futuristic aspect of the status as the following phrase describes.307 Here, the Spirit of adoption is also at work for this sealing.

“inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation”: This last phrase, by using “inherit” and “everlasting salvation,” makes the point that the grace of adoption has an

305. Trumper, while admitting this phrase including “yet never cast off” as a connotation the Pauline model ‘huiothesia’ can have, recognizes, in an excessive manner, this part as a weakness of WCF 12 since he insists what this part describes is beyond what huiothesia biblically signifies. Trumper, op. cit., 110: “Yet this description is made up of relational sentiments found outwith the corpus Paulinum rather than accurate exegetical statements derived from the apostle’s theology.”
306. “The effect of adoption is that a man’s whole experience becomes a meaningful dialogue with God.” Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 110. Regarding the use of “pity,” Sproul points out, “The word pity usually has somewhat negative connotations in modern usage, but here it describes something positive: divine compassion.” Sproul, Truths We Confess, 72.
307. Ibid., 73.
eschatological aspect. Although the adopted ones already have this status, their salvation is not yet perfected, but on the way to its completion.

At the end of commenting on WCF 12, it is necessary to point out three issues as an overall observation. First, WCF 12 shows in a good balance that the grace of adoption includes the “already/not-yetness” in its treatment. Whereas the first half of WCF 12 from “they are taken into the number” to “chastened by him as by a Father” describes the blessings the adopted already have had, the second half after “yet never cast off” shows that God’s salvific promises are on the way to their fulfillment. Second, the grace of adoption has both a legal or forensic aspect based on the status of God’s children, and a familial or relational aspect based on the personal relationship between the children and the Father. As we have seen, the phrases “justified,” “the liberties and privileges,” and “inherit the promises” have a legal aspect related to the status. On the other hand, the others such as “taken into the number,” “his name put upon them,” “have access to the throne,” “cry, Abba, Father,” and various expressions referring to the filial relationship, depict a relational and personal, yet communal as well as familial, aspect of adoption. Finally, when comparing WCF 12 with its proof texts, it is noted that the wordings of WCF 12 are directly taken from the scriptural references on which it was written. Because of this, it is said that WCF 12 demonstrates “the thoroughly scriptural quality of the statements.”

Thus, WCF 12, in a compact way, describes what adoption basically signifies. But, it is also noted that it lacks one issue which is crucial to the concept of adoption, namely reference to predestination, although it uses Ephesians 1:4 as the first scriptural basis on it. As we shall see in

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308. Sproul, op. cit., 73; Spear, op. cit., 67.


310. Hendry, op. cit., 142; Cara, op. cit., 73.

311. Hendry, op. cit., 142; Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 99; Edward D. Morris, Theology of the Westminster Symbols: A Commentary Historical, Doctrinal, Practical on the Confession of Faith and Catechisms and the Related Formularies of the Presbyterian Churches (Columbus, OH: Champlin Press, 1900), 451-52: “The chapter has at least the merit of drawing our thoughts away from the technical and formal aspects of justification as a forensic act, and fixing them more fully on that blessed relationship which in and through justification is forever established between the justified soul and God in Christ.”

312. Spear, Faith of Our Fathers, 66: “More than half of this brief chapter of the Confession is made of expressions taken directly from Scripture.”

what follows, the place in which the WCF relates adoption to predestination is not WCF 12, but WCF 3-6.

b. Other References to Adoption in the Standards

In what follows, we pay attention to other relevant places in the WCF first, and then the WLC and WSC. In the WCF, besides WCF 12, there are two places referring to adoption. The first place is WCF 3-6 treating God’s eternal decree. In the context of treating election, WCF 3-6 refers to adoption which is realized on the basis of God’s election: “Wherefore they who are elected . . . are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation.” Here it is worth noting that even in the context of God’s decree, WCF 3-6, in a soteriological manner, treats adoption in a context coupled with justification and sanctification. Next, WCF 18-2 treating the assurance of salvation, is the second place referring to adoption. In the context of explaining the certainty of the assurance believers have (18-1), WCF 18-2 refers to “the testimony of the Spirit of adoption” as a basis of this certainty: “This certainty is . . . infallible assurance of faith, founded upon . . . the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.”

In the WLC and WSC, there are five places with relevance to adoption. The first one, WLC 39, in the context of the Incarnation, recognizes adoption as a purpose of it: “Q. 39. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be man? A. . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.” Here it is noted that WLC 39 recognizes adoption as the first purpose of the Incarnation which is related to the

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315. Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 98-99. This soteriological treatment of adoption is similar to Calvin’s.
316. Westminster Confession of Faith, 76-77.
317. Here we skip WLC 74 and WSC 32 which treat adoption as a locus because they are shortened versions of WCF 12.

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benefits of believers.\textsuperscript{319} The second place is WLC 69 treating what “the communion in grace” signifies. It answers as follows: “The communion . . . is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.”\textsuperscript{320} Just as seen in WLC 39, this is also one of the places where the WLC supplements the WCF, in terms of adoption, by clarifying the inseparable relation of adoption to union with Christ.\textsuperscript{321} The third place is WLC 80. Although it does not use the word “adoption,” what it conceptually describes is the ministry of the Spirit of adoption, and is similar to WCF 18-2 treating the assurance of salvation, which we have seen.\textsuperscript{322} The fourth place is WLC 165, which supplements the WCF by relating adoption to baptism.\textsuperscript{323} Regarding what baptism signifies, WLC 165 refers to adoption including its relevant issue, union with Christ: “Baptism is a sacrament . . . wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water . . . to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life.”\textsuperscript{324} The fifth place is WSC 32 treating the effectual calling. In regard to “the benefits,” WSC 32 explains: “They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.”\textsuperscript{325} Here it is noted that both the WCF and WLC, as they treat the effectual calling, do not count adoption as a benefit related to it, although it

\textsuperscript{319} In WLC 39, the first half is related to Christ’s earthly ministry. Adoption is at the top of its second half which is related to the benefits of believers. Cf. WCF 8, treating the issue of the Incarnation, does not refer to adoption.

\textsuperscript{320} “The Larger Catechism,” 163.

\textsuperscript{321} In WCF 26-1, 2, and 3 focusing on union with Christ, the WCF does not mention adoption. This makes it unclear to see if the WCF relates adoption to union with Christ. In regard to this point, WCF 12 is not sufficient, even though it has the phrase “in and for his only Son Jesus Christ,” Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 100: “To be fair, the Westminster documents are lacking in emphasis on this essential aspect of the gospel.”

\textsuperscript{322} WLC 80 states that those who believe in Christ, “by faith grounded upon the truth of God’s promises, and by the Spirit . . . bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.” “The Larger Catechism,” 171. WLC 80 has the reference which WCF 18-2 does not have, in referring to the Spirit’s work, “enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made.” Although we skip it, WSC 36 also treats adoption in relation to the assurance of salvation as a benefit of the adopted ones.

\textsuperscript{323} See WCF 28. It does not relate adoption to baptism.

\textsuperscript{324} “The Larger Catechism,” 255-56.

\textsuperscript{325} “The Shorter Catechism,” in Westminster Confession of Faith, 296.
is possible to assume it inductively by gathering other places.\textsuperscript{326}

In short, whereas the \textit{WCF} devotes a chapter to adoption in \textit{WCF} 12, it is necessary to see the \textit{Standards}, as a whole, in terms of adoption since there are some supplementary references in the \textit{WCF}, \textit{WLC}, and \textit{WSC}. We will return to this issue as we analyze the \textit{WCF}.

c. Union with Christ in the \textit{WLC}

Compared to the other confessional documents we have seen, the treatment of union with Christ in the \textit{WCF} is relatively scant, and the references to this union are all in passing.\textsuperscript{327} However, it is worth noting that the \textit{WLC}, in particular from WLC 65 through 90, thoroughly treats union with Christ.\textsuperscript{328} For example, WLC 69, as we have already seen, clarifies the close relationship existing between adoption and union with Christ.\textsuperscript{329} Also, it is noted, besides the long section on the union (65-90), that in two QAs (165, 167), the \textit{WLC} recognizes the sacrament of baptism as a reminder of union with Christ.\textsuperscript{330}

4. Theological Analysis

There are three issues we need to take into account for analyzing the \textit{WCF}: 1) three characteristic points for the \textit{WCF} in treating the concept of adoption, 2) the supplementary roles of the \textit{WLC} and \textit{WSC}, and 3) the continuity and similarities between Calvin and the \textit{WCF}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{326} See \textit{WCF} 10 and WLC 67, 68. \textit{Westminster Confession of Faith}, 53-56, 161-62.
\item \textsuperscript{327} The \textit{WCF} refers to union with Christ in the following places: \textit{WCF} 3-5 treating predestination, 25-6 in the context of ecclesiology, 26-1 and 3 of the communion of saints, 28-1 of baptism, and 29-1 of the Lord's Supper. Among these, 26-1 is relatively rich in treating the union because of the issue on which \textit{WCF} 26 have its focus. Cf. Van Vlastuin, “Personal Renewal between Heidelberg and Westminster,” 62. Also see ibid., 60. Van Vlastuin refers to the issue of covenant in the \textit{WFC} which has implications for \textit{unio cum Christo} in the context in which the \textit{WCF} treats faith.
\item \textsuperscript{328} Cara, “Redemptive- Historical Themes,” 62-63: “The \textit{WLC} has a large union with Christ section (WLC 65-90) that needs more highlighting.”
\item \textsuperscript{329} WLC 69: “The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, sanctification.” Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 100. Besides WLC 69, at various places in this section from 65 to 90, the \textit{WLC} refers to union with Christ: WLC 65 (ecclesiology), 79 (perseverance), 82, 83, 85 (the communion believers have with Christ), and 86, 87, 90 (eschatology).
\item \textsuperscript{330} WLC 165: “Baptism is a sacrament . . . wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water . . . to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself.” WLC 167: “Q. 167. \textit{How is our baptism to be improved by us?} A. . . by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized.” Although we do not quote here, it is noted that union with Christ is, in a rich way, treated in relation to the Supper. See WLC 178, 170, 171, 174, 175, and 177.
\end{itemize}
a. Three Characteristic Points in the WCF in Treating the concept of adoption

The WCF has three points, as a whole, in its treatment of the concept of adoption. As the first point, that the WCF devotes a chapter to adoption as a locus makes the concept more prominent, compared to the other confessional documents we have seen. When it comes to the contents of WCF 12, it has necessary issues, compared to the other documents, for describing what the concept of adoption basically means, except for predestination. Thus, this distinctive treatment helps us to see theologically in summary fashion what the grace of adoption signifies.331

The second point is that the WCF structurally treats adoption in the close relationship between justification and sanctification. As we have seen, WCF 12 itself describes the two aspects of adoption, the forensic aspect related to justification, and the relational aspect which has relevance to sanctification, as the adoptive life. In addition to this, that the WCF structurally places WCF 12 between WCF 11 of justification and 13 of sanctification reinforces the point that the concept of adoption theologically has an inseparable relationship with them.332 Within the structure of the WCF, WCF 12 theologically functions as a bridge between justification and sanctification through sharing some crucial issues in common with each of them.333

As to the third point, that the WCF devotes a chapter to adoption because of its scholastic method, can be a weakness in considering that it sacrifices the multiple roles the concept of adoption is supposed to play when being woven into the text.334 In scrutinizing the concept of adoption throughout the text of the WCF, it is noted that, except in WCF 12, the WCF does not relate adoption, in any significant way, to other relevant issues such as the Fatherhood of

331. In considering that WCF 12 is the shortest chapter (101 words) in the WCF, Trumper recognizes it as a weakness in terms of treating adoption. See his “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 107-8. However, for analysing WCF 12, the theological contents are more important rather than its length.

332. Trumper, op. cit., 103: “As forensic as the adoptive act may be, it forms the threshold to the relational, which is the adoptive experience of sonship.”

333. Ibid., 103-4. Because of this structure, Trumper insists that “the Westminster Assembly regarded adoption as the pinnacle of soteriology.”

334. Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 112: “Although the scholastic drive for precision lent itself to a unique creedal exposition of adoption, the tendency to allot doctrines specific theological loci created a ‘pigeonhole’ effect in which recognition of the inter-relatedness of the various doctrines is minimized.”
God or the sacraments.\textsuperscript{335} Among those issues to which the \textit{WCF} fails to relate adoption, the most important one must be union with Christ, the source of adoption. Because of this, it is actually difficult to see, in the entire theological framework of the \textit{WCF}, whether or not the grace of adoption flows from union with Christ.\textsuperscript{336} In short, while treating adoption as a \textit{locus} in \textit{WCF} 12, the \textit{WCF} does not do justice to the multiple roles it is supposed to play. This is possibly a negative impact which the distinctive treatment of adoption gives to the \textit{WCF} as a whole.\textsuperscript{337}

b. The Supplementary Roles of the \textit{WLC} and \textit{WSC}

Although it has necessary issues for explaining what the concept of adoption basically signifies, \textit{WCF} 12 does not cover all the issues for showing the theological framework into which the concept is woven. Even the whole \textit{WCF}, theologically the main branch of the \textit{Standards}, is not enough for pointing to the framework, since it does not do justice to the multiple roles of the concept, as mentioned above. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the roles the \textit{WLC} and \textit{WSC} play for supplementing the \textit{WCF}, as we have seen.

These supplementary roles lead us to think, in terms of treating the concept of adoption, what the distinctive treatment brings theologically into the \textit{WCF}. Since the \textit{WCF} is historically the first document which devotes a chapter to adoption, it is easy for some to value highly what \textit{WCF} 12 accomplishes in creedal history.\textsuperscript{338} However, if \textit{WCF} 12 lacks some important issues, and even the \textit{WCF} needs to be supplemented by the \textit{WLC} and \textit{WSC}, it is necessary to consider

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\textsuperscript{335} In the \textit{WCF}, there are only two places (3-6, 18-2), other than \textit{WCF} 12, which, in passing, relates adoption to its inseparable issues, as we have seen.\textit{WCF} 3-6 refers to adoption in treating predestination; 18-2 relates it to the assurance of salvation, through referring to the Spirit of adoption.

\textsuperscript{336} Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 100. Trumper says that, because union with Christ is not found until \textit{WCF} 26 treating “Of Communion of Saints,” T. F. Torrance “wrongly claims that the Assembly understood union with Christ to be reached through various stages of grace” including adoption. Torrance, \textit{Scottish Theology}, 128. As Trumper says, \textit{WLC} 66, in the long section of union with Christ, clarifies that the union takes place when the elect is effectually called, prior to adoption.

\textsuperscript{337} Besides the missing multiple roles of adoption, Trumper points out, as another possible weakness of the \textit{WCF}, that “the statements are insufficiently redemptive-historical” because of its scholastic approach, namely categorization using \textit{loci}. Ibid., 110-12. Actually, in \textit{The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century}, the most recent exhaustive work on the \textit{WCF}, it is concluded by Cara that “many of the modern R[edemptive]-H[istorical] themes are in the \textit{Westminster Standards}” (57; italics mine). See Cara, “Redemptive- Historical Themes,” 55-76.

\textsuperscript{338} “Let us be clear; they [the \textit{Standards}] were breaking with creedal history by doing what had never been done before.” Trumper, op. cit., 90.

whether the distinctive treatment of adoption theologically makes any difference as compared with the other confessional documents prior to the WCF. Although we shall come back to this issue in the next chapter, the actual difference WCF 12 makes in creedal history appears to be not theological, but methodological. 339 By devoting a chapter to adoption, WCF 12 methodologically shows an alternative way of presenting what it basically signifies in a concise way. However, in terms of the theological contents of adoption, it is clear that the Assembly did not add anything new to the WCF, as their basic attitude also shows. 340

c. The Similarities and Differences between Calvin and the Westminster Standards

It has been one of the debated issues, among scholars of Calvin studies, if there is continuity or discontinuity between Calvin and the WCF. This so-called “Calvin vs. Calvinists” debate appears to revolve around the following issues, such as Christ’s presence in the Supper, the redemptive-historical approach vs. the scholastic approach, and covenant theology. 341

Here it is necessary for us to see if there is any continuity or similarity between them in terms of the concept of adoption. Although we shall return to this issue in the following chapter, it is noted, in comparing Calvin and the Westminster Standards, they are basically in agreement in terms of treating adoption. 342 Besides the overall agreement between Calvin and the Standards, 339 In comparing Calvin and the Assembly, Trumper admits, “What differences there are turn largely on presentation or form rather than content.” “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 106.

340. Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 46: “They [the Assembly] were not creative minds so much as summarizers and interpreters of the tradition.”


342. Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 106. It is necessary here to compare Calvin
the following four similarities need to be taken into account. First, both of them treat the concept of adoption in its inseparable relationship with justification and sanctification, and describe the point that adoption consists of the legal aspect and the relational aspect, as we have seen. Second, they have in common a sacramental aspect of adoption which is recognized in the view of baptism. Both of them recognize baptism as the “initiation” to union with Christ and the new status as God’s children. Third, it is noted that, as another sacramental aspect, the spiritual nourishment through the Supper in the Standards reminds us of the fatherly nourishment for God’s children through the Supper in Calvin. Fourth, both of them, in relation to the assurance of salvation, refer to the grace of adoption. Thus, it is possible, in a particular way, to recognize continuity and similarity between Calvin and the Standards in terms of treating the concept of

and the Standards, since, as mentioned above, the WCF is deficient in some points, in particular, its treatment of union with Christ as compared with Calvin.

343. WCF 12; Trumper, op. cit., 102-3; Zuchman. The Assurance of Faith, 247; Spear, Faith of Our Fathers, 67. In regard to Calvin’s documents, see the Instruction (1537), Art. 18 [CO 22 (CR 50): 50]; Inst., 3.17.5-6. Also, in regard to the overall characteristics of Calvin’s treatment, see Chapters 2 and 4 of this study; Van Vlastuin, “Personal Renewal between Heidelberg and Westminster,” 59.

344. WLC 165: “Baptism is a sacrament . . . to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life.” In regard to Calvin’s, see the Geneva Conf., Art. 15, in CCF, 2:313 [CO 22 (CR 50): 91]; the Geneva Catechism, QA 323, in CCF, 2: 357 [CO 6 (CR 34): 115-18]; Inst., 4.17.1; Trumper, op. cit., 101.

345. WCF 29-2: “Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, really and indeed . . . spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death.” WLC 168: “The Lord’s Supper is a sacrament . . . wherein . . . they that worthy communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.” WLC 170: “. . . they that worthy communicate in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner.” With regard to Calvin’s, see the Geneva Catechism, QA 323, in CCF, 2: 357 [CO 6 (CR 34): 115-118]; Inst., 2.7.2, 3.2.22, 4.17.1; Trumper, op. cit., 101; Duncan, “True Communion with Christ,” 442; Spear, “Calvin and Westminster on the Lord’s Supper” 410-11. In comparing Calvin and the Standards in terms of the Supper, what Spear points out deserves our attention. After comparing Calvin’s documents, Art. 21 of the Scottish Confession (1560), Art. 28 of the Thirty-Nine Articles (1571), and Arts. 92, 94, and 93 of the Irish Articles of Religion (1615), Spear analyses, “The Assembly chose not to use language similar to that of the Scots Confession and the Irish Articles, because they wished to allow for some latitude among different convictions regarding the Lord’s Supper.” Then, he concludes, “The Assembly deliberately chose not to repeat the language of Calvin’s distinctive doctrine.” Spear, “The Nature of the Lord’s Supper,” 374-76. Given this, this attitude of the Assembly fits in with the generic character of the WCF mentioned in relation to its characteristics. This is also applicable to other issues in terms adoption.

346. WCF 18-2: “This certainty is . . . an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon . . . the testimony of the Spirit of adoption.” WLC 80: “Such as truly believe in Christ . . . by the Spirit . . . bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace.” In regard to Calvin’s documents, see Inst. (1536), 76 [CO 1 (CR 29), 90]; the Consensus Genevensis, in “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 717 [CO 8 (CR 36): 114]; Dever, “Calvin, Westminster and Assurance,” 341.
adoption.

But at the end of this section, it is necessary to mention some issues which the Standards treat not as pervasive as Calvin does, even though they do treat those issues in passing. There are, at least, five issues we need to take into account: The Fatherhood of God, predestination, union with Christ, the church as God’s household, and prayer. Because of them, the Standards do not succeed in forming the entire framework, in terms of adoption, covering from predestination through eschatology, which Calvin has in his confessional documents.

In short, the comparison of Calvin and the Standards makes it clear that even this distinctive treatment can have a weakness. While the distinctive treatment of the concept of adoption makes it more prominent, that treatment, at the same time, may make it difficult for a confession to treat the concept in a pervasive way relating it to other doctrines and forming a framework into which it is woven. We shall return to this issue in the following chapter.

5. Conclusion

The distinctive treatment of adoption in the WCF makes the concept of adoption more prominent, and helps us to understand, in a concise way, what the grace of adoption basically signifies. It is clear that this treatment is historically significant as a method for presenting the concept of adoption. However, it is noted, at the same time, this distinctive treatment can affect the way the WCF describes the multiple roles the concept of adoption is supposed to play. As a result, even the Standards, as a whole, do not succeed in showing these roles and theologically forming a comprehensive framework into which the concept needs to be woven.

G. Analysis of the Third Group (Written after Calvin)

347. Regarding union with Christ, all of Calvin’s documents in this study treat it pervasively, as we have seen. See chapter 4 of this study. In relation to the Fatherhood of God and prayer, the clearest case we have seen is the Geneva Catechism. The 1536 Institutes is also helpful. In regard to election, the Consensus Genevensis is the most important one. With regard to ecclesiology, see the 1536 Institutes. Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 112-15.
348. Trumper also acknowledges, “The Assembly’s rigorous scholastic use of logic could not easily be combined with a more flexible approach reflecting the overlapping relationship of the numerous biblical doctrines.” Ibid., 112.
1. What Calvin Developed

Before analyzing the third group, we briefly review what Calvin accomplished through his confessions. As we saw in chapter 3, even the documents written prior to Calvin treat basic issues related to the concept of adoption although they do not yet fully develop those issues. What Calvin did through his documents was, on the bases of the documents written prior to him, to develop and to deepen the concept of adoption. Basically there are three issues which Calvin developed or clarified in terms of treating adoption. First, he developed the way of presenting the entire theological framework into which the concept is woven in a pervasive way. Second, he clarified in detail what the grace of adoption means theologically: 1) adoption as a relational concept between the Father, the Son, and the children of God, 2) adoption as having two aspects, the adoptive act related to justification and the state which has relevance to sanctification, 3) adoption which plays multiple roles relating to other doctrines, and 4) adoption which is distinguished from the new birth. Third, Calvin developed the way of writing theology in a familial as well as relational way. This familial and relational way centers on his emphasis of union with Christ, the Fatherhood of God in a soteriological context, and the Trinitarian presentation of the concept of adoption.

As we have seen in chapter 4, Calvin, even in the 1536 *Institutes*, already has most of these three points in his treatment of adoption, except for his Trinitarian presentation. In this sense, we have not seen any clear progression, in terms of treating the concept of adoption, as we explore his documents from the 1536 *Institutes* through the *Consensus Genevensis* of 1551. Instead of seeing progression, what impressed us through those documents are his various styles or methods for treating the concept. Those styles or methods actually show us “Calvin’s ability to

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349. See pages 164-66 in chapter 4 of this study.
render his material with great flexibility” in order to respond to each of those different circumstances under which each document was written.350

2. The Post-Calvin Documents

After seeing what Calvin developed in terms of treating the concept of adoption, it is natural for us to expect to see the post-Calvin confessions use what he developed in each immediate historical context. However, what we found in this chapter is a little different from what we expected. Although they have some issues in common with, or even some possible influence from Calvin, those confessions in the third group are all different with one another in the degree or way of treating adoption, and compel us to think if they may have had an intention to use or apply, in their texts, the concept of adoption developed by Calvin.

Of course, it is possible to see that those confessions have, like Calvin, some issues relevant to adoption although there are some differences in their degree of referring to them. In comparing the post-Calvin confessions, the following four issues are recognized as those they have in common: 1) theologically distinguishing the concept of adoption from the concept of the new birth,351 2) forming a theological framework into which adoption is woven, although there are various ways of forming it,352 3) having, in a clear way, the familial aspect of the gospel,353 and 4) describing the concept of adoption which revolves around union with Christ.354

351. All of the six documents in this chapter distinguish adoption from the new birth. We do not see any conflation between those two in them.
352. It is recognized that all the six have theological frameworks while they vary. For example, the Scottish Confession has a redemptive-historical framework into which the familial notion is woven. The Heidelberg Catechism has a framework consisting of two main elements, the soteriological and ecclesiastical ones. They are tied by union with Christ. The Thirty-Nine Articles and the Canons of Dort have a soteriological framework which is predestination-oriented.
353. Obvious cases are recognized in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Scottish Confession, the Second Helvetic Confession, and the Canons of Dort.
354. The Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession clearly pay attention to union with Christ as the source of adoption, and maintain the relational tone. The Westminster Standards also keep the relational tone in the WLC, but in the WCF, it is not clear that the grace of adoption flows
In addition to these, we also recognize some possible influence from Calvin in the confessions in the third group. There are five points we need to point out here. The first one is the union-oriented way of treating the concept of adoption, which is clearly seen in the *Heidelberg Catechism*. The second case is the soteriological treatment of predestination which is related to adoption. We have seen this in the *Scottish Confession*, the *Second Helvetic Confession*, the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, the *Canons of Dort*, and the *WCF*. The third point is related to treating adoption in an inseparable relationship with the twofold grace of justification and sanctification. These cases are found in the *Thirty-Nine Articles* and in the *WCF*. The fourth possible influence is related to the treatment of the sacraments, such as baptism as the sign and seal of entering a new relationship based on the adoptive sonship, and the Supper as a sign and seal of the spiritual nourishment for God’s children. We have seen them in the *Scottish Confession*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the *Second Helvetic Confession*, the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, and the *Westminster Standards* although there are some terminological differences among them.355 The last point is the emphasis on the familial aspect of the gospel, which is recognized in the *Scottish Confession*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the *Second Helvetic Confession*, and the *Canons of Dort*.

355. In Art. 21 of the *Scottish Confession*: “We assuritlie beleif that be baptisme we ar ingraftit in Christ Jesus, to be maid partakeris of his justice. . . . In the Supper . . . Christ Jesus is sa jooinit with us that he beculis the verray nuriischment and fude of our saulis.” *RBS*, 2/1:282; QA 74 of the *HC*: “so sollen sie auch durch den tauff, als des Bunds zeichen, der Christlichen Kirchen eingeleibt.” *RBS*, 2/2:193; QA 75 of the *HC*: “er selbst mine seel mit seinem gecreutzigten leib und vergossnen blut so gewiß zum ewigen leben speise und trencke.” *RBS*, 2/2:193-94; Chapter 20 of the *Second Helvetic Confession*: “baptismus . . . est perpetua obsignatio adoptionis nostrae.” *RBS*, 2/2:327; Chapter 21 of the *Second Helvetic Confession*: “intus interim opera Christi per spiritum sanctum . . . pascuntur his in vitam aeternam.” *RBS*, 2/2:330; Art. 27 of the *Thirty-Nine Articles*: “they that receaue baptisme rightly, are graffit into the church: the promises of the forguenesse of sinne, and of our adoption to be the sonnes of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed.” *Evans and Wright*, 167; Art. 28 of the *Thirty-Nine Articles*: “The body of Christ is geuen, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after an heauenly and spirituall maner.” *Evans and Wright*, 167; WLC 165: “Baptism is a sacrament . . . to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life.” “*The Larger Catechism*,” 255-56; WLC 168: “The Lord’s Supper is a sacrament . . . wherein . . . they that worthily communiate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.” “*The Larger Catechism*,” 258.
3. Conclusion

In the confessions in this third group, we see that they all have in common some issues related to the concept of adoption although they are varied in terms of treating the concept. Furthermore, we recognize in those confessions some possible influence from Calvin’s treatment of adoption. However, it is hardly possible to say that the third group of the confessions as a whole, although written after Calvin, develops or takes full advantage of what he has in his use of adoption. Instead, what we see in this chapter is that they respectively take advantage of part of Calvin’s usage, in accordance with the structure or format of each confession.

In the following chapter, on the bases of the instances of treating adoption found in chapters 3-5, we will finally carry out the historical and theological tasks in order to answer the main research question.
CHAPTER VI

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters 3-5 we, delving into the confessional documents, found numerous instances of treating the concept of adoption or its relevant issues. As intended in the method of this study,¹ those instances themselves become a clear answer to the first sub-question of the historical task.² After supplying those instances, now we need to carry out, in this concluding chapter, the historical and systematic-theological tasks and finally conclude this study by giving a clear answer to the main research question: what is the place and function of the concept of adoption in the Protestant confessions in the 16th and 17th centuries?

In this chapter we will proceed as follows. In the first half of this chapter, we will focus on the historical task.³ As we carry out the historical task, it is necessary to take into account that Calvin occupies the central position in terms of treating adoption during the Reformation Period. In accordance with this, the instances of treating adoption in chapters 3-5 first require us to see whether or not there are any historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin in terms of the concept of adoption (the second sub-question).⁴ By scrutinizing the instances as a whole, we will present a historical overview of what we found through our investigation. In particular, we will focus on the relation of the confessions written by Calvin to those written after him. Second, on the basis of the investigation of the confessions, we will clarify the contextual nature of the confessions in order to consider what the main factor was for the difficulty of recognizing the

¹. See pages 58 in chapter 1; 92, 92n1 in chapter 3 of this study.
². Page 51 in chapter 1 of this study: “Are there any instances of treating adoption or its relevant issues in the confessions in the entire course of the Protestant confessions prior to the WCF?”
³. Ibid: The historical task is “to find the place of the concept of adoption in the context of the confessional documents.”
⁴. Pages 51-52 in ibid: “Are there any historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin in terms of treating the concept of adoption?”
historical lines related to Calvin in terms of the concept of adoption (the third sub-question).5 Third, we will focus on the Westminster Assembly and reconsider the meaning of devoting a chapter to adoption in WCF 12 (the fourth sub-question).6 This will help us to conclude the historical task regarding the place of the concept of adoption in the confessions and set a solid basis for the second half of this chapter.

In the second half of this chapter, we will, on the basis of the historical task mentioned above, focus on the systematic-theological task.7 First, we will compare the instances of treating adoption in the confessions with the redemptive-historical perspective of the Pauline huiothesia (the first sub-question).8 Second, we will, with a systematic-theological approach, identify all the relevant issues to the concept of adoption (the second sub-question),9 while clarifying the relation of adoption to three unclear issues: the twofold grace, the new birth, and deification. Third, we will discuss the advantages of the concept of adoption for reshaping soteriology (the third sub-question),10 clarifying how the concept functions in the confessions. Here is the place in which the concluding chapter will give a definition to the function of the concept of adoption in the confessions examined in this study. Then, at the very end, we will discuss the possibility of doing fuller justice to the concept of adoption (the fourth sub-question)11 in order to conclude the systematic-theological task of the function of the concept.

5. Page 52 in chapter 1 of this study: “What is the main factor causing the difficulty for us to recognize the historical lines related to Calvin in terms of the concept of adoption in the confessional history of the Reformation Period?”
6. Ibid: “On the basis of the three sub-questions answered, what is the meaning of having WCF 12 as a locus in the confessional history?”
7. Page 51 in ibid. The systematic-theological task is to clarify “the function of the concept of adoption in the confessional documents.”
8. Page 52 in ibid: “How do the instances of treating adoption in the confessions reflect or not reflect the redemptive-historical perspective of ‘huiothesia’?”
9. Ibid: “What are the relevant issues of adoption, to which its concept is theologically related?”
10. Ibid: “What advantage or implication does the concept of adoption have for reshaping soteriology in a confession?”
11. Ibid: “How can the concept of adoption be expressed more fully in confessions?”
PART I  The Historical Task: The Place of the Concept of Adoption

A. The Overall Historical Lines Prior to and After Calvin

At the conclusions chapters 3, 4 and 5, we summarized the overall observations of each of the chapters and analyzed what we found. In the first group of confessional documents, written prior to Calvin, while not so prominent in terms of the concept of adoption itself, we found some enigmatic hints which have the potential for development in later confessions. Such hints are the relational and familial tones as recognized in the Sixty-Seven Articles, the pervasive references to the Fatherhood of God in the Large and Small Catechisms of Luther, the filial notion treated in the context of justification and sanctification in the Tetrapolitan Confession, the election-oriented method of treating adoption in the Fidei ratio, and the treatment of relating baptism to adoption in the First Helvetic Confession. Furthermore in these hints, it is noted that four of those documents, recognized as Reformed, value union with Christ in the soteriological context, although not as clearly as Calvin, at that point in confessional history. Then, it is recognized that confessional documents in the second group significantly develop these hints in showing theological frameworks into which the concept of adoption is woven, clarifying what divine adoption signifies, distinguishing it from the new birth and treating other relevant issues, as we have seen in chapter 4 of this study.

However, in exploring the documents in the third group which were written after Calvin, what we have actually seen is different from what we expected. More precisely, although each confession in the third group has some references to adoption including its concept, none of

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12. For analysing the findings we have in the confessions we, throughout this chapter, often refer to the present study itself from chapters 1 through 6 (e.g. Page “293 in chapter 5” means page 293 in chapter 5 of the present study).
them treats it systematically, except for the WCF which devotes a full article to adoption. This is what we concluded at the end of chapter 5.

1. The Theological Framework Maintained in the Third Group

Nevertheless, it will give us a different perspective if we, instead of scrutinizing each confession in detail, see the overall historical lines of instances treating adoption, in comparison with Calvin as the center, through the course of the confessional history. There are four issues to be noted here. First, it is noted that the issues which we recognized as having seminal importance in the first group, after coming through Calvin, become clearer and more obvious as a whole in the third group. For example, in the first group, the Tetrapolitan Confession has a small framework treating the filial notion in the context of justification and sanctification,\(^\text{13}\) and the Fidei ratio has a soteriological framework which starts from the grace of election and refers to adoption.\(^\text{14}\) Then, after being developed by Calvin in the second group, all the confessions in the third group, regardless of their size or scale, have some theological framework which is based on or has relevance to the concept of adoption. The Scottish Confession has a redemptive-historical framework which has relevance to huiologia.\(^\text{15}\) The Heidelberg Catechism is recognized as having a redemptive-historical framework revolving around the theme of union with Christ.\(^\text{16}\) Also, it is noted that in the context of baptism, the Second Helvetic Confession forms a framework focusing on the life of the adoptive children.\(^\text{17}\) Furthermore, although we do not refer

\(^{13}\) See page 120 in chapter 3.
\(^{14}\) See pages 124, 126 in ibid.
\(^{15}\) See pages 208-9 in chapter 5. It is worth noting that the Confession of Faith of the English Congregation, an important source of the Scottish Confession, also treats adoption conceptually covering Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Pages 192-94 in chapter 4.
\(^{16}\) See pages 218-19 in chapter 5.
\(^{17}\) See pages 229 in ibid. “The Confession, by showing the richness in this framework, helps us to see that salvation does not end at cleansing our sins.”
to them here, the other confessions in the third group also have such a frameworks. 18 (We will return to the issue of theological framework in detail in the second half of this chapter, carrying out the systematic-theological task.) In short, what these frameworks as a whole signify is that the confessions in the third group present multiple aspects of adoption. Even though these confessions do not refer to the concept of adoption as pervasively as Calvin does in the Institutes of 1536, they actually treat adoption by relating it to other relevant issues in a familial way. 19 In this sense, these frameworks can be recognized as hints to the concept of adoption in the confessional documents. The confessional documents we have seen in this study clearly show that they present frameworks which are relevant to the concept, although they do not treat it in a pervasive manner. 20 In terms of the treatment of the concept, this is clearly recognized as a historical line relevant to Calvin. 21

2. Relevant Issues Maintained in the Confessions

Second, when comparing the issues which are relevant to the concept of adoption within the

18. The Thirty-Nine Articles forms, although it is small, a soteriological framework covering from election through eschatology in page 236 in chapter 5. In the case of the Canons of Dort, they have the election-oriented frameworks as a response to the Remonstrance, as we have seen in pages 248-49, 252-53 in ibid. Regarding the Westminster Confession of Faith, WCF 12, as a locus, has a soteriological framework in a concise way, as we have seen in pages 259-62 in ibid.

19. See page 44 in chapter 1. The present study points out that “pervasiveness” is not so useful practically for judging whether or not a confession values the concept of adoption. Instead of that, the study uses the multiple aspects of adoption as a more practical lens for scrutinizing confessions.

20. As another example of this seminal importance, it is noted that the relational or familial tones found in the Sixty-Seven Articles or Luther’s catechisms through their frequent reference to the Fatherhood of God, after being deepened by Calvin, become clearly recognized, in a more dominant manner, among some confessions in the third group, such as the Confession of the English Congregation at Geneva, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Second Helvetic Confession. In regard to the Confession of the English Congregation, see page 194 in chapter 4: “The Confession, in a pervasive way, keeps the familial and relational tone throughout its text.” Although this confession is in the second group because of Calvin’s approval, it is important to see this in terms of Calvin’s influence on the third group because this confession shows some possible patterns of his influence, as we have seen in pages 199-200 in ibid. Regarding the Heidelberg Catechism, see pages 218-20 in chapter 5. Union with Christ, while functioning as an organizing principle, makes the catechism significantly relational. About the Second Helvetic Confession, see page 229 in chapter 5: “The two relevant issues to the concept of adoption, the Fatherhood of God and union with Christ, are woven into the text of the Second Helvetic Confession.”

three groups, it is noted that some relevant issues, being enhanced by Calvin, are prominent in the third group. For example, the *Fidei ratio* relates election to the concept of adoption in presenting a soteriological framework in a concise way. 22 Calvin, in the *Institutes* of 1536 and the *Consensus Genevensis*, soteriologically deepens and broadens election, relating it to the concept. 23 After that, it seems to become an established method in the third group that election is treated in a soteriological context, not in theology proper, relating to the grace of adoption, as seen in the *Second Helvetic Confession*, the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, the *Canons of Dort*, and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. 24

Another example was found in baptism. 25 In the first group, the *First Helvetic Confession* relates in passing baptism to adoption. 26 Calvin, in the *Geneva Confession* and the *Geneva Catechism*, clarifies baptism as a sign and seal of bringing believers into God’s family. 27 Then, the third group, in the *Second Helvetic Confession*, the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, and the *Westminster Standards*, relates baptism to the concept of adoption. 28 The *Scottish Confession* and the *Heidelberg Catechism* also treat baptism in a clearly relational way, even though they do not relate it to the concept. 29 Besides the two examples mentioned above, there are other

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22. See pages 126-27 in chapter 3.
25. Besides baptism, it is noted that the Lord’s Supper is also, in a familial way, treated in the third group. See pages 269, 269n345 in ibid. The most significant case is the Supper as the fatherly nourishment for God’s children. This fatherly nourishment is recognized in the following documents: the *Geneva Catechism*, the *Confession of Faith of the English Congregation*, the *Scottish Confession*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the *Second Helvetic Confession*, and the *Westminster Standards*. See pages 182, 182n156, 194, 194n202 in chapter 4; 205n18, 218, 218n91, 225n118, 229n138, 269, 269n345 in chapter 5. Regarding the treatment of the Supper in the first group, although it is basically relational as a whole, the familial treatment of the Supper is not recognized in those documents in the first group. See pages 123, 123n135, 134-35, 134n181, and 136 in chapter 3.
26. See page 133 in chapter 3.
27. See pages 169, 179 in chapter 4.
29. In regard to the *Scottish Confession*, see page 205n18 in ibid: “We assuritlie [assuredly, *CCF*, 2: 400] beleif that be baptisme we ar ingraftit in Christ Jesus, to be maid partakeris of his justice.” *RBS*, 2/1:282. Regarding the *Heidelberg Catechism*, HC 70: “To be washed with Christ’s Spirit means that the means that the Holy Spirit has renewed me and set me apart to be a member of Christ [zu einem gled
important issues, developed by Calvin, and maintained in the third group, such as the soteriological treatment of the Fatherhood of God,\textsuperscript{30} the Spirit’s ministry helping believers to know the Father or in having filial consciousness,\textsuperscript{31} the benefits of the life of the adopted ones,\textsuperscript{32} and the conceptual reference to the adoptive act without using “adoption.”\textsuperscript{33}

3. Adoption Distinguished from the New Birth

Third, it is worth noting that the distinction between adoption and new birth by the second group is passed on to the confessions in the third group. As we have seen, this distinction was not well defined in the first group.\textsuperscript{34} Then, our research shows that it is Calvin who clarified the distinction in confessional documents by deepening the treatment of adoption.\textsuperscript{35} After that, it is noted that every confession in the third group theologically distinguishes adoption from new birth, although there are some differences in their respective degrees of treatment.\textsuperscript{36} Thus, there

\textsuperscript{30} Christi geheiliget sein].” RBS, 2/2:192. In addition to them, Calvin, in his confessions, treats baptism in a relational way. With regard to the 1536 Institutes, Inst. (1536), 95 [CO 1 (CR 29), 111]: “Through baptism Christ makes us sharers in his death [fecerit participes], that we may be engrafted in it [\textit{ut in eam inseramur}].” Regarding the Institutes, Inst., 4.15.1 [CO 2 (CR 30): 962]; page 74n76 in chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{31} In the first group, see Luther’s two catechisms in pages 102-3 in chapter 3. Regarding the second group, the 1536 Institutes and the Geneva Catechism are good examples in 164-65, 178-79, 181-82 in chapter 4. In the third group, it is worth paying attention to the Fatherhood in the Second Helevetic Confession in pages 225, 225n119 and 229-30 in chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{32} As their seminal importance in the first group, see the Tetrapolitan Confession and the Fidei ratio in pages 116, 125-26 in chapter 3. In the second group, see the Geneva Catechism, the Consensus Genevensis, and the Consession of the English Congregation in pages 178, 187-88, 193 in chapter 4. In the third group, see the Scottish Confession, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Canons of Dort, and the Westminster Confession of Faith in pages 207, 234, 250-51, 261 in chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{33} After exploring Calvin’s works, Trumper lists six benefits the life of the adopted children brings about, as we have seen in pages 82-88 in chapter 2. Those are Christian liberty, prayer, assurance, providence, obedience, and inheritance. Among them, it is noted that the confessions in the third group frequently refer to three of these, i.e. prayer, assurance, and inheritance. We will return to them in the section of the systematic-theological task in the second half of this chapter.

\textsuperscript{34} In the first group, see the Fidei ratio and the First Helvetic Confession in pages 124, 132-33 in chapter 3. Regarding the second group, it is noted in the Geneva Confession, the Instruction of 1537, the Geneva Catechism, and the Consession of the English Congregation in pages 169, 172n117, 179, 192-93 in chapter 4. In the third group, see the Scottish Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism in pages 205-7, 215-16 in chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{35} See page 142 in chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{36} See page 198 in chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{37} The Scottish Confession relates the new birth to the restoration of the image of God. See
is no conflation between adoption and the new birth in the second and third groups of the documents, whereas the distinction was not well defined in the first group.

4. Adoption as a Relational Concept

Fourth, we have found that the second and third groups of the confessions have an understanding of the concept of adoption which the first group does not contain, i.e. adoption as a relational concept for clarifying the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the adopted children. After being used by Calvin in the 1536 Institutes, this relational concept has been preserved in the Instruction of 1537, the Geneva Catechism, the Consensus Genevensis, and the Confession of the English Congregation in the second group. Then, the concept has been passed on to the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession, although references to it are always in passing.

5. Possible Issues Hinting at Calvin’s Treatment

Although it may be difficult to identify the direct influence of Calvin on the confessions in the third group, it is still possible to recognize some possible issues or manners for treating adoption, in the third group, which hint at and are suggestive of Calvin’s own treatment. According to the

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37. See page 165 in chapter 4.
38. See pages 172n117 and 181 in chapter 4.
40. See pages 192-93 in chapter 4.
41. See pages 215-16 in chapter 5.
42. See page 226n123 in chapter 5.
overall historical lines of instances treating the concept of adoption or its relevant issues we have seen, those issues or manners are as follows: 1) the frequent references to the Fatherhood, 2) the union with Christ-oriented soteriology, 3) the soteriological treatment of election, 4) the treatment of the concept in the close context of the twofold grace (justification and sanctification), 5) the familial treatment of the sacraments, 6) the benefits of the adoptive life for God’s children, and 7) the distinction of adoption from the new birth. When taking into account the overall richness of these issues as a whole, we are confronted with a different view on the concept of adoption; even though treating the concept itself is in passing in the confessions of the third group, the concept creates the relational and familial tones and is woven into various frameworks, relating to other relevant issues.

Furthermore, seeing these seven issues frequently found throughout the Reformed confessions, it becomes clear that having the concept of adoption in confessions can be regarded as a specifically Reformed tradition. As seen in chapter 3, we find no mention of adoption in major documents of the Lutheran tradition, such as Luther’s catechisms, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, and the Schmalkaldische Artikel.43 Furthermore we do not recognize any relevant issues in those documents, except for the Small and Large Catechisms of Luther in terms of the Fatherhood and the filial notions in them.

Thus, it is concluded that in terms of treating the concept of adoption, whereas the historical line leading to Calvin is recognized in the first group of the confessions, the historical line flowing from him is found in the third group, hinting at or suggesting his influence of the concept on the confessional documents.

B. **The Contextual Nature of the Confessions**

43. See pages 111n81, 139n193 in chapter 3.
It is generally recognized that historical factors or contexts significantly influence confessional documents, as pointed out at the beginning of this study.\textsuperscript{44} It is true that religious as well as political factors or contexts impacted confessions in various ways. Pelikan correctly pointed out, “The juxtaposition between what Hans von Schubert calls ‘the formation of confessions and the politics of religion’ would continue to play a decisive role in the history not only of politics but of confessions.”\textsuperscript{45} This is exactly what we have seen in exploring the historical background of each confession in chapters 3-5.

1. The Context Influencing the Format

Now, it is necessary to consider how those historical factors or contexts practically and concretely influenced the confessional documents we have studied. Although there may be various possible answers to this question, one of the most obvious influences is on the format or formulation of the documents. Our research reveals that the format of confessions affected the treatment of adoption in them, as we shall see in the next paragraph.

Some examples may show how the historical context inspired a format for the treatment of adoption in a confession. Regarding the first group of confessions, it is worthwhile to pay attention to the Tetrapolitan Confession, which basically follows the Augsburg Confession in its structure.\textsuperscript{46} Since these two documents, written by reformers belonging to the first generation Reformers, were to be submitted to the Diet of Augsburg, it was imperative for them to emphasize the continuity of their belief with the Church’s tradition, her teachings, and patristic

\textsuperscript{44} See pages 38-40 in chapter 1; Pelikan, \textit{Credo}, 462.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 217.
\textsuperscript{46} Greschat, \textit{Martin Bucer}, 95. “The twenty-three articles [the Tetrapolitan Confession] . . . essentially follow the pattern of Melanchthon’s confession without reproducing its dual structure of statements of doctrine on the one hand and defence of innovations on the other.”
authorities, in order to avoid being regarded as heretics or interpreted as a radical reform movement.\textsuperscript{47} In particular, the \textit{Augsburg Confession} is characterized by its “civil and conciliatory tone,” showing “the moderate positions of the Lutherans.”\textsuperscript{48} Given the historical context of the first generation reformers, it is understandable, in terms of the concept of adoption, that the early confessions rarely have a direct reference to adoption since it was a neglected issue throughout the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{49} As we have seen there is no actual reference to adoption in the \textit{Sixty-Seven Articles}, Luther’s two catechisms, and the \textit{Augsburg Confession}. Even if there are some in the first group, references to the concept of adoption are very few, as seen in the \textit{Tetrapolitan Confession}, the \textit{Fidei ratio}, and the \textit{First Helvetic Confession}. This is because the confessions in the first group were historically compelled to show their continuity with the orthodoxy in the course of the Christian tradition prior to the Reformation.

Yet, here is an important point worth noting. Although the \textit{Tetrapolitan Confession} basically follows the \textit{Augsburg Confession} in its composition, there are some places where it diverges from it. When there is a need to emphasize some important issues, the \textit{Tetrapolitan Confession} carefully departs from the composition of the \textit{Augsburg Confession}, such as on the authority of the Scriptures and the good works which justified people manifest.\textsuperscript{50} In considering this, it is important to note that, although it is limited to one location, the \textit{Tetrapolitan Confession} chooses a word the \textit{Augsburg Confession} does not use, i.e. adoption.\textsuperscript{51}

Regarding the second group, it is worth noting the case of the \textit{Geneva Catechism}, published after Calvin’s return to Geneva. On the basis of his experience of failure during his first

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{CCF}, 2:50; Pelikan, \textit{Credo}, 9. Pelikan recognizes “continuity” as a presupposition of “the creedal definition of orthodoxy.”

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{CCF}, 2:49; Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:234: “It [the Augsburg Confession] leaves the door open for a possible reconciliation with Rome.”

\textsuperscript{49} See page 11 in chapter 1; Lidgett, \textit{The Fatherhood of God}, 200; Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption I,” 17.

\textsuperscript{50} See pages 113-14 in chapter 3; \textit{CCF}, 2:218.

\textsuperscript{51} See page 117 in chapter 3.
stay in the city from 1536 to 1538, it can be assumed that in his second Catechism Calvin chose the question-answer style, in order to write an educationally more effective version.\textsuperscript{52} This new format was to make “the material more accessible.”\textsuperscript{53} Another example in the second group is the \textit{Consensus Genevensis}, the format being an address to the people of Geneva. It is noted that the \textit{Consensus}, as a specific reaction to the Bolsec controversy, intentionally takes the formulation which is election-oriented.\textsuperscript{54} This obviously makes its treatment of adoption election-oriented as well. In the third group, the two instances, i.e. the election-oriented formulation in the \textit{Canons of Dort} and the categorization used by the \textit{Westminster Confession of Faith}, typically show the contextual nature of these documents, as we have already seen, in the format of theological articles.\textsuperscript{55}

2. The Relation of the Format to the Concept of Adoption

In seeing how the historical context influenced the format of the confessions, it is possible to analyze why the confessions do not have overall pervasive references to the concept of adoption in them. There are three issues we need to take into account. First, in exploring the whole course of confessional history during the Reformation period, it is clear that adoption was never a theologically disputed or focal issue such as justification, election, and the Lord’s Supper were. Since confessions are designed practically as well as contextually to respond to disputed issues or controversies, it is understandable that the confessional documents we have seen in this study do not have any particular reason to focus on the concept of adoption in their composition or formats.\textsuperscript{56}

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\textsuperscript{52} See page 175n126 in chapter 4; Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:469; Kayayan, “Instruction of Faith in Geneva,” 631.
\textsuperscript{53} Spijker, \textit{Calvin}, 75.
\textsuperscript{54} See page 186 in chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{55} See pages 247, 257-58 in chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{56} See pages 16-17 in chapter 1; Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption II,” 179-89.
Second, some confessional documents were, because of their historical contexts, mainly written for educational purposes, such as the Small and the Large Catechisms of Luther, the 1536 Institutes, the Instruction of 1537, the Geneva Catechism, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Westminster Larger and Smaller Catechisms. As we have seen, it is basically a standard, during the Reformation Period, that the confessional documents written for catechetical purposes, except for the Westminster Standards, integrate the three main elements, i.e. the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer, into their formulation.\textsuperscript{57} In other words, these documents structurally consist of these main elements, along with the sacraments, for their catechetical use. Since the contents of the elements form the main body of the documents, it is again understandable that these confessions, structurally speaking, did not need to refer frequently to the concept of adoption since none of the elements had a direct reference to it unless there was a particular reason for the confessions to do so. Because of this, it is possible to say that the educational purpose of these confessions do not invite pervasive references to the concept.\textsuperscript{58}

Third, this contextual approach also helps us to conjecture why it became possible for the Westminster Confession to treat adoption as a locus for the first time. As we have seen against the background in which it was written, the “scholasticism” in that era contextually compelled the Confession to take a categorization methodological approach in writing its theology.\textsuperscript{59} So far, no church historian or theologian has yet identified the reason why the Assembly chose to devote a chapter to adoption. Nonetheless, this categorization, at least, leads us to think that treating adoption as a locus does not necessarily mean that the Assembly intentionally gave its concept a special treatment which no one in the past had ever done. In this sense, it is possible to say that it

\footnotesize{57. See pages 100-1 in chapter 3.}
\footnotesize{58. Of course, even though the three elements do not have a direct reference to adoption, it is still possible for a confession to treat it by deepening the issue of God the Father in the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. For example see HC 26 and 120.}
\footnotesize{59. See pages 257-58 in chapter 5.}
was not the Assembly but the scholasticism in that era which led the Westminster Confession to treat adoption as a *locus* because of the categorization the Assembly chose as their method. We cannot be sure whether or not the Assembly intentionally chose adoption to treat it as a *locus* for the first time in the confessional history.

3. As a Part of the Central Doctrines

However, having contextually analyzed why the confessions did not need to refer frequently to the concept of adoption, this analysis has a flip side which is worth noting. Given that the confessions in this study do not necessarily need to refer to adoption pervasively, it can be still significant that the confessional documents in the third group, from the *Scottish Confession* of 1560 through the Westminster Confession of 1647, that is over the course of eighty years, have kept some references to adoption including its relevant issues. In order to understand clearly the significance of this point, we need to keep in mind the issue of the “priority of the central doctrines,” which Pelikan clarifies in explaining how confessions function. Even though confessions develop contextually in the course of history, argues Pelikan, they still need to keep a good balance between the central doctrines and the contextual issues for which they were written, and their primary focus is placed on the former. He points out, “As a consequence, even intensely political confessions deal with the central doctrines of the Christian faith, not primarily with their political situation as such apart from those Christian doctrines.”60 What Pelikan remarks here is also applicable to all the documents we have seen and helps us to see the treatment of the concept of adoption during the Reformation Period from a different perspective. Even though the concept did not become a major disputed issue during the period contextually, it is important to note that after Calvin, adoption kept a place throughout the confessional documents as a part of the central doctrines.

60. Pelikan, *Credo*, 71.
doctrines for over eighty years until its treatment as a *locus* in the *Westminster Confession*. Even the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, the briefest in the third group, refer to the concept of adoption twice throughout their text.61 This is significant in considering that the Articles are known as trying not to have a theologically specific label for them.62 This fact, when combined with the familial tones and the various treatments of the relevant issues in the confessions, makes it difficult for us to justify naively the creedal neglect of adoption in the confessions after Calvin, even though we do not recognize any pervasive references to it in them.63

Furthermore, those issues hinting at the concept of adoption, scattered through the documents in the second and third groups, also lead us to consider the meaning of treating adoption as a *locus*. We have already pointed out that devoting a chapter to adoption in the *WCF* does not necessarily show the intention of the Assembly to emphasize it. Contextually speaking, what we could say for certain is that the Assembly chose it just as one of the issues they had to treat through the categorization of the Confession. In addition to this, we have also seen in the previous chapter that the distinctive treatment of adoption in the Confession does not theologically make a difference when compared to the documents prior to the *WCF*. Because of this, as concluded in the previous chapter, “The actual difference *WCF* 12 makes in creedal history appears to be not theological, but methodological.”64 By inserting a chapter to adoption, the *WCF* shows a methodologically alternative way of presenting the concept of adoption.65

Seeing all the issues and points argued throughout this section, it becomes possible to identify the main factor causing the difficulty for us to recognize the historical lines leading to and flowing from Calvin in terms of the confessional history of treating the concept of adoption.

61. See pages 234-35 in chapter 5.
62. See pages 232-34, 233n15 in chapter 5.
63. See pages 272-73 in chapter 5.
64. See pages 267-68 in chapter 5.
65. See pages 270, 270n348 in chapter 5.
Our research and discussion show that the contextual nature of confessions is the main factor causing the difficulty. Although there are the historical lines related to Calvin, because of the contextual nature affecting the format or formulation of confessions, it is not easy to find the historical lines as well as the actual instances of treating the concept or its relevant issues in the confessions during the Reformation Period. However, because of the historical lines actually existing, when the historical context required the categorization for treating the central doctrines, it was natural for the WCF to refer distinctively to adoption, which had already become a part of the Reformed tradition prior to the WCF.

C. Reconsidering the Meaning of Having WCF 12

At the end of this section, for concluding the historical task, it is worth paying attention to the Westminster Assembly because it concretely shows the point that adoption historically maintains a place throughout the Reformed confessions prior to the WCF. This also leads us to reconsider the meaning of having WCF 12 in the confessional history during the Reformation Period.

First of all, we need to ask this difficult but valid question, “How did the Westminster Assembly arrive at the decision to devote a separate chapter to the grace of adoption?” Although it is difficult to identify the process leading to this decision,66 it is worthwhile to raise the question because it helps us to discern some important issues behind WCF 12.

We have already paid attention to the basic attitude of the Assembly described by Leith. “The Assembly was composed of highly competent men who were fully able to utilize the accumulated theological work of more than a century.”67 The Assembly was not a group of

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67. Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 46.
authors creating a new theology, but of “summarizers and interpreters of the tradition.”68 It is worth noting that being “summarizers or interpreters of the tradition” exactly fits one of the tasks given to the Assembly when it was summoned. It was “the promotion of church unity with Scotland and the Continent.”69 Then, the Standards were prepared by utilizing “the accumulated theological work of more than a century,” covering almost the entire course of the Reformation prior to the Assembly. In other words, the Standards were composed not only for those British churches to be united with each other,70 but also for the Reformed churches on the continent.

In order to accomplish this task the Assembly, in composing the documents, tried to avoid a specific theological label and to make them generally “Reformed.”71 Thus, the Assembly theologically tried, in composing the Standards, to take the greatest common denominator by using the accumulated Reformed tradition. One of the most obvious signs of this attitude is found in the treatment of the Lord’s Supper. After comparing Calvin’s documents, the Scottish Confession, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the Irish Articles of Religion,72 Spear comments, “The Assembly chose not to use language similar to that of the Scots Confession and the Irish Articles, because they wished to allow for some latitude among different convictions regarding the Lord’s Supper.” Then, it is concluded, “The Assembly deliberately chose not to

68. Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 46.
70. In actually composing the Standards, the Assembly, besides the churches of England and Scotland, also put the Church of Ireland in their scope for having unity. See pages 255-56, 256n265 in chapter 5; CCF, 2:601.
71. Cf. Wallace D. Dewey, “Via Media?: A Paradigm Shift,” in Anglican and Episcopal History Vol. 72, No. 1, Essays on the English Reformation (March 2003): 2, 10. Wallace points to a recent paradigm shift in the school of the history of the Church of England. He pointedly argues that “the Church of England is much more in continuity with the continental Reformation” rather than a “via media between Rome and Geneva, as it was often put.” In referring to Zwingli, Bucer, and Calvin significantly influencing the Church of England particularly during the Elizabethan and early Stuart era, Wallace recognizes the church as “one of the Reformed or Calvinist churches.”
72. Regarding the Scottish Confession, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the Irish Articles of Religion, they are all recognized as possible sources of the Standards. Pages 255-57, 256n266 in chapter 5.
repeat the language of Calvin’s distinctive doctrine.” This careful attitude is an example of the editing principle the Assembly took in formulating the contents of the Standards. This attitude is also applicable to the case of composing WCF 12 as well.

Thus, when understanding the Assembly not as an author of a new theology, but as a summarizer of the accumulated tradition, it leads us to recognize again the concept of adoption as a part of the “accumulated” tradition, even though the concept is not a major theological issue in that tradition. For some, it would not be so convincing to have only this point for recognizing this. But, if we take, in addition to this, the previous two points, i.e. the overall historical lines and the contextual nature of confessions, into account together, it becomes even clearer that the concept of adoption maintains a position in the central doctrines of the Reformed tradition, especially after Calvin.

In seeing all the points discussed above, we are now compelled to reconsider the meaning of having WCF 12 in the confessional history. It becomes clear now that the meaning of having WCF 12 is not an “epoch-making historic-theological significance,” but a confessional sign of the recognition that the concept of adoption maintains a part of the central doctrines in the Reformed tradition prior to the WCF. If we can recognize an epoch-making significance in WCF 12, it is not theological in nature but rather methodological in the confessional history.

D. Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the actual instances of treating adoption found in

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the research body (chapters 3-5) provide us with a clear answer to the first sub-question. We have those significant instances of treating the concept of adoption and its relevant issues in the confessions during the Reformation Period.

Regarding the second sub-question, it would be difficult to identify direct influence from Calvin on the confessional documents in the third group. Yet, when trying to grasp the overall historical lines of instances treating the concept of adoption and the relational and familial tones in the documents in the third group, it becomes possible to recognize some significant hints pointing to Calvin as the theologian of adoption. In addition to this, various treatments of the relevant issues to the concept which are scattered throughout the documents lead us to discern again some important points hinting at possible influences from Calvin, even though the documents in the third group do not pervasively refer to the concept to the extent that Calvin does. Thus, it is concluded that there are the historical lines in the confessions leading to and flowing from Calvin’s treatment of the concept of adoption.

In regard to the third sub-question concerning the major factor causing the difficulty of recognizing the historical lines related to Calvin, we clarify the importance of paying attention to the contextual nature of confessional documents. The fact that confessional documents are historically contextual helps us to see that the concept of adoption was never a disputed issue during the Reformation Period and that the confessions in the third group simply did not have any particular reason to treat it pervasively. On the other hand, it is still important to note that the concept of adoption keeps a position in the Reformed tradition after Calvin, considering that confessional documents historically and essentially need to treat primarily the central doctrines, not the contextual issues. In conclusion, we identify the contextual nature affecting the format of

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75. Even in Calvin’s documents, the references to the concept of adoption are scant in some documents, such as the Geneva Confession and the Geneva Catechism. This also makes it clear that confessions are basically contextual.
confessions as the main factor causing the difficulty of recognizing the historical lines in terms of treating the concept.

In relation to the fourth sub-question, the moderate attitude of the Assembly and the three sub-questions answered above compel us to reconsider the meaning of having WCF 12 in the confessional history. The editing principle of the Assembly clearly shows that the concept of adoption was part of the accumulated Reformed tradition when the Westminster Standards were composed. The Assembly was acting as summarizer of tradition, and this attitude was plausibly one of the factors for the Assembly in devoting a separate chapter to adoption, which had already become a part of the tradition. Therefore, it becomes clear that the meaning of having WCF 12 is a confessional sign of recognizing adoption as a part of the Reformed tradition prior to the WCF.

In sum, we recognize the concept of adoption as a part of the Reformed tradition even before the WCF devoted a chapter to the concept as a locus. Historically speaking, this is the place the concept maintains in the confessional history during the Reformation Period.
A. The Comparison with the Pauline Adoption

As we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, one of the significant characteristics of the Pauline huiōthesia is its redemptive-historical perspective, showing a theological framework which describes God’s entire plan of salvation for his children covering from election through the consummation. In other words, it is this framework into which the concept of adoption is woven, relating it to other relevant issues in the Scriptures.

Previously in this chapter, we mentioned the historical context of the treatment of adoption. From a historical perspective, it is pointed out that the limited theological frameworks found in the first group have seminal importance. After being developed by Calvin, they are maintained with variations in all the confessions in the third group. Regardless of their size or scale, the confessions in the third group have the framework relevant to the concept of adoption, and in them the concept is connected to other relevant issues in showing God’s plan of salvation.

At the beginning of the second half of this concluding chapter, we analyze, from the biblical perspective of huiōthesia, how this redemptive-historical framework is depicted in the confessional documents. When exploring the confessions from chapters 3 through 5, what we actually did was to see and analyze theologically each confession in terms of the theological formulation of each document. Now we need to look at those confessions again and compare them with the biblical perspective of huiōthesia (the first sub-question of the systematic-theological task). In what follows, on the basis of this comparison amongst them,

76. See pages 2-6 in chapter 1; 90 in chapter 2; Ridderbos, Paul, 204: “The whole love of the Father, the whole redeeming work of Christ, the whole renewing power of the Holy Spirit, are reflected in it [the sonship of believers given in Christ].”

77. Page 52 in chapter 1: “How do the instances of treating adoption in the confessions reflect or
we refer to the following five issues: 1) the gap between the confessions and *huiοθεσία*, 2) three differences found in the confessions, 3) the basic functions of confessional documents, 4) the importance of theological context, and 5) reconsidering the meaning of the gap between the confessions and *huiοθεσία*.

1. The Gap between the Confessions and *Huiοθεσία*

At the beginning of this study in chapter 1, we sketched the entire framework of the biblical meaning of the Pauline ‘*huiοθεσία*’. In comparing that sketch with the various frameworks found in the confessions in this study, we are forced to realize that there is a gap between them. This gap may not be huge, but is still a significant one because there are differences of emphasis, for example that of logical development or formulation, and so on. In short, it is possible to say that those frameworks found in the confessions are, as a whole, biblical in terms of the concept of adoption. But, at the same time, we cannot insist that those frameworks exactly depict what Paul describes by using his distinct word *huiοθεσία*. The differences between them are just like mosaic pieces which can create a different design by placing them in a different way, even though the same pieces are used.

Here are some examples we need to see for understanding the gap. First, in the case of the 1536 Institutes, it is necessary to see the context where it treats justification by referring to Ephesians 1:4-5. After referring to election based on the “goodness” of the Father, the 1536 Institutes, without mentioning the purpose of election, moves on to the issues of redemption and becoming heirs which are related to Galatians 4:5-7 and Romans 8:17. In other words, the 1536 Institutes skip the purpose of election, i.e. to be holy and blameless, and start by treating the

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78. *Inst.* (1536), 37 [CO 1 (CR 29), 51]; page 161 in chapter 4.
79. *Inst.* (1536), 37 [CO 1 (CR 29), 51].
other relevant issues to the concept of adoption. Thus, the framework Paul depicts in the context of Ephesians 1:4-5 is not fully expanded here in terms of *huiothesia.*

Second, another instance is found in the *Heidelberg Catechism* when the Catechism treats God the Father in HC 26 and the Spirit in HC 53. In seeing these QAs, we would immediately assume that these QAs, or at least one of them, relate the issue of knowing the Father to the Spirit’s work on the basis of Galatians 4. However, none of these QAs relate the Fatherhood to the Spirit’s work or vice versa, as though these two were not connected issues. A similar case is also found in QA 13 of the *Geneva Catechism,* which treats knowing the Father without referring to the Spirit, although the *Geneva Catechism* in QA 250 refers to the Spirit’s work in the context of praying to the Father. At any rate, these two catechisms do not depict the full contents of Galatians 4:1-7 in which the issue of the Spirit of adoption is deepened in terms of knowing the Father.

Third, it is necessary to pay attention to an example found in the *Thirty-Nine Articles.* The Articles are analyzed, in the previous section, as having a small framework which is

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80. This is just one of those similar cases which are found throughout the confessions. For other similar instances, see the *Consensus Genevensis* in page 187 in chapter 4. While emphasizing God’s saving grace and the unworthiness of his children for salvation in relation to the context of Eph. 1:3-6, the Consensus refers to the issue of faith which the context does not have. Also see the *Scottish Confession* in pages 205-6 in chapter 5. After referring to the phrase “befo’r the foundation of the world was laid,” the Confession immediately moves on to the issue of the Incarnation, which is related to Gal. 4:1-7 in terms of *huiothesia.* *CCF,* 2:392; *RBS,* 2/1:252.
81. See pages 215-17 in chapter 5.
82. Rom. 8:12-17 also has relevance to the relationship between the Fatherhood and the Spirit’s work, not regarding the issue of knowing the Father, but regarding the issue of praying to him in the context of the life of the adopted children, see page 5 in chapter 1.
83. HC 120 which treats prayer to the Father does not refer to the Spirit’s witness either, although these two are connected with each other in the context of Rom. 8:12-17. *RBS,* 2/2:207.
84. The *Geneva Catechism,* GC 13: “M. How do we know that [God’s desire to be our Father]? C. By his word, in which he declares his mercy to us in Christ, and assures us of his love toward us.” *CCF,* 2:321 [CO 6 (CR 34): 11-12]. It is clear that these two catechisms treat the issue of knowing the Father in a Christ-oriented way.
85. See page 178 in chapter 4.
86. Similar cases are also found in the 1536 *Institutes* and the *Second Helvetic Confession.* See page 166 in chapter 4; 225n119 in chapter 5. On the other hand, a different case is found in the *Confession of the English Congregation.* In Article 3, the Confession refers to the Spirit’s witness helping us to have the filial consciousness as God’s children. See page 193 in chapter 4.
soteriologically election-oriented. In Article 17, after using the renowned phrase of Ephesians 1:4-5, i.e. “before the foundations of the world were layd,” and referring to election in Christ, the Articles move on to treat justification and good works of God’s children, but without mentioning the pleasure of the Father as the motivation of election and the purpose for the adopted ones “to be holy and blameless.” In that context, the Articles, instead of deepening the framework of Ephesians 1, often refer to the Spirit’s ministry and its relevant issues such as “his Spirit workyng in due season,” and “vnspeakeable comfort to the godly persons.” But, in seeing these similarities to Galatians 4 or Romans 8, it may be strange that Article 17 never refers to God as Father. This method of treating the concept of adoption leads us to sense that the Articles, by selecting some relevant issues, synthesize the concept on the basis of the whole Scriptures and create their own framework into which the concept is woven. Given this, this method is similar to what we have seen in the Westminster Standards. As seen in WCF 12, WLC 39, and WLC 69, the Standards, selecting relevant issues in a manner similar to placing mosaic pieces in a meaningful whole, synthesize the concept of adoption and reconstruct its framework in their own way. Because of this, we cannot deny that those frameworks in the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Standards are not identical with the one Paul describes in his Epistles in terms of logical formulations and theological thrusts.

Although we do not refer to every one of those cases, it is noted that there are many similar examples in those documents in terms of the biblical framework of huiothesia. Of course, there are some which are relatively close to the original framework described by Paul.

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87. See pages 236 in chapter 5; 289 in this chapter.
88. This phrase is relevant to the context of Gal. 4:1-7. See pages 4-5 in chapter 1.
89. This reminds us of the context of Rom. 8:12-17. See page 5 in chapter 1.
90. Evans and Wright, 162.
91. See pages 259-65 in chapter 5.
92. For example, Article 3 of the Fidei ratio appears to be the closest case, in the first group of the documents, to the biblical framework of huiothesia in Eph. 1:4-5, as we have seen in pages 126-27 of chapter 3. Article 3 of the Confession of the English Confession is relevant to the framework described in
addition to this, some large documents, such as the 1536 *Institutes*, may be able to claim that they, as a whole, are related to the way Paul describes. This is because their quantity may make it possible to have all the necessary issues or points which *huiothesia* has, even though their logical order or presentation is different. However, according to the comparison with the Pauline adoption, we are forced to conclude that there is an actual gap consisting of some differences existing between the Pauline biblical framework and the various frameworks we have found in the confessions. Biblically speaking, there is no confession, at least among the confessions in this study, which does full justice to the full scope of Paul’s use of *huiothesia*.

Our research shows that there are three differences worth noting, when comparing the confessions with the Pauline *huiothesia*: the corporate aspect focusing on the sonship of Israel, the eschatological emphasis, and the peculiar position of the sacraments.

2. Three Differences Found in the Confessions

a. The Corporate Aspect: The Sonship of Israel

First, our research shows that in the confessions, the most neglected aspect of the biblical framework of *huiothesia* is its corporate aspect which is related to Romans 9:4 focusing on the sonship of Israel. In order to more fully depict this corporate aspect, it is necessary to clarify that the sonship of God’s people was originally given to Israel under the Old Covenant and extended to the adopted children under the New Covenant. This corporate aspect is to show, in a dynamic way, God’s salvific act from the redemptive-historical perspective, focusing particularly

Gal. 4:1-7. It refers to the Spirit’s witness helping believers to have filial consciousness, Christ’s brotherhood which is related to the Incarnation, and becoming co-heirs with him, although the logical order in Gal. 4 is slightly different. See page 193 in chapter 4. In Chapter 13 of the *Scottish Confession*, the reference to the spiritual battle of God’s children reminds us of the framework of Rom. 8:12-17 focusing on the life of those adopted. In the context of treating good works, it refers to the life led by the Spirit, the spiritual battle, and the Spirit’s help reminding God’s children of their sonship. See page 207 in chapter 5.

93. But, as we have seen in the 1536 *Institute*, its treatment of the Spirit of adoption is not sufficient. Pages 165-66 in chapter 4.

94. See page 4 in chapter 1; pages 65-67 in chapter 2.
on the extension of the sonship of Israel to all who believe in Christ. Nonetheless, our research finds no confession which describes this dynamic extension of the sonship, except the Consensus Genevensis. But even the Consensus refers to the sonship only under the Old Covenant in passing and does not develop it to include the extended sonship of those adopted under the New Covenant. In exploring the confessions from the redemptive-historical perspective, most frameworks formed by them mainly center around one of the following passages, namely Ephesians 1:4-5, Galatians 4:1-7, and Romans 8:12-17.

b. The Eschatological Emphasis

Second, besides Romans 9:4, it is also rare, in the confessions, to find an aspect which is based on Romans 8:18-25. As we have seen in chapter 1, the aspect of huiothesia Romans 8:18-25 presents is eschatological or future-oriented, emphasizing “the already/not yet tension” leading God’s children to press on towards their consummation. Of course, there are some references, in the confessions, to the promise of the inheritance of the kingdom, which also have a futuristic aspect. But most of those cases are not related to Romans 8:17-25 in seeing that they lack “the

95. Ridderbos, Paul, 197-98; page 67 in chapter 2: “On the basis of this Old Covenant, God dynamically expanded the covenant of grace, in the New Testament era, in order to bring all who believe in Christ into his family.”

96. Cf. Trumper, “Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine,” 112. He points out, in relation to the Westminster Standards, that “the commissioners omitted to focus on the difference between the minority sonship of God’s people under the Old Covenant and the majority sonship of the adopted under the New Covenant (Gal. 3-4).”

97. The Consensus of Genevensis is a possible exception, since it has a reference to the sonship given to the children of Abraham in passing. “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 705 [CO 8 (CR 36): 100]: “Although God has chosen the children of Abraham to be his heritage, not all who are descendants of the race of Abraham ‘according to the flesh’ are the ‘children of promise.’ In other words, they are ‘not included’ or ‘comprised in God’s election, to be truly heirs of God and his kingdom.” Besides the Consensus, if we recognize the Institutes of 1559 as a catechism, it would be also an exception. Inst., 1:10:1, 3.2.22; Westhead, “Adoption,” 108: “For Calvin, any transition or development in the notion of sonship across time must be set against the relationship between the old and new covenants. In principle these covenants are essentially one. . . . When Calvin thinks of sonship in the Old Testament, he can speak of it in New Testament terms. The covenant with the Jews for instance, he calls ‘the covenant of adoption’ (Inst. 3:2:22), and the even older covenant with Abraham is one which consisted in ‘receiving by free adoption as sons those who were enemies’ (Inst. 1:10:1).”

98. Pages 5-6 in chapter 1.
already/not yet tension.” So far as the present writer knows, clear cases are only found in WCF 12 and 18-2 in the Westminster Confession.99 In short it is noted that the confessions, in addition to the corporate aspect, do not do full justice to the futuristic aspect of the biblical framework of huiothesia in the context of Romans 8:18-25.

c. The Peculiar Position of the Sacraments

Third, in exploring the confessions, we noted that the issue of the sacraments occupies a rather peculiar position into which the concept of adoption is woven. This is because, theologically speaking, the sacraments in the confessions contain some significant issues which easily connect the concept to the sacraments, such as the spiritual presence of Christ,100 the role of initiation baptism plays,101 the issue of the covenant,102 and so on. Thus, in our chapters 3-5, we have seen many cases in which the sacraments are related to the concept of adoption or to the familial notions creating the familial as well as relational tones.

On the other hand, it is clear that none of the scriptural passages using huiothesia speak directly of the sacraments. Without such reference to the sacraments, it is natural for the confessions to relate the sacraments to the concept of adoption or its relevant issues not on the basis of the biblical framework of huiothesia, but on their own formulation.103 Since we have already seen many cases in which the sacraments are related to the concept, we do not repeat them in this context. At any rate this peculiar position the sacraments occupy in the confessions

99. See pages 259-62 in chapter 5. WCF 12 refers to Rom. 8:17, but only in the context of the privileges of God’s children, although it clearly shows this “already/not yet tension.”

100. See pages 104n55 (Luther’s catechisms) in chapter 3; 161n68 (1536 Inst.), 169n104 (Geneva Conf.), 180 (Geneva Catech.), 193-94 (Conf. of the English Congre.) in chapter 4; 205n18 (Scottish Conf.), 217-18 (Heidelberg Catech.), 265, 269n345 (Westminster Standards) in chapter 5.

101. See pages 133, 133n177 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 169 (Geneva Conf.), 179 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 269 (Westminster) in chapter 5.


103. One of the clear cases is found in references to the Supper as the fatherly nourishment. See pages 327, 327n231 in this chapter.
again shows that confessional documents are historically contextual. Practically speaking, it is imperative for a confessional document, as an educational tool for the church, to treat the sacraments. Numerous cases in the historical background of the confessions indicate the necessity of treating the sacraments.\textsuperscript{104}

3. The Basic Functions of Confessional Documents

Although it may be possible to recognize biblically the “gap” consisting of these differences as a limitation of confessions in terms of the redemptive-historical framework, it is worth discussing how we can theologically interpret this gap in relation to the basic functions of confessions. This is because, theologically speaking, it is not necessarily required for a confession to depict the concept of adoption exactly in the same manner the Scriptures have. In order to clarify the basic functions, it is necessary first to understand the basic relation of confessions to the Scriptures. This will help us to consider how we can understand the gap between the confessions and the Pauline \textit{huiōthēsia}.

Whereas there are some possible interpretations about the relation of confessions to the Scriptures, in terms of the current systematic-theological task we need to focus on the basic principle that confessions, in terms of their authority, are subordinate to the Scriptures.\textsuperscript{105} Of course, creeds or confessions have functioned with authoritative and normative features throughout church history, their authority is recognized as relative and secondary, depending on the authority of the Scriptures. Schaff clearly articulates this principle, “The Bible is the \textit{norma normans}; the Confession the \textit{norma normata}. . . . The Bible has, therefore, a divine and absolute, the Confession only an ecclesiastical and relative authority.”\textsuperscript{106} Here it is clear that the difference

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\textsuperscript{104}. For example, see pages 98-102, 112-13, 123, 131-32 in chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{105}. Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:7; Pelikan, \textit{Credo}, 9, 142, 150.
\textsuperscript{106}. Schaff, op. cit., 1:7; Pelikan, op. cit., 142.
of the authorship between these two makes the Scriptures primary and confessions secondary. While the authorship of the Scriptures is divine, confessions were written by human authors as their responses to the absolute authority, interpreting what the Scriptures teach and confessing what they, as the church, believe.\textsuperscript{107} Thus, it is obvious that confessions function differently from the Scriptures because of this relationship.

Then, this basic relation requires three basic functions of confessional documents as follows. First, since confessions are based on the Scriptures, they can function as norms or standards, in order to regulate doctrines, preaching, and practices in the church.\textsuperscript{108} Second, confessions, functioning as bonds of union, are to help churches to be united and to exclude heresies by interpreting the Scriptures and making a theological consensus on which they can stand together.\textsuperscript{109} Third, confessions have a catechetical and educational function for believers and subsequent generations, explaining what the Scriptures teach as a whole.\textsuperscript{110} In addition to this, it needs to be emphasized that the church is the main context in which confessions function in these three manners.\textsuperscript{111}

4. The Importance of Theological Context

After clarifying these three basic functions, it is further necessary to take into account that each function is not always emphasized in an equal manner in confessions; it is often noted that a confession tends to have its particular emphasis, focusing on just one or two of the three functions. For example, regarding the first normative function, it is particularly emphasized in the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{107} Schaff, op. cit., 1:5; Pelikan, op. cit., 21.
  \item \textsuperscript{108} Schaff op. cit., 1:8-9; Pelikan, op. cit., 21, 71, 142, 150.
  \item \textsuperscript{109} Schaff op. cit., 1:8; Pelikan, op. cit., 78: “It is the intent of confession to ‘establish consent touching true religion.’ ‘Consent’ refers to the doctrinal consensus that is sought and achieved.”
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Schaff op. cit., 1:8; Pelikan, op. cit., 47.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Schaff, op. cit., 1:7: “The Confession [has] . . . an ecclesiastical and relative authority.”
\end{itemize}
following confessions such as the *Sixty-Sevent Articles*,\footnote{112. Pages 93-94 in chapter 3.} the *Consensus Genevensis*,\footnote{113. Pages 185-86 in chapter 4. As we have seen, the Consensus was written to regulate specifically the doctrine of election. But, as its title shows, the Consensus also functioned as a bond of union in terms of election.} and the *Canons of Dort*.\footnote{114. Pages 246-48 in chapter 5.} In regard to the second function as bonds of union among churches, it is worth paying attention to the documents such as the *Tetrapolitan Confession*,\footnote{115. Pages 112-13 in chapter 3.} the *First Helvetic Confession*,\footnote{116. Pages 129-32 in ibid.} the *Geneva Confession*,\footnote{117. Pages 167-68 in chapter 4.} and the *Second Helvetic Confession*.\footnote{118. Pages 222-23 in chapter 5.} Concerning the third function which is catechetical, we can see typical examples in the *Large and Small Catechisms* of Luther,\footnote{119. Page 101 in chapter 3.} the *Geneva Catechism*,\footnote{120. Pages 174, 175 in chapter 4.} and the *Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms*.\footnote{121. Page 259, 259n279 in chapter 5.} Of course, even these documents, being known for their particular emphasis on one of the three functions, cover other two in the church context in which each was written and used. However, they were intended to function with their particular emphasis or focus because their theological context in the church required it.

In the first half of this chapter carrying out the historical task, we treated the contextual nature of confessions from the historical perspective, focusing particularly on the political circumstances in which a confession was written. Now as we carry out the systematic-theological task here, it is necessary to pay specific attention to the theological context in which a confession was written, although theological issues are practically inseparable from historical issues in the actual context of the church. When a confession was composed, there were historical and political contexts surfacing over the church life in that era, as we have seen. But underneath that context, it should be noted that there was also a theological context, on a
deeper level, in which the church was compelled to deal with specific theological issues.\textsuperscript{122} Because of this, Schaff states, “They [Christian symbols and creeds] emanate from the inner life of the church, independently of external occasion.”\textsuperscript{123} Thus, as the historical context gave impact on the format of confessions, it is natural that the theological context also affected their format and contents, placing their specific emphasis on their intended functions. This is the fundamental reason why the different emphases of the main functions are recognized among the confessions mentioned above. Confessions are not a summary of the Bible. A different theological context in the church not only affects the format and contents of confessions, but also requires those confessions to function with a specific emphasis on one or two of the basic three functions.

5. Reconsidering the Meaning of the Gap

Thus, considering this theological context, it is theologically understandable for a confession to have its own theological emphasis and thrust, even though the way it presents adoption is not exactly in the same with the manner as the Scriptures. This requires us to reconsider what the “gap” means theologically, in relation to the differences between the confessions in this study and the Pauline huiothesia. In order to deepen the discussion of what the gap means, here we focus on the corporate aspect, i.e. the most significant gap between the confessions and huiothesia, by paying attention to three examples (the Heidelberg Catechism, the “Family Life in 16th Century Geneva,” and I-17 of the Canons of Dort). These three have relevance respectively to the issue of lacking the corporate aspect and help us to reconsider the meaning of the gap in terms of the theological context. In what follows, the order of referring to these three is not according to a chronological order, but according to a logical one which is suitable to the following discussion.

\textsuperscript{122} Pelikan, \textit{Credo}, 71: “But all such cultural and political references in these creeds and confessions put together can seem almost trivial by comparison with the attention they give to doctrine.”
\textsuperscript{123} Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom}, 1:5.
a. Theological Context of the Palatinate

First, we focus on the example of the *Heidelberg Catechism (HC)* because the issue of lacking the corporate aspect reminds us of one of the features of the HC, i.e. its careful avoidance of referring to controversial issues including covenant.\(^{124}\) While Zacharias Ursinus and Casper Olevianus are generally recognized as covenant theologians,\(^{125}\) the references to covenant in the *HC* are few and all in passing.\(^{126}\) This is because the issue of covenant was still recognized as relatively new and controversial in that era.\(^{127}\) Furthermore, the theological context in the Palatinate compelled the authors to avoid referring frequently to covenant, fearing that covenant “in a consensus catechism might provoke Lutheran criticism on both sides of the Palatinate border.”\(^{128}\) If it were in a theological tract or textbook such as the Larger Catechism of Ursinus, it would be possible to make frequent references to the issue of covenant.\(^{129}\) However, since the *HC* was composed as a consensus catechism with the normative and catechetical functions, it is understandable that the *HC* is careful in referring to covenant. This may not be applicable to all the confessions in this study, but the lack of the corporate aspect in the confessions, at least, fits well in with the theological context where the *HC* was written. Thus, it is naïve to criticize simply the lack of sufficient treatment of covenant in the *HC*, and this is suggestive for us to reconsider

\(^{124}\) Pages 212-13 in chapter 5.


\(^{126}\) Bierma, “The Sources and Theological Orientation,” 97: “The HC, which so many have considered Reformed in its orientation, employs the term *covenant* only five times in 129 questions and answers.” All five references are in the context of the sacraments, and no reference is found on the issue of the Old Covenant focusing on the sonship of Israel. Among them, HC 74 can be recognized as significant since it treats, in the context of infant baptism, the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, although it has no reference to the filial notion.

\(^{127}\) It is worth remembering that even the doctrine of justification was recognized as new, especially among the first generation of reformers. Pelikan, *Credo*, 85: “Nor . . . has been a creedal and traditional ‘doctrine’ of justification (much less of justification by faith alone), at any rate before the confessions of the Reformation.”

\(^{128}\) Bierma, op. cit., 98.

\(^{129}\) Ibid., 97-98. The Larger Catechism was written by Ursinus for theological instruction at the Sapient College and never published during his lifetime. It has 55 references to covenant.
all the other confessions in this study in terms of the “gap.”

b. The Practical Context in the Reformation of 16th Century Geneva

Second, we pay attention to family life in 16th century Geneva, in which Calvin and his colleagues tried to restore healthy family life. Focusing on this issue helps us to understand that theological issues are inseparably related to practical issues in the context of the church. This is because we have seen that Calvin, treating familial issues such as marriage and children, often deepens them to a theological level, relating them to theological issues. For example, preaching from Genesis 2:22-24, Calvin theologically relates the creation of marriage to the believer’s union with Christ. Also, in order to protect the purity of marriage, he, in his lecture on Malachi 2:15-16, theologically discusses the importance of legitimate children on the basis of God’s creation of marriage. Besides these two, there are various examples showing that Calvin treats familial issues in the same manner through his commentaries or sermons, as we have already pointed out. In fact, Calvin is not the only one who deepens familial issues to a theological level. It is also recognized in other places of western Europe during the Reformation Period. As Gager points out, the Puritans, in 16th century England, recognized “the household as the center of the individual’s spiritual life and the father as its ‘domestic priest.’” Thus, the Puritans also, by deepening familial issues in a theological manner, played an important role for modifying family life in England in that era. Therefore, it is likely that the manner of treating familial

131. Page 147, 147n8 in ibid.
132. Page 151, 151n29 in ibid.
133. Page 147n9 in ibid
issues on a theological basis was not rare, but a common approach in order to treat the issue of family life in western Europe during the Reformation Period.

This approach, in terms of the lack of the corporate aspect, is suggestive to consider minimally what the lack of the corporate aspect means in the confessional documents written by Calvin for reforming 16th century Geneva. As we have seen in chapter 4 of this study, the restoration of healthy family life was one of the key issues among the various issues Calvin and his colleagues treated during the Reformation in that city.\textsuperscript{136} Considering this, it is very suggestive that Calvin often depicts the gospel using familial terminologies,\textsuperscript{137} in the practical context of the church in which he and his colleagues encouraged the lifestyle of the nuclear family as the “only approved kind.”\textsuperscript{138} Those familial terminologies are practically and theologically relevant to that context in which the reformers valued healthy family life, although it may be difficult to prove, in a scholarly way, that the use of those familial terminologies was intentional for helping families in Geneva. As we mentioned above, the inseparability between confessions and practices in the church also reinforces the relevance of using familial terminologies. On the other hand, while the use of familial terminologies may have relevance, it is difficult to see practically and theologically any relevance of the corporate aspect focusing on the OT sonship to the reforming family life in 16th century Geneva. This is because the scope of the corporate aspect is beyond family life in just one city such as Geneva. Its scope is much wider than that, focusing on the sonship of Israel as a nation. Of course, here we do not mean to say at this point that Calvin takes the sonship in the OT lightly in his theology. On the contrary, as seen in chapter 2, Calvin clearly grasps the dynamic expansion of the adopted sonship from the OT to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{136} Pages 157-58 in chapter 4.
  \item \textsuperscript{137} Page 198 in ibid; Canlis, “Calvin’s ‘Institutes,’” 20.
  \item \textsuperscript{138} Page 155n47 in ibid; Kingdon, “Calvin and the Family,” 15; Kingdon, Reforming Geneva, 78. It is also suggestive that the confessions in this study, especially in the second and third groups, often use familial or relational languages, as we have seen.
\end{itemize}
the NT throughout his works as a whole, but not in his confessions. The point we need to clarify here is that in order to restore family life, the issue of the sonship of Israel practically and theologically has no relevance to the context of reforming 16th century Geneva. Thus, practically as well as theologically there is no wonder that even the confessions written by Calvin lack the corporate aspect related to the OT sonship, considering that confessions are to be practically used in the context of the church with the normative, unifying, and catechetical functions in order to build up local churches.

c. The Pastoral Context of I-17 of the Canons of Dort

Third, we pay attention to the example of I-17 of the Canons. The purpose of focusing on I-17 is to understand that confessions are theologically inseparable not only from practical issues, but also from pastoral issues in the context of the church. In terms of the issue of lacking the corporate aspect focusing on the sonship of Israel, it is worth noting that I-17 refers to the covenant, treating the salvation of infants of believing parents.

Article 17. [The Salvation of the Infants of Believers].

Since we must make judgments about God’s will from his Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy.

While referring to covenant for clarifying the salvation of infants of believers, it is noted at the same time that I-17, when composed, did not use Romans 9:6 as a scriptural reference although

139. Pages 65-67 in chapter 2.
140. CCF, 2:575 (2:575; italics mine).
the delegates of the Palatinate required the committee to add it to this canon. This is because a reference to Romans 9:6 in I-17 might have pointed to “the possibility of reprobation,” focusing on God’s eternal counsel. Obviously, Romans 9:6 has relevance to the issue of the sonship of Israel since it is located in the close context of Romans 9:4, in which huiōthēsia is used by Paul. But the synod did not need to relate the focal issue of I-17 to the OT sonship, deepening what the covenant means in detail, because what was at stake there is a pastoral as well as theological issue for healing the pain of numerous parents who struggled with high infant mortality in that era. All those parents theologially had a huge question whether or not their children who died young were adopted by God the Father as his children into his household. Here what we mean to say is not that the Canons neglect the issue of the OT sonship, but that they pastorally as well as theologially do not have any reason to relate the focal issue of I-17 to the scope of the sonship of Israel. Here we can clearly see again how confessions are supposed to function in the context of the church. Treating the corporate aspect related to the OT sonship in a theological textbook or tract is not the same thing with treating it in a confessional document which is pastorally and theologically used in the church with the normative, unifying, and catechetical functions.

In conclusion, after seeing the three examples mentioned above, we are led to reconsider how we can or should understand what the “gap” means. The three examples clearly show us that it is not right to criticize simply the confessions in this study because of the gap between them and the Pauline huiōthēsia. It is not right either, because of the lack of the corporate aspect, to recognize the gap as a sign of the over-individualized understanding of the concept of adoption in the confessions. This is because we see numerous references to the familial aspect of the concept throughout the confessions. As a whole, the treatment of the concept in the confessions can be recognized as familial, but it is not wide enough to have a nation-wide scope of the concept because the confessions lack the corporate aspect focusing on the sonship of the OT.

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141. Pages 241-42 in chapter 5.
143. Ibid. I-17 is “a doctrinal response . . . to a religious question with pastoral intensity.”
144. If I-17 were related to the sonship of Israel, it would definitely cause a controversy, noting the historical fact that not every individual in Israel was saved. See page 4, n7 in chapter 1.
In considering the importance of the OT background of *huiothesia*, the lack of this corporate scope can be a weakness in the confessions during the Reformation Period. Because of this point, the confessions lack the dynamic scope of the covenantal expansion of sonship from the OT through the NT. Furthermore, this lack may cause the insufficient treatment of the eschatological aspect which is relevant to the dynamic completion of the sonship of God’s people consisting of both Israel and foreigners in the completed kingdom.

This weakness reminds us again of the basic functions of confessional documents. Confessions are written to serve and build up the church by regulating doctrines, providing bonds of unity, and educating believers mostly in the context of local churches or cities during the Reformation Period. Because of these tasks of confessions, it is not necessarily required for confessions, during that era, to treat the concept of adoption in terms of the corporate aspect based on Romans 9:4 focusing on the OT sonship and its covenantal extension in the NT era.

6. Summary

Since we have had a long course of discussion above, it is helpful, at the end of this section, to summarize what we conclude in relation to the first sub-question. Our research has shown that the confessions in this study basically reflect the redemptive-historical perspective of *huiothesia*. Yet, at the same time we have noted that no confession does full justice to the full scope of the redemptive-historical perspective, finding a gap between the confessions and the Pauline *huiothesia*. We have found three main differences which are worth noting: the confessions 1) lack the corporate aspect of adoption focusing on the sonship in the OT, 2) have insufficient treatment of the eschatological aspect, and 3) treat the sacraments in a peculiar manner. Amongst these three, the lack of the corporate aspect is the most significant difference.

From the historically contextual nature of the confessions, it is possible to recognize

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146. Page 52 in chapter 1: “How do the instances of treating adoption in the confessions reflect or not reflect the redemptive-historical perspective of *huiothesia*?”
this “gap” as a limitation of confessions. But, when seeing the gap from the theological context in which confessions were written, it becomes possible to see the importance of theological context, requiring the confessions to be used with the three basic functions: the normative, unifying, and catechetical functions. Because of these functions it is not required for confessions to depict adoption exactly in the same manner as the Scriptures. Confessions are not a summary of the Scriptures. Furthermore, the theological context practically or pastorally compels confessions to be used, with particular emphasis on one or two of the basic functions, in a specific context of the church. In other words, the confessions in this study were written to build up the church in the actual theological context in which they were written. Thus, it is recognized as a strength of the confessions that they all theologically have relevance to the context of the church in which they were written and used with a specific emphasis related to the basic functions.

On the other hand, we cannot deny that the lack of the corporate aspect forces the confessions to narrow down their theological scope. They are not wide enough to have a nation-wide scope of the concept related to the sonship of Israel, lacking the dynamic expansion of the sonship from OT through the NT. Because of this narrow scope, the lack of the corporate aspect may cause the insufficient treatment of the eschatological aspect which is related to the dynamic completion of the sonship of God’s people consisting of both Israel and foreigners.

B. The Relevant Issues to the Concept of Adoption

As indicated in the method of this study, in order to solve the second sub-question of the systematic-theological task, in what follows we identify all the relevant issues to which the concept of adoption is related and clarify three specific issues in terms of their relation to the

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147. Page 52 in chapter 1: “What are the relevant issues of adoption, to which its concept is theologically related?”; pages 58-59 in ibid.
concept: 1) the twofold grace, 2) the new birth, and 3) deification.

1. Fourteen Key Issues

On the basis of our investigation of the confessions in the research body (chapters 3-5), we identify the following fourteen points as the relevant issues which are crucial and related to the concept of adoption in the theological framework into which the concept is woven. Those issues are all necessary to clarify what adoption means theologically. According to the most common order of the redemptive-historical perspective, we identify the fourteen issues as follows: a) God the Father, b) the grace of election, c) the image of God, d) the covenant of God, e) the Incarnation, f) union with Christ, g) justification, h) sanctification, i) the Spirit of adoption, j) prayer, k) baptism, l) the Lord’s Supper, m) assurance, and n) the inheritance of the kingdom. At the end of each point, after describing each one’s basic meaning, we will then present what it implies or signifies relevant to the spiritual life of God’s children. This is because *huiothesia* as a theological concept is used to describe a spiritual reality of the grace of adoption.148

a. God the Father

Regarding the Fatherhood of God, it is necessary to point out that it consists of two aspects, i.e. the creative Fatherhood which is related to the original sonship of Adam and the redemptive Fatherhood which is related to the adoptive sonship in his saving grace.149 In the soteriological context of *huiothesia*, it is clear that we need to focus on the latter, the redemptive Fatherhood.150

Just as with the concept of adoption, the Fatherhood of God also can be an underlying

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148. See page 6 in chapter 1.
149. See page 42n153 in ibid.
150. Pages 54-55 in ibid. The creative Fatherhood tends to be more emphasized in Luther’s catechisms. Pages 102, 102n43, 110 in chapter 3. On the other hand, the redemptive Fatherhood is more focused on in Calvin’s confessions. See pages 64-65 in chapter 2; 164-65 (1536 *Inst.*), 172-73 (*Geneva Conf.*), 177-79 (*Geneva Catech.*) in chapter 4; 229-30 (*2nd Helvetic Conf.*) in chapter 5.
theme or organizing principle because it relates to various issues in the confessions we have previously examined. Because of this broad character of the Fatherhood, many issues in the soteriological context can be re-defined by the perspective of the Fatherhood. For instance, what election means is to be elected by the Father as his children. Salvation is re-defined as being united to the Father’s love in the Son, and faith as knowing the Father. Furthermore, in the sphere of the Christian life, there are rich issues which are related to the Fatherhood, such as the Spirit leading God’s children to know the Father and pray to ‘Abba’, the assurance which is brought about by the paternal care, the cross given by the Father to train his children, the Father listening to prayers of his children, and the inheritance promised by the Father to them. In the context of ecclesiology, the Supper is recognized as the fatherly nourishment. Thus, the issue of the Fatherhood plays a crucial role for depicting the concept of adoption throughout the confessions. Regarding the spiritual life of God’s children, what the Fatherhood provides is a fundamental and stable basis on which they put their trust.

b. Election

151. Canlis, “Calvin’s ‘Institutes’,” 20. “For Calvin, God becoming our Father is perhaps the best summary of the gospel. . . . his theology is better known as filial.”
152. See pages 178, 178n141, 181-82 in chapter 4. It is noted that the Fatherhood sometimes goes hand in hand with the filial notion of God’s children in the Geneva Catechism.
155. Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 91; Inst., 3.8.1: “Whomever the Lord has adopted and deemed worthy of his fellowship ought to prepare themselves for a hard toilsome, and unquiet life. . . . It is the Heavenly Father’s will thus to exercise them so as to put his own children to a definite test.”
156. See pages 107-9 in chapter 3; 178 in chapter 4. Also see Inst., 3.20.17, 36, 37: “He gives the Spirit as witness to us of the same adoption, through whom with free and full voice we may cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”
158. See pages 182n156, 194, 194n202 in chapter 4; 269, 269n345, 273, and 273n355 in chapter 5.
159. It is noted that the Geneva Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession are recognized as fatherly oriented. See pages 181-82 in chapter 4; 229-30 in chapter 5. In addition to them, the 1536 Institutes is also significant in terms of treating the Fatherhood. See pages 164-65 in chapter 4.
160. For example see the Geneva Catechism (GC) 261; HC 120; Second Helvetic Conf. Chapter 5 (RBS, 2/2:281.2).
Theologically speaking, election tends to be treated in theology proper, just as we have seen in WCF 3. But, in most of the confessions referred to in this study, election is treated in the soteriological context in which it relates to the concept of adoption.

Among the confessional documents we have seen in this study, it is the *Consensus Genevensis*, which shows, in the clearest way, the inseparable relationship existing between election and adoption. The Consensus clarifies adoption as a vital part of what election signifies and re-defines the meaning of election, not just as election to salvation, but as election into God’s family through the act of adoption. Thus, the relationship between election and adoption creates the familial tone throughout its text and makes it clear that election is not a theoretical and fatal doctrine, but a warm and familial one.

Just as we have seen in the case of the Fatherhood of God, election is also a doctrine which can be an organizing principle forming a theological framework. We have seen that some confessional documents are election-oriented or have a part, in their texts, which revolves around election. In those cases, election functions as a starting point of the soteriological graces including adoption. The doctrine of election helps God’s children in the assurance of their

162. See page 263 in chapter 5. However, it is also noted that although the WCF puts election in WCF 3 treating God’s eternal decree, WCF 3-6 treats election soteriologically, relating it to adoption.
163. See pages 124 (the *Fidei ratio*) in chapter 3; 161 (1536 Inst.) in chapter 4; 226-27 (*2nd Helvetic Conf.*), 234-35 (*Thirty-Nine Arts*), 248-50 (*Canons of Dort*) in chapter 5. It is noticeable that election is treated in a Christ-centred way in the *Second Helvetic Confession* and the *Thirty-Nine Articles*. It is worth noting that the 1536 *Institutes* refers to election in the context of ecclesiology in terms of the concept of adoption. See page 163n78 in chapter 4.
164. See pages 187-88 in chapter 4; 269 (*Westminster*) in chapter 5; Leith, *Assembly at Westminster*, 99: “Adoption was emphasized by the Puritan theologians to describe the new situation of the called or the elect. The elect were now to enjoy all the rights and privileges of the children of God.”
165. See pages 189-90 in chapter 4; “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 717 [*CO 8 (CR 36)*: 114].
167. For example see “Congregation on Eternal Election,” 699 [*CO 8 (CR 36)*: 94]: “So then, we see how we should know fully the grace of God: when we are persuaded and convinced that he has not only given us faith, but has also given it to us because he chose us by his will ‘before the creation of the world.’”
salvation by clarifying the stability of their status since their sonship is based on Christ’s Sonship and rooted in God’s eternal decree.\textsuperscript{168}

c. The Image of God

The relevance the image of God has to the concept of adoption may not be as clear as it is with other relevant issues.\textsuperscript{169} Exploring the confessions in this study, however, what becomes clear of the image of God is as follows. First of all, the issue of the image of God is related to the original sonship Adam enjoyed in Eden prior to the Fall.\textsuperscript{170} But, because of the Fall, the image of God in human beings became corrupted. Then, as we have seen in some documents, the grace of adoption is related to the restoration of what was lost in Adam, namely the image of God.\textsuperscript{171} Here is the point which theologically makes the image of God relevant to the concept of adoption.

The relation of adoption to the restoration of the image of God is clearly found in the \textit{Tetrapolitan Confession}. In chapter 4, the Confession interchangeably uses the sonship of believers and the image of God as the bases of doing good works in the process of the spiritual renewal.\textsuperscript{172} It is also noted that the restoration of the image of God is related to the issue of regeneration or the new birth.\textsuperscript{173} We shall return to this issue later.

Relative to the spiritual growth of God’s children, what the image of God shows is not
only a basis for good works, but also provides a goal for them as they grow toward the perfect image of God the Son.\textsuperscript{174}

d. The Covenant

As we have seen in the first sub-question of the systematic-theological task, the confessions in this study have only scant references to the corporate aspect of adoption which is based on Romans 9:6 and related to the OT covenant focusing on the sonship of Israel.\textsuperscript{175} Yet, this corporate aspect has the potential to cover, in a historically dynamic way, the whole course of God’s salvific act which includes giving the sonship to the people of Israel, extending it, through adoption, to those who believe in Christ, and completing it at the consummation.

Because of its broad character relating to various issues in the redemptive-historical context, the covenant also can be an underlying theme forming a theological framework in terms of the concept of adoption.\textsuperscript{176} More precisely, at the beginning of the course of God’s salvific plan, election to the children of God is covenantal since it is a promise by God in Christ.\textsuperscript{177} Then, in the course of the salvation history, it becomes clear that the covenant has, in relation to the filial notion, two aspects, i.e. the sonship of Israel under the Old Testament and the sonship of the

\textsuperscript{174} Col. 1:15: “He [Christ] is the image of invisible God, the first born over all creation.” Also see the Tetrapolitan Conf. Chapter 4 (RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747).

\textsuperscript{175} See pages 299-300 in this chapter; Trumper, “Adoption: the Forgotten Doctrine,” 110-12.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 107: “A second major aspect of Calvin’s thought, in addition to the Trinitarian dimension, is what we might call the ‘covenantal’ or perhaps the ‘redemptive-historical’. By this we refer to the movement and development of thought with regard to adoption that Calvin perceives in the unfolding of redemption across the contours of covenantal disclosure.”

\textsuperscript{177} See pages 124 (Fidei ratio) in chapter 3; 187-88 (Consensus Genevensis) in chapter 4; 225-26 (2nd Helvetic Conf.), 234-35 (Thirty-Nine Arts), 263 (Westminster) in chapter 5; WCF 3-6: “As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the mean thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation.” Westminster Confession of Faith, 29-30.
adopted children under the New Testament. Since God’s covenant is consistently related to the filial notion, with the extension from Israel to those who believe in Christ, throughout the Old and New Testament eras, we do not recognize two covenants, but one covenant having two dispensations. In the New Testament era, the Incarnation plays a covenantal role for believers to participate in the Sonship of Christ. On the basis of the Incarnation, all who believe in Christ can participate in his Sonship as a promise given by God. Furthermore, the sonship entails the various privileges of God’s children and is ultimately, in terms of the covenant, related to the promise of the inheritance of the kingdom which has the futuristic aspect in the redemptive-historical perspective.

At the end of this section, it is also worth paying attention to the peculiar position which the sacraments occupy in terms of the covenant. Since the sacraments are essentially covenantal, we have seen many instances in which the sacraments, as a seal of the covenant, are related to adoption or its relevant issues, as we shall see later.

For the spiritual life of God’s children, the covenant helps them to have confidence in the certainty of God’s plan of salvation for them, which is based on his eternal promise.


179. See pages 65-67 in chapter 2; Ridderbos, Paul, 197-98; Inst., 2.10.1, 2; Westhead, op. cit., 108: “For Calvin, any transition or development in the notion of sonship across time must be set against the relationship between the Old and New Covenants. In principle these covenants are essentially one. Any movement from one to the other and the attendant changes are formal rather than substantial and do not affect the inner unity.”

180. Inst. (1536), 17-18 [CO 1 (CR 29), 30]: “And all these blessings he showers upon us for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, who . . . put on our flesh, to enter a covenant with us to join us (far separated from God by our sins) closely to him.”

181. See pages 68-70 in chapter 2; Ridderbos, Paul, 199.

182. See pages 259-62 (WCF 12) in chapter 5; Sproul, Truths We Confess, 73.

183. Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 103. In the Institutes of 1559, insists Sano, Christ’s presence in the Supper is based on the covenant which has another name “the covenant of free adoption.” Inst., 2.7.2, cf. 3.2.22. It is also worth noting that the Second Helvetic Confession relates the concept of adoption, in a covenantal way, to baptism. See pages 227-28, 227n129 in chapter 5. Regarding baptism, also see page 264 (WLC 165) in chapter 5; Ross, “Improving the Means of Grace,” 432.

184. For example, the Fidei ratio, Article 2 (RBS, 1/1:429); the Second Helvetic Conf. Chapter 20 (RBS, 2/2:327.31-33); WCF 3-6, 12.
e. The Incarnation

When it comes to the Incarnation, it is clear that the Incarnation of the Son plays a crucial role in God’s plan of salvation for his children. In particular, it is noted, in exploring the confessions, that adoption is recognized as the purpose of the Incarnation. In other words, it is also possible to recognize the Incarnation as a foundation of adoption since it is the Incarnation of the Son, through which God the Father is able to be the “Adopter” of believers. In the same lines, references to Christ’s brotherhood with us are also relevant to the Incarnation since the Incarnation makes it possible for believers to have the Son as their oldest brother. In relation to the spiritual life of believers, it is also the Incarnation which sets a basis for them to start living and growing as God’s children in his household.

Since the Incarnation sets the foundation for believers to have a deeper level of union with Christ, the issue of the union follows the Incarnation theologically.

f. Union with Christ

It is one of the characteristics in Calvin’s theology that soteriology revolves around the subject of union with Christ. As we have seen in exploring the confessions, union with Christ, not only...
in Calvin’s documents, but also in other Reformed documents, plays a crucial role in the soteriological context. In relation to the concept of adoption, it is necessary to keep in mind union with Christ as the source of the soteriological graces including adoption. There are two bonds which unite believers with Christ, namely the Holy Spirit and faith.

In exploring the confessions, we noted that they have numerous references to union with Christ in relation to adoption or its relevant issues. These pervasive references to the union are understandable in considering that it is the source of the soteriological graces. Even though union with Christ is not related to adoption in a clear way, it is also the union which creates the relational and familial tones throughout the texts of the confessional documents. In particular, the union plays a significant role when the confessions treat the sacraments as a sign and seal of our grafting into Christ, as we shall see later again in paying attention to the sacraments. Finally, it is also noted that, as we have seen a typical case in the Heidelberg

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191. As we have seen, in the Westminster Standards, the issue of union with Christ is not so clear in terms of the concept of adoption. See page 265, 265n327 in chapter 5. Instead of union with Christ, the role the effectual calling plays appears to be more significant in terms of the concept. See WSC 32: “They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.” “The Shorter Catechism,” in Westminster Confession of Faith, 296; Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 98: “The Christian life is analysed in terms of the ‘benefits’ that flow from effectual calling.”

192. See pages 114-16 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 192-93 (Conf. of the English Congre.) in chapter 4; 214-18 (Heidelberg Catech.) in chapter 5.

193. See pages 114-15 (Tetrapolitan Conf.), 124 (Fidei ratio), 134-35 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 218-19 (Heidelberg Catech.), 225n117 (2nd Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 5. Although references to union with Christ in the Thirty-Nine Articles are in passing, it is worth paying attention to Article 17, which refers to adoption in the context of election. Here, O’Donovan comments on that article saying that “predestination . . . means our participation in his [the Son’s] position as the objects of the Father’s favour from eternity.” See page 236 in chapter 5. Note: Since the confessions in the second group (chapter 4) have numerous references to the union, we do not refer to those cases.

194. Such as pages 95-96 (Sixty-Seven Arts), 133-34 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 180 (Geneva Catech.), 194-95 (Conf. of the English Congre.) in chapter 4; 225n117-18 (2nd Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 5.

195. See pages 169, 169n104, 169n107 (Geneva Conf.), 180 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 205n18 (Scottish Conf.), 264 (WLC 165) in chapter 5; WCF 28-1: “Baptism is . . . a sign and seal . . . of his ingrafting into Christ,” Westminster Confession of Faith, 113; WCF 29-1: “The Lord’s Supper . . . to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him [Christ], and with each other, as members of his mystical body.” Westminster Confession of Faith, 116; Ross, “Improving the Means of Grace,” 428-29; Spear, “The Nature of the Lord’s Supper according to Calvin and the Westminster Assembly,” 360.
Catechism, union with Christ theologically has the potential to form a theological framework.\footnote{196}{See pages 218-19 in chapter 5.}

Regarding the spiritual life of the adopted children, the role union with Christ plays is critical because it is this union, through which they participate in the person of Christ. They receive from him all the graces and benefits necessary for them to mature in God’s household.\footnote{197}{See pages 219-20 in chapter 5; Van Vlastuin, “Doctrine of Scripture in the Heidelberg Catechism,” 43; Van Vlastuin, “Personal Renewal between Heidelberg and Westminster,” 52; Latzel, Theologische Grundzüge, 52.}

g. Justification

From the perspective of the concept of adoption, justification is defined as the act of accepting believers into a new status as God’s children.\footnote{198}{See pages 124, 124n139 (Fidei ratio), 136, 136n187 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 161-62 (1536 Inst.), 186n172 (Consensus Genevensis) in chapter 4; Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 95; Inst., 3.11.2: “We explain justification simply as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as righteous men. And we say that it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.”}

In seeing that the act of acceptance is mentioned in many confessions, it is clear that there is an inseparable relationship between justification and adoption. But, we need to be careful in understanding this relationship. On the one hand, justification and adoption share some significant issues, such as their declarative aspect and the forensic status brought by being received into God’s family.\footnote{199}{See pages 120-21 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 161-62 (1536 Inst.), 194 (Conf. of the English Congre.) in chapter 4; 214n72 (Heidelberg Catech.), 250, 250n235 (Canons of Dort), 260-62 (WCF 12) in chapter 5; Spear, Faith of Our Fathers, 66: “Adoption resembles justification in that, in human practice, both involve legal processes. . . . Adoption involves a legal pronouncement that a person who is not a child by birth now possesses all the rights and responsibilities of a son or daughter in the adopting family.”}

These issues shared by the two make them look synonymous. However, on the other hand, the concept of adoption entails some distinct aspects justification does not have in a clear way, such as its relational and personal aspect, and its ethical aspect which is shared with sanctification.\footnote{200}{Because of this, in the past, adoption had been doctrinally subsumed by F. Turretin under justification, and this understanding was influential, as we have seen in pages 22-25 in chapter 1.}

\footnote{201}{See pages 120-21, 120n126 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 262n311 (Westminster) in chapter 5; Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 99: “Adoption is a synonym for justification, but it expresses personal nuances and dimensions of the experience that justification does not.”}
In seeing these similarities as well as distinct features, it is theologically necessary to understand the relationship between justification and adoption in a broader context of soteriology. This relationship should be understood not as existing only between the two, but as being a part of the relationship between adoption and the twofold grace, namely justification and sanctification. As the confessions show, these three need to be grouped together in terms of the concept of adoption in the soteriological context. Then, when delving into the close relationship amongst them as a group, we are further led to realize that justification with sanctification centers on soteriology, whereas adoption, because of union with Christ, is woven into the entire redemptive-historical framework. In this sense, the theological scope of adoption is broader than that of justification. On the other hand, justification as the acceptance into God’s family can be recognized as the official starting point and basis of their status, although God already predestined them to be adopted into his household. Because of this broad character of adoption, Turretin is wrong in recognizing adoption as a merely positive aspect of justification. WCF 12 also needs more clarity since its leading phrase “All those that are justified” may be misleading us to recognize adoption as a mere effect of justification.

h. Sanctification

While justification is defined as the acceptance into the new status as God’s children, sanctification is the growth of those adopted on the basis of their new status and entails the communal aspect in God’s family. Because of this, sanctification, in the context of adoption,

202. See pages 126, 141 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 265n329, 266, 268-69 (Westminster) in chapter 5; Hendry, The Westminster Confession for Today, 140; Spear, op. cit., 73; Sano, op. cit., 95; Inst., 3.11.1: “By partaking of him, we principally receive a double grace.”

203. Gal. 4:4-5; WCF 12; pages 3-5 in chapter 1.

204. Page 259 in chapter 5.

205. See pages 97-98 (Sixty-Seven Arts), 117 (Tetrapolitan Conf.), 132-33 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 162n72 (1536 Inst.), 188n178, 189 (Consensus Genevensis) in chapter 4; 234-35 (Thirty-Nine Arts), 260-61 (WCF 12), 269n345 (Westminster) in chapter 5.
soteriologically includes both the forensic and familial aspects in a balanced way. Also, since
their growth continually takes place during the whole course of the adoptive life, it is clear that
sanctification is an ongoing process towards the completion of the adoptive sonship. In seeing
this broad context, it is natural for sanctification to have various aspects in the
redeemper-historical perspective.

For instance, it is crucial for God’s children, in their growing process, to receive the
fatherly care from God. The Father cares for his adopted children, in various ways, through
feeding, training, preserving them, and listening to their prayers. During this long journey of
their growth, the church (‘the household of God’, 1 Tim. 3:15) continues to be the context in
which God’s children grow and mature. Furthermore, as we shall see in the following sections,
some spiritual means need to be used for their growth, such as prayer, baptism, and the Supper.

Ethically speaking, sanctification is related to the change of hearts in the adopted
children on the basis of their status. More concretely, it has relevance to restoring the image of
God and renewing the nature in those children. Here is the contact point in which adoption
can be connected to regeneration or the new birth, which is an ethical issue. We shall return to
this issue later, as this section clarifies the relation of adoption to the new birth.

What this section describes is applicable to the spiritual life of God’s children as well.
Sanctification is simply defined as the Christian life, in which adopted children grow and mature,

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206. See pages 117-18, 117n114 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 195-96 (Conf. of the English
Congr.) in chapter 4; Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 95.
207. See pages 76-85 in chapter 2; 260-62 (WCF 12) in chapter 5.
208. See pages 117 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 260-61 (WCF 12) in chapter 5; Sano, op.
cit., 89.
209. See pages 97-98 (Sixty-Seven Arts) in chapter 3; Sano, op. cit., 101; Inst., 4.1.1.
210. Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 99; “Adoption also presupposes the changed heart of
sanctification, but again this is expressed in a more personal way.”
211. See pages 117-18 (Tetrapolitan Conf.), 119-23 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 173
(Geneva Conf.) in chapter 4; 207-8, 208n45 (Scottish Conf.), 252n242 and 253 (Canons of Dort) in chapter
5.
212. However, the growth of the adopted children itself is distinct from the new birth since their
growth takes place in the context of their filial status based on the grace of adoption.
living with other brothers and sisters in the household of God, towards the complete realization of their sonship.

i. The Spirit of Adoption

In terms of the concept of adoption, the Spirit is recognized as the “Usher” of adoption. In order to clarify how the Spirit works for bringing God’s children into his family and keeping them in the adoptive life, there are six issues we need to note here.

First, the Spirit of adoption as a bond of union with Christ unites people to the Son for participating in his Sonship. By uniting them, he also helps them to receive the soteriological graces including the grace of adoption. Second, the Spirit of adoption helps believers to know God as the Father for having the filial relationship with him. Third, it is also the Spirit, as the witness of adoption, who leads believers to have the filial consciousness, telling them who they are. Fourth, the Spirit, in order for those adopted to grow and mature, teaches them to respond to their Father through prayers. Fifth, during the course of the adoptive life, it is the Spirit who leads them to be assured as God’s children and guides them to live out their faith in him. Sixth, the sacraments are the means of grace, in addition to prayer, which the Spirit uses for sealing their adoptive status and nourishing them in the context of the church.

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214. As we have seen, there is another bond, faith, which is also a gift from the Spirit. See pages 115-16 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 192-93 (Conf. of the English Congr.) in chapter 4; 214-18 (Heidelberg Catech.) in chapter 5; Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 87; Inst., 3.1.4.
215. See page 125 (Fidei ratio) in chapter 3.
216. See pages 116 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 193 (Conf. of the English Congr.) in chapter 4; 207-8 (Scottish Conf.), 250-51 (Canons of Dort), 263, 264n322 (Westminster) in chapter 5; Canlis, op. cit., 23: “The Spirit tells us not so much what to do, but what we are.”
217. See pages 125 (Fidei ratio), 135 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 178 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 236-37 (Thirty-Nine Arts) in chapter 5; Inst., 3.20.36, 37: “He gives the Spirit as witness to us of the same adoption, through whom with free and full voice we may cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”
Thus, the things in which the Spirit is involved are so varied and rich that the issue of the Spirit of adoption also can be an underlying theme relating to other issues in the theological framework, just as the themes of the Fatherhood and union with Christ are. In other words, from the perspective of the spiritual life, the Spirit is the crucial Partner who lives in God’s children, helping and providing them with all they need throughout their spiritual journey towards the completion of the kingdom.220

j. Prayer

In exploring the confessions, there are three means of grace which have significant relevance to the concept of adoption, i.e. prayer, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper.221 In considering that divine adoption itself is a grace from God, it is natural that the concept of adoption has relevance to each of them.

When it comes to prayer, there are three issues we need to take into account. First, as just mentioned above, the Spirit of adoption leads those adopted to pray to God the Father. However, not only the Spirit, but the fact of adoption itself also leads them to pray. More precisely, through the grace of adoption, what is communicated to those children is the sheer grace given by the Father for delivering those who were slaves to sins and bringing them into his household as its members. As an immediate reaction to this amazing grace, it is natural for them to be led to pray to the Father for expressing their gratitude.222

220. For example, see GC 90-91; HC 53.
221. WLC 154: “Q. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation? A. The outward and ordinary means . . . are all his ordinances; especially the word, the sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.” “The Larger Catechism,” 246; Ross, “Improving the Means of Grace,” 423.
222. See pages 163 (1536 Inst.), 176 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 260-61 (WCF 12) in chapter 5; WLC 189: “A. The preface of the Lord’s prayer . . . teaches us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other child-like dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also, to pray with and for others.” “The Larger Catechism,” 272; Spear, Faith of Our Fathers, 68-69: “The Confession [WCF 12] treats adoption as a strong encouragement to prayer. . . .
Second, in order to live and grow as God’s children, it is necessary for them to pray. Until the completion of their sonship in the kingdom, those adopted need to keep praying on the spiritual journey towards the consummation. In this sense, prayer is a means for them to grow. On that journey, when facing their weaknesses, physical and spiritual needs, and sins committed by them, those adopted are led or compelled to ask the Father for their various necessities. Through this process of praying for their needs, the relationship between the Father and his children is deepened and developed. This relationship is essentially not between only the two, but Trinitarian between the Father, the Mediator, the Spirit of adoption, and those adopted.

Third, prayer has an extrovert nature leading those adopted to live out their faith on the earth. Whereas prayer helps God’s children to have fellowship with the triune God, it also leads them to love and serve various neighbors around them. Ultimately speaking, praying for neighbors is for the purpose of completing the kingdom.

As described throughout this section prayer is the spiritual breath by which they live out their lives as God’s children.

k. Baptism

When it comes to baptism in the confessions in this study, there are three issues we need to point out here. First, in the context of ecclesiology, we need to value baptism as the initiation of

Understanding the doctrine of adoption will help us to pray in the right way, confident of the love of our heavenly Father.”

223. See pages 163-64 (1536 Inst.), 176, 178 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 221n103 (Heidelberg Catech.), 225n119 (2nd Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 5. Although Luther’s catechisms do not have the concept of adoption, it is noted that prayer plays a key role in the context of the life of God’s children. See pages 109, 138 in chapter 3.

224. See pages 164-65 (1536 Inst.), 178n142, 182 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4. Also see Inst., 3.20.36, 37.

225. See pages 178n143 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 251n241 (Canons of Dort) in chapter 5; WLC 189: “A. The preface of the Lord’s prayer . . . teaches us . . . to pray with and for others.” “The Larger Catechism,” 272.


227. Although we focus on baptism in terms of adoption here, baptism is often related to the
adoption, witnessing, as a covenantal sign and seal, that believers are brought into the household of God. Second, baptism is recognized as a means for nurturing God’s children. More concretely, baptism, through reminding them of their identity, encourages them to live as God’s children on their journey to the consummation. Third, in exploring the confessions, it is noted that baptism shows the communal and relational aspect which is based on union with Christ. In other words baptism at a deeper level helps God’s children to remember the firm foundation on which their status and lives stand as believers.

1. The Lord’s Supper

Since the spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper tends to be particularly emphasized in the Reformed tradition, it is noted in the confessions that the treatment of the Supper basically has the relational tone. In order to identify the Supper in terms of the concept of adoption, there are two issues we need to take into account. First, in terms of the concept, the most significant issue in the Supper is that God uses it for the fatherly nourishment of those adopted. Here, the familial or organic tone in the Supper is even more emphasized than the relational one which is related to union with Christ. Second, the Supper is recognized as a means of grace which Christ,  

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spiritual renewal of believers. See pages 104 (Luther’s catechisms), 119 (Tetrapolitan Conf.) in chapter 3; 218 (HC 70, Heidelberg Catech.), 228n131 (2nd Helvetic Conf.), 235, 235n161 (Thirty-Nine Arts) in chapter 5.

228. Pages 133n177, 135-36 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 169 (Geneva Conf.), 179, 182n156, 193n200 (Geneva Catech.), 193, 195n209 (Conf. of the English Congre.) in chapter 4; 227-28, 227n129 (2nd Helvetic Conf.), 235 (Thirty-Nine Arts), 264 (WLC 165) in chapter 5.

229. See pages 169 (Geneva Conf.) in chapter 4; 235n162 (Thirty-Nine Arts), 269, 269n344 (WLC 165) in chapter 5; Ross, “Improving the Means of Grace,” 428-29: Baptism “signifies that we belong to the Lord and are obligated to live as his children, faithfully keeping his covenant.”

230. See pages 119 (Tetrapolitan Conf.), 133 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 180n148 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 205n18 (Scottish Conf.), 218 (Heidelberg Catech.), 235 (Thirty-Nine Arts), 264, 269, 269n344 (WLC 165) in chapter 5; Inst., 4.15.1, 4.17.1; Ross, op. cit., 428-29.

231. Pages 112-13 (Tetrapolitan Conf.), 123, 123n135 (Fidei ratio), 131-32 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 169n104 (Geneva Conf.), 179 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 205n18 (Scottish Conf.), 217-18, 218n91 (Heidelberg Catech.), 268, 268n341, 269n345 (Westminster) in chapter 5.

232. See pages 179, 182n156 (Geneva Catech.), 194 (Conf. of the English Congre.), 195n209 (Instruction of 1537) in chapter 4; 269, 269n345 (Westminster) in chapter 5.

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through the Spirit, uses for strengthening the union he has with God’s children and leading them to grow.\textsuperscript{233} Here, the spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper plays a crucial role, creating the relational as well as organic atmosphere. Thus the Supper is recognized as spiritual nourishment the triune God uses for nurturing his adopted children in the fellowship of his household.

m. Assurance\textsuperscript{234}

In terms of the concept of adoption, what assurance means is the assurance of the filial status of those adopted. In the context of the adoptive life, the assurance of God’s children is inseparably related to the concept of adoption because it plays a significant role for sustaining those adopted on their journey to the consummation until their sonship is fulfilled.\textsuperscript{235} There are four issues we need to point out here. Although those four issues are closely connected with one another, it is necessary to refer to each respectively in order to understand them in a clearer way.

First, in some confessions, the assurance of those adopted is based on election to the filial status.\textsuperscript{236} More precisely, God’s children are assured by understanding the stability and certainty of the adoptive status based on God’s eternal election. This way of treating assurance is particularly found in confessional documents treating the concept of adoption in an

\textsuperscript{233} See pages 119, 121-22, 122n131 (Tetrapolitan Conf.), 130n165, 134-35, 134n181, 135n183 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 169n104 (Geneva Conf.), 180, 180nn148-49, 182 (Geneva Catech.) in chapter 4; 205n18 (Scottish Conf.), 218, 218n91 (Heidelberg Catech.), 225n118 (2nd Helvetic Conf.), 232n150, 237, 237n174 (Thirty-Nine Arts), 265n327, 265n330, 269n345 (Westminster) in chapter 5; Spear, “The Nature of the Lord’s Supper,” 374-76: “The Supper is a means by which the believer’s union with Christ is strengthened.”

\textsuperscript{234} In exploring the confessions in the first group, it is noted that there are no documents which, in a significant way, treat the assurance of God’s children, except Luther. What this possibly indicates is that the assurance of those adopted is developed by Calvin, and passed on to the confessions in the third group. When it comes to Luther, although he does not use the concept of adoption in his catechisms, he refers to the assurance which God’s children have on the basis of their filial relationship with God. See page 107n68 in chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{235} See page 251n239 (Canons of Dort) in chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{236} Pages 188, 188n176 (Consensus Genevensis) in chapter 4; 250-51, 250n237, (Canons of Dort) in chapter 5. Also see Inst., 3.24.5: “Those whom God has adopted as his sons are said to have been chosen not in themselves but in his Christ. [Eph. 1:4].” Sano points out that in Calvin’s thought, certainty or assurance of election needs to be found in Christ. Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 100.
election-oriented way. Second, the grace of adoption itself gives assurance to God’s children, leading them to thank and pray to the heavenly Father, who adopts those who were slaves to sins and brings them into his household. In this case, the concept of adoption itself plays a role as a basis of their assurance. Third, the Spirit of adoption is emphasized, in some confessions, as assuring those adopted of their filial status or leading them to have the filial consciousness. Finally, throughout the course of the adoptive life, it is necessary to pay attention to the role the sacraments as a sign and seal play for helping God’s children to be assured of their filial status and the blessings which are connected to the status. As mentioned above, the Spirit uses the sacraments as means of grace for giving assurance to those adopted.

In short the assurance God’s children enjoy helps them to keep moving forward throughout the spiritual journey towards the goal which is the full inheritance of the kingdom.

n. The Inheritance of the Kingdom

The concept of adoption has the futuristic aspect, and it becomes clear when the concept is related to the issue of the inheritance of the kingdom. This is because, as WCF 12 clarifies, those adopted are, because of their status, “sealed to the day of redemption” and “inherit the promise, as heirs of everlasting salvation.” Thus, the issue of the inheritance is a crucial part of the eschatological aspect of the redemptive-historical framework into which the concept is woven.

237. See page 188 (Consensus Genevensis) in chapter 4.
238. See pages 163-64 (1536 Inst.), 188 (Consensus Genevensis) in chapter 4; 264n322 (Westminster) in chapter 5.
239. See pages 193 (Confession of the English Congre.) in chapter 4; 250-51, 251n238 (Canons of Dort), 263, 264n322, 269n346 (Westminster) in chapter 5; Westhead, “Adoption,” 102.
240. See pages 205n18 (Scottish Conf.) 228n131 (2nd Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 5.
241. See pages 261-62 (WCF 12) in chapter 5; Spear, Faith of Our Fathers, 67. Also see pages162n73 (1536 Inst.) in chapter 4; 217n84 (Heidelberg Catech.) in chapter 5; HC 59: “Q. What good does it do you, however, to believe all this? A. In Christ I am right with God and heir to life everlasting.” Also see Inst., 3.18.2-3; Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 94.
242. See pages 5-6 in chapter 1; 161n69 (1536 Inst.), 188n178 (Consensus Genevensis) in chapter 4; Cara, “Redemptive-Historical Themes,” 73. Note: The Consensus treats the inheritance in the context of Rom. 9:6-20 treating the covenant.
The adoptive sonship is perfected when those adopted receive the promised inheritance at the consummation.243

The promise of the inheritance to those adopted is theologically identical with becoming heirs of the kingdom. But, what the status of heirs, given by the Father, means is not merely to become heirs, but to become joint-heirs of the Son through being united to Christ by the Spirit of adoption as the bond.244 Here, it becomes clear that the issue of the inheritance is not only eschatological, but also very much Trinitarian.245 The triune God has been at work for those adopted to receive the inheritance at the consummation.

In the context of ecclesiology, the sacraments play an important role in terms of the inheritance. As a seal and sign the sacraments are to prepare God’s children for “the day of redemption” and to seal them to be joint-heirs with the Son in the completed kingdom.246 This inheritance is the goal towards which their spiritual journey is heading.

2. Clarifying the Relation of the Three Issues to the Concept of Adoption

a. The Twofold Grace

In the theological framework, it is necessary to note that there is a particularly inseparable relationship between adoption and the twofold grace consisting of justification and sanctification.247 Because of the close relationship between them, it is understandable that they appear to be synonymous, and adoption can be theologically subsumed under the twofold grace.

244. See pages 132-33, 133n175, 135 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 162-63 (1536 Inst.), 193 (Conf. of the English Congre.) in chapter 4.
245. See pages 125 (Fidei ratio) in chapter 3; 162-63, 162n75 (1536 Inst.), 193-94 (Conf. of the English Congre.) in chapter 4; 250-51 (Canons of Dort), 261-62 (Westminster) in chapter 5; Sproul, Truths We Confess, 73.
246. See pages 227-28, 227n129 (2nd Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 5.
247. See pages 73-76 in chapter 2; 319-24 in this chapter.
However, it needs to be emphasized that adoption is distinct from the twofold grace. Although they are inseparably related to each other, adoption is theologically recognized as broader than the twofold grace in seeing that it is woven into the full framework of the redemptive-historical framework and unites justification and sanctification as the twofold grace, as we shall see in what follows.

In the context of soteriology and ecclesiology in which the concept of adoption can be pervasively treated, it is theologically possible to see two aspects of the concept, i.e. the adoptive act and life. When it comes to the adoptive act, the focus of the concept is on the forensic feature of the act, and the act is closely related to justification, which is also characterized as forensic. In regard to the life of those adopted, its ethical and relational features need to be emphasized since it has more relevance to sanctification in which God’s children grow and mature in the communal and familial context in the household of God.

Nevertheless, we still need to be careful not to separate the concept of adoption into two parts, although its two aspects are legitimate. While Paul treats the concept of adoption with the one word ‘huiothesia’, theologically the oneness of adoption still needs to be more emphasized than the two aspects of adoption. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Calvin himself does not refer to the act and life in a separate way because the concept functions as a link uniting justification and sanctification as the twofold grace. If adoption is separated into two parts, it will lose its potential to be an underlying theme throughout the framework and be easily

248. See pages 73-76 in chapter 2.
249. See page 322 in this chapter.
251. See pages 321-22 in this chapter; Spear, Faith of Our Fathers, 66.
252. See pages 322-24 in this chapter; Leith, Assembly at Westminster, 99.
253. See pages 2-6 in chapter 1.
254. See pages 75-76 in chapter 2; Billings, Union with Christ, 28; Zachman, The Assurance of Faith, 247: “sanctification can be subordinated to justification regarding the basis of our adoption, whereas justification can be subordinated to sanctification regarding the goal of our adoption.”
subsumed under justification or sanctification. In addition to this, the inseparable relationship between justification and sanctification would be damaged by separating adoption into two parts.

In fact, although the relationship between the twofold grace and adoption appears to be synonymous, the theological scope of adoption is broader than the twofold grace because it presents a theological framework covering from election through the consummation. Theologically speaking, the true synonymous relationship exists not between adoption and the twofold grace, but between adoption and union with Christ as the source of the soteriological graces including the twofold grace and adoption. As we have seen in the framework of *huiοθεσία* and Calvin’s understanding of the concept of adoption as a whole, the concept is always in company with union with Christ, forming a redemptive-historical framework. We have seen at the beginning of the salvation history that God the Father predestined believers to be his children not in themselves, but in Christ, the Son.255 We have also seen that the adoptive sonship is to be elevated to a higher status than the original sonship of Adam, by participating in the Sonship of Christ and conforming to him.256 In terms of the concept of adoption, the oneness of the covenant of grace is also based on Christ.257 God’s children receive various soteriological graces including justification and sanctification, by participating in the Sonship through union with Christ.258 It is also this union, which helps those adopted to grow and mature in the context of the church as the household of God.259 In relation to the sacraments, while they have significant relevance to the concept of adoption in the context of the church, they function, as a sign and seal, to strengthen the union which God’s children have with Christ.260 Finally, when the adopted sonship is completed, those adopted will enjoy their inheritance of the kingdom as

255. Pages 63-64 in chapter 2; 314-16, 315n162 in this chapter.
256. Pages 64-65 in chapter 2; 316-17 in this chapter.
257. Pages 67 in chapter 2; 317-18 in this chapter.
258. Pages 67-76 in chapter 2; 319-24 in this chapter.
259. Pages 76-85 in chapter 2; 323, 326 in this chapter.
260. Pages 81-82, 81n11 in chapter 2; 326-28 in this chapter.
joint-heirs of the Son.\textsuperscript{261} Regarding this synonymous relationship, the confessions in this study are basically in agreement with Calvin\textsuperscript{262} on this function between adoption and union with Christ forming a redemptive-historical framework. Thus, it is concluded that whereas adoption is inseparably related to the twofold grace functioning as a link between justification and sanctification, the theological scope of adoption is broader than that of the twofold grace.

b. The New Birth

As we have seen in exploring the confessions of the second and third groups, the new birth is related to the restoration of the human nature or the image of God in believers.\textsuperscript{263} This restoration is not a once-for-all event or act, but an ongoing process.\textsuperscript{264} Here is a contact point in which the new birth has relevance to sanctification, which is defined as the growing process of God’s children on the basis of their filial status in terms of the concept of adoption.\textsuperscript{265}

Since the context of the Pauline Epistles having huiothesia does not refer to the new birth, it is difficult to place it theologically, in an orderly way, into the framework of huiothesia. However, in seeing those confessions treating the concept of adoption and the new birth in their texts, it is possible to analyze, at least, the relation of adoption to the new birth as being found in the confessions.\textsuperscript{266}

In exploring some significant cases in the confessions which treat the new birth or regeneration as the restoration of our nature, it is noted that they basically have two issues in common. The first issue is the Spirit’s renewing power working in believers, and the second one

\textsuperscript{261} Pages 85-88 in chapter 2; 329-30 in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{262} Pages 196-98 in chapter 4; 272-73 in chapter 5; 283 in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{263} See pages 316-17 in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{265} See pages 322-24 in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{266} See page 281n36 in this chapter.
is the filial status or the freedom which is entailed in the status of God’s children.  

For instance, it is worth paying attention to Chapters 3 and 13 in the *Scottish Confession*. In Chapter 3, the Confession, after pointing out that man is incapable of renewing himself, refers to the crucial necessity of the Spirit’s work leading us to be regenerated. Then, in Chapter 13, the Confession clarifies that, once God’s children receive the Spirit, it becomes possible for them to be renewed by the Spirit on the basis of their status: “For how soon that ever the Spirite of the Lord Jesus (quhilk Goddis elect children ressaif be trew faith) takis possessioun in the hart of ony man, as sone dos he regenerate and renew the same man.” Besides the *Scottish* Confession, other documents, such as the *Second Helvetic Confession*, the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, the *Canons of Dort*, and the *WCF*, also make it clear that it is the work of the

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267. Spear, *Faith of Our Fathers*, 68. As Spear points out, the grace of adoption has significant relevance to freedom based on the privileges those adopted have.


269. “As soon as” or “once”, *RBS*, 2/1:261.


272. Ibid.

273. (2nd Helvetic Conf.) Chapter 20 (of baptism): “For we are all born in the pollution of sin and are the children of wrath. But God, who is rich in mercy, freely cleanses us from our sins by the blood of his Son, and in him adopts us to be his sons [in hoc adoptat nos in filios], and by a holy covenant joins us to himself, and enriches us with various gifts, that we might live a new life [possimus novam vivre vitam]. . . . For inwardly we are regenerated, purified, and renewed by God through the Holy Spirit.” *CCF*, 2: 509.3; *RBS*, 2/2:327.35-328.5.

274. (Thirty-Nine Arts) Article 27 (of baptism): Baptisme . . . is also a signe of regeneration or newe byrth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receaue baptisme rightly, are grafted into the church: the promises of the forgeuenesse of sinne, and of our adoption to be the sonnes of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and seal’d: the faith is confyrmed: and grace increased by virtue of prayer vnto God.” *Evans and Wright*, 167.

275. (Canons of Dort) III/IV-10 (of conversion as the work of God): “It must be credited to God: just as from eternity he chose his own in Christ, so within time he effectively calls them, grants them faith and repentance, and having rescued them from the dominion of darkness, brings them into the kingdom of his Son.” *CCF*, 2:585; *Bakhuizen*, 254. III/IV-11 (of the Holy Spirit’s work in conversion): “When God carries out this good pleasure in his chosen ones . . . by the effective operation of the same regenerating Spirit, he also penetrates into the inmost being of man, opens the closed heart, softens the hard heart, and circumcises the heart that is uncircumcised. He infuses new qualities [novas qualitates] into the will, making the dead will alive, the evil one good, the unwilling one willing, and the stubborn one
Spirit which makes God’s children renewed on the basis of their status or the freedom given to them because of their sonship.

In short, what these cases theologically signify is the point that the Spirit and the filial status entailing the freedom from sin, provide room for believers to be renewed in terms of the human nature. Because of the Fall in Adam, they were slaves to sin and incapable of recovering themselves to the original human nature. But, after being delivered from sin, they become free as God’s children and are led freely by the Spirit to be restored to the original image of God. Given this, the meaning of the new birth or regeneration as the restoration of the human nature is coming closer to what sanctification, as the growth of God’s children, means theologically. As already mentioned, it is the role of adoption which gives the filial status to believers. Then, on the basis of that status, those adopted can grow and mature, being conformed to the Son through the Spirit. In terms of the new birth found in the confessions, it is also this filial status which provides freedom for those who were slaves to sin to be restored by the Spirit to the original human nature, namely the image of God, which is shared with Christ.

Because of the limited number of cases in the confessions which treat the new birth in relation to the filial status, the subject mentioned above at this point is all that can be said in terms compliant. CCF, 2: 586; Bakhuizen, 255. Note: as we have seen, the phrases “he chose his own in Christ” (III/IV-10) and the “good pleasure in his chosen ones” (III/IV-11) have significant relevance to the adoptive status and remind us of it. See pages 248, 248n225 in chapter 5.

276. WCF 12: “They [those justified] are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as a father.” Westminster Confession of Faith, 60-61; WCF 13-1: “They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them.” Ibid., 61-62. Note: In the WCF, the effectual calling is a starting point of the soteriological graces including adoption. See WCF 10; page 320n191 in this chapter.

277. Wim Verboom, “Regeneration According to the Heidelberg Catechism,” in The Spirituality of the HC, 116: “The expression of regeneration is used in the HC thrice, in HC 8, 71, and 73. It can be characterized as the spiritual renewal of a person by the Holy Spirit with the aim of restoration of the image of God. . . . Regeneration, sanctification, conversion and gratitude are closely related. Each presents a certain aspect of renewal of man by the Holy Spirit.”

278. See page 281n36 in this chapter.

279. Col. 1:15: “He [Christ] is the image of invisible God, the first born over all creation.”
of the relation of adoption to the new birth in the confessions. Therefore, as we carry out a part of the systematic-theological task, it is further necessary to return to the Scriptures to see how they, in the context of the Pauline Epistles, understand the new birth. As mentioned above, the fact that all the biblical contexts using *huiothesia* do not refer to the new birth makes it difficult to put the new birth in an orderly way theologically in relation to the concept of adoption. However, here is one thing we can do; it is possible, at least, to see how Paul uses the concept of the new birth in his Epistles, even though it is detached from the contexts using *huiothesia*. This helps us to see whether or not what we observed in the confessions has relevance to the Pauline usage of the new birth.

Paul only once uses biblical terminology relevant to the new birth, in Titus 3:5. It is a Greek word *palingenesia*: “He [God] saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through [dia] the washing of rebirth [*palingenesia*] and renewal by the Holy Spirit [anakainóseós Pneumatos Hagiou].” Here, our exegetical research shows four issues which are relevant to the present study in terms of the Pauline new birth. First, it is worth noting that the Greek word ‘*palingenesia*’ is, in its definition, related not to man’s status but to man’s nature, although it can be argued whether or not the “rebirth” is a proper translation to the word. Regarding the issue of its translation, the choice of “rebirth” emphasizing the concept of “again” lacks convincing support in both Scriptural data and extra-biblical literatures in pre-Christian history. A more convincing translation is a word

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describing the starting event of a new life in God and emphasizing its newness, such as “conversion,” “new birth,” or “new beginning.” At any rate, it is recognized that the core meaning of *palingenesia* is biblically related to man’s nature or inner life in the context of the new life of believers. Here we see relevance to our observation of the use of the new birth in the confessions.

Second, it noted that in the context of Titus 3:5, Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as the main agent of bringing about *‘palingenesia’* and *‘anakainóseós’* [renewal in NIV]. In this context, it is possible to argue whether or not the *‘Pneumatos Hagiot’* in genitive case is grammatically linked to both *‘palingenesia’* and *‘anakainóseós’* or only to the latter which is put just before the Spirit. Considering that here the preposition *‘dia’* grammatically governs both of these two words in terms of its syntax, now most commentators are in consensus that the Spirit works as the Agent of these two things in this biblical context. Here, it is important to note this point because our research also shows that the new birth found in the confessions takes place in the work of the Spirit, as we have seen.

Third, in terms of the grammatical structure of Titus 3:5, it is recognized that the two words *‘palingenesia’* and *‘anakainóseós’* function together as a unit sharing similar meanings with each other. This unit indicates that the thing happening in this context is related to the sphere of sanctification, although it can be argued whether or not its emphasis is on an initial event of

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284. TDNT Abridged, s.v. “anakainósis”: “This word, meaning ‘renewal,’ is used in Rom. 12:2 for the renewal of mind and will that we must undergo, through the work of the Spirit (Rom. 8:9ff.). . . . The reference in Tit. 3:5 is to the first and unique renewing, the creation of a life that was not there before, which is the work of the Holy Spirit associated with baptism.” Yet, in terms of the meaning of the word, the following two issues here can be argued: 1) Is the “first and unique renewing” an once-for-all event or a process and 2) Is the work of the Spirit in this context is associated with baptism? Regarding 2), some commentators understand the “washing” not as baptism, but as ceremonial cleansing. See Mounce, op. cit., 448; Towner, op. cit., 781. See Knight, op. cit., 342. Knight understands the washing as spiritual cleansing because of the reference to the Spirit in the following context.

285. Knight, op. cit., 344; Mounce, op. cit., 450; Towner, op. cit., 783.
new life or on its ongoing process.\textsuperscript{286}

Fourth, Titus 3:7 in the following context, Paul clearly refers to the issue of “becoming heirs” of eternal life as the goal of salvation. This context also clarifies that believers will reach this goal through the grace of justification. In Titus 3:7, Paul states: “So that, having been justified \textit{[dikaiothentes]} by his grace, we might become heirs \textit{[kléronomoi]}\textsuperscript{287} having the hope of eternal life.” Here the use of ‘\textit{kléronomoi}’ is suggestive since this word is also used by Paul in Romans 8:17, in which he refers to the inheritance of the kingdom in terms of the concept of adoption. With a reference to justification in 3:7, this makes it possible for us to assume that ‘\textit{palingenesia}’ in Titus 3:5 has relevance to the filial notion\textsuperscript{288} in the course of the redemptive-historical perspective.\textsuperscript{289}

In conclusion, regarding our observation in the confessions, the use of the new birth in the confessions has some significant overlap with the Pauline usage of ‘\textit{palingenesia}’ in the following four points. First, both have relevance to not man’s status but man’s nature. Second, the two are theologically related to the work of the Holy Spirit. Third, the two have significant relevance to the sphere of sanctification. Fourth, they have relevance to the issue of the

\textsuperscript{286} Mounce, \textit{Pastoral Epistles}, 450: “Knight notes that most who see \textit{anakainóseis}, ‘renewal,’ as dependent on \textit{dia}, ‘through,’ view sanctification as progressive. But the creed [the context of Tit. 3:5] views salvation as an accomplished fact, so it must refer to positional sanctification (which may by implication have an ongoing effect in the believer’s life; cf. use of verbal cognate \textit{anakainoun}, ‘to renew,’ in Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:10).” See Knight, \textit{Pastoral Epistles}, 343.

\textsuperscript{287} \textit{TDNT Abridged}, s.v. “\textit{kléronomos}”: “A Special NT sense may be seen in the parable of Mk. 12:1ff., where the Son is the heir and the inheritance is the kingdom. This links sonship and inheritance much more closely than in the OT and Judaism. . . . Inheritance is by a new creation (1 Cor. 15:5), or by adoption (Rom. 8:23), and such it is an object of hope. Salvation (Heb. 1:4), glory (Rom. 8:17), redemption (8:23), grace (1 Pet. 3:7), blessing (3:9), in sum, eternal life (Tit. 3:7), constitutes the content of the inheritance.”

\textsuperscript{288} Knight, op. cit., 346-47: “It is used figuratively of one who as God’s son will receive something as a possession from him and who now stands in that privileged and anticipatory position.” Also see Moune, op. cit., 451.

\textsuperscript{289} Towner, \textit{Timothy and Titus}, 788: “By means of the concept, a writer could establish the tension between the presentness and futurity of salvation at once. Although this status (heir) has already been conferred by the declaration of the Father (Gal. 4:7), the believer has not yet come fully into the inheritance. . . . It is typical of Paul to associate the \textit{kléronomoi} status with such ideas as the work of the Spirit and justification.”
inheritance of the kingdom, and this makes it possible to assume that the Pauline new birth also has relevance to the redemptive historical perspective. However, regarding the third point, we have another thing to note. If the emphasis of the unit consisting of ‘palingenesia’ and ‘anakainóseós’ is not on an ongoing process, but on an initial event in the course of sanctification, we will be led to conclude that there is a difference of emphasis between the Pauline new birth and the new birth in the confessions, affirming that the concept of the new birth found in the confessions tends to focus on the ongoing, growing process in the sphere of sanctification.

c. Deification

Here, we consider how the issue of deification needs to be understood theologically in relation to the concept of adoption. As we have seen in chapter 1, deification is a significant issue in the church fathers in terms of the concept. However, we do not have enough references to it in the confessions in this study, and this makes it difficult to analyze deification in the context of the confessions during the Reformation Period. In addition to this, it appears that no relevant reference to deification is found in the biblical contexts of huiiothesia. This also makes it difficult to treat deification from the biblical perspective of adoption.

However, here is one thing we can do; it is possible to look into Calvin as the center for exploring the confessions examined in this study. Yet, looking into him is also not an easy task. The following four issues make it difficult to investigate into Calvin’s works in terms of deification. First, it is important to note Calvin’s basic theological stance emphasizing the majesty of God and taking seriously into account the sinfulness of humanity. Since Calvin clearly keeps a

291. The only possible instance is found in Chapter 4 of the Tetrapolitan Confession. See page 118 in chapter 3: “We . . . show ourselves as gods – that is, true children of God [ware kinder gottes / germanos Dei filios] – by love striving for their advantage so far as we are able. For ‘he loveth his brother abideth in the light’ and ‘is born of God [ist auß gott geboren / ex Deo natus est].’” CCF, 2:224; RBS, 1/1:464; Niemeyer, 747.
“Creator CREATOR-creature distinction” based on this stance throughout his works, it appears to be difficult for his theology to have room for deification, which is related to union of humanity with God.\textsuperscript{292} In actuality, it is rare that Calvin treats deification or its concept in a clear manner. When he treats it, it is usually in commenting on a specific passage relevant to eschatology, such as 2 Peter 1:4.\textsuperscript{293} Explaining the eschatological hope, Calvin states, “The end of the gospel is, to render us eventually conformable to God, and, if we may so speak, to deify [deificari] us.”\textsuperscript{294} Here it may be possible to see somewhat, in the phrase ‘ut ita loquamur’, his hesitation of using ‘deificari’.\textsuperscript{295}

Second, Calvin’s writing style also makes it difficult to find the issue of deification in his works. When writing soteriology, Calvin tries to keep with scriptural language to describe it from the redemptive-historical perspective.\textsuperscript{296} Since the word “deification” [deificari / theosis] is an extra-biblical terminology, it is difficult for us to find the exact word in the soteriological context in his works. Furthermore, the fact that Calvin at times uses the word ‘deificari’ or ‘theosis’ in both positive and negative manners makes it more complicated to understand.

\textsuperscript{292} Jason van Vliet, \textit{Children of God: The Imago Dei in John Calvin and His Context} (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2009), 127. Van Vliet strongly claims, “Geneva’s reformer decisively disagrees . . . with the notion of \textit{theosis}. \textit{Theosis}, or deification, was a somewhat tangential, yet tenacious, teaching that the restoration of the \textit{imago Dei} would eventually allow human beings to participate in the very essence and substance of God himself.” Also see Billings, “United to God through Christ,” 315-16; Canlis, “Calvin, Osiander and Participation,” 181. Canlis argues that in the past, this “Creator-creature” distinction was interpreted in a shallow way, complaining, “Reformed scholarship and discipleship are in greater danger of teaching a theology of ‘union with Christ’ which does not plumb the depths to the degree that Calvin’s did.”

\textsuperscript{293} 2 Pet. 1:3-4: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heave for you.”; Billings, “United to God through Christ,” 324-25, 333. See Carl Mosser, “The Greatest Possible Blessing: Calvin and Deification,” \textit{Scottish Journal of Theology} 55:1 (2002), 40. Mosser refers to four primary biblical references related to deification in the patristic and Orthodox writings. They are as follows: 2 Peter 1:4, Ps. 82:6, John 10:34-35, John 17, and 1 John 3:2. Among these, according to Mosser, 2 Peter 2:4 is the “most explicit” case in which Calvin treats the concept of deification.


\textsuperscript{295} Canlis, \textit{Calvin’s Ladder}, 81: “We must remember that, for polemical reasons, Calvin was at times hesitant to emphasize this ‘positive’ role for humanity.”

\textsuperscript{296} Billings, op. cit., 325.
Calvin’s usage of it. 297

Third, it is historically necessary to pay attention to the polemical discussion of Calvin with Osiander or Sevetus revolving around the concept of deification as infusion of divinity into humanity or mixing these two natures. 298 Since Calvin refutes their concept of deification, using, in a negative manner, specific terminologies related to deification, his discussion with them easily compels us to assume that he denies deification itself as a theological concept. 299

Fourth, a tendency of recent theological studies gives us an impression that the issue of deification is foreign to Calvin. Billings complains about it, “The problem is made worse by the fact that recent studies tend to look to late Byzantine theologians such as Gregory Palamas [1296-1359] as the standard statement on deification, even when comparing western theologians who were unfamiliar with Palamas.” 300 Since late Byzantine theologies of deification is known for its “analytical precision” requiring a “large set of technical theological distinctions,” 301 if we see the issue from the perspective of this trend, it will be easy to deny that the concept of deification is present in Calvin’s theology.

Although there are these factors compelling us to have a negative judgment on deification in Calvin, what Billings writes in his article “United to God through Christ” deserves our attention and helps us to see another side of the story. Considering and digesting what Billings argues there, it becomes clear that there are three key points in order to discuss the issue

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297. According to Billings, this is “to differentiate his position from various alternatives” in terms of the issue of deification. Billings, “United to God through Christ,” 325, 325n54. In relation to these positive and negative manners, see Mosser, “The Greatest Possible Blessing,” 41, 53-55.


299. Canlis, “Calvin, Osiander and Participation,” 177: “It is often assumed that Calvin opposed Osiander because Calvin opposed participation in God, rather than Osiander wanted substantial participation [note: such as deification as infusion] while Calvin wanted participation by the Spirit in Christ.” Also see Mosser, op. cit., 52-55.

300. Billings, op. cit., 316. What Billings mentions here is mostly related to ecumenical dialogues between Lutheran theologians and Eastern Orthodoxy. See ibid., 316n5. One of the most renowned works focusing on this dialogue is Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, Union with Christ: The Finnish Interpretation of Luther (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998).

301. Billings, op. cit., 333.
of deification in Calvin. First, it is important to have a viable definition of deification in order to look into Calvin’s works. If we use the definition in Osiander or late Byzantine theologies, it will be difficult to find deification in Calvin. On the other hand, the definition presented by Billings theologically helps us to find it, i.e. “the restoration and fulfillment of the original union of God with human beings in creation, which has been disrupted by the Fall.”  

This definition helps us to find the concept of deification in Calvin’s works even in the contexts in which he does not use the word “deification.” Second, it is important to identify, in Calvin’s works, viable places in which he refers to the patristic notion of deification or its relevant issues. This is because deification is recognized as important among church fathers, such as Irenaeus, Augustine, and Cyril, whom Calvin, being in basic agreement with them, appropriates for constructing his theology. Third, it is necessary to notice that Calvin values the relational languages found in the Johannine and Pauline writings in order to find the relevant issues to deification in his works. In the Johannine passages, the most significant image is a metaphor of the branch in the vine found in John 15:5. In relation to the Pauline passages, the book of Romans is critical for understanding Calvin’s notion of deification. Exploring Romans, Calvin clarifies the relational tone found in the notions of participation, adoption, and ingrafting into Christ, which have relevance to the concept of deification in his theology.

302. Billings, “United to God through Christ,” 333. Mosser defines deification as becoming ‘partakers of the divine nature’ which means to be “raised up to God and united with him.” Mosser, “The Greatest Possible Blessing,” 41. The definition by Billings has more redemptive-historical perspective.  
303. Canlis, Calvin’s Ladder, 237: “I should note that Osiander’s theology is far from the patristic, orthodox doctrine of deification; rather, it is a caricature of it more akin to pagan pantheism. Calvin’s response is much more in line with classical patristic deification than is Osiander’s.”  
304. Billings, op. cit., 333. In order to look for deification in Calvin’s works in terms of the patristic writings, it is noted that Calvin does not necessarily refer to specific names of church fathers, when treating the notion of deification. The typical manner he uses is that he, commenting on “standard patristic proof-texts” such as 1 Peter 1:4 and 1 John 3:2, conceptually refers to or treats deification. Mosser, op. cit., 49-52, 55. This manner makes it difficult for scholars unfamiliar with the patristic writings to find the notion of deification in Calvin’s works.  
305. CTS John., vol. 2, 109-10. Also see ibid., 112-13, 183-89.  
306. For example see CTS Rom., 189.  
In what follows, we list six points crucial to the concept of deification in Calvin. They are identified on the basis of the definition of deification mentioned above.

1. In Calvin’s theology, it is possible to recognize the original union of God with humanity in Eden. He clearly states, “It was the spiritual life of Adam to remain united and bound to his Maker.” Given this, what deification signifies is to restore and fulfill this original harmony God enjoyed with Adam.

2. Whereas the participation of humanity in the divine nature of God is the essence of deification in Calvin, it needs to be emphasized that this participation is a differentiated union, maintaining a “Creator-creature” distinction. When we take this into account, it becomes possible to see the notion of deification in Calvin clarifying that humanity, in redemption, can flourish only in this participation.

3. In order to maintain this Creator-creature distinction, it is necessary to emphasize the Imputation of Christ’s righteousness which believers receive through union with him. The doctrine of the Imputation theologically clarifies the pardon of sin as forensic and keeps union of believers with Christ from becoming infusion of humanity into divinity. This forensic pardon by grace alone is a basis of adoption of believers and encourages them to obey God positively as a gratitude to his saving grace.

with Augustine and Irenaeus, his central sources are scriptural.”

308. Mosser, “The Greatest Possible Blessing,” 41: “Deification is not merely an eschatological concept for Calvin. It is rooted in the divine intentions for the creation and recreation of humanity.”

309. Inst., 2.1.5; Billings, “United to God through Christ,” 320. When it comes to the issue of “union” of humanity with divinity, it is important note that Calvin has not only union with Christ, but also union with God. See Inst., 1.13.24: “He [Christ] took upon himself the person and office of the Mediator, that he might join us to God.” Mosser, op. cit., 43.


311. CTS 1 Cor., vol. 2, 53 “The condition that we obtain through Christ is greatly superior to the lot of the first man, because a living soul was conferred upon Adam in his own name, and in that of his posterity, but Christ has procured for us the Spirit, who is life.” [CO 49 (CR 77): 558]. Also see John Calvin, The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defense of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius, ed. A. N. S. Lane, trans. G. I. Davies (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 193-200.


313. “But if, freed from this severe requirement of the law . . . they hear themselves called with
4. In addition to the Imputation, it is also crucial to emphasize the work of the Spirit as the bond uniting believers with God in Christ.\textsuperscript{314} This notion theologically makes Calvin distinguished from Osiander, whose concept of deification becomes the “infusion” of the “essence” of God into humanity by neglecting the Spirit’s work.\textsuperscript{315} Thus, the Trinitarian orientation is recognized as significant in the concept of deification in Calvin.\textsuperscript{316}

5. The clearest place in which Calvin values the concept of deification is in the context of the sacraments.\textsuperscript{317} In his treatment of the sacraments, the “communicating of Christ” play a vital role, strengthening the union of believers with God.\textsuperscript{318}

6. Although the concept of deification is recognized throughout the redemptive-historical perspective in Calvin, the main emphasis of deification is on the glorification of believers.\textsuperscript{319} Calvin, commenting on Romans 5:2, says, “The hope of the glory of God shone upon us through the gospel, which testifies that we shall be participators of the divine nature; for which we shall see God face to face, we shall be like him. (2 Peter 1:4, 1 John 3:2.)”\textsuperscript{320}

Thus, if it is legitimate to define deification in Calvin as the restoration and fulfillment of the original union of God with human beings, it is promising for us to look for the concept of deification in his works. Although deification is not a major theological issue such as election or justification, it is actually recognized in the context of treating other relevant doctrines. Even if he fatherly gentleness by God, they will cheerfully and with great eagerness answer, and follow his leading.”

\textit{Inst.}, 3.19.5; Billings, “United to God through Christ,” 327.

\textsuperscript{314} \textit{Inst.}, 3.11.5. In the context of refuting Osiander, Calvin states, “It comes about through the power of the Holy Spirit that we grow together with Christ, and he becomes our Head and we his members.” Mosser, “The Greatest Possible Blessing,” 47.

\textsuperscript{315} “The Spirit is the one who allows two differing qualities to participate in one another. . . . This is what Calvin feels the crux of his insight against Osiander.” Canlis, \textit{Calvin’s Ladder}, 164; Billings, op. cit., 323.

\textsuperscript{316} Mosser, op. cit., 46.

\textsuperscript{317} Billings, op. cit., 323; Mosser, op. cit., 44.

\textsuperscript{318} \textit{Inst.}, 4.14.7: “Paul, in speaking to believers, so deals with the sacraments as to include in them the communicating of Christ.” Ibid., 4.14.17: “Let it be regarded as a settled principle that the sacraments have the same office as the Word of God: to offer and set forth Christ to us.”

\textsuperscript{319} Mosser, op. cit., 45-46.

\textsuperscript{320} \textit{CTS Rom.}, 189.
does not use the word “deification,” he treats it in the context of treating related issues, such as union with Christ, adoption, and ingrafting. Then, what we find in Calvin also additionally becomes applicable to the confessions in this study.

In short, in order to discuss deification in the confessions as well as Calvin’s works, the most critical point is how to define its meaning. If it is defined the way proposed above, it becomes possible to recognize deification as akin to adoption on the basis of the redemptive-historical perspective. Furthermore, it is noted that while going along with the course of the redemptive historical perspective, the main emphasis of deification is on the eschatological goal of God’s children, as we have seen Calvin relate it to 2 Peter 1:4.

C. The Advantages of Having the Concept of Adoption in the Confessions

On the bases of all the key issues just identified above and the overall research in this study, here we describe how adoption theologically functions in the confessions during the Reformation period. This is to solve the third sub-question of the systematic-historical task. In order to clarify the advantages of having the concept of adoption in the confessions, there are four issues we need to note: 1) the theological function of the concept, 2) the potential for presenting the redemptive-historical framework, 3) the Trinitarian orientation, and 4) the practical implication of having the concept in the confessions.

321. Billings, “United to God through Christ,” 205: “Calvin’s development of the themes of union, adoption, ingrafting, and participation gives a strongly ‘catholic’ character to his theology of deification. Relying upon interpretations of John and Paul as well as Irenaeus and Augustine, Calvin teaches that the final end and goal for humanity is a Trinitarian union of humanity with God.”

322. Mosser, “The Greatest Possible Blessing,” 36: “For Calvin, deification is the eschatological goal and blessing greater than which nothing can be imagined.”

323. Page 52 in chapter 1: “What advantage or implication does the concept of adoption have for reshaping soteriology in a confession?”
1. The Theological Function of the Concept in the Confessions

The overall function of the concept of adoption is defined as a teleological grace which provides believers with both a basis for and the purpose of salvation in the redemptive-historical context. In the confessions examined in this study, our research shows that in the following four contexts, the concept typically functions in that teleological way, showing the purpose of salvation: 1) the context of defining election as the election to be God’s children in his household, 2) the context of recognizing adoption as the purpose of the Incarnation, 3) the context of describing the Spirit helping those adopted to grow toward the completion of their status, and 4) the context of depicting the inheritance of the kingdom as the goal of adoption. There are two main reasons, as a whole, for supporting this teleological function of the concept. First, the concept has the potential for presenting a redemptive-historical framework in the confessions. Second, throughout the redemptive-historical framework, the concept is recognized as one of the main purposes of the ministry of the triune God. While supporting the concept as a teleological grace, these two reasons are, at the same time, recognized as advantages of having the concept in the confessions. In what follows, we need to elaborate on them.

2. The Potential for Presenting the Theological Framework

324. Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 87, 107. Sano also defines ‘adoption’ as a teleological doctrine of salvation which gives the purpose to all the soteriological graces. On the basis of adoption, salvation can be redefined as “becoming God’s children through adoption based on union with Christ.” Also see Griffith, “The First Title of the Spirit,” 153: “Adoption is a central concept in Calvin’s understanding of the gospel. . . . The purpose of the Incarnation and atonement is adoption.”

325. Of course, these four contexts do not exhaust what the teleological function means.


327. See pages 95 (Sixty-Seven Arts), 123-24 (Fidei ratio), 132-33 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 163n80 (1536 Inst.), 192-93 (Conf. of the English Congreg.) in chapter 4; 206 (Scottish Conf.), 263-64 (Westminster) in chapter 5; Inst., 2.2.2 and 3.20.36.

328. See pages 125 (Fidei ratio), 135 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3; 178 (Geneva Catech.), 188 (Consensus Genevensis), 193 (Conf. of the English Congreg.) in chapter 4; 236-37 (Thirty-Nine Arts), 250-52, 251n238 (Canons of Dort), 261-62 (WCF 12), 269n346 (Westminster) in chapter 5; Inst., 3.20.36, 37.

329. See pages 189 (Consensus Genevensis) in chapter 4; 261-62 (WCF 12) in chapter 5.
The first reason for the teleological function of the concept is related to its theological potential for presenting a theological framework which has a redemptive-historical perspective. What this potential theologically means is clarified by referring to the following four characteristics. The first characteristic is the breadth of the theological framework which the concept of adoption can show to us. In terms of confessional documents, the concept is broad enough not only to cover the entire course of the salvation history, but also to cover all the three main catechetical texts, i.e. the Decalogue, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer, and the sacraments, even though these texts themselves do not have direct references to the concept.

The second characteristic is that, on the basis of this broadness, the concept of adoption can be an organizing principle or underlying theme relating to all the fourteen relevant issues mentioned above in the redemptive-historical framework. In addition to this, in the framework, there are two main spheres in which the concept is pervasively connected to other issues, i.e. soteriology and ecclesiology.

As the third characteristic, when being woven into the framework and relating to the relevant issues, the concept of adoption gives a clear direction, in a familial way, to where salvation history is moving. At the beginning of salvation history, when seeing what was lost in Adam in Eden, the concept helps us to see, at election, the promise of recovering the sonship. In order to realize this, God’s salvific plan has been set on the basis of the covenant and moved forward from there. However, at each milestone, such as Exodus and the

330. See pages 2-6 in chapter 1; 90 in chapter 2; Ridderbos, Paul, 204.
331. See pages 164 (1536 Inst.) in chapter 4; 331-33 in this chapter.
332. See pages 312-33 in this chapter.
333. See page 219 (Heidelberg Catech.) in chapter 5; Sano, “Adoption in Calvin,” 107.
334. See pages 314-16 in this chapter. In considering election in terms of the concept, some would consider the issue of the so-called “Supra- and Infralapsarianism.” In exploring the confessions, it is not clear which one is dominant.
335. See pages 316-17 in this chapter.
336. See pages 317-18 in this chapter.
337. See ibid.
Incarnation on the way for recovering the sonship, it gradually becomes clear that the grace of adoption is more than just recovering the original sonship. In seeing the actual contents of adoption, such as participating in the divine Sonship and being joint-heirs with Christ, we are led to conclude that the adoptive sonship in Christ includes the elevation from the original sonship of Adam. After being adopted by the Father, those adopted are led by the Spirit to grow and be conformed to the Son throughout the adoptive life. Furthermore, in the context of the church, there are powerful means of grace which the Father uses, in Christ, for leading those adopted, through the Spirit, to be assured of the stability of their status as well as the promise given to them. Thus, the concept of adoption continues to show those adopted the clear direction towards the completion of their sonship until it is perfected at the consummation.

The fourth characteristic is that when presenting the redemptive-historical framework, the concept can describe both the individual and communal aspects of salvation in a balanced way. While one is individually delivered from the slavery to sin, adopted by God as his daughter or son, and united with Christ, each one is communally brought into his household to live and grow together. Due to this good balance of the individual and communal aspects of salvation in the concept, it has a potential, throughout the redemptive-historical framework, to describe salvation, maintaining the balance. In other words, the concept has a potential to avoid

338. See pages 318-19 in this chapter.
339. See pages 318-21, 329-30 in this chapter; Westhead, “Adoption,” 103-4: “This redemptive sonship is so far superior and qualitatively different as to permit Calvin to aver that creative sonship is not sonship at all, for ‘to neither angels nor men was God ever Father’, but he becomes so only ‘by free adoption’ (Inst., 2.14.5).”
340. See pages 313-14 in this chapter.
341. See pages 323-25 in this chapter.
342. See pages 325-28 in this chapter.
343. See pages 328-29 in this chapter.
344. See pages 329-30 in this chapter.
345. For example, pages 313-16, 319-22, 328-29 in this chapter. But, at the same time, it is necessary to take into account that each relevant issue has both individual and communal aspects.
346. Also see pages 317-18, 326-28, 329-30 in this chapter.
describing the gospel in an over-individualized or over-communalized manner.\textsuperscript{348}

Thus, this potential for presenting a redemptive-historical framework, with its four characteristics, is recognized as a significant advantage of using the concept in the confessions.

3. The Trinitarian-Orientation

The second reason for the function of the concept to be a teleological grace is that the concept clearly shows one of the main purposes of the ministry of the triune God. As the confessions treat the relevant issues from election to the consummation, they, in terms of the concept, refer again and again to the names of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of adoption and demonstrate how each Person in the triune Godhead is at work in unity, playing in various ways each role for bringing the adoptive sonship to its completion.\textsuperscript{349} In this sense, it is possible to say that the overall function of the concept of adoption in the confessions is Trinitarian-oriented as a whole.\textsuperscript{350} Because of this, it is understandable that the Reformed tradition, characterized as Trinitarian, provides room for the concept to be treated. On the contrary, the concept basically finds no room in the Lutheran tradition, which is well known for its “theology of the cross” which is justification-oriented.\textsuperscript{351}

In terms of the function of the concept in the Trinitarian context, it is worth noting that the concept of adoption is sometimes used as a relational concept for distinguishing the relationship amongst the Father, the Son, and the adoptive children.\textsuperscript{352} The most significant point


\textsuperscript{349} See pages 313-14, 318-19, 323-25 in this chapter.

\textsuperscript{350} See pages 88-89 in chapter 2; Westhead, “Adoption,” 102-7.

\textsuperscript{351} Zachman, \textit{The Assurance of Faith}, 245.

\textsuperscript{352} See page 282 in this chapter.
of this use is to clarify that the Sonship of Christ is distinct from the adoptive sonship, although they are organically related to each other through union with Christ. In short, it is also an advantage of having the concept that it can show, in a teleological way, the ministry of the triune God working together to bring the adoptive sonship to its completion.

4. The Practical Implication of Having the Concept in the Confessions

In addition to the two theological advantages mentioned above, it is further necessary to consider practically what the implication of having the concept of adoption in confessional documents, as compared with having it in theological tracts, treatises, or theological textbooks. In other words, we need to ask whether or not there is any distinct advantage of having the concept particularly in confessional documents. Our overall research throughout this study shows that having the concept in confessions has a practical implication in the context of church discipline.\(^3\)

Here it is necessary to take into account again the three basic functions of confessions in the context of the church, i.e. the normative, unifying, and catechetical functions.\(^4\) From the practical perspective in the church context, these three functions give a distinct strength to confessions, officially allowing them to be used in a more effective manner in order to influence church discipline, as compared with other theological writings. This practical strength of confessions is particularly recognized in the official adopting process of confessions by the church. As we have seen in the research body (chapters 3-5), after a confession is written, it is not automatically adopted and put into practice in the church context. Rather, in most cases, it needs to be scrutinized, discussed, edited, and at the end officially adopted by the church through the

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353. Here the word “discipline” is used as having a broader meaning than mere disciplinary exercises. It includes educational exercises for church life. For example, see Joseph H. Hall, “John Calvin’s View of Church Government,” Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes, 400: “Calvin maintained that church discipline is for the well-being of church members and the glory of Christ. Moreover, church discipline is a prototype of what should exist for each church member: he or she must exercise self-discipline.” Also see Maruyama, Calvin’s Reformation Ecclesiology, 368-71, 487n138.

354. See page 303 in this chapter.
long procedure in order to secure the official use of a confession in the context of the church. This is a clear illustration to help us to understand the meaning of using a confession in the context of the church. After being officially adopted by the church, the normative, unifying, and catechetical functions give a distinct strength to confessions in the church and require her to use them officially, valuing those functions. This is the implication other theological writings do not have.

This implication is directly applicable to having the concept of adoption in the confessions. Instead of having it in other theological writings, the concept with its familial notion and the redemptive-historical perspective can influence the church discipline in a more direct and effective way. This is clearly an implication of having the concept of adoption in confessional documents, rather than having it in theological tracts, treatises, and theological textbooks.

**D. How to Present the Concept in Confessions**

At the very end of this study, it is worth asking what then would be the most appropriate method of presenting the concept of adoption in confessions (the fourth sub-question). In seeing the confessions, there are two major methods as a whole: presenting it as a *locus*, or presenting it as an underlying theme in the redemptive-historical perspective. As we have seen in chapter 5,

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355. Pages 93-94 (Sixty-Seven Arts), 101 (Luther’s Catechisms), 111-14 (Tetrapolitan Conf.), 131 (1st Helvetic Conf.) in chapter 3. Note: In the case of the Sixty-Seven Arts, it was not the church, but the city council which gave the Articles an official feature. Luther’s *Small Catechism* appeared in the Lutheran *Book of Concord* in 1580. *CCF*, 2:30. In the case of the Tetrapolitan Conf., the four cities gave an official role to it; pages 167-68 (Geneva Conf.), 173-74 (Geneva Catech.), 185-86 (Consensus), 191-92 (Conf. of the English Congre.) in chapter 4; 202-3 (Scottish Conf.), 211-12 (Heidelberg Catech.), 222-23 (2nd Helvetic Conf.), 231-32 (Thirty-Nine Arts.), 246-47 (Canons of Dort.), 255-56 (Westminster) in chapter 5.

356. Page 52 in chapter 1: “How can the concept of adoption be expressed more fully in the confessions?”

357. A third possible method is the adoption-oriented method of presenting adoption. In this method, all doctrines or issues are treated in the light of adoption as an overall theme in a confession, although there is no confession having this method.
we do not find any significant differences between these two in terms of the theological meaning of adoption.\textsuperscript{358} In this sense, what we ask here is mainly recognized as methodological. It is the contention of the present study that to present the concept of adoption as an underlying theme is the best, or at least better, method for confessions to treat the concept because that way reflects the characteristics of the concept more appropriately. In what follows, we see the rationale of this contention.

In order to choose the most appropriate method of presenting the concept in confessions, it is necessary to keep in mind the methodological difficulty which confessions have in presenting the concept of adoption.\textsuperscript{359} Confessions basically need to treat, in a limited space given by its formulation, both the central doctrines of Christianity and practical as well as educational teachings which are relevant to the contextual issues each confession faces historically or theologically.\textsuperscript{360} Because of this, when writing a confession, it is necessary to put, with a good balance, both the central doctrines and the contextual issues, into a limited space with an effective method as an educational tool.

In order to solve this difficulty and figure out the most appropriate method of presenting the concept of adoption, here we briefly summarize again how the concept is theologically characterized. There are mainly two characteristics. First, the concept is characterized as forming, in a broad way, a redemptive-historical framework into which adoption itself is woven.\textsuperscript{361} Second, in that framework, the concept functions as an underlying theme, connecting to other relevant issues. In other words, the concept plays multiple roles relating relevant issues with one another.\textsuperscript{362} Keeping these two characteristics in mind helps us to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{358} See pages 267-68, 268n339 in chapter 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{359} See pages 266-67 in chapter 5; Trumper, “Adoption, the Forgotten Doctrine,” 112.
  \item \textsuperscript{360} See pages 286-90, 303-5 in this chapter.
  \item \textsuperscript{361} See page 2-6 in chapter 1; 346-49 in this chapter.
  \item \textsuperscript{362} See pages 29-30 in chapter 1; 347 in this chapter.
\end{itemize}
consider the following two issues which are relevant to the most appropriate method of presenting the concept of adoption.

The first issue is the “preoccupation with other doctrines.” Although some documents treat the concept to some extent, they are criticized as having a “preoccupation with other doctrines” because they always treat it in relation to other doctrines. However, if this preoccupation is based on the characteristic of adoption as it easily relates to other issues, our perspective would be changed in terms of presenting adoption in a confession. Given this, the preoccupation is not a weakness, but can be perceived as a strength appropriately reflecting one of the characteristics of the concept of adoption.

The second issue is the conceptual reference to adoption. It is noted that, in exploring the confessions, some documents conceptually refer to it without using the specific word “adoption.” What makes this conceptual reference possible is also the characteristic of adoption relating variously to other relevant issues in the redemptive-historical framework. This broadness of the concept covering from election until the consummation provides room for other issues to depict adoption from their various perspectives, but without using the exact word. For instance, if we describe adoption from the perspective of justification, it is depicted as accepting believers into the household of God, as we have seen. When treating the perfection of adoption from the eschatological perspective, it is defined as receiving the inheritance of the kingdom. Thus, there are various ways of describing conceptually adoption from other perspectives, even though the word “adoption” is not used.

Thus, in considering the broad characteristics of the concept of adoption relating to other issues in the redemptive-historical framework, we are led to conclude that presenting the concept as an underlying theme in the framework is the most appropriate, or at least the best

363. See page 34 in chapter 1; Trumper, “The Theological History of Adoption II,” 183.
method of presenting it. Of course, the perceptibility of adoption will be increased when presenting it as a *locus*, as we have seen in WCF 12. This is actually recognized as strength of presenting the concept distinctively. Although having WCF 12 might not benefit and help the concept of adoption to be developed in the post-Westminster era, at least it historically helped it kept in the Presbyterian tradition.\textsuperscript{364} If the concept is presented as a *locus*, even though most theologians do not value it, someday the concept would be brought to light because of the distinctive treatment as a historical sign of theological reminder. But as a shadow side of it, we need to take into account that the distinctive treatment would sacrifice some significant characteristics of the concept of adoption. If we treat the concept by devoting a chapter to it, it may become difficult to recognize the interrelatedness existing between adoption and other important issues, as we have seen in WCF 12.\textsuperscript{365} It may also become difficult for confessions to present a broad framework which is relevant to the concept of adoption, if we treat adoption as a *locus*, as WCF 12 lacks a reference to election, which is the starting point of the redemptive-historical framework. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the *WCF* needs to have supplementary roles the *WLC* and *WSC* play, in terms of the concept. Because of the structural limitation the *WCF* has for describing the concept exhaustively, it is not enough for us to see only the *WCF*, but we need these two catechisms, in order to grasp the entire framework into which the concept of adoption is woven.

In conclusion, in order for confessions to fully describe the concept, the most important thing is not to increase its perceptibility, but to maintain its multiple aspects in various ways, relating to relevant issues and showing the redemptive-historical framework.

\textit{E. Conclusion}

\textsuperscript{364} See pages 20-22 in chapter 1.
\textsuperscript{365} See pages 266-67 in chapter 5.
Regarding the first sub-question, by comparing the confessions and the Pauline *huiothesia*, we find that the former basically reflects the latter, but no confession does justice to the full scope of *huiothesia*. We identify the three differences between them: the confessions 1) lack the corporate aspect focusing on the sonship in the OT, 2) treat the eschatological aspect insufficiently, and 3) treat the sacraments in a peculiar manner. What these differences indicate theologically is that the confessions were written to build up the church under actual theological contexts, dealing with specific issues and serving her with normative, unifying, and catechetical functions. On the other hand, the lack of the corporate aspect theologically forces the confessions to narrow down their theological scope. They theologically lack the expansion of the sonship concept from the OT through the NT and this may cause the insufficient treatment of the eschatological aspect relevant to the dynamic completion of the sonship consisting of both Israel and foreigners.

In regard to the second sub-question, we identify all the fourteen key issues which are crucial to form a redemptive-historical framework into which the concept of adoption is woven. We also clarify the relation of adoption to the twofold grace, the new birth, and deification. Regarding the first one, whereas adoption is inseparably related to the twofold grace functioning as a link between justification and sanctification, the theological scope of adoption is broader than that of the twofold grace. Next, our analysis shows that the new birth found in the confessions has significant overlap with sanctification in the redemptive-historical perspective although the new birth is theologically distinct from adoption. With regard to deification, we conclude that if it is legitimate to define it as the restoration of the original union of God with human being, it will be theologically recognized as akin to the concept of adoption, having its emphasis mainly on the eschatological completion of the adopted sonship.

In relation to the third sub-question, we first define the function of adoption as a teleological grace providing God’s children with both a basis for and the purpose of salvation.
throughout their journey to the consummation. On the basis of this function, we can identify the three advantages of having the concept in confessions. The first advantage is the theological potential of the concept to present a redemptive-historical framework, functioning as an organizing principle of doctrines and giving a clear direction for which the salvation history is heading. The second one is the potential to provide a Trinitarian orientation in a theological framework. The third advantage is practically based on the three basic functions of confessions. Because of the normative, unifying, and catechetical functions, having the concept in confessions makes it possible for the familial aspect of the gospel with the redemptive-historical perspective to be communicated, in a more theologically effective way, in the context of the church discipline.

Regarding the fourth sub-question, we propose that presenting the concept of adoption as an underlying theme is the most appropriate method. This method has a theological potential to secure the multiple aspects of the concept showing a redemptive-historical perspective into which the concept itself is woven.

At the very end, on the basis of all the research, analyses, and discussions above, we now conclude this study by giving a clear answer to the main research question. Regarding the place of the concept of adoption in the Protestant confessions in the 16th and 17th centuries, we recognize the concept as a part of the Reformed tradition even before the WCF devoted a chapter to the concept as a locus. In regard to its function in the confessions, the concept of adoption theologically functions as a teleological grace, reflecting the redemptive-historical perspective of huiologia as a whole and hinting at the historical lines of treating the concept which lead to and flow from Calvin. Throughout the confessions, this teleological function is to build up the church by providing God’s children with both a basis for and the purpose of their salvation.
Throughout this study we explored eighteen confessional documents of the Reformation Period, looking for the concept of adoption and familial notions in them. The issues related to the concept and familial notions were a part of the belief which the church taught and confessed with believers in that era. Now at the very end of this study, the things we have studied through the confessions lead us in our era to seriously face familial issues that people struggle with in this fallen world.\(^1\) It is time for us, as God’s adopted children, to return to “various challenges in the wretchedness of this post-modern world where the traditional family model is not ready to meet the challenges of today.”\(^2\)

a. Family Ethics

Considering the concept of adoption is not only a theological matter, but also a very practical concept. The communal as well as familial aspect in the concept practically compels us to face familial issues on earth. This is because having brothers and sisters in God’s household leads us to re-think the concept of building up our earthly family in this current society. As was seen in the examples of Geneva and Dort,\(^3\) for believers there has been a practically inseparable relationship between being brought into God’s family and building up an earthly family on the basis of the love generated from the triune God.

However, we must acknowledge at the same time, how difficult it is even for God’s children to build up their own families in a healthy way on earth. Historically speaking, after the first Adam, the representative of the human race, failed in building up his own first family in this

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1. Page 9 in chapter 1 of this study: “This clearly shows the reality that the human practice of adoption, even in the case of infants, faces some difficulties that must be overcome in this fallen world.”
2. Page 10 in ibid.
3. See pages 144-58 in chapter 4; 238-43 in chapter 5 of this study.
world, numerous parents in the past history have failed in their attempts to form healthy families. Even godly servants of the Lord struggled with issues related to their wives or children, godly people such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, and David. With these devout people, we share the same challenges in attempting to build up healthy families in this fallen world, even though our actual challenges might be slightly different from theirs.

b. Healing Pneumatology

Masao Uenuma is one of the church leaders who are involved in a ministry helping people to develop healthy family lives in Japan. In particular, he started the men’s ministry called “Promise Keepers” in Japan, a ministry helping those struggling with various familial and related masculine issues. In the ministry of “Promise Keepers,” after interviewing mainly, but not exclusively, men, Uenuma realized that most those people struggling with their own families had painful experiences or memories from the past in relation to their genealogical fathers. Even among people who grew up in seemingly ordinary families, many experienced various emotional pain related to their own fathers. These interviews led Uenuma to ponder theologically the issue of having or being a father in this current era, and write a monograph in 2010 on that issue titled as *Oh Father and Fathers.*

In this monograph, after deeply reflecting on this issue and biblical references related to it, Uenuma concludes that there is essentially the only way to heal the emotional and spiritual pain with which those people struggle; they need to return to the bosom of the heavenly Father since he is the only perfect father who can heal the pain caused by earthly fathers, by adopting

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4. Masao Uenuma is a Japanese minister and theologian (Ph. D. from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago). He is currently leading a Christian organization “The Ministry of the Bible and Theology” in Japan and the U.S.A.

those suffering into his household in Christ, through the Spirit. In the monograph, Uenuma refers to a man who cannot address the word “Father” in praying to God since the word reminds him of the awful experience he had in relation to his biological father. However, it is the hope, argues Uenuma, that it becomes possible even for those suffering to be healed, in calling God the Father, by the help of the Spirit of adoption.

Thus, on the bases of his practical experience helping people as well as theological reflection on the issue, Uenuma values the power of addressing the name of the Father. As being seen in the Scriptures, addressing God as such is one of the key issues showing the entire plan of salvation. Those suffering people can be saved by returning, in Christ, to the bosom of the Father, as the prodigal son did in the Gospel of Luke.

c. Spirituality Based on the Trinitarian Fellowship

After being brought into God’s household, those adopted are healed in the fellowship which the triune God enjoys within himself. In this sense, the Trinitarian fellowship is not closed, but an opened fellowship, inviting the adopted into new family life in God, as the perfect model for our family life. Regarding the Trinitarian fellowship as the perfect model of family life, Uenuma exegetically explores the context of Ephesians in which the issues of family, of married couple, and of the relation of father to children are carefully treated by Paul on the basis of the Trinitarian fellowship. In other words, the issue of the Trinitarian fellowship and that of our familial relationship on earth go hand in hand throughout the text of Ephesians. Then, it is the contention

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6. Uenuma, Oh Father and Fathers, 41.
7. Ibid., 147.
8. Ibid., 152.
9. See pages 313-14 in chapter 6 of the present study.
11. Ibid., 172, 182. It is interesting to see that Uenuma refers to T. F. Torrance, who pays attention to the view of the opened fellowship of Trinity in the Eastern Orthodoxy. Uenuma, op. cit., 182-84; T. F. Torrance, The Trinitarian Faith (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000).
of Uenuma that the fellowship of the triune God is the firm foundation which can help suffering people to successfully face the issue of building up a healthy family in this society.

d. Familial Ecclesiology

After experiencing and enjoying the perfect family model in the Trinitarian fellowship, we as God’s children will be able to triumphantly face the issue where the first Adam failed. Of course, it is still difficult for us to have healthy family lives in this fallen world – difficult, but not impossible in Christ. In Christ, we, participating in his Sonship, are called to build up godly families again on earth. In fact, it is not only about biological families, but also about spiritual families in the church. Christ the Son has commissioned the church to serve this world and call back people to join the new-extended family in Christ. Obviously, this is not an easy task for God’s children, but it becomes possible in the grace of divine adoption in Christ. Now the sentence mentioned at the very beginning echoes again. “Divine adoption will never fail because the triune God has been working to accomplish the plan of divine adoption in order to take us out of the household of slavery to sin and bring into God’s family.”13 Here is our only comfort.

13. Page 9 in chapter 1 of the present study.
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