

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CALVIN'S DEFENSE AND REFORMULATION
OF LUTHER'S EARLY REFORMATION DOCTRINE
OF THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL

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This dissertation entitled

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation finds that Calvin's reformulation of the doctrine of free choice reflects his convictions of the early Reformation heritage, his learning of the tradition from the early church fathers and especially from Augustine, the influences generated by his continuous dialogues with the development of the formulations among the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation, and his personal theological convictions. Calvin formulated his defense as a Reformer of the second phase of the Reformation defending the early Reformation formulation set by Luther. The early Reformers used various necessitarian arguments to argue their cases. The Reformers in the second phase had the apologetic and pedagogical need to shift from the necessitarian argument. They incorporated theodical concern in their reformulations. They generally affirmed the genuine integrity of second causality, by affirming the existence of contingency, the voluntary nature of the bound will, and the freedom of choice for Adam before the fall. Calvin was quite unique among them, in maintaining several necessitarian concepts similar to Luther's: the rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*, an all active concept of divine omnipotence, and the preference for active biblical expressions in affirming divine sovereignty over sins.

Calvin grew theologically in debate with Pighius. He clarified his early less nuanced concepts. In the process, he utilized scholastic distinctions and the witnesses of the early church and medieval church to defend the doctrine. Calvin followed Luther's

conviction that the mature Augustine is more biblical. Calvin read Augustine's works, including *Against Julian*, through the lens of Luther's convictions.

Calvin, in his explicit affirmation of the divine ordination of the fall, deviated from the post-fall framework of Augustine and Luther. Because of this, we find that there are two sides to Calvin's formulation. In his reaffirmation of the genuine integrity of the second causality, Calvin is like a classical Augustinian. In his reception of necessitarian concepts and his idea of the divine ordination of the fall, the deterministic side of Calvin is revealed. This may be the source of various debates among Calvin scholars and the ambiguity in reading Calvin, on the issue of human freedom.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the doctrine of human will in Calvin's thought is only recently beginning to receive its proper share of attention from Calvin scholars. The publication of an English translation of Calvin's *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will* (1996), A. N. S. Lane's insightful works in this area, Dewey Hoitenga's *John Calvin and the Will* (1997), Matthew C. Heckel's dissertation, and other recent historical works on Calvin's debate with Pighius contribute greatly to our awareness of the importance of the doctrine for Calvin.¹ Hoitenga's work demonstrates both that this is a crucial topic in Calvin's

¹ John Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will: A Defense of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice Against Pighius*, edited by A. N. S. Lane and translated by G. I. Davies (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); John H. Gerstner, "Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards on the Bondage of the Will," in *The Grace of God and the Bondage of the Will*, vol. 2, ed. Thomas Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 279-96; Matthew C. Heckel, "His Spear through My Side unto Luther': Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will" (Ph.D. diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 2005); Dewey J. Hoitenga, Jr., *John Calvin and the Will: A Critique and Corrective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997); Anthony N. S. Lane, "The Influence upon Calvin of His Debate with Pighius," in *Auctoritas Patrum II: Neue Beiträge zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, edited by Leif Grane, Alfred Schindler, and Markus Wriedt (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1998), 125-39; Lane, "Calvin and the Fathers in 'Bondage and Liberation of the Will,'" in *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex: Calvin as Protector of the Purer Religion*, edited by Charles G. Nauert, Jr., and Raymond A. Mentzer (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1997), 67-96; Lane, "Did Calvin Believe in Freewill?" *Vox Evangelica* 12 (1981): 72-90; Lane, "Bondage and Liberation in Calvin's Treatise against Pighius" (Davidson [Columbia] Calvin Conference, 1998), 1-23; Lane, "Introduction," in *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, xiii-xxxiv; Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999); Lane, "Anthropology: Calvin between Luther and Erasmus," in *Calvin: Saint or Sinner*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming); John H. Leith, "The Doctrine of the Will in the Institutes of the Christian Religion," in *Reformatio Perennis: Essays on Calvin and the Reformation in Honor of Ford Lewis Battles*, ed. B. A. Gerrish (Pittsburg: Pickwick Press, 1981), 49-66; Gerard Melles, *Albertus Pighius en zijn strijd met Calvijn over het liberum arbitrium* (Kampen: Kok, 1973); Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth Press, 1986); Muller, "Fides Cognitionis in Relation to the Problem of Intellect and Will in the Theology of John Calvin," *Calvin Theological Journal* 25/2 (November 1990): 207-24; Albertus Pighius, *De libero hominis arbitrio et divina gratia, Libri decem* (Cologne: Melchior Noversianus, 1542); André Pinard, "La notion de grâce irrésistible dans la Response aux calomnies d'Albert Pighius de Jean Calvin" (Ph.D. Thesis, Université Laval, 2006); Ludolf F. Schulze, *Calvin's Reply*

thought and that it has been improperly neglected in the scholarly discussion of Calvin. Using T. F. Torrance as an example, Hoitenga critically observes, “Torrance writes four chapters on the image of God in man and two more on ‘Total Perversity’ without a single paragraph on the human will.”² Hoitenga also points out that other recent major works on Calvin’s thought also barely touch on the human will.³ In short, most major studies of Calvin fail to observe the importance of the doctrine of the bondage and liberation of the human will to Calvin.

Nevertheless, the debate on the bondage of the will was crucial to the cause of the Reformation in general and also to the development of Calvin’s thought in particular. In this dissertation, we will classify the years 1517-1530 as the first phase of the Reformation debate over the problem of human willing and free choice, and the years 1531-1564 as the second phase. The first phase begins with Luther’s posting or circulating the Ninety-Five Theses and closes with the publication of the Augsburg Confession. The second phase begins with the death of Zwingli and closes with the death of Calvin. Until the end of the first half of the second phase, there was still a strong sense

to *Pighius* (Potchefstroom, South Africa: Pro Rege-Press Ltd., 1971); Schulze, “Calvin’s Reply to Pighius—A Micro and Macro View,” *Calvinus Ecclesiae Genevensis Custos*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984), 171-86.

² Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*, 17. Cf. T. F. Torrance, *Calvin’s Doctrine of Man* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977).

³ William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); John H. Leith, *John Calvin’s Doctrine of the Christian Life*, Foreword by Albert C. Outler (Louisville, Kent.: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 138-45; Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956); T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought* (Louisville, Kent.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995), 52-56; François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origin and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. by Philip Marlet (New York: Harper & Row Inc., 1963), 188-92. For other major works on Calvin, to name a few, please refer to Emil Doumergue, *Jean Calvin, les Hommes et les Choses de son Temps*, 7 vols. (Lausanne: G. Bridel, 1899-1927); Alexandre Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin*, translated by David Foxgrover and Wade Provo (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987); Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

of an united cause and front among the Lutheran side and Swiss Reformed side, albeit great debate on their differences on the Lord's Supper.⁴ Calvin, especially in his teaching of the doctrine in 1540s, saw himself defending the doctrine as a younger team member of the great cause launched by Luther in the early Reformation. On this, Ludolf F. Schulze provides us a good summary, "But they were also the basic convictions of the Reform movement in general: all the Reformers, except Melancthon in his later development, were basically united as far as free will and predestination are concerned. Therefore the thesis that the doctrine of predestination is 'typically Calvinistic' must be rejected as historically untenable."⁵ Calvin's reformulation of the doctrine of human will in the second phase of the Reformation-era debate, was deeply shaped by the formulations in the early Reformation and the polemic in his own times. On this, Heckel rightly reminds us that there is a substantial continuity between Luther and Calvin on the doctrine of human will: "Calvin, more than any other of the reformers, appears as the heir of Luther's doctrine of the will in bondage."⁶ Hence, a more comprehensive examination

⁴ This classification focuses more on the Reformation as a whole. This classification is similar to that provided by William van't Spijker. He divides the period from the Reformation to the beginning of the seventeenth century into four short periods: 1517-1530s; 1530s-1550s; 1550s-1570s; 1580-1600s. Cf. William van't Spijker, "Reformation and Scholasticism," in *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, eds. Willem J. van Asselt and Eef Dekker (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 79-89. There are other classifications. For example, Richard Muller, focusing mostly on the Reformed theology, identifies 1523-1564 as the first era of Reformed theology: "The first era of the development Reformed theology runs roughly from Zwingli's *Articuli sive conclusiones* (1523) and the *Theses Berneses* in 1528 to the promulgation of the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1562-63) and the death of Calvin in 1564, with some acknowledgement necessary between the earliest Reformers, like Zwingli, Bucer, and Oecolampadius, and a second group or 'generation' of codifiers, like Calvin, Musculus, Bullinger, and Vermigli." Muller, *PRRD*, 1:52-53. Muller also divides the Protestant Orthodoxy into three periods: early, high, and late orthodoxy. Cf. Muller, *PRRD*, 1:30-32. *PRRD* stands for Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).

⁵ Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*, 138.

⁶ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 125.

of Calvin's concept of the bondage and liberation of human will that is sensitive to Calvin's historical context is in order. In reading Calvin contextually, we find a Calvin who saw himself a bearer of the early Reformation heritage defending Luther's formulation of the orthodox doctrine on the bondage of the human will. The nuances of his formulations reflect his interaction with the changing theological environment in the second phase of the Reformation, his growing understanding of Augustine's thoughts, and his particular theological convictions.

A. A Review of Literature: A Comprehensive Study Sensitive to Calvin's Historical Context Is Needed

We will first review the major literature on this topic and point out that a comprehensive study on Calvin's doctrine of the human will that is sensitive to Calvin's historical context, namely Calvin's role both in defending the early Reformation formulation and in adapting to the change of formulations among the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation, is needed. The studies of A. N. S. Lane,⁷ several historical analyses on Calvin's debate with Pighius,⁸ Matthew Heckel's dissertation, and some of the older literature pay more attention to the historical context of Calvin's thoughts.⁹ Dewey Hoitenga, Mary P. Engel, Abel Fong, John S. Feinberg, T. F.

⁷ Lane, "The Influence upon Calvin of His Debate with Pighius," 125-39; Lane, "Calvin and the Fathers in 'Bondage and Liberation of the Will,'" 67-96; Lane, "Did Calvin Believe in Freewill?" 72-90; Lane, "Introduction," xiii-xxxiv; Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 151-90; Lane, "Bondage and Liberation in Calvin's Treatise against Pighius," 1-23.

⁸ Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*; Schulze, "Calvin's Reply to Pighius—A Micro and Macro View," 171-86; Melles, *Albertus Pighius en zijn strijd met Calvijn over het liberum arbitrium*; Pierre Pidoux, "Albert Pighius de Kampen, Adversaire de Calvin, 1490-1542" (Ph.D. diss., Lausanne University, 1932); Pinard, "La notion de grâce irrésistible."

⁹ Hermann Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen und ihr Verhältnis zur Lehre der übrigen Reformatoren und Augustins* (Neuwied a. Rh.: Heusersche Buchdruckerei, 1927); William Cunningham, "Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity," in *The Reformers and the Theology*

Torrance, and Roy W. Battenhouse provide modern interpretations of the topic, that typically fail to provide substantial analysis of Calvin's views in his historical context.¹⁰

Various studies of the development of the doctrine in late medieval and early Reformation that examine Luther's thought are helpful in clarifying the nature of continuities and discontinuities of Calvin's formulation with that in the early

Reformation.¹¹ In view of Calvin's substantive use of Augustine, works on Augustine

of the Reformation (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), 471-524; Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, vol. 1 (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1862; 1969), 568-639; John L. Girardeau, *The Will in Its Theological Relations* (Columbia, S.C.: W. J. Duffie, 1891); J. B. Mozley, *A Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination* (London: John Murray, 1855).

¹⁰ Roy W. Battenhouse, "The Doctrine of Man in Calvin and in Renaissance Platonism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 9 (1948): 447-71; Mary P. Engel, *John Calvin's Perspectival Anthropology* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); John S. Feinberg, "The Doctrine of Human Freedom in the Writings of John Calvin" (Th.M. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1972); Abel Fong, "Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin: The Dynamic Balance between the Freedom of God's Grace and the Freedom of Human Responsibility" (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1997); Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*; Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*; Vernon Bourke, *Will in Western Thought: A Historical-Critical Survey* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964).

¹¹ William J. Courtenay, "Nominalism in Late Medieval Religion," in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval Religion*, ed. Charles Trinkhaus and H. Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 26-59; B. A. Gerrish, "John Calvin on Luther," in *Interpretations of Luther: Essays in Honor of Wilhelm Pauck*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 67-96; Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will;" Denis R. Janz, *Luther and Late Medieval Thomism: A Study in Theological Anthropology* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983); Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Julius Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, trans. Charles E. Hay, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1986); August Lang, "Luther und Calvin," in *Reformation und Gegenwart*, ed. Lang (Detmold: Meyersche Hofbuchhandlung, 1918), 72-87; Gordon Leff, *Gregory of Rimini: Tradition and Innovation in Fourteenth Century Thought* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961); Alister E. McGrath, "John Calvin and Late Medieval Thought: A Study in Late Medieval Influences upon Calvin's Theological Development," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 77 (1986): 58-78; Harry J. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong? An Ecumenical-Theological Study of Luther's Major Work, The Bondage of the Will* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969); David C. Steinmetz, "The Scholastic Calvin," in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, edited by Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), 16-30; Pieter A. Verhoef, "Luther's and Calvin's Exegetical Library," *Calvin Theological Journal* 3 (1968): 5-20.

Heiko A. Oberman's works on late medieval theology and Luther cannot be neglected. Heiko A. Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation*, trans. Paul L. Nyhus (New York: Holt, Rinehart Winston, 1966); Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967); Oberman, *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine, A Fourteenth Century Augustinian; A Study of His Theology in Its Historical Context* (Utrecht: Kemink & Zoon, 1957); Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation: The Emergence of a New Intellectual Climate in Europe*, trans. Dennis Martin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, trans.

concerning various related topics, on the relationship between Augustine and Calvin, on the development of the medieval Augustinian tradition, and on Reformers' reception of the Fathers should also be consulted.¹² We will also consult works on the developments

Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Oberman, *Initia Calvini: The Matrix of Calvin's Reformation* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1991); Oberman, *The Reformation: Roots and Ramifications*, trans. Andrew Colin Gow (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Oberman, *The Impact of the Reformation: Essays* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Oberman, *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*, ed. Donald Weinstein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Heiko A. Oberman, ed., *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era: Papers for the Fourth International Congress for Luther Research* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974); Oberman, ed., *Gregor von Rimini: Werk und Wirkung bis zur Reformation* (Berlin; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1981); Heiko A. Oberman and Frank A. James, III, ed., *Via Augustini: Augustine in the Later Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation: Essays in Honor of Damasus Trapp, O.S.A.*, in cooperation with Eric Leland Saak (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1991).

¹² Irena Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, 2 vols. (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001); Vincent Brümmer, "Calvin, Bernard and the Freedom of the Will," *Religious Studies* 20 (1994): 437-55; Dennis R. Creswell, "St. Augustine's Dilemma: The Conflict between Eternal Law and Grace, Its Resolution in Double Predestination, and Its Effect on Freedom in the Late Pelagian Controversy" (Th.D. diss., Lutheran Northwestern Theological Seminary, 1991); Gerhard Ebeling, *The Word of God and Tradition: Historical Studies Interpreting the Divisions of Christianity*, trans. S. H. Hooke (London: Collins, 1968), 102-47; Peter Fraenkel, *Testimonia Patrum: The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melancthon* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1961); Gerstner, "Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards on the Bondage of the Will," 279-96; A. N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*; Lane, "Scripture, Tradition, and Church: An Historical Survey," *Vox Evangelica* 9 (1975): 37-55; Lane, "Sola Scriptura? Making Sense of a Post-Reformation Slogan," in *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture*, eds. P. E. Satterthwaite and D. F. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 297-327; J. Marius J. Lange van Ravenswaay, *Augustinus totus noster. Das Augustinverständnis bei Johannes Calvin* (Tübingen: Tübingen University doctoral thesis, 1985; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); Alister E. McGrath, "The Anti-Pelagian Structure of 'Nominalist' Doctrines of Justification," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 57 (1981): 107-19; McGrath, "'Augustinianism'? A Critical Assessment of the So-Called 'Medieval Augustinian Tradition' on Justification," *Augustiniana* 31 (1981): 147-67; McGrath, *A Life of Calvin* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990); E. P. Meijering, *Melancthon and Patristic Thought: The Doctrines of Christ and Grace, the Trinity and the Creation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983); Mozley, *A Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*; Gordon R. Payne, "Augustinianism in Calvin and Bonaventure," *Westminster Theological Journal* 44 (Spring 1982): 1-30; Barbara Pitkin, "Nothing but Concupiscence: Calvin's Understanding of Sin and the Via Augustini," *Calvin Theological Journal* 34 (1999): 347-69; Lange van Ravenswaay, "Initia Augustiniana Calvini. Neues zur Genese von Calvins Augustinverständnis," in *Congresso Internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI Centenario della Conversione*, vol. 3 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1987), 257-74; Eric L. Saak, *High Way to Heaven: The Augustinian Platform between Reform and Reformation, 1292-1524* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2002); Larry D. Sharp, "The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine," *Evangelical Quarterly* 52 (April-June 1980): 84-96; Luchsius Smits, *Saint Augustine dans l'oeuvre de Jean Calvin*, 2 vols. (Assen: van Gorcum, 1957-58); Mark E. Vanderschaaf, "Predestination and Certainty of Salvation in Augustine and Calvin," *The Reformed Review* 30-31 (Autumn 1976): 1-8; Benjamin B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1971).

in the second phase of the Reformation, and works on the methodology of Calvin¹³ and other key Reformers.¹⁴

¹³ Richard A. Muller's various works on Calvin and Reformed theology are good places to start. Muller, *Christ and the Decree*; Muller, *God, Creation, and Providence in the Thought of Jacob Arminius: Sources and Directions of Scholastic Protestantism in the Era of Early Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991); Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 vols.; Muller, "Grace, Election, and Contingent Choice: Arminius's Gambit and the Reformed Response," in *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will*, edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 251-78; Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

On other scholars' works on Calvin's methodology, please refer to Brian G. Armstrong, "Duplex cognitio Dei, Or? The Problem and Relation of Structure, Form, and Purpose in Calvin's Theology," in *Probing the Reformed Tradition: Historical Essays in Honor of Edward A. Dowey, Jr.*, ed. Elsie Anne McKee and Brian G. Armstrong (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 135-53; Richard C. Gamble, "Exposition and Method in Calvin," in *Calvin and Hermeneutics*, ed. Richard C. Gamble, Articles on Calvin and Calvinism, vol. 6 (New York & London: Garland, 1992), 51-64; Julius Köstlin, "Calvin's *Institutio* nach Form und Inhalt in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 41 (1868): 7-62, 410-86; John H. Leith, "Calvin's Theological Method and the Ambiguity in His Theology," in *Reformation Studies: Essays in Honor of Roland H. Bainton*, ed. F. H. Littel (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), 106-14; Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 9-21, 246-54; Benjamin B. Warfield, "On the Literary History of Calvin's Institutes," in *Calvin and Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 373-428; Wendel, *Calvin*, 111-49; Jean-Daniel Benoit, "The History and Development of the *Institutio*: How Calvin Worked," in *John Calvin*, ed. Gervase E. Duffield (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 102-17. Works that pay much attention to Calvin's historical context should be consulted too. Cf. Susan E. Schreiner, *The Theater of His Glory: Nature and the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1991) Schreiner, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Calvin's Exegesis of Job from Medieval and Modern Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); David C. Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Works on Melanchthon, Zwingli, Bucer, Bullinger, and Vermigli should be consulted. To name a few: Fritz Büsser, "Elements of Zwingli's Thought in Calvin's Institutes," in *In Honor of John Calvin, 1509-64*, ed. E. J. Furcha (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1987), 1-27; Paul Helm, "Calvin (and Zwingli) on Divine Providence," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29/2 (1994): 388-405; W. P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Günter Frank and Herman J. Selderhuis, eds., *Melanchthon und der Calvinismus* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2005); Gregory B. Graybill, "The Evolution of Philipp Melanchthon's Thought on Free Will" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2002); Robert Kolb, "Nikolaus Gallus' Critique of Philip Melanchthon's Teaching on the Freedom of the Will," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 91 (2000): 87-110; Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 67-102; August Lang, "Melanchthon und Calvin," in *Reformation und Gegenwart* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1968), 88-135; Karin Maag, ed., *Melanchthon in Europe: His Work and Influence beyond Wittenberg* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); Wolfgang Matz, *Der befreite Mensch. Die Willenslehre in der Theologie Philipp Melanchthons* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001); Barbara Pitkin, "The Protestant Zeno: Calvin and the Development of Melanchthon's Anthropology," *Journal of Religion* 84/3 (July 2004): 345-78; Timothy J. Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness: Philip Melanchthon's Exegetical Dispute with Erasmus of Rotterdam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Wengert, "Philip Melanchthon's Contribution to Luther's Debate with Erasmus over the Bondage of the Will," in *By Faith Alone: Essays on Justification in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde*, eds. Joseph A. Burgess & Marc Kolden (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), 110-124; Matthieu Arnold and Berndt Hamm, eds., *Martin Bucer zwischen Luther und Zwingli* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Martin Greschat, *Martin Bucer: A Reformer and His Times*, trans. Stephen E. Buckwalter

I. John Hesselink aptly calls Lane's article, "Did Calvin Believe in Freewill?", "the most thorough study of this subject in English" and a work that "should be consulted if one wants to investigate this question further."¹⁵ Still, Lane does not here analyze Calvin's historical context or offer a truly comprehensive study of the documents. In a later essay, Lane does examine the historical context of Calvin's treatise against Pighius:

It was not only the divergence between Luther and Melancthon that embarrassed Calvin. Calvin also diverges significantly from Luther, as becomes apparent in his later *De aeterna praedestinatione dei*. In addition to affirming "absolute necessity" Luther also denied the scholastic distinction between absolute or consequent necessity (*necessitas consequentis*) and necessity of consequence (*necessitas consequentiae*). Pighius assumed that Calvin agreed with Luther's teaching that "nothing happens to us contingently, but everything by sheer necessity." Calvin's embarrassment was that he did not agree—but could not say so openly without displaying Protestant disunity.¹⁶

(Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004); Joel Edward Kok, "The Influence of Martin Bucer on Calvin's Interpretation of Romans: A Comparative Case Study" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1993); Wilhelm Pauck, *Calvin and Butzer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929); W. van't Spijker, "Prädestination bei Bucer und Calvin: ihre gegenseitige Beeinflussung und Abhängigkeit," in *Calvinus Theologus*, ed. W. H. Neuser (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976), 85-111; David F. Wright, ed., *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1980); Fritz Büsler, "Bullinger as Calvin's Model in Biblical Exposition: An Examination of Calvin's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans," in *In Honor of John Calvin*, 64-95; Cornelis P. Venema, "Heinrich Bullinger's Correspondence on Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination, 1551-1553," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 17/4 (1986): 435-50; Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination: Author of "the Other Reformed Tradition"?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2002); Peter Walser, *Die Prädestination bei Heinrich Bullinger im Zusammenhang mit seiner Gotteslehre* (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1957); Luca Baschera, "Peter Martyr Vermigli on Free Will: The Aristotelian Heritage of Reformed Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 42/2 (November 2007), 325-40; John Patrick Donnelly, *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli's Doctrine of Man and Grace* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976); Donnelly, "Calvinist Thomism," *Viator* 7 (1976): 441-55; Frank A. James III, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination: The Augustinian Inheritance of an Italian Reformer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); James III, ed., *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations: Semper Reformanda* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004).

¹⁵ I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 202, note 54.

¹⁶ Lane, "Bondage and Liberation in Calvin's Treatise against Pighius," 7. *Necessitas consequentis* is normally defined as "the necessity of something that cannot be other than what it is, which is to say, a simple or absolute necessity." *Necessitas consequentiae* is normally defined as "a necessity brought about or conditioned by a previous contingent act or event so that the necessity itself arises out of contingent circumstance; thus conditional necessity." Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 200.

Here, Lane voices a major historical issue concerning Calvin's formulation: whether Calvin agrees with Luther's concept of necessity. Lane recognizes that there were subtle yet significant differences among the Reformers. Amidst the intensely polemical spirit of the Reformation, Calvin, as a Reformer of the second generation, could not avoid defending terminologies and ideas set by the earlier formulations on the one hand and adapting to the changes involved in the second stage of the Reformation on the other. Yet neither Lane's earlier essay, nor his introductory essay to the translation of Calvin's treatise against Pighius, investigates fully the possible impact of the early Reformation heritage and the altered polemic in Calvin's times on Calvin's reformulation. Concerning the relationship of the formulations of the two Reformers, Lane provides only a general comment that "Calvin adopted a more moderate position than did Luther."¹⁷

We also need to qualify Lane's statement concerning the dissimilarity between Luther and Calvin: "What is remarkable is not the occasional parallel, nor the inevitable fact that certain commonplace arguments are reiterated, but the lack of similarity between the two debates."¹⁸ If Lane is referring solely to the structure of the treatises, he is certainly correct. But if he means that the early Reformation debates have little impact on Calvin's formulation of his concept of human will, this would be inaccurate.¹⁹

¹⁷ Lane, "Introduction," xxviii.

¹⁸ Lane, "Introduction," xxviii-xxix. In a forthcoming article, Lane still maintains his older position, but admits that there are similar points between Calvin and Luther: "Pighius attacks Luther's *Assertio omnium articulorum*, but makes no mention of either Erasmus's *Diatriba* or Luther's *De servo arbitrio*. Pighius's library at his death included neither work—but nor did it include Calvin's *Institutio* or Luther's *Assertio*. Calvin makes no allusion to the earlier debate. In the notes to the critical edition of his *Defensio* a number of parallels have been noted, but none of these amounts to clear proof that either Pighius or Calvin had the earlier works in mind." Lane, "Anthropology: Calvin between Luther and Erasmus."

¹⁹ For an overview of early Reformation debates that involved Luther concerning the bondage of the will, cf. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 240-366; Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's

Matthew Heckel's dissertation, "His Spear through My Side unto Luther': Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," is a recent substantial work on this topic. In contrast to Lane, Heckel focuses on a key issue involved in Calvin's reformulation: the nature of the continuities and discontinuities between Luther and Calvin. Heckel also makes an effort to interpret the formulations of Luther and Calvin in the late medieval and early Reformation context. We agree with Heckel that there is an essential continuity between the two Reformers. Nevertheless, we find that one of Heckel's key theses needs to be qualified: "Luther was not only a general influence on the Reformer of Geneva but he appears to have been the most decisive influence in forming his doctrine of the will."²⁰ We believe that Augustine and various contemporaries of Calvin also contributed significantly to Calvin's reformulation of the early Reformation heritage. The uniqueness of Calvin's thought is to be identified only after the influences of these three sources on Calvin's thought are comprehensively examined.

Heckel also has a tendency to minimize and explain away genuine discontinuities between Luther and Calvin, and is deeply convinced that any seeming discontinuities between Luther and Calvin do not constitute genuine differences. He therefore argues against Lane's thesis that there are subtle yet significant differences between the two great Reformers. For example, on Calvin's reuse of the scholastic distinction of two kinds of necessity that Luther rejected, Heckel, disagreeing with Lane, argues that Calvin does not teach anything substantially different from Luther: "Calvin's claim to full solidarity

Doctrine of Will."

²⁰ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 284.

with Luther in *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will* is supported by his defense of Luther's necessitarian argument, and that Calvin's claim was not reversed by his later work *The Eternal Predestination of God*.²¹ Harry J. McSorley uses the term "necessitarian argument" to describe Luther's way of argument in *Assertio omnium articulorum* (1520)²² and *The Bondage of the Will* (1525) that argues the bondage of the human will by the fact of the sovereign ruling of God. In this dissertation, we will use the term "necessitarian argument" to represent this kind of argument in Luther. Heckel is not aware of the fact that although Calvin adopts many necessitarian ideas from Luther, he does not adopt Luther's necessitarian argument.²³

Heckel also criticizes McSorley for suggesting some minor but significant discontinuities between Augustine and Luther. Heckel believes, "We found both reformers to be thoroughly Augustinian with respect to Augustine's final position on grace, contra McSorley, and that they only differed with Augustine over the value of the term 'free choice.'"²⁴ While we agree with Heckel's observation there is an essential similarity among Augustine, Luther and Calvin, we differ with Heckel in finding that there are subtle, genuine, and significant differences among the three.

²¹ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 12. Cf. *ibid.*, 8-21, 224.

²² Cf. Martin Luther, *An Assertion of All the Articles of Martin Luther Which Were Quite Recently Condemned by a Bull of Leo X, Article 36*, translated and annotated by Clarence H. Miller, in Desiderius Erasmus, *Controversies*, edited by Charles Trinkaus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 76 (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 301-10. In later quotes, the short form "*Assertio*" will be used. The Latin text is in *WA* 7:142-49.

²³ Cf. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 21. We use the term "necessitarian" in this dissertation to describe those ideas in the Reformation debates that emphasize the divine sovereignty.

²⁴ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 224-25. Disputing with McSorley over the issue of natural freedom, Heckel argues that there is an essential continuity between Luther and Augustine in his later works: "The whole dichotomy wedged between Augustine and Luther falls flat when it is seen that Luther admitted the same." *Ibid.*, 203.

The third limitation in Heckel's work is that he tends to disregard any possible inconsistency or ambiguity in Luther's and Calvin's formulations. He also seems to read Luther's and Calvin's formulation through an Edwardsean-Calvinist perspective, and uses modern philosophical terminology to argue that Calvin consistently maintains a concept of a self-deterministic human will: "Calvin's concession to free choice was voluntary self-determination (*lubens spontanea*) not a power to choose between good and evil."²⁵ He also uses this Edwardsean concept of human will to read Luther's comment on the fall.²⁶ He implicitly disallows that Adam before the fall had a genuine freedom of contrary choice.

The Reformers' formulations were framed mostly by biblical terminology and some medieval concepts. Without a careful understanding of the subtle differences between the classical Augustinian classifications and the modern philosophical distinctions, it is easy to misread the formulations of the Reformers. Some areas of Heckel's analysis fall into this fault. Heckel does not significantly register the classical Augustinian position that there is a significant difference between the states of Adam before and after the fall, as the Reformers did. By implication, Heckel does not allow Luther teaching genuine freedom of contrary choice for Adam before the fall: "But McSorley says that in *BW* we cannot be sure that Luther means the same thing, since his necessitarian argument forced him to avoid explaining the origin of sin in terms of free will. McSorley is misguided by his definition of free will, which does not allow Luther's

²⁵ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 240. And immediately following this sentence, Heckel also says, "Luther conceded the same, and Harry J. McSorley accuses him of negating human responsibility so as to implicate God in the blame: 'Luther seems to make God the actual originator of sin.' Luther and Calvin interpreted the fall as a divine withdrawal or a withholding of perseverance." Ibid.

understanding of free choice as voluntary self-determination.”²⁷ Heckel does not clarify what he means by these modern philosophical terms.

Arguably, Heckel draws on a modern Edwardsean concept of human will and imposes it on his reading of Luther and Calvin. John S. Feinberg, a key advocate of a modern Edwardsean concept of human will, argues that to be a consistent Calvinist we must dismiss the whole free will defense of Augustine and we must not allow Adam genuine freedom of contrary choice:

This is an old mistake and a very common one. In fact, I believe Augustine himself made this error. His free will defense clearly commits him to indeterminism, and yet his other treatises about God's control of the world necessitate some form of determinism. Theists who take this approach need either to change their views on freedom or modify their notion of God's sovereignty.²⁸

Feinberg, following the logic of Jonathan Edwards' concept of human will, translates the necessitarian nature of the bound will after the fall, into a deterministic concept of human will applicable also to Adam before the fall, and denies the Augustinian affirmation that there is a major difference between the two states.

In this dissertation, we will not deal with this modern philosophical problem in depth, but we shall be reminded that Calvin does adopt an Augustinian free will defense and we shall be watchful of the philosophical lens used by some Edwardsean-Calvinist scholars. Elton Holtrop is sharp in his criticism of this modern Edwardsean-Calvinist concept that they miss the distinction of the states of human will between Adam before

²⁶ Cf. Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 234-45.

²⁷ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 235, note 38. Italics added.

²⁸ John S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 98. Feinberg says, “As for the Calvinist, he must reject the Free Will of Defense (and the Arminian theology that goes with it) as a solution to his problem of evil; but he, too, must admit that the free will defender’s theology is rendered internally consistent by the Free Will Defense.” Feinberg, “And the Atheist Shall Lie Down with the Calvinist: Atheism, Calvinism, and the Free Will Defense,” *Trinity Journal* 1 (1980): 151.

the fall and that after: “This distinction is essential in Calvinism as it differentiates between man’s will as yet uninfluenced by sin and man’s will under the influence of sin. Edwards neglected this distinction which would compel him logically to make God the author of sin.”²⁹

The fourth limitation in Heckel’s work is that he uses unqualified statements to describe the Reformers’ teaching on the relationship between God’s sovereign will and the fall of Satan and Man. Though Heckel properly acknowledges that both Luther and Calvin affirm the asymmetrical relationship between God’s sovereignty in bringing salvation and his sovereign role over reprobation, he uses unqualified causal language in describing Calvin’s concept of the relationship between God’s sovereign will and the fall. Heckel’s representation gives an impression of a more direct causal relationship than Calvin does: “*In the fall, God withdrew so that man fell on his own, but in salvation, God intervenes so that man believes because of God’s action.*”³⁰ “What does it mean that God ordained the fall? Calvin would not conscience the idea that God could be the author of sin, *but God created the circumstances that led to sin.*”³¹ God’s withdrawal becomes a sufficient cause, though not necessarily an immediate cause, for the fall of Adam. We agree that Calvin occasionally uses positive and causal language to describe the

²⁹ Elton John Holtrop, “Edwards’ Conception of the Will in the Light of Calvinistic Philosophy” (Ph.D. Thesis, Western Reserve University, 1948), 102-3. For an introduction to this modern Edwardsean concept, one may refer C. Samuel Storms, “Jonathan Edwards on the Freedom of the Will,” *Trinity Journal* 3 (1982): 131-69. For substantial discussion on the subtle differences between Edwardsean concept of human will and classical Reformed/Calvinist concept of human will, one may refer James Dana, *The Examination of the Late Rev’d President Edwards’ Enquiry on Freedom of Will* (New Haven, 1773); Girardeau, *The Will in its Theological Relations*; Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*; 471-524; Allen C. Guelzo, *Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1989).

³⁰ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 242. Italics added.

³¹ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 233. Italics added.

relationship of God's will over Adam's fall. One key saying is in *Institutes*, 3.23.8: "As if God did not establish the condition in which he wills the chief of his creatures to be!"³²

Calvin does not claim that the condition God created will automatically lead to the fall of Adam. Heckel does not take Calvin's repeated claims of the theoretical possibility of Adam's not falling seriously enough.³³

Moreover, Heckel pays not enough consideration of the important affirmation by Calvin that Adam before the fall has the genuine freedom of contrary choice between good and evil.³⁴ Heckel also miss the fact that a post-fall framework was assumed by Luther in his discussion of God's role over sinful acts, as Kolb rightly argues.³⁵ Because of these, by not paying enough regard to Calvin's repeated emphases on the integrity of Adam before the fall, Heckel does not accurately represent Calvin's view, and does not fully represent the dual convictions Calvin consistently maintains. First, God did ordain

³² The Latin text is, "Quasi vero non constituerit Deus qua conditione praecipuam ex creaturis suis esse vellet." *Inst.*, 3.23.8. The Latin text used of the 1559 *Institutes* is quoted from John Calvin, *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (1559), available from *Calvin's Institutes Latin-English Search and Browser Programs*, ed. Richard F. Wevers (Grand Rapids: Calvin College/Calvin Theological Seminary, 1999) [CD-ROM]. Future quotations of the Latin texts of 1559 *Institutes* will be quoted from this version.

³³ Calvin frequently protects the integrity of Adam before the fall: "In this integrity man by free will had the power, if he so willed, to attain eternal life." "For, the individual parts of his soul were formed to uprightness, the soundness of his mind stood firm, and his will was free to choose the good." *Inst.*, 1.15.8.

³⁴ Cf. "Therefore Adam could have stood if he wished, seeing that he fell solely by his own will. But it was because his will was capable of being bent to one side or the other, and was not given the constancy to persevere, that he fell so easily. Yet his choice of good and evil was free, and not that alone, but the highest rectitude was in his mind and will, and all the organic parts were rightly composed to obedience, until in destroying himself he corrupted his own blessings." *Inst.*, 1.15.8. For the English texts of Calvin's *Institutes* (1559 edition), in this dissertation we mainly use Battles' translation in John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vol. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960). The abbreviation form *Inst.* will be used in this dissertation. Calvin in *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will* explicitly agrees with Pighius on the state of Adam before the fall: "To speak even more clearly, there is full agreement between us about the original creation of man. For Pighius lays down that man was made with free choice. We accept this, and did not wait for him to demand this of us; we have always owned this belief." Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 92; *CO* 6:296. The standard abbreviation *CO* stands for *Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, edited by G. Baum and others, 59 vols. (Braunschweig and Berlin: Schwetschke, 1863-1900).

the fall of Adam, and not by mere permission.³⁶ Second, Calvin insists that it is fully Adam's responsibility and Adam had the freedom of contrary choice and could avoid it if he wished: "Therefore Adam could have stood if he wished, seeing that he fell solely by his own will."³⁷ Heckel thus draws a portrait of the Reformer with a stricter necessitarian look than the Reformer actually is.

In addition to the works of Lane and Heckel, there are several significant older studies of Calvin's debate with Pighius. Hermann Barnikol's *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen und ihr Verhältnis zur Lehre der übrigen Reformatoren und Augustins* (1927) is insightful particularly in its methodology: it provides careful comparison of Calvin's concept with that of Bucer, Luther, Melancthon, and Augustine. Well before Heckel's work, Barnikol accurately pointed out that Calvin is "the excellent and more skillful presenter" and "a defender" of the Lutheran doctrine of the bondage of the human will.³⁸ Barnikol argues that Bucer, implicitly disagreeing with Luther's necessitarian argument, helped to direct Calvin to put the issue of the bondage of the human will primarily in a religious-moral framework.³⁹ He also points out that there was a new trend

³⁵ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 1-66.

³⁶ The sentence immediately before the above quote is this: "Still, it is not in itself likely that man brought destruction upon himself through himself, by God's mere permission and without any ordaining." *Inst.*, 3.23.8.

³⁷ *Inst.*, 1.15.8. Calvin consistently maintains both the sovereign role of God and the personal responsibility by Adam: "Accordingly, man falls according as God's providence ordains, but he falls by his own fault." *Inst.*, 3.23.8.

³⁸ Barnikol says, "Immerhin läßt sich sagen, daß das, was Luther in der Behauptung seines metaphysischen Determinismus wollte, in Calvin den trefflichen und geschickteren Darsteller gefunden hat." "Mit Recht fühlt sich Calvin in allen für den Glauben notwendigen Stücken als ein Verteidiger der lutherischen Lehre von der Willensunfreiheit des Menschen." *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 57-58; cf. *ibid.*, 38-58.

³⁹ Barnikol says, "Dabei muß aber deutlich herausgestellt werden, daß Calvin ungleich schärfer und folgerichtiger über ein gewisses Schwanken der Darstellung Butzers hinausgehend den religiös-sittlichen

set by Melanchthon in his 1535 *loci* to disassociate the Reformation doctrine from Luther's necessitarian argument used in the early Reformation.⁴⁰ Barnikol is correct in recognizing the impact of the debate against Pighius on Calvin: after the 1540s Calvin gradually moved his formulation closer to Augustine's and further from Luther's. Though still holding some of Luther's core convictions, Calvin grew and learned through these polemic treatises, and, in Barnikol's view, became a better disciple of Augustine.⁴¹

In addition, Barnikol provides three more important and insightful observations. First, Barnikol argues that Calvin, though agreeing with Luther on the substance of the doctrine, differs from Luther in the use of argument. We believe that this differentiation between the substance of doctrine and the way of argument is an important tool to clarify the nature of the continuities and discontinuities between Luther and Calvin. Second, Barnikol convincingly demonstrates that Bucer, differing from Luther, puts the cause of

Determinismus herausgearbeitet hat, der das eigentliche Herzstück seiner Darstellung bildet." *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 38; cf. *ibid.*, 12-38.

⁴⁰ Barnikol says, "In der Ausgabe der *Loci* von 1535 und in der Vorlesung Melanchthons über die *Loci* aus dem Jahre 1533, die uns in einer Niederschrift Bugenhagens erhalten ist, stehen wir nämlich vor der gewaltigen Tat, daß sich Melanchthon von dem ihm durch Luther überkommenen Determinismus freigemacht hat. Zwar polemisiert Melanchthon aus begreiflichen Gründen nicht gegen Luthers Schrift ‚*de servo arbitrio*‘, sein Tadel trifft einzig den Praedestianismus eines Zwingli und Laurentius Valla, aber der Sache nach hat sich Melanchthon dem Einfluß Luthers, dessen deterministische Doktrin in den ersten Jahren deutlich spürbar war, entzogen. Mit dem Verzicht auf den metaphysischen Determinismus Luthers hat er indes auch den sittlichen Determinismus preisgegeben. Melanchthon vertritt in den *Loci* von 1535 die Anschauung von der religiösen Unfreiheit des menschlichen Willens zum Heil. Aus der Erörterung des Willensproblems scheidet Melanchthon nunmehr den früher an erster Stelle stehenden, dann an die zweite Stelle gesetzten Gedanken der Praedestination völlig aus." *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 69-70; cf. *ibid.*, 58-82.

⁴¹ Barnikol says, "Allerdings war dieses *liberum arbitrium* völlig entwertet und nur von formaler Bedeutung. Calvin, der dies erkannt hat, zeigt sich beim Kampf mit Pighius bereit, sich zum *liberum arbitrium* im Sinne Augustins zu bekennen. Die schroffe Formulierung Luthers, der das *liberum arbitrium* als eine *res de solo titulo* bezeichnet, wußte Calvin unter dem Einfluß Augustins zu vermeiden. Immerhin weiß Augustin stärker, als Calvin es tut, die Spontaneität des Willens herauszustellen." "Calvin, der sich mit Recht einen Erneuerer des Augustinismus nennt, ist im gleichen Sinn wie Augustin Determinist im sittlich-religiösen Sinn, zugleich auch Indeterminist wie auch Augustin im psychologischen Sinn. Beider Lehre vom *liberum arbitrium* charakterisiert sich in der Gegenüberstellung von theologischen Determinismus und psychologischen Indeterminismus." *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 100; cf.

the bondage of the human will solely in a soteriological framework, that is to prove the bondage of the human will by the fact of original sin and the fall, but not by the fact of the sovereign ruling of God. This point reminds us that Calvin developed his formulation amidst an increased theodical concern among his contemporaries: to defend the early Reformation formulations against the charge that the Reformers taught that God is the author of sin. We use the term “theodical concern” in this dissertation to represent the concern in denying the charge of teaching God as the author of sin.⁴²

In the second phase of the Reformation, the Reformers not only need to defend the doctrine of the bondage of the human will, but they also need to defend the charge that Luther’s and the early Reformers’ formulations gave the impression that God is the author of sin. The Reformers not only had to argue an anti-Pelagian case, which was the primary concern in the early Reformation debates, but also had to distance themselves from Manichaeism. Peter Stephens uses the term “twin concerns” to represent both of these concerns in Heinrich Bullinger.⁴³ This theodical concern became more and more an important aspect of their reformulations. This new development in the second phase of the Reformation, together with a better acquaintance with Augustine and a better

ibid., 82-101.

⁴² “Theodical” is an adjectival term used by some modern philosophical discussion on the issues related to the problem of evil. For an illustration of this use, cf. Jeff Jordan, “Divine Love and Human Suffering,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 56 (Dec. 2004): 169-78. It is a helpful and concise term we use in this dissertation to represent the concern for defending the Reformation formulations against the charge that the Reformation doctrine teaches that God is the author of sin.

⁴³ Cf. W. Peter Stephens, “Election in Zwingli and Bullinger: A Comparison of Zwingli’s *Sermonis de Providentia dei Anamnema* (1530) and Bullinger’s *Oratio de Moderatione Servanda in Negotio Providentiae, Praedestinationis, Gratiae et Liberi Arbitrii* (1536),” *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 7.1 (April 2005): 50, 53.

appreciation of some medieval distinctions, stimulated Calvin to put his formulation of the bondage of the human will basically in a soteriological framework.

Another key observation made by Barnikol is that Luther's earlier defense in *De servo arbitrio* has a two-track argument against the freedom of the will: an anthropological argument coupled with a necessitarian argument.⁴⁴ This line of observation is supported by the recent work of Robert Kolb.⁴⁵ In Barnikol's terminology, it is a religious-moral argument mixed with a metaphysical determinism.⁴⁶ Barnikol believes that Luther, in his emphasis on the incompatibility of divine omnipotence, providence, and predestination with human free choice, adds a strong metaphysical determinism in his defense.⁴⁷ Moreover, Luther's argument is easily perceived as teaching a concept of absolute power of God that denies the logical possibility of the existence of genuine human free choice.⁴⁸ On this, Barnikol praises Calvin for putting

⁴⁴ "Luther betrachtet das Problem der Willensfreiheit unter zwei verschiedenen Gesichtspunkten." Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 46.

⁴⁵ Cf. Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 52.

⁴⁶ "In diesem Fortgerissenwerden liegt die unbedingte Notwendigkeit der menschlichen Handlung begründet, tritt der metaphysische, über das religiös-sittliche Gebiet hinausgehende Determinismus Luthers zu Tage." Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 45.

⁴⁷ Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 47. "In der Betonung der Unvereinbarkeit von göttlicher Omnipotenz und Providenz und Praedestination mit dem *liberum arbitrium* des Menschen gewinnt der Determinismus Luthers seine metaphysische Art." For a different perspective on Luther's the necessitarian argument in *Assertio*, see Julius Köstlin, *Theology of Luther in Its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, Part I, trans. Charles E. Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897), 431-32, 480-84. Köstlin argues that Luther did not twist the topic into a metaphysical discussion. Köstlin believes that it is in *Grund und Ursach* where Luther represents his true intention. There Luther put the issue back into a soteriological framework. Köstlin argues that it is because of Luther's zeal in rejecting human righteousness Luther uttered those necessitarian phrases and arguments in *Assertio*: "It is thus always zeal against *human righteousness* and in behalf of the absolute nature of divine grace which lies at the basis of his strongest utterances in regard to the divine omnipotence and the changeless character of the divine will in general." *Ibid.*, 432.

⁴⁸ "Wo der Gottesgedanke als absolute Kraft auftritt, herrscht unbedingte Notwendigkeit, versinkt die Freiheit des menschlichen Willens im göttlichen Kausalzusammenhang des Weltgeschehens. Kein Wunder, daß hier der über das sittlich-religiöse Gebiet hinausgehende metaphysische Determinismus

the whole issue back into a soteriological framework: he argued the fact of the bondage of the human will as a consequence of the fall.⁴⁹ Barnikol uses a Kantian framework or terminology to interpret the differences between Luther and Calvin: a clear distinction between a metaphysical realm and a religious-moral realm. This may mislead the readers because such constructs would inappropriately impose nineteenth century categories on the Reformation debates. Nevertheless, we believe that Barnikol is correct in pointing out the existence of the two-track argument in Luther and a significant discontinuity between Luther and Calvin in Calvin's not using the same necessitarian argument.

Barnikol, however, has some limitations. He fails to notice that in certain related issues, Calvin uses deterministic arguments similar to Luther's. Although Calvin typically avoids fully necessitarian argumentation, in his elaborations of predestination, of the relationship between the divine will and the fall of humankind, and of divine hardening, Calvin retains various necessitarian concepts similar to Luther. In addition, Barnikol fails to observe an important trend in the second phase of the Reformation: a shift away from Luther's deterministic argument. If Barnikol had included Bullinger and Vermigli in his comparison, the trend of the shift would have been more obvious. Calvin should not be given the greatest credit for putting the issue back into a soteriological framework, because he was only one among the many and he was not the first.

triumphiert." Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 47-48.

⁴⁹ Cf. "So tritt auch der Gott-Satan-Gedanke mehr in den Hintergrund; die theologischen Voraussetzungen des lutherischen Determinismus in Allmacht, Vorsehung und Vorherbestimmung Gottes sind in der calvinischen Darstellung völlig beseitigt. Dadurch vermeidet sein Determinismus den metaphysischen Charakter der lutherischen Darstellung, und beschränkt er bei der Erörterung der Willensfreiheit des Menschen den Blick mit Bewußtsein auf die Erörterung der ethisch-religiösen Probleme. Während für Luther das Problem des freien Willens in erster Linie ein theologisches Problem ist, gestaltet es Calvin mit bewußtem Willen ausschließlich zu einem anthropologischen." Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 57.

William Cunningham's old but well-researched study also provides insights into the debate. Cunningham reminds us that the difference in theological expression was an important issue in the Reformation. He criticizes Melanchthon for issuing "rash and offensive statements" in his earlier writings.⁵⁰ Cunningham believes that the early Reformers overstepped the biblical boundary in their teaching on the relationship of God's will over men's sinful actions: "discussions which too often resulted in some attempt to explain more fully and minutely than Scripture affords us materials for doing."⁵¹ Whether we accept this theological judgment or not, we are reminded by this important observation that the early Reformers, especially Luther, in following the biblical expressions concerning God's sovereignty over sins literally, use expressions that seem to imply that God has an active and causal role over sins. In view of this, we find that the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation gradually tempered these earlier statements and shifted towards a more traditional Augustinian formulation. In general, Cunningham provides a reliable, albeit theologized, analysis of Calvin's concept of human will. His coverage of Calvin's works is quite comprehensive and his various comments are insightful.

John L. Girardeau's *The Will in Its Theological Relations* was designed to defend a sublapsarian reading of Calvin. Girardeau tries to convince his readers that Jonathan Edwards' concept of philosophical determinism is not compatible with the classical and genuine Calvinism.⁵² His work rightly reminds us to be aware of the danger of imposing

⁵⁰ Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 1:628.

⁵¹ Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 1:637.

⁵² "The Necessitarianism of Edwards was obviously not the norm of recent Calvinistic thought. It had been grafted by his powerful hand into the Theology of the Reformed Church, and for a time, in this

Edwardsean concepts on Calvin and on Reformed theology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To this end, Girardeau provides an intensive and comprehensive analysis of the nature of human will in Calvin's teaching. He pays a lot of attention to whether Calvin's formulation compromises God's integrity over the fall of Satan and human beings. Girardeau makes a key contribution by pointing out the importance of differentiating the stages of Adam in Calvin's formulation:

This is Edwards's moral necessity, a necessity not imposed in the way of physical constraint, but springing from the dispositions of the man himself. Now every Calvinist must admit the possible co-existence of such a necessity with the highest form of freedom. They concur in God, in the elect angels, and in glorified men. *The only question is—and it is of the utmost consequence—Does this concurrence take place in every supposable case? Did it obtain in the instance of the non-elect angels and of Adam in innocence?*⁵³

Girardeau correctly points out that "Calvin habitually made a great distinction between the necessity of sinning in our present fallen and unregenerate condition and the free and unnecessitated sin of Adam."⁵⁴ This well thought out work has, however, a major drawback. In his single-minded focus in proving that Calvin does not teach an Edwardsean concept of determinism, Girardeau tended to disregard some necessitarian

country, almost dominated it; but it became evident that the Calvinistic Theology is extricating itself from the iron embrace of the Necessitarian Philosophy as one of universal application." Girardeau, *The Will in its Theological Relations*, 14.

⁵³ Girardeau, *The Will in its Theological Relations*, 48. Italics added. "The theory of President Edwards and his followers strangely fails to note this obvious distinction between the case of man in innocence and that of his present and future condition, and therefore comes short of being an adequate account of the freedom of the will." Ibid., 56. Girardeau emphasizes that Edwards' concept is applicable for human will after the fall, but not before the fall: "We have no hesitation in using the language of Edwards in relation to the fixed connection between a sinful nature and acts of the will." Ibid., 127.

⁵⁴ Girardeau, *The Will in its Theological Relations*, 143. Girardeau rightly affirms that Augustine and the Reformed Orthodox affirm similar concepts too: "With Augustin, Calvin, and the Reformed Confessions, we ascribed the power of contrary choice of Adam in spiritual things, not in the sense of an essential and inalienable attribute of humanity, but as an accidental, separable, contingent quality." Ibid., 130.

concepts and presentations in Calvin's thought and failed to investigate the historical context behind those presentations.⁵⁵

Ludolf F. Schulze's works on Calvin's debate with Pighius provide reliable background information on the debate. Schulze reminds us that the doctrine of the bondage of the human will was a common doctrine among the Reformers. On this doctrine, Calvin did not distance himself from Luther or the Lutherans.⁵⁶ Schulze, following Barnikol, argues that Calvin steered away from the deterministic formulations of Luther.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Schulze fails to take into account the possible impact of the early Reformation debates on Calvin. He also does not investigate how the change among the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation might have influenced Calvin's reformulation. Moreover, Schulze limits his investigation to the two treatises of Calvin, and hence a more comprehensive research is needed. André Pinard's recent thesis on

⁵⁵ Girardeau recognizes the existence of necessitarian tones in Calvin's teaching of divine decree over the fall of Adam: "But we must admit that, in these passages, he seems to maintain that the decree of God in some way rendered the first sin necessary. If this be his meaning, we have to confess that we must part with our venerable guide at the point at which he *appears* to deflect from the Sublapsarian road, and take the Necessitarian; and we proceed modestly to assign our reasons for divergence." *The Will in its Theological Relations*, 232-33. Girardeau believes that these concepts are incompatible with a consistent Sublapsarian position: "Let us consider the first supposition: that God efficaciously procured the commission of the first sin. In the first place, if this were Calvin's meaning, he is in this matter, inconsistently with himself." *Ibid.*, 233. Girardeau prefers a consistent Calvin: "We are not bound to follow him in utterances which are exceptional and incapable of logical adjustment to his system; and the special tenet in which he appears to follow Augustine we regard as belonging to that category." *Ibid.*, 239.

⁵⁶ "It is obvious that Calvin feels himself wholly in line and one with the Lutherans in these points. Nowhere in the exposition does he differentiate between the Lutherans and himself but he constantly speaks simply of 'we' . . . says that the doctrine of Luther is also his own doctrine." Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*, 19-20.

⁵⁷ "Barnikol shows also how Luther's formulations tend in the definite direction of a metaphysical determinism." Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*, 85, note 84. "In his answer he reveals his unity with the other Reformers (e.g. in the defence of Luther, the distinction between *coactio* and *necessitas*, etc.); yet he formulates more clearly, evading the deterministic formulations of Luther and the uncritical expressions of Bucer. . . . His preoccupation was to stay as closely as possible to Scripture." *Ibid.*, 142.

Calvin's debate with Pighius is another detailed historical analysis of the debate.⁵⁸ The work would be more helpful, if it paid more attention to the changing theological environment in the second phase of the Reformation.

There are also works on related topics that provide important background for our study. Harry J. McSorley's *Luther: Right or Wrong?* is not only a classic work for Luther's concept of the bondage of the will, but also a useful resource for identifying the medieval background of this topic. McSorley rightly observes that Luther's use of "necessitarian argument" and Luther's "reformation of theological language" had a great impact on the development of the formulations of the doctrine of human will in the Reformation.⁵⁹ We find McSorley's observation of a "reformation of theological language" in Luther's formulation of the doctrine particularly insightful. Debate over the doctrine in the Reformation was not limited to the proper positions, but also the manner of presentation and the terms to be used. Nevertheless, in reading McSorley's work, we should be careful that on some points, McSorley occasionally has a tendency to read Augustine in light of the councils of Orange and Trent.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Pinard, "La notion de grâce irrésistible."

⁵⁹ McSorley says, "In this concept of unfree will Luther argues that God's infallible foreknowledge imposes an absolute necessity on all things. Even though it is possible to defend Luther against the charge of determinism and to show, by a painstaking exegesis, that his necessitarian argument for the unfree will need not be understood as a denial of man's natural free will, it is nonetheless never completely clear that Luther's emphasis on the necessity of all human actions does not rob faith of its character of personal, free decision. Luther's necessitarian argument is based on speculative theological reasoning. Luther, very uncharacteristically, makes no effort to give biblical support for this argument. The necessitarian concept of unfree will has, moreover, never been accepted by the Church—before or after Luther—as a legitimate expression of the biblical doctrine of fallen man's bondage to sin and death." *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 21.

⁶⁰ Cf. Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 193-204. Heckel points out, "While McSorley sees Orange as faithful to Augustine, he also seems to see Augustine in light of the council." On the issue of natural freedom, Heckel says, "Thus, while McSorley tries to differentiate 'free choice' as natural freedom from 'free will' as something else, it is clear from the context that Augustine was talking about the same thing." *Ibid.*, 207, 199.

Robert Kolb's *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*

provides a well-researched analysis of the development of the formulation on the Lutheran side.⁶¹ Kolb argues that the soteriological concern is Luther's main and primary concern. Nevertheless, he has to admit that there is an additional side of Luther's argument that a human being is bound not merely because of the corrupted nature after the fall, but also "because of the nature of being a creature as well."⁶² He points out that: "Let God be God" is a major thesis and concern in Luther's *De servo arbitrio*.⁶³ Kolb provides a careful documentation of the possible softening of positions on divine necessity by Luther and his followers after the publication of *De servo arbitrio*. He argues that Luther "soon abandoned this particular experiment in expressing his views, but in 1525 it seemed to work."⁶⁴ Kolb cautiously points out that Luther's concept of necessity in *De servo arbitrio* generated significant theodical problems. He says, "Troublesome for most of his disciples and many thereafter were those passages in which Luther's affirmation of God's lordship seems to make God responsible for evil. The reformer admitted that he, too, struggled with this mystery of evil. But in his

⁶¹ To understand more about the development of Melancthon, refer also Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness*.

⁶² Kolb says, "It must be noted that Luther held that the human will is 'bound' not only because of sin. Its powers are limited because of the nature of being a creature as well." Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 52. Kolb also says, "The most troublesome part of the book for his followers was his argument from divine necessity." "His understanding of the Creator God led him to insist on a doctrine of divine necessity, that God's willing creates an absolute necessity embracing all of his creation." *Ibid.*, 26.

⁶³ Kolb argues that there are "three theological axioms" that "form the foundation of Luther's treatment of Erasmus' argument. First, God is Creator. Second, the human being is a creature, fashioned by and dependent upon the Creator and his design for humanity. Luther regarded the fall into sin as an inescapable corollary of this axiom. . . . Third, restored to trusting in him, his own chosen people, having been given the gift of faith, are engaged in a lifelong struggle against the evil that sin produces in their lives." Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 31

⁶⁴ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 26.

determination to confess the absolute lordship of the Creator, he on occasion gave the impression that God is responsible for evil.”⁶⁵ The combined insights of Barnikol, McSorley, and Kolb point us toward a closer investigation of the nature of continuities and discontinuities in the use of necessitarian arguments in the second phase of the Reformation.

One of Muller’s theses is relevant here: we should pay attention “to Calvin’s medieval roots and to the thought of Calvin’s contemporaries” and should not base our research on “a generalized picture of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, or Reformation.”⁶⁶ Muller also argues that we should read Calvin comprehensively and that the *Institutes* alone does not represent his whole theology. In particular, by treating his *Institutes* more or less as *loci communes* and *disputationes*, Calvin does not mean to provide a complete theology in the *Institutes* alone, nor a systematic theology in the modern sense.⁶⁷ Therefore, to understand Calvin’s theology in its proper context, “one must examine all of Calvin’s chosen forms of expression.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 53.

⁶⁶ Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 6.

⁶⁷ “We have here, in a nutshell, Calvin’s theological method: the running exposition of the biblical text in commentary and sermon, coupled with the elicitation of theological *loci* from the text and the gathering of those *loci* together with the important dogmatic *disputations* of Calvin’s time into a form of a basic instruction or *institution* in theology.” Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 29. Cf. *ibid.*, 115-17.

⁶⁸ Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 158. Muller also says, “As Calvin had argued, his readers ought to use the *Institutes* as a background to the study of Scripture *and* the study of the commentaries. Still, to the commentaries themselves and the sermons must be read in order to gain a full understanding of Calvin’s thought, specifically with relation to the biblical *fontes* of his topical argumentation.” *Ibid.*, 157-58. Cf. T. H. L. Parker, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God: A Study in the Theology of John Calvin* (London and Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952), 3.

Heiko A. Oberman's works cannot be neglected as they provide important insights into the medieval background of the early Reformation.⁶⁹ Specifically, Oberman identifies the "Augustinian Renaissance" as a significant antecedent of Reformation debate over the bondage of the human will. Concerning Calvin's use of the church fathers and Augustine, the works of Smits, Lane, and Backus provide insight into the increased use of the fathers to defend Reformation teaching.⁷⁰

Given the conclusions of the preceding survey of scholarship, significant deficiencies can be identified in the works of Hoytenga, Engel, Fong, Feinberg, Torrance, and Battenhouse.⁷¹ First, they do not incorporate Calvin's treatise against Pighius into their investigation. A related deficiency is that they limit their research mainly to Calvin's *Institutes*, even though Calvin's full presentation of the doctrine can only be elicited from his treatises on providence and predestination, his commentaries, his *Antidote to the Council of Trent*, his sermons, and his interaction with fellow Reformers in his correspondence. Fong's dissertation is a typical example of this problem.

The third limitation of these studies is that they tend to read Calvin through the conceptual framework of later generations, or in the light of their own theological or philosophical agenda. Hoytenga exemplifies the problem. He is keen to prove that there is philosophical inconsistency in Calvin, specifically that "Calvin's intellectualist account

⁶⁹ For the bibliography of Oberman's works, see note 11.

⁷⁰ Luchsius Smits, *Saint-Augustin dans l'oeuvre de Jean Calvin*, 2 vols. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1956-58); Anthony N. S. Lane, "Calvin's Use of the Fathers and the Medievals," *Calvin Theological Journal* 16 (1981): 159-65; Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*; William Newton Todd, "The Function of the Patristic Writings in the Thought of John Calvin" (Th. D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1964); Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, 2 vols.

⁷¹ For the bibliography of their works, see note 10.

of the will in the created state is simply mistaken.”⁷² Hoitenga may be correct in pointing out that Calvin is liable to a logical contradiction if in fact he moves from an “intellectualist” view for human will as created to a “voluntarist” view for human will as fallen. Nevertheless, Hoitenga’s conclusion is liable to critique. As Lane comments: “Hoitenga is right to point to at least a verbal inconsistency, but goes too far in implying that Calvin was *consistently* intellectualist in his view of humanity as created.”⁷³ In addition, Hoitenga does not pay enough attention to Calvin’s roots in the Augustinian tradition. He criticizes Calvin for teaching that “man, using free will badly, has lost both himself and his will.”⁷⁴ He believes that Calvin, in emphasizing “that every desire of the fallen will is evil,” renders “unintelligible the moral choices between good and evil that human beings continue to make in their fallen state.”⁷⁵ This may be a legitimate philosophical concern for modern philosophers, but Hoitenga, as Lane points out, fails to

⁷² Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*, 65.

⁷³ Lane, “Bondage and Liberation in Calvin’s Treatise against Pighius,” 4. Lane, Muller, and Girardeau provide a simple way to reconcile on the seeming conflicting relationship between intellect and will. Lane says, “A simple way to reconcile them with the rest of Calvin’s teaching would be to interpret them not as accounts of what must inevitably happen (which they manifestly are not) but rather as what was meant to happen and as what did happen so long as the will did not turn away to sin.” Lane, “Bondage and Liberation in Calvin’s Treatise against Pighius,” 5. Muller points out, “Calvin is not, however, interested in elaborating an analysis of the freedom of the will or of its relative primacy over the intellect: instead, he inquires into the problem of human inability to will the good, the problem of the restriction of free choice.” *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 166. Cf. Muller, “*Fides* and *Cognitio* in Relation to the Problem of Intellect and Will in the Theology of John Calvin,” 215f. Girardeau believes that Calvin only refers to the legal relation between them: “We are decidedly of the opinion, after carefully looking into the matter, that Calvin, in the passage in the Institutes in which he mentions the regulative influence of the intellect upon the will, did not have his eye upon the question of the psychological relation between the two faculties—the only one peculiar considered by the Determinists—but spoke of the legal relation between them. The question before his mind was not, *Is* the will, in its acts, efficiently controlled by the representations of the intelligence? But it was, *Ought* the will, in its acts, to be governed by the judgments of the intellect?” *The Will in its Theological Relations*, 162-63.

⁷⁴ Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*, 87.

⁷⁵ Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*, 89. Hoitenga fails to observe that in his defense of the bondage of the human will Calvin basically does not deal in depth with the issue of human freedom in civil righteousness or external righteousness.

observe that “these words are Augustine’s rather than Calvin’s.”⁷⁶ And the focus of Augustine and Calvin is about soteriological choices rather than civil moral choices. Hoitenga thus fails to read Calvin in his historical context and tends to load Calvin’s language with modern philosophical implications. Hence, Hoitenga’s charge against Calvin “for teaching the near destruction of the will and its choice itself” is rightly regarded by Lane as being “not fair.”⁷⁷

To conclude our review of literature, we find that Lane’s works and Heckel’s dissertation, the older literature, and several historical works on Calvin provide important insights about Calvin’s concept of human will. Still, a comprehensive study of Calvin’s teaching with sensitivity to Calvin’s Reformation context remains to be written. This is a gap this dissertation aims to fill.

B. Guidelines in Reading Calvin’s Formulation in His Historical Context

To produce a comprehensive research on Calvin’s teaching on the human will, we find it helpful to identify important guidelines in understanding Calvin’s formulation through our investigation. We also need a prudent delimitation of the scope of our research on Calvin’s view of the human will. The doctrine of the bondage of the human will is closely related with the doctrines of original sin, providence, contingency, and predestination. It is also closely related to the concept of God. As Schulze comments,

⁷⁶ Lane, “Bondage and Liberation in Calvin’s Treatise against Pighius,” 14. Cf. Calvin says, “Again, man, using free will badly, has lost both himself and his will.” *Inst.*, 2.2.8. Augustine in *Enchiridion* says: “For it was by the evil use of his free-will that man destroyed both it and himself.” *Enchiridion*, 30. The English texts of Augustine’s works in this dissertation are mainly quoted from *A Selected Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st Series, 8 v., ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

⁷⁷ Lane, “Bondage and Liberation in Calvin’s Treatise against Pighius,” 14. Concerning the issue of the inability of choosing good, Hoitenga fails to observe that, as Muller points out, Calvin means only that “we cannot choose between performing nominally good acts in a sinful way and performing them in an

“The doctrine of predestination with which the doctrine of the will in bondage is inseparably connected, has justly been called ‘cor ecclesiae’.”⁷⁸ On the one hand, we cannot ignore the scholarship on these related doctrines, but on the other hand, we have to limit the scope of our investigation only on those issues that are mostly related to the doctrine of the human will. Our investigation must respect these doctrinal relationships without being drawn into the details of the seemingly never-ending research into Calvin’s doctrines of providence and predestination.⁷⁹ The results of the scholarship on Calvin’s doctrines of providence and predestination will be consulted as necessary, but we will not engage in elaboration of these collateral doctrines.

We find five important guidelines very helpful in reading Calvin’s teaching on the human will in his historical context. The first important guideline we find is that we must read Calvin’s defense of the doctrine of the bondage of the human will as a defense of a Reformation doctrine formulated by his predecessors in the early Reformation, as Barnikol, Heckel, and others have recognized. The terminology used, the arguments articulated, and the principles adopted in early Reformation had a great impact on Calvin’s defense and reformulation of the doctrine. In chapter 2, we will investigate the historical context behind Calvin’s development of his formulation of the doctrine of human will. A central issue in this dissertation is to investigate the degree and the nature

utterly good way.” Richard A. Muller, “Foreword,” in Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*, 7.

⁷⁸ Schulze, “Calvin’s Reply to Pighius—A Micro and A Macro View,” 177.

⁷⁹ To name a few: Richard Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 17-38; Paul Helm, “Calvin (and Zwingli) on Divine Providence,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 29/2 (1994): 388-405; Paul Jacobs, *Prädestination und Verantwortlichkeit bei Calvin* (Neukirchen: Kreis Moers, 1937); Richard Stauffer, *Dieu, la Création et la Providence dans le prédication de Calvin* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1978). For a fuller bibliography on these topics, see Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 187-88, 227-35.

of the impact Luther's formulation of the bondage of the will had on Calvin. A clarification of the degree of continuities and discontinuities between Luther and Calvin is fundamental to an understanding of Calvin's theology in his historical context.

The second guideline is that the doctrine of the bondage of the human will is a major contested issue in the Reformation and is closely related with key issues debated in the Reformation, namely the doctrine of justification and the emphasis on *sola gratia*. In chapters 2 and 3, we will show that in defending this and other related issues, Calvin understands that he is defending an important heritage of the early Reformation.⁸⁰

McSorley provides a good summary of the close relationship among these issues:

Anyone even slightly acquainted with the theology of Luther or with Lutheran theology may be surprised to find that Luther calls the doctrine of the unfree will the '*res ipsa*' and the '*summa causae*' of his teaching. Is not the doctrine of justification by faith alone the heart of Luther's reformation thinking, the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*? Actually there is no real inconsistency in asserting that the doctrine of the unfree will is just as important and central for Luther as his teaching on justification. For if the doctrine of justification is the article on which the Church stands and falls, *then the doctrine of the unfree will is the foundation of the article on which the Church stands and falls, or the article on which Luther's doctrine of justification stands or falls.*⁸¹

McSorley calls the doctrine of the bondage of the human will "the inmost center of the Reformation."⁸² Some modern debates appear to assume that it is only Calvin and the

⁸⁰ Packer and Johnston had a similar lament: "These things need to be pondered by Protestants to-day. With what right may we call ourselves children of the Reformation? Much modern Protestantism would be neither owned nor even recognised by the pioneer Reformers. *The Bondage of the Will* fairly sets before us what they believed about the salvation of lost mankind. In the light of it, we are forced to ask whether Protestant Christendom has not tragically sold its birthright between Luther's day and our own. Has not Protestantism to-day become more Erasmian than Lutheran?" James I. Packer and O. R. Johnston, "Historical and Theological Introduction," in Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. James I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Grand Rapids, MI.: Fleming H. Revell, 1993), 59-60.

⁸¹ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 10-11. Italics added.

⁸² Cf. Hans Joachim Iwand, "Theologische Einführung und Anmerkungen (in Verbindung mit B. Jordahn) zu Luthers Schrift Dass der frei Wille nichts sei." (München, 1954), 253, 312. Quoted in McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 11.

Calvinists who teach the total bondage of the will. They seem to forget that it was Luther, not Calvin, who first advocated the absolute importance of the doctrine of the bondage of the human will in the early Reformation. Because of this, Luther was labeled by the Roman authorities as a Manichean.⁸³ Luther himself surely recognized the central importance of the doctrine in the Reformation debates: “In other matters the frivolity and blindness of the pope could be tolerated, but when it comes to this chief article of the faith it is a pity that they are so senseless. *Here they completely ruin everything that God has given us through Christ.*”⁸⁴ Luther argued that it is absolutely necessary for all Christians to uphold the doctrine.⁸⁵ For him, this is “the cardinal issue” between the Reformers and their Roman opponents.⁸⁶ On his reply to the papal bull, *Exsurge Domine*, Luther defended his teaching on the bondage of the human will and called it “the highest and most important issue of our cause.”⁸⁷

⁸³ Erasmus says, “From the time of the apostles down to the present day, no writer has yet emerged who has totally taken away the power of freedom of choice, save only Manichaeus and John Wyclif.” Erasmus, “On the Freedom of Will: A Diatribe or Discourse,” in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, trans. and ed. E. Gordon Rupp (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), 43.

⁸⁴ *LW* 32:93. Italics added. Throughout this dissertation the abbreviation *LW* will be used to stand for the *Luther's Works*. Cf. Jaroslav J. Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works*, 55 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-1986).

⁸⁵ “Therefore, it is not irreverent, inquisitive, or superfluous, but *essentially salutary and necessary for a Christian*, to find out whether the will does anything or nothing in matters pertaining to eternal salvation. Indeed, as you should know, this is *the cardinal issue* between us, the point on which everything in this controversy turns. For what are we doing to inquire what free choice can do, what it has done to it, and what is its relation to the grace of God. If we do not know these things, we shall know nothing at all of things Christian, and shall be worse than any heathen. *Let anyone who does not feel this confess that he is no Christian*, while anyone who disparages or scorns it should know that he is the greatest enemy of Christians.” *LW* 33:35. Italics added.

⁸⁶ “So you see that this problem is one half of the whole sum of things Christian, since on it both knowledge of oneself and the knowledge and glory of God quite vitally depend.” *LW* 33:35.

⁸⁷ Martin Luther, “Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X,” in *WA* 7.148.16. Quoted in Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 53. The standard abbreviation *WA* is used to represent Martin Luther, *Dr. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883-1990). The thirty-sixth error

McSorley also reminds us that Melanchthon in early Reformation understood that “all of Luther’s theological views were essentially related to the question of free will.”⁸⁸

We found similar emphasis in Calvin. To Calvin, the doctrine of the bondage of the human will is fundamental to the Christian faith:

It has been necessary to say this by way of preface because some, while they hear that man’s power is rooted out from its very foundations that God’s power may be built up in man, bitterly loathe this whole disputation as dangerous, not to say superfluous. Nonetheless, *it appears both necessary in religion and most advantageous for us.*⁸⁹

Basically, the reformers are unanimous in emphasizing the complete helplessness of fallen human being. And this concept is closely related with their emphasis on the absolute necessity of divine grace.

Our third key guideline is that Calvin, in defending the early Reformation formulation of the doctrine, faced delicate tensions in maintaining a united front amidst changes and development in the reformulations among his fellow Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation. Pighius’ attack, after all, was intended to drive a wedge between Calvin and Melanchthon. Particularly, in chapters 4 and 5, we will investigate the changes and the shift of focus in the formulations among the key Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation. Arguably, in the second phase of the Reformation, the

listed in the papal bull, that condemned Luther in early Reformation, is Luther’s idea: “Free will after sin is a matter of title only; and as long as one does what is in him, one sins mortally.” Carl Zickendraht observes that “Luther designates this article (36) as the center of his belief—a belief which was to lead to the rejection of the papal Church.” *Der Streit zwischen Erasmus und Luther die Willensfreiheit* (Leipzig, 1909), 8; quoted and translated by McSorley in *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 8, note 6.

⁸⁸ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 10. Cf. *CR*, 1:674ff. McSorley found this comment in Melanchthon’s letter to Erasmus, dated September 30, 1524, just after the publication of *De libero arbitrio*.

⁸⁹ *Inst.*, 2.2.1. Italics added. The translation of the last sentence of this passage is mine. The Latin text is “et in religione necessariam, et nobis utilissimam esse apparet.” Battles’ translation is “it appears both fundamental in religion and most profitable for us.”

Reformers had, in Peter Stephens' words, "twin concerns" rather than a single focused concern as in the early Reformation.⁹⁰ In the early Reformation, Luther and Melanchthon developed a strong necessitarian argument against the existence of free will to defend the biblical teaching of the bondage of the human will and *sola gratia* in human salvation. Their elaboration, loaded occasionally with unnuanced necessitarian arguments and presentations, generated the need in the second phase of the Reformation to argue further that God is not the author of sin. Now the twin concerns, including both the argument for the bondage of the human will and this theodical concern, framed the development of their doctrine.

Among some of Calvin's contemporaries, the theodical concern, rather than the proof of the bondage of the will, became the key focus. Calvin was perhaps the only major writer of his generation who retained Luther's rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*. Still, the theodical shift in the second phase of the Reformation had much to do with subtle differences between Luther and Calvin, and with many nuanced articulations in Calvin's formulation. Calvin had to walk a fine line in order both to defend the early Reformation formulation and to maintain a united front.

We will further show that the various reformulations by Melanchthon and Bucer had significant impact on Calvin. In addition, comparing Calvin's formulation also with

⁹⁰ Note Stephens' comparison of Zwingli and Bullinger: "He [Bullinger] then indicates two opposed views (Pelagianism and Manichaeism) which he rejects: one ascribing too much to us and the other too much to God. Some people, he writes, attribute salvation to free will or merit rather than to God's grace, while others, affirming absolute necessity, make God the author of all evil, as if we perish by God's fault, not ours. These *twin concerns* shape Bullinger's work, though the second is more prominent (777)." "It is significant that Bullinger responds to two errors, Pelagianism and Manichaeism, whereas Zwingli in effect engages with Pelagian views." W. Peter Stephens, "Election in Zwingli and Bullinger: A Comparison of Zwingli's *Sermonis de Providentia dei Anamnema* (1530) and Bullinger's *Oratio de Moderatione Servanda in Negotio Providentiae, Praedestinationis, Gratiae et Liberi Arbitrii* (1536)," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 7.1 (April 2005): 50, 53. Italics added.

the formulations provided by Bullinger and Vermigli, we will identify some significant characteristics of Calvin's approach. We agree with Heckel that Calvin was probably one of the most loyal disciples of Luther on this issue. To defend Luther on the one hand and not to alienate other Reformers on the other, Calvin produced various clarifications and guarded statements on the doctrine.

The fourth major guideline is that we should be watchful of changes in the use and in the interpretation of theological terms and scholastic distinctions. There was great fluidity in the definitions and the uses of various related theological terms and scholastic distinctions between the thirteenth century and the mid-sixteenth century. In the debates in the first phase of the Reformation, Luther and Melanchthon preferred a sea change in theological expressions. In chapter 3, we will show that Luther has the principle of "the preference for biblical expressions" and argued for a reformation of theological language in his discussion on the bondage of the human will and other related issues. One important example is Luther's condemnation of the use of the term *liberum arbitrium* to represent the nature of human willing after the fall.⁹¹ Though the term *liberum arbitrium* was rejected by Luther and Melanchthon in early Reformation, their contemporary, Bucer, and many Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation favored the term in their formulation of the doctrine. Given the fluidity of usage, we need to be aware that the

⁹¹ The term *liberum arbitrium* is usually translated either as "free will" or "free choice." The term *voluntas* is usually translated as "will." On the different views of the term "liberum arbitrium" between the Lutheran and Reformed, and the term, "voluntas," cf. Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 176-77, 330-31. On this, Lane prefers to translate *liberum arbitrium* as free choice: "With an issue like grace and free choice the language can be quite technical. In order to convey the meaning as accurate as possible we have sought to translate the more technical terms consistently. First, the word *arbitrium*. This is always translated 'choice'; *voluntas*, on the other hand, is almost translated 'will.' There is a long tradition of translating *liberum arbitrium* as 'free will,' but this can only cause confusion in a work where *arbitrium* and *voluntas* are often used in relation to each other." Lane, "Introduction," xxxii.

meaning of a theological term assigned by a particular Reformer may not be the same as that designated by the others, and that the choice of a term or a scholastic distinction by a Reformer may point us to an important issue raised in a particular historical context. For example, when Lane points out that “Unfortunately, the issue was obscured by the fact that Calvin unlike Augustine, chose to reject the term ‘free choice,’”⁹² it must be remembered that Luther had advocated rejecting the term in the early Reformation. Hence, Calvin’s rejection reveals his particular perspective amidst the diversity of approaches in the second phase of the Reformation.

Luther’s “reformation of theological language” also had a great impact on his interpretation of the relationship of God’s sovereign will to hardening and reprobation. Rendering the full force and full teaching of the biblical texts on hardening and reprobation had much to do with Luther’s and Calvin’s rejection of mere divine permission, and their formulations on hardening and reprobation, and Calvin’s concept of the divine ordination of the fall. Another important example of the terminological issue is Calvin’s recourse to the scholastic distinction of the two kinds of necessity, a point on which there is great disagreement between Heckel and Lane.

The fifth important guideline we find is that we have to be aware of an important trend developed in the second phase of the Reformation: the need for the Reformers to defend their doctrine as an orthodox doctrine, and a pedagogical need to produce a more comprehensive and better articulated teaching on the human will and predestination. This reflected in the trend in the second phase of the Reformation that the Reformers had more interaction with Augustine, other early church fathers, and the so-called “better

⁹² Lane, “Introduction,” in John Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, xix.

schoolmen” (in Calvin’s discussion on the bondage of the human will, namely Bernard). In chapter 6, we will show that the Reformers in the second phase of the debate utilized more of the writings of the early fathers, of the early church councils, of the better witnesses in the medieval churches, and more classical and scholastic terminologies.

C. Division of the Subject Matter

This study is divided into eight chapters, counting this Introduction. In chapter 2, we will investigate the historical context behind Calvin’s development of his formulation of the doctrine of the human will. We will investigate the degree of the impact of the early Reformation debate and heritage on Calvin’s reformulation of his doctrine of human will. We shall demonstrate that the early Reformation formulation by Luther and the changes in the second phase of the Reformation had significant impact on Calvin.

In chapters 3 to 5, we will navigate the thoughts of the earlier Reformers, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and Bucer, and those of Calvin’s contemporaries, Bullinger and Vermigli. These predecessors and contemporaries of Calvin evidence the development of a broader pattern of argument than that found in Luther, namely, the nearly exclusive focus on the soteriological problem of the bound will, the affirmation of *sola gratia* in salvation, and the emphasis on the sovereignty of God.

With the exception of Luther and Zwingli, all these Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation debate shifted from a single focused concern to twin concerns. While they still emphasize the *sola gratia*, the bondage of the human will, and the sovereignty of God, they also at the same time spend much more effort in the theodical concern to deny that their teaching makes God the author of sin. This additional theodical concern leads them to provide more emphasis on affirming the existence of contingency,

to give arguments supporting a certain kind of freedom of the will, to clarify the nature of God's sovereignty over sins, and to avoid the necessitarian argument used by the early Reformers. This shifted concern and the variety of the formulations among these Reformers have a lot to do with the nuances and development of Calvin's concept of the human will and predestination.

In chapter 3, we will make a detailed review of key issues raised by Luther that would have great implications on the shifted concern and reformulations in the second phase of the Reformation. We will discuss particularly the necessitarian argument Luther used in the early Reformation.

In chapter 4, we will document the beginning of that shifted concern. Among other Reformers of the first generation, with the exception of Zwingli, Bucer and Melancthon in the second phase of the Reformation initiated the shifted concern. Bucer and especially the mature Melancthon placed much emphasis in their formulation in theodical concern to defend the charge that the Reformation doctrine made God the author of sin.

In chapter 5, we will discuss the existence of the diversified formulations and the further development of the shifted concern among Calvin's contemporaries, Bullinger and Vermigli. Through the identification of the shift from a single focused concern (to prove the bondage of the human will) to the twin concerns (to prove the bondage of the human will and the theodical concern), and through the identification of the similarities and dissimilarities between Calvin and other Reformers, we may locate both some of their mutual influences and the uniqueness of Calvin's formulation.

In chapter 6, we will investigate Calvin's positive formulation in response to Pighius, his use of the better tradition, and his rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*.

We will show that Calvin, in his defense of the orthodoxy of the Reformation teaching, by drawing support from the teachings of early church fathers, of church councils, and of so-called “better” or “safer” medieval theologians (namely, Bernard), occupied a key place among the Reformers in substantiating the claim of the support of Augustine and of the genuine tradition of the church. In addition, both in his rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium* and in his guarded comments, we find that while Calvin had Luther’s convictions in his heart, he needed to balance these against the danger of generating disunity among his fellow Reformers and of giving occasions for accusations by his Roman opponents.

In chapter 7, we will handle Calvin’s reception and modification of early Reformation teachings of necessitarian concepts. This is one of the most difficult puzzles in Calvin’s thought. We shall identify the similarities and dissimilarities between Luther’s and Calvin’s necessitarian concepts. Calvin was deeply impressed by Luther’s early Reformation convictions and read Augustine, especially his work against Julian and several key anti-Pelagian works, through the lens of Luther’s convictions. We also find that among his predecessors and contemporaries, Calvin’s use of active language to represent God’s active role in the fall of Adam was unique. On the one hand Calvin, unlike Luther and Zwingli, adopted classical Augustinian concepts and scholastic distinctions to affirm the genuine integrity of second causality. Yet, on the other hand, Calvin, in adopting many necessitarian concepts of Luther and in applying the active concept of God’s sovereignty on the fall of Adam, gave a strong deterministic character to his reformulation. These two sides of Calvin are the source of different readings of

Calvin and of disagreement over the exact character of Calvin's views on related issues.

After that, we will summarize the key findings of this dissertation in our chapter 8.

CHAPTER II

CALVIN IN THE CONTEXT OF REFORMATION DEBATE: CALVIN AS A REFORMER OF THE SECOND GENERATION

A. Calvin between Augustine and Luther

One repeated methodological deficiency in the studies of many Calvin scholars is their negligence to read Calvin's formulations of his teachings in Calvin's Reformation context. In particular, many writers began their analyses by comparing Calvin's teachings with those of Augustine in their identification of theological precedents of Calvin's thoughts.¹ In one sense, to compare Calvin's teachings with those of Augustine directly seems to be a natural starting-point given Calvin's copious citation of Augustine. In his *Institutes* and his treatise against Pighius, Calvin repeatedly emphasizes that his position on the doctrine of the human will is identical with that of Augustine. Through various expressions, Calvin claims the total support of Augustine for the Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the human will: "Augustine is certainly on our side."² "I have Augustine on my side."³ "How faithfully and candidly I have expounded the true authentic thought of Augustine."⁴ There is no argument among the scholars that Augustine's teaching had a great impact on Calvin and the Reformation. Benjamin B. Warfield coins the famous

¹ To name a few: Hoitenga, *John Calvin and the Will*, 19, 24, 70; Lane, "Did Calvin Believe in Freewill?" 72-90; Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*; Mozley, *A Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, 393; Parker, *Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought*, 113.

² Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 100, 128; *CO* 6:301, 320; *Inst.*, 2.2.4, 2.2.9, 2.3.13-14.

³ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 233; *CO* 6:396.

⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 135; *CO* 6:325.

line: “It is Augustine who gave us the Reformation. For the Reformation, inwardly considered, was just the ultimate triumph of Augustine’s doctrine of grace over Augustine’s doctrine of the Church.”⁵ Nevertheless, many nuances in Calvin’s formulation are caused by the precedent and influence of his predecessors and contemporaries. To compare Calvin’s formulations directly and only with Augustine’s has significant methodological drawbacks. In this approach, while the broad influence of Augustine on Calvin has been widely noted, the highly specific influences by the early Reformers and his contemporary Reformers on Calvin’s development, however, have been less fully charted.

Concerning the doctrine of the human will, Lane also concludes his essay, “Did Calvin Believe in Freewill,” by comparing directly Calvin’s position with Augustine’s: “What Augustine had carefully safeguarded, Calvin grudgingly conceded.”⁶ Lane adds that “Calvin’s reluctance has manifested itself in his hostility to the term *liberum arbitrium*, in his ambivalence towards the idea of cooperation with grace and in his tortured exposition of the passage where Augustine speaks of the gift of *non posse peccare*.”⁷ This approach misses Calvin’s Reformation context. B. A. Gerrish provides insight into this problem:

The casual reader of the *Institutes*, who is not skilled in identifying unacknowledged debts or anonymous opponents, could certainly be pardoned for concluding that Calvin had never heard of Luther. Although the pages of Calvin’s systematic work

⁵ Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 322.

⁶ The concluding paragraph of Lane’s articles is this: “Calvin’s teaching on freewill is very close to that of Augustine. Perhaps the greatest difference is one of attitude. Augustine, while clearly teaching the bondage of the will and the sovereignty of grace, took great care to preserve man’s will. Calvin was more polemical in his assertion of human impotence and was reluctant to talk of freewill. What Augustine had carefully safeguarded, Calvin grudgingly conceded.” Lane, “Did Calvin Believe in Freewill?” 86.

⁷ Lane, “Bondage and Liberation in Calvin’s Treatise against Pighius,” 22.

bristle with citations from biblical, patristic, scholastic, and classical authors, no explicit reference is made to the great German reformer.⁸

Lane does observe that Calvin, in various points, takes up similar positions as Luther does: “Calvin, like Luther, adopted a different strategy. . . . There might have been less heat and more light had Calvin been willing to follow Augustine’s approach and to affirm free choice, while defining it carefully.”⁹ But Lane fails to investigate the possible impacts of the early Reformation formulations on Calvin. In particular, the neglect of the impact of Luther and Melanchthon on Calvin’s formulation would lead to a significant deficiency in understanding Calvin’s defense of the Reformation doctrine of the human will.¹⁰ Schulze’s and Melles’ expositions in particular do not pay significant attention to the impact of the early Reformation formulations.¹¹

Heckel’s dissertation reverses this deficiency and argues in detail that Luther’s formulation had a great impact on Calvin’s, without allowing for any significant discontinuity between Calvin and Luther.¹² Nevertheless, Heckel also fails to consider the impact of the altered historical context in the second phase of the Reformation on Calvin’s formulation.

⁸ Gerrish, “John Calvin on Luther,” 67. One may find the same article with slight editing in B. A. Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 27-48.

⁹ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 175.

¹⁰ On Luther’s authority towards his contemporaries and later generations, especially that of the Lutheran side, see Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, Hero: Images of the Reformer, 1520-1620*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999).

¹¹ Cf. Schulze, *Calvin’s Reply to Pighius*; Schulze, “Calvin’s Reply to Pighius—A Micro and Macro View”; Melles, *Albertus Pighius en zijn strijd met Calvijn over het liberum arbitrium*.

¹² Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 6; note that well before Heckel’s work, Barnikol also accurately pointed out that Calvin is “the excellent and more skillful presenter” and “a defender” of the Lutheran doctrine of the bondage of the human will. *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 57-58; cf. *ibid.*, 38-58.

In order to put Calvin's formulation in his historical context, we will identify both the impact of the early Reformation debate and that of the shifts in the second phase of the Reformation on Calvin's formulation of the doctrine of the human will. In this chapter, we will first identify the importance and impact of Calvin's identification with the early Reformation formulation on his formulation. We will identify three major impacts on Calvin because of his identification with the early Reformation formulation. First, reading Calvin as a Reformer of the second generation defending the early Reformation formulation is an important key towards a proper understanding of Calvin's formulation. Second, although Luther was an authoritative figure for Calvin, the historical context of the changes in the second phase of the Reformation in which Calvin worked led directly to his reformulation of the doctrine. Third, both to defend the early Reformation formulation and to maintain a united front help to generate subtle differences between Luther and Calvin and many nuanced articulations in Calvin's formulation.

B. Calvin as a Defender of Luther's Early Reformation Formulation

To understand Calvin properly, we should not fail to investigate also the possible impacts of Luther's formulations on Calvin. Concerning the doctrine of the bondage of the human will, we should read Calvin as a defender of Luther's early Reformation formulation. François Wendel correctly points out that, in addition to Augustine, Luther is a significant figure behind Calvin's formulation of his theology: "Again, we must never lose sight of the fact that he did not study Scripture or interpret it as a disinterested scientist but as a theologian who was a reader of Augustine and of Luther, ever

preoccupied to find confirmation of his own dogmatic positions.”¹³ Reinhold Seeberg also indicates, “It is of the first importance, for a proper appreciation of Calvin, to remember that he is a man of the second generation of this great period.”¹⁴ Richard Muller consistently classifies Calvin, Bullinger, Musculus, and Vermigli as Reformers of the second generation, “who were a decade or more younger than Luther, Bucer, and Zwingli.”¹⁵ He points out that we should read Calvin as a key second-generation codifier. Muller observes that Calvin, “on the basis of the work of men like Luther, Bucer, and Zwingli,” began the work of developing and codifying the theology of the Reformation into systems of theology.¹⁶ Timothy George and Alexandre Ganoczy had similar observations¹⁷ and David Steinmetz states, “Calvin is notorious, however, not for his negative but for his positive judgments of Luther. Karl Holl called Calvin Luther’s

¹³ Wendel, *Calvin: The Origin and Development of His Religious Thought*, 123.

¹⁴ Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*, vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997), 394.

¹⁵ Muller, *PRRD*, 3.87-88. Cf. *ibid.*, 1.56.

¹⁶ Muller, *PRRD*, 3.87-88, 1.56. Oberman has a helpful discussion on the nature of Reformation and the unique contribution of Calvin. Oberman classified the Reformation in three stages. On the first stage, Luther’s Reformation, Oberman warns us that “it is also an unpaid and now overdue bill for jumping to the conclusion that the Reformation as a whole is identical with Luther’s Reformation, and for limiting the Reformation to the first decades of the sixteen century.” Oberman classified the second stage “the urban Reformation.” He believed, “The reformed city [Zurich] lost its function as the standard bearer of Christian society reformed by God, as well as its view of itself as a model for other communities.” The third stage to him is “the Reformation of the refugees.” On Calvin’s success in this Calvin’s Reformation from Geneva, Oberman says, “It is at this juncture that Calvin as a reformer achieves an independence fraught with consequences for subsequent history, not just in Europe but around the world.” This “kingdom of Christ” became “a bridgehead for the expansion of the kingdom of Christ. . . . In short, whereas Zwingli reformed Zurich, Calvin reformed *from* Geneva.” Heiko A. Oberman, “One Epoch—Three Reformations,” in *The Reformation*, 208, 213, 214, 216.

¹⁷ Cf. Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1988), 165.

best disciple and there are historical reasons for that judgment.”¹⁸ There are important continuities and subtle differences between Luther and Calvin in various doctrines.

Concerning the doctrine of the bondage of the human will in particular, many scholars recognize the essential continuities between Luther’s positions and Calvin’s.

Packer and Johnston comment:

Historically, it is a simple matter of fact that Martin Luther and John Calvin, and, for that matter, Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer, and all the leading Protestant theologians of the first epoch of the Reformation, stood on precisely the same ground here. On other points, they had their differences; but in asserting the helplessness of man in sin, and the sovereignty of God in grace, they were entirely at one. To all of them, these doctrines were the very life-blood of the Christian faith.¹⁹

Barnikol observes that Calvin discontinues the use of Luther’s necessitarian argument.

He also points out that “an influence of Luther on of Calvin’s formulation is unmistakable,” and Calvin saw himself “as a defender of the Lutheran doctrine of the bondage of the will.”²⁰ Schulze also draws a similar conclusion in his investigation of Calvin’s two treatises against Pighius:

Therefore these two works indicate some of Calvin’s basic convictions, learnt from Scripture, which he was prepared to defend at all costs. But they were also the basic convictions of the Reform movement in general: all the Reformers, except Melancthon in his later development, were basically united as far as free will and predestination are concerned. Therefore the thesis that the doctrine of predestination is “typically Calvinistic” must be rejected as historically untenable. It was rather a basic scriptural truth which the Reformers had rediscovered in the Bible and which they were not prepared to sacrifice to any humanistic or rationalistic compromise. This is clearly proved by both Luther’s *De servo Arbitrio* and these two treatises of Calvin.²¹

¹⁸ David C. Steinmetz, “Luther and Calvin on Church and Tradition,” in *The Martin Luther Quincentennial*, ed. Gerhard Dünnhaupt (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), 99.

¹⁹ Packer and Johnston, “Historical and Theological Introduction,” 58.

²⁰ “An dieser Stelle ist ein Einfluß Luthers auf Calvins Darstellung unverkennbar.” “Mit Recht fühlt sich Calvin in allen für den Glauben notwendigen Stücken als ein Verteidiger der lutherischen Lehre von der Willensunfreiheit des Menschen.” Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 56, 58.

²¹ Schulze, *Calvin’s Reply to Pighius*, 138.

Pelikan also argues an essential continuity between Luther and Calvin, by pointing out the fact that the position of Calvin and Calvinism on the bondage of the human will and predestination is closer to Luther's than that of the later Lutherans:

In this as in other respects, Calvin and Calvinism represented themselves as championing the doctrine of the real Luther against the perversions of his doctrine by his later disciples. For example, after Reformed and Lutheran theologians had met in a colloquium at Montbéliard in March 1586, Theodore Beza drew upon Luther's *Bondage of the Will* for support in his response to the dispute over predestination.²²

Heckel also points out that "Luther was not only a general influence on the Reformer of Geneva but he appears to have been the most decisive influence in forming his doctrine of the will. . . . There is proof, however, that Calvin's knowledge of Luther goes beyond *Assertio* and reflects close awareness of Luther's teachings in *The Bondage of the Will*."²³

Calvin himself also explicitly affirmed the essential continuities between Luther's positions and his. In *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* (1543), Calvin made a significant and public review of Luther's role and contribution in the Reformation. In this treatise written just after his treatise against Pighius, Calvin credited Luther and other early Reformers for their correction of the "perverted" teaching about free will:

Then, as to the doctrine of free will, as preached before Luther and other Reformers appeared, what effect could it have but to fill men with an overweening opinion of their own virtue, swelling them out with vanity, and leaving no room for the grace and assistance of the Holy Spirit? But why dwell on this? There is *no point which is more keenly contested*, none in which our adversaries are more inveterate in their opposition, than that of justification, namely, as to whether we obtain it by faith or by works.²⁴

²² Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 4:218.

²³ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 284.

²⁴ *SW* 1:134-35. Italics added. The abbreviation, *SW*, stands for *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, ed. by H. Beveridge and J. Bonnet, 7 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

Calvin clearly recognized that the doctrine of the bondage of the human will was a core issue in the early Reformation debates and was closely related to the issue of justification.

Similar to what he did in the treatise against Pighius, Calvin pressed the point that he, Luther, and the early Reformers were in agreement. He used terms like “our doctrine,” “our Faith,” “our Confession,” “our churches,” “our writers,” “our reformers,” “our people,” “our labors,” “our form,” and “our method” to show complete consolidation with the cause of Luther.²⁵ Calvin explicitly argued that Luther and the early Reformers set the foundation of the truth of “our religion” and “our churches”:

We maintain, then, that at the commencement, *when God raised up Luther and others*, who held forth a torch to light us into the way of salvation, and who, by their ministry, founded and reared *our churches, those heads of doctrine in which the truth of our religion*, those in which the pure and legitimate sonship of God, and those in which the salvation of men are comprehended, were in a great measure obsolete.²⁶

It is certain, that *before Luther became known to the world*, all men were fascinated by these impious dogmas; and even in the present day, there is no part of *our doctrine* which our opponents impugn with greater earnestness and obstinacy.²⁷

²⁵ For example, see *SW* 1:145-46. “*Our doctrine* has been assailed, and still is every day, by many atrocious calumnies. . . . But the *Confession of our Faith*, which we presented to your Imperial Majesty, . . . , to render an account of *our doctrine*. In a word, there is no doctrine preached in *our churches* but that which we openly profess. As to controverted points, they are clearly and honestly explained in *our Confession*, while every thing relating to them has been copiously treated and diligently expounded by *our writers*. . . . This much, certainly, must be clear alike to just and unjust, that *our reformers* have done no small service to the Church, in stirring up the world as from the deep darkness of ignorance, to read the Scriptures, Even the most prejudiced, how much soever they may in other respects defame *our doctrine*, admit that *our people* have in some degree reformed these evils. I am willing, however, that all the advantage which the Church may have derived from *our labors* shall have no effect in alleviating our fault, if in any other respect we have done her injury. Therefore, let there be an examination of *our whole doctrine*, of *our form* of administering the sacraments, and *our method* of governing the Church; and in none of these three things will it be found that we have made any change upon the ancient form, without attempting to restore it to the exact standard of the Word of God.” Italics added.

²⁶ *SW* 1:125. Italics added.

²⁷ *SW* 1:136. Italics added.

Calvin thus argued that the main positions of the Reformation doctrines had been established by Luther and other early Reformers. Calvin said, “The same course we are still pursuing in the present day.”²⁸ Calvin also argued that their teaching was consistent with that of Augustine: “Nay, we are able, without any difficulty, *to confirm our doctrine to the very letter out of the mouth of Augustine.*”²⁹

Calvin not only spoke of an essential continuity with Luther and the early Reformers on the doctrines of free will, original sin, and justification, but he also defended Luther against the charge of schism:

When *Luther at first appeared*, he merely touched, with a gentle hand, a few abuses of the grossest description, now grown intolerable. And he did it with a modesty which intimated that he had more desire to see them corrected, than determination to correct them himself. The opposite party forthwith sounded to arms; and when the contention was more and more inflamed, our enemies deemed it the best and shortest method to suppress the truth by cruelty and violence. Accordingly, when *our people* challenged them to friendly discussion, and desired to settle disputes by calm arguments, they were cruelly persecuted with sanguinary edicts, until matters have been brought to the present miserable pass.³⁰

Nor was Calvin’s allegiance doubted by Luther. Gerrish points out that Luther read Calvin’s work and “gave it his glowing commendation.”³¹

C. Calvin’s Defense amidst Melancthon’s Changes of Formulations

To understand fully the complexity involved in Calvin’s defense of Luther’s early Reformation formulation, we should recognize both the fact of the change of position by Melancthon in 1530s and its complex impact on Calvin’s adoption of Luther’s early

²⁸ *SW* 1:145.

²⁹ *SW* 1:160. Italics added.

³⁰ *SW* 1:183-84. Italics added.

³¹ Gerrish, “John Calvin on Luther,” 80.

Reformation formulation. Among the relationships of Calvin with other major Reformers, his relationship with Melanchthon is one of the most important ones and had a great impact on his formulation and presentation of the doctrine of the human will.³² Next to Luther, Melanchthon was the most important speaker on the issue of the bondage of the human will in the early Reformation. As Melanchthon moved towards synergism in his 1535 *Loci Communes*, his change of positions on free will and predestination had significant impacts on Calvin's defense of early Reformation teaching on human will.³³ The tension might be missed if one took Calvin's dedication to Melanchthon in his treatise against Pighius at its face value. Publicly in his dedication, both in terms of friendship and doctrinal positions, Calvin claimed that he had Melanchthon's full support: "I am dedicating to you a book which I know for certain will be doubly pleasing to you, both because of your love for me the author and because it contains a defense of the godly and sound teaching of which you are not only *a most zealous supporter, but a very distinguished and bravest champion.*"³⁴ Nevertheless, both the claims of personal

³² Cf. Wengert, "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever,'" 19-44; Pitkin, "The Protestant Zeno," 345-78; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 8:385-98; James T. Hickman, "Friendship of Melanchthon and Calvin," *Westminster Theological Journal* 38 (Winter 1976): 152-65. On the influence of Melanchthon on Calvin's methodology, one may refer Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 125-30. Muller believes that Melanchthon has greater impact on Calvin's methodology than on Calvin's theological substance: "The result of Calvin's early reading of Melanchthon's work was an initial meeting followed by a lifelong dialogue, only part of which can be reconstructed from their letters. . . . On the one hand, there was a profound and positive methodological relationship between the two thinkers, while, on the other hand, there was an equally profound disagreement over free choice and predestination accompanied by a tense interchange over the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and the problem of 'things indifferent,' or *adiaphora*." Ibid., 125.

³³ Green denies that Melanchthon is a synergist. Cf. Lowell C. Green, "The Three Causes of Conversion in Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and the 'Formula of Concord'," *Lutherjahrbuch* 47 (1980): 97.

³⁴ The translation of the last sentence is mine. Italics added. Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 3; *CO* 6:229-30. "tūm quod piae sanaeque doctrinae defensionem continet: cuius tu non modo studiosissimus es cultor, sed eximius fortissimusque vindex." In his letter to Melanchthon, dated February 16, 1543, Calvin speaks about this dedication too: "But that you may not suppose that I have made an

friendship and the full support on his positions are questioned by recent scholarship.³⁵ On the nature of their relationship, Wengert uses the term “epistolary friendship,” namely, “a literary fiction imposed by the authors themselves, especially Calvin, onto a very complex web of interactions, not all of which were friendly.”³⁶ He argues that we should not be misled by the language used by the two Reformers in their correspondence. By the declaration of affection they used, they seemed to have an intimate friendship. But Wengert argues that “they contained public affections not private ones” and there is much Renaissance rhetoric in their public and private expressions.³⁷

Hence, if we look beyond the public rhetoric, we find that Calvin faced a changing environment in his defense against Pighius. Calvin’s comment about Melanchthon may be applicable to Melanchthon’s early positions in 1521, but it seems to be only partially accurate for Melanchthon’s position after 1535. On this, Wengert provides a lucid description on the context Calvin faced:

improper use of your name in the Essay which I have lately published, I ask you to recognize or approve of it on the score of my affection for you, or to yield so far to your own kindly disposition as to acquiesce in what I have done.” *SW* 4:363. Cf. B. Hägglund, *History of Theology*, 3rd. ed. (St. Louis & London: Concordia, 1968), 249-51. Wengert believes that the preface was probably written in January 1543. Cf. Wengert, “‘We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever’,” 27, note 32.

³⁵ Wengert points out that in Melanchthon’s thank you letter for Calvin’s dedication, Melanchthon pointedly, though politely, hinted that Calvin overstepped into a speculative realm in his concept of predestination: “Thus, in Melanchthon’s eyes Calvin’s approach—for all its biblical sincerity—was by its very subtlety speculative.” Wengert also reminds us that in the very next letter from Melanchthon, Melanchthon ‘reiterated the two reformers’ fundamental disagreement on the question of predestination.” Wengert, “‘We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever’,” 29. Cf. *CO* 11:539-42.

³⁶ Wengert, “‘We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever’,” 22. Pitkin observes that in the late 1530s and early 1540s there were mutual efforts in building up the friendship: “because of the desire on the part of each man, at least in this early period, to establish Protestant unity as well as ‘evangelical truth.’” “In the early 1540s, Calvin and Melanchthon professed public agreement with one another while taking pains to rule out dangers each saw in the other’s position—without, however, naming any names.” Pitkin, “The Protestant Zeno,” 349, 350.

³⁷ Wengert, “‘We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever’,” 22-23.

Calvin could hardly have been ignorant of Melanchthon's (and, he had to assume, Wittenberg's) shift on the issue of human bondage from Luther's 1525 attack against Erasmus in *De servo arbitrio*—Pighius himself had pointed it out. Indeed, the eighteenth article of the Augsburg Confession emphasized a distinction between freedom in civil matters and weaknesses in spiritual things, and the second edition of Melanchthon's *Loci communes* of 1535 spoke of three causes for salvation (the Word, the Holy Spirit and the human will (*voluntas*) and glossed over predestination. Thus, Calvin, in prosecuting his case against Pighius, sought to claim the authority of Melanchthon, whose own opinion on the topic was unclear.³⁸

Nevertheless, in his treatise against Pighius (1543), Calvin admits their differences only in expression:

It is also true that Philipp Melanchthon, by careful and very adept softening of the outward form of some things which Luther had written in scholastic language, in a style alien to popular taste, accommodated them to the general mass of humanity and to common usage.³⁹

This admission provides two important insights. First, Calvin publicly advocated a way of interpreting the change of Melanchthon's thought, namely that it was not in substance, but only on style and expression. This Calvin consistently maintained. Second, Calvin showed that he was fully aware of Luther's style and use of theological expressions in Luther's debate against Erasmus.

Melanchthon's polite response to Calvin's dedication by itself seemed to support Calvin's argument. There Melanchthon says, "I maintain the proposition that God is not the author of sin, and therefore cannot will it. . . . I only suggest that this mode of expression is better for practical use."⁴⁰ After this, Calvin maintained this line of argument and consistently denied publicly that there was difference in content between

³⁸ Wengert, "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever,'" 27.

³⁹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 29; CO 6:250.

⁴⁰ Cf. CO 11:539-542. The passage is translated and quoted in Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8:392. Cf. Wengert, "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever,'" 28-29.

them, albeit the existence of different modes of expression. Calvin kept this line of argument in his preface to the 1546 French translation of Melanchthon's *Loci communes* and added another line of argument that Melanchthon did not disclose all he maintained.⁴¹

Nevertheless, the Bolsec controversy pushed Calvin's difference with Melanchthon on predestination before the public.⁴² Wengert provides a good summary of the incident:

In 1551 Jerome Bolsec and Jean Trollet had crossed Calvin on the question of predestination, resulting in the arrest of Bolsec in October. When the matter came before the city council, Trollet appealed in his written defense to Melanchthon's

⁴¹ Cf. "Jean Calvin aux Lecteurs [Préface de la Somme de Melanchthon 1546]," in *CO* 9:847-50. Cf. De Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin*, 205-6. On this preface, Muller has this comment: "Calvin wrote a largely laudatory preface to the French translation of Melanchthon's *Loci communes* despite the presence in that very edition of the doctrinal points on which the two most strongly disagreed." Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 125. The editor of Letter 301 provides a helpful English translation of Calvin's 1546 preface: "I perceive that the author, being a person of profound knowledge, has not chosen to enter into subtle disputations, nor to treat these matters with that high degree of skill which it would have been so easy for him to employ. But he has brought himself down as much as he could, having only regard to edification. It is, certes, the style and fashion which we should observe, did not our adversaries constrain us by their cavils to turn aside from this course. . . . The same about predestination, because he sees now-a-days so many flighty spirits who are but too much given to curiosity, and who go beyond bounds in this matter. Wishing to provide against this danger, he has proposed to touch only on what was needful to be known, leaving all else buried out of sight, rather than by disclosing all he could, to give the reins to much perplexing and confused disputation, from whence arises no good fruit. *I confess that the whole of what God has seen pleased to reveal to us in scripture ought not to be suppressed, whatsoever happens*; but he who seeks to give profitable instruction to his readers, may very well be excused for dwelling upon what he knows to be most essential, passing lightly over or leaving out of sight that which he does not expect to be equally profitable." *SW* 5:368, note 1. Cf. *CO* 9:848. Wengert provides the French texts in "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever,'" 29-30, note 44. Wengert points out, "By emphasizing Melanchthon's modesty, Calvin actually made room for his own, opposing position without thereby having to refute Melanchthon." *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴² On the documents on the Bolsec controversy, cf. *Compagnie des pasteurs et professeurs de Genève, Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève au temps de Calvin*, edited by R.M. Kingdon and J.-F. Bergier (Geneva: Droz, 1962-1964), I, 80-131; for English translation see *The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, edited and translated by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1966), 137-86. For a good introduction, see Williston Walker, *John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism (1509-1564)* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 314-20; Richard A. Muller, "The Use and Abuse of a Document: Beza's Tabula Praedestinationis, The Bolsec Controversy, and the Origins of Reformed Orthodoxy," in *Protestant Scholasticism*, 33-61. For an introductory comment on the bibliography, cf. *ibid.*, 35-36, note 13. Cf. also Philip C. Holtrop, *The Bolsec Controversy on Predestination, from 1551 to 1555*, 2 vols. (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1993).

position as outlined in the French translation of the *Loci*. Calvin, in turn, was forced publicly to explain the discrepancy between his position and Melanchthon.⁴³

In a letter to the syndics of Geneva, dated October 6, 1552, Calvin still used the above arguments to discharge any substantial difference between them:

As to the passages extracted out of the book of Melanchthon, I confess that God is not the author of sin. I have even expressly maintained this article of faith in my books, and as warmly as could be required from a faithful servant of God. It is therefore superfluous to set up this as a matter of dispute between us. Notwithstanding, I must confess, as I have formerly declared, that *the method of instruction which Melanchthon adopts, is different from mine*. I have also, honorable Seigneurs, explained to you the cause of this. It is, that Melanchthon, being a *timorous man*, has accommodated himself too much to the common feeling of mankind, that he might not give occasion to over curious people to seek to pry into the secret things of God. *And thus, as at last appears, he has spoken of the present question rather as a philosopher than a theologian, having no better authority to rest upon than that of Plato.* I shall not waste my time in disproving these propositions, brought forward by the adverse party, in which *Melanchthon gives satisfaction to none of the learned, because he yields to too tender a caution, not venturing to say what he knows to be true, because he fears that all may not be capable of hearing it.*⁴⁴

Nevertheless, Calvin became more expressive in his criticism against Melanchthon's timidity.⁴⁵

⁴³ Wengert, "We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever," 30-31. Cf. Calvin's version on this: "Certain worthless wretches, after stirring up strife amongst us, in reference to the free election of God, and the sad bondage of the human will, and after creating a public disturbance, had nothing more plausible to urge in defense of their grievous opposition than the authority of your name." Letter 305, to Melanchthon, dated November 28, 1552, *SW* 5:377. "But of the numerous injuries I had to endure none was so bitter and cruel to me as to see myself dragged into an invidious disagreement with Melanchthon, from which, however, I so dexterously disengaged myself, that during the whole preceding I continued to say nothing but what was to the honor of so great a man." Letter Appendix 9, to Francis Dryander, dated November 1552, *SW* 7:418. Muller also observes this point: "The other side of the relationship, however, as revealed in their letters and in the occasionally grudging remarks in their published writings, was an angry debate over a series of theological points, exacerbated by citation of Melanchthon in the writings of Calvin's adversaries." Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 125.

⁴⁴ Letter 301, to the Seigneurs of Geneva, dated October 6, 1552, *SW* 5:367-69. Italics added.

⁴⁵ In a letter against Lelio Sozzini, Calvin gave a similar view: "You are deceived in so far as you entertain the impression that Melanchthon does not agree with us on the doctrine of predestination. I only said briefly that I had a letter written by his own hand, in which he confessed that his opinion agreed with mine." Letter 289, dated [1551], *SW* 5:330.

Still, Calvin continued to argue that there was no substantial difference between his formulation and Melanchthon's. Calvin kept arguing that the existence of their good friendship was an evidence of their agreement.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, on the side of Melanchthon, the difference became more obvious and the accusation against Calvin's position became more direct:

What was Melanchthon's reaction to Calvin's approach? In a private letter to his friend Camerarius, dated 1 February 1552, he reported on the debate in Geneva concerning "Stoic necessity" and the arrest of Bolsec. He also knew of Sozzini's admonition. The Zurich theologians, Melanchthon commented, were milder. On the same day he wrote to his son-in-law, Caspar Peucer, "O what a terrible matter! The teaching of salvation is obscured by disputations foreign to it."⁴⁷

Melanchthon also went as far as labeling Calvin as "Zeno," the founder of the stoic school.⁴⁸

In the private letter to Melanchthon, dated November 28, 1552, Calvin, for the first time, admitted that they had substantial differences that they needed to resolve:

But, to speak candidly, *religious scruples prevent me from agreeing with you on this point of doctrine, for you appear to discuss the freedom of the will in too philosophical a manner*; and in treating of the doctrine of election, you seem to have no other purpose, save that you may suit yourself to the common feeling of mankind. . . . It increases my anxiety, and at the same time my grief, to see you in this matter to be almost unlike yourself; for I heard, when the whole formula of the agreement of our Church with that of Zurich was laid before you, *you instantly seized a pen and erased that sentence which cautiously and prudently makes a distinction between the elect and the reprobate*. Which procedure, taking into

⁴⁶ Cf. "As for him, there are witnesses more than enough, who know how much he loves me. And I know that he would detest those who sought to shelter themselves behind him, to disparage my doctrine in any way." Letter 301, *SW* 5:369.

⁴⁷ Wengert, "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever,'" 31-32. Cf. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8:392.

⁴⁸ Cf. Wengert, "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever,'" 31, note 53. Wengert adds, "He nicknamed Calvin 'Zeno.'" Cf. *CR* 7:930. Pitkin provides the translation of the related portion of that letter: "But see the madness of this age! The Genevan battles over Stoic necessity are such that a certain person who disagreed with Zeno was thrown into prison." "The Protestant Zeno," 346.

consideration the mildness of your disposition, not to mention other characteristics, greatly shocked me.⁴⁹

Calvin also disclosed for the first time the rationale behind his consistent public consolidation with Melanchthon is to maintain the united front:

And after they had found out how easy it was for us to refute whatever arguments they adduced, they tried to crush us, forsooth, by this artifice, — by asking, if we were willing openly to disagree with you. . . . Therefore, all my colleagues and myself openly professed to hold the same opinion on that doctrine which you hold. . . . Meanwhile, nevertheless, such indefinite and reserved expression of opinion cannot but pain me exceedingly; and it cannot but pain me, that opportunity is being left to the evil-disposed for harassing the Church, after our death, as often as they please; while the conflicting parties will array against each other the opinions of those who ought to have spoken, as with one mouth, one and the same thing.⁵⁰

To Calvin, the threat from France was so real and immediate that the need for a united front among the Reformers was crucial. “There is much trouble, annoyance, and even disorder, among us. Full in view is the enemy, who are continually imperiling our lives by new dangers. We are at a distance of three days’ journey from Burgundy. The French forces are but an hour’s march from our gates.”⁵¹ Because of this, Calvin repeatedly tried to persuade Melanchthon for the good sake of the Church to maintain their friendship: “there is no reason for my concealing that our friendship could not be interrupted without great injury to the Church.”⁵² Probably for diplomatic reasons, Calvin still denied that Melanchthon actually differed from him: “Indeed, the matter is so

⁴⁹ Cf. Letter 305, to Melanchthon, dated November 28, 1552, *SW* 5:379-80. Italics added.

⁵⁰ Letter 305, *SW* 5:377-78.

⁵¹ Letter 305, *SW* 5:380.

⁵² Letter 305, *SW* 5:377.

obvious, that no one of sound judgment can be persuaded otherwise, than that you are giving out what is quite different from your real inclination.”⁵³

Yet gradually Calvin had to admit that there were substantial differences between them on the issue of predestination.⁵⁴ And their differences had a chilling effect on their relationship: “How it has happened that for more than a space of three years, you have not given me one word in reply to my letters, I know not.”⁵⁵ During and after this chilling period, Calvin became blunter in his criticisms against Melancthon in his private letters:

I know not how much I ought to congratulate myself on Philip’s agreement with me in one thing, since in the most important matters, catching at the approbation even of the philosophers, he openly opposes sound doctrine; or lest he should provoke the resentment of certain persons, he cunningly, or at least, with but little manliness, disguises his own opinion. May the Lord endow him with a more courageous spirit, lest posterity suffer great detriment from his timidity.⁵⁶

The unfortunate issue of the conference at Worms does not so much distress me, *as the inconstancy of Philip moves both my anger and detestation*. For though I had not forgotten how pliant and weak he has always been, and knew that on the present occasion also he is too timid and indolent, nevertheless he has exceeded himself far beyond what I could ever have suspected.⁵⁷

⁵³ Letter 305, *SW* 5:380.

⁵⁴ Cf. “And yet the doctrine of the gratuitous mercy of God is entirely destroyed, *unless we hold that the faithful, whom God has thought fit to choose out for salvation, are distinguished from the reprobate by the mere good pleasure of God*; unless this also be clearly established as a consequence, that faith flows from the secret election of God, because he enlightens, by his Spirit, those whom it seemed good to him to elect before they were born, and by the grace of adoption grafts them into his family. *Weigh well in your wisdom, how absurd it is that this doctrine should be impugned by the greatest of theologians*. You see that the manifest discordance which is certainly remarked between our writings has a pernicious tendency. . . . And, indeed, whatever method of reconciling *our differences* it shall please you to adopt, that I will gladly embrace.” Letter 359, to Melancthon, dated August 27, 1554, *SW* 6:62. Italics added.

⁵⁵ Letter 465, to Melancthon, dated August 1557, *SW* 6:335-36.

⁵⁶ Letter 357, to John Sleidan, dated August 27, 1554, *SW* 6:58.

⁵⁷ Letter 493, to Bullinger, dated February 23, 1558, *SW* 6:410-11. Italics added.

Nevertheless, amidst all difficulties, Calvin continued to stress both their friendship and the claimed theological unity.⁵⁸

This short review of the tense relationship between Calvin and Melanchthon reminds us of two important points. First, we cannot accept Calvin's public statement about his consolidation with the early Reformers on face value alone and uncritically.⁵⁹ Second, the call both to maintain a united front in a changing environment in the second phase of the Reformation and to defend the early Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the human will was not an easy job. There were also changes caused by Bucer, Bullinger, and Vermigli, which we will discuss in chapters four and five. A clarification of Calvin's changing historical context reminds us of the need to dig out the nuanced and subtle adjustments Calvin made.

D. Calvin Defends Luther's Formulation in His Treatise against Pighius

Given that the change in Melanchthon's teaching and the existence of more diversified formulations by other Reformers, Calvin was in a delicate position to defend both Luther's formulation and his own rather unnuanced formulation in *Institutes* (1539).⁶⁰ Pighius charged Calvin's teaching as "a doctrine difficult and new and not taught by the apostles."⁶¹ Pighius condemned the teaching of Luther, Calvin, and other

⁵⁸ Cf. Letter 465, *SW* 6:338; Letter 519, to Melanchthon, dated November 19, 1558, *SW* 6:482-85. Wengert's final note on this letter is this: "Only Melanchthon's death prevented a public breach and allowed Calvin's less than realistic eulogy in 1561." "We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever," 42.

⁵⁹ Steinmetz raises a similar warning concerning Calvin's criticisms against Scholasticism: "Unfortunately, the attempt to understand Calvin's relationship to scholasticism has been complicated by the fact that some Reformation historians have accepted almost uncritically and at face value the characterization of scholasticism by its enemies." "The Scholastic Calvin," 17.

⁶⁰ Cf. Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*, 19-20, 42-44, 54-55.

⁶¹ Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*, 28.

Reformers and labeled their doctrine as one “derived from the ancient heretics, Priscillian, Mani, Marcion, Cerdon, and even Simon Magus himself.”⁶² Calvin also had to face the charge of inconsistency. Three main charges are involved. First, the Roman side perceived Melanchthon changed his position on free will. Second, since early Reformers rejected the freedom of the will on the one hand, and argued for the existence of outward civic freedom on the other, their Roman opponents contended that the Reformers held two conflicting positions. Third, some Reformers retained the term “*liberum arbitrium*” in opposition to Luther and Melanchthon. The Reformers’ difference on the use of the term was regarded as another sign of inconsistency. These charges are summarized by Calvin in his treatise:

And here he complains not only about our obscureness but about our diversity; for [he says] since a lie is of itself full of darkness, we seek a hiding place for it to aid our deceit, and besides we are so unlike and different from one another that it would be an endless task to conclude anything definite from all our writings.⁶³

Pighius argued that the changes were indications of deceit and inconsistency among the Reformers, and that they revealed the unreliability of the Reformers’ doctrine. Schulze observes that Calvin “proceeds to defend Luther and to reject the allegation that the Reformers are divided amongst themselves on the issue of free will.”⁶⁴ The seeming disagreements among the Reformers also gave the Roman critics a basis for claiming that the teachings of the Reformers are heretical. Calvin’s response tended to reveal less the actual differences among the Reformers, but rather focused more on their similarities and

⁶² Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 42; cf. *ibid.*, 42-50; *CO* 6:260-65.

⁶³ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 29; *CO* 6:251.

⁶⁴ Schulze, *Calvin’s Reply to Pighius*, 19.

continuities. Hence, if we want to identify the subtle differences between Calvin and the others, we need to compare Calvin's teachings with those of his contemporaries.

To defend Luther and the early Reformation heritage, therefore, was a major concern in Calvin's treatise against Pighius. Gerrish rightly points out, "The first part of the treatise contained a remarkable defense of Luther against many of the charges that are still brought against him in our own day."⁶⁵ Schulze also argues that in his defense, "Calvin identified himself wholly with Luther and Augustine against all heresies."⁶⁶ In this treatise, Calvin clearly assumed the role of a Reformer of the second generation defending the early Reformation heritage of Luther and the consistency of the Reformers' position in face of Melanchthon's later development toward synergism.

Calvin's response, published in February 1543, focused on the issue of human will.⁶⁷ Calvin initially intended to write another work to rebuke Pighius' attack on the doctrine of predestination. Yet as Pighius died shortly after Calvin's treatise appeared, Calvin delayed his response on predestination until controversy with Jerome Bolsec arose in 1552.⁶⁸ The first treatise against Pighius is regarded by Lane as Calvin's "fullest treatment of the relation between grace and free will."⁶⁹ The full title of the treatise speaks for itself: "Defense of the Sound and Orthodox Doctrine of the Bondage and

⁶⁵ Gerrish, "John Calvin on Luther," 78.

⁶⁶ Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*, 55.

⁶⁷ For background of this treatise, cf. Lane, "Introduction," xiii-xvi; Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*, 11-27.

⁶⁸ Cf. Holtrop, *The Bolsec Controversy on Predestination from 1551 to 1555*; John Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, trans. J. K. S. Reid (London: James Clarke, 1961); Richard A. Muller, review of *The Bolsec Controversy on Predestination, from 1551-1555*, by Philip C. Holtrop, *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994), 581-89.

⁶⁹ Lane, "Introduction," xiii.

Liberation of the Human Will, against the Misrepresentations of Albert Pighius Kampen.” In this treatise, Calvin tries to prove the orthodoxy of the doctrine, primarily from the scriptures, and secondly by arguing full agreement with the teaching of Augustine and the Second Council of Orange. There, Calvin also clarifies and defends certain complex concepts of the human will. The words “Defense” and “Orthodox” used in the title remind us that Calvin does not aim to formulate a new doctrine, but a classical doctrine, reestablished in the early Reformation.

At the very beginning of this treatise, Calvin emphasizes that the doctrine of the human will that he defends is the “common cause” of the Reformers. Calvin starts with the comment that Pighius’ previous work, *Diligent and Lucid Exposition of the Controversies by Which the Faith and Religion of Christ Are Being Disturbed* (1541), “was written chiefly against Luther and Philipp Melanchthon but secondarily against all of us together.”⁷⁰ Calvin calls his teaching of human will in his *Institutes* (1539) “the common cause” of the Reformers: “For I reasoned as follows: because he had judged me an unworthy victim by myself for him to prove his strength, he had preferred to turn [his book] into an attack on *the common cause* itself, so that if he were victorious his triumph would be the more renowned, whereas if he were defeated the disgrace would be less.”⁷¹ Calvin also says, “But that teaching which is the chief issue in this controversy and the

⁷⁰ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 7; CO 6:233.

⁷¹ “*Communis causae*,” in Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 7; CO 6:233. Cf. *ibid.*, 8; CO 6:234. Italics added.

cause of everything else that is said we defend today *just as it was put forward by Luther and others at the beginning.*⁷²

Calvin shows his full support for Luther by arguing for the divine origin of Luther's doctrine: "So let Pighius cease to be amazed about the origin of this new and unheard-of efficacy of our teaching, when the fact itself proclaims that at the beginning *it was not Luther who spoke, but God thundered through his mouth*, and that now it is not we who speak, but God is displaying his power from heaven."⁷³ Even in places where Calvin admits that Luther may exaggerate, Calvin defends Luther's exaggeration by arguing that the corrupt situation drove Luther to it. For example, when Luther claims that even good works are of themselves mortal sins,⁷⁴ Calvin writes,

But, you will say, Luther exaggerates, I can grant this, but only when I say that he had a good reason which drove him to such exaggeration; that is, he saw that the world was so deprived of sense by a false and perilous confidence in works, a kind of deadly drowsiness, that it needed not a voice and words to awaken it but a trumpet call, a peal of thunder and thunderbolts.⁷⁵

Calvin indeed has minor disagreements with Luther, but in defending Luther against their common Roman opponents Calvin does not disclose their differences. Rather, Calvin defends the unity of the Reformers:

⁷² Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 29; CO 6:251. Italics added. "Caeterum, quod summum est in hac quaestione, et cuius gratia reliqua omnia dicuntur, quemadmodum initio propositum fuit a Luthero et aliis, ita hodie defendimus."

⁷³ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 12; CO 6:238. Italics added.

⁷⁴ Cf. "Unhappy free will! When a just man does a good deed, he sins mortally, as we have seen, and free will boasts that before justification it is something and can do something." Martin Luther, "An Assertion of All the Articles of Martin Luther Which Were Quite Recently Condemned by a Bull of Leo X, Article 36," translated and annotated by Clarence H. Miller, in Desiderius Erasmus, *Controversies*, edited by Charles Trinkaus, Collected Works of Erasmus, vol. 76 (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 306.

⁷⁵ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 26; CO 6:249.

There was, he says, a wonderful unanimity [*consensum*] among the apostles over doctrine. As if the Lord has not given this same unanimity also to those who today seek to restore the teaching of the gospel to its original place.”⁷⁶

In addition, Calvin shows his full consolidation with the cause of Luther by explicitly counting himself as a member of the Lutheran party. Calvin uses various words and phrases, like “our party,” “our teaching,” “our books,” “books written by our company,” “our defection from the pope,” “our opponents,” “we have the greatest likeness,” and “our people,” to convince his readers that he, Luther, and other Reformers are united in this Reformation cause.⁷⁷ Calvin argues that Pighius “wants to appear to be opening a battle against *the whole party of the Lutherans*, not against any individual member of it. But he cannot attack us all at the same time except as a united body.”⁷⁸ Even though there had been many differences and much bitterness generated among them by the Lord’s Supper controversy, in defending the “common cause” of the Reformation heritage, Calvin is not shy away from counting himself as a member of “the whole party of the Lutherans.” While Pighius uses the term “Lutheran” as a sectarian label, Calvin in this case is willing to identify with the label.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 13; CO 6:238. “Mirus, inquit, apostolorum consensus erat in doctrina. Quasi vero non hunc quoque consensum dederit iis Dominus, qui evangelii doctrinam in pristinum suum locum restituere hodie conantur.”

⁷⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17, 28, 172.

⁷⁸ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 30; CO 6:251-52. Italics added. “Vides hic lector, hominem constringi simul et distrahi. *In totam Lutheranorum sectam*, non in privatum ex ea quempiam certamen instituere videri vult.”

⁷⁹ On the term “Lutheran,” the editor’s note on Luther’s “Receiving Both Kinds in the Sacrament” provides a helpful summary of its background: “By this time, in 1522, the word *lutherisch* was already in extensive use, not only as a possessive adjective and a predicate adjective, but even in the form of a substantive as the name of a new religious party. It was used first and most particularly by Luther’s enemies, but also by his friends (despite his repudiation of it) and by the population generally.” LW 36:265, note 29. Luther wrote probably during mid December 1521 and published in 1522 his famous criticism against the use of the term “Lutheran”: “In the first place, I ask that men make no reference to my name; let them call themselves Christians, not Lutherans. What is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine [John

Gerrish reminds us that Calvin sees himself as an Evangelical, a member of the whole Reformation front, and not as a “Reformed,” nor a “Calvinist” in the modern sense:

It cannot be too strongly emphasized at the outset that Calvin did not think of himself as “Reformed” in the sense of inner-Protestant polemics. Calvin was not a Calvinist, but an Evangelical, and what he thought about Luther can only be understood from this viewpoint. He identified himself wholly with the common Protestant cause and never faced the Wittenbergers as the sponsor of a rival movement.⁸⁰

This observation is also supported by the historical circumstances of the treatise. When Pighius wrote his attack against Calvin, he clearly aimed this as a general attack on the Reformation. Pighius was requested by Bernardus Cincius, bishop of Aquila, and Cardinal Marcello Cervini to write a response to Calvin’s *Institutes* (1539). They treated Calvin’s *Institutes* as one of the Lutheran works and judged that “this work was more

7:16]. Neither was I crucified for anyone [I Cor. 1:13]. St. Paul, in I Corinthians 3, would not allow the Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. How then should I—poor stinking maggot-fodder that I am—come to have men call the children of Christ by my wretched name? Not so, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians, after him whose teaching we hold. The papists deservedly have a party name, because they are not content with the teaching and name of Christ, but want to be papist as well. Let them be papist then, since the pope is their master. I neither am nor want to be anyone’s master. I hold, together with the universal church, the one universal teaching of Christ, who is our only master [Matt. 23:8].” *LW* 45:70-71. The abbreviation, *LW*, stands for *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, 55 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1955-1986).

⁸⁰ Gerrish, “John Calvin on Luther,” 69. McGrath also observes, “In the early period of the Reformation, the Reformers regarded themselves as evangelicals committed to a common programme of theological education and reform. By the second half of the century, however, it was evident that a major bifurcation had occurred within the movement (if, indeed, it had always been there from the beginning).” Alister E. McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1987), 5. Cf. Josef Bohatec, “‘Lutherisch’ und ‘Reformiert’,” *Reformiertes Kirchenblatt für Österreich* 28 (January 1951), 1-3. McGrath, following Bohatec, argues that the two camps would be more accurately referred to as “Evangelical-Lutheran” and “Evangelical Reformed.” For example, Gerrish quotes Calvin’s intercession effort for the struggle between the Saxon Lutherans and Heinz von Wolfenbüttel. There Calvin exhorted the Genevans: “I am not speaking of Geneva alone, but of all towns and territories where the gospel is proclaimed. . . . May we set ourselves apart? May we say, ‘They are far away from us’? No, they belong to the Church, and we are their members.” “John Calvin on Luther,” 69. From *CO* 32:460-61.

dangerous than *the other 'Lutheran' writings*.”⁸¹ From the perspectives of Pighius and other Roman theologians, Calvin was a young but formidable member of the Lutheran sect.⁸² Hence Calvin’s public admittance of the label, “Lutheran,” informs us much about Calvin’s Reformation context.

Lane is well aware of this: “Note that Calvin, in the interests of maintaining a united Protestant front against Pighius’s charge, is willing to be called a Lutheran.”⁸³ This strengthens our argument that one of Calvin’s central concerns in his formulation of the bondage of the human will is to defend the Reformation heritage. On this, Schulze rightly observes that “Calvin feels himself wholly in line and one with the Lutherans in these points” and that Calvin firmly believes that “the doctrine of Luther is also his own doctrine.”⁸⁴ Calvin calling himself a member of “the Lutheran party” is probably one of his strongest declarations of his identification with the cause of Luther.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Lane, “Introduction,” xiv. Italics added. Cf. C. Schultingius, *Bibliothecae catholicae et orthodoxae, contra summam totius theologiae calvinianae in Institutionibus Ioannis Calvini, et Locis Communibus Petri Martyris* (Cologne, 1602), 1:39-40; H. Jedin, *Studien über die Schriftstellertätigkeit Albert Pighes* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1931), 163.

⁸² In a rhetoric form and with a humble manner, Calvin argues that as Pighius attacked him personally and directly, he, though a junior Reformer, felt justified to take up the defense of the common cause: “For myself I should not have dared to take up the defence of the common cause if he had attacked all of us together, for fear that I would appear to have wanted to put myself before others who are agreed to be far more competent, and so would seem to be motivated more by my rashness and foolish self-confidence than by right judgment.” Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 8; *CO* 6:234.

⁸³ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 30, n. 86. Elsewhere, Lane says, “He refers to ‘Luther and the rest of our party’ (*CO* 6:324) and the uninitiated reader would remain blissfully unaware that there was any division between Lutheran and Reformed Protestantism.” “Bondage and Liberation in Calvin’s Treatise against Pighius,” 7, note 34.

⁸⁴ Schulze, *Calvin’s Reply to Pighius*, 19-20; Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 65-93.

⁸⁵ Cf. “Calvin had been predisposed to go a long way with the Lutherans. He was never happy in disagreeing with Luther. If to be Lutheran is to hold common ground with Luther, we may safely affirm that Calvin is about nine-tenths a Lutheran. He praised Luther in high terms, both before and after Luther’s death.” McNeill, “Calvin as an Ecumenical Churchman,” 49.

We find two other significant places for this use of the term “Lutheran” in Calvin’s corpus. In *the Articles by The Theological Faculty of Paris* (1542), against which Calvin had written an Antidote, the Faculty of Paris used the term “Lutherans” to include also the Swiss Reformers in their attack.⁸⁶ Even as late as October 5, 1559, Calvin himself would use the term, “Lutheran,” to refer to a Reformed Frenchman in Paris in a letter to Bullinger.⁸⁷

In addition to this explicit declaration as a Lutheran, Calvin also shows his identification with the cause of Luther and the early Reformation in his historical review of the early Reformation. Calvin argues that he is fighting for the same cause: “We have sought nothing else these twenty-five years but that the whole conflict should be ended in such a way that the victory should not fall to men, but should remain, as is fitting, with that teaching which was proclaimed by Christ and the apostles.”⁸⁸ Here Calvin argues that his cause is the same as what Luther began in the *Nine-five Theses* twenty five years before Calvin wrote his defense against Pighius. He, Luther, and the other Reformers aim at nothing but to restore the teaching of Christ and the apostles. Calvin also implicitly identifies their cause with that of the apostles by comparing the difficulties faced by the apostles with that by Luther in the early Reformation: “For anyone who considers with

⁸⁶ *SW* 1:75, 77, 78, 80-81, 83, 85, 86-87, 90, 92, 93, 95, 99, 102, 103, 108-9, 113, 116.

⁸⁷ “At Paris the cruelty of the enemies of the gospel rages more furiously than it appears hitherto to have done. . . . They turn all the household furniture upside down, and menace with punishment the masters of families, if they shall be discovered to have sheltered a Lutheran in their houses.” *SW* 7:69. Only after deeper separation between the German side and the Swiss side of the Reformation, the term “Lutheran” became gradually more or less restricted to represent only the German camp of the Reformation. As a matter of fact, just a few months before Calvin’s death, Calvin even expressed the need to guard against “Lutheranism”: “I am carefully on the watch that Lutheranism gain no ground, nor be introduced into France.” Letter 650, to Bullinger, dated July 2, 1563, *SW* 7:322.

⁸⁸ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 13; *CO* 6:238.

insight the conditions of the time when Luther came to prominence will see that he shared almost all other difficulties in common with the apostles, but that in one respect his situation was worse and harder than theirs.”⁸⁹ Calvin claims that Luther’s situation was more difficult because the pope was much more powerful and used deceptive teachings.⁹⁰ In addition, Calvin demonstrates his continuity and identification with Luther through the sharing of common difficulty: “This is a difficulty which we also now face.”⁹¹ Calvin argues that the success of the Reformation clearly demonstrates that the work of Luther and the other Reformers is a work of God: “Pighius is too stupid to recognise that [our success] is an evident and clear miracle of God’s power at which he is compelled to marvel, whether he wishes to or not.”⁹² Calvin repeatedly emphasizes an essential continuity between Luther and himself.

To defend Luther against the charge of schism, Calvin even quotes a sentence from Luther’s *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*: “Whether I will or not, my opponents compel me to become wiser from day to day.”⁹³ Calvin then argues that the schism was

⁸⁹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 14; CO 6:239. Cf. “I would say that our troubles exceeded those of the apostles also because of the toil of having to struggle with a deceptive ghost of a church and a concealed hostility to religion which hides itself under the name of God itself, were it not the fact that several of the prophets and the apostles had a similar ordeal on the same battleground.” Ibid., 15; CO 239-40.

⁹⁰ “It is well known how powerful the pope is the power of arms and in aid from treatises and in wealth and in the very reverence paid to his title, and then how much security and strength he has in this vast flotsam of his which is scattered all over the world—I mean the cardinals, bishops, and priests.” “I would say that our troubles exceeded those of the apostles also because of the toil of having to struggle with a deceptive ghost of a church and a concealed hostility to religion which hides itself under the name of God itself.” Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 14-15; CO 6:239.

⁹¹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 14; CO 6:239.

⁹² Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 12; CO 6:237.

⁹³ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 17; CO 6:241. The translation in *Luther’s Works* is “Whether I wish it or not, I am compelled to become more learned every day, with so many and such able masters eagerly driving me on and making me work.” LW 36:11.

caused by the refusal of the Papist side to repent from their wicked practices: “It is possible that in books written by our company he [Pighius] read that initially Luther criticized only certain very great abuses and the infamous behaviour of the priests, always going further than before because of the wickedness of his opponents.”⁹⁴ Calvin also defends Luther’s motive and integrity in his Reformation efforts:

Nor indeed was it then Luther’s intention to defect from the tyranny of the Antichrist, but solely to heal those diseases whose cure seemed as easy as it was necessary. But he proved to be mistaken in this view. For popery was swarming with such a purulent mass of every kind of foul practice that once a hand began to be laid on it, since it could not bear any cure, it split down the middle.⁹⁵

Against the charge of schism, Calvin voices out a common concern of the Reformers:

“The Holy Spirit declares that the unity of the church is maintained by agreement in sound and true doctrine.”⁹⁶

Against Pighius’ criticism of Luther’s “grave struggles of the conscience,” Calvin characterizes Luther’s struggles as signs of a devout person:

But really, if this idiot could imagine even in a dream what this means, what it implies, he would either be struck dumb or he would rather be changed into an admirer and a praiser of Luther. For it is the common lot of the devout to endure from time to time awful tortures to the conscience, so that taught by these they may become more accustomed to true humility and fear of God.⁹⁷

This defense of Luther’s character is particularly significant, given that Calvin had lifelong complaints concerning Luther’s vehemence against the Swiss Reformers, especially on the issue of the Lord’s Supper. Yet, in facing their common opponents, the

⁹⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 17; CO 6:241.

⁹⁵ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 17; CO 6:241.

⁹⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 18; CO 6:243.

⁹⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 22; CO 6:245.

minor defects of Luther are pushed aside and his greatness is openly praised. And Calvin credits Luther as “a distinguished apostle of Christ whose labour and ministry have done most in these times to bring back the purity of the gospel.”⁹⁸

In sum, with a conviction to defend Luther’s heritage, and a need to accommodate the change of Melanchthon and the existence of more diversified formulations among the Reformers, Calvin faced a delicate dilemma. In the face of the Roman opponents and to diffuse the charge of inconsistency, Calvin could not be completely candid on the differences among the Reformers. This was the historical context when Calvin formulated his teaching. This had a great impact on the manner of his presentation. Calvin’s major concern in formulating his doctrine of the human will was certainly not to aim at any uniqueness. Rather, Calvin’s primary concern was to persuade his readers that his doctrine is the same as that taught by the early Reformers, that it is a catholic and orthodox doctrine, represented by Augustine and early church councils, that it is compatible with the diverse formulations of other Reformers, and most important, that it is what the Bible teaches.

⁹⁸ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 28; CO 6:250.

CHAPTER III

LUTHER AND THE PROBLEM OF FREE CHOICE IN REFORMATION DEBATE

To understand Calvin in his historical context, we must first understand both the teachings about the bondage of the human will and the necessitarian argument developed by Luther in the early Reformation. We will show that there are essential continuities and important discontinuities between Luther's formulation and Calvin's. On the substance of the doctrine, there are essential continuities between the two Reformers. Calvin adopted four major characteristics of Luther's formulation: the rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*, an active presentation of God's sovereign will over the wicked, the preference for biblical expressions, and a reinterpretation of Augustine's heritage. Nevertheless, on the use of the necessitarian argument, Calvin, following the trends developed in the second phase of the Reformation, shifted away from Luther's necessitarian argument and argued the bondage of the human will from a soteriological perspective.

A. Luther's Necessitarian Argument in the *Assertio*

The criticisms generated by the necessitarian argument used by Luther and the need to defend it are important backgrounds behind Calvin's defense against Pighius. In the beginning of his treatise on the human will, Calvin summarized the three major challenges he had to defend against Pighius. The first is Pighius' attack on Luther's and the Reformers' denial of genuine free will for humankind after the fall. The second is his attack on Luther's necessitarianism, namely, the claim that "all things happen by absolute necessity." The third is the charge that the Reformers were not consistent among

themselves, as witnessed by the shift found in Melanchthon. On the first two charges

Calvin provides a sharp summary:

When the discussion has reached *Luther's actual opinion* [*ipsam Lutheri sententiam*], [Pighius] reduces everything in it which he desires to condemn to main charges: namely that he taught that since the fall of the first man free choice has been a reality in name only, and that we can of ourselves do nothing but sin; and that, not content with that, he added afterwards, that [free choice] is something imaginary, a name without substance, and then that nothing happens by chance, *but everything befalls us by absolute necessity* [*sed absoluta necessitate nobis provenire omnia*].¹

The first two challenges are generated by Luther's teachings in his *Assertio omnium articulorum* (1520),² though the seeds of these may be found in other early Reformation works by Luther.³ Unlike the classical Augustinianism, which mainly uses soteriological argument to prove the bondage of the human will, Luther, both in his *Assertio* and *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), develops a two-track argument to argue for the bondage of the human will: a soteriological argument that argues the bondage of the human will by reason of original sin and the corruption caused by the fall, and a necessitarian argument that argues that the human will under the sovereign ruling of God does not have genuine freedom. I follow McSorley in using the term "necessitarian argument" to represent this

¹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 26; CO 4:248. Italics added. The Latin text is "Ad ipsam Lutheri sententiam quum ventum est, ad duo capita revocat quidquid in ea vult damnare: nempe quod liberum arbitrium docuerit, rem esse, post primi hominis lapsum, de solo titulo, nec posse nos ex nobis aliud quam peccare. Nec eo contentus, addiderit postea, figmentum esse in rebus, et titulum sine re, deinde nihil contingere fortuito, sed absoluta necessitate nobis provenire omnia."

² Cf. Martin Luther, *An Assertion of All the Articles of Martin Luther Which Were Quite Recently Condemned by a Bull of Leo X, Article 36*, translated and annotated by Clarence H. Miller, in Desiderius Erasmus, *Controversies*, edited by Charles Trinkaus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 76 (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 301-10. The Latin text is in *WA* 7:142-49. Luther produced four rebuttals against the papal bull *Exsurge Domine: Adversus execrabilem Antichristi bullam* (Nov 1520), *Wider die Bulle des Endchrishts* (Nov 1520), *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X novissimam damnatorum* (Dec 1520), and *Grund und Ursach aller Artikel D. Martin Luthers so durch römische Bulle unrechtilich verdammt sind* (Mar 1521).

³ On the rejection of the term "free will," please refer to Thesis 13 of Heidelberg Disputation (1518) and the thirty-sixth article condemned by the papal bull, *Exsurge Domine*. For a more comprehensive reading, cf. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 224-53.

track of argument in Luther.⁴ It is this necessitarian argument that generated a lot of heated debates in the early Reformation. The Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation has a need to either defend it or to shift away from it. After the precedent set by Luther in *Assertio* (1520), this kind of necessitarian argument became a common argument used by the leading Reformers in the early Reformation. Barnikol points out that in 1521 and 1522 versions of the *Loci Communes*, Melanchthon followed Luther closely in using this necessitarian argument to defend the bondage of the human will.⁵ Kolb also points out, “Even before 1525 Luther’s views on God’s absolute lordship over all things and the freedom or bondage of the will had won the support of many of his advocates.”⁶ One may find similar necessitarian argument in Zwingli’s *The Providence of God* (1530).⁷

On the nature of the continuities and discontinuities between Luther and Calvin on necessitarian argument, Lane and Heckel offer different evaluations. Lane believes that Calvin “adopted a more moderate position than did Luther,” and argues that Luther’s

⁴ McSorley says, “In this concept of unfree will Luther argues that God’s infallible foreknowledge imposes an absolute necessity on all things. . . . Luther’s *necessitarian argument* is based on speculative theological reasoning. Luther, very uncharacteristically, makes no effort to give biblical support for this argument. The necessitarian concept of unfree will has, moreover, never been accepted by the Church—before or after Luther—as a legitimate expression of the biblical doctrine of fallen man’s bondage to sin and death.” McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 21. Italics added. Cf. *ibid.*, 329, 342; Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 46.

⁵ “In den Ausgaben von 1521 und 1522 wandelt Melanchthon in den Bahnen Luthers. Wie der große Reformator faßt auch Melanchthon das Problem des freien Willens an von zwei großen Gedankenkreisen, die in Gott und dem Menschen ihren Mittelpunkt finden. Von der anthropozentrischen Begründung der Unfreiheit des menschlichen Willens durch die Erbsünde kommt er zur ethisch-religiösen Unfreiheit des Menschen; die theozentrische Erklärung der menschlichen Gebundenheit durch die Praedestination führt ihn zum metaphysischen Determinismus.” *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 63.

⁶ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 67. Cf. *ibid.*, 67-70.

⁷ Ulrich Zwingli, “Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God,” in *On Providence and Other Essays*, ed. William John Hinke (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 155-89.

claim in *Assertio* “caused Calvin some embarrassment.” Calvin, because of his concern for “Protestant solidarity” did not openly criticise Luther’s assertion. Indeed, only in his *Eternal Predestination* (1552) and in the 1559 *Institutes*, did Calvin, by explicitly approving the Scholastic distinctions of two kinds of necessity, put “clear water between Luther and himself.”⁸ Other commentators also argue that Calvin teaches a milder concept of necessitarianism than Luther. Barnikol argues that Calvin does not follow Luther’s necessitarian line of argument but defends the early Reformation teaching of the bondage of the human will. Barnikol calls Calvin “the excellent and more skillful presenter” of Luther’s ideas.⁹ Schulze notes, “In his answer he reveals his unity with the other Reformers (e.g. in the defence of Luther, the distinction between *coactio* and *necessitas*, etc.); yet he formulates more clearly, *evading the deterministic formulations of Luther and the uncritical expressions of Bucer.*”¹⁰ Cunningham also has similar observation. “With respect to the bearing of the fore-ordination and providence upon the question of liberty or bondage of the will,”¹¹ Cunningham says, “Calvin, in particular, who never made such strong statements as Luther and Melanchthon did in their earlier works, about the connection between fore-ordination and necessity, has, with his usual caution and wisdom, set forth these views upon many occasions.”¹²

⁸ Lane, “Introduction,” xxviii. Cf. John Calvin, *Calvin’s Calvinism: Treatises on the Eternal Predestination of God and the Secret Providence of God*, trans. Henry P. Cole (Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, [1987]), 235; *Inst.*, 1.16.9.

⁹ Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 57-58. “Immerhin läßt sich sagen, daß das, was Luther in der Behauptung seines metaphysischen Determinismus wollte, in Calvin den trefflichen und geschickteren Darsteller gefunden hat.”

¹⁰ Schulze, *Calvin’s Reply to Pighius*, 142. Italics added.

¹¹ Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 1:581.

¹² Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 1:581-82.

Heckel strongly disagrees with this line of observation and argues that there is an essential continuity between the two.¹³ Heckel acknowledges that Luther dropped the provocative term “absolute necessity” in *The Bondage of the Will*, but he argues that Luther’s concept of “absolute necessity” should be interpreted “as meaning simply that everything that will happen ‘should happen.’”¹⁴ Heckel points out that Calvin also used the term “necessity.” Because of this, he claims that even though Calvin adopted the scholastic distinction, Calvin did not use the distinction “to affirm the theological point that Luther rejected or even undermine Luther’s position.” To Heckel, Calvin’s answer “was along the same line as Luther but was more nuanced.”¹⁵

Using mainly those passages in *The Bondage of the Will* where Luther affirms the voluntary nature of the bound human will and where Luther makes the distinction between necessity and coercion, Heckel argues, by disagreeing with McSorley and Lane, that Luther’s necessitarian argument does not lead to “incompatibility of necessity and natural freedom or freedom *in inferioribus* once Luther’s distinction between necessity and coercion is properly grasped.”¹⁶ Heckel has the tendency to gloss over the full implication of the necessitarian argument and the harsh language used by Luther in *Assertio*. He tends to soften the necessitarian look of Luther’s argument and claims that “It might be said that he kept ‘absolute necessity’ in name only, perhaps to be provocative, and used it in his own way.”¹⁷ He also does not take note of the fact that

¹³ Cf. Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 8-10, 19-20, 87, 97.

¹⁴ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 109.

¹⁵ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 10, 110.

¹⁶ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 194. Cf. *ibid.*, 184-93; *LW* 33: 64-65, 103, 176, 283.

¹⁷ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 108.

Calvin does not employ necessitarian argument in his defense of the bondage of the human will. Indeed, one of the most difficult challenges Calvin and his contemporaries had to face was to explain the harsher necessitarian language of Luther's *Assertio* (1520) in particular and to some extent also the necessitarian argument used in *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), as well as the necessitarian language in Melancthon's *Loci communes* (1521) and Zwingli's *The Providence of God* (1530).

Among these works, the Latin work, *Assertio*, is the one that planted the seed of the heated controversies concerning the issue of necessitarianism in the early Reformation.¹⁸

It is this treatise that offended Erasmus most and led to his attack against Luther.¹⁹

Luther had written,

For I misspoke when I said that free will before grace exists in name only; rather I should have simply said 'free will is a fiction among real things, a name with no reality.' *For no one has it within his control to intend anything, good or evil, but rather, as was rightly taught by the article of Wyclif which was condemned at Constance, all things occur by absolute necessity [omnia de necessitate absoluta eveniunt].* That was what the poet meant when he said, "All things are settled by a

¹⁸ Watson points out: "Interestingly enough, the German version of this article in *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles (Grund und Ursach aller Artikel)*, which was published in 1520 for more popular consumption, reads more mildly, making no mention of 'necessity.' Cf. *WA* 7, 444–451; *LW* 32:92–94." McSorley says, "The Latin and the German versions of Luther's formal, detailed reply to *Exsurge Domine* differ significantly. The Latin version of Luther's defense of proposition 36 is not only twice as long as the German, but is also much more radical. The radicality of the *Assertio* consists above all in the fact that Luther leaves himself clearly open to the charge of necessitarianism or theological determinism." "The *Assertio* fills about seven pages of the *WA*, while the *Grund und Ursach* takes up less than three." *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 254 and note 187. McSorley also points out, "Luther believed that the *Grund und Ursach*, which appeared on March 1, 1521, was a better version of his reply to the papal bull than the *Assertio*. From an ecumenical standpoint, one can agree that it is better since it is less divisive and less radical in its formulations. Above all, there is no hint of absolute necessitarianism." McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 264.

¹⁹ "Erasmus, after he had decided in the spring of 1523 that he would write against Luther, concluded that the teaching of Luther with which he most fully disagreed was that contained in article 36, and this became the subject of *A Discussion of Free Will*, published at the beginning of September 1524." "Introductory Note," in Erasmus, *Controversies*, 300. In his *A Discussion of Free Will*, Erasmus repeatedly attacks Luther's *Assertio*. He attacks it at the very beginning of his work: "more recently still it was violently stirred up by Martin Luther, who has written an *Assertion* on free will." And throughout his work, Erasmus refers to *Assertio* explicitly: "I have read Martin Luther's *Assertion*—with an open mind." "I will quote his own words from his *Assertion*." "Luther did so at the beginning of his *Assertion*." Erasmus, "A Discussion of Free Will," *Controversies*, 7, 8, 45, 65.

fixed law.” And Christ in Matt 10[:29-30]: “The leaf of a tree does not fall to the earth apart from the will of your Father who is in heaven, and the hairs of your head are all numbered.” And Isaiah 41[:23] taunts them: “Do good also or evil, if you can!”²⁰

Erasmus quotes it verbatim in his work,²¹ and uses it to condemn Luther as a Manichean.²² In this passage, Luther explicitly quotes and supports the twenty-fifth article of John Wyclif condemned by the Council of Constance: “All things happen from absolute necessity [*Omnia de necessitate absoluta eveniunt*].”²³ This idea of Luther is also condemned by John Eck. In the beginning of his chapter “Concerning Free Will,” in *Enchiridion of Commonplaces: Against Luther and Other Enemies of the Church* (1525),²⁴ Eck uses this quote to condemn Luther and other Reformers as teaching Manichaeism and Stoicism:

²⁰ Luther, “*Assertio*,” 306. Italics added. “Male enim dixi, quod liberum arbitrium ante gratiam sit res de solo titulo, sed simpliciter debui dicere ‘liberum arbitrium est figmentum in rebus seu titulus sine re’. Quia nulli est in manu sua quippiam cogitare mali aut boni, sed omnia (ut Viglephi articulus Constantiae damnatus recte docet) de necessitate absoluta eveniunt. Quod et Poeta voluit, quando dixit ‘certa stant omnia lege’, Et Christus Matth. x. ‘Folium arboris non cadit in terram sine voluntate patris vestris qui in celis est et capilli capitis vestri omnes numerati sunt’. Et Esa. xli. eis insultat dicens ‘Bene quoque aut male si potestis facite’.” *WA* 7, 146.

²¹ “For no one has it within his control to intend anything, good or evil, but rather, as rightly taught by the article of Wyclif which was condemned at Constance, all things occur by absolute necessity.’ This is quoted verbatim from Luther.” Erasmus, “A Discussion of Free Will,” 45.

²² “From the apostles’ times to this day, there has not been a single writer who has completely denied the power of free will, excepting only Manichaeus and John Wyclif; for the authority of Lorenzo Valla, who seems virtually to agree with them, carries little weight amongst theologians.” Erasmus, “A Discussion of Free Will,” 15.

²³ Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (London: Sheed & Ward; Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1: 412. Of the “Sentence condemning 260 articles of Wyclif,” articles 56 and 58 are also related to this: “56. All things that happen, happen from absolute necessity.” “58. I assert as a matter of faith that everything that will happen, will happen of necessity. Thus if Paul is foreknown as damned, he cannot truly repent; that is, he cannot cancel the sin of final impenitence by contrition, or be under the obligation not to have the sin.” The Latin text is, “56. Omnia, quae eveniunt, absolute necessario eveniunt.” “58. Ut fidem asseram, quod omnia, quae evenient, de necessitate evenient. Sic Paulus praescitus non potest vere poenitere, hoc est contritione peccatum finalis impenitentiae delere, aut ipsum non habere debere.” *Ibid.*, 426.

²⁴ Battles says, “In 1525 his best-known work and principle treatise appeared at Landshut, *Enchiridion locorum communium*, ostensibly directed against the *Loci communes* of Philip Melancthon, although Luther is of course his prime target.” “Introduction,” in John Eck, *Enchiridion of Commonplaces*:

Here the heretics have revived the once extinct heresy of Mani who first indeed denied free will functions actively on good works, because such are wholly and totally done by God; thereupon Luther, having become insane, denied free will completely, *because all things happen out of absolute necessity* [*quia omnia de necessitate absoluta eveniunt*]²⁵—something once said by the stupid Stoics, Empedocles, Critolaus, Diodorus, and other mistaken ones.

To Eck, Luther's presentation is liable to the charge of teaching strict Stoicism. Luther's statement that "no one has it within his control to intend anything, good or evil," coupled with the use of the controversial phrase, "all things occur by absolute necessity," and the rejection of the existence of free will, rendered his *Assertio* an easy target for his opponents. In McSorley's words,

The radicality of the *Assertio* consists above all in the fact that Luther leaves himself clearly open to the charge of necessitarianism or theological determinism. In his previous writings Luther's concept of the unfree will was basically nothing more than the biblical doctrine of man's slavery to sin, to injustice and to Satan.²⁶

Luther's key concern is to attack the idea of merit of congruity (*meritum de congruo*), that "free will is able to prepare itself to enter into grace,"²⁷ as encapsulated in Gabriel

Against Luther and Other Enemies of the Church, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 4. On the text of the translation, Battles says, "The first edition of the translation was made from the 1529 edition, partially collated with the 1532 edition, and completely checked against the 1572 edition, the only editions available to me at that time. . . . A complete revision of the original translation was made possible by the provision of a microfilm of the 1541 Ingolstadt edition, on which the present edition rests." Ibid., "Preface,"

²⁵ Eck, *Enchiridion of Commonplaces*, 210. Italics added. "Haeretici hic resuscitarunt olim extinctam haeresim Manichaei. Primo quidem negarunt liberum arbitrium se habere active ad bonum opus, 'quia illud totum et totaliter fieret a Deo'. Dein Luther, insanus factus, negavit omnino liberum arbitrium, 'quia omnia de necessitate absoluta eveniunt', quod olim stupidi Stoici, Empedocles, Critolaus, Diodorus, et alii errantes dixerunt." Johannes Eck, *Enchiridion locorum communium adversus Lutheran et alios hostes ecclesiae (1525-1543)*, ed. von Pierre Fraenkel (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1979), 313.

²⁶ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 254.

²⁷ McSorley points out, "His unquestionable concern was to refute and to destroy the exaggerated Neo-Semipelagian view of free will that found its expression in the Ockham-Biel interpretation of the Scholastic axiom: *facienti quod in se est, etc.*" McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 262. Cf. Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 16-18.

Biel's axiom: "God does not deny grace to one who does what is in him," (*Facientibus quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam*). McSorley notes,

This axiom, we saw, was an expression of the general Scholastic doctrine that a sinner who is aided by God's grace moving him interiorly can prepare himself for justification by cooperating with that grace. Many Scholastics such as Bonaventure and Scotus and their disciples speak of this grace-facilitated preparation as a *de congruo* merit of justification. Most Thomists refer to it simply as a non-meritorious preparation for the grace of justification. With Gabriel Biel, following Ockham, we encounter an interpretation of *facienti quod in se est* . . . which must be regarded as a new form of Semipelagianism. For, according to this interpretation, it is fallen man's free will that takes the first step toward justification, a free will that is unaided by any special inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Augustine; II Orange) or by a 'gratuitous assistance of God moving the soul from within or inspiring a good resolution' (Thomas, I-II, q. 109, a.6).²⁸

Luther's counter argument, according to McSorley, is "clearly open to the charge of necessitarianism or theological determinism."²⁹ McSorley concludes: "Here Luther is clearly not arguing for the unfree will because of man's sinfulness, but because of his creatureliness!"³⁰

In addition, also in his *Assertio*, Luther uses active language to present God's role in human evil acts. Quoting Prov. 16:4, Rom. 1:28, 9:18, and Ex. 9:16, Luther argues that human will "does not even have the power to make its own paths evil" and "God does even bad deeds in the wicked."³¹ Luther also uses biblical texts concerning divine providence to deny the existence of free choice.³² Using the case of Balaam in Num. 25:5-27, Luther argues that man "does not even have within his power the words for this

²⁸ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 199-200.

²⁹ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 254.

³⁰ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 309.

³¹ The Latin text is "Nam et mala opera in impiis deus operatur." *WA* 7, 144. Quoted also in Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 103.

³² Other quoted texts on divine providence are Jer. 10:23, Prov. 16:1, 16:9, 21:1, Ps. 138:4.

deed of his but rather is *forced* by the marvelous providence of God both to speak and to act differently from what he had in mind.” Luther argues, “Who would dare to deny that even in evil works he has been *forced* to do something different from what he had in mind?” He then draws the conclusion: “Where, then, is free will? It is completely fictitious.”³³

Luther also explicitly rejects the medieval concept of *concursum generalis*: “Here, then, that great influence disappears by which, according to their babble, we have it in our power to perform natural operations (*naturalis operationes*).”³⁴ Muller points out that the medieval theologians and the Protestant scholastics use the idea of “*concursum generalis*” to define “the continuing divine support of the operation of all secondary causes (whether free, contingent, or necessary).” This general *concursum* may be identified as the government according to good pleasure (*gubernatio kat’ eudokian*) or that according to permission (*secundum permissionem*).³⁵ The general practice in medieval theology is to classify the relationship of the primary causality with sin in permissive manner and with grace in an active manner. John Eck has a similar idea:

We admit that, before all things God is the prime cause of all things, and nothing can be done without him. Hence on every natural effect he has a general influence, but on good works of the rational creature he also concurs by a special influence. Therefore God is the first cause, moving also natural and voluntary causes.³⁶

³³ Luther, “*Assertio*,” 305. Italics added.

³⁴ Luther, “*Assertio*,” 306. “Periit itaque hic etiam generalis illa influentia, qua garriunt, esse in potestate nostra naturales operationes operari.” Quoted also in Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther in Its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, Part I, 430.

³⁵ Muller, s.v. “concursum,” in *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 76-77. Cf. *Ibid.*, 168, 63-64.

³⁶ Eck, *Enchiridion of Commonplaces*, 216.

But for Luther, by the fact of the sovereignty of God, there cannot be a genuine freedom of the secondary causality.

To argue for the concept of absolute necessity and the bondage of the human will, Luther bluntly undermines the genuine contingency of the second causality in *Assertio*:

These miserable people are deceived by the inconstancy or (as they call it) the contingency of human affairs. They fix their stupid eyes on things in themselves and the actions of things and never lift them up to the sight of God so that they might recognize in God the things above things. For when we look at things here below they *seem to be* fortuitous and subject to choice but when we look upward all things are necessary, because we all live, act, and suffer everything *not as we wish* but as he wills.³⁷

Luther argues that only in human perspective, things “seem to us” to be fortuitous and subject to choice. Luther maintains this line of argument also in other works.³⁸ Luther’s sole concern is to uphold a complete sovereignty of God: “Does the contingency of an event impede the sure predestination of God? And the answer is that with God there simply is no contingency, but it is only in our eyes.”³⁹

Luther probably identifies “contingency” as “chance.” Philip S. Watson observes that “Luther interprets ‘contingency’ as virtually equivalent to ‘chance,’ as the Schoolmen did not.”⁴⁰ McSorley also argues that “He seems to be rather combatting a *contingentia* such as Thomas Bradwardine opposed, one which is identified with a chance that is outside the order of God’s providence.” McSorley believes that “Luther

³⁷ Luther, “*Assertio*,” 307. Italics added.

³⁸ “The free will which *seems to* bear on us and temporal things has no bearing on God, for in him, as James says, there is no variation or shadow of change, but here all things change and vary.” Luther, “*Assertio*,” 307. Italics added. “From this it follows irrefutably that everything we do, everything that happens, *even if it seems to us to happen mutably and contingently* [*contingenter*], happens in fact nonetheless necessarily and immutably, if you have regard to the will of God.” *LW* 33:37-38. *WA* 18, 615. Cf. *LW* 25:372-73, 54:260.

³⁹ *LW* 25:273.

⁴⁰ Note 37 in *LW* 33:38.

does not truly understand the distinction between *necessitas consequentiae* and *consequentis*,”⁴¹ and that Luther “introduces a serious note of confusion when he identifies contingency with what Aristotle, Augustine and Thomas would have called chance or fortune.”⁴² Heckel believes that Luther might have misread the scholastic idea of the distinction of necessity. And he quotes Fredrik Brosché to argue that “for Luther, God’s foreknowledge is the same thing as foreordination.”⁴³ From Luther’s perspective, the distinction has been misused by some of his opponents to affirm not only the theoretical possibility of contingency of the things themselves, but also the existence of freedom of choosing good or evil by the fallen human will. Erasmus is an example of this position and he uses the distinction to argue that “not all necessity excludes free will.”⁴⁴ Eck also uses the distinction to affirm that to assent to God’s saving inspiration is in our power.⁴⁵

Luther’s concept of absolute necessity and the use of necessitarian argument to argue for the bondage of the human will in *Assertio* constitute a major departure from the Augustinian tradition.⁴⁶ Luther’s necessitarian argument is actually blunter in the

⁴¹ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 319.

⁴² McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 233.

⁴³ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 12. Cf. Fredrik Brosché, *Luther on Predestination: The Antinomy and the Unity between Love and Wrath in Luther’s Concept of God* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell international, 1978), 93-94. Brosché says, “*Coram hominibus* much appears contingent, since we encounter it as if it were by chance and without our expecting it. But *coram Deo* all things come to pass by a necessary and immutable will.” *Ibid.*, 144-45.

⁴⁴ Erasmus, *On the Freedom of the Will*, 68. On the case of Judas, Erasmus uses the necessity of consequence to defend that Judas “had it in his power to refuse to undertake his treacherous design.”

⁴⁵ Cf. Eck, *Enchiridion of Commonplaces*, 219, 216.

⁴⁶ Cf. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 253-73. Köstlin also misses the point by bypassing the issues generated by the necessitarian argument in the *Assertio*: “How significant it is that the German treatise, *Grund und Ursach*, etc., which was designed to accompany the *Assertio*, does not repeat these utterances, but rests in the declarations of human depravity which characterize the other writings of the

Assertio than in *The Bondage of the Will*. Heckel misses the point because he assumes that if one reads Luther's *Assertio* carefully, it will be clear that Luther "primarily spoke of necessity in relation to sin and located it in the human will."⁴⁷ Nevertheless, even Heckel has to admit that if we read Luther's argument in the *Assertio* literally, necessity seems to be built into the created nature: "Calvin did not want people to think that the Reformation taught that necessity was hardwired into created nature, and unless people read Luther carefully they could have received that impression from the *Assertio*."⁴⁸

B. Luther and "The Preference for Biblical Expressions"

In addition to controversies generated by the necessitarian argument in *Assertio*, Luther's use of active language of those biblical texts on hardening and reprobation to support the sovereign role of divine power and the bondage of the human will also generated great controversies and misunderstanding for the debate on human will in the Reformation. Luther uses this principle of preference for biblical expressions to support his rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium* and to justify the necessitarian presentation that he uses in his treatises. Luther elaborates this concept of preference for biblical expressions mainly in *Against Latomus* (1521) and *The Bondage of the Will*.

This principle was fully developed in *Against Latomus*.⁴⁹ Martin Brecht calls this treatise "one of the most consistent and clearly systematized expositions of the central

Reformer." Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther in Its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, Part I, 431-32. By this, Köstlin hopes to lead the readers to shift their focus away from the *Assertio*: "Yet even now, upon the other hand, when we compare the entire volume of Luther's writings at this time, how solitary and apart do not the strongest of those comprehensive declarations seem to stand which lead us back from the peculiarly religious aspects of the subject to general metaphysical principles." Ibid., 431.

⁴⁷ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 91.

⁴⁸ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 14.

⁴⁹ LW 32:217-60.

Reformation doctrine of grace and human nature to appear before *The Bondage of the Will*.⁵⁰ There Luther debated with Latomus on whether one should call “sin” labeled by Paul in Rom. 7 as “weakness” or as “sin.” The controversy was generated by a thesis of Luther: “Every good work of the saints while pilgrim in this world is sin.”⁵¹ Latomus argued that as the early fathers interpreted the “sins” used by Paul as “weakness and imperfection,” we should not call them “sins” without clarification. Latomus charged that Luther’s way of presentation was misleading, absurd, and dangerous.

Facing this criticism, Luther defends and develops this principle of preference for biblical expressions:

I therefore first ask whether I, as a Christian professing the gospel, am allowed to call sin what the Apostle Paul calls sin. I am here not arguing anything whatsoever about the meaning of sin—I shall see about that later. *I simply want to be answered as to whether it is permissible for me to use this Pauline term.* If it is not allowed, then Paul is erased. . . . *That may be, but who forces me to use the words of the fathers, who forces me to forsake Paul’s words? They say that it is absurd and dangerous; but this is no longer to turn against me, against Luther, but against Paul and the Spirit of Christ.*⁵²

Here Luther advocates a ground breaking concept in the Reformation: One should prefer biblical expressions over traditional terms developed in church history. Luther argues that using the biblical expressions, as being authorized by God, is the “sound and pure” way:

⁵⁰ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 7. For a brief introduction of Luther’s *Against Latomus*, cf. *ibid.*, 6-9, *LW* 32:135-37. The theologians of the University of Louvain in Belgium are one of the theological teams that oppose Luther harshly in the early Reformation. They openly condemned Luther’s writings as early as 1519. Latomus, originally named as Jacobus Masson, was one of the ferocious opponents of Luther. Luther calls him “a detractor of linguistic competence.” *LW* 32:137.

⁵¹ *LW* 32:159. Cf. Thesis 7 of Heidelberg Disputation: “The works of the righteous would be mortal sins if they would not be feared as mortal sins by the righteous themselves out of pious fear of God.” *LW* 31:45-46. There Luther argues that “the works of the saints are mortal sins.” *LW* 31:46.

⁵² *LW* 32:219. Luther also says, “I have Paul’s term on my side.” *LW* 32:221. Cf. *ibid.*, 194, 200, 221-22.

You see that in the treatment of sin and grace, I seek and wish to understand and to speak in this simple and Pauline way. It is sound and pure, grasped absolutely without any difficulty, *requires no distinctions*, is marvelously attractive and clear, and opens up all Scripture.⁵³

Therefore, Luther emphasizes that scriptural expression should be the rule for theological expressions: “I thus effectively prove that it must be so taken, for nothing should be asserted in [questions of] faith without scriptural precedent.”⁵⁴

Moreover, Luther points out the dangerous consequences for not using scriptural expressions. If one deviates from the scriptural expressions, one gives for heathen explanations and ideas to influence the theological contents:

If there were nothing else against them, still they speak unscripturally, destroying the soundness of Scripture for no reason at all and darkening the understanding of its contents. *So it happens that the loss of its simplicity becomes a stumbling block which leads us farther and farther away from it.* This occurred when we first accepted human interpretations as godly, and as more lucid than Scripture itself. Finally other interpretations were added to these interpretations, so that now there is no limit to the increase of glosses on glosses and, in the confusion of words, we are led into the utmost confusion. We now know absolutely nothing at all about Christian truths, and suppose that heathen foolishness is as good and useful as what is ours.⁵⁵

Luther also links this principle with literal exegesis: “I want Paul’s words in this place to be taken literally.”⁵⁶

“The preference for biblical expressions” is also an important tool in *The Bondage of the Will*.⁵⁷ A key issue involved is on how to interpret the biblical texts that

⁵³ LW 32:229-30. Italics added.

⁵⁴ LW 32:230.

⁵⁵ LW 32:236-37. Italics added.

⁵⁶ LW 32:244-45. WA 8, 118. Cf. LW 33:173.

⁵⁷ Lane points out, “While in LCC 17 the title of Luther’s *De servo arbitrio* is rendered *The Bondage of the Will*, in the text itself *arbitrium* is translated as ‘choice.’” Lane, “Introduction,” xxxii. Fredrik Brosche points out that one of the chief reasons behind Luther’s taking the literal interpretation of biblical texts on hardening and reprobation is Luther’s acceptance of the concept of a paradoxical concept

concerning divine hardening and God's sovereign will over sinful acts. Luther emphasizes that we should use literal and plain scriptural terminology to present our teaching: "we must everywhere stick to the simple, pure, and natural sense of the words that accords with the rules of grammar and the normal use of language as God has created it in man."⁵⁸ Luther teaches that "what God says must be taken quite simply at its face value"⁵⁹ and "the words must be taken as they stand."⁶⁰ And we should follow the "natural meaning" of the biblical texts:

What would you do with a conscience that questioned you like this: "Look, the Divine Author says, 'I will harden Pharaoh's heart,' and the meaning of the verb 'to harden' is plain and well known; but a human reader tells me that 'to harden' in this passage means 'to give an occasion of hardening,' inasmuch as the sinner is not immediately corrected. By what authority, for what reason, *with what necessity is the natural meaning of the word thus twisted for me? [qua necessitate vocis illa naturalis significatio mihi sic torquetur?]* What if the reader and interpreter should be wrong? What proof is there that this twisting of the word ought to take place in this passage? It is dangerous, and indeed impious, to twist the word of God without necessity and without authority."⁶¹

of God as revealed by his reading of the Scriptures. Cf. Fredrik Brosche, *Luther on Predestination: The Antinomy and the Unity between Love and Wrath in Luther's Concept of God* (Uppsala: Univ.; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell international (distr.), 1978), 116-21. Brosche believes that this is a key reason behind Luther's attack on Erasmus and human reason. Brosche says, "Luther's doctrine of predestination thus implies a paradoxical concept of God." "Nevertheless, he will under no circumstances neutralize the contradictions in the notion of God, but rather accentuates them. The first and decisive is, of course, *the argument from Scripture*. The simple, literal interpretation of Holy Writ is fundamental for Luther's reasoning." *Ibid.*, 120.

⁵⁸ LW 33:162. "Sed ubique inhaerendum est simplici puraeque et naturali significationi verborum, quam grammatica et usus loquendi habet, quem Deus creavit in hominibus." WA 18, 700. Cf. LW 33:173.

⁵⁹ LW 33:166: "To the fact that she thinks so, even though it is backed by the toilsome researches of all the centuries, we attach no importance whatever; but continue to insist that there can be no trope here, and that what God says must be taken quite simply at its face value. [*simpliciter vero, ut sonant verba, sermone Dei esse accipiendum.*] For it is not for us to decide to make and remake the words of God just as we please; otherwise, what remains in the entire Scripture that would not fit in with Anaxagoras' philosophy, so that anything might be made of anything?" WA 18, 702-3.

⁶⁰ LW 33:166.

⁶¹ LW 33:165-66. Italics added. WA 18, 702.

Luther emphasizes that “we shall abide by the natural, grammatical meaning of the word, and laugh at both your armies and your triumphs.”⁶² In addition, Luther believes that the neglect of scriptural expressions led to many theological errors and heresies:

What I have observed is this, that all heresies and errors in connection with the Scriptures have arisen, not from the simplicity of the words, as is almost universally stated, but from neglect of the simplicity of the words, and from tropes or inferences hatched out of men’s own heads.⁶³

In tackling the problems of the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, Luther reminds us that the biblical expression is the safe way and certain way, as “Paul intended it to be so used.”⁶⁴ Luther argues that we should keep the biblical expression even though the presentation may be offensive.⁶⁵ Luther even uses a *sola scriptura* type of argument to support his view: “In any case, we have an agreement that we are willing to fight each other, not by appealing to the authority of any doctor, but by that of Scripture alone [*sed solius scripturae*].”⁶⁶

Luther also uses this principle to support his argument against the use of the term *liberum arbitrium*. He stresses that as the fallen will has no power in doing good, the term *liberum arbitrium* is confusing and misleading. It involves contradiction. Luther says, “Therefore, to say that free choice exists and has indeed some power, but that it is an ineffective power, is what the Sophists call *oppositum in adjecto* [“a contradiction in terms”]. It is as if you said that there is a free choice which is not free [*liberum arbitrium*

⁶² LW 33:236. “Quod nisi effeceris, manemus in naturali et grammatica significatione vocabuli, ridentes tam exercitus quam triumphos tuos.” WA 18, 749.

⁶³ LW 33:163. Cf. “[A]nd this indicates what we ought to do, in accordance with the nature of the imperative verb as the grammarians and ordinary speech employ it.” LW 33:164.

⁶⁴ LW 33:164-65.

⁶⁵ LW 33:190. WA 18:719.

⁶⁶ LW 33:167. WA 18, 703.

est, quod liberum non est.], which is as sensible as calling fire cold and earth hot.”⁶⁷

Therefore, the term *liberum arbitrium* misrepresents the actual status of the fallen will.

Moreover, Luther argues that people frequently misunderstand the orthodox doctrine of the bondage of the human will when the term *liberum arbitrium* is used:

For the expression “free choice” is too imposing, too wide and full, and the people think it signifies—as the force and nature of the term requires—a power that can turn itself freely in either direction, without being under anyone’s influence or control. If they knew that it was not so, but that hardly the tiniest spark of power was meant by this term, and a spark completely ineffectual by itself as a captive and slave of the devil, it would be surprising if they did not stone us as mockers and deceivers who say one thing and mean something quite different, or rather who have not yet decided or agreed on what we do mean.⁶⁸

Therefore, Luther presses hard for dropping the term, “the safest and most religious thing to do.”⁶⁹

Luther indeed launched not only a reformation of doctrines, but also “a reformation of theological language” in the early Reformation. And this had great consequences on the Reformation debate on human will. This principle is also a key reason for Luther’s rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*. McSorley has a sharp observation: “Luther wants *a reformation of theological language* in view of the fact that the term ‘free will’ is not

⁶⁷ LW 33:67. WA 18, 636.

⁶⁸ LW 33:68-69. Cf. “Theologians therefore ought to have avoided this term when they wished to speak of human ability, leaving it to be applied to God alone. They should, moreover, have removed it from the lips and language of men, treating it as a kind of sacred and venerable name for their God. And if they attributed any power at all to men, they should teach that it must be called by another name than free choice, especially as we know and clearly perceive that the common people are miserably deceived and led astray by that term, since they hear and understand it in a very different sense from that which the theologians mean and discuss.” LW 33:68.

⁶⁹ The term “religiosissimum” should be translated as “most religious thing.” “But if we are unwilling to let this term go altogether—though that would be *the safest and most God-fearing thing* to do [*quod esset tutissimum et religiosissimum*]—let us at least teach men to use it honestly, so that free choice [*arbitrium liberum*] is allowed to man only with respect to what is beneath him and not what is above him.” LW 33:70. Italics added. WA 18, 638.

biblical and since it has led many into serious error.”⁷⁰ For Luther, as McSorley observes, this provides a strong argument against Pelagianism:

Luther’s conviction that a popular Pelagianism ‘prevailed,’ coupled with the doctrinal error (Neo-Semipelagianism) that he himself learned from the works of Gabriel Biel and other late Scholastic theologians led him to the conclusion that *the best way to combat this heresy was through a radical revision of accepted theological language: by eliminating completely the term liberum arbitrium—a word that Satan invented to lure men away from God.*⁷¹

Joseph Lortz also points out, “This is not a secondary or insignificant matter. It touches an essential point, because Luther was extraordinarily influenced by situations. His partners and opponents in dialogue decisively affected the tone of his statements, and sometimes the influence went beyond the tone even to the content itself.”⁷² Kolb also has a similar observation: “At times his exegetical work led him to devise new expressions for his biblical exploration of the teaching of the catholic tradition.”⁷³ For Luther, the proper use of theological expressions, as Muller observes, is “to hold as closely as possible to the language of Scripture and to shun the niceties of scholastic distinctions.”⁷⁴ A similar principle was clearly echoed and supported by Melancthon in *Loci Communes* (1521).⁷⁵ In the rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium* and the adoption of this principle, Calvin shows himself as loyal disciple of Luther. Among his contemporaries, Calvin was

⁷⁰ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 266. Italics added. Cf. *ibid.*, 265-69.

⁷¹ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 267-68. Italics added.

⁷² Joseph Lortz, “The Basic Elements of Luther’s Intellectual Style,” in *Catholic Scholars Dialogue with Luther*, ed. Jared Wicks (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1970), 25.

⁷³ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 2.

⁷⁴ Muller, *PRRD*, 4.65. The issue is illustrated by the reluctance of Luther, Melancthon, and Bucer to use traditional non-biblical trinitarian vocabulary in the early period of the Reformation. *Ibid.*, 4.62-65.

⁷⁵ Brecht observes, “Melancthon was the only one to make use of it [Against Latomus] immediately—in his *Loci Communes*, the first evangelical dogmatics, which he was writing at the time.” Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532*, 9. Melancthon, “*Loci communes theologici*,” 23.

most faithful to this principle: “But what does the Holy Spirit say in the Scriptures, from which we should seek the rule for correct speech?”⁷⁶

C. The Mature Augustine Is Better Than the Younger Augustine: Luther’s Rejection of the Term *Liberum Arbitrium*

Luther’s rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium* also reflects the complex nature of Luther’s reception of the Augustinian tradition. Through this, Luther launched a reformation of historical interpretation: the mature Augustine is better than the younger Augustine. On both the rejection of the term and the two Augustines, Calvin followed Luther closely.

The Latin term *liberum arbitrium* was used frequently by Augustine. Augustine usually maintains both that there is a bondage of the will (*voluntas*) and there is an existence of free choice (*liberum arbitrium*). In *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, Augustine maintains both the necessity of grace and the existence of *liberum arbitrium*:

With reference to those persons who so preach and defend man's free will [*liberum arbitrium*], as boldly to deny, and endeavour to do away with, the grace of God which calls us to Him, and delivers us from our evil deserts, and by which we obtain the good deserts which lead to everlasting life: we have already said a good deal in discussion, and committed it to writing, so far as the Lord has vouchsafed to enable us. *But since there are some persons who so defend God's grace as to deny man's free will [liberum arbitrium], or who suppose that free will [liberum arbitrium] is denied when grace is defended,* I have determined to write somewhat on this point to your Love, my brother Valentinus, and the rest of you, who are serving God together under the impulse of a mutual love.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 204. “Therefore anyone who claims that choice is free uses a different expression from that of the Holy Spirit.” Calvin even mildly criticizes Augustine because “he yields to custom” in using the term *liberum arbitrium* to represent the fallen will. Nevertheless, Calvin credits Augustine for taking “careful precautions to prevent the name from giving birth to a mistaken understanding.” *Ibid.*, 102, 69. Cf. *Inst.*, 2.4.3; 1.18.2.

⁷⁷ Augustine, *A Treatise on Grace and Free Will*, I.1. The quotes of the early church fathers’ works used in this dissertation are mainly from ANF and NPNF series. If they are quoted from other series, it will be noted. The Latin text for the italic section is, “Sed quoniam sunt quidam, qui sic gratiam Dei defendunt, ut negent hominis liberum arbitrium, aut quando gratia defenditur, negari existiment liberum arbitrium.” The Latin texts of Augustine quoted in this dissertation are from *S. Aurelii Augustini Opera omnia*, editio Latina, available in <<http://www.augustinus.it/latino/index.htm>>, accessed August 15, 2006.

Augustine argues that the Scripture “teaches neither free will without grace or grace without free will, but grace *and* free will.”⁷⁸ The use of the term was also a common practice among early church fathers. After Augustine, basically all major theologians assume that human being has *liberum arbitrium*. On the standard medieval use of the term, McSorley provides a succinct description: “The Catholic tradition indeed retains the Augustinian paradox—we prefer to call it the Augustinian dialectic—by insisting on both grace *and* free will.”⁷⁹ Nevertheless, how to interpret Augustine’s usage was a key problem in the early Reformation: “The question, however, immediately arises, what he means by freewill; whether he uses the word in the sense which the ordinary doctrine of freewill requires or in another and a different sense.”⁸⁰ Luther’s departure, for some critics in his time, was a dangerous move that unnecessarily distorted the orthodox tradition. But for Luther, the rejection was a necessary correction for unbiblical practice and a correct interpretation of the mature Augustine.

Luther repeatedly used Augustine as an important witness to the teaching of the early church and as an important support for his own teaching. Nevertheless, Luther’s reception of Augustine is of a complex nature. On the one hand, Luther set the example of claiming Augustine in his defense against his Roman opponents. On the other hand, Luther could distance himself from Augustine when his exegesis demanded it. Both Luther’s agreements with Augustine and his criticisms of Augustine had great impact on Calvin’s formulation.

⁷⁸ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 96.

⁷⁹ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 103.

⁸⁰ Mozley, *A Treatise on the Augustinian Predestination*, 209.

As with those later medieval theologians, identified by Oberman as participating in the “Augustine Renaissance,” Luther repeatedly claimed the full support of Augustine since the very early stage of his Reformation efforts.⁸¹ Luther also frequently lines Augustine’s support with the authority of the Bible, especially that of Paul. In the preface of *Heidelberg Disputation* (May 1518), Luther coins his famous comment of the link between Paul and Augustine, calling Paul, “the especially chosen vessel and instrument of Christ,” and Augustine, “his most trustworthy interpreter.”⁸² To link Paul and Augustine closely together was a common practice in Luther’s time.⁸³

On the doctrine of the bondage of the human will, Luther frequently quotes Augustine to his support: “Free will, however, is dead, as demonstrated by the dead whom the Lord has raised up, as the holy teachers of the church say. St. Augustine, moreover, proves this same thesis in his various writings against the Pelagians.”⁸⁴ In *The*

⁸¹ Oberman, *Masters of Reformation*, 64-100; and note McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation*, 83. McGrath also provides the following references: A. Hamel, *Der junge Luther und Augustin* (Gütersloh, 1934-1935), vol. 1, 5-25; Bernhard Lohse, “Die Bedeutung Augustins für den jungen Luther,” *Kerygma und Dogma* 11 (1965), 116-35; Leif Grane, “Augustins ‘Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos’ in Luthers Römerbriefvorlesung,” *ZThK* 69 (1972), 304-30; Grane, “Divus Paulus et S. Augustinus, interpres eius fidelissimus: Über Luthers Verhältnis zu Augustin,” in *Festschrift für Ernst Fuchs*, ed. G. Ebeling, E. Jüngel and G. Schunack (Tübingen, 1973), 133-46. With the exception of Augustine and a few other writers, Luther did not speak well about the early fathers in general. His comments in *Table Talk* reveals much about his stance on early fathers: “Except only for Augustine, there was great blindness among the fathers. After the Holy Scriptures, Augustine should especially be read, for he had keen judgment.” *LW* 54:352. Cf. “Jerome can be read for the sake of history, but he has nothing at all to say about faith and the teaching of true religion. Origen I have already banned. I have no use for Chrysostom either, for he is only a gossip. Basil doesn’t amount to anything; he was a monk after all, and I wouldn’t give a penny for him. Philip’s apology is superior to all the doctors of the church, even to Augustine himself. Hilary and Theophylact are good, and so is Ambrose.” *LW* 54:33-34.

⁸² *LW* 31:39.

⁸³ Heiko A. Oberman observes that Luther was “a leading member of the Wittenberg team which, in keeping the motto of the university, initiated its program ‘in the name of St. Paul and St. Augustine.’” *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Later Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1992), 44.

⁸⁴ *LW* 31:49.

Bondage of the Will, Luther claims the full support of Augustine: “Augustine, whom you overlook, is entirely with me.”⁸⁵

Nevertheless, it is Luther’s criticism of Augustine’s use of the term *liberum arbitrium* and in his adoption of Augustine’s use of the term “bound choice” that reveal his important conviction. On these two important points, Calvin adopts the same line of thought as Luther does. In *Against Latomus* (1521), Luther criticizes Augustine on his use of the term *liberum arbitrium*: “For not even Augustine, even though he is of all the fathers the best, was free to change the expression Paul used and to invent another.”⁸⁶ Luther also teaches another nuanced precedent which Calvin follows. Luther argues that the mature Augustine supported him in following biblical expression to call the fallen human will “a bound choice” (*servum arbitrium*).⁸⁷ Already in *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), Luther quoted an important line from Augustine’s *Against Julian*, 2.8.3: “You call the will free, but in fact it is an enslaved will.” [*Liberum vos vocatis, imo servum arbitrium.*]⁸⁸ In *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles* (1521), Luther makes a historically groundbreaking interpretation of Augustine. Luther argues, “St. Augustine changes the term, ‘free will,’ in his work *Against Julian*, II, and calls it ‘a will in

⁸⁵ LW 33:72.

⁸⁶ LW 32:203-4. Italics added. Cf. LW 33:103.

⁸⁷ Cf. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 217-73; Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 193-212.

⁸⁸ LW 31:48. WA 1.360. Cf. Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, II, 8, 23: “et non libero, vel potius servo propriae voluntatis arbitrio.” The English translation provided by Schumacher is a loose paraphrase of the Latin text: “not a free gift, but one dependent on the decision of man’s own will.” A literal translation should be “and not a free [will], but rather in fact an enslaved choice of the will.” Augustine, *Against Julian*, trans. Matthew A. Schumacher (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 83.

bondage' [*servo voluntatis*]."⁸⁹ Luther repeatedly used this quote in *Against Julian* to support his argument for the bondage of the human will:

The free will without grace has absolutely no power to achieve righteousness, but of necessity it is in sin. Therefore blessed Augustine is correct in his book *Against Julian* when he calls it "a bound will rather than a free will."⁹⁰

Lombard clearly thinks with Augustine that free choice by its own power alone can do nothing but fall and is capable only of sinning; which is why Augustine, in his second book against Julian, calls it an enslaved rather than a free choice [*servum potius quam liberum arbitrium*].⁹¹

Luther advocates a re-interpretation of Augustine, and argues that the mature Augustine in his treatise against Julian finally used the proper term to describe the human will: "So St. Augustine correctly defined it against Julian and Jerome."⁹² In *Against Julian*, Luther found the support for his rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*.⁹³ This preference for the mature Augustine generated heated debates on how to interpret Augustine properly and Calvin in this treatise against Pighius devoted "Book Three" entirely to support this line of argument as Luther did.

⁸⁹ *LW* 32:92. Italics added.

⁹⁰ *LW* 25:375.

⁹¹ *LW* 33:108. WA 7, 665.

⁹² *LW* 34:186.

⁹³ On other quotes of the book *Against Julian* in Luther, cf. "Then take the book *Against Julian* and likewise the book *Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians*." Letter to George Spalatin, dated January 18, 1518. *LW* 48:52. "Paul and Augustine rightly teach about it to the Romans and Galatians, where Paul speaks of the corruption of nature which impels us to resist the Holy Spirit. See Augustine's treatise against Julian." *LW* 34:185. "Concerning these things, see how beautifully and richly blessed Augustine has written in many of his books, especially in his second book *Against Julian*, where he cites St. Ambrose, Hilary, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Basil, Nazianzen, Irenaeus, Reticus, and Olympius." *LW* 25:268. "Mortal sins, on the other hand, are those which seem good yet are essentially fruits of a bad root and a bad tree. Augustine states this in the fourth book of *Against Julian* (*Contra Julianum*)." *LW* 31:45. In a letter to George Spalatin, dated October 19, 1516, Luther says, "Had Erasmus studied the books Augustine wrote against the Pelagians (especially the treatises *On the Letter and the Spirit*, *On Merits and Forgiveness of Sinners*, *Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians*, and *Against Julian*, almost all of which can be found in the eighth volume of his works), . . . then perhaps he would not only correctly understand the Apostle, but he would also hold Augustine in higher esteem than he has so far done." *LW* 48:24.

This rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium* gave rise to many criticisms of Luther's formulation. More and more modern Catholic critics accept Luther's claim that his idea is basically orthodox and Augustinian.⁹⁴ For example, McSorley admits that Luther's concern about the bondage of the will is biblical, Augustinian, and orthodox: "This deeply biblical understanding of 'servum arbitrium,' we hope to show, is not only Johannine and Pauline, but also Augustinian, Thomistic, Lutheran and Tridentine. It is both Evangelical and Catholic."⁹⁵ Yet McSorley strongly criticizes Luther for this break from the tradition:

What Luther says here is both biblical and Augustinian in substance, with one exception. When Luther says that man's will is called free only because it was once free and because, through grace, it can again become free, he restricts the name 'free' in a manner which is foreign not only to the Scholastics, but also to Augustine and to the teaching of the early councils of the Church.⁹⁶

McSorley argues that this change of theological expressions caused confusion and was rejected by the church: "It is a matter of historical record that the Church did not accept Luther's proposal. It can very plausibly be argued that the official teaching authority of the Church did not even understand his pastoral catechetical intention."⁹⁷ McSorley adds that the confusion was aggravated by the fact that "Luther did not avoid suggestions of fatalism and determinism in his attack on the exaggeration of the powers of free will."⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Lane points out, "An influential essay by the Benedictine Odilio Rottmanner in the nineteenth century marked a new willingness by Roman Catholics to admit that in the areas of grace and predestination the Reformers were largely justified in their appeal to Augustine. "Introduction," xxiv. Cf. Odilio Rottmanner, *Der Augustinismus* (Munich: J. J. Lentner, 1892).

⁹⁵ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 21.

⁹⁶ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 247.

⁹⁷ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 268.

⁹⁸ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 268. McSorley laments the confusion caused by this rejection of the term: "The tragedy of this transformation from Catholic to Protestant reformer lies to a great extent in the fact that there was no true dialogue or meeting of minds between the Church and Luther

Steinmetz observes that this “exegetical optimism” “proved not altogether workable in practice,” and Melanchthon and other Reformers picked up the scholastic distinctions again.⁹⁹ As the Reformation progressed, and as the need of edification increased, more and more Reformers preferred to use again many traditional theological vocabularies to clarify their teachings as we have demonstrated in last chapter. Yet amidst this shift away from Luther’s early Reformation practice even among many contemporary Reformers in the second period of the Reformation, Calvin’s continuity with Luther’s line of thought should not be counted as a causal, nor a coincident move by Calvin. This is rather a strong indication that Calvin treasured Luther’s insights and was one of most loyal followers of Luther’s early Reformation convictions.

D. God’s Active Role over Sins in *The Bondage of the Will*

Although Luther did not reproduce the terminology of “absolute necessity” in *The Bondage of the Will*, he elaborates another line of necessitarian thought which had a great impact on Calvin’s formulation: God’s active role over sins. By accepting “the preference for biblical expressions” and a strong sense of God’s sovereignty, it became natural and logical for Luther to emphasize the active role of God and the passive nature of the human will to argue for the bondage of the human will. Luther consistently argues an all-active concept of divine omnipotence in *The Bondage of the Will*: “for they do not

prior to his separation from the Church. There was mostly simply a mutual rejection of formulas, with little understanding of the intention and concern of the other.” *Ibid.*, 270.

⁹⁹ Steinmetz points out that both Melanchthon and Calvin gradually departed from an unlimited trust on biblical expressions and picked up more traditional distinctions again: “Like many early Protestants he was in the grip of an exegetical optimism that proved not altogether workable in practice. Melanchthon abandoned philosophy only to take up it again. Calvin discovered that some philosophical distinctions, including many of the distinctions drawn by the schoolmen, were too useful to be discarded lightly.” Steinmetz, “The Scholastic Calvin,” 25.

sufficiently consider how unrestingly active God is in all his creatures, allowing none of them to take a holiday.” Luther calls this “the unceasing activity of God in created things, an activity whereby he moves also the ungodly, as we said above concerning Pharaoh.”¹⁰⁰

Luther also uses active verbs to describe this all active activity of God in all of his creatures:

For what we assert and contend for is this, that when God operates without regard to the grace of the Spirit, *he works all in all, even in the ungodly*, inasmuch as *he alone moves, actuates, and carries along* [*solus quoque movet, agit et rapit*] by the motion of his omnipotence all things, even as he alone has created them, and this motion the creatures *can neither avoid nor alter, but they necessarily follow and obey it*, each according to its capacity as given it by God; and thus all things, even including the ungodly, cooperate with God.¹⁰¹

Hence, it becomes clear that in the early Reformation Luther set the precedent of using active terms, “moves,” “actuates,” and “carries along,” to represent divine sovereignty over sinful acts. Of course, arguably, language of God as mover or actuator has scholastic resonances, so that these usages do not exclusively illustrate Luther’s preference for biblical language; but Luther’s choice of terms reflects the scholastic language of divine causality and divine omnipotence, and consciously avoids scholastic language of divine permission or non-impediment.

Luther defines divine omnipotence in an active sense and uses the existence of this active divine omnipotence to deny the existence of free choice:

By the omnipotence of God, however, I do not mean the potentiality by which he could do many things which he does not, but *the active power by which he potently works all in all* [*sed actualem illam, qua potenter omnia facit in omnibus*], which is the sense in which Scripture calls him omnipotent. This omnipotence and the foreknowledge of God, I say, completely abolish the dogma of free choice.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ LW 33:178, 232-33. Luther’s active presentation of God’s sovereign will over sinful acts started as early as his *Lectures on Romans* (1515-1516). LW 25:160-63.

¹⁰¹ LW 33:242. Italics added. WA 18, 753.

¹⁰² LW 33:189. WA 18, 718.

Moreover, this active power of God is one which human will cannot avoid:

It is the latter that is signified by God's "turning," which is not such a snoring, indolent thing as Diatribe imagines, *but is that most active working of God which a man cannot avoid or alter [Sed est actuosissima illa operatio Dei, quam vitare et mutare non possit]*, but under which he necessarily has the sort of will that God has given him, and that God carries along by his own momentum, as I have said above. . . . I reply: Whether God permits or turns, neither the permitting nor the turning takes place without *God's willing and working*; for the will of the king cannot escape the action of Almighty God, because everyone's will, whether it is good or evil, is impelled by it to will and to do.¹⁰³

Luther emphasizes that in hardening human will, God's active willing is involved:

For since he sees that free choice cannot will good, and *that it is made worse by the forbearance of one who is long-suffering*, this very lenience makes him seem extremely cruel, and as if he enjoyed our evil plight; *for he could remedy it if he would, and need not tolerate it unless he so willed; indeed, unless he so willed he could not tolerate it. Who is there to compel him if he is unwilling?*¹⁰⁴

And this active concept of God is viewed by Luther as an essential attribute of God as being God: "The answer is that this is wanting God to cease to be God on account of the ungodly if you want his power and activity to cease, which implies that he should cease to be good lest they become worse."¹⁰⁵ Kolb points out that "Let God be God" is a key thesis in Luther's *The Bondage of the Will*. According to Kolb, Luther means that "God is a person, the almighty Creator of all that exists, the sovereign Lord and sole acting agent over his creation, totally responsible for all that takes place."¹⁰⁶ Heckel recognizes that,

¹⁰³ LW 33:233. WA 18, 747.

¹⁰⁴ LW 33:170. Italics added.

¹⁰⁵ LW 33:180.

¹⁰⁶ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 31-32.

for Luther, in moving a wicked instrument to action, God is “not simply concurring with his action.”¹⁰⁷

It is in this focused concern for proving the bondage of the human will that Luther elaborates two important necessitarian concepts in his *The Bondage of the Will*. He advocates an active role for God’s sovereign will over hardening and reprobation, and, at the same time, rejects the concept of mere divine permission. Luther frequently uses active terminology to describe God’s hardening and reprobating and abandoning will:

Yet he offends very many, who being *either abandoned or hardened by that secret will* of the Divine Majesty do not receive him as he wills, speaks, does, suffers, and offers, as John says: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not comprehend it” [John 1:5]; and again: “He came to his own home, and his own people received him not” [John 1:11]. It is likewise the part of this incarnate God to weep, wail, and groan over the perdition of the ungodly, when *the will of the Divine Majesty purposely abandons and reprobates some to perish*. And it is not for us to ask why he does so, *but to stand in awe of God who both can do and wills to do such things*.¹⁰⁸

Here Luther emphasizes that God “purposely” “wills to do such things.” Indeed, throughout the treatise, Luther defends the use of an active concept to represent the concept of God’s hardening sinners. He refuses to use phrases like “permitted to be hardened” or merely “divine forbearance” to explain away the strong and active sense of those texts that teach that God hardened Pharaoh and the others.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 138.

¹⁰⁸ *LW* 33:146. Italics added. The latin is “licet plurimos offendat, qui secreta illa voluntate maiestatis vel relicit vel indurati non suscipiunt volentem, loquentem, facientem, offerentem, sicut Iohan. Dicit: Lux in tenebris lucet et tenebrae eam non comprehendunt. Et iterum: In propria venit, et sui non receperunt eum. Huius itidem Dei incarnati est flere, deplorare, gemere super perditione impiorum, cum voluntas maiestatis ex proposito aliquos relinquat et reprobet, ut pereant. Nec nobis quarendum, cur ita faciat, sed reverendus Deus, qui talia et possit et velit.” *WA* 18, 689-690.

¹⁰⁹ Luther argues, “But if God is to be said to harden when he confers benefits and exercises tolerance, and to have mercy when he afflicts and punishes, how can he be said to have hardened Pharaoh any more than the Children of Israel or even the whole world?” Luther believes that Erasmus’ explanation does not reveal the fullest force of the biblical teaching: “You see, therefore, even if your ideas of hardening and mercy (that is, your glosses and tropes) are admitted to the fullest extent, as supported by

He also repeatedly rejects the medieval distinction of two kinds of necessity: “But the necessity of consequent, with which they console themselves, is a mere phantom and diametrically opposed to the necessity of consequence. . . . This comes of your being only half awake and not noticing how completely useless that device of the necessity of consequent is.”¹¹⁰ A key rationale behind this is his concept of an active divine omnipotence.

Since, then, God moves and actuates all in all, he necessarily moves and acts also in Satan and ungodly man. But he acts in them as they are and as he finds them; that is to say, since they are averse and evil, and caught up in the movement of this divine omnipotence, they do nothing but averse and evil things. It is like a horseman riding a horse that is lame in one or two of its feet; his riding corresponds to the condition of the horse, that is to say, the horse goes badly.¹¹¹

McSorley is correct in pointing out that in *The Bondage of the Will* there are two important emphases: The first is that there is a “bound choice” (*servum arbitrium*) because of “the biblical doctrine of man’s servitude to sin” after the fall. The second, and the controversial aspect, is that “Man has unfree will because of God’s necessitating, infallible foreknowledge of all things.”¹¹²

Unlike Luther, Calvin does not use the existence of divine hardening to prove the bondage of the human will. Nevertheless, Calvin not only picks up the principle of “the preference for biblical expressions,” but he also adopts the active presentation of God’s role over hardening and reprobation. Heckel recognizes that both Luther and Calvin differ with Erasmus and Pighius in this “active” concept: “Calvin however, followed

custom and precedent, and such as one can see in the case of Pharaoh, there is still a hardening, and the hardening of which Moses speaks must be of a different sort from that of which you dream.” *LW* 33: 168, 169.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *LW* 33: 195.

¹¹¹ *LW* 33: 176.

Luther and not the medieval emphasis on a general concurrence of God. For both reformers God was active in wielding wicked tools that are not free but bound to sin and are nevertheless voluntarily complicit in their sin.”¹¹³

Following Luther, this becomes a key conviction for Calvin: to teach the full force of the biblical texts. Calvin understands the offensive nature of this active presentation of God’s government of evil acts. Yet he strongly believes that it is the way of the Bible and he has to follow:

Since the expression seems harsh to delicate ears, many soften it away, by turning the act into mere permission; as if there were no difference between doing and permitting to be done; or as if God would commend his passivity, and not rather his power. As to myself, I am certainly not ashamed of *speaking as the Holy Spirit speaks*, nor do I hesitate to believe what so often occurs in Scripture, that God gives the wicked over to a reprobate mind, gives them up to vile affections, blinds their minds and hardens their hearts.¹¹⁴

The core reason behind Calvin’s adoption of active presentation of God’s sovereign will over hardening is that he agrees with Luther’s argument for “the preference for biblical expressions”: The use of “the preference for biblical expressions” and the use of active presentation of God over hardening clearly signify an important continuity between the two Reformers.

E. The Post-Fall Framework in Luther’s Necessitarian Argument

We believe that one major discontinuity between Luther and Calvin is that Calvin did not restrict the discussion of the all-active concept of divine sovereign will on the fallen will alone as Luther did. If we read Luther’s necessitarian argument and

¹¹² McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 309. Cf. *ibid.*, 308-10.

¹¹³ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 139.

¹¹⁴ Calvin, *Comm.* on Ex. 4:18-23. Italics added.

soteriological argument carefully, we shall find that Luther's primary aim is to teach an Augustinian concept of *non posse non peccare* (not able not to sin). One of the most important declarations Luther makes is that he explicitly affirms that God does not create "evil in us from scratch."¹¹⁵ Luther argues that God's omnipotence cannot help to lead the fallen will to sin and err, because the fallen will itself is corrupted:

But his corruption or aversion from God makes it impossible for him to be moved and carried along with good effect. God cannot lay aside his omnipotence on account of man's aversion, and ungodly man cannot alter his aversion. It thus comes about that man perpetually and necessarily sins and errs until he is put right by the Spirit of God.¹¹⁶

This is a very important feature of Luther's formulation. For example, after Luther's emphasis on the "absolute necessity" in his *Assertio*, the soteriological reason for the bondage of the choice is immediately stated. Luther uses Eph. 2:3 to argue that "how can someone be a son of wrath by his nature except because everything he does is evil, preparing not for grace but for wrath, indeed meriting wrath?"¹¹⁷ Luther emphasizes, "You could hardly find a briefer, clearer, or more emphatic statement against free will in Scripture."¹¹⁸ In his discourse on hardening, as we have mentioned above, Luther argues that the proper cause of sin is their intrinsic evil nature after the fall. "God moves and actuates all in all." Hence, "he necessarily moves and acts also in Satan and ungodly man," because "he acts in them as they are and as he finds them."¹¹⁹ The post-fall

¹¹⁵ LW 33:178.

¹¹⁶ LW 33:176-77.

¹¹⁷ Luther, "Assertio," 307.

¹¹⁸ Luther, "Assertio," 308.

¹¹⁹ LW 33:176.

framework is an assumed background for all of Luther's necessitarian arguments and concepts.

Nevertheless, Luther in *Assertio* and *The Bondage of the Will* does not explicitly affirm the distinction of the two stages of human will (the human will before the fall and that after the fall), nor does he clearly restate the classical Augustinian position that Adam before the fall had the freedom of choice between good and evil and that Adam fell by his free will. McSorley says, "He will not say clearly with all previous theological tradition that they have fallen by a misuse of their free will." And "how they have fallen he does not say."¹²⁰

On this, Heckel expresses a different view. First, he argues that both Luther and Calvin "believed that what God permitted in the fall was also what God willed." Heckel argues that all active concept of divine omnipotence should apply to the fall too: "For Luther, God's will extends to Satan's fall, but his relationship to it is different than Satan's."¹²¹ Second, Heckel has an odd way reading Luther's idea concerning the fall of the angels and Adam. He argues that both Luther and Calvin "spoke in terms of God deserting Adam and Satan so that they fell."¹²² We believe that Heckel makes a serious mistake here and misread Luther's discussion on the fall of Adam.

Heckel quotes a discussion of the fall by Luther in Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* to claim that Luther taught that Satan became evil "through 'God's deserting and Satan's sinning.'"¹²³ When Luther makes the comment on Gen. 3, Luther, in the eyes of

¹²⁰ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 342.

¹²¹ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 235-36.

¹²² McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 234.

¹²³ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 234; *LW* 33:178.

Heckel, teaches that in some sense God did cause Satan to sin: “we might say that for Luther, God caused the sinful act but not the sinful quality in the act, for that came from Satan’s motivation to rebel.”¹²⁴ The core text of Luther Heckel quotes is this:

First, we point out that the former was said before the fall of man, when the things that God had made were “very good.” But it soon follows, in the third chapter [Gen. 3], *how man became evil when he was deserted by God and left to himself. . . .* For although God does not make sin, yet he does not cease to fashion and multiply the *nature that has been vitiated by sin through the withdrawal of the Spirit*, as a wood-carver might make statues out of rotten wood. Thus as is human nature, so are men made, God creating and fashioning them out of such a nature.¹²⁵

Heckel seems to read too much out of the phrase that “he was deserted by God and left to himself.” But the text below emphasizes that God cannot cease to “fashion and multiply the nature that has been vitiated by sin.” It is still a post-Fall framework.

In Heckel’s presentation, Luther seems to argue that not the free use of their free will by Satan and Adam before the fall is the cause of their fall, but “the withdrawal of the Spirit” is the cause of the fall. Repeatedly Heckel uses this interpretation of Luther to argue that as God withdraws, then Satan and Adam misused their will: “In the absence of grace Adam misused his will.”¹²⁶ Heckel seems to adopt a modern Edwardsean concept of the human will that emphasizes merely the existence of mere spontaneity for the human will before the fall, rather than the classical Augustinian position that Adam before the fall has genuine free choice between good and evil. And because of this, Heckel assumes that Luther has a similar concept and criticizes McSorley for his failure to observe this: “The problem is, once again, McSorley’s definition, which does not

¹²⁴ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 235.

¹²⁵ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 234. Italics added and was quoted by Heckel.

¹²⁶ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 234.

accept mere spontaneity as freedom but requires an independent action of the will.”¹²⁷

As we have pointed out in Chapter One, Heckel seems to borrow a modern Edwardsean concept of human will and imposes this on his reading of Luther and Calvin. Similar to Feinberg, Heckel seems to assume that both Luther and Calvin have similar deterministic concepts applicable also to Adam before the fall. Just by the order of the phrase quoted, Heckel assumes that the withdrawal of God’s spirit is the immediate cause for the fall: “he withdraws and Satan sins.”¹²⁸ Heckel misses the post-fall framework that Luther assumes here.

If we allow Luther’s sayings in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535-36) to be used to clarify the point, then it is obvious that Luther allows Adam the theoretical possibility of otherwise and Luther assumes theoretically Adam before the fall may refuse to sin. There Luther explicitly teaches the possibility of otherwise for Adam before the fall:

It is as if God were saying: “You can indeed remain in the life for which I have created you. And yet you will not be immortal in the same way as the angels. Your life is, as it were, placed in the middle: you can remain in it and afterwards be carried to an immortality that cannot be lost; contrariwise, if you do not obey, you will become a victim of death and lose your immortality.”¹²⁹

Here Luther supports the traditional Augustinian concept that the freedom of choice in Adam before the fall is not as good as the freedom of the human will in the beatific state: “I call it the innocence of a child because Adam was, so to speak, in a middle position and yet could be deceived by Satan and fall into disaster, as he did.” Luther explicitly

¹²⁷ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 234, note 32. Heckel also says, “McSorley is misguided by his definition of free will, which does not allow Luther’s understanding of free choice as voluntary self-determination.” *Ibid.*, 235, note 38.

¹²⁸ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 235.

¹²⁹ *LW* 1:111.

says that both the angels and Adam before the fall are in a middle position.¹³⁰ And Adam before the fall could “remain in the life” or “fall into disaster”: “I call it the innocence of a child because Adam was, so to speak, in a middle position and yet could be deceived by Satan and fall into disaster, as he did.” Luther even affirms the classical Augustinian concept that the fallen angels have the possibility of otherwise before their fall: “But if the dragon or the evil angels had remained in their innocence, they, too, would have been confirmed later on so that they could not fall.”¹³¹ Augustine and the classical tradition firmly distinguish two particular stages of human beings: the stage of Adam before the fall, and that after. Luther’s use of necessitarian argumentation blurs the line and teaches a concept of necessitarianism that generates misleading theodical problems. Yet implicitly in his argument, Luther clearly has a traditional Augustinian distinction of two stages of the human will in mind and a post-fall framework for most of his discussion. Kolb has a good summary on this: “Furthermore, he confessed that the human will is bound by its nature as the will of a creature, and it is bound by the sinfulness that has afflicted it since the fall into sin in Eden.”¹³² Hence, we believe that in Calvin’s repeated emphasis of the divine ordination of the fall, Calvin in a subtle way extends the necessitarian concepts advocated by Luther and applies them not only for the human will after the fall, but also to the case of Adam before the fall. This constitutes a major development of the doctrine and an important departure from the classical Augustinian positions.

¹³⁰ “For just as I said that to man there had, as it were, been assigned a middle position, so also the angels, as soon as they were created, were not so firmly established in their nature that they were incapable of sinning.” *LW* 1:111.

¹³¹ *LW* 1:111-13.

¹³² Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 63.

Concluding this chapter, we find that the rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium* is not the only major feature of Luther's early Reformation formulation. Luther also argues for all controlling and active divine power through his necessitarian argument by absolute necessity and the active presentation of God's role over sins. Luther also launched a reformation of theological language through his principle of "the preference for biblical expressions" and a reformation of historical interpretation by claiming that "the mature Augustine is better than the younger Augustine." With the exception of the use of necessitarian argument to prove the bondage of the human will, Calvin basically adopted all these key convictions in Luther's early Reformation formulation. In addition, there is another subtle but important discontinuity between the two Reformers. While Luther basically uses the necessitarian concept in a post-Fall framework, Calvin logically uses this also for Adam before the fall. This generates another crucial issue in Calvin's reformulation of the doctrine of the human will and the doctrine of predestination.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHIFTED CONCERNS AND DIVERSIFIED FORMULATIONS: ZWINGLI, BUCER, AND MELANCHTHON

It was not only Luther's formulation of the bondage of the human will that had great impact on Calvin's formulation and his debate with Pighius: Zwingli, Bucer, and Melanchthon also presented diversified formulations that had implication for Calvin's debate. In this chapter we investigate those aspects of the formulations of these three major Reformers of the first generation. In Bucer and the mature Melanchthon we shall observe a trend moving from the single focused concern in proving the bondage of the human will, and shifting towards a more balanced approach that includes more affirmation on the genuine contingency of the second causality and more defensive notes on theodical concern. Muller reminds us that Calvin had significant "theological and exegetical 'conversation'" with his fellow Reformers and there were mutual influences and development generated by these interactions.¹ We will have a short review of Zwingli's position, which serves as another witness of the heavy use of necessitarian argument in the early Reformation. We will have longer elaboration on the formulations of Bucer and Melanchthon, because they give substantial exposition of the topic and

¹ Muller says, "The theological and exegetical 'conversation' in which Calvin was involved is far more specific than the issue of 'context.' It is at times exceedingly clear from Calvin's prefaces and from references in the text of his letters as well as his printed works that his theology was constructed in dialogue with certain thinkers and certain books. Calvin sought advice and counsel from Farel, Viret, and Bucer. He engaged in extended discussions with Bullinger and Melanchthon. He framed his exegetical method with specific reference to the alternative approaches of Bucer, Melanchthon, Bullinger, and others. . . . The point of identifying this relationship to other authors as a 'conversation' is to emphasize that Calvin did not merely cite, use, and agree or disagree with these thinkers but rather developed his thought in an ongoing exercise of learning from and, in some cases, with them." Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 14.

Calvin read many of their works and there are important interactions between Calvin and these two Reformers. Bucer's and Melancthon's Romans commentaries were studied by Calvin in his preparation for his Romans commentary. The various versions of Melancthon's *Loci theologici* exhibit parallels with the various editions of *Institutes* and Calvin knew them well.² Their formulations certainly left their marks on Calvin's formulation. These predecessors of Calvin evidence the development of a broader pattern of argument than that found in Luther, namely, the nearly exclusive focus on the soteriological problem of the bound will, the affirmation of *sola gratia* in salvation, and the emphasis on the sovereignty of God. In Bucer and the mature Melancthon, we will observe a shift from a single focused concern to twin concerns: while they still emphasize the *sola gratia* and the bondage of the human will and the sovereignty of God, they also at the same time spend much more effort denying that their teaching identifies God as the author of sin. This additional theodical concern leads them to provide more emphasis on the existence of contingency, to give arguments supporting the existence of certain kind of freedom of the will, to make clarification about the nature of God's sovereignty over sins, and to stay away from the necessitarian argument used by the early Reformers. This shifted concern and the diversifications of the formulations have a lot to do with the nuances and development of Calvin's concept of human will and predestination.

A. Zwingli's Necessitarian Argument

Following the necessitarian argument of Luther, Ulrich Zwingli left his mark on the debate concerning the human will and providence in his *The Providence of God* (1530). Similar to what Luther did, Zwingli also used active language to present God's

² Cf. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 125-30.

role in human evil acts. Johann Adam Möhler points out, “In his writing on Providence, addressed to the Landgrave Philip of Hesse (anno 1530), Zwingli asserts that *God is the author, mover, and impeller* [*Dei auctoris, motoris, impulsoris*] to sin; that also He makes the sinner; that by the instrumentality of the creatures He produces injustice, and the like.”³ Zwingli also follows the necessitarian argument of Luther to the existence of free will on the ground of the existence of providence. In various passages, Zwingli teaches these necessitarian concepts in a way very similar to what Luther did in the *Assertio* and *The Bondage of the Will*. Zwingli says,

I grant that he was forced to sin, but for this purpose, that the one should be translated, the other nailed to the cross. Here the champions of free will, the logical opponents of Providence are under a delusion. . . . For the same Providence does all this. It not only influences and impels men until murder takes place, but goes further, and forces the judge by the law, goads him with the sting of conscience, drives him by the example of cruelty to bind the robber and raise him upon the cross. . . . In short, God instigated the killing, but He instigates the judge just as much to sacrifice the slayer to justice. And He who instigates, does it without any suspicion of crime. For He is not under the law.⁴

In addition, Zwingli explicitly uses a necessitarian argument to reject the existence of free choice and pays little concern to affirm the genuine contingency of the second causality: “Since, therefore, nothing is or exists by its own power, nor lives nor acts, nor

³ Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolism: Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced by Their Symbolical Writings*, trans. James Burton Robertson (NY: Crossroad, 1997), 39. Italics added. In his Note 1 of p. 39, Möhler provides the following related Latin texts in Zwingli: “Zwingli de providentia c. vi, Opp. tom i. fol 364, b. ‘Unum igitur atque idem facinus, puta adulterium aut homicidium, *quantum Dei auctoris, motoris, impulsoris, opus est, crimen non est*, quantum autem hominis est, crimen ac scelus est.’ Fol. 366 a: ‘Cum movet (Deus) ad opus aliquod, quod perficienti instrumento fraudi est, sibi tamen non est, ipse enim, libere movet, neque instrumento facit menta, quibus non facit injuriam, si nunc limam in malleum, et contra innocentem, etiamsi imparatum ad mortem.’”

⁴ Ulrich Zwingli, “Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God,” in *On Providence and Other Essays*, ed. William John Hinke (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 183. Cf. Paul Helm, “Calvin (and Zwingli) on Divine Providence,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (Nov. 1994): 388-405; W. Peter Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); August Lang, *Zwingli und Calvin* (Bielefeld, Leipzig, Velhagen & Klasing, 1913).

understands, nor deliberates, but the present power of the Deity does all these things, how could human will be free?”⁵ Zwingli even goes so far as to deny second causality its proper role: “It is established, therefore, that secondary causes are not properly called causes.” He emphasizes, “Whatever means and instruments, therefore, are called causes, are not properly so called, but by metonymy, that is, derivatively from that one first cause of all that is.” And “God is the only effective force, and He alone can do and does all things.”⁶ For Zwingli, only God is entitled to be called “the only real cause” and humankind “are not properly causes, but the agents and instruments.”⁷ Zwingli seems to be more outspoken than Luther to affirm the all active and controlling nature of the first causality. Henry Buis, agreeing with Reinhold Seeberg, concludes that Zwingli is even more deterministic than Luther: “Seeberg sees Zwingli as following the path of Luther in his *De Servo Arbitrio*, but allowing his determinism to affect his soteriology much more than did Luther.”⁸

Zwingli’s *The Providence of God* (1530), together with Luther’s *Assertio omnium articulorum* (1520) and *De servo arbitrio* (1525), and with Melanchthon’s *Loci communes* (1521) evidence a widespread use of necessitarian presentation, concept, and argument to defend the doctrine of the bondage of the human will in the first phase of the Reformation. And they basically paint an all active concept of God, including active roles

⁵ Zwingli, “Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God,” 189.

⁶ Zwingli, “Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God,” 155.

⁷ “In this entire chapter I have been aiming to prove that since all things have their being, existence, life, movement and activity from One and in One, that One is the only real cause of all things, and those nearer things which we call causes, are not properly causes, but the agents and instruments with which the eternal mind works, and in which it manifests itself to be enjoyed.” Zwingli, “Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God,” 157-58.

⁸ Harry Buis, *Historic Protestantism and Predestination* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1958), 65.

in sinful acts, hardening and reprobation, and they use blunt and offensive language to deny the genuine contingency of secondary causality. This line of thought and argument generated a great need for the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation debate to answer the charge that the early Reformation formulations make God the author of sins. The Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation needed to react to the charge of Stoicism and Manichaeism by their Roman opponents. Kolb ably summarizes the issue:

Troublesome for most of his disciples and many thereafter were those passages in which Luther's affirmation of God's lordship seems to make him responsible for evil. The reformer admitted that he, too, struggled with this mystery of evil. But in his determination to confess the absolute lordship of the Creator, he on occasion gave the impression that God is responsible for evil.⁹

B. Bucer's Augustinian Formulation

In the early part of the second phase of the debate, there began a trend to return to the classical Augustinian formulation. And Martin Bucer was a key figure in this trend. Bucer was the mentor and the senior Reformer under whom Calvin served during his exile in Strasbourg. Bucer's exposition of predestination and free will in his *Commentary on Romans* (1536), together with the changed positions of Melanchthon after 1534, signified an important break from the necessitarian arguments used by Luther, the early Melanchthon, and Zwingli. This work of Bucer, which Calvin read thoroughly in the preparation of his 1540 Romans commentary, provided Calvin a good taste of a different formulation of the Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the human will.

⁹ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 53.

The influence of Bucer, a theologically trained Dominican before becoming a Reformer, on Calvin has been widely acknowledged.¹⁰ Considering Calvin's theology in general, Ganoczy argues that Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Bucer also had a significant impact on Calvin: "I believe these examples constitute a sufficient reason to place Bucer along side Melanchthon and Zwingli (after Luther) among the men who gave the young Calvin the theological initiation that he desired."¹¹ Seeberg and Lang believe that Bucer's impact is more on his ecclesiology and doctrine of predestination.¹² Regarding occasional Thomistic elements in Calvin, Oberman believes that this may also be the result of the influence of Bucer.¹³ It was moreover during his exile in Strasbourg and as a result of his contact with Bucer and Capito, that Calvin consolidated the pattern of his exegetical and theological efforts that "would guide him for the remainder of his life."¹⁴ On the whole, the scholarship on the relation between Bucer and Calvin reminds us that no claim about Calvin's originality can be sustained without careful comparison with the other reformers of his time.¹⁵

¹⁰ Willem van't Spijker, "The Influences of Bucer on Calvin as Becomes Evident from the 'Institutes'," in *John Calvin's "Institutes," His "Opus Magnum"*, ed. Barend Johannes van der Walt (Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1986), 106-32; François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 137-44.

¹¹ Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin*, 167.

¹² Ganoczy observes that Seeberg and Lang "sense a strong influence from Bucer when Calvin defines the mystery of the Church in terms of election and God's eternal predestination." Referred by Ganoczy in *The Young Calvin*, 160, 350. Cf. R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 4th ed. (Basle, 1954), vol. 4/2, 554 and August Lang, "Die Quellen der Institutio von 1536," *Evangelische Theologie* 3/3 (1936): 108-10.

¹³ Oberman, "Initia Calvini," 11, especially note 14. Cited also in Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 208, note 46.

¹⁴ Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 38.

¹⁵ Cf. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 116.

In our investigation of the influence of Bucer on Calvin in the doctrine of free will and the related doctrines, we will focus on several features found in Bucer's *Commentary on Romans* (1536).¹⁶ Bucer divides his discussion of free will into three parts: on the term "free will," on the question whether humankind possesses free will, and on "the force or precise nature of free will." Bucer says,

We shall examine this point in the latter half of our inquiry, on the force of free will [*quid liberum arbitrium valeat*]. For the present, discussion centres on the term 'freewill' [*de nomine liberi arbitrii*], and is soon to move on to the question of man's possession of free will [*liberum arbitrium*], and eventually to the force or precise nature of free will [*quale sit*].¹⁷

First of all, contrary to Luther and the early Melancthon, Bucer explicitly affirms the existence of *liberum arbitrium*. We observe that Bucer set the example for the reuse of the classical term *liberum arbitrium* in the second phase of the Reformation debate. Bucer supports the use of traditional Augustinian terminology. He says, "For our part we follow St. Augustine both in substance and in terminology [*ita et nomine*], in defining free will [*liberum arbitrium*] as the free volition [*voluntatem liberam*] automatically consequent upon a decision of one's own reason [*proprie rationis arbitrium ultro*

¹⁶ Martin Bucer, *Metaphrases et enarrationes perpetuae epistolarum D. Pauli apostoli . . . Tomus I. continens metaphrasim et enarrationem in Epistolam ad Romanos*, (Argentorati per Vvendelinum Rihelium, 1536). For later quotes of this work, the short form *Metaphrases* will be used. On the locus on free choice, cf. *Metaphrases*, 400-404; on the locus on predestination, cf. *Metaphrases*, 358-61. This commentary was highly praised by Calvin in his commentary on the Romans (1539): "In the last place comes Bucer, who, by publishing his works, has given as it were the finishing stroke. For in addition to his recondite learning and enlarged knowledge of things, and to the clearness of his mind, and much reading and many other excellencies, in which he is hardly surpassed by any at this day, equaled by few and excelled by still fewer — he possesses, as you know, this praise as his own — that no one in our age has been with so much labour engaged in the work of expounding Scripture." Calvin, "The Epistle Dedicatory," in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 19, xxv.

¹⁷ Martin Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, trans. and ed. D. F. Wright (Abingdon, England: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1972), 147. This book contains English translation of some portions of Bucer's *Commentary on Romans*. The Latin text is: "De eo nos disseremus in altera parte huius quaestionis, quid liberum arbitrium valeat, adhuc em de nomine liberi arbitrii disputamus, mox ecussuri, an sit homini liberum arbitrium, postremo quansum valeat, vel quale sit." *Metaphrases*, 401a.

sequentam].”¹⁸ Nevertheless, as Bucer understands well the concerns of the debates in early Reformation, he defines *liberum arbitrium* in such a way to make it compatible with the doctrine of the bondage of the will: “By ‘free will’ [*liberi arbitrii*] then, we mean simply the faculty of choosing or rejecting [*facultatem deligendi et refutandi*] the things that come our way, in accordance with our decided judgment [*nostro arbitrio et iudicio*]. This faculty is called ‘free will’ [*liberum arbitrium*] according to its natural meaning.”¹⁹

In addition, Bucer sees himself as one member of a united front and explicitly shows his consolidation with the doctrines taught by Luther, Zwingli, and Melanchthon. Bucer quotes Melanchthon’s commentary on the Romans and his *loci communes* (1535).²⁰ In the locus on predestination, Bucer draws Melanchthon’s exposition on predestination in 1535 *Loci* as a support in handling issues concerning predestination: “The teaching of Philip Melanchthon answers this very devoutly and faithfully: it is solely in order that you may be more certain of your salvation and may cleave more firmly to the promises of God.”²¹ He writes a long paragraph to defend Zwingli and calls Zwingli “a man uncommonly ardent for the reformation of the Church.” He also argues

¹⁸ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 146; *Metaphrases*, 400b.

¹⁹ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 147. “Nos ita que nomine liberi arbitrii intelligemus simpliciter, facultatem deligendi et refutandi quae incidunt, pro nostro arbitrio et iudicio. Istaec enim facultas hoc nomine, liberum arbitrium, nativa significatione notatur.” *Metaphrases*, 401a. Cf. “Freedom of will, therefore, and free will [*Libertas ergo arbitrii, et liberum arbitrium*] (that is, *autexousion*) is the capacity for acting according to your own decision [*potestas est agenda pro tuo arbitrato*], so that you act on your own initiative and are not acted upon contrary to your wish to be acted upon, and this excludes any power which compels or constrains you against your will but not the God-given invariability and necessity of doing right.” *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 102-3; *Metaphrases*, 360b.

²⁰ Cf. Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 99, 147, 164, 173.

²¹ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 99. Cf. *CR* 21, 451ff. The standard abbreviation *CR* stands for *Corpus Reformatorum. Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. C. G. Bretschneider and H. E. Bindweil (Halle and Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1834-60). In the locus on free will, Bucer also mentions about Melanchthon: “Hence Philip Melanchthon commonly says that man has free will in his civil but not in his

that Zwingli and “the godly Luther” and other Reformers taught “the orthodox belief in original sin.”²²

Nevertheless, without naming names, Bucer voices his disagreement with the necessitarian arguments against the existence of free choice in the beginning of his locus on free will. Bucer says,

Some writers who discuss this question seem to interpret “free will” [*liberum arbitrium*] as the ability to do anything and everything [*facultate faciendi quiduis*]. For they deny that man has free will [*liberum arbitrium*] so long as we are unable to fulfil the commandments of God (that is, if we have no knowledge of God himself, whom we are powerless truly to know unless we are born again and enlightened by the Spirit of God), because then man is not able to do absolutely everything, since he cannot, so they argue, fulfil the commands of God. In like manner they also deprive of free will [*liberum arbitrium*] those who have already attained to some measure of the knowledge of God and love his commandments but, on account of our inherent waywardness [*innata perversitate*], fail to do what they approve of, and do instead the evil they condemn. Some writers stretch the definition of freedom of will [*arbitrii libertatem*] as far as the actual influencing of events, and therefore deny that man is equipped with free will [*libero arbitrio*] because he is continually foiled of his purpose as events take a course contrary to his designs.²³

Here Bucer provides a good summary of different arguments against the existence of free choice: both the soteriological reason because of our fallen nature and the necessitarian argument because of divine providence. Some of the points being attacked are similar to the necessitarian arguments taught by Luther, the early Melancthon, and Zwingli.

Contrary to their teaching, Bucer argues that the existence of the first cause does not necessarily deny the genuine contingency of the second causality:

religious life.” *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 147.

²² Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 123-24. In the English translation of the *Loci*, this is the only place that Bucer explicitly quotes Zwingli and Luther by name in his *Loci*.

²³ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 145-46; *Metaphrases*, 400b. D. F. Wright in the editor’s note on the paragraph says, “The denial of the freedom of the will referred to earlier in the paragraph was virtually the position of Luther.” *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 155, note 3.

There have even been some writers who by “free will” [*libero arbitrio*] have understood a self-contained, creative power of action, and, because Scripture affirms that God acts in us and upon us, have denied that our will [*nostram voluntatem*] acts at all, even when we act with great enthusiasm. But a first cause does not preclude the functioning of second causes. [*Atqui caussa prima non excludit actionem caussarum secundarum.*] God does indeed act in us in everything, and acts upon us too according to his good pleasure, but he does so in such a way that he causes us to act, so that by his action we come to understand an issue, exercise choice, accept or reject, and set our physical powers in motion.²⁴

Bucer also clearly shows his disagreement with the necessitarian argument in his teaching on the question of “whether predestination abolishes the freedom of the will.” Once again, Bucer, clearly contrary to Luther’s argument, though without naming names, argues that “far from destroying the freedom of the will, predestination alone really establishes it.”²⁵ In Bucer, we obviously see an important precedent of the shift from Luther’s necessitarian formulation towards the classical Augustinian formulation.

In addition, Bucer also uses the classical Augustinian argument to support the existence of free choice. Bucer, following the trend set by Melancthon, explicitly affirms the existence of human free will “in civil and external righteousness,” by quoting Melancthon. In his use of arguments for the existence of human free will in “civil and external righteousness,” Bucer follows Augustine, not Luther. Bucer argues that the existence of “commands, promises, and threatenings” proves the existence of human possession of the power of free will. Bucer emphasizes that this is an argument used by

²⁴ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 146; *Metaphrases*, 400b. “On this, Wright in his editor’s note says, “It is not immediately evident whom Bucer has in mind in this criticism. It may even still be Luther’s *The Enslaved Will* that is his target; but it seems more likely that he is alluding to the less temperate views of a man like Otto Brunfels, who . . . spent the years 1524-33 in Strasbourg. . . . In 1527 he issued the first edition of his *Compendium in Twelve Books of the Old and New Testaments* . . . in which he defends the scriptural theses that ‘All things come to pass by necessity’, ‘We have no free will’, ‘Not even the doing of evil lies in our own power’, and ‘God powerfully works evil’.” *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 155, note 5.

²⁵ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 103. “Ex his ergo consequitur, quod praedestinatio adeo non tollat libertate arbitrii, u team sola adserat.” *Metaphrases*, 361a.

“Augustine and the Fathers” and on this “surely Scripture speaks with undoubted propriety and the utmost appropriateness.”²⁶ Bucer, unlike Luther, uses “experience” to prove the existence of free will: “If we proceed to ask whether man possesses free will [*liberum arbitrium*], experience itself instructs us to answer in the affirmative.”²⁷ Bucer ends this session by affirming the classical Augustinian position: “Augustine declares that it is a dogma of catholic faith that man has free will [*liberum arbitrium*].”²⁸ For Bucer, the early Reformation formulation by Luther is not the standard, but the classical Augustinian formulation is.

On this point, Bucer’s formulation is different from Calvin’s. Once again, we observe that Calvin prefers Luther’s position and argument.²⁹ It is interesting to find that Pighius, similar to Bucer and the traditional practice, quotes Augustine’s *Grace and Free Choice* to support the existence of free will, while Calvin repeatedly uses Augustine’s *Rebuke and Grace* to prove the bondage of the will.³⁰ Nevertheless, we have to be aware that though both Pighius and Bucer quote Augustine to support free will, they have different definitions and different concepts of what a fallen human will is capable.

²⁶ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 148.

²⁷ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 147; *Metaphrases*, 401a.

²⁸ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 148. “Hinc agnoscit D. Augustinus dogma fidei catholicae, esse homini liberum arbitrium.” *Metaphrases*, 401b. Wright points out, “Probably a reference to Pseudo-Augustine, *Book or Exposition of the Dogmas of the Church* 21 (PL 42, 1216f.), a work in reality by Gennadius, a presbyter of Marseilles early in the fifth century.” *Ibid.*, 155, note 8.

²⁹ Cf. “The enemies of God’s grace customarily pile up these innumerable proofs, derived from his commandments and from his protestations against the transgressors of the law, to give the delusion of free will.” *Inst.* (1539), 2.5.11. Calvin also defends Luther’s perspective in his treatise against Pighius: “But [says Pighiu] even in [Augustine’s] latest writings he teaches that freedom of choice is addressed whenever God commands or exhorts.” Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 140. Nevertheless, Calvin admits that Augustine does teach that way, but then he qualifies the meaning of Augustine by Augustine’s own words. Cf. *ibid.*, 140-42.

³⁰ Cf. Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 121-25, 156-61. Calvin is right to point out “Therefore now it was necessary to inquire how much power Augustine bestows on free choice, not to

Bucer also uses classical Augustinian concepts to clarify the difference between “compulsion” and “necessity” and to affirm the voluntary and self-determinative nature of the human will.³¹ Bucer says,

Now the freedom [*libertas*] of the will [*arbitrii*] is the faculty of acting according to one’s own choice [*facultas ex proprio arbitrio*] and decision without any compulsion. Notice that I say ‘without compulsion,’ [*sine coactione*] not ‘without necessity,’ [*sine necessitate*] for God of necessity wills what is right and cannot will otherwise, yet has the highest freedom [*libertate*] of will [*arbitrii*].³²

Bucer emphasizes that “our free will [*liberum arbitrium*] is of no avail for the appropriation of the things that belong to true godliness, but only for their refusal and rejection.”³³ And this does not diminish the voluntary nature of the human will. He quotes Augustine to his support: “To Augustine ‘free’ [*liberum*] and ‘willing’ [*voluntarius*] have the same meaning, and a will that is not free [*voluntas non libera*] sounds as senseless as something hot without heat.”³⁴ This is the reason behind his definition of the term as meaning “‘being in one’s own power’ or ‘acting on one’s own initiative, by one’s own decision.’”³⁵ Bucer is therefore one of the early Reformers who draws on the classical Augustinian position to reaffirm the voluntary and self-determinative nature of the human will, as contrary to the rather one-sided language of Luther, that would emerge more clearly in the second phase of the Reformation.

insist on the use of the proper term.” *Ibid.*, 124.

³¹ Luther in *The Bondage of the Will* also makes distinction between necessity and compulsion. Cf. *LW* 33:64. Quoted in Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 185.

³² Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 102; *Metaphrases*, 360b.

³³ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 148; *Metaphrases*, 401b.

³⁴ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 149; *Metaphrases*, 402a.

³⁵ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 145. “Graeci vocant aut exousion, quod significat esse suae potestatis, vel agere a se ipso, suo arbitratu.” *Metaphrases*, 400a.

Bucer also set an important precedent in drawing support from the early Fathers and the “better” Schoolmen to defend the orthodoxy and catholicity of the Reformation doctrines. On justification, Bucer writes,

Our purpose in adding this last section was to demonstrate that *the early Fathers are one with us, and do not conflict either with Philip Melancthon or with all the others* who duly proclaim that the heart of our salvation, that is, our justification, is our free acceptance before God, . . . I have also considered it worthwhile to demonstrate fully the interpretation of justification maintained *both by the early writers and by contemporary theologians who faithfully preach Christ.*³⁶

On original sin, Bucer notes that there are differences among the early Fathers, but insists that basically they affirm the orthodox beliefs which the Reformers teach. Here Bucer develops arguments that would later be reflected in Calvin’s *Institutes* (1539).³⁷ On this increase use of the early fathers in Bucer’s commentary on Romans (1535), Irena Backus gives a succinct summary: “Gone is the tacit appropriation of the Early Church with the names of the Fathers only figuring sporadically. Practically every section of the *Romans*

³⁶ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 167. Italics added.

³⁷ Bucer observes, “From these examples [that of Chrysostom, Origen, and Ambrose] one may see that the ancient Church did not firmly acknowledge the meaning of original sin as we have explained it and as the catholic Church today acknowledges it.” Nevertheless, Bucer concludes that “But if we carefully examine the writings of the holy Fathers, we shall assuredly discover that they did handsomely acknowledge even this sinfulness of our nature. But because they perceived that men were making it an excuse for their own slothfulness and willful perversity, they treated original sin (in the sense of that whereby we are lost before we are born) as a mystery, and determined not to speak of it at random in public. . . . We will now cite a few statements of opinion from a number of the leading holy Fathers, from which anyone may see clearly that they held orthodox beliefs about this evil of our diseased origin, and did actually confess it at the appropriate moment.” Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 130, 131. We find similar saying in Calvin: “All ecclesiastical writers have recognized both that the soundness of reason in man is gravely wounded through sin, and that the will has been very much enslaved by evil desires. Despite this, many of them have come far too close to the philosophers. Of these, the early ones seem to me to have, with a twofold intent, elevated human powers for the following reasons. First, a frank confession of man’s powerlessness would have brought upon them the jeers of the philosophers with whom they were in conflict. Second, they wished to avoid giving fresh occasion for slothfulness to a flesh already indifferent toward good. Therefore, that they might teach nothing absurd to the common judgment of men, they strove to harmonize the doctrine of Scripture halfway with the beliefs of the philosophers. Yet they paid especial attention to the second point, not to give occasion for slothfulness.” *Inst.*, 2.2.4.

Commentary contains a paragraph titled *Sententiae partum* where the Fathers who have commented on the passage are explicitly cited, and their opinions discussed.”³⁸

On free will, Bucer similarly argues that the early Fathers have essentially the same position as that of the Reformers on the issue of the bondage of the will: “Therefore there is no difference among the Fathers on matters of substance in relation to this question, but only in their manner of handling it.” And they “recognise that all goodness in all men results solely from the goodness of God and not from their own unaided powers.”³⁹ He also emphasizes this in his conclusion of this locus: “For instance, you can examine the abundant and universal testimony of Augustine and his disciples concerning both our will [*voluntate*] and our guilt. Such is the agreement in substance among the Fathers.”⁴⁰ We will also find a similar line of argument in Calvin’s *Institutes* (1539), though Calvin is more explicit about the inconsistency and ambiguities found in the Fathers.⁴¹ It is highly probable that Calvin draws this line of thought from Bucer.

³⁸ Irena Backus, “Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer and the Church Fathers,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, vol. 2, 652. Backus observes that there was a trend developed in the 1520s and 1530s to use more of the early church fathers: “What both Zwingli and Bucer seem to share is what might be called the ‘implicit normativity’ approach in their dealings with patristic writings. The Bible is interpreted through institutional and individual writings of the Early Church, which are in turn interpreted through the Bible. However, no attempt is made to explicitly create a consensus. On the contrary, patristic writings are used implicitly to overflow the consensus of the Roman Catholic Church.” *Ibid.*, 658.

³⁹ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 153. “On this point the voices of orthodoxy are unanimous. For whatever the early Fathers wrote about God’s foreknowledge of the future merits of men and equality of grace offered to all but not equally received by all, was not written through a failure to recognise that all goodness in all men results solely from the goodness of God and not from their own unaided powers.” 153

⁴⁰ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 154; *Metaphrases*, 404a.

⁴¹ Calvin says, “Perhaps I may seem to have brought a great prejudice upon myself when I confess that all ecclesiastical writers, except Augustine, have spoken so ambiguously or variously on this matter that nothing certain can be gained from their writings. Some will interpret this as if I wanted to deprive them of any voice in the matter because they all are my opponents. But I meant nothing else than that I wanted simply and sincerely to advise godly folk; for if they were to depend upon those men’s opinions in this matter, they would always flounder in uncertainty. At one time these writers teach that man, despoiled of the powers of free will, takes refuge in grace alone. At another time they provide, or seem to provide, him with his own armor. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to demonstrate that they, in the ambiguity of their

Bucer also set an example of using the witness of the early church without undermining the Reformation's emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures. On the locus on election, Bucer points out that there is "very serious disagreement among the most learned Fathers on a major article of the faith," and "how perilous it is in controversies of this kind to lean on human opinion rather than on the Scriptures."⁴² Here Bucer affirms the Reformation doctrine that the Scriptures have the final say: "From what has been said thus far, who can fail to see clearly that as much as the Spirit surpasses all the Fathers in wisdom, eloquence, love, etc., by so much the holy Scriptures and the doctrine of God excel all the teachings and writings of the Fathers? Therefore these heavenly controversies must be settled out of the word of God and the teaching of the Holy Spirit."⁴³ Similar argumentation is also found in Calvin.⁴⁴

Bucer also set the precedent to differentiate the better or "more notable" Schoolmen from the other Schoolmen, a differentiation Calvin also made beginning with his *Institutes* (1539).⁴⁵ On free will, Bucer says, "And so not only the early Fathers but

teaching, held human virtue in no or very slight esteem, but ascribed all credit for every good thing to the Holy Spirit. . . . Yet I dare affirm this: however excessive they sometimes are in extolling free will, they have had this end in view — to teach man utterly to forsake confidence in his own virtue and to hold that all his strength rests in God alone." *Inst.* (1539), 2.2.9.

⁴² Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 112.

⁴³ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 114.

⁴⁴ Calvin, when he begins his discussion on predestination, similar to what Bucer does, also establishes first that the Bible should have the final say: "Let this, therefore, first of all be before our eyes: to seek any other knowledge of predestination than what the Word of God discloses is not less insane than if one should purpose to walk in a pathless waste, or to see in darkness. And let us not be ashamed to be ignorant of something in this matter, wherein there is a certain learned ignorance." *Inst.*, 3.21.2. "Human curiosity renders the discussion of predestination, already somewhat difficult of itself, very confusing and even dangerous." *Inst.*, 3.21.1. "If this thought prevails with us, that the Word of the Lord is the sole way that can lead us in our search for all that it is lawful to hold concerning him, and is the sole light to illumine our vision of all that we should see of him, it will readily keep and restrain us from all rashness. For we shall know that the moment we exceed the bounds of the Word, our course is outside the pathway and in darkness, and that there we must repeatedly wander, slip, and stumble." *Inst.*, 3.21.2.

⁴⁵ Calvin says, "I chose to note these two points in passing that you, my reader, may see how far I

also the more notable of the Schoolmen, irrespective of the degree of free will [*liberi arbitrii*] they assign to men, are all agreed that without the special prompting and constant direction [*perpetuo actu*] of the Spirit of God men can neither turn to God, . . .”⁴⁶ Bucer uses this to argue that both the better Schoolmen and certainly Augustine support the Reformation doctrine of *sola gratia*: “They unitedly confess that all these are the work of God’s grace, for they follow St. Augustine, and this is certainly his opinion.”⁴⁷

In Bucer, we also see a new trend, developing in the early second phase of the Reformation that more Reformers are willing to quote Thomas Aquinas and other medieval theologians in a positive sense. For example, Bucer says, “Thomas Aquinas is therefore correct in taking free will [*liberum arbitrium*] to be the volition [*voluntate*] whereby we choose that which reason after consideration has ascertained and adjudged to be the more advantageous course of action.”⁴⁸ Bucer also uses Thomas as a witness to the Reformation concept of predestination: “But this is an error that even St. Thomas correctly refutes in saying that anything good in us is the effect of predestination.”⁴⁹

Moreover, Bucer also shows a line of continuity with Luther in adopting an active presentation of God’s role in hardening. Although Bucer stays away from Luther’s

disagree with the sounder Schoolmen [*sanioribus Scholasticis*]. I differ with the more recent Sophists [*recentioribus Sophistis*] to an even greater extent, as they are farther removed from antiquity.” *Inst.* (1539), 2.2.6. “For on the beginning of justification there is no quarrel between us and the sounder Schoolmen [*saniores scholasticos*].” *Inst.*, (1543), 3.14.11. “I do not pause to ask how the saner Schoolmen [*saniores Scholastici*] at the outset received this doctrine.” *Inst.* 4.18.1. Cf. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 50, 57. Muller points out, “Lombard and the ‘more sound’ scholastic thinkers were not the object of Calvin’s most heated attacks.” *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁶ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 151; *Metaphrases*, 402b.

⁴⁷ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 152.

⁴⁸ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 145.

necessitarian argument, Bucer retains, similar to Luther, the use of active terminology to handle the issues of hardening, blinding, and giving up: “Scripture does not shrink from stating that God abandons [*tradere*] certain men to a depraved mind and works [*agere*] in them in their ruin; why, then, is it unworthy of God to say that he had also decided in advance to abandon [*traderet*] them to a depraved mind and work [*ageret*] in them to their ruin?”⁵⁰ Bucer, similar to Luther, does not use passive language to explain the biblical teaching on hardening:

The unsettlement occasioned by this verdict of our reason has led some so far astray as to claim, contrary to countless explicit utterances of holy Scripture, that God will in the end enlighten and save all the wicked. Others, however, who have maintained a straightforward and universal belief in holy Scripture have begun to interpret “hardened, blinded, handed over to depravity” in terms of “withdrew his Spirit from, allowed to be hardened and blinded”. [*induravit, excaecavit tradidit in sensum reprobum, interpretari: per deservit suo spiritu, permisit excaecari, indurari.*] But neither course can satisfy the human intellect, for it is unable to acknowledge the justice with which God even temporarily blinds, hardens, and gives up [*induret et in sensum reprobum tradat*] to a depraved disposition men from whom he demands a life in all parts righteous and holy. It also cannot fail to judge inhuman that God even allows men to fall [*Deum vel permittere libi*] when he alone can save them from falling, and cruel, that he punishes the fallen when, bereft of his aid, they could not help failing.⁵¹

Bucer affirms the sovereign role of God in divine hardening: “Consequently, once it is agreed that it belongs to God’s glory to declare that he hardens, blinds, and gives up to depraved reason whom he chooses [*indurare, excaecare, et tradere in sensum reprobum quos vult*], it will be obvious that it can also be said that God foreknew and ordained [*prescisse, et destinasse*] these very people for such a fate before he created them; for he accomplishes all things according to a predetermined and settled plan [*praestinito et certo*”

⁴⁹ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 102.

⁵⁰ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 97; *Metaphrases*, 358b.

⁵¹ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 98; *Metaphrases*, 359a.

consilio].”⁵² Bucer treats reprobation as a kind of predestination and is not shy to use active presentation to describe God’s role:

In this sense there is even a predestination of the wicked, for just as God forms them also out of nothing, so he forms them for a definite end. God does everything in wisdom, not expecting the predetermined [*praesinitum*] and good use of the wicked, for even the godless are the *skeuē* the tools and instruments, of God, and ‘God has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked man for the day of evil’.⁵³

On the issue of divine hardening, Bucer, similar to Luther, employs the biblical expression. On this, Bucer’s formulation, in addition to Luther’s, set the precedent for Calvin to follow.

This review shows that there are clearly incidents of similarities and parallels found between Bucer and Calvin. Through Bucer, Calvin might learn to appreciate more the classical Augustinian tradition and the better tradition in the medieval. In key issues, Calvin prefers Luther over Bucer when they differ, but in subtle issues, like the appreciation of the Augustinian tradition, the use of better tradition in the medieval, and the need to affirm natural contingency of the second causality, Calvin prefers Bucer over Luther. In particular, Calvin agrees with Bucer, but not Luther, in not using the necessitarian argument to argue for the bondage of the human will.

C. Melancthon’s Theodical Formulation, ca. 1530-1545

As we have mentioned, Pighius’ third major challenge to Calvin was that the Reformers were not consistent among themselves, as witnessed by the shift found in

⁵² Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 98; *Metaphrases*, 359a.

⁵³ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 97; *Metaphrases*, 358b. Bucer points out, “The theologians, however, refuse to call this ‘predestination’, preferring ‘reprobation’ [*reprobationem*] instead.” Ibid.

Melanchthon.⁵⁴ As Melanchthon shifted away from his earlier necessitarian argument in his 1535 *Loci communes*, his change of positions and the theodical concern of his later position had significant impacts on Calvin's defense of early Reformation teaching on the human will.

The fact that Melanchthon followed Luther closely in using this necessitarian argument to defend the bondage of the human will in his 1521 *Loci communes* is widely acknowledged.⁵⁵ In 1521 *Loci communes*, Melanchthon says, "Since all things that happen, happen necessarily according to divine predestination, our will (*voluntas*) has no liberty." And after quoting biblical texts on providence and predestination, Melanchthon claimed that "how could I conceal the position of Scripture when it deprives our will (*voluntas*) of freedom by the necessity of predestination?"⁵⁶ Following the pattern set by Luther's *Assertio* (1520) and Melanchthon's 1521 *Loci communes*, even before the publication of Luther's *De servo arbitrio* (1525), some fellow Wittenberg colleagues of Luther and Melanchthon had already incorporated the necessitarian argument by Luther and Melanchthon in their own publication.⁵⁷ On this, Kolb makes a sharp observation: "Even before 1525 Luther's views on God's absolute lordship over all things and the freedom or bondage of the will had won the support of many of his advocates."⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 29; CO 6:250.

⁵⁵ Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 63; Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 67-68.

⁵⁶ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes Theologici*, 24, 25. Cf. Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 85; Matz, *Die Willenslehre in der Theologie Philipp Melanchthons*, 141-47.

⁵⁷ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 67-70.

⁵⁸ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 67.

But we are more concerned about the change of positions in Melanchthon. As Kolb observes, the debate on Melanchthon's relationship with Luther on the issue of bound choice and the freedom of the will "has been variously interpreted, fiercely debated and disputed for nearly 450 years."⁵⁹ Kolb points out that Melanchthon gradually "distanced himself from the strict doctrine of divine necessity and similar contentions in *De servo arbitrio*."⁶⁰ Melanchthon gradually shifted the issue back to a soteriological perspective. And various of Luther's other followers also skipped this "starker side of Luther's picture of God in *De servo arbitrio*."⁶¹

The 1535 *Loci communes* is commonly recognized as the major dividing line in Melanchthon's position on free choice. Nevertheless, in recent research, there are evidences that the seed may begin earlier. In 1527 *Scholia* on Col. 1:15-16, as Timothy J. Wengert points out, Melanchthon had already repositioned the issue as a soteriological issue: "we were not asking *de creatione* (concerning creation) how God moved all creatures, but *de iustificatione et sanctificatione* (concerning justification and sanctification)."⁶² Nevertheless, his shift was more widely recognized with the

⁵⁹ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 71. Cf. Wolfgang Matz, *Der Befreite Mensch: Die Willenslehre in der Theologie Philipp Melanchthons* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001); Robert Kolb, "Nikolaus Gallus' Critique of Philip Melanchthon's Teaching on the Freedom of the Will," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 91 (2000): 87-110; Barbara Pitkin, "The Protestant Zeno: Calvin and the Development of Melanchthon's Anthropology," *Journal of Religion* 84/3 (July 2004): 345-78; Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 67-102; Timothy J. Wengert, "Philip Melanchthon's Contribution to Luther's Debate with Erasmus over the Bondage of the Will," in *By Faith Alone: Essays on Justification in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde*, eds. Joseph A. Burgess & Marc Kolden (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), 110-24; Wengert, "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever': The Epistolary Friendship of John Calvin and Philip Melanchthon," in *Melanchthon in Europe*, 19-44.

⁶⁰ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 71.

⁶¹ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 288.

⁶² Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness*, 90.

publication of 1535 *Loci communes*.⁶³ After this, Melanchthon consistently separated the issue of the bondage of the human will from that of predestination.⁶⁴

Melanchthon's theodical concern to defend against the charge, that the Reformation doctrine makes God the author of sin, became his primary concern in the later phase of the Reformation. Kolb points out that the Peasants' Revolt (1525), the seeing of "the pitiful state of public behavior in the Saxon villages" (1526), and the accusation by Johann Eck in colloquies in 1540 and 1541 may have contributed to Melanchthon's change of focus.⁶⁵ Kolb points out that "in the colloquies, Johann Eck, had 'provoked arguments which lasted whole days with citations from the earliest writings of Luther and Philip.'"⁶⁶ The addition of a locus "De causa peccati et de contingentia" (On the cause of sin and on contingency) in 1543 *Loci communes* is a clear sign of this change.⁶⁷

⁶³ Kolb provides a detailed review of Melanchthon's views in the revisions of his *Loci Communes*. Cf. Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 84-95.

⁶⁴ Barnikol observes that in 1535 Melanchthon clearly separated himself from Luther's necessitarian argument. Cf. Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 69-70. Kolb also points out that Melanchthon clearly separates the issue of the bondage of the human will from the issue of predestination and puts them into two distanced and separated loci: "After the exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity and creation came a locus on the cause of sin and contingency, followed by the topic of 'human powers.' Predestination to salvation was treated in the context of the topic of justification." *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 84.

⁶⁵ Kolb says, "Public disorder, for example, in the early days of the Reformation in Wittenberg in 1521 and 1522, or in the Peasants' Revolt in 1525, further strengthened his commitment to teaching the commandments of God for daily life. Perhaps the crowning impetus for these concerns came in 1527 and 1528 when he and Luther were both shocked and deeply distressed by the pitiful state of public behavior in the Saxon villages they inspected during the official visitation of churches in Elector John's principality. At the very same time, one of the inner circle of the Wittenberg reformers, Johann Agricola, called into question the need and propriety of preaching the law to believers. Melanchthon never again could pass up an opportunity to emphasize the life of good works that faith produces." Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 74-75; cf. *ibid.*, 88.

⁶⁶ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 88.

⁶⁷ CR 21, 371-73.

A careful analysis of Melanchthon's 1535 and 1543 *Loci communes* will give us a good sense of how things changed in the beginning of the second phase of the Reformation. Pitkin has a good summary of the importance of this comparison:

There is one further reason why the period from 1539-46 represents a fertile field for exploring the differences between Calvin and Melanchthon's conceptions of human nature. This was also the period in which each was working out his own understanding of human nature and human capabilities and bringing it to fuller expression.⁶⁸

Pitkin argues that it is Calvin, "the Protestant Zeno," who helped to press Melanchthon toward a sharper formulation of his own less deterministic views.⁶⁹ The new development of Melanchthon is especially relevant to our discussion because Calvin knew well the works of Melanchthon.⁷⁰

Unlike 1521 *Loci communes*, the primary concern of 1535 and 1543 *Loci communes* is not the rejection of free will, but rather is the warning against a Stoic concept of necessity. In the first line of his locus on free will, Melanchthon begins his

⁶⁸ Pitkin, "The Protestant Zeno," 350. On the text of 1543 *loci communes*, Pitkin reminds us that on the revision of the locus on free will, Melanchthon apparently finished the revision too late: "In the 1543 edition Melanchthon left the discussion of free will exactly as he had written it for the *Loci* of 1535, but subsequently completely revised this section." Hence, some of the texts on the third edition of the *loci* on the section on free will may be actually found in 1545 *loci communes*. Pitkin, "The Protestant Zeno," 373. In this dissertation, for simplicity sake, we will just treat the extended discussion on free will as in 1543 *loci communes*, unless the time element is an issue of discussion. Pitkin also points out that in 1548, Melanchthon adds a section in attacking certain Manicheans. Pitkin argues that his correspondence with Calvin may be key reasons behind his attack on Stoic necessity. Nevertheless, as the attack against Valla and Stoicism was already in his 1535 *loci communes*, the initial attack could be directed against Calvin. The interaction with Calvin may influence his additional comments in 1545 *loci communes*, but not that in 1535 *loci communes*. Cf. *ibid.*, 373-76.

⁶⁹ Pitkin, "The Protestant Zeno," 377-78.

⁷⁰ Pitkin has a nice summary on this: "Melanchthon was laying the foundations for what would become his final edition of his *Loci communes*, which had initially appeared in 1521 as the first Protestant summary of Christian doctrine. He had already significantly reshaped his discussions of topics related to human nature for the 1535 edition; now, in the early 1540s, he was rendering his discussions of such issues as the cause of human sin, the freedom of the will, and the nature of sin even more precise. Calvin was well-acquainted with all of these editions; he had drawn upon Melanchthon's 1521 summary of Protestant teaching for his own 1536 contribution to this genre. He utilized the 1535 edition when he revising his own *Institutes* in 1539. Finally, he wrote a preface for the French translation of the 1543 edition of the *Loci* published in Geneva in 1546." "The Protestant Zeno," 351-52.

discussion by an attack on Valla and the Stoics.⁷¹ His very first sentence speaks against the concept of stoic determinism: “Valla and many others have taken the freedom away from the will of man. Therefore all things happen with God’s decree.”⁷² The reason in attacking Valla as Kolb points out is that “Melanchthon could use him as a target of criticism to distance himself” from the criticisms made by the contemporary Roman Catholic theologians.⁷³ Melanchthon condemned Valla in the 1535 and 1543 *Loci communes*, but in the 1521 *Loci communes* he defended Valla.⁷⁴ Kolb implicitly links

⁷¹ Cf. CR 21, 374.

⁷² Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 41a. “Valla & plerique alii detrahunt voluntati hominis libertatem, ideo fiant omnia decernente Deo.” CR 21, 652. Cf. Philipp Melanchthon, *Loci communes theologici, iam postremo recogniti & aucti* (Basileae: Apud Ioannem Oporinum, 1547), 84. The first line in 1535 *loci* is “Valla and many others have taken the freedom away from the will of man. Therefore all things happen with God’s decree. And thus they destroy contingency.” “Valla et plerique alii non recte detrahunt voluntati hominis libertatem ideo, quia fiant omina decernente Deo; atque ita in universum tollunt contingentiam.” CR 21, 374. In his 1533 lecture, the Valla sentence is not there. The first sentence is about the benefits of Christ: “Necesse est de viribus humanis aliquid praefari, ut ea quae postea de peccato. Item de lege, de beneficio Christi dicenda erunt, facilius intelligi possint.” CR 21, 274.

Valla wrote a treatise *De libero arbitrio*, first published in Louvain (1483). He “attacked the Aristotelian and Scholastic reconciliation of free will and divine providence and asserted the irrationality of any attempt to understand the paradox that God by hardening or showing mercy allowed free will to men.” Quoted in Melanchthon, “*Loci Communes Theologici*,” 26, note 26. The attack on Valla signifies a significant break from previous versions. It is also interesting to point out that in his 1555 German *Loci* the line on Valla is omitted. Nevertheless, the concern against Stoic tendency is still clearly a key concern. Melanchthon ends his locus on free will in 1555 by saying this: “Let this be enough about free will as a human power. And I pray that Christians will not let themselves be involved in strange Stoical disputes about this; such disputes do not belong in the Christian Church, and cause people to err.” Melanchthon, *On Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555*, 51, 68. But if we go to the Latin text of the 1559 *loci*, the same line is there. *MW*, Book 2, Part 1, 236.

⁷³ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 90.

⁷⁴ There Melanchthon defends Valla against Eck’s criticism: “Eck says that Valla wanted to know more than he had learned because he refuted the position of the Schools on free will, i.e., that he as a very amusing trifler. Now, if there vampires raise the same objection against us, saying that a professor of languages is dabbling in theology, we can only answer that they should not evaluate a work by its author.” Melanchthon, “*Loci communes theologici*,” 26. “Vallam ait Eccius, quod scholarum sententiam de libero arbitrio confutarit, plura voluisse scire quam didicisset, scilicet egregie festivus nugatory. Quod si idem nobis obiecerint istae lamiae versari hominem grammatistam in re theologica, quid responderimus, nisi ut ne ab auctore rem aestiment?” *MW*, Book II, Part I, 12. Wengert points out that in his 1522 *loci*: “Finally, he made few changes in the section on predestination, except to eliminate an expressed attack on Eck in favor of Lorenzo Valla.” Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness*, 69.

this directly with his disapproval of Calvin's position: "He did not wish to reject the position of Calvin publicly, it seems."⁷⁵ Nevertheless, as Melanchthon started to condemn Valla severely as early as in 1535, Calvin could not be his primary target. We believe that it is his way to distance himself from the unnuanced arguments Luther and he himself had made in the early Reformation. Melanchthon explicitly distinguished his position from Luther's by the re-adoption of the medieval distinction of two kinds of necessities.⁷⁶ In addition, Melanchthon "spoke of three causes for salvation (the Word, the Holy Spirit and the human will (*voluntas*) and glossed over predestination."⁷⁷

In the first sentence of the second paragraph of this locus, Melanchthon again shows his theodical concern by distancing himself from the charge of teaching God as the author of sin: "We must cling to this godly and true teaching with both hands and more importantly with whole heart: that God is not the cause of sin, and that God does not will sin. But the causes of sin are the will of the devil and human will."⁷⁸ This theodical defense is enlarged in his 1543 *loci*:

⁷⁵ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 90.

⁷⁶ "His repugnance toward Luther's assertion that all things happen by absolute divine necessity began to come out in the open through his treatment of contingency in human affairs within the framework of a *necessitas consequentiae*, which Melanchthon distinguished from the *necessitas consequentis*, the scholastic distinction that Luther had opposed." Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 87. Kolb also points out that in 1535 Melanchthon has his new understanding of necessity and Melanchthon's new position is that "contingency must exist and there can be no absolute necessity, a repudiation of his position in 1521 as well as Luther's in 1525." *Ibid.*, 88. Cf. *CR* 21:371-73; Matz, *Die Willenslehre in der Theologie Philipp Melanchthons*, 110-38.

⁷⁷ Timothy J. Wengert, "'We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever': The Epistolary Friendship of John Calvin and Philip Melanchthon," in *Melanchthon in Europe*, 27. Cf. *CO* 6:250-51; *CR* 21: 376, 428, 450-53. Kolb points out that 1533 fragment, a working draft of the 1535 *Loci Communes*, "does contain a brief topic 'on predestination,' which admonishes readers that this locus can be understood neither from human reason nor from the law, but only on the basis of the gospel." *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 86.

⁷⁸ "Et autem haec pia et vera sententia, utraque manu ac verius toto pectore tenenda: quod Deus non sit causa peccati, et quod Deus non velit peccatum. Sed causae peccati sunt voluntas Diaboli et voluntas hominis." *CR* 21:371.

We must cling to this true and godly teaching with both hands and more importantly with our whole heart, that God is not the cause of sin nor does He will sin, nor drive our wills into sin or the approval of sin [*Deum non esse causam peccati, nec velle peccatum, nec impellere voluntates ad peccandum, nec approbare peccatum*].⁷⁹ . . . Thus God is not the cause of sin, nor is sin something which was created or ordained by God [*Non igitur Deus causa est peccati, nec peccatum est res condita aut ordinata a Deo*]; but it is a terrible destruction of both the divine order and the divine work.⁸⁰

In 1543, Melanchthon adds that God does not approve of sin, “nor is sin something which was created or ordained by God.” Pitkin points out that the French translation in 1546 in Geneva omits the last sentence of the paragraph. Pitkin argues that “it is hard to imagine that this was a mistake.”⁸¹ Pitkin implies that Calvin did not agree with this line of thought and omitted that part in the French translation.

Melanchthon’s 1543 *Loci communes* altered the order of his presentation in the locus on free will and greatly increased the length to defend the genuine contingency of the human will. On this Kolb observes: “Melanchthon’s revised locus ‘on the cause of sin and on contingency’ of 1543 repeated the basic arguments of the locus composed eight years earlier, with the same Bible passages and more, but was four times as long.”⁸² Kolb believes that it was a reaction against Johann Eck’s accusations in the 1540 and 1541 colloquies. Kolb says, “This accusation the Preceptor had wanted to rebut at all

⁷⁹ The word “causa” is frequently cited as “caussa” in the versions of 1543 onwards cited in *CR 21*. We will just change it back to “causa.”

⁸⁰ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 36a. *CR 21*, 644. Pitkin points out that after 1543/1545 version, the section on free will “was carried through unchanged in all remaining editions of the *Loci*.” “The Protestant Zeno,” 372, note 102.

⁸¹ Pitkin, “The Protestant Zeno,” 377. Pitkin also adds the following historical consequence: “In fact, Trolliet, in 1551, quoted the passage containing the sentence in question—now restored within the discussion, although, curiously, located in a few sentences later than it appears in the Latin original.” *Ibid*.

⁸² Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 88. The discussion expands a lot from the versions of 1535-1541. The exposition grows from 2.2 pages (*CR 21*, 371-73) to 8.4 pages (*CR 21*, 643-52) in the version of 1543 and onwards. And the locus *de humanis viribus seu de libero arbitrio* expands from 5 pages (*CR 21*, 373-78) into nearly 13 pages (*CR 21*, 652-65). The locus *de*

costs.”⁸³ Kolb also points out, “When the Preceptor revised his *Loci* in 1543, he had a new occasion to make certain that he would not be vulnerable to charges of Stoic determinism.”⁸⁴ Of course, Melanchthon has already attacked Valla and Stoicism severely in 1535, and though he intensified his argumentation in the 1540s, the shift to a emphasis on the condemnation of Stoicism should be traced to the mid 1530s.

This focus on theodical concern contrasts greatly with the focus Melanchthon had in 1521. It signifies a tremendous change in focus and concern in Melanchthon. In 1521, Melanchthon’s main purpose was to emphasize the bondage of the human will.⁸⁵ And his central thesis then was to reject the use of the term *liberum arbitrium*.⁸⁶ Melanchthon then also used the existence of divine predestination to argue for the bondage of the human will.⁸⁷ In 1521 Melanchthon also rejected the existence of genuine contingency:

praedestinatione expands from 3 pages (CR 21, 450-53) into 5.6 pages (CR 21, 912-20).

⁸³ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 88.

⁸⁴ Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 88. Kolb also adds, “In this third edition of the *Loci* he expanded his comments on the concept of contingency to make certain that God could not be regarded in any way responsible for evil.” *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ “Therefore, they attributed even more things to human power than was right, and fluctuated remarkably when they saw that the Scriptures everywhere contradicted the judgment of reason.” Melanchthon, “*Loci communes theologici*,” 23.

⁸⁶ “The godless doctrine about free will [*libero arbitrio*] was taken over and the benefits of Christ were obscured through that profane and earthly wisdom of our reason. The term ‘free will’ [*liberi arbitrii*] was used, a term most incongruous with Scripture and the sense and judgment of the Spirit, and a term that often offended holy men.” Melanchthon, “*Loci communes theologici*,” 23. “Et receptum est impium de libero arbitrio dogma et obscurata Christi beneficentia per profanam illam et animale[m] rationis nostrae sapientiam. Usurpata est vox liberi arbitrii a divinis literis, a sensu et iudicio spiritus alienissima, qua videmus sanctos viros non raro offensos esse.” *MW*, Book 2, Part I, 8.

⁸⁷ Melanchthon, “*Loci communes theologici*,” 24. “Quandoquidem omnia quae eveniunt, necessario iuxta divinam praedestinationem eveniunt, nulla est voluntatis nostrae libertas.” *MW*, Book II, Part I, 10. “And since free will had to be discussed in the very first topic, how could I conceal the position of Scripture when it deprives our will of freedom by the necessity of predestination?” Melanchthon, “*Loci communes theologici*,” 25. “Et cum de libero arbitrio omnino primo loco agendum esset, qui potui dissimulare sententiam scripturae de praedestinatione, quando voluntati nostrae libertatem per praedestinationis necessitatem adimit scriptura?” *MW*, Book II, Part I, 11-12.

“What, then,” you will say, “is there no chance in events, no accident, or, to use the word of those fellows, no contingency?” The Scriptures teach that all things take place by necessity. Granted that to you it seems that there is a contingency in human affairs, but right here the judgment of reason must be overruled.⁸⁸

But the first thesis on free will in his 1543/1545 emphasizes the existence of contingency:

“we must concede there is some place for contingency.”⁸⁹ In addition, in 1543/1545,

unlike 1521, Melanchthon separates the topic of free will from that of predestination:

“Furthermore, we must not confuse the argument concerning divine determination with the question of free choice.”⁹⁰ In 1543/1545, Melanchthon explicitly argues that the

bondage of the human will did not necessarily link to the topic of divine determination:

“The church sets forth this doctrine of our infirmity not to plant Stoic ideas, nor to tie up our minds with perplexing and insoluble arguments.”⁹¹

Furthermore, while, in 1521, Melanchthon was very keen to reject the use of the term *liberum arbitrium*, in 1543/1545 Melanchthon only gave brief remarks on the debates, “There are also records of long arguments on the term ‘free choice’ [*liberum arbitrium*] which can easily be evaluated by those who are interested.”⁹² Contrary to his

⁸⁸ Melanchthon, “Loci communes theologici,” 25. “Quid igitur, inquire, nullane est in rebus, ut istorum vocabulo utar, contingentia, nihil casus, nihil fortuna? Omnia necessario evenire scripturae docent.” *MW*, Book II, Part I, 11. Melanchthon has more to say against contingency: “The would-be philosophers who have attributed freedom to the will have fixed their eyes upon this contingency of external works. But Scripture tells nothing of that kind of freedom, since God looks not its external works but at the inner disposition of the heart.”

⁸⁹ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 41a. “Sed aliquam contingentiam concedendam.” *CR* 21, 652.

⁹⁰ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 41a. “Nec miscenda est disputatio de determinatione divina, quaestioni de libero arbitrio.” *CR* 21, 652.

⁹¹ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 41a. “Hanc doctrinam de nostris morbis proponit Ecclesia, not ut Stoicas opiniones serat, non ut mentes implicet perplexis et inextricabilibus disputationibus.” *CR* 21, 653-54.

⁹² Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 41b. “Extant autem longae disputationes de vocabulo Liberi arbitrii, quae ab attentis facile diiudicari possunt.” *CR* 21, 653.

practice in 1521, in 1543/1545 Melanchthon explicitly uses the term *liberum arbitrium*: “Furthermore, it is called free choice [*liberum arbitrium*] when the mind and the will are joined together. Or free choice [*liberum arbitrium*] is the name given to the faculty or power of the will to choose and seek those things which have been shown to it, or to reject them.”⁹³ The focus has completely changed.

In 1543/1545, the theodical concern, not the argument for the bondage of the human will, dominates Melanchthon’s exposition. Because of this theodical concern, Melanchthon argues that “it follows that sin occurs by contingency, that is, that not all things which happen take place by necessity.”⁹⁴ Melanchthon also repeatedly affirms the existence of contingency which he seemed to disallow in 1521.⁹⁵ Melanchthon now explicitly places the proper cause of sin fully on humankind and denies that God is the cause of sin: “Thus God is not the cause of sin. For although He does sustain human nature to an extent, yet the defects in the human mind are not produced by Him, and Eve’s free will was properly and truly the cause for her action and she voluntarily turned

⁹³ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 41a. “Vocantur autem liberum arbitrium Mens et Voluntas coniunctae. Aut vocatur liberum arbitrium facultas voluntatis ad eligendum ac expetendum ea, quae monstrata sunt, et ad reiiciendum eadem.” *CR 21*, 653.

⁹⁴ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 37b. “Constitutata autem hac sententia, quod Deus non sit causa peccati, nec velit peccatum, sequitur Contingentiam esse, hoc est, non omnia, quae fiunt, necessario fieri.” *CR 21*, 647. The 1535 version is “Constitutata autem hac sententia, quod Deus non sit causa peccati, plane sequitur contingentiam concedendam.” *CR 21*, 371. The 1543 *loci* is more explicit in rejecting the link between contingency and necessity caused by the sovereign will.

⁹⁵ Now Melanchthon argues that the fact that God foresees all things and sustains all things does not necessarily take away the contingency: “On the one hand, God sets limits to the things which He wills, and on the other hand, to the things which He does not will. Further, He limits the things which depends wholly on His will and the things which He Himself does in part and which the will of man does in part [*partim voluntas humana*]. . . . Nor does the fact that God sustains human nature stand in the way of contingency or liberty [*contingentiae aut libertati*]. . . . Thus, however great the freedom is, it is not hindered by the sustaining of God, but just as God sustain Saul, whatever he is, likewise the will of Saul is properly the cause of his evil action.” Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 38b. Melanchthon also emphasizes, “Therefore, although these points are stated by way of warning concerning the help of God in good and salutary actions, yet we must not conclude from this that there is absolutely no freedom of choice for the human will [*prorsus nullam esse libertatem electionis humanae*]. Much less does it follow that all

herself away from God.”⁹⁶ Melanchthon places the fault of her fall totally on her alone and does not agree that “the first cause is also the cause of sin”:

For the objection is raised that a secondary cause does not act without a primary cause. *Thus the secondary cause, such as the will of Eve, is properly the cause of sin, and therefore the first cause is also the cause of sin.*⁹⁷ . . . yet I shall deal with another reply which is weightier and more substantive, which is derived from the fundamental principle that God is present with his creatures, not in the sense of a Stoic god who is bound to secondary causes, so that He can move only in a simple way, as secondary causes move, but rather God is a completely free agent who sustains nature and by His own counsel acts in various different ways towards different things.⁹⁸

Eve should be fully responsible for her fall: “Thus the will of Eve in turning herself away from God is a personal and independent cause of her action [*immediata causa sui actus*]. . . . And the secondary cause is free, just as the will of Eve was free to do evil, without the aid of the first cause.”⁹⁹ The integrity of second causality is fully affirmed now. The will of Eve is the immediate cause, a secondary cause, and free.

Moreover, the theodical concern is clearly behind his attack against Stoicism: “The Stoics and the Christians do not understand in the same way the proposition that a secondary cause does not act without a primary.” And Melanchthon ends his locus on contingency in 1543 *Loci communes* by condemning the Stoic concept: “In summary, let

good and evil things of necessity come from God.” Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 38b. CR 21, 649.

⁹⁶ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 37b. “Nec propterea Deus est causa peccati. Etsi enim sustentat aliquantisper naturam, tamen defectus illi in mente non efficiuntur ab ipso, et voluntas libera Evae proprie et vere erat causa suae actionis, ac sponte se avertit a Deo.” CR 21, 647.

⁹⁷ “Secunda est proprie causa peccati, ergo etiam prima.” CR 21, 651. Italics added.

⁹⁸ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 39b.

⁹⁹ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 40a. CR 21, 651.

us cling to this proposition: God is present with His work, not as a Stoic god but as a truly free agent who sustains His creation and governs many things.”¹⁰⁰

Another significant turn against the early Reformation formulation is Melanchthon’s recourse to the medieval distinction of two kinds of necessity. Luther had explicitly rejected the legitimacy of the distinction in his debate against Erasmus.¹⁰¹ Melanchthon used it in his commentary on Romans (1532),¹⁰² in 1535 *Loci communes*, and in 1543 *Loci communes*.¹⁰³ In 1543, Melanchthon both uses it positively and provides a long elaboration on the terms to safeguard the contingency of the human will.¹⁰⁴ And unlike Luther, Melanchthon uses the case of Pharaoh, the issue of God’s

¹⁰⁰ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 40b. It is interesting to observe that this ending was dropped in Melanchthon 1555 *loci*. Together with the drop of the attack on Valla which was in the beginning sentence in his locus on free will in 1543, Melanchthon seemed to soften the tone of his attack on the Stoic concept in his 1555 *loci*. Cf. Melanchthon, *On Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555*, 50-51.

¹⁰¹ *LW* 33:39-41, 190-91, 194-95, 230-31. “That figment about the necessity of consequence and of the consequent has been refuted above.” *LW* 33:185. On use of the term in medieval, one may refer Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 199-200. The medieval distinction, as McSorley explains it, is “to enable the Scholastics clearly to affirm man’s free will, while at the same time affirming the infallible working of God’s creating and saving activity.” “Neither does the distinction explain the mystery of the relation between divine and human activity, it enables us to state the mystery correctly and to retain it by affirming both God’s transcendent, unailing working and man’s free will.” McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 235.

¹⁰² “Meminerint hic etiam studiosi vulgatum discrimen necessitatis. Alia vocatur necessitas absoluta seu consequentis, qualis est: Deum esse necesse est. Alia vocatur necessitas consequentiae, qualis est: Oportet vinci Pompeium; oportuit everti Ierosolymam, non quod hoc sua natura necessarium fuerit, sed vel quia Deus ita determinat, vel quia sequitur propter praecedentes causas. Ita natura contingenta fiunt necessaria necessitate consequentiae.” Melanchthon, *Römerbrief-Kommentar 1532, MW*, vol. 5 (Gütersloh: Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1965), 256-57.

¹⁰³ In his *Loci communes 1535*, Melanchthon says, “Ceterum illa distinctio necessaria est: Necessitas alia est consequentis seu absoluta qualis est haec. . . . Alia est consequentiae, . . . , Haec non sunt natura sua necessaria, sed fiunt immutabilia, postquam decreta sunt.” *CR* 21, 372. Cf. Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 39a. “Sic fit necessaria, Pharao persequetur Israelitas, haec non est sua natura necessaria, sed revere contingens. Ac fieri oppositum, non esset impossibile, sed quia sic evenit, dicitur necessaria, necessitate consequentiae. Haec puerilis distinctio non est inutilis, et saepe traditur in scholis, ut consideremus, qui eventus vere pendeant et oriantur a voluntate Dei, qui aliunde oriantur.” *CR* 21, 650.

¹⁰⁴ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 39a. Cf. Melanchthon, *On Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555*, 49.

hardening the heart of Pharaoh, to affirm that even in these cases contingency exists. He says,

Thus it was necessary that Pharaoh persecute the Israelites, but this was not necessary of its own nature, but is actually contingent [*haec non est sua natura necessaria, sed revera contingens*]. It is not impossible that the opposite might occur, but because a matter turns out in a certain way, it is said to be necessary or a necessity of consequence [*dicitur necessaria, necessitate consequentiae*]. This simple distinction is useful and often taught in the schools, so that we might consider which events actually depend upon and arise from the will of God and which come from some other source.¹⁰⁵

Contrary to Luther's early practice, he interprets the "hardening" of the heart of Pharaoh as "permission."¹⁰⁶

The assertion of the existence of a certain freedom of the human will and the emphasis on the assenting nature of the will become important components of Melancthon's exposition in 1543 *Loci communes*. Now "the philosophers" are credited, while they were condemned in 1521. Now they "correctly attribute" the freedom of the will concerning external civil works for humankind.¹⁰⁷ Melancthon also clarifies the nature of bondage that is born with us and that is in our minds and hearts. He argues that "this will is captive and not free to remove death and the depravity of human nature,"

¹⁰⁵ Melancthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 39a. *CR 21*, 650. In his *Loci Communes* (1555), he divides the concept of necessity into four different degrees. On the case concerning evil works, Melancthon says, "It is necessary only because it follows, *necessitate consequentiae*." Melancthon, *On Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555*, 49.

¹⁰⁶ Melancthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 175a. "And examples occur from time to time which testify that by this Hebrew expression permission [*permissionem*] is very often signified." *CR 21*, 919. In 1535 *loci*, he puts it in the locus *de causa peccati et de contingentia*. *CR 21*, 371. In his 1532 Romans commentary, cf. *MW*, 5, 257. On Luther's view, cf. *LW* 33: 164-83.

¹⁰⁷ In his 1543/1545 *loci communes*, Melancthon says, "Thus the human will can by his own powers and without regeneration perform to some degree the external works of the Law. This the freedom of the will which the philosophers correctly attribute to man." Melancthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 41b. "Quare voluntas humana potest suis viribus sine renovatione aliquo modo externa Legis opera facere. Haec est libertas voluntatis, quam Philosophi recte tribuunt homini." *CR 21*, 654. Cf. *CR 21*, 374.

though “there remains some happiness, some freedom in ruling our external activities for some degree of improvement.”¹⁰⁸

After this, Melanchthon comes to a very significant and long section to defend an assenting, and not-idle nature of the human will. It is an important feature added in his 1543/1545 *loci communes*.¹⁰⁹ And here he builds on three causes he briefly mentioned in 1535 *loci communes* and expands it into long sections of elaboration. In 1535 *loci communes*, the three causes are only briefly mentioned in his elaboration on Rom. 8:26: “In this example we see the joining of the causes: the Word, the Holy Spirit, and the will, which is not idle, but is repugnant because of its weakness.”¹¹⁰ At that time he followed it only with two short quotes from Basil and Chrysostom. But in 1543/1545 *loci communes*, this short elaboration was greatly expanded into four full pages of elaboration.¹¹¹ Now the three causes are fully elaborated:

And when we are guided by His Word, we meet the three causes of good works, namely, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the human will which assents to and does not contend against the Word of God. For the will could disregard the Word of God, as Saul did of his own free will. But when the mind, hearing and sustaining itself, does not resist or indulge in hesitation, but with the aid of the Holy Spirit tries to assent, in this contest the will is not idle.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 42b, 42a.

¹⁰⁹ One may compare the lack of this discussion in 1535 version, cf. *CR 21*, 376-77.

¹¹⁰ “In hoc exemplo videmus conjungi has causas, Verbum, Spiritum sanctum, et voluntatem, non sane otiosam, sed repugnantem infirmitati suae.” *CR 21*, 376.

¹¹¹ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 43b-45a. *CR 21*, 658-662.

¹¹² Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 43b. “Cumque ordimur a verbo, hic concurrunt tres causae bonae actionis, verbum Dei, Spiritus sanctus et homana voluntas assentiens, nec repugnans verbo Dei. Posset enim excutere, ut excutit Saul sua sponte; Sed cum mens audiens ac se sustentans non repugnat, non indulget diffidentiae, sed adiuvante etiam Spiritu sancto conatur assentiri, in hoc certamine voluntas non est otiosa.” *CR 21*, 658.

Melanchthon also provides a long exposition of this assenting will in order to defend the genuine freedom of believers.¹¹³

Concluding our review on Melanchthon's theodical concern, we find that, starting in 1530s, Melanchthon evidences a clear shift of focus. The attack against Stoicism, the affirmation of a genuine existence of contingency and second causality and a certain degree of freedom in humankind, a strong condemnation of Stoicism, and the clear rebuttals against the charge of making God the author of sin become Melanchthon's primary concern. The single focused concern of the early Reformation has shifted to the "twin concerns" and the theodical concern has become primary. Melanchthon, similar to Bucer, affirmed the catholicity and orthodoxy of the Reformation and smoothed out the unnuanced early Reformation formulation. He reminds his readers that his teachings, implying also the doctrines taught by the Reformers, are not "new," but are biblical and truly catholic as they have the consensus of the "universal church of Christ, and that is, of all learned men in the church of Christ."¹¹⁴ In the beginning of 1543 *Loci communes*, Melanchthon admits that he may improve in time and at least he may clarify his

¹¹³ In them, "the will was not idle but was fighting against these temptations and commanding the eyes and the feet that they avoid the occasion of failing. These examples explain the causes of good actions." Still, this freedom of the will in no way sets aside the need for grace: "although there is some liberty or freedom of choice, yet we at the same time must consider the impediments, so that we learn to set aside our self confidence and see our help from God." Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 44b, 45a.

¹¹⁴ "So I listened very carefully to the learned interpreters and teachers of theology. With great care and concern, I investigated the doctrine of the church and tried to state these great truths as clearly as I could. I am not creating *new* opinions. Nor do I believe that any greater crime can be committed in the church than to play games by inventing *new* ideas, departing from the prophetic and apostolic Scripture and true *consensus* of the church of God. Further, I am following and embracing the teaching of the church at Wittenberg and those adhering to it. This teaching unquestionably is the *consensus* of the universal (*catholica*) church of Christ, that is, of all learned men in the church of Christ." Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 15a. Italics added. CR 21: 601. To defend that the orthodox nature of the Reformers' doctrine, that is not "new", the "consensus" of the theologians and learned men is repeatedly emphasized. Melanchthon pointedly and explicitly expresses his apologetic purpose in the work: "that I may be able to express the testimony of my own conscience in the face of the accusations of Eck, Cochlaeus, Alphonsus, and the many others who support them." Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 15.

arguments as he increases his knowledge. This may not be just polite words, but a genuine reflection of his change and development.¹¹⁵ The older Melanchthon desperately wants to separate his teaching from the charge of Manichaeism and Stoicism.¹¹⁶

In this chapter we find that both Bucer and Melanchthon in mid 1530s supported the more classical Augustinian position and paid much greater attention to affirm the genuine contingency of second causality. They also showed their dislike of the necessitarian arguments used in the early Reformation. But Melanchthon went further than Bucer. Gradually the theodical concern became his primary concern. This significant shift of formulations and concern was the historical context Calvin and his contemporary Reformers had to face in the second phase of the Reformation.

¹¹⁵ Melanchthon says, “I began this work . . . that I might increase my own knowledge, . . . Although I am anxious to speak clearly and in proper language, yet it can happen—especially in so great a mountain of things and with so great need for brevity—that from time to time something may be said which is a little unclear or less than perfect.” Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 15.

¹¹⁶ On this, Pitkin says, “There differences in defining human nature and the implications of these definitions for their views of human responsibility and freedom represent two attempts toward a Protestant theological anthropology.” “The Protestant Zeno,” 377.

CHAPTER V

FREE CHOICE OF THE WILL AMONG CALVIN'S CONTEMPORARIES: BULLINGER AND VERMIGLI

Having reviewed Calvin's more important predecessors, we now come to the two key contemporaries of Calvin, Bullinger and Vermigli. On Bullinger, we will start our investigation with his *Oratio* (1536). In this work, Bullinger revealed his departure from the early Reformation formulation and advocated the importance of twin concerns, by maintaining both the anti-Pelagian concern in arguing for the bondage of the human will, and the theodical concern to defend against the charge that the Reformation doctrine makes God the author of sin. This work further proves that there are obvious discontinuities of the formulations of the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation and the early Reformation formulations. Both in this work and in other works of Bullinger, we find the seed for his future disagreement with certain necessitarian features in Calvin's formulation.¹

An investigation of Vermigli's formulation also helps us to have a more comprehensive picture of how different Reformed thinkers in the second phase of the Reformation react to the early Reformation formulation. Although Vermigli's works

¹ Cf. Cornelis P. Venema, "Heinrich Bullinger's Correspondence on Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination, 1551-1553," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 17/4 (1986): 435-50; Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination: Author of "the Other Reformed Tradition"?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2002); W. Peter Stephens, "Election in Zwingli and Bullinger: A Comparison of Zwingli's *Sermonis de Providentia dei Anamnema* (1530) and Bullinger's *Oratio de Moderatione Servanda in Negotio Providentiae, Praedestinationis, Gratiae et Liberi Arbitrii* (1536)," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 7.1 (April 2005): 40-56; Stephens, "Predestination or Election in Zwingli and Bullinger," in *Heinrich Bullinger: Life, Thought, Influence: Zurich, Aug. 25-29, 2004, International Congress Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575)*, edited by Emidio Campi and Peter Opitz (Zürich: TVZ, 2007), 1:313-34.

were published after Calvin's formulation, they are both biblical and Augustinian and at the same time also very sensitive to the early Reformation debate.² The formulations of Bullinger, Calvin, and Vermigli give us a better understanding of the spectrum of the formulations advocated among the Reformed thinkers in the second phase of the Reformation-era debate on free choice. A comparison of the similarities and dissimilarities of Vermigli's and Calvin's formulation also help us to locate Calvin's uniqueness.

From these two contemporaries of Calvin, we find further evidence of a shift from a single focused concern in the early Reformation to twin concerns in the second phase of the Reformation. In the continuities with his contemporaries, we may find features in Calvin's formulations that are actually common among many of his fellow reformers. In the discontinuities with his contemporaries, we may observe some possible uniqueness in Calvin and may appreciate more to what extent Calvin truly treasures himself as a defender of the early Reformation formulation.

A. Bullinger's "Twin Concerns" Formulation

When scholars discuss the relationship between Bullinger and Calvin on the issue of predestination, their focus is mostly on their various disagreements demonstrated in their correspondence concerning the Bolsec controversy.³ Cornelis P. Venema provides a survey of the development and a succinct summary on their differences:

² Cf. Frank A. James III, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination: The Augustinian Inheritance of an Italian Reformer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); James, ed., *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations: Semper Reformanda* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004).

³ During the controversy, Bolsec attacks Calvin and Zwingli and claims that both of their teachings lead to the conclusion that God was the author of sin. Bolsec also argued that "his doctrine was the same as that of Melancthon, Brenz, and Bullinger." Venema, "Heinrich Bullinger's Correspondence on Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination, 1551-1553," 438.

There is ample evidence, then, in Bullinger's correspondence regarding Calvin's doctrine of predestination in the years 1551-1553, that he differed with Calvin on at least two matters: the inclusion of Adam's fall into sin with the divine decree, and the elaboration of the doctrine of reprobation in the manner that did not adequately protect God against the charge of being the author of sin.⁴

Hence, it is obvious that their major disagreements are issues related to theodical concerns. Nevertheless, we should not neglect an important document written earlier by Bullinger, his *Oratio de moderatione servanda in negotio providentiae, praedestinationis, gratiae et liberi arbitrii* (1536).⁵

W. Peter Stephens calls this "Bullinger's first sustained discussion of predestination."⁶ We find the comparison Stephens makes between Zwingli and Bullinger helpful. This document testifies to a significant shift of focus and concern in the early part of the second phase of the Reformation in Zurich. By comparing the two Reformers of different generations, Stephens observes a significant shift of focus and concern: "It is significant that Bullinger responds to two errors, Pelagianism and Manichaeism, whereas Zwingli in effect engages with Pelagian views."⁷ Stephens describes the change as a change from a single focused concern in Zwingli to the "twin concerns" in Bullinger:

He then indicates two opposed views (Pelagianism and Manichaeism) which he rejects: one ascribing too much to us and the other too much to God. Some people,

⁴ Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 68-69.

⁵ Printed in Johann H. Hottinger, ed., *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti* (Zürich, 1667), 8:763-827.

⁶ W. Peter Stephens, "Predestination or Election in Zwingli and Bullinger," in *Heinrich Bullinger: Life, Thought, Influence: Zurich, Aug. 25-29, 2004, International Congress Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575)*, edited by Emidio Campi and Peter Opitz (Zürich: TVZ, 2007), 1: 322.

⁷ W. Peter Stephens, "Election in Zwingli and Bullinger: A Comparison of Zwingli's *Sermonis de Providentia dei Anamnema* (1530) and Bullinger's *Oratio de Moderatione Servanda in Negotio Providentiae, Praedestinationis, Gratiae et Liberi Arbitrii* (1536)," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 7.1 (April 2005): 53.

he writes, attribute salvation to free will or merit rather than to God's grace, while others, affirming absolute necessity, make God the author of all evil, as if we perish by God's fault, not ours. These *twin concerns* shape Bullinger's work, *though the second is more prominent*.⁸

Bullinger's *Oratio* (1536) is therefore another important indicator of the shift in the early stage of the second phase of the Reformation. Now the defense against the necessitarian arguments which seem to make God the author of sin becomes a prominent concern. The term "moderatione" (moderation) used by Bullinger in his title speaks volumes.⁹

Stephens points out that this theodical concern is a key issue in this work of Bullinger: "It is fundamental to Bullinger that God is not the author of sin and death . . . From them he concludes that God does whatever he wills, that he does not will evil, and therefore that he does not do evil."¹⁰ By linking *providentia*, *praedestinatio*, *gratia* and *liberum arbitrium* together in his title and content, Bullinger shows his intention to reflect the broader churchly tradition that, at least since the time of Anselm, had written treatises affirming all four doctrines.¹¹ At the very beginning of his *Oratio*, Bullinger explicitly attacks people using concepts of divine foreknowledge and predestination to argue for fatal necessity.¹² This change of the priority we also find in Melanchthon. Melanchthon's and Bullinger's formulations evidence the fact that on both the Lutheran side and the

⁸ Stephens, "Election in Zwingli and Bullinger," 50. Italics added. Stephens' work will be more helpful, if he has supported his observation on Bullinger with Latin texts of *Oratio*.

⁹ "Nam, pro gratia mihi a Domino data, docebo, quae modertaio servanda sit in negotio providentiae, praedestinationis, gratiae ac liberi arbitrii." *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:765.

¹⁰ Stephens, "Election in Zwingli and Bullinger," 50.

¹¹ Anselm, *On Freedom of Choice*, in *Three Philosophical Dialogues*, translated, with Introduction and Notes, by Thomas Williams (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub., 2002), 31-51.

¹² "Hodie quidem nulla quaestio omnium exagitatione perinde volvitur atque providential, praedestinationis, gratia & liberi abitrii. Sunt enim, qui causam, quam vocant primam agnoscant, secundam negligunt. Sunt alii, qui deiis per quem operatur Deus, ita omnia tribuunt, ut operantis impellentisque Dei videantur obliti. Invenias multos, qui afferant, divina praescientia & praedestinatione quemlibet ad vitam vel mortem *fatali quadem necessitate vel nolentem rapi*." *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:764.

Reformed side in the 1530s there was great concern among the Reformers to provide a theodical defense against the charge generated by the necessitarian argument in the early Reformation.

This work also signifies the shift from a single front of opponents to a double front. As Stephens points out, Bullinger strives to avoid both heresies: Pelagianism and Manichaeism; the former being the object of the initial Reformation polemic, the later being the counter-accusation of the Reformers' opponents.¹³ Bullinger emphasizes that God uses means and He uses them always wisely, justly and holy: "God by his providence cares for human affairs wisely, justly, and holily, but also that he uses the work and ministry of his creatures, especially people, as means and instruments."¹⁴ Bullinger, unlike Zwingli, maintains both primary and secondary causality. In order to deny the charge that God is the author of sin, Bullinger explicitly affirms the full integrity of Adam and his having had a genuine freedom of will. He also explicitly claims that Adam was not constrained by necessity.¹⁵ He also condemns the concept of "absolute

¹³ "Illa in his opinionibus aequitas, nullum servatur & colligitur medium. Virinque peccatur ab extremitatibus. Et difficilis videtur huius negotii discussio ut operosius adversus Manichaeos, Pelagianos & reliqua hareseon monstra defundarnt." *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:765.

¹⁴ Stephens, "Election in Zwingli and Bullinger," 49. Cf. "Nempe, quod Deus providentia sua res mortalium, & prudenter, iusta & sancte curat Et quod utatur creaturarum suarum, hominum maxime, opera & ministerio ceu mediis & instrumentis quibusdam. . . . quocirca recte uteris in hac re moderatone, si ita asseras Dei providentiam, ut interim eius iustitiam non neges, id est, ita doceas Deum in nobis operari omnia, ut prater decorum, aequum & iustum: imo prater ordinem agat nihil." "Cur igitur negligimus haec media, cur solam & nudam electionem jactamus? Electio Dei a voluntate Dei separanda non est, neque sola, ordine & mediis neglectis, jactanda." *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:776, 807.

¹⁵ On this, Stephens has a nice summary: "This response leads to the further challenge that 'if evil comes from man and man was created by God, then God is the author of evil'. He argues against this that Adam's will 'was free and constrained by no necessity, so that it could have inclined to better things. But tempted, not by God but by the serpent, it declined knowingly and willingly to worse things' (790-94)." "Election in Zwingli and Bullinger," 51. "Conditus enim homo suerat, ut se conformem faceret puritati divinae per veritatem, iustitiam & sanctimoniam: Ut ipsa imago Dei, juxta quam homo conditus est ipsa dici possit veritas, puritas, justitia & sanctimonia." "Certe, ante lapsum erat homo bonus, excellens, a corruptione alienissimus & prorsus divinus: Vnde ergo malum inquis? Certum est hominem ad imaginem Dei esse conditum, ac in imagine Dei nihil haerere mali, vitiive." *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*,

necessity” [*absolutam necessitatem*].¹⁶ He repeatedly affirms the nature of God as being the best and righteous. The verse Ps. 145:17 (Jehovah is righteous in all His ways, and kind in all His works.) is one of his favorite verses and a core conviction in his theodical defense.¹⁷

Also, contrary to Luther and Zwingli, Bullinger uses “permission” to interpret those “hardening” texts. Stephens points out, “Furthermore, references to blinding and hardening are to be understood in terms of God’s permitting.”¹⁸ Repeatedly Bullinger declares that God is the “fountain of goodness, equity, and just” and “does not will evil and does not do evil.”¹⁹ He fully puts the problem of the bondage of the will in a soteriological framework: we have the grace only from Christ and only because of Adam there comes wrath, sin, and death.²⁰ Also repeatedly he argues that the cause of sin is from humankind themselves, and not from God.²¹ As Stephens points out, Bullinger concludes the *Oratio* with the twin concerns: “They are, therefore, to take care to

8:791, 792-93.

¹⁶ “Hic vero alii salutem hominis non ad gratiam Dei, sed merito tribuunt liberi arbitrii. Alii vero, de electione & fidei dono, sive gratia Dei differentes, omnia sic rejiciunt in absolutam necessitatem, ut omnis malis, omnium que scelerum authorem faciant Deum: quasi illius, non nostra culpa pereamus.” *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:777.

¹⁷ “Deum, vere optimum maximum, peccati & mortis authorem non esse, sed hominem sua potius culpa perire.” “Iustus Dominus in omnibus viis suis, & sanctus in omnibus operibus suis.” *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:784.

¹⁸ Stephens, “Election in Zwingli and Bullinger,” 52. He also uses permission to interpret the issue of reprobation in Rom. 1: “In sceleris vindictam, permisit illos sibi ipsis.” *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:821.

¹⁹ “Dominus quae cunq̄e voluit, facit: sed malum non vult, ergo malum non facit. Voluntas enim Dei sancta est & bona.” “Deum enim omnis boni authorem & fontem unicum, bonum, aequum & iustum esse; authorem mali & peccati non esse.” *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:785, 788.

²⁰ “Hoc est, boni authorem indicans, ex Christo gratiam, donum & vitam derivat: ex Adam iram & peccatum & mortem.” *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:788.

²¹ “Habetis, opinor, facris comprobatum demonstratumque; testimoniis quod malum sit ex homine, i.e. quod homo sua, non Dei culpa pereat.” *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Novi Testamenti*, 8:790.

attribute grace, forgiveness, and all good things to God, and wrath, sin, and everything corrupt to man.”²² Bullinger’s emphasis on theodical concern and his withdrawal from the necessitarian argument show once again that as early as in 1536 there was a major shift of focus in argumentation on the Reformed side.

Bullinger consistently maintains these twin concerns after 1536. The twin concerns are once again incorporated in his *Decades* (1549-1551).²³ As in *Oratio* (1536), Bullinger’s theodical concern leads him, in his third Decade, to reject the concept of “absolute necessity” and maintains the existence of means: “Who, I pray you, knoweth not, that God doth not deal with us by his absolute power, but by an appointed law and ordinance; I mean, by commodious means and a probable order?”²⁴ He also firmly and clearly maintains the genuine existence of freedom of choice in Adam that Adam before the fall “had power to do either good or evil.”²⁵ Bullinger also emphasizes that God’s foreknowledge does not cause necessity on Adam: “upon God’s foreknowledge there followeth no necessity, so that Adam did of necessity sin because God did foreknow that he would sin.”²⁶ He also uses “permission” to explain those “hardening” texts and argues that the actual cause of the hardening is our corrupted nature: “In the same sense God is said to harden man. . . . Permit . . . ; that is, he leaveth man unto his own corrupt nature, according unto which the heart of man is stony . . . : therefore the withdrawing of God’s

²² Stephens, “Election in Zwingli and Bullinger,” 53.

²³ Cf. Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 41-49.

²⁴ Heinrich Bullinger, “Third Decade,” in *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, edited by Thomas Harding (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1968), 365. Cf. *ibid.*, 365-81.

²⁵ Bullinger, “Third Decade,” in *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, 369.

²⁶ Bullinger, “Third Decade,” in *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, 377.

grace is the hardening of man's heart; and when we are left unto ourselves, then are we hardened."²⁷

This theodical concern is also manifested in his correspondence concerning the Bolsec controversy. One key theological difference between Bullinger and Calvin is how large is the scope of the divine role in the fall of Adam. Both reformers affirm that they should teach as far the Bible teaches and stop when the Bible stops. But they have a significant difference on the scope. Bullinger, in his letter to Calvin on December 1, 1551, implicitly argues that we should not speak about the divine ordination of the fall because the Bible speaks little about it and Calvin's way of saying gives an impression that God is the author of sin.²⁸ Venema summarizes the differences between Bullinger and Calvin:

In this remarkable statement, Bullinger implicitly criticized Calvin for exceeding the boundaries of this question as they were determined by the example of the apostles. By doing so, Calvin risked giving offense to the pious, since he gave the impression that God does not intend well for all men. For Bullinger, those who are reprobate (*reprobi*) perish by virtue of their own guilt, not because of any malice on God's part (*non Dei malignitate*).

And in his letter of February 20, 1552, Bullinger explicitly identifies the problem of Calvin's doctrine to his linking the will of God with the fall of Adam: "That God not only foresaw but also predestined and dispensed the fall of Adam, this seems to be a manner

²⁷ Bullinger, "Third Decade," in *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, 381.

²⁸ "Now believe me, many are offended by your statements on predestination in your Institutes, and Hieronymus has drawn the same conclusion as he did from Zwingli's book on providence. In fact, it is my opinion that the apostles touched upon this sublime matter only briefly, and not unless compelled to do so and even in such circumstances, they are cautious that the pious were not thereby offended, but understood God to desire well for all men, and also to offer salvation in Christ, which itself can be received not by one's own worth but by faith which is truly a gift of God. And indeed the elect are chosen on account of Christ and his grace and not on account of any respect of their own; the reprobate perish truly on account of their own guilt, and not by the malice of God [*reprobi vero sua culpa non Dei malignitate, perire*]." CO 14:215. Translated and quoted also in Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 61-62.

of speaking about the origin of evil and the cause of sin which can be turned around so that God himself is the author.”²⁹

The title added to Bullinger’s correspondence with Bartholomäus Traheronus in 1553 points in the same direction: *de providentia Dei eiusdemque praedestinatione electione ac reprobatione, deque libero arbitrio et quod Deus non sit autor peccati*. Once again, the theodical concern links the four topics (providence, predestination, free will and the problem whether God is the author of sin) together.³⁰ Venema provides a good summary of the background of this correspondence. Traheronus, an English theologian, “reported that in England it was thought that Bullinger had adopted the position of Melanchthon on providence, predestination, and free will.” And Traheronus “sided with the doctrine of Calvin, and explicitly referred to Calvin’s essay on predestination against Pighius.”³¹ Venema points out that Bullinger “sought to distance himself from Melanchthon’s synergism without embracing the strong statements of Calvin on predestination.”³²

In other words, Bullinger stands between Melanchthon and Calvin. Venema points out that Bullinger maintains both the sovereign role of God’s providence and the genuine existence of second causality. Bullinger comments, “Indeed, God administers all things,

²⁹ CO 14:289-90. “Deum non tantum praevidissee sed praedestinasse et dispensasse lapsum Adami, huiusmodi esse videtur ex quo origio mali causaque peccati in ipsum posit reflecti Deum autorem.” Translated and quoted in Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 63.

³⁰ CO 14:480-90. Venema has a good summary of this response, see *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 63-67. Venema points out that the original copy “is no longer extant.” *Ibid.*, 64.

³¹ Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 64. On Traheronus’ letter, see CO 14:359-60.

³² Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 64.

but through means, even though he is not bound by them.”³³ Repeating something similar to his earlier *Oratio* (1536), Bullinger points out, “Indeed, God is the fountain of every good and does not perform evil, nor destines evil, nor impels evil.”³⁴ Venema observes that Bullinger uses the classical concept of divine permission to disassociate God from evil: “This divine *permissio* was inseparable from divine providence, but it was not an *operatio* or ‘operation’ of God. God neither willed nor impelled anyone to sin: he only permitted what he himself abhorred.”³⁵

Bullinger also uses the Augustinian distinction between the two stages of the human will: *ante lapsum* and *post lapsum*, before the fall and after the fall. First, Bullinger affirms the genuine free will before the fall. Second, he affirms that we may still claim the existence of free will (*liberum arbitrium*) in some sense among the unregenerate because “man is not compelled but commits sin of his own accord and nature.”³⁶ Thus, as another evidence of his theodical concern, Bullinger identifies the *liberum arbitrium* as a genuine instance of second causality. And similar to what Melancthon does, Bullinger affirms that we may more properly say that the regenerate, by the virtue of God’s grace, has free will after the fall.³⁷ Bullinger also uses the

³³ CO 14:481. “Omnia enim agit Deus sed per media, licet his non sit alligatus.” Quoted and translated in Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 65.

³⁴ CO 14:482. “Deus enim fons est omnis boni et malum non facit, nec in malum destinat vel impellit.

³⁵ Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 65. Cf. CO 14:483. “Permissio non est operatio.”

³⁶ CO 14:485. “Et omino rursus est liberi arbitrii. Quo denim malum et peccatum atinet, homo non coactus sed sua sponte et natura peccatum operatur.” Quoted and translated in Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 65.

³⁷ CO 14:487.

consensus of the church fathers to defend his position and implicitly criticizes Calvin's practice. Venema summarizes:

But to teach that God not only foresaw but also predestined the fall of Adam was to make God the author of sin. When Calvin spoke, moreover, of God raising up the unbeliever, he spoke in a way that the church fathers never condoned. Such expressions were not required in order to honor God's mercy and grace.³⁸

By upholding a traditional Augustinianism, Bullinger reaffirms his theodical concern and takes a position between Melancthon and Calvin.

Another important indication of the "twin concerns" in Bullinger is his elaboration in *The Second Helvetic Confession* (1566). The title speaks about the key concerns among the Reformers of the second generation: a concern in developing an orthodox and catholic faith to be agreed among key cities in Switzerland.³⁹ In chapter 6, Bullinger maintains that means should not be despised: "Nevertheless, we do not spurn as useless the means by which divine providence works, but we teach that we are to adapt ourselves to them in so far as they are recommended to us in the Word of God."⁴⁰ On the fall of angels, Bullinger emphasizes that they fell by their own free will: "Consequently we teach that some angels persisted in obedience and were appointed for faithful service to God and men, but others fell of their own free will [*sua sponte*] and were cast into

³⁸ Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 67. Cf. CO 15:488.

³⁹ "*Confessio et expositio Simplex Orthodox Fide et dogmatm Catholicorum syncerae religionis Christianae, . . .*," in *Bekennnisschriften und Kirchenordnungen: der nach Gottes Wort reformierten Kirche*, edited by Wilhelm Niesel (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A. G. Zollikon, 1938), 219-78. The English text we use is "A Simple Confession and Exposition of the Orthodox Faith: The Second Helvetic Confession of 1566," in *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*, edited by Arthur C. Cochrane, with Historical Introductions (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), 224-301. The short form, *Confessio et expositio Simplex Orthodox Fide*, will be used in following quotations for the Latin text.

⁴⁰ Second Helvetic Confession, 233. "Media non aspernanda": "Interim vero media per quae operatur divina providentia, non aspernamur ut inutilia, sed his hactenus nos accomodandos esse docemus, quatenus in verbo Deus nobis commendantur." *Confessio et expositio Simplex Orthodox Fide*, 229.

destruction, becoming enemies of all good and of the faithful, etc.”⁴¹ And in chapter 8, “Of Man's Fall, Sin and the Cause of Sin,” Bullinger points out that man falls by his own fault (*sua culpa*).⁴² And he elaborates more on the issue, “God is not the author of sin, and how far he is said to harden.” He uses the concept of permission and of God acting the role of a just Judge and an avenger to handle the theodical concern.⁴³ Bullinger also limits the questions like “whether God willed Adam to fall, or incited him to fall” as “curious questions.”⁴⁴ Venema notes,

Ernst Koch, in his study of the text of the Second Helvetic Confession, has shown that this comment was more severe in its original formulation. In his original draft of the Confession, Bullinger spoke in the context of his implied criticism of Calvin's doctrine of those raise “unchristian questions.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ “Docemus ergo angelos alios quidem perstitisse in obedientia, ac ad fidele Dei et hominum ministerium esse deputatos: alios vero sua sponte lapsos, et in exitum esse praecipitados, factosque esse omnis boni fideliumque hostes, etc.” *Confessio et expositio Simplex Orthodox Fide*, 230.

⁴² “In the beginning, man was made according to the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, good and upright. But when at the instigation of the serpent and by his own fault he abandoned goodness and righteousness, he became subject to sin, death and various calamities. And what he became by the fall, that is, subject to sin, death and various calamities, so are all those who have descended from him.” “The Second Helvetic Confession,” 235.

⁴³ “When, therefore, it is said in Scripture that God hardens, blinds and delivers up to a reprobate mind, it is to be understood that God does it by a just judgment as a just Judge and Avenger. Finally, as often as God in Scripture is said or seems to do something evil, it is not thereby said that man does not do evil, but that God permits it and does not prevent it, according to his just judgment, who could prevent it if he wished, or because he turns man's evil into good, as he did in the case of the sin of Joseph's brethren, or because he governs sins lest they break out and rage more than is appropriate.” “The Second Helvetic Confession,” 236.

⁴⁴ “An Deus voluerit labi Adamum, aut impulerit ad lapsum?” “Confessio et expositio Simplex Orthodox Fide,” 231. Cf. “CURIOUS QUESTIONS. Other questions, such as whether God willed Adam to fall, or incited him to fall, or why he did not prevent the fall, and similar questions, we reckon among curious questions (unless perchance the wickedness of heretics or of other churlish men compels us also to explain them out of the Word of God, as the godly teachers of the Church have frequently done), knowing that the Lord forbade man to eat of the forbidden fruit and punished his transgression. We also know that what things are done are not evil with respect to the providence, will, and the power of God, but in respect of Satan and our will opposing the will of God.” “The Second Helvetic Confession,” 237.

⁴⁵ Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 94. Cf. Ernst Koch, “Die Textüberlieferung Der Confessio Helvetica Posterior Und Ihre Vorgeschichte,” in *Glauben und Bekennen: Vierhundert Jahre Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, ed. Joachim Staedtke (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966), 39-40.

In the chapter “Of Free Will” [*De libero arbitrio*], Bullinger, using the traditional Augustinian classification of different stages of man, explicitly affirms the presence of contrary choices for man before the fall: “There is the state in which man was in the beginning before the fall, namely, upright and free, so that he could both continue in goodness and decline to evil. However, he declined to evil, and has involved himself and the whole human race in sin and death, as has been said already.”⁴⁶ He emphasizes that “man does evil by his own will”: “Therefore, in regard to evil or sin, man is not forced by God or by the devil but does evil by his own free will, and in this respect he has a most free will.”⁴⁷ He also protects the genuine existence of second causality and affirms the active nature of the will of the regenerate in choosing and doing good: “the will [of the regenerate] itself is not only changed by the Spirit, but it is also equipped with faculties so that it wills and is able to do the good of its own accord” and “the regenerate, in choosing and doing good, work not only passively but actively.”⁴⁸ After that, he even affirms the existence of free will [*liberum arbitrium*] in the unregenerate in certain sense: “Moreover, no one denies that in external things both the regenerate and the unregenerate enjoy free will [*liberum arbitrium*]. For man has in common with other living creatures (to which he is not inferior) this nature to will some things and not to will others.”⁴⁹

Then he concludes the section on free will with his “twin concerns”:

In this matter we condemn the Manichaeans who deny that the beginning of evil was for man [created] good, from his free will. We also condemn the Pelagians who

⁴⁶ “The Second Helvetic Confession,” 237.

⁴⁷ “The Second Helvetic Confession,” 237. “(Homo sua sponte malum facit.) Ergo quoad malum sive peccatum, homo non coactus vel a Deo, vel a diabolo, sed sua sponte, malum facit, et hac parte liberrimi est arbitrii.” ?” “Confessio et expositio Simplex Orthodox Fide,” 232.

⁴⁸ “The Second Helvetic Confession,” 238-39.

⁴⁹ “The Second Helvetic Confession,” 239. “Confessio et expositio Simplex Orthodox Fide,” 233.

assert that an evil man has sufficient free will to do the good that is commanded. Both are refuted by Holy Scripture which says to the former, "God made man upright" and to the latter, "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).⁵⁰

Consistently, Bullinger maintains the "twin concerns" throughout his *Oratio* (1536), his *Decades* (1549-1551), his correspondence on predestination (1551-1553), and his *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566). To his contemporary theologians and Reformers, Bullinger clearly demonstrates a formulation that not only maintains the early Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the human will, but also pays attention to the theodical concern, a common concern among the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation. Bullinger's position is between Melancthon's and Calvin's, and is similar to Bucer's, but with much more detail and elaboration.

B. Vermigli's Augustinian-Reformational Formulation

Peter Martyr Vermigli is another important Reformer whose formulation will help us to understand more about Calvin's historical context.⁵¹ Before his leaving Italy in the summer of 1542, Vermigli was already a distinguished young theologian and had obtained his doctorate in theology (1526). Frank A. James III calls him "a mature

⁵⁰ "The Second Helvetic Confession," 240.

⁵¹ Cf. James, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination*; James, ed., *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations*; James, "A Late Medieval Parallel in Reformation Thought: *Gemina Praedestinatio* in Gregory of Rimini and Peter Martyr Vermigli," in *Via Augustini*, 157-88; James, "Peter Martyr Vermigli: At the Crossroads of Late Medieval Scholasticism, Christian Humanism and Resurgent Augustinianism," in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, edited by Carl R. Trueman and R. S. Clark (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 1999), 62-78; Donnelly, *Calvinism and Scholasticism*; Donnelly, "Calvinist Thomism," 441-55; J. C. McLelland, "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination according to Peter Martyr," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8 (1955): 257-65; McLelland, ed., *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Italian Reform* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1980); Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 57-75; Gordon Leff, *Gregory of Rimini: Tradition and Innovation in Fourteenth Century Thought* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961); Philip McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy: An Anatomy of Apostasy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Emidio Campi, ed., *Peter Martyr Vermigli: Humanism, Republicanism, Reformation* (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 2002).

theologian with considerable ecclesiastical experience” before he arrived in Strasbourg (Oct. 1542).⁵² Vermigli was already quite familiar with the works of Bucer, Melancthon, Bullinger, and Calvin when he was in Lucca (1541-42).⁵³ His outstanding theological gift was widely recognized by his fellow Reformers and even by the Catholic opponents. Possessing a gift of great clarity and careful articulation and being well trained in classical theology, Vermigli quickly became a key theologian among the Reformers and later became one of the most significant codifiers of Reformed theology.⁵⁴

There are different opinions about the exact nature of Vermigli’s concept of predestination.⁵⁵ Muller and Donnelly believe that Vermigli, particularly in his use of concept of divine permission and various classical concepts of causality, seems to be influenced by Thomistic theology. But in recent years James forcefully argues that there are close affinities between Vermigli’s theology and that of Gregory of Rimini. He believes that we should locate the main influence behind Vermigli’s concept of

⁵² James, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination*, 39. James disagrees with the common conception that Vermigli derived his concept of predestination through interaction with the fellow Reformers, especially that with Bucer. *Ibid.*, 41-42.

⁵³ “With Martyr as his mentor, Girolamo Zanchi was introduced to the works of Bucer, Melancthon, Bullinger, and Calvin.” “Zanchi himself acknowledges Vermigli’s role in exposing him to key themes in the theology of Calvin.” James, “*Nunc Peregrinus Oberrat*,” xvi.

⁵⁴ James points out that “So valuable was he to Bucer, that Johann Sturm stated the veteran Reformer made no decisions without first consulting with his Italian colleague. As a teacher, Vermigli was judged by all ‘to surpass’ Bucer.” “Even Catholic detractors, such as Cornelius Schulting argue that Vermigli was clearer and more learned than Calvin.” “*Nunc Peregrinus Oberrat: Peter Martyr in Context*,” in *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations*, xvii and note 20 in that page.

⁵⁵ James has a good summary on the debate: “Scholars have been divided as to the proper categorization of his doctrine of predestination. Reinhold Seeberg describes Vermigli’s doctrine of predestination as ‘extreme supralapsarian’. Donnelly concurs in this assessment. But more recently, Richard Muller’s analysis of Vermigli’s doctrine of predestination has challenged this traditional characterization. While acknowledging the sovereignty of the *propositum Dei*, Muller insists that Vermigli’s view ‘presses . . . toward a purely soteriological and essentially infralapsarian definition of predestination’.” *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination*, 88.

predestination in his study of Gregory when he was in Italy.⁵⁶ All three writers, however, agree that Vermigli used well articulated scholastic concepts to reformulate the Reformation concept of the bondage of the human will, providence, and predestination in the second phase of the Reformation.

The main works of Vermigli that are related to our topics are his *Commentary on Romans* (1558), *Commentary on Genesis* (1569), the Lecture on Free Will (1560) in *Loci Communes* (1580-82), and *Commentary on 2 Samuel* (1564). According to James and McLelland, the first three works are closely related with Vermigli's various lectures in 1550-52, 1545-46 (or 1543-44), and 1560 respectively.⁵⁷ In these works, Vermigli provides a highly articulated formulation both to defend the early Reformation assumption of the bondage of the will and to handle the theodical concern. As Vermigli's

⁵⁶ James, "Gemina Praedestinatio in Gregory of Rimini and Peter Martyr Vermigli," 157-88; James, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination*, 126-32. Cf. Donnelly, "Calvinist Thomist", 442-3; Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 62. One core reason behind James's analysis is this: "Virtually all late medieval theologians resisted a full-fledged doctrine of reprobation. Neither Gregory nor Vermigli follows this tendency. Demonstrating the first parallel, both were unequivocal in their assertion that reprobation is not dependent upon foreseen sins and that the sovereign will of God is the ultimate and exclusive cause of reprobation." "Peter Martyr Vermigli: At the Crossroads," 76. Using the fact that Vermigli's not identifying predestination as *pars providentiae* and his putting the locus in Rom. 9, James argues that his model is in direct contrast with Aquinas, Zwingli, Bucer, and the early Calvin. Cf. *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination*, 67. On McLelland's disagreement with this, see McLelland's comments in *Philosophical Works*, xxxiii-xxxviii, 268-70.

⁵⁷ Peter Martyr Vermigli, *In Epistolam S. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos... Commentarii* (Basle: P. Perna, 1558), 404-41; Vermigli, *In Primum Librum Mosis Qui Vulgo Genesis Dicitur Commentarii* (Zurich: C. Froschauer, 1569), 115r-117v; Vermigli, *Loci Communes Petri Martyris Vermiglii* (Basle: P. Perna, 1580-82), 971-89; Vermigli, *In duos Libros Samuelis Prophetarum... Commentarii* (Zurich: C. Froschauer, 1564), 275r-281r. For a brief introduction to these texts, see Joseph C. McLelland's notes in Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Philosophical Works: On the Relation of Philosophy to Theology*, translated and edited with Introduction and Notes by Joseph C. McLelland (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, Inc., 1996), 171-75, 265-70; and Frank A. James III's note in Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification: Two Theological Loci*, translated and edited with Introduction and Notes by Frank A. James III (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University, 2003), xxiii-xxxi. The English of the four documents, cf. *Predestination and Justification*, 3-84; *Philosophical Works*, 176-96, 215-62, 271-319. There are also "Three Summaries" added by Rudolph Gualter to the 1580 edition of the *Loci Communes*. As their authorship is greatly debated among the scholars, we do not include them in our investigation. Cf. *Philosophical Works*, 268-70. James also believes that the commentary on Romans (1558) also bear some relationship with his lectures on Romans in Lucca (1541-42) and his lectures in Strasbourg (1545-46). James believes that the time for the lectures on Genesis should be 1543-44; *Peter Martyr Vermigli and*

exposition is very comprehensive, we will limit our investigation to four main characteristics in his theology that are related to our subject.

The first significant feature in Vermigli's work is that he, unlike Melancthon and Bullinger, is willing to say that "God in a sense wills sin" [*Deum quoquo modo velle peccatum*]⁵⁸ and "God seems to the cause of sin."⁵⁹ More than that, Vermigli even goes as far as to say that God in a sense willed the fall of Adam: "Thus it is evident that in a sense God willed that sin and was in a way its author, even though it was not the punishment for a previous sin."⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Vermigli carefully qualifies what he means. His ultimate concern is to maintain a strong articulation of divine providence and yet to deny that God is the author of sin: "I said that to speak properly, God is not the cause of sin, and that nothing occurs in the world, whether good or evil, outside divine providence."⁶¹ In his augmentation, Vermigli seems both to show some affinities with the late medieval Augustinian manner of speaking and also to defend the necessitarian presentation of the early Reformation.

James points out that the affirmation of a certain sense of divine causality of sin is closely linked to the concept of God's role as the "ultimate ground of existence" and God being the cause of all human acts, though not sins as such. To clarify the point, James

Predestination, 47-48.

⁵⁸ "To solve this dilemma, they should first recall that it cannot be denied but that God in a sense wills or (as some others say) permits sin." Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 45. Cf. *ibid.*, 45, 53, 73; *Philosophical Works*, 221, 254-55. And this locus on predestination is from his Romans commentary (1558). The Latin text is "Vt huic difficultati satisfiat, primum meminisse debebunt, negari non posse, Deum quoquo modo velle, aut quemadmodum alij dicunt, permittere peccatum." Vermigli, *Romanos*, 423.

⁵⁹ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 255; *Predestination and Justification*, 53.

⁶⁰ Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 53.

⁶¹ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 261. Cf. *ibid.*, 193-95, 225, 230, 235, 259, 334; *Predestination and Justification*, 23-24.

quotes Leo D. Davis: “When God is said to be the author of sin, evil must be understood adjectively, that is, to sin is *agere male*; God is responsible for the *agere*, not the *male*. God is the coauthor of the entity of the act which happens to be done evilly.”⁶² In Vermigli’s words, “Certainly, if we speak correctly and properly, God cannot be said to be the cause of sins, yet we cannot utterly exclude him from the government and ordering of sins, for he is the cause of those actions which to us are sins.”⁶³ Because of this Vermigli distinguishes the first cause (remote cause) from the proximate cause (secondary cause): “For God and the will constitute the entire effect, although joined together in action. I will show this by an example. To produce an action we have the will and understanding, and our will makes it complete. But one is near, the other more remote. So it is concerning the will and God: our will does all, and God does all, but one is the first cause and the other secondary.”⁶⁴ Vermigli in general has a strong sense of divine providence and sovereignty, but he also makes a clear distinction between the first and second causality.

The second notable feature in Vermigli’s work is that while he advocates a strong concept of divine providence, he also strongly defends the genuine existence of contingency and second causality. In the beginning of his exposition of providence in his commentary on Genesis, after Vermigli briefly affirms God’s sovereignty, he directly

⁶² James, “*Gemina Praedestinatio* in Gregory of Rimini and Peter Martyr Vermigli,” 176-78; Leo Donald Davis, “Man, Intellect, and Will in the Writings of Gregory of Rimini” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1981), 327.

⁶³ Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 23. This line of thought is from Augustine, for example, in *City of God*, 5.9.4: “For, as He is the creator of all natures, so also is He the bestower of all powers, not of all wills; for wicked wills are not from Him, being contrary to nature, which is from Him. . . . But all of them are most of all subject to the will of God, to whom all wills also are subject, since they have no power except what He has bestowed upon them. The cause of things, therefore, which makes but is made, is God; but all other causes both make and are made.”

⁶⁴ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 240.

raises the question concerning contingency. And this is his primary focus: “But a large and difficult position arises: if all our acts and experiences are so certain, how is it possible that they can also be contingent?” So also, in the exposition of predestination in his commentary on Romans, he devotes the fourth part of this locus to clarify the concept of necessity.⁶⁵ The affirmation of the existence of contingency and the genuine existence of second causality seems to be quite a standard feature in the thought of the second generation of the Reformers. Nevertheless, unlike the three contemporaries we have investigated, Vermigli prefers to maintain both the existence of contingency and the necessitarian concepts in the early Reformation. He says that “things may be partly called necessary and also partly contingent or free.”

Vermigli explicitly affirms that while all things are subject to the providence of God, there is both freedom and contingency: “Thus our works which proceed from our will are said to be free, and those things produced in nature which may or may not come to pass, are considered contingent.”⁶⁶ Unlike the early Reformation formulations, Vermigli frequently puts two elements together, the existence of divine providence (and foreknowledge) and the existence of contingency and genuine second causality: “God foreknew that it might have been done, and although it would never happen, yet it was not hindered by foreknowledge, but it was possible. Therefore, since the foreknowledge of God does not exclude possibility, neither does it remove contingency and freedom.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 176; *Predestination and Justification*, 68-84.

⁶⁶ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 71-72.

⁶⁷ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 74. “Here we must remark that all things are necessary insofar as they are done and decreed in relation to the decision and purpose of God, but for God himself, who appoints and decides the act, all things are contingent, nothing in the world being of such necessity that it may not be otherwise.” *Predestination and Justification*, 182.

Significantly, Vermigli brings back the young Augustine to affirm the existence of freedom in human will: “Augustine clearly shows how the foreknowledge of God does not hinder our will, in book 3, chapters 2 and 3, of his *Freedom of the Will*.”⁶⁸ The anti-Manichaean insights of the young Augustine are brought back into the debate as to provide the support for the twin concerns. Nevertheless, Vermigli, unlike some medieval writers, does not argue positively that divine foreknowledge makes the contingency happen, but only passively that it does not “remove” nor “exclude” contingency.

One important feature is his affirmation of the integrity of the “nature” of the second causality, amidst a strong notion of divine providence. Vermigli repeatedly affirms the integrity of the contingent nature of second causality: “All things are necessary in relation to the providence of God, while in their own nature they are contingent.” Using the case of Saul, he says, “In its very nature their choice was unlimited, whether to give something to him or not.”⁶⁹ Vermigli does not expand this as Melanchthon did in his commentary on Colossians, but this still represents a trend of clearer distinction between natural issues and spiritual issues.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 79.

⁶⁹ Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 195. In the disputed treatises, there are similar sayings: “Further, the providence of God does not govern things except according to their own natures.” “By predestination the natures of things are not changed, in terms of necessity, contingency, and deliberations, as we said in regard to providence.” *Ibid.*, 329, 330.

⁷⁰ In that *Scholia*, Melanchthon uses the concept of *actio Dei generalis* to affirm the genuine freedom of man in natural things: “The human will has freedom in choosing things, which are carnal, that is, to choose this or that kind of food, to wear this or that kind of clothing, to go here or there, and it has the power of effecting carnal and civil justice, is able to refrain from murder, theft, and another man’s wife.” “Habet libertatem voluntas humana in diligendis his, quae ψυχικά sunt, ut hoc aut illud cibi genus eligere, hoc aut illo genere vestitus uti, huc aut illuc ire, habet et vim carnalis et civilis iustitiae efficiendae, continere manus potest a caede, a furto, abstinere ab alterius uxore.” *MW* 4:223-24. Quoted by Sharon Kaye Young, “The Development of the Doctrine of the Will in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon from 1519-1535” (M. A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1985), 85; cf. *ibid.*, 78-93; Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness*, 89-91; Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 78-80.

The third important characteristic of Vermigli's thought is his extensive use of scholastic distinctions to clarify related issues and to defend God against the charge of being the author of sin. Vermigli reuses the distinction of two kinds of necessity and the distinction between external and internal causality. Vermigli accepts the Scholastic distinction between the two kinds of necessity: "The Scholastics have said that there is a necessity of consequence and another of the consequent. By this distinction they mean that the connection is sometimes necessary, although what is inferred is not itself necessary." Vermigli also uses the distinction between *necessitas certitudinis* and *necessitas coactionis*, similar to Luther's usage in early Reformation: "but to clarify things we will add another distinction: that there is one necessity of certainty and another of compulsion."⁷¹ The distinction between external/extrinsic cause and internal/intrinsic/inward cause is another important tool for Vermigli to clarify the nature of the causality between God and evil acts. And through these Vermigli may distinguish God as the primary cause and the human as "the true cause," "the proper cause," and "the proximate cause" of evil acts.⁷² Vermigli starts with the affirmation of "no intrinsic necessity" of genuine human actions: "First, our actions have no intrinsic necessity. Willing is of its own nature (as God created it), mutable and flexible to either side." And "those things produced in nature which may or may not come to pass."

⁷¹ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 69, 70. Luther says, "Now, by 'necessity' I do not mean 'compulsorily,' but by the necessity of immutability (as they say) and not of compulsion." *LW* 33:64. "Necessario vero dico, non coacte, sed ut illi dicunt, necessitate immutabilitatis, non coactionis." *Luthers Werke*, 18:634.

⁷² "[God is] not the true cause—that proper cause is inward, that is their evil will." Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 225. The Latin text is "Non vera causa, nam ea propria est interior, mala scilicet eorum que postea male sicut potest dici."

Unlike the early Reformation debate, the beginning of his argument is not the rejection, but the affirmation (more like the young Augustine) of the existence of genuine freedom of the will. And the proper and the true cause should be the inward, and not the external cause: “I take only the inward and proper causes of everything whose effects are contingents, since they might or might not be produced by them.”⁷³ And there is no necessity of compulsion in this voluntary nature of the will, “for compulsion and violence are against the nature of the will.” And Vermigli believes, as Augustine did, that the nature of a genuine will is its willingness and natural freedom: “If the will should do anything unwilling it would not be called will but ‘no-will’ [*non voluntas sed noluntas*] (if one may so call it), and it would be destroyed.”⁷⁴ Because of this, the fallen humankind has certain level of freedom in external and civic affairs: “We might say instead that by this freedom our works may agree with the civil or economic law, which has regard to outward acts and is not much concerned with the will.”⁷⁵ Vermigli clearly makes distinction between natural freedom and spiritual freedom. Guardedly he is willing to accept the use of the term *liberum arbitrium* for the unregenerate, if it is not interpreted to mean freedom in spiritual sense. He prefers to say that the unregenerate has “partial free will” [*liberum arbitrium partim*].⁷⁶ And the bondage of the human will and the necessity are caused by the corrupted human will itself, the inward and proximate cause. Quoting Augustine, Vermigli writes that “the first man did not remain in free will; so are

⁷³ Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 70, 71.

⁷⁴ Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 70.

⁷⁵ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 275.

⁷⁶ “We gather from these words that we are not to contend about the word, and may allow *liberum arbitrium* so long as it is the same as *voluntas*, and that freedom in spiritual matters is not attributed to it. We also take the will to be free only through grace; otherwise it is a slave.” Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*,

we now fallen headlong into necessity.” Nevertheless, Vermigli clarifies that “this necessity of sinning” is to be understood generally and there is still freedom of choosing one particular sin over the other.⁷⁷

Moreover, Vermigli emphasizes that before the fall, humankind does not have this internal bondage of necessity: “I grant that in respect to inward causes man was originally so made that nothing could be necessary for him.”⁷⁸ Through these distinctions Vermigli firmly places the fault for sins firmly on human willing. Vermigli generally puts the issue into a soteriological framework and uses, as James points out, “a certain divine asymmetry between the production of good and bad acts.”⁷⁹ Vermigli clearly puts the issue in the post-fall state. Vermigli emphasizes, “God is not equally the cause of them all.” In various ways, Vermigli clearly demonstrates this asymmetric nature: “Although sins are in one sense subject to the will of God, they are not produced by it in the same way as are good deeds.” And the reason behind this is that in good works we need God’s external initiation, but in evil acts “the ground,” the proximate and inward cause, is in our corrupted nature.⁸⁰ Vermigli also uses this asymmetric concept to defend Zwingli.⁸¹

284. *Ibid.*, 274.

⁷⁷ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 279. “Therefore, those who are not regenerate are under this necessity of sinning, to be understood generally [*generatim*] and not of particular sins [*non de singularibus peccatis*]; for it is not necessary for them to be guilty of this sin rather than that.” *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 189

⁷⁹ James, “*Gemina Praedestinatio* in Gregory of Rimini and Peter Martyr Vermigli,” 177.

⁸⁰ Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 53,73; “They are grounds of good works, grounds we do not have in ourselves, but he governs sins in such a way, and wills in such a sense, that even their grounds, that is, the fresh and our corrupt and wicked nature, are not in God but in ourselves. Therefore, there is no need for them to be poured into us by some outward mover.” *Ibid.*, 45.

⁸¹ “If the things he suggests come to good men they incline to good, but if to the wicked, they tend to evil. . . . So likewise I understand what Zwingli—a learned and steadfast man of holy memory—once wrote, that by God’s providence men are at times provoked to sin; and that the same act comes from God and the wicked, with justice from him, unjustly from them.” Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 234; cf. *ibid.*,

Then Vermigli handles the nature of necessity caused by God's foreknowledge and hardening. No matter that the will has genuine freedom or it has internal necessity, the nature of providence brings with it a necessity, but a necessity of certainty, a hypothetical necessity.⁸² In the issues of hardening, the proper cause is the corrupted nature of humankind.⁸³ In his theodical defense in his commentary on 2 Samuel, he argues that there is more than mere permission in the cases of divine hardening: God "plays the part of judge and governor" and "does govern and rule sin itself." But the genuine and proper cause is "within us" and God only suggests "an occasion of offense." In addition, in these occasions, God only does good, but the corrupted mind turned it to evil acts. Repeatedly Vermigli says: "The advice is good but falls on an evil mind." "This suggestion in itself was good, but Pharaoh took it the wrong way and began to act more cruelly." "The first notion was good, but through his sin turned into evil." Hence this external and hypothetical necessity caused by God's providence should not be deemed as properly the cause of sin: "God is not by himself and properly the cause of sin [*Deum non esse per se & proprie causam peccati*]."⁸⁴

The fourth important characteristic of Vermigli's works is that in his exposition on the fall of Adam, he does not always limit his exposition by the concept of divine

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⁸² "It has a hypothetical necessity. As soon as you consider the foreknowledge and predestination of God, it follows of necessity that it will come about just as God foreknows and predestines it." 70 "Since we want to remain certain and without doubt, we affirm on the other side that by the foreknowledge and predestination of God, the will is not impeded." Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 82

⁸³ Vermigli also uses the Augustinian concept of deficient causality: "These are inward causes of sin, but they are rather deficient than efficient causes." Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 230.

⁸⁴ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 231, 232, 224. "Yet these suggestions, whether inward or outward, cannot properly be termed the causes of sin, since those causes are within us; but they may be called occasions." "Nor does this happen only externally—sometimes also God accomplishes it inwardly through good thoughts; for we should always regard good things as from God." *Ibid.*, 231, 232.

permissive willing. Muller argues that a “primary difference” between Calvin and Vermigli is their difference in concept of divine permission in the issue of fall and reprobation: “This distinction is based upon Martry’s acceptance of the concept of a permission or passive willing in God, a concept which Calvin rejected. Vermigli appears to have followed Thomas Aquinas closely in his formulation of this portion of his doctrine.”⁸⁵ McLelland, however, comments: “Like John Calvin, Martyr rejects the distinction between positive will and mere permission, for permission is ‘not completely without God’s will.’”⁸⁶ We believe that while Vermigli wants to affirm a kind of willing permission as Augustine taught, there are places where Vermigli teaches something more.⁸⁷ In his discussing of this permissive willing, it is interesting to find that he follows the concept in Augustine’s *Against Julian* and he argues, “Clearly there is permission, but something greater is shown by these telling passages.” We will show in later chapters that Augustine’s *Against Julian* also has an important impact on Calvin. Vermigli, following Augustine’s teaching in *Against Julian*, rejects the idea of “a bare permission.” And he concludes that section by saying that “This will is a permission, but yet of a kind that belongs to the will.”⁸⁸ The issue here is that whereas their definitions are similar, Vermigli is comfortable with the traditional language of permission, while Calvin is not. Calvin retains his emphasis on biblical terminology.

⁸⁵ Muller, *Christ and Decree*, 66. Italics added. Cf. *Inst.*, 3.23.8.

⁸⁶ *Philosophical Works*, 174.

⁸⁷ “‘Permission,’ which some acknowledge, is no different from will, for God permits what he will not prevent. Nor should it be said that he permits unwillingly, but willingly, as Augustine said.” Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 73.

⁸⁸ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 234.

Vermigli wants to argue that this permissive will is still a will. But that is not all Vermigli says, there is still something more. When we look carefully at Vermigli's exposition of the fall of Adam, a stronger concept of God's sovereignty is revealed. There are two versions of the arguments in Vermigli's handling of the fall. The first one is characterized by the concept of permissive willing and has a strong constraint in elaboration:

He did not do this to Adam; aware by his foreknowledge that he would fall, he might have prevented him but would not; he allowed him to fall, and by his external decree appointed Christ to be the remedy for his fall. We cannot explain other things concerning that state in greater detail because we lack perfect knowledge. Let us return to our own state.⁸⁹

In these cases, Vermigli firmly uses permissive language to handle the relationship of God's decree and the fall of Adam.

Nevertheless, in his locus on predestination in the commentary on Romans, he has another kind of elaboration, not totally unlike that of Luther and Calvin. He uses an active manner to describe God's role in the fall of Adam. In this case, we find that Vermigli, similar to Calvin, seems to be driven by the use of an active presentation of God's role in Adam's fall and the logic of divine causality:

As to the sin of the first man, we should consider that this sin cannot be said to have been the punishment of another sin. If it was the first sin, there was no other sin before it. We cannot say absolutely that God did not will that sin, for how could it be committed against his will? He saw that Adam would fall if not sustained by his Spirit and with more abundant grace, but he did not help him or stretch out his hand to keep him from falling. Moreover, the devil would not have dared to tempt him if God had chosen otherwise. Also, he [God] had planned to declare his goodness and severity through Adam. He presented the opportunity to sin when he issued a law which he knew would not be kept and also gave him a wife who would tempt him. Finally, the occasion itself (as a subject or event that sustained the lack of righteousness) could not have occurred without the power and might of God. *Thus it is evident that in a sense God willed that sin and was in a way its author, even*

⁸⁹ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 236.

though it was not the punishment for a previous sin. On the other hand, he is said not to have willed it and not to have been its author, since he prohibited and punished it and did not will it absolutely, except for another purpose. He did not suggest it himself, nor inspire the evil; but Adam's will, not being prevented by a stronger grace, fell from righteousness of his own accord.⁹⁰

Here Vermigli still affirms that God “did not inspire the evil” and Adam fell of his own accord. And Vermigli is clearly aware that this case is *ante lapsum* (before the fall). And the logic of God as a judge of our falling or that of internal necessity cannot apply here, as “it was not the punishment for a previous sin.” Yet Vermigli still presents it in such a way that Adam seems not to be able to escape the fall: “He saw that Adam would fall if not sustained by his Spirit and with more abundant grace;” and God “gave him a wife who would tempt him.” And if in this case there is no inward necessity for Adam to choose the fall, how could one handle the tension caused by “in a sense God willed that sin and was in a way its author” and other active presentations of divine ordination. The previous distinctions and arguments under a soteriological framework cannot properly apply here. The readers are confronted with more than a mere necessity of certainty and a query of how it can be possible to maintain both that Adam has a genuine choice and that God already ordained and willed his fall and gave him a wife to tempt him. We find the same uneasiness, or similar supralapsarian tone, also in Calvin's formulation.

To uphold a strong concept of divine providence is one of Vermigli's core convictions. To have a theodical defense that an active presentation of God's governing will over sins does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that “God is properly the cause of sin” is another core conviction. Although Vermigli, unlike the other three Reformers we discuss in this chapter, shows a preference for an active presentation of God's role in

⁹⁰ Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification*, 52-53. Italics added.

the fall, he, similar to the other three, also maintains the twin concerns. With his well-equipped classical theological training, Vermigli uses better and clearer language to defend a strong view of divine providence and indirectly to defend some necessitarian arguments used in the early Reformation. His affirmation of the genuine existence of contingency and the natural freedom of the human will signifies another example of the shift from unnuanced necessitarian arguments made in the early Reformation. Nevertheless, similar to several key Reformers, including Luther, the early Melancthon, Zwingli, and Calvin, in the course of defending the Augustinian concept of *sola gratia* and the bondage of the human will, Vermigli develops a strong concept of divine providence too. Here we are reminded of an insight made by Kolb: “Let God be God” is the main rationale behind Luther’s *De servo arbitrio*.⁹¹ We find that this is also a significant issue in Vermigli’s formulation. And if Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin have caused uneasiness when they apply a strong concept of divine providence to issues of hardening and the fall of Adam, Vermigli does better on the issue of divine hardening, but not necessarily so in handling the issue of God’s positive willing in the fall of Adam. In this, we find a close affinity between Vermigli and Calvin, though Vermigli provides clearer distinctions and nuances in his affirmation of genuine contingency. The four Reformers we investigated in this chapter demonstrated a significant shift in the second phase of the Reformation. The single focused concern of necessitarian argument against the freedom of the will was replaced by the twin concerns that maintain both the bondage of the human will and a theodical defense.

⁹¹ Kolb says, “Though not often found in Luther’s own writing, the exhortation ‘Let God be God’ can serve as an apt summary of *De servo arbitrio*.” *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 32.

C. The Shift Towards Theodical Concern and Classical Augustinianism in the Second Phase of the Reformation

Drawing a brief conclusion to Chapters Four and Five, we find that there was obviously a growing need for and emphasis on theodical concern among the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation. The “twin concerns” replaced the single focused concern. Basically, with the exception of Zwingli, in the second phase of the Reformation, Bucer, Melancthon, Bullinger, and Vermigli all stayed away from the necessitarian arguments used in the early Reformation. They also in various degrees picked up the classical Augustinian concepts, definitions, or terminology. They also clarified the issues with better articulations and clearer nuances. They also had much greater interaction with the church fathers and the better medieval theologians. More scholastic concepts and distinctions were drawn back into their formulations. The main dividing line among them was whether they would prefer a more active presentation of God’s sovereign role over sins and hardening.

Of the four Reformers, we may divide them more or less into two camps. On the one side, Melancthon and Bullinger represent a trend that basically stays away from the necessitarian arguments used by the early Reformers. They uphold genuine existence of contingency and the natural freedom of the fallen human will. They consistently use permissive language to handle the issue of reprobation and the fall of Adam. They make distinction between natural freedom and spiritual freedom. They also tend to distance themselves from the necessitarian argument by strongly condemning the Stoic concept of necessity. They basically put the issue back into a pure soteriological realm.

On the other side, we find Bucer and Vermigli, who have a very strong concept of divine providence, and would use active presentation to explain God’s sovereignty over

sins. Nevertheless, they basically stay away from the necessitarian arguments used in the early Reformation. They also in various degrees provide some theodical defense to uphold the genuine existence of second causality.

In short, we have identified a spectrum of formulations on free choice. At the one end, we have Luther, Zwingli, and the early Melanchthon who advocate necessitarian arguments and concepts in the early Reformation. At the other end, we find Bullinger and the older Melanchthon. Their primary concern is now the theodical concern. Between these two groups, we have Calvin, Vermigli, and Bucer. Calvin and Vermigli are closer to the early Reformation formulation than the others, but Vermigli offers a highly nuanced position not subject to some of the difficulties that we find in Calvin's formulations.

CHAPTER VI

CALVIN'S "ORTHODOX" DEFENSE: HIS POSITIVE FORMULATION IN RESPONSE TO PIGHIUS AND IN 1559 *INSTITUTES*

A. Calvin's Defense: The Issue of Orthodoxy

The subtitle of Calvin's treatise against Pighius is *A Defense of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius*. This reminds us that to defend the orthodoxy of the Reformation doctrine of the human will is an important characteristic, purpose, and contribution of Calvin's defense and reformulation of the early Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the human will. Through this effort, Calvin grew in his understanding and appreciation of the works of Augustine and the genuine tradition of the church. Calvin picked up scholastic distinctions and important elements of the Augustinian framework to clarify and polish the less nuanced formulation he made in the 1539 *Institutes*.

After Luther and Melancthon rejected the use of the term *liberum arbitrium* and used necessitarian arguments to prove the bondage of the human will, they were accused of teaching the heretical concepts of the Manicheans and the Stoics.¹ Calvin was well aware of the labels, especially that of Stoicism, and made efforts to repudiate the charges of heresy.² To defend the orthodoxy of the Reformation doctrines became an important

¹ Cf. Calvin says, "For [he says that] with Marcion, Valentius, Mani, and the like we misrepresent human nature as evil; with Wyclif and Lorenzo Valla we make man only an instrument of the will of God, so that he is acted upon rather than acting. Everything depends on the choice of God alone, so that nothing happens to us contingently, but everything by sheer necessity." *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 171; *CO* 6:350.

² Calvin devotes a significant section to disclaim the heresy: "For we do not deny that man was created with free choice endowed as he was with sound intelligence of mind and uprightness of will." "Will Pighius still make us out to be like Credo, Valentinus, and the Manichees? They imagined that man was

concern for Melanchthon, Bucer, Bullinger, Calvin, and Vermigli, all of whom attempted to provide a defense of the orthodoxy of the Reformation.³ Both the debate over who actually represented the truly catholic church and the increasing use of the church fathers and of medieval resources in the debate reflected this historical development. The battlefield was enlarged and the debate was no longer limited to the issue of the right biblical teaching. Who had the genuine tradition behind their formulation became an important evidence of one's orthodoxy in the second phase of the Reformation debate over free choice.⁴

“Which side represents the ancient church?” was an issue Calvin dealt with early in his Reformation career. In *Reply by Calvin to Cardinal Sadolet's Letter* (1539), Calvin argues that “the ancient Church is clearly on our side.”⁵ The treatise against Pighius on the doctrine of the human will was probably a major stimulus to enhance Calvin's understanding of the genuine tradition of the church. Lane provides a good background summary on this:

For Calvin every doctrinal belief must be tested by Scripture, while for Pighius the pronouncements of the pope are the final form. As they are arguing from different

evil in substance and by creation. . . . What similarity, I ask, is there between substance and accident?” Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 47; CO 6:263-64. Cf. *ibid.*, 40-48. For Calvin's criticisms of Stoicism, see *Inst.*, 1.5.12; 1.16.8-9; 2.4.28; 3.8.9-10. Calvin is well aware of the label of Stoicism given by the opponents of the Reformers: “Those who wish to cast odium upon this doctrine defame it as the Stoics' dogma of fate.” *Inst.*, 1.16.8. “I know how unjustly they slander this doctrine of ours, for they call it the paradox of the Stoics, concerning the equality of sins, but they will be easily refuted by their own mouth.” *Inst.*, 2.4.28.

³ For example, Melanchthon explicitly disclaims the heresy of the Manicheans: “Nor must we permit the Manichean ravings which argue that there is certain number of men, whom they call materially minded and earthly, who cannot be converted.” Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 43b. Vermigli also disclaims the heresy of Stoicism: “Some will say that we are reviving the opinion of the Stoics concerning fate; it is false.” Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 196.

⁴ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 170-73.

⁵ *SW* 1:49. Cf. *SW* 1:35-37.

premises, there is little chance of a meeting of minds. But there is also a secondary battle under way. *What is historic Christianity?* Pighius claims that his view is in accord with the universal consensus of the Catholic church over the centuries. While Calvin theoretically could have conceded this claim, to have done so would have gravely undermined the plausibility of his case.⁶

Pighius argued that Calvin and the Reformers rejected “the common and agreed doctrine of the church.”⁷ This generated a need for an orthodox defense that eventually helped Calvin to produce his “second most important work as regards his use of the fathers.”⁸

Through this effort, Calvin increased his understanding and appreciation of Augustine, the early church councils, the sounder Schoolmen, and the Scholastic distinctions. Calvin got better acquainted with Augustine’s thought in his anti-Pelagian works, and had a better understanding of the subtle differences between Augustine’s thought and the early Reformation formulation. Calvin became more willing to quote the teachings of the sounder Schoolmen for his support.⁹ Calvin also employed the Augustinian framework and scholastic distinctions to clarify his early, less nuanced,

⁶ Lane, “Introduction,” xxiii. Italics added.

⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 205; CO 6:374.

⁸ Lane, “Calvin and the Fathers in *Bondage and Liberation of the Will*,” 83.

⁹ For example, Calvin starts to differentiate “the sounder Schoolmen” from the “more recent Sophists” as early as his 1539 *Institutes*. The following saying in 1539 was maintained in 1559: “I chose to note these two points in passing that you, my reader, may see how far I disagree with the sounder Schoolmen. I differ with the more recent Sophists to an even greater extent, as they are farther removed from antiquity. However, we at least understand from this division in what way they grant free will to man. For Lombard finally declares that we have free will, not in that we are equally capable of doing or thinking good and evil, but merely that we are freed from compulsion. According to Lombard, this freedom is not hindered, even if we be wicked and slaves of sin, and can do nothing but sin.” *Inst.*, 2.2.6. Cf. Muller, “Scholasticism in Calvin: A Question of Relation and Disjunction,” in *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 39-61. On Calvin’s knowledge of scholastic theology, Muller says, “LaVallee quite convincingly hypothesized that Calvin studied scholastic theology privately after his conversion and that much of what Calvin knew came from contemporary Roman Catholic commentaries on the *Sentences* (in which, presumably, the opinions of major teachers of previous centuries were summarized). In addition, Calvin most certainly read medieval theology after 1536, and, we may hypothesize, he read more fully in the work of biblical commentators like Nicholas of Lyra and Denis the Carthusian than he did in the dogmatic writings of the period.” *Ibid.*, 45. Muller also points out that “the more recent Sophists” point mainly to the faculty of Sorbonne. *Ibid.*, 50-52.

statements and to strengthen the theological structure of his argument. Given of this effort, Calvin was able to argue that the Reformation doctrine is not only biblical, but is also fully supported by Augustine, the greatest early church father, by the early church councils, and by the better medieval tradition, represented by Bernard of Clairvaux. In addition, Calvin's defense should be read in comparison with Luther's formulation: the disuse of the necessitarian argument and the positioning of the issue in a soteriological realm are two important aspects of Calvin's formulation. Calvin's positive defense and various important clarifications he made in his treatise against Pighius (1543) should be counted as one of the most comprehensive defenses of the Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the will.

B. Augustine as the Primary Witness in His Defense

Augustine is Calvin's star witness in his orthodox defense of the Reformation doctrine. It is widely acknowledged that there is a close affinity between Augustine's teachings and Calvin's, especially in the doctrine of grace, free will, original sin, and predestination.¹⁰ Lane characterizes Calvin's respect for Augustine as an "almost unqualified respect for Augustine's authority": "Calvin held Augustine in such high regard that his judgment was sufficient to counterbalance all the other fathers."¹¹ Larry

¹⁰ See also Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*; Brümmer, "Calvin, Bernard and the Freedom of the Will," 437-55; Gerstner, "Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards on the Bondage of the Will," 279-96; Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*; Lange van Ravenswaay, *Augustinus totus noster*; Lange van Ravenswaay, "Initia Augustiniana Calvini," 257-74; Mozley, *A Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*; Payne, "Augustinianism in Calvin and Bonaventure," 1-30; Sharp, "The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine," 84-96; Smits, *Saint Augustine dans l'oeuvre de Jean Calvin*; Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*.

¹¹ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 39, 38. Nevertheless, Lane reminds us "Calvin's almost unqualified respect for Augustine's authority in dogmatic matters is not paralleled in the exegetical realm. Here it is Chrysostom who was Calvin's hero, at least for the New Testament. Augustine's exegesis is severely criticized. . . . In exegesis as in theology Calvin always remained

D. Sharp says, “Outside the Bible Augustine was Calvin’s greatest source.”¹² We should be aware of the role of Augustine in Calvin’s defense. Lane summarizes it beautifully: “Calvin saw Augustine as the best witness to antiquity and as the guardian of the teaching of the Early Church.”¹³ Schulze has a similar observation: “The struggle between Calvin and his opponent centers mainly around the testimony of Augustine, which is claimed by both.”¹⁴

In the treatise against Pighius, Calvin is forced to engage the works of Augustine in detail because, as Lane points out, “a major thrust of Calvin’s controversy with Pighius was the dispute about the teaching of the fathers, especially Augustine.”¹⁵ Calvin claims the full support of Augustine for the Reformation doctrine in the 1539 *Institutes*. Because of this, Pighius accuses “Calvin of quoting Augustine out of context and without understanding him, of quoting mutilated passages contrary to Augustine’s meaning.”¹⁶ For example, Pighius says, “That one sentence of Augustine he cites, he cites malignantly, and contrary to the truest and clearest meaning of Augustine.”¹⁷ To this charge, as Lane points out, Calvin reacts strongly: “Calvin was stung by this charge and took care that his third book would not face such an accusation. He quotes lengthy

courteous when disagreeing with Augustine.” Ibid.

¹² Sharp, “The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine,” 84.

¹³ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 39.

¹⁴ Schulze, *Calvin’s Reply to Pighius*, 60. Schulze also says, “In this way the extraordinarily strong influence of Augustine on Calvin will become apparent.” Ibid.

¹⁵ Lane, *John Calvin: Students of the Church Fathers*, 151-52. Cf. Lane, “Introduction,” xxiii.

¹⁶ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 174.

¹⁷ “Quae de Augustino ille citat, maligne citat, & contra ipsissimam & clarissimam Augustini sententiam.” Pighius, *De libero hominis arbitrio et divina gratia*, 64a. Cf. Ibid., 37a-b.

passages with reference to their context.”¹⁸ As a result, Calvin “cites twenty-eight works of Augustine or pseudo-Augustine” in his treatise against Pighius.¹⁹ Calvin admits that he did not have sufficient resources on Augustine when he wrote his 1539 *Institutes*.²⁰

Here we are reminded of a premise advocated by Muller:

Calvin’s theology must be understood not as a finished product but as a theology in development—specifically, a theology that was learned in the course of a life of exegetical, homiletical, and ecclesial labor in close dialogue, positive and negative, with a definable group of partners in conversation.²¹

In the process of his debate with Pighius, Calvin learns more from Augustine and the Augustinian tradition and polishes his formulation with better nuanced distinctions. The debate also provides Calvin an important catalyst to seek for better understanding and appreciation of the better scholastic traditions in the medieval church. Through these efforts, Calvin strengthens the early Reformers’ claim of the support of the great church father by means of thorough interaction with Augustine’s works. Calvin’s detailed engagement and elaboration of Augustine’s thoughts should be considered as an important contribution to the Reformation debates on the bondage of the human will.

¹⁸ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 174.

¹⁹ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 154.

²⁰ Cf. Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 151. Even in his reply to Pighius, according to Lane, “Calvin made haste to reply.” And “Calvin did not have time to check all his references or to follow up all the issues that interested him.” Lane argues that Calvin probably wrote the work between November 1542 and January 1543. *Ibid.*, 67-68, 84. Referring to Calvin’s possession of the works of early church fathers and Augustine in writing his 1539 *Institutio*, Lane points out that “the early years at Geneva must have been among the most barren.” “*Ibid.*, 84. Lane also says, “Pighius, by contrast, quoted longer passages than did Calvin and generally much more accurate, though not with total accuracy. Why was this? As Calvin notes in his preface, his Roman Catholic adversaries had considerably more time, leisure, and peace to prepare their attacks. In addition, while Calvin laments his lack of books while writing the 1539 *Institutes*. Pighius had an extensive personal library, an inventory of which was made after his death.” “Introduction,” xxiv.

²¹ Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 187.

The early Reformers, though claiming Augustine for their side, do not cite much of his works to prove their case. Luther claims that Augustine is entirely with him, but he does not provide many quotations from Augustine to consolidate his claim.²² In the discussion on free will in 1521 *Loci Communes*, Melancthon mentions Augustine only once and briefly: “Augustine and Bernard wrote on free will (*arbitrium*), and the former revised his ideas extensively in the books that he later wrote against the Pelagians.”²³ Calvin in his 1539 *Institutes* follows basically the same line of argument as that of Melancthon.²⁴ The focus in the early Reformation formulations is more concerned with the biblical basis of doctrine.

Nevertheless, as the need for an orthodox defense grew, the Reformers were forced to interact more with Augustine to substantiate their claims. Among his fellow Reformers, Calvin is the one who provides the most extensive quotations from Augustine. We should credit Calvin for making a major contribution to substantiate the early Reformation claim with appropriate quotations from Augustine, the early church councils, and the sounder Schoolmen. Calvin’s use of different eras of the genuine tradition to argue for the orthodoxy of the Reformation doctrines also sets an important precedent for later Reformers and Reformed theologians.

The importance of Augustine for Calvin’s defense of the Reformation doctrine of the human will is further established by the fact that there are more patristic citations in Calvin’s treatise against Pighius than in any other of Calvin’s works, with the exception

²² Luther says that “though Augustine, whom you overlook, is entirely with me”. *LW* 33:72. Cf. *LW* 33:58, 73, 74, 82, 196, 224, 228-29, 269-70, 273, 295.

²³ Melancthon, “*Loci communes theologici*,” 22.

²⁴ Cf. *Inst.*, 2.2.4.

of his *Institutes*. Lane points out that there are 310 patristic citations in the treatise against Pighius, while there are only 301 citations in the 1539 *Institutes*. The 1559 *Institutes* has 866 patristic citations.²⁵ And among these patristic citations, the major portion is from Augustine. The name “Augustine” appears 269 times in the 1559 *Institutio*, but in the five chapters of Book Two of the 1559 *Institutio* alone, the section on the bondage of the will, the name appears 52 times.²⁶ Obviously the use of Augustine is essential to Calvin’s defense and teaching on the bondage of the human will.

In his treatise against Pighius, Calvin’s first response, after facing the charge of the Manicheans, is to argue and defend that Augustine has “a similar cause” and faces “the same false accusations” as the Reformers have:

Augustine, when he is dealing with the Priscillianists, says that they err in that they declare that man is evil not through choice but through God’s act of creation. In condemning them he not only acquits us, but by that very verdict of his bestows approval on our teaching. Yet more, when against the Pelagians [Augustine] engages in a *similar cause* to that in which we are now occupied, that is, when he is defending himself against *the same false accusations*, he speaks on his own behalf in such a way that his pleading also provides us with all the defence that we need.²⁷

Calvin also uses various expressions to remind the readers that Augustine is totally on the side of the Reformers: “Augustine is certainly on our side.”²⁸ “I have Augustine on my

²⁵ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 151, n. 2. Cf. R. J. Mooi, *Het Kerken Dogmahistorisch Element in de Werken van Johannes Calvijn* (Wageningen: H. Veenman, 1962), 365-97; Barnikol, *Die Lehre Calvins vom unfreien Willen*, 91; Smits, *Saint Augustine dans l’oeuvre de Jean Calvin*, 1:254-71.

²⁶ A computer search on the Latin text shows that the Latin name of Augustine appears 30 times in Book I, 70 times in Book II, 72 times in Book III, and 97 times in Book IV. Therefore the name appears 269 times in 1559 *Institutio*. In chapters 16 to 18 of Book I, the chapters on providence, the name appears 6 times. In chapters 21 to 24 of Book III, that on predestination, the name appears 26 times. So the name appears 84 times, including 52 times in chapters 1 to 5 of Book II, in the three related topics. That means nearly one-third of the discussion of Augustine is related to these three topics.

²⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 47-48; CO 6:263-64. Italics added.

²⁸ *Inst.*, 2.24, 9; 2.3.13-14; Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 100, 128; CO 6:301, 320.

side.”²⁹ “There is nothing of mine in that. For Augustine insists on it everywhere, though he at the same time maintains that he is not inventing it out of his own mind but takes it from the mouth of God himself.”³⁰ “If human support is needed, we have Augustine to vouch for all of this.”³¹ “I reply first that this way of speaking is neither new nor my invention. For this is how Augustine spoke before me.”³²

Calvin also tries to prove the complete support of Augustine by long quotations from Augustine. Calvin argues that by Augustine’s words alone, he can defend the doctrine of the Reformers:

But I took everything from just four books, and these not so very lengthy ones, which it would not be a great trouble to read completely. *I could have piled up far more statements from all over the place*, but I refrain, partly out of a desire to save space and partly so that it would be easy for readers, without trouble or toil, *to check how faithfully and candidly I have expounded the true authentic thought of Augustine.*³³

In one place, Calvin says, “And there is not one point which does not appear almost word for word quite often in Augustine’s works, nor is there any which may not be confirmed by a clear testimony of his.”³⁴ On another occasion, Calvin argues, “But we are doing nothing but following Augustine!”³⁵ In particular, Calvin also claims that Augustine set the precedent: “*There is nothing of mine in that. For Augustine insists on it everywhere,*

²⁹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 233; CO 6:396.

³⁰ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 154; CO 6:338.

³¹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 172; CO 6:351.

³² Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 212; CO 6:380.

³³ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 135; CO 6:325. Italics added. The four books of Augustine are *Grace and Free Choice*, *Rebuke and Grace*, *The Predestination of the Saints* and *The Gift of Perseverance*.

³⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 175; CO 6:353.

³⁵ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 134; CO 6:324.

though he at the same time maintains that he is not inventing it out of his own mind but takes it from the mouth of God himself.”³⁶ Calvin also uses various rhetorical devices to argue for total support from Augustine:

*I teach that the whole of human nature is corrupt. What of Augustine? . . . I say that man is preempted by the freely given grace of God, that he attains to it by no merit of his own, indeed he cannot even aspire to it until this desire has been aroused in his heart. Let Augustine speak: . . . I consider that God does not merely give man the option, so that he has the ability both to will and to act well if it pleases him. . . . Now let Augustine speak. . . . That same thought I also apply to perseverance: as the beginning, so also the completion of good works depends on God alone. . . . On this too let Augustine reply: . . . So he [Augustine] concludes that ‘the grace of God is the whole merit of the saints’ (Rebuke and Grace 7). Why then is Pighius angry with me, if I make use of Augustine’s support which he so generously offers me.*³⁷

After these long passages, Calvin reinforces his thesis again: “For it cannot escape anyone’s attention how closely Augustine’s thoughts and words are in agreement with ours when he writes like this.”³⁸ The way Calvin uses only words of Augustine to defend himself is both for polemic reasons and for showing essential identification with the teachings of Augustine. Schulze rightly observes, “The most remarkable thing however, is that Calvin answered only with quotations from Augustine. This shows how he has wholly identified himself with the Augustinian doctrine of predestination.”³⁹ The use of many of Augustine’s quotations in Calvin’s defense against Pighius and in his *Institutes* should not be read merely as Calvin’s theological affinity with the church father, but

³⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 154; CO 6:338. Italics added.

³⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 175-79; CO 6:353-56. Italics added.

³⁸ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 183. On this Cunningham provides a nice summary: “A considerable portion of this treatise is occupied with an elaborate investigation as to what were Augustine’s views upon this point, . . . that, Augustine, with occasional looseness and inaccuracy of expression, held the same views in substance which he and his fellow Reformers had promulgated.” Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 486-87.

³⁹ Schulze, *Calvin’s Reply to Pighius*, 102.

should be regarded as a diligent effort and important contribution of Calvin's orthodox defense.

C. Calvin on Other Early Church Fathers

Calvin's comments on other early church fathers' teachings on the human will in his orthodox defense reveal once again that, in certain issues of his reformulation of early Reformation doctrine, he stands closer to Luther than his fellow Reformers do. In 1539 *Institutes*, following the precedent set by Luther, Calvin teaches that with the exception of Augustine, the teachings of the early church fathers are confused:

Further, even though the Greeks above the rest—and Chrysostom especially among them — extol the ability of the human will, yet all the ancients, save Augustine, so differ, waver, or speak confusedly on this subject, that almost nothing certain can be derived from their writings.⁴⁰

This conviction of Calvin reveals both his continuity with the early Reformation formulation and his uniqueness among his fellow Reformers in his times.

Calvin devotes a long section in his treatise against Pighius to defend this statement of 1539 *Institutes*.⁴¹ He briefly goes through various quotations from Origen, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Hilary, Basil, Jerome, Ambrose, and Chrysostom to defend his case. First of all, Calvin argues that when most of them spoke of the existence of free choice,

⁴⁰ CO 1:317. The text is kept the same in 1559, *Inst.*, 2.2.4. Lane reports the impact of this passage on Calvin's debate with Pighius: "In his *Institutio* Calvin twice claimed that apart from Augustine, the early fathers are so confused, vacillating, and contradictory on the subject of free choice that almost nothing can be determined with certainty from their writings. This claim so incensed the Dutch Roman Catholic theologian, Albertus Pighius, that he devoted much of the ten books of his *De libero arbitrio* to refuting it." "Calvin and the Fathers in *Bondage and Liberation of the Will*," 67. Lane also points out, "Calvin's interest lies predominantly in the Western fathers." *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 41. Cf. "I have certainly never denied that the ancients frequently extol free choice and ascribe to it more than is proper." Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 75; CO 6:284. Cf. Lane, "Introduction," xxi-xxiv.

⁴¹ Cf. Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 67-86.

either they spoke about the human free choice before the fall, or they did not properly distinguish the state before the fall from that after. On Tertullian and Irenaeus, Calvin maintains that they spoke mainly about the original state and were concerned with the refutation of Marcion and others. On Origen, Calvin says, “If he is talking about the original, natural state, he is telling us nothing that we do not also acknowledge. If he makes no distinction between a nature that is corrupted and one that is unspoiled, then everyone who is devout will declare that he is bringing basic principles.”⁴²

Moreover, some fathers might support the use of the term *liberum arbitrium*, but taught similar substance as the Reformers did. Cyprian is such a case for Calvin. Calvin also agrees that many of the fathers, including Origen and Chrysostom, extolled free choice more generously than the Reformers. Calvin reinforces the key point he makes in 1539 *Institutes* that some exalted human powers more than was right both to avoid the laughter of philosophers and not to give excuse for laziness to the flesh.⁴³

After this long section, Calvin provides a short conclusion. Calvin first argues that “the consensus of the church” should be based on the Scriptures: “the only consensus of the church is that which is throughout suitably and fittingly in agreement with the word of God.”⁴⁴ Calvin also contends that in any case the early church councils which supported the teachings of the Reformers should be counted as more official than the confused sayings of individual church fathers. In addition, many church fathers did not provide a clear definition of what they meant by free choice, and when a few did provide

⁴² Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 70.

⁴³ *Inst.*, 2.2.4. Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 74.

⁴⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 80.

it, they defined it very differently. Hence, Calvin argues that Pighius cannot claim that the Reformers' formulation is against the consensus of the church.

Calvin also repeatedly characterizes Origen and Jerome as the opponents of the Reformation doctrine. In 1559 *Institutes*, Calvin says, "I know that they can cite Origen and Jerome in support of their exposition, I could in turn oppose Augustine to these."⁴⁵ Here Calvin obviously follows a line found in Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* (1525). There Luther says, "For hardly any of the ecclesiastic writers have handled the Divine Scriptures more ineptly and absurdly than Origen and Jerome."⁴⁶

Calvin's critical comments on other early church fathers reflect both his uniqueness among his fellow Reformers and once again his affinity towards Luther's formulation. In the second phase of the Reformation debate, as the Reformers had better acquaintance with the sayings of the fathers and the growing need of the theodical concern and orthodox defense, they tended to be more sympathetic with the sayings of other early fathers too, with the clear exception of Origen. Bucer is an example of this new trend. Bucer in his comment on free choice basically aligns his position with that of the early fathers: "Therefore, there is no difference among the Fathers on matters of substance in relation to this question, but only in their manner of handling it."⁴⁷ While Calvin and

⁴⁵ *Inst.*, 2.5.17. We find that all Calvin's comments about Jerome in the chapters on human will in the *Institutes* are negative. Cf. *Inst.*, 2.2.4, 2.5.2, 2.5.17; Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 77, 78, 85; CO 6:286, 286, 291. On negative comment on Origen, cf. *Inst.*, 2.5.17.

⁴⁶ *LW* 33:167. Luther frequently lumps both Origen and Jerome together, cf. *LW* 33:167, 169, 214-215. For other quotes on either of these fathers, cf. *LW* 33:163, 198, 212-213, 219, 262.

⁴⁷ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 153.

Luther focus more on their differences with the other early fathers, Bucer focuses more on their essential agreement.⁴⁸

Calvin's uniqueness also reflects in his criticism on the oft-quoted statement by Chrysostom: "Whom he draws, he draws willingly." Calvin repeatedly classifies Chrysostom as the champion of human powers in the early church: "He has Chrysostom, who I have always acknowledged was excessive in his praise of human powers." "I said that the ancients unjustifiably exalted free choice, the Greeks especially and among them particularly Chrysostom."⁴⁹ And Calvin bluntly criticizes Chrysostom: "Therefore one must deny that oft-repeated statement of Chrysostom: 'Whom he draws he draws willingly.' By this he signifies that the Lord is only extending his hand to await whether we will be pleased to receive his aid."⁵⁰ Calvin even calls this "a false and profane assertion."⁵¹ Nevertheless, both the mature Melancthon and Vermigli differ with Calvin on this point.

⁴⁸ Cf. "Hence the difference of treatment among the Fathers, but their substantial agreement is abundantly clear from the common acknowledgement of both groups that no one can do any good of himself that is not wholly the gift and work of God, Similar expressions of opinion you can find in great numbers in these and other Fathers. For instance you can examine the abundant and universal testimony of Augustine and his disciples concerning both our will and our guilt. Such is the agreement in substance among the Fathers." Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 154.

⁴⁹ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 85; CO 6:291. For negative quotes from Chrysostom among the chapters on free will in the *Institutes* and in the treatise against Pighius, cf. *Inst.*, 2.2.4, 2.2.9, 2.2.11, 2.3.7, 2.3.10, 2.5.2, 2.5.3; Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 80, 85, 226, 227; CO 6:287, 291, 391, 392. There is a positive quote in this section: "A saying of Chrysostom's has always pleased me very much, that the foundation of our philosophy is humility." *Inst.* 2.2.11.

⁵⁰ *Inst.*, 2.3.10.

⁵¹ Calvin in commenting John 6:44 criticizes Chrysostom without naming him: "It is a false and profane assertion, therefore, that none are drawn but those who are willing to be drawn, as if man made himself obedient to God by his own efforts; for the willingness with which men follow God is what they already have from himself, who has formed their hearts to obey him." *Comm.* John 6:44. Italics added. Cf. CO 47:149; cited by Pikin, "The Protestant Zeno," 366.

In the locus on free choice of *Loci Communes* (1543), Melanchthon provides a different evaluation of Jerome and Chrysostom. Melanchthon uses a neutral tone to comment about Jerome: “Finally we must cite two points from Jerome which are often quoted and need some interpretation.” “In the statement of Jerome we have two blessings.”⁵² Unlike Calvin, Melanchthon positively treats Chrysostom’s saying as a support to his teaching on the self-determined nature of the will. Melanchthon quotes Chrysostom’s saying and uses it to affirm the active participation of the will in our struggle: “Since the struggle is great and difficult, the will is not idle but assents weakly.”⁵³

Similar to the efforts of Calvin, Vermigli devotes many pages of writings to discuss the teachings of the early church fathers and draw their support for the Reformation doctrine.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, Vermigli, unlike Calvin, is more positive towards the teachings of the fathers in general and also accepts Chrysostom’s saying with careful qualification:

We do not reject this saying, but should consider that since the divine attraction causes the change, man is found to be unwilling at the very start. When changed by God and healed he is made willing, and willingly drawn to further matters such as believing, hoping, and loving God himself; nevertheless, at that first moment when he began to be drawn he was not willing.⁵⁵

He maintains the teaching of divine initiation and argues that “at the first moment” of being drawn, the person was not willing. Also similar to Bucer, Vermigli’s focus is more

⁵² Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 45b, 46b.

⁵³ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 43b. “Cum aut sit certamen ingens & difficile, voluntates non est ociosa, sed languide assentitur.” Melanchthon, *Loci communes theologici* (1547), 94. Pitkin points out, “Calvin critically criticizes the views expressed in the 1535 *Loci*. Notably, he implicitly repudiates Melanchthon’s description of the ‘three causes’ by rejecting the very same quotation from Chrysostom that Melanchthon had cited to support his view.” Pitkin, “The Protestant Zeno,” 366.

⁵⁴ Cf. Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 271-319.

⁵⁵ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 305.

on drawing the support of the consent of the genuine tradition in various periods, on concluding the section on divine drawing, he says,

But to return to that preparation or healing of the soul which I said our mind meets only passively, I say that I have clearly proved it by Scripture and also by the witness of the Fathers. Now I add that it is not foreign to scholastic theologians, for they also grant that there are habits and theological virtues infused by God which we receive only passively.⁵⁶

As the main concern shifts towards the theodical concern, both Melanchthon and Vermigli find Chrysostom's saying helpful in affirming the self-determined nature of the will. In the second phase of the Reformation, Calvin shares with Bucer, Melanchthon, Vermigli, and others to draw the supports of the teachings of the early church fathers. Nevertheless, Calvin tends to follow Luther in focusing on the ambiguity of the fathers. And in their different attitudes towards how to deal with Chrysostom's saying, we find once again that Calvin stands closer to Luther than his fellow Reformers.

D. The Use of the Early Church Councils as Witness

Another major contribution and breakthrough Calvin makes in his defense is the use of several early church councils as witnesses to the Reformation doctrine,⁵⁷ in particular, the use of the Second Council of Orange as a support.⁵⁸ Calvin, in his use of early church councils as a support of the Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the

⁵⁶ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 314.

⁵⁷ On Calvin's quotes from and allusions to the Council of Carthage (416), the Council of Milevis (416), and the Council of Carthage (418), cf. Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 82, 99, 106, 125-126; *CO* 6:289, 300, 305, 318-19. Lane provides a nice comment on Calvin's confusion between Milevis and Carthage, cf. *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 106, note 119; 82, note 251.

⁵⁸ On Calvin's quotes from and allusions to the Second Council of Orange (529), cf. Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 81-82, 105-6, 126, 188-89; *CO* 6:289, 305, 319, 363-64. Nevertheless, Calvin does not use the Second Council of Orange to support his arguments on these related issues, though he uses it to support his teaching on "vow" and "penance." Cf. *Inst.*, 4.13.3; 4.19.14. On Calvin's use of "Council of Carthage," cf. *Inst.*, 3.20.22; 4.7.2-3, 30; 4.15.20; 4.19.14.

human will, starts a new trend in the second phase of the Reformation to claim the support of the better and purer tradition of the church for the Reformers' cause. It also reflects an important scholarship development.

Luther in his early Reformation defense never quotes the Second Council of Orange for his support.⁵⁹ There is an interesting history behind this. Luther and many medieval theologians before him are not well aware of this council. The medieval theologians learned about the decisions of the councils through compiled handbooks. The most famous one was the ninth-century Pseudo-Isidorian *Decretals*. But the *Decretals* does not include the Second Council of Orange. Lane gives a good summary on this:

Pighius, like Erasmus before him, was a victim of the fact that the condemnation of semiPelagianism at Orange was overlooked from the tenth century to 1538.⁶⁰

The medievals relied on compilations for their knowledge of the councils; these compilations, including the most influential, the ninth-century Pseudo-Isidorian *Decretals*, did not include Orange. Thus the canons of this council were unknown and unquoted from the tenth century until 1538, when Peter Crabbe published his two volume *Concilia omnia* (Cologne: P. Quentel, 1538).⁶¹

Therefore, Calvin has the benefit of the updated scholarship provided in the second phase of the debate.⁶² It is interesting to observe how a scholarly effort contributes to the cause

⁵⁹ The editor of Luther's *Against Latomus* argues that Luther seems to use a decree from the Council of Orange to rebut the idea of Jerome: "For there is another decree, alongside this scandalous one, which is genuinely godly, holding that, 'Whoever says we can fulfill God's commands without divine grace is anathema.'" *LW* 32:152. The editor says, "This may be a reference to the decrees of the Synod of Orange (529) which were confirmed by Pope Boniface II." But we believe that the evidence is not clear, nor convincing.

⁶⁰ Lane, "Bondage and Liberation in Calvin's Treatise against Pighius," 11.

⁶¹ Lane, "Bondage and Liberation in Calvin's Treatise against Pighius," 11, note 60. Cf. Bouillard, *Conversion et grace chez S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Aubier, 1944), 98-102, 114-21.

⁶² "Calvin also quotes from a number of councils: those of Carthage, Milevis, and Orange. He clearly had the source open before him. This must have been volume 1 of Peter Crabbe's *Concilia omnia*, the only printed work at this time to contain the canons of the Second Council of Orange (529)." Lane, "Introduction," xxiii. Crabbe's *Concilia omnia* was published in 1538.

of the Reformation. And Calvin uses it to support his cause against Pighius. For example,

Calvin uses the authority of the council to rebuke the authority of Hilary, quoted by

Pighius:

Moreover, let Pighius answer me this question: *should greater trust be placed in a private individual, as evidence of the consensus of the church*, then in many people gathered in a council who declare in the name of the church and as though from its mouth what they have considered together? . . . Hilary divides the credit between the human will and the grace of God, . . . *the council declares to be enemies of the Holy Spirit those who think or speak so*. . . In a second passage of Hilary . . . Here again I set against him another declaration of the same synod . . . With particular reference to faith Hilary affirms that its beginning is located in us. But the words of the council have a different sound . . . *Whatever Pighius quotes from Hilary he wants considered the official tradition of the church. Where then shall we put that council, which even though later in time ought not to take second place in authority?* Especially since it approved nothing that was different from the earlier councils at Carthage and Milevis.⁶³

Calvin also uses the authority of the council to justify his claim that Pighius' position is

heretical: "he is declared an enemy of the Holy Spirit by an orthodox council."⁶⁴ And

"he [Pighius] is declared to be a heretic by a decree of a church council (Council of

Orange, ch. 5)."⁶⁵ Calvin also uses the council to undermine Pighius' argument of the

apostolic succession by the Roman authority:

Now let Pighius show me one detail in the whole of his teaching which is not cut to pieces and condemned by those decrees! But if he despised the authority of the council, then at least he should be disturbed by the fact that the bishops who took part in it and signed its decrees do not make themselves out to be the originators of those clauses, but only to be approving them, since they had been sent to them from the apostolic see. This is the same see whose every utterance Pighius maintains is to

⁶³ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 81-82. Italics added. Peter Crabbe's edition confuses the canons of the Council of Carthage with the canons of the Council of Milevis. And Calvin follows Crabbe here. Cf. Lane's remark in *ibid.*, 82, note 251.

⁶⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 106.

⁶⁵ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 188.

be received no differently from an oracle of the tripod, nay no differently from a divine revelation from heaven to which both angels and prophets ought to defer.⁶⁶

And Lane calls Calvin's comment wise: "This was a shrewdly aimed blow as Pighius held that the decisions of councils took their validity from the pope's approval."⁶⁷

After Calvin, Vermigli also uses a similar line of argument and the authority of the councils to defend the Reformation doctrine.⁶⁸ The use of the councils reveals a new trend in the second phase of the Reformation. The Reformers gained a better understanding and appreciation of the genuine tradition in the early church.

E. Bernard as a Star Witness in the Medieval Church

In Calvin's defense, we find another key development of the Reformation debate on human will: the use of Bernard as a key witness of the better tradition of the medieval church. Calvin seldom quotes a medieval theologian with good words, but Bernard of Clairvaux is an exception.⁶⁹ Most research on the relation of Calvin and Bernard focuses on the possible influence of Bernard on the young Calvin. This involves the famous debate on whether the young Calvin was influenced by John Major when Calvin studied at the Collège de Montaigu. This Reuter thesis assumed that Calvin learned about the late

⁶⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 189. Cf. *Ibid.*, 188-89. On the metaphor of tripod, the editor provides this explanation: "The seat of the Pythian priestess of Apollo at Delphi." *Ibid.*, 189, note 112.

⁶⁷ Calvin, *The Boondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 189, n. 111.

⁶⁸ On Vermigli's use of the Council of Orange and the Council of Milevis, see Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 279, 315.

⁶⁹ Cf. Brümmer, "Calvin, Bernard and the Freedom of the Will," 437-55; Anthony N. S. Lane, "Calvin's Use of Bernard of Clairvaux," in *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 87-114; Lane, "Bernard of Clairvaux: A Forerunner of Calvin?" in *Bernardus Magister: Papers Presented at the Noncentenary Celebration of the Birth of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 10-13 May, 1990*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 533-45; Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, Studies in Reformed Theology and History, New Series Number 1 (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1996).

medieval scholastic theology when he was at the Collège de Montaigu.⁷⁰ Lane notes that both Calvin's usage of and attitude towards Bernard changed a lot between 1539 and 1543. Concerning the doctrine of the human will, Lane believes, "It is possible that Bernard contributed substantially to Calvin's formulation of the doctrine of the bondage of the will in the 1539 *Institutio*." On Bernard's influence on Calvin's treatise against Pighius (1543), Lane argues, "Bernard probably provided Calvin with significant material for his early teaching on sin and grace, but there is no evidence that he significantly influenced Calvin's basic stance." Lane suggests that the main contribution of Bernard is that he enriched Calvin's expression of his theology.⁷¹ The change of Calvin's characterization of the citations of Bernard may be seen as a reflection of Calvin's development of a better appreciation of the genuine tradition and a reaction against Pighius' criticism: more approving citations of Bernard were added both in his treatise against Pighius and in the later editions of the *Institutes* to a few primarily disapproving citations of Bernard in the 1539 *Institutes*.

In his 1539 *Institutes*, among four citations of Bernard that Calvin used, two of them are disapproving and the other two brief.⁷² Lane says,

Until the 1543 *Institutio* Calvin's citations are all vague, no references are given and none can be related with any certainty to a specific passage of Bernard, except for the definition of freewill, which appears to have an intermediary source.⁷³

⁷⁰ Cf. Karl Reuter, *Vom Scholaren bis zum jungen Reformator* (Neukirchen: Neukirchner Verlag, 1981); Alexandre Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin*, trans. David Foxgrover and Wade Provo (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 173-78; Alister E. McGrath, "John Calvin and Late Medieval Thought: A Study in Late Medieval Influences upon Calvin's Theological Development," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 77 (1986), 58-78; McGrath, *Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 94-106; McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 36-47; Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 39-44; Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 9-15.

⁷¹ Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 100, 96, 101.

⁷² Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 93. Cf. *ibid.*, 89-114, 136-137.

The only positive quote from Bernard is on the human will and Calvin uses it to clarify the nature of necessity of the fallen human will: “Not inappropriately Bernard teaches that to will is in us all: but to will good is gain; to will evil, loss. Therefore simply to will is of man; to will ill, of a corrupt nature; to will well, of grace.”⁷⁴

Lane points out that in 1543 *Institutes*, which was nearing completion in January 1543, “Calvin is by now familiar with Bernard. Bernard is cited extensively and approvingly, to support points being argued by Calvin. There are long and appreciative quotations from Bernard’s works.”⁷⁵ From the length of the quotations, Lane believes that “Calvin used an *Opera omnia* rather than either manuscripts or editions of individual works.”⁷⁶ Nevertheless, we should point out that among these lengthy quotations, none is related to the issue of the bondage of the human will. A background issue behind the change is Pighius’ claim in his treatise that Bernard supported his position, rather than the Reformers. On this, Calvin responds, “And indeed elsewhere he does not hesitate to bring forward Bernard, but if the dispute were to be decided on his vote, I would, even if I did

⁷³ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 93. Lane basically rejects the Reuter thesis concerning Bernard: “This conclusion concerns not the nebulous influence of a ‘bernhardinisch-devote’ tradition, where Reuter may well be correct, but Calvin’s direct literary encounter with Bernard, about which Reuter makes equally firm assertions, which are unfounded.” *Ibid.*, 94. Concerning the possible impact of the treatise of Pighius on 1543 *Institutio*, Lane observes, “The 1543 edition of the *Institutio* was already largely complete by early 1542 and was probably with the printer by the time Calvin was replying to Pighius, so no influence on that edition is to be sought (or found).” Lane, “Introduction,” in *Defensio Sanae et Orthodoxae Doctrinae de Servitute et Liberatione Humani Arbitrii*, 19. To differentiate this work with Lane’s Introduction in the English treatise, we will include the year 2008 to identify it.

⁷⁴ “Neque vero inepte Bernardus, qui velle nobis omnibus inesse docet: sed velle bonum, profectus: velle malum, defectus. Ideo simpliciter velle, hominis: male velle, corruptae naturae: bene velle, gratiae.” *Inst.*, 2.3.5. Cf. Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 105.

⁷⁵ Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 14.

⁷⁶ Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 16.

not get his absolutely full support, still come out on top by a long way.”⁷⁷ Lane points out that Calvin gradually developed the use of Bernard as “a medieval witness to the truth.”⁷⁸

Calvin’s concern to defend the orthodoxy of the Reformation was one of key reasons behind the change. Calvin’s citations of Bernard changed from a disapproving tone to a much more approving tone reflecting not only a better acquaintance with Bernard’s literature, but also a significant development in the second phase of the debate. Because of a greater appreciation through more interaction, the need for edification, and the apologetic need to defend the orthodoxy of the Reformation doctrines, the Reformers came to utilize the better tradition of the medieval church as the witness of their cause. Bucer in his *Commentary on Romans* (1536) had already set the precedent to draw the support of the Schoolmen:

And so not only the early Fathers but also the more notable of the Schoolmen, irrespective of the degree of free will [*liberi arbitrii*] they assign to men, are all agreed that without the special prompting and constant direction of the Spirit of God men can neither turn to God, nor having turned persevere in the life of God, nor after falling rise again, nor for all their perseverance and progress, attain perfect establishment in the life of God and the inability to fall any more. They unitedly confess that all these are the works of God’s grace, for they follow St. Augustine, and this is certainly his opinion.⁷⁹

Following a similar direction, Calvin became a key pioneer among them to draw on Bernard for the cause of the Reformation formulation.

⁷⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 85. Cf. Pighius, *De libero hominis arbitrio et divina gratia*, 11a, 46a.

⁷⁸ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 93, 98.

⁷⁹ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 151-52; *Metaphrases*, 402b. Lane points out, “But Bucer’s use of Bernard is slight compared with Calvin’s and Bucer’s role would have been no more than to point Calvin in the direction of Bernard.” Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 15.

This effort to quote Bernard for support differed a lot from the tone set in early Reformation. On the very first lines in the section on free will in his *Loci Communes* (1521), Melanchthon used a disapproving tone in speaking about Bernard: “Augustine and Bernard wrote on free will (*arbitrium*), and the former revised his ideas extensively in the books that he later wrote against the Pelagians. Bernard is not consistent.”⁸⁰ In the last sentence of this section, Melanchthon also strongly criticized Bernard:

You see, dear reader, with how much more certainty we have written about free will (*arbitrium*) than Bernard or any of the Scholastics. Furthermore, the matters that we have discussed so far will become more clear in the remaining parts of our compendium.⁸¹

To Melanchthon in this period, Bernard was probably a member of “the Pharisaical Scholastics.” All three comments he made on Bernard in 1521 are negative.⁸² Bernard was not used to support the Reformation position in early Reformation. Luther did not use Bernard to support his argument for the bondage of the human will.⁸³

⁸⁰ Melanchthon, “Loci communes theologici,” 22.

⁸¹ Melanchthon, “Loci communes theologici,” 30. Melanchthon has another negative comment on Bernard in his 1521 *Loci Communes*: “I wish Bernard were a little more liberal on this point in his *De praecepto et dispensatione*.” *Ibid.*, 68.

⁸² On the Pharisaical Scholastics, Melanchthon has these comments: “The Pharisaical Scholastics will preach the power of free will (*arbitrium*). The Christian will acknowledge that nothing is less in his power than his heart. May the stupid Scholastics see how many thousands of souls they have slain with their Pharisaical double-talk on free will (*arbitrium*)! We shall soon speak more on the affections, however, when we discuss original sin.” Melanchthon, “Loci communes theologici,” 30. Kolb relates a possible positive impact by Bernard on Luther in Melanchthon’s brief overview of Luther’s career for the second volume of the Wittenberg edition of Luther’s Latin works (1546): “He [Melanchthon] focused on Luther’s struggles of faith as a monk and professor in the 1510s, and he traced the beginning of the dawning of the gospel in his colleague’s consciousness to Luther’s encounter with an anonymous old monk who took Brother Martin aside and directed him to the words of the creed, ‘I believe in the remission of sins.’ The monk also pointed Luther to the comments of Bernard of Clairvaux on forgiveness through God’s grace in Christ. Luther proceeded to study Paul and Augustine, Melanchthon wrote, but he continued to hang on to the Scholastic theologians Gabriel Biel, Jean Gerson, and William of Ockham, whom he preferred to Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus.” Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, Hero*, 23. Cf. CR 6:155-70.

⁸³ For a long bibliography of Luther’s relationship with Bernard, cf. Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 1, note 9. See also Theodorus M. M. A. C. Bell, *Divus Bernhardus. Bernhard von Clairvaux in Martin Luthers Schriften* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1993). Luther’s only citation of Bernard in *The*

Calvin, as a young Reformer, in 1539 *Institutes* probably followed the line of thought established in the early Reformation, and used Bernard more in a disapproving than approving manner. Yet from 1539 to 1543, a very important stage in his development, Calvin came to a better understanding of Bernard and the sounder Schoolmen. The reading he had done between these years and the debate with Pighius probably provided him opportunities to have a better interaction with the wider catholic heritage, in particularly the literature of Augustine, Bernard, Lombard, and other Reformers. Though his position did not change significantly, he established more independence from the early Reformation formulation, and developed a better appreciation and more positive use of the genuine tradition of the medieval church.

On the topic of the human will, Lane points out that Calvin cited Bernard four times in his response to Pighius' *De libero arbitrio*.⁸⁴ In all these citations, Calvin claims the full support of Bernard. Calvin also lines up Bernard's support with that of Augustine. Calvin says, "So spoke Augustine, so spoke Bernard, before us." On the issue of the necessity of sinning, Calvin says, "But that now, after his fall, the yoke of necessity, from which we should otherwise have been free and exempt, has been laid upon us, is the unanimous teaching of [Augustine] himself, and Prosper and Bernard."⁸⁵ Brümmer points out, "Bernard's 'freedom from necessity' is what Calvin refers to as 'freedom from

Bondage of the Will is this: "This was often the case with Augustine, and it was so with Bernard when, at the point of death, he said, 'I have lost my time because I have lived like a lost soul.'" *LW* 33:77.

⁸⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 85, 147, 149, 209; *CO* 6:291, 333, 335, 378. Cf. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 96-97. Comparing with his citations in the 1543 *Institutio*, where Bernard is cited at length, Lane argues, "The four citations in Calvin's 1543 *Defensio doctrinae de servitute et liberatione arbitrii* are brief and vague and suggest that Calvin was relying on his memory of his earlier study of Bernard and had no text at hand." *Ibid.*, 117.

⁸⁵ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 147, 149.

compulsion’.”⁸⁶ After this, Calvin argues that “being voluntary” is not “inconsistent with being necessary.”⁸⁷ Hence, “the devil is evil of necessity, but his wickedness is no less culpable.”⁸⁸

In his 1559 *Institutio*, the name “Bernard” is cited twenty eight times.⁸⁹ Lane points out that there are fifteen new Bernardine citations in the 1559 *Institutio*, and they are concerned with “freewill, grace, and justification.” Lane believes that these citations are related to Calvin’s “wider reading of Bernard in connection with old topics.”⁹⁰ In chapters one to five in Book II, the section on human will, the name “Bernard” is cited seven times. With the exception of two mild criticisms of Bernard, all these new quotations are very positive.⁹¹ In the discussion of predestination, the name “Bernard” is cited four times. All new citations are positive too.⁹² Obviously after the treatise against Pighius, Bernard becomes a key medieval witness for Calvin.⁹³

⁸⁶ Brümmer, “Calvin, Bernard and the Freedom of the Will,” 447. Cf. “Bernard agrees with Augustine when he makes the church speak thus: ‘Draw me, however unwilling, to make me willing; draw me, slow-footed, to make me run.’” *Inst.*, 2.3.12. “Bernard also aptly teaches the same thing: that we are the more miserable because the necessity is voluntary, a necessity which nevertheless having bound us to it, so constrains us that we are slaves of sin, as we have mentioned before. The second part of their syllogism is defective because it erroneously leaps from ‘voluntary’ to ‘free.’ For we proved above that something not subject to free choice is nevertheless voluntarily done.” *Ibid.*, 2.5.1.

⁸⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 146-49, 209.

⁸⁸ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 147; *CO* 6:333.

⁸⁹ *Inst.*, 2.1.4, 2.24, 2.2.6, 2.3.5 (2 times), 2.3.12, 2.5.1, 2.16.1, 3.2.25, 3.2.41, 3.3.15, 3.11.22, 3.12.3, 3.12.8, 3.13.4, 3.15.2, 3.21.1, 3.22.10 (2 times), 3.24.4, 4.5.13, 4.7.18, 4.7.22 (3 times), 4.11.11 (2 times), 4.17.15.

⁹⁰ Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 19-20.

⁹¹ *Inst.*, 2.1.4, 2.3.5 (2 times), 2.3.12, 2.5.1, 2.5.14.

⁹² *Inst.*, 3.21.1, 3.22.10, 3.24.4. Cf. Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 71-73, 98-100.

⁹³ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 93, 98.

Calvin frequently blends Augustine and Bernard together to act as the witnesses of the biblical and Reformation teachings in the ancient and medieval churches.⁹⁴ In these 8 pairs of occasions in 1559 *Institutes*, they stand for the witnesses to the doctrines of the human will, grace, and predestination. Calvin uses various rhetorical phrases to emphasize the combined witnesses: “Bernard, agreeing with Augustine”; “Bernard agrees with Augustine”; “ancient writers also sometimes speak thus. So says Augustine in one place . . . Bernard’s famous sentences correspond to this”; “So Augustine says . . . Now Bernard says”; “Augustine says . . . Bernard is in agreement with this”; “Augustine also teaches us to act thus . . . Also Bernard”; “Let Augustine answer for me . . . For Bernard rightly says”. If Augustine is the star witness for Calvin in the early church, Bernard is his star witness in the medieval church. On this Calvin says it beautifully in his comment on human will in the 1559 *Institutes*:

Surely my readers will recognize that I am bringing forth nothing new, for it is something that Augustine taught of old with the agreement of all the godly, and it was still retained almost a thousand years later in monastic cloisters.⁹⁵

Calvin follows the formula he began in his debate against Pighius (1543). Bernard becomes an integral part of Calvin’s orthodox defense.

In the section on human will in 1559 *Institutes*, in addition to Bernard, Calvin also briefly reviews the views of several medieval Schoolmen: Anselm, Lombard, and Aquinas. Calvin ends the discussion by agreeing with the sayings of Lombard: “Now in the schools three kinds of freedom are distinguished: first from necessity, second from

⁹⁴ *Inst.*, 2.3.5, 2.3.12, 3.11.22, 3.12.3, 3.13.4, 3.15.2, 3.21.1, 3.22.10. Cf. Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, 30-31.

⁹⁵ *Inst.*, 2.3.5. Calvin also implies this in his comment on predestination: “But why do we need to quote Bernard as a witness, when we hear from the Master’s own lips: ‘Only those see the Father who are from God.’ (John 6:46).” *Inst.*, 3.22.10.

sin, third from misery. The first of these so inheres in man by nature that it cannot possibly be taken away, but the two others have been lost through sin. I willingly accept this distinction, except in so far as necessity is falsely confused with compulsion.”⁹⁶ He also uses a long quotation of Bernard to finish this section.⁹⁷

The better acquaintance of the genuine tradition of the church not only provides Calvin witnesses for the orthodox defense, but also polishes his concept of the human will with clear expressions. In his treatise against Pighius, Calvin also quotes Bernard to distinguish the threefold nature of the will: the faculty of willing, qualities or habits, and the acts of will. Calvin says, “For in relation to the present issue, following Bernard I proposed three things for consideration: to will per se, that is, simply to will; then to will badly; and [to will] well.”⁹⁸ This, coupled with his use of “habitus” to differentiate the quality and the substance of the will, becomes a very helpful clarification, for Calvin to defend his earlier statement. In his 1539 *Institutio*, Calvin, using biblical expressions, teaches that the heart changes from a stony one to a fleshy one. Calvin is liable to the charge that he means that the substance of the will is changed. Using this terminology and other distinctions, Calvin is able to clarify and qualify what he meant in 1539.

We do not find such extensive use of Bernard by Melanchthon, Bucer, or Bullinger.⁹⁹ Vermigli also quotes Bernard as a support, but much less frequent than

⁹⁶ *Inst.*, 2.2.5. Calvin also used it in the 1539 *Institutes*.

⁹⁷ *Inst.*, 2.3.5.

⁹⁸ Cf. Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 209; CO 6:378.

⁹⁹ Melanchthon does not mention Bernard in his discussion of contingency or free choice in the 1543 *Loci communes*. In the 1555 *Loci communes*, Melanchthon has no citation of Bernard on these topic, but his name to support his doctrine: “Ever since the time of the apostles there have been holy men who have known and preached this truth, some more clearly and purely, some more obscurely than others—Basil, Ambrose, Augustine, Prosper, Maximus, Hugo, Bernard, Tauler, Wessel, and Luther.” Melanchthon,

Calvin does.¹⁰⁰ Hence, we believe that Calvin was a pioneer in adopting Bernard as a key witness from the medieval church. Calvin's concern for an orthodox defense of the early Reformation heritage led him to a better appreciation of the genuine medieval heritage. His use of corresponding medieval authority probably set an important precedent for the early Reformed orthodoxy.

F. The Augustinian Distinction Between the State of the Human Will Before the Fall and the State After the Fall

In his orthodox defense, through better acquaintance with Augustine's works and the Augustinian tradition through his debate with Pighius, Calvin learned to use traditional the Augustinian framework and scholastic terminology to qualify his previously less nuanced statements. Calvin became more explicit in affirming the Augustinian distinction between the state of the human will before the fall and after it. By paying attention to the criticism of Pighius and theodical concern, Calvin strengthens his previous formulation by affirming explicitly that Adam before the fall had the free choice of good and evil, that when Adam fell, he fell by his own choice, and that after he fell, the human will was bound because of the corruption caused by the fall. After the treatise, Calvin consistently maintains this important Augustinian framework to differentiate the state of Adam before the fall from that after the fall.

First of all, Calvin uses the opportunity to clarify an unnuanced statement in 1539 *Institutes*, where he talked about the passive nature of the human will in receiving grace. There Calvin says, "If, therefore, a stone is transformed into flesh when the Lord converts

On Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555, 68.

¹⁰⁰ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 241-42, 258-59, 272.

us to zeal for the right, *whatever is of our own will is effaced [aboletur]*. What takes its place is wholly from the Lord.”¹⁰¹ After this, he emphasizes that “the Lord corrects our evil will, or rather extinguishes [*aboleat*] it; he substitutes for it a good one from himself.”¹⁰² Because of this statement, “Calvin was accused by Pighius in 1542 of teaching that grace destroys the will.”¹⁰³ In response, in the treatise against Pighius, Calvin clarifies his point by using the scholastic distinction of three kinds of will: the substance (or faculty) of the will, the habit of the will, and the actions of the will: “Or is Pighius still so uneducated as not to recognize anything between the substance of the will, or the faculty of willing, and its actions or its actual effects? . . . Since no one is so unlearned as not to set habit (*habitus*) in between.”¹⁰⁴

Calvin also uses a quote from Bernard to reinforce his point: “to will per se, that is, simply to will; then to will badly; and [to will] well.”¹⁰⁵ Through these distinctions, Calvin argues that his early statement does not teach the destruction of the faculty of the will, but a change in the quality or the habit (*habitus*): “For I explicitly mention that the will remains in man just as it was originally implanted in him, and so the change takes place in the habit, not in the substance.”¹⁰⁶ Calvin introduces the philosophical term

¹⁰¹ Italics added. “Si ergo lapis in carnem transformatur quando nos Dominus ad recti stadium convertit, aboletur quidquid est propriae nostrae voluntatis; quod in eius locum succedit, totum a Domino est.” *CO* 1:340. Cf. *Inst.*, 2.3.6. In his 1539 *Institutes*, after this line, Calvin goes directly to the first paragraph of 2.3.7 of the 1559 version.

¹⁰² *Inst.*, 2.3.7. “quod et pravam nostram voluntatem corrigat Dominus, vel potius aboleat, et a seipso bonam submittat.”

¹⁰³ Lane, “Did Calvin Believe in Freewill?” 82.

¹⁰⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 209; *CO* 6:378.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, “On Grace and Free Choice,” in *The Works of Bernard Clairvaux*, vol. 7 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Pub. Inc., 1977), 6.16, 18-20; 8.24-26.

¹⁰⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 210; *CO* 6:379. In one place in his 1539

habitus to clarify his previously less nuanced statement, though, as Lane points out, Calvin does not use this term in any edition of the *Institutes*.¹⁰⁷ Lane says, “*Habitus* is a philosophical term adopted by medieval scholastic theology, which Calvin here voluntarily introduces into the debate.”¹⁰⁸

After the treatise against Pighius, Calvin also adds useful distinctions and elaborations in 1559 *Institutes* to qualify and clarify his previously less nuanced statement: “I say that the will [*voluntatem*] is effaced [*aboleri*]; not in so far as it is will [*voluntas*], for in man’s conversion what belongs to his primal nature remains entire. I also say that it is created anew; not meaning that the will now begins to exist, but that it is changed from an evil to a good will.”¹⁰⁹

Calvin also came to recognize the theodical need to affirm clearly and explicitly that Adam, before the fall, had free choice, *liberum arbitrium*. In 1559 *Institutes*, Calvin adds a long section to affirm the existence of *liberum arbitrium* in Adam:

Institutes, Calvin implicitly provides a distinction between quality and substance and this paragraph is maintained in the 1559 *Institutes*: “We deny that it has flowed from nature in order to indicate that it is an adventitious quality [*qualitatem*] which comes upon man rather than a substantial property which has been implanted from the beginning.” *Inst.*, 2.2.11. “A natura fluxisse negamus, ut significemus adventitiam magis esse qualitatem quae homini acciderit, quam substantialem proprietatem quae ab initio indita fuerit.”

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Lane, “Introduction,” xxvi.

¹⁰⁸ Calvin, *Defensio Sanae et Orthodoxae Doctrinae de Servitute et Liberatione Humani Arbitrii*, 290, note 53. In his *Commentary on Seneca’s De Clementia* (1532), Calvin discussed the term: “This is what the philosophers say: that man’s mind, as it becomes accustomed to virtues or vices, contracts the habit of them. Now habits are acquired qualities by which with regard to our moral character we conduct ourselves well or badly. So I do understand that passage in Aristotle’s *Ethics* [2.1, 1103a16ff], that moral virtue is acquired by habit.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentary on Seneca’s De Clementia*, ed. F. L. Battles and A. M. Hugo (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 80-83.

¹⁰⁹ A long passage of 320 Latin words is added: “Voluntatem dico aboleri, non quatenus est voluntas: quia in hominis conversione integrum manet quod primae est naturae: creari etiam novam dico, non ut voluntas esse incipiat, sed ut vertatur ex mala in bonam. . . . quasi diceret ne tantillum quidem restare homini in quo gloriatur, quia totum a Deo est.” *Inst.*, 2.3.6. In Battles’ translation, the long passage has 464 English words: “I say that the will is effaced; not in so far as it is will, . . . It is as if he were saying that not a whit remains to man to glory in, for the whole of salvation comes from God.”

To this he joined the will [*voluntatem*], under whose control is choice [*electio*]. Man in his first condition excelled in these pre-eminent endowments, so that his reason, understanding, prudence, and judgment not only sufficed for the direction of his earthly life, but by them men mounted up even to God and eternal bliss. Then was choice [*electio*] added, to direct the appetites and control all the organic motions, and thus make the will completely amenable to the guidance of the reason. In this integrity man by free will [*libero arbitrio*] had the power, if he so willed, to attain eternal life. Here it would be out of place to raise the question of God's secret predestination because our present subject is not what can happen or not, but what man's nature was like. Therefore Adam could have stood if he wished, seeing that he fell solely by his own will [*voluntate*]. But it was because his will was capable of being bent to one side or the other, and was not given the constancy to persevere, that he fell so easily. *Yet his choice of good and evil was free* [*Libera tamen fuit electio boni et mali*], and not that alone, but the highest rectitude was in his mind and will, and all the organic parts were rightly composed to obedience, until in destroying himself he corrupted his own blessings.¹¹⁰

Here Calvin expressively affirms that Adam before the fall had *liberum arbitrium* and a free choice of good and evil. But it is not so in 1539 *Institutes*. In 1539 Calvin did not expressively state that Adam before the fall had a free choice of good and evil. Calvin gradually incorporates this Augustinian standpoint into the *Institutes*. The short passage of about eight sentences in 1539 is now enlarged to a chapter of 8 sections in 1559

Institutes. Lane says,

But in the 1539 edition the nearest that Calvin comes is the acceptance of Augustine's teaching that Adam's original freedom was "posse non peccare." Where Calvin explains why he prefers not to follow Augustine in affirming *liberum arbitrium* he does so on the grounds that fallen humanity is in bondage to sin.¹¹¹

Calvin's less nuanced presentation in 1539, with the teaching of the will being effaced and the rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium* and without the explicit affirmation of

¹¹⁰ *Inst.*, 1.15.8. Italics added.

¹¹¹ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 182. The quote is, "Primam fuisse libertatem, posse non peccare; nostram multo maiorem, non posse peccare." "The original freedom was to be able not to sin; but ours is much greater, not to be able to sin." *Inst.*, 2.3.13. This sentence is placed at the middle part of chapter 2 in the 1539 version and is very far from the first paragraph we just mention.

free choice for Adam before the fall, may easily be misunderstood by his opponents as denying the natural integrity of the human will.

Because of this, in his defense against Pighius in 1543, Calvin has to argue defensively, “For we do not deny that man was created with free choice [*liberi arbitrii*], endowed as he was with sound intelligence of mind and uprightness of will [*voluntatis*].” Now He explicitly affirms that on this point the Reformers agree with the Roman opponents: “To speak even more clearly, there is full agreement between us about the original creation of man [*de prima hominis creatione*]. For Pighius lays down that man was made with free choice [*Liberi enim arbitrii factum fuisse hominem*]. We accept this, and did not wait for him to demand this of us; we have always owned this belief.”¹¹² Lane is sharp to point out that “it is not until the 1559 edition that he positively affirms what he earlier did not deny.”¹¹³ Now Calvin also sharply distinguishes the state before the fall from that after. He uses phrases like “the original, natural state,” “one that is unspoiled,” “the nature of man who was formed by God,” “original condition,” “the pure state of creation,” “first origins,” and “the nature of man at the time of his creation and first origin” to describe the original state.¹¹⁴ He emphasizes that in this state “man as created by God was free and in control of himself [*liberum et suae potestatis*]” and “was made with free choice and received a soul that was capable of both good and evil. [*liberi arbitrii fuisse conditum animamque accepisse boni et mali capacem*]”¹¹⁵

¹¹² Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 47, 92; CO 6:263, 296. Quoted also by Lane in *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 182.

¹¹³ Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 182.

¹¹⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 70-77.

¹¹⁵ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 71; CO 6:281-82.

Calvin also understands well the theodical concern for teaching the existence of free choice for the original state. Referring to Basil's teaching on this issue, Calvin calls this teaching "a description designed to prevent people from passing on to God the blame for the evils they commit." Calvin now carefully puts the issue back in an Augustinian framework: "At the beginning therefore he says that sin was not inherent in man's substance, but befell him through his own fault, something which we not only acknowledge but carefully safeguard."¹¹⁶ Through the need to defend himself and by way of more interaction with the Augustinian traditions, Calvin reformulates his idea with a much clearer Augustinian framework. This careful distinction between the original state and the fallen state becomes a standard feature after his debate against Pighius.

In addition, we need to be aware that in those key treatises concerning the debates on the bondage of the human will in the early Reformation debates, Luther and young Melancthon never explicitly affirmed that Adam before the fall had *liberum arbitrium*. Neither did Calvin in 1539. Hence, as Bullinger did in *Oratio* (1536), Calvin in defense against Pighius had a great opportunity to clarify his less nuanced statement, and in the meantime polished the early Reformation formulation.

This clarification reminds us of three things. First, the fluidity of the theological language used by the young Calvin and the early Reformers generates certain degrees of misinterpretation, misunderstanding and ambiguity.¹¹⁷ It is also complicated by the fact that some earlier formulations lacked sufficient qualification and clarification to guard

¹¹⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 75.

¹¹⁷ Lane says, "Pighius did not allow sufficiently for the element of humanist exaggeration in Calvin's rhetoric." "Bondage and Liberation in Calvin's Treatise against Pighius," 17, note 96. See also R. W. Richgels, "Scholasticism Meets Humanism in the Counter-Reformation. The Clash of Cultures in Robert Bellarmine's Use of Calvin in the *Controversies*," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 6/1 (1975): 61-66.

against these misunderstandings. Second, there is a healthy and natural development in the second phase of the Reformation for the Reformers to clarify the terms used in the early Reformation and to reuse classical terms to defend the Reformation doctrine.¹¹⁸

Third, Calvin, though lacking formal scholastic theological training, masters more traditional and medieval distinctions as he is pressed to clarify or qualify his earlier formulation in his debate with Pighius.¹¹⁹ Through more interaction with Augustine and the Augustinian tradition, Calvin utilizes more traditional Augustinian concepts to defend his cause, and becomes more tolerant than Luther towards traditional Augustinian distinctions.

G. Calvin's Rejection of the Term *Liberum Arbitrium*

Unlike Bucer, the mature Melanchthon, Bullinger, and to some extent also Vermigli, Calvin is very unique among his fellow Reformers in the second phase of the debate in his support of Luther's rejection of the use of the term *liberum arbitrium*. At the time of Calvin's treatise against Pighius, there was a polemically-generated need to reassess the use of all of the traditional Augustinian terminology, including the term, *liberum arbitrium*. As a matter of fact, most of Calvin's contemporaries drew on classical Augustinian terminology and scholastic distinctions to protect the genuine contingency of the secondary causality. Most of them tended to move away from Luther's necessitarian

¹¹⁸ Lane points out, "Calvin is fully aware of progress at least in the outward expression of his teaching." *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*, 180.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Muller says, "Calvin's knowledge of scholastic theology certainly also increased as he prepared his lectures on Scripture, his commentaries, and the successive editions of the *Institutes*. It may well be the case that his more positive use of scholastic distinctions arose by way of his encounter with them as explanations of difficulties and seeming contradictions in the biblical text, an encounter largely related to his reading of major medieval commentators in preparing for his writing of lectures and commentaries on Scripture." *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 57.

argument.¹²⁰ Hence, the diversity among the Reformers towards the use of the term *liberum arbitrium* constituted an important historical context behind Calvin's way of formulation.

Calvin's rejection of the term reminds us that Calvin basically adopts key features of Luther's early Reformation formulation: "the preference for biblical expressions" and a re-interpretation of Augustine. Nevertheless, Calvin also provided a nuanced qualification in his rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*. This actually reflected a concern about and an indirect interaction with the changing theological environment: as the Reformation progressed, and as the need for edification increased, many traditional theological terms returned or at least were tolerated.

Bucer's strong support for the use of the term in his *Commentary on Romans* (1536) was something Calvin certainly knew. There Bucer argues, "For our part we follow St. Augustine both in substance and in terminology, in defining free will [*liberum arbitrium*] as the free volition automatically consequent upon a decision of one's own reason."¹²¹ Bucer even calls this a "catholic faith": "Hence Augustine declares that it is a dogma of the catholic faith that man has free will [*liberum arbitrium*]."¹²² Bucer taught the bondage of the will, but he did not reject the use of the term. After the 1530s,

¹²⁰ It is interesting to point out that both Kolb and Bagchi observe that in his later years, Luther also gradually picked up more scholastic distinctions. Kolb says, "As a child of the scholastic system of the medieval university, Luther also resorted to concepts formulated from traditional scholastic philosophical raw material to clarify and defend his teaching." Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 2. D. V. N. Bagchi says, "And yet there remains the fact that in later years Luther frequently returned to scholastic ways of arguing." "Sic et Non: Luther and Scholasticism," in *Protestant Scholasticism*, 11.

¹²¹ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 146; *Metaphrases*, 400b.

¹²² Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 148; *Metaphrases*, 401b.

Melanchthon explicitly reuses the term *liberum arbitrium*.¹²³ Bullinger also uses the term in his 1536 *Oratio*. Bullinger even affirms that in some sense, free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) still exists among the unregenerate as “man is not compelled but commits sin of his own accord and nature.”¹²⁴

Vermigli, though showing high sensitivity towards the early Reformation’s rejection of the term, also reuses the term. He acknowledges that “The term ‘free will’ [*liberum arbitrium*] is not found in Holy Scripture so far as I know.”¹²⁵ He also retells the story of the early Reformation positively: “Consider this, Luther called *arbitrium* rather *servum* than *liberum*. If one were in prison, bound with shackles and chains, would he be right to maintain that he is free because he can move his head and lift up his eyes?”¹²⁶ Yet Vermigli still affirms the use of the term by careful definition: “The Latin phrase *liberum arbitrium* consists of two words: *arbitrari* means to weigh, perceive, suppose, or judge; we have already said that the adjective *liber* describes one who has authority over himself.”¹²⁷ Guardedly he also accepts the use of the term *liberum arbitrium* for the unregenerate, if it is not interpreted to mean freedom in a spiritual sense. He prefers to say that the unregenerate have “partial free will” [*liberum arbitrium partim*].¹²⁸ Hence, it is quite obvious that Calvin was unique among his fellow key Reformers in his rejection of the term.

¹²³ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes* 1543, 41a.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Venema, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Doctrine of Predestination*, 65.

¹²⁵ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 271.

¹²⁶ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 281.

¹²⁷ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 272.

¹²⁸ “We gather from these words that we are not to contend about the word, and may allow *liberum*

Nevertheless, there are three subtle differences between Luther and Calvin in their rejection of the term. This reflects that tension Calvin has to face in view of the common reuse of the term among his contemporaries. First, while Luther was blunt in criticizing Augustine for the use of the term, Calvin showed more sympathy towards Augustine's use. In *Against Latomus* (1521), Luther criticizes Augustine on the use of the term *liberum arbitrium*: "For not even Augustine, even though he is of all the fathers the best, was free to change the expression Paul used and to invent another."¹²⁹ But Calvin speaks of it with more appreciation:

That expression [*vocabulum*] had already gained a hold in common speech [*vulgo*], so that Augustine saw that he would have more trouble eliminating it than explaining the whole matter properly. So he yields to custom [*Cedit igitur consuetudini*], but at the same time he takes careful precautions to prevent the name from giving birth to a mistaken understanding.¹³⁰

Calvin also does not criticize Augustine in his review of the term in the *Institutes*. Rather, Calvin, following the line of Luther, defends the rejection of the term by quoting that Augustine "does not hesitate to call it 'bound.' [*servum*]"¹³¹

In addition, Calvin shows much more toleration in his rejection. He prefers to identify what is really the substance of the teaching behind different uses of terminology. Calvin says, "I am not so excessively concerned about words as to want to start an

arbitrium so long as it is the same as *voluntas*, and that freedom in spiritual matters is not attributed to it. We also take the will to be free only through grace; otherwise it is slave." Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 284. *Ibid.*, 274.

¹²⁹ *LW* 32:203-4. Cf. *LW* 33:103.

¹³⁰ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 102; *CO* 6:302-3. "In case these words should cause anyone difficulty, we must immediately observe the sense in which he is wont to call choice free [*quo sensu arbitrium vocare liberum*]. I made no secret in the *Institutes* of the fact that this term [*nomen*] occurs repeatedly in his writings." Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 102; *CO* 6:302.

¹³¹ *Inst.*, 2.2.8. "In primis Augustinus, qui non dubitat servum appellare." Cf. *LW* 31:48, 32:92, 25:375, 33:108; Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, II, 8, 23.

argument for that cause, provided a sound understanding of the reality is retained.”¹³²

Though Calvin prefers not to use the term, he, unlike Luther, clearly states that the use of the term, with proper qualification is acceptable: “ “But I have always borne witness that I do not want to fight over words if it is once and for all established that freedom should be applied not to a power or ability to choose good and evil alike, but to a movement and an agreement which is self-determined.”¹³³ Calvin also shows sensitivity towards the reuse of the term by his fellow Reformers “And yet if there is agreement among the learned about its meaning, *I will allow them to make use of that word*. And I will not even impede its use before the general public, if that which is designated by it is clearly explained. Where this cannot be achieved, I now warn readers to pay attention to the thing itself rather than to its name.”¹³⁴

The third subtle difference is that Calvin is milder in tone in his pastoral warning against the use of the term.¹³⁵ Strong condemnation of the term dominated most of Luther’s discussion. Luther in *The Bondage of the Will* (1525) strongly condemns the use of the term *liberum arbitrium*, and argues that the use of the term may lead to fatal

¹³² Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 68.

¹³³ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 103; *CO* 6:303. “Semper autem testatus sum, me de nomine pugnare nolle, si hoc semel constitueretur: libertatem, non ad potentiam vel facultatem boni aeque ac mali eligendi, sed ad spontaneum motum et consensum referri debere.” Only in a single incident, we find that Luther seems to tolerate the possible use of the term: “But if we are unwilling to let this term go altogether—though that would be the safest and most God-fearing thing to do—let us at least teach men to use it honestly, so that free choice is allowed to man only with respect to what is beneath him and not what is above him.” *LW* 33:70. Cf. “But in order not to appear to delight in quarreling about words, let us for the moment accept this misuse of terms, serious and dangerous though it is, and allow free choice to be the same as vertible choice.” *LW* 33:104.

¹³⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; *CO* 6:279-80. Italics added.

¹³⁵ *LW* 33:70. Cf. “But in order not to appear to delight in quarreling about words, let us for the moment accept this misuse of terms, serious and dangerous though it is, and allow free choice to be the same as vertible choice.” *LW* 33:104.

consequences and “is a danger to salvation.”¹³⁶ Therefore, he calls dropping the term “the safest and most religious thing to do.”¹³⁷ As early as in *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles* (1521), Luther condemned the use of it in strong words. Luther says, “For this reason I would wish that the words, “free will,” had never been invented.”¹³⁸ Calvin basically adopts most of the pastoral and didactic concerns of Luther,¹³⁹ but he is less polemical against the use of the term. Though Calvin argues that “error of pernicious consequence” and “a fatal confidence” are involved, he still says, “I abominate mere verbal disputes.”¹⁴⁰ The conclusion of his discussion in *Institutes* reflects this subtle change and sensitive tension: “If anyone, then, can use this word without understanding it in a bad sense, I shall not trouble him on this account. But I hold that because it cannot be retained without great peril, it will, on the contrary, be a great boon for the church if it be abolished. I prefer not to use it myself, and I should like others, if they seek my advice, to avoid it.”¹⁴¹

Calvin’s formulation is a reformation of Luther’s early Reformation convictions in the setting of shifted concern and diversified formulations in the second phase of the Reformation. Personally, Calvin was deeply persuaded by the argument and the pastoral and didactical reasons advocated by Luther. Nevertheless, Calvin faced the scenario that many Reformers readopted the classical terminology. Calvin faced the danger of both

¹³⁶ LW 33:69. Cf. LW 33:66-70.

¹³⁷ The Latin text is “*quod esset tutissimum et religiosissimum.*” LW 33:70. WA 18, 638.

¹³⁸ LW 32:94.

¹³⁹ Cf. LW 32:93-94; 33:67-69, 243.

¹⁴⁰ *Inst.*, 2.2.7.

¹⁴¹ *Inst.*, 2.2.8.

alienating other Reformers, and giving his Roman opponents excuses for charging the Reformers with being inconsistent. Calvin adopted Luther's rationale and strongly advised others not to use the term, but Calvin presented this in a much milder tone and was much more receptive towards others who preferred to use the term.

H. Calvin's Clarification of the Nature of *Servum Arbitrium*

Calvin made important contributions in his treatise against Pighius by his clarification of previously less nuanced formulations, by clarifying the nature of the bondage or necessity of the will, and by not using the necessitarian argument. A key contribution is his clarification of the nature of the bound choice (*servum arbitrium*). The early Reformers, in their rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*, and in their use of necessity language to prove the bondage of the human will, gave their Roman opponents excuses or impressions that they denied the natural integrity of secondary causality. For example, on the debate between Luther and Erasmus, McSorley observes that "a lack of conceptual clarity and an inadequate definition of terms by both Erasmus and Luther caused such confusion in their debate that a true meeting of minds rarely took place."¹⁴² Lane points out that Calvin in his *Institutio* (1539) reflected similar ambiguity, but the debate with Pighius provided him an opportunity to clarify his concepts and indirectly also the early Reformation concept.¹⁴³

Calvin, following the trend of his fellow Reformed, paid greater efforts to clarify the nature of the bondage and to defend the natural integrity of the second causality. As

¹⁴² McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 29.

¹⁴³ Cf. Lane, "Did Calvin Believe in Freewill?" 81-83.

Heckel points out, Luther also had less elaborate words to affirm the self-determined nature of a bound will in *The Bondage of the Will*.¹⁴⁴ Calvin, as with his fellow Reformers, made great efforts to explain the concept of necessity or bondage, and explicitly reaffirmed the self-determined nature of second causality. To clarify the nature of this “bound will,” Calvin introduces four important terms and their related definitions, namely “free” (*libera*), “bound” (*serva*), “self-determined” (*spontanea*), or “coerced” (*coacta*).¹⁴⁵

Calvin first of all tries to clarify what is “free” and criticizes Pighius and others for misleading definitions: “People generally understand a free will to be one which has in its power to choose good or evil, and Pighius also defines it in this way.”¹⁴⁶ For example, Erasmus defined “free choice” in a similar manner: “By free choice in this place we mean a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them.”¹⁴⁷ This definition, by itself, allows the fallen human will by its own power (*in sua potestate*) to choose either good or evil, in matters of salvation. This way of definition gives rise to the arguments to deny the absolute

¹⁴⁴ Luther also distinguishes necessity from compulsion and speaks loosely the concept of “sponte” in the bound will: “Now, by ‘necessarily’ I do not mean ‘compulsorily,’ but by the necessity of immutability (as they say) and not of compulsion. That is to say, when a man is without the Spirit of God he does not do evil against his will, as if he were taken by the scruff of the neck and forced to it, like a thief or robber carried off against his will to punishment, but he does it of his own accord and with a ready will (*sed sponte et libenti voluntate facit*).” *LW* 33:64; *WA* 18: 634. Cf. Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 185-93.

¹⁴⁵ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; *CO* 6:279-80. The Latin words are “voluntatem aut liberam esse, aut servam, aut spontaneam, aut coactam.”

¹⁴⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; *CO* 6:280. “Liberam voluntatem vulgo intelligunt, et sic Pighius quoque definit, quae bonum aut malum eligere habeat in sua potestate.”

¹⁴⁷ Erasmus, *On the Freedom of the Will*, 47. The Latin words of the later part of the text: “Vim humanae voluntatis, qua se possit homo applicare ad ea quae perducunt ad aeternam salutem, aut ab iisdem avertere.” Quoted in *ibid.*, note 22. McSorley also quotes Iwand to emphasize, “In this controversy over free will, the issue centers precisely around this definition!” McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 283.

necessity of divine grace in matter of salvation. Rupp provides a summary of this: Erasmus's definition is "more defective than the definitions of Peter Lombard and Gabriel Biel in that it defines freedom with regard to salvation, and yet makes no mention at all of grace."¹⁴⁸ This definition used by Pighius and others in Calvin's time reminds us to take note of the huge change in the definitions of various classical terms in the late medieval period.¹⁴⁹ As more and more theologians classified *liberum arbitrium* in Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian manners, this became a strong catalyst for Luther and some Reformers in the early Reformation to reject the term *liberum arbitrium* categorically and to prefer not to call the human will (*arbitrium* or *voluntas*) "free." The reformation of theological expressions, advocated by Luther, should be seen as a counter-reaction to this important change in classical definitions in the late medieval and early Reformation periods.

After that, Calvin publicly acknowledges the existence of a kind of freedom, even in the fallen human will. The bound will is free and "voluntary" or "self-determined," as in the classical Augustinian definition of "free":

If freedom [*libertas*] is opposed to coercion, I both acknowledge and consistently maintain that choice is free [*liberum esse arbitrium*], and I hold anyone who thinks otherwise to be a heretic. If, I say, it were called free [*liberum*] in the sense of not

¹⁴⁸ E. Gordon Rupp, "Introduction," in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 10. Cf. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 283. McSorley says, "Compare the definition of Erasmus with that of Peter Lombard, for example: free will in the wayfarer 'is the faculty of reason and will by which good is chosen with the help of grace, or evil in the absence of grace.' Even Biel does not define free will in terms of salvation, but only in terms of *natural* goodness or evil: 'There is free will between alternatives because the will can be moved spontaneously to those things which reason (*ratio*) judges to be good or evil.'" *Ibid.*, 285.

¹⁴⁹ McSorley points out that there is another serious problem in the early Reformation: "An opponent was read not in order to understand him, but to refute him!" "A number of Protestant scholars agree that Luther's accusation was exaggerated and unfair. As Walter has shown, one finds the fullest statement of Erasmus' own position only at the end of DLA—in Part IV. Luther did not take these later elaborations seriously." McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 287.

being coerced nor forcibly moved by an external impulse, but moving of its own accord [*sponte agatur sua*], I have no objection. The reason I find this epithet unsatisfactory is that people commonly think of something quite different when they hear or read it being applied to the human will [*voluntati*]. Since in fact they take it to imply ability and power [*ad facultatem viresque*], one cannot prevent from entering the minds of most people, as soon as the will [*voluntas*] is called free [*libera*], the illusion that it therefore has both good and evil within its power [*sub potestate sua*], so that it can by its own strength [*suapte virtute*] choose either one of them.¹⁵⁰

Calvin agrees with Luther that people tend to link the concept of “free” with “ability and power.” Nevertheless, he allows the usage but with guarded explanation.

The second term Calvin explains is the term “coerced” (*coacta*). Calvin argues that there is no “coerced” “will” and there are two conflicting concepts in these two words:

There can be no such thing as a coerced will [*coacta voluntas*], since the two ideas are contradictory. But our responsibility as teachers requires that we say what it means, so that it may be understood what coercion is. Therefore we describe [as coerced] the will which does not incline this way or that of its own accord [*sponte sua*] or by an internal movement of decision, but is forcibly driven by an external impulse.¹⁵¹

It is similar to Luther’s saying in *The Bondage of the Will*: “And this we do readily and willingly, according to the nature of the will, which would not be a will if it were compelled; for compulsion is rather (so to say) ‘unwill.’”¹⁵² Nevertheless, Calvin uses more technical terms to explain it. By a careful distinction between “internal movement”

¹⁵⁰ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 68; CO 6:279. “Si coactioni opponitur libertas, liberum esse arbitrium, et fateor, et constanter assevero: ac pro haeretico habeo, quisquis secus sentiat. Si hoc, inquam, sensu liberum vocetur, quia non cogatur, aut violenter trahatur externo motu, sed sponte agatur sua, nihil moror. Sed quum aliud prorsus vulgo concipiant, dum hoc epitheton hominis voluntati attributum vel audiunt vel legunt, haec causa est cur mihi displiceat. Si quidem ad facultatem viresque referunt, nec impedire possis, quin simul ac libera fuerit voluntas dicta, haec pluribus imaginatio protinus in mentem veniat: habere igitur sub potestate sua bonum et malum, ut alterutrum eligere suapte virtute queat.”

¹⁵¹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; CO 6:280. “Coacta voluntas nulla esse potest, quum alterum alteri repugnet. Verum docendi causa, quid significet, dicendum est, ut intelligatur quid sit coactio. Eam ergo sic vocamus, quae non sponte sua, nec interiore electionis motu, inclinatur huc vel illuc, sed externo motu violenter fertur.”

¹⁵² LW 33:65.

and “external impulse,” Calvin defends his and Luther’s use of the term “necessity.” Bucer also has a similar saying: “I say without any coercion, but not without necessity.”¹⁵³ Calvin argues that when the Reformers teach that the fallen will is bound by internal necessity, they teach not a coerced will. The necessity they emphasize is a necessity caused by an internal corruption and not by an external coercion. For this, Schulze commends Calvin for providing the Reformation a more clarified formulation:

In his answer he reveals his unity with the other Reformers (e.g. in the defence of Luther, the distinction between *coactio* and *necessitas*, etc.); yet he formulates more clearly, evading the deterministic formulations of Luther and the uncritical expressions of Bucer. . . . His preoccupation was to stay as closely as possible to Scripture.¹⁵⁴

In addition, he wisely and explicitly teaches that the cause of the bondage lies in the fall, and the change of internal quality because of original sin. Unlike Luther, Calvin squarely puts the issue back in a soteriological perspective and he does not use providence nor a necessitarian argument to prove the bondage or internal necessity.¹⁵⁵

On the term, “spontaneous,” often translated as “self-determined” (*spontanea*), Calvin says, “We say that it is self-determined [*spontanea*] when of itself (*ultra*) it directs itself in the direction in which it is led, when it is not taken by force or dragged unwillingly [*invita*].”¹⁵⁶ Calvin also applies the idea of “*spontanea*” to the fallen will:

¹⁵³ Martin Bucer, *Metaphrases et enarrationes perpetuae epistolarum D. Pauli Apostoli . . . tomus primus ad Romans* (Strasbourg, 1536), 360b. Quoted in Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 215.

¹⁵⁴ Schulze, *Calvin’s Reply to Pighius*, 142.

¹⁵⁵ For example, he defines a bound will as “one which because of its corruptness is held captive under the authority of evil desires.” Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; *CO* 6:280. “The chief point of this distinction, then, must be that man, as he was corrupted by the Fall, sinned willingly, not unwillingly or by compulsion; by the most eager inclination of his heart, not by forced compulsion; by the prompting of his own lust, not by compulsion from without.” Calvin, *Inst.*, 2.2.5.

¹⁵⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; *CO* 6:280. “Spontaneam dicimus, quae

“According to these definitions we allow that man has choice and that it is self-determined, so that if he does anything evil, it should be imputed to him and to his voluntary choosing.”¹⁵⁷ A related term is “of itself” (*ultra*). The Latin term “*ultra*” may mean “of one’s own accord” or “spontaneously.” Calvin uses this term 54 times in his 1559 *Institutes*. Calvin on many occasions uses the two words “*spontanea*” and “*ultra*” as synonym. It is the will itself that directs itself to whatever direction it chooses. If the will is not coerced by eternal impulse, then it is a self-determined will. The will is responsible for its choice. It is a trend among the Reformers in this period to pay attention to affirm the integrity of the second causality. Both in the 1559 *Institutes* and in the treatise against Pighius, Calvin uses the sayings of Bernard to clarify this point: “Not inappropriately Bernard teaches that to will is in us all: but to will good is gain; to will evil, loss. Therefore simply to will is of man; to will ill, of a corrupt nature; to will well, of grace.”¹⁵⁸

The fourth term Calvin explains is “bound will” (*serva voluntas*): “A bound will, finally, is one which because of its corruptness is held captive under the authority of evil desires [*malarum cupiditatum*], so that it can choose nothing but evil, even if it does so of its own accord [*sponte*] and gladly [*libenter*], without being driven by any external impulse.”¹⁵⁹ Here Calvin gives two important clarifications. First, a bound will (*serva voluntas*) can choose things “of its own accord” (*sponte*). Hence, it is also a “self-

ultra se flectit, quocunque ducitur, non autem rapitur, aut trahitur invita.”

¹⁵⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69.

¹⁵⁸ Calvin, *Inst.*, 2.2.5. Cf. Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 208; *CO* 6:378.

¹⁵⁹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; *CO* 6:280. *Serva postremo voluntas est, quae propter corruptionem sub malarum cupiditatum imperio captiva tenetur, ut nihil quam malum eligere*

determined will” (*spontanea voluntas*), but a self-determined will that is bounded by its internal habit or quality. And it is held captive “because of its corruptness” under “the authority of evil desires.” Both “its corruptness” and “evil desires” are internal matters, or “habits” of the will. Calvin identifies the changed “habit” (*habitus*), the changed quality of the will to the innate wickedness of man after the fall, as the reason for the bondage and for the necessity of sinning.¹⁶⁰ Lane points out that, only in the treatise against Pighius, but not in the *Institutes*, Calvin uses the term “habit” (*habitus*), an Aristotelian term, to distinguish the quality of the will from the “substance” (*substantia*) of the will.¹⁶¹ Calvin also uses it to attack Pighius’ concept, as Lane says: “Calvin is making no cheap debating point here. Pighius saw sin purely in terms of sinful acts, which is why he could not acknowledge a corruption of human nature. He saw righteousness purely in terms of righteous acts and left no room for ‘habitual’ grace.”¹⁶² This use reflects a more positive use of Aristotelian terms both in Calvin and among his peers.¹⁶³

Hence, Calvin argues that a “bound will” is also “self-determined” (*serva spontanea voluntas*): “According to these definitions we allow that man has choice

possit, etiam si id sponte et libenter, non externo motu impulsa, faciat.”

¹⁶⁰ “But surely it is the native philosophy of Christians that our first ancestor corrupted not only himself but all his offspring at the same time, and that it is from this that we derive the habit which resides in our nature.” Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 150; *CO 6:336*. Ibid., 209.

¹⁶¹ Lane, “Introduction,” xxv. Calvin once speak about this in his early work: “This is what the philosophers say: that man’s mind, as it becomes accustomed to virtues or vices, contracts the habit [*habitum*] of them. Now habits [*Habitus*] are acquired qualities by which with regard to our moral character we conduct ourselves well or badly. So I do understand that passage in Aristotle’s *Ethics*, that moral virtue is acquired by habit.” *Calvin’s Commentary on Seneca’s De Clementia*, ed. F. L. Battles and A. M. Hugo (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 80-83.

¹⁶² Lane, “Introduction,” (2008), 55.

¹⁶³ Lane says, “This substantial use of Aristotle and of Aristotelian distinctions shows that while Calvin did not share the medieval scholastic enthusiasm for Aristotle, he also did not share the early Luther’s programmatic rejection for Aristotle.” Lane, “Introduction,” (2008), 56.

[*arbitrium*] and that it is self-determined [*spontaneum*], so that if he does anything evil, it should be imputed to him and to his own voluntary choosing [*volunatriae suae electioni*].”¹⁶⁴ Therefore, Calvin says, “We do away with coercion and force, because this contradicts the nature of the will [*natura voluntatis*] and cannot exist with it.” The nature of the will has a self-determined property. The self-determined nature or the voluntary nature of the will is compatible with necessity, an internal necessity caused by corrupted habits.¹⁶⁵ Hence, the self-determined nature of the will is not denied even after the fall.

Calvin also clarifies the nature of “necessity”: “For where there is bondage, there is necessity.”¹⁶⁶ The necessity is caused by the corruption of the will after the fall: “We locate the necessity to sin precisely in corruption of the will, from which it follows that it is self-determined.”¹⁶⁷ It is important to note here that while Luther frequently argues that divine omnipotence leads to necessity, Calvin repeatedly and carefully puts the issue of the bondage or the necessity back into a soteriological framework: The necessity is caused by the inherited corrupted habit of the will. We believe that this is a significant modification of Luther’s necessitarian argument. Hence, Calvin argues that though the early Reformers use the term “necessity” to represent the state of the fallen will, they do not actually deny the genuine integrity of the second causality. Calvin affirms that the

¹⁶⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; CO 6:280. “Secundum has definitiones homini arbitrium concedimus, idque spontaneum, ut, si quid mali facit, sibi ac volunatriae suae electioni imputare debeat.”

¹⁶⁵ Cf. “Our opponents want to force us to agree that being voluntary is inconsistent with being necessary.” Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 147; CO 6:333.

¹⁶⁶ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69; CO 6:280.

¹⁶⁷ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69-70; CO 6:280.

Reformers maintain both the genuine integrity of the human will and the bound nature of the fallen will: “Now we see how self-determination and necessity can be combined together.”¹⁶⁸ Therefore, it is clear that Calvin supports the idea of naming “human fallen will” as “self-determined will,” but a “self-determined will” held captive because of man’s innate evil desires after the fall. Calvin made an important contribution to the Reformation debate on the bondage of the human will. And we wonder if Calvin had also added this clarification in his later *Institutes*, there would have been less misinterpretation of his thoughts on the nature of the bound will.

Hence, in concluding this chapter, we find that there was a steady growth and development in Calvin’s understandings of the genuine tradition of the church. A more comprehensive defense of the Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the human will with the supports of the genuine traditions of church and with the use of more scholastic and Augustinian definitions should be counted as major contributions to Calvin’s reformulation and defense of the doctrine. Through these, Calvin strengthened the claim that the Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the will is the ancient, catholic, and orthodox teaching. Together with his fellow Reformers, Calvin set the precedent for Protestant Orthodoxy to align more insights with the genuine tradition of the church.

We also repeatedly find in various related issues of the doctrine that Calvin had great allegiance towards Luther’s early Reformation convictions. In his orthodox defense, Calvin prided himself as a Reformer of the second generation in defending the early Reformation convictions of Luther and the young Melanchthon. Nevertheless, after being forced by his opponents, Calvin provided a more nuanced formulation that shared with

¹⁶⁸ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 70; CO 6:280.

his fellow Reformers the shift towards a soteriological framework, the need to clarify some unnuanced formulations provided by Luther and the young Calvin himself, and the room to tolerate the existence of diverse formulations among the Reformers.

CHAPTER VII

CALVIN'S RECEPTION AND REFORMULATION OF THE NECESSITARIAN CONCEPTS OF THE EARLY REFORMATION

A. The Impact of Luther's Necessitarian Concepts on Calvin

In Calvin's defense of Luther's early Reformation doctrine of the bondage of the human will, his reception and reformulation of the necessitarian concepts of the early Reformation is crucial to an understanding of his role in the second phase of the Reformation debate. Although Calvin does not repeat the necessitarian argument of the early Reformation, Calvin does adopt key necessitarian concepts and expressions taught by Luther and other early Reformers. For example, Calvin explicitly defends Luther's active presentation of a divine sovereign will over sins:

That the wicked are like saws in the hand of God which moves, turns, and directs them where he wills is not derived from Luther but from the Holy Spirit—if Pighius acknowledges that it was he who spoke through the prophets. For Isaiah says concerning Sennacherib: Should the saw boast against him by whom it is pulled? (Isa. 10). However, Luther always added this explanation: all the wicked are instruments of God in such a way that the doing of evil originates from them, remains in them, and is also to be imputed to them.¹

The active role of God in sins and in the hardening of the sinners, and the use of active language in describing this role are important continuities between Luther's formulation and Calvin's. While Luther tackles the issue of hardening in his discussion of the bondage of the will,² Calvin only briefly mentions this in his treatise against Pighius

¹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 48-49. Quoted also in Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 135.

² Cf. Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 131-41; *LW* 33:160-84; McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 335-48.

(1543). Nevertheless, Calvin uses similar presentations and concepts in his works on providence, predestination and in his *Institutes*. Hence, this reception of Luther's necessitarian concepts and language greatly influences Calvin's formulation of providence and predestination. Heckel in his discussion of "the issue of God driving the wicked" provides a detailed comparison of the possible parallels between Luther and Calvin on how God "acts upon an inborn necessity in the wicked themselves that drives them into voluntary action."³ Nevertheless, there are some related and important similarities Heckel does not discuss and some subtle and important differences Heckel misses. Calvin does not only adopt some necessitarian concepts from Luther, but he also provides development and modification in his reformulation. And we should not miss the fact that the debates on the bondage of the human will in the early Reformation and in Calvin's times not only have impacted Calvin's formulation on the human will, but also his formulation of providence and predestination.

In this chapter, we shall show that Luther and the other early Reformers set six key precedents that Calvin followed closely in his reformulation of the doctrine: an active concept of divine omnipotence, a literal and active presentation of hardening, the use of the term "ordain" to handle the issue of reprobation, the characterization of divine sovereign will on evil acts as a will to execute punishment, a nominalist idea of divine will, and God should not be counted as the proper cause of the active governing over sins because the human will after the fall is by nature evil. We also find key development in Calvin's reformulation. Calvin, based on Luther's insight on the re-interpretation of

³ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 134. Cf. *ibid.*, 131-41.

Augustine, not only differentiates the young Augustine from the mature Augustine, but also adopts the line of thought of Augustine advocated in *Against Julian* and applies it to issues of hardening and the predestination of the fall of Adam.

With his contemporary Reformers, Calvin reverses Luther's practice, adopts the scholastic distinctions concerning necessity, affirms the genuine contingency of the human will, and discontinues the necessitarian argument for the bondage of the human will. On these issues, Calvin seems to safeguard the classical Augustinian affirmation of the genuine integrity of secondary causality. Nevertheless, among his peers, Calvin makes a unique modification of Luther's necessitarian concepts: Calvin repeatedly extends this active concept of necessitarianism to the fall of Adam, while Luther basically sets his discussion of active presentation of divine willing of hardening in a post-fall framework. This constitutes a major characteristic of Calvin's formulation of the relationship between primary causality and secondary causality. On this Calvin seems to teach necessitarian concepts similar to (if not stronger than) those of the early Reformers. The tension between his continuities with the necessitarian concepts emphasized in the early Reformation and his protection of the genuine integrity of the second causality in the classical Augustinian tradition gives his formulation a complex and ambiguous character and generates different interpretations of the exact nature of his formulation. This also has great historical consequences on the development of the doctrine of the human will and that of providence and predestination for Reformed theology and Calvinism.

B. Calvin's Reception of Necessitarian Concepts

Even though Calvin does not employ the necessitarian arguments of the early Reformation, he does adopt various necessitarian concepts advocated in the early Reformation. Hence, we shall find essential continuities between early Reformation necessitarian concepts and Calvin's doctrines of providence and predestination. We find that in at least six aspects of the necessitarian concepts there are essential continuities between the formulation of Luther and the other early Reformers and that of Calvin.

First of all, Calvin adopts an active concept of divine omnipotence advocated by the Reformers in the early Reformation. As we have demonstrated in Chapter Three, in the defense for the bondage of the human will, Luther sets the precedent in using an active concept of divine omnipotence to defend the idea of "sheer necessity." Luther gives the impression that, as Heckel notices, God is "not simply concurring with his action."⁴

We have also reviewed in chapter 4 that Zwingli also teaches an active concept of divine providence. Zwingli explicitly minimizes the integrity of second causality: "Secondary causes are not properly called causes. This is of fundamental importance for the understanding of Providence."⁵ Zwingli also uses pantheistic language to characterize the nature of the creation, "everything that is, is in Him and through Him and a part of Him." And "there is nothing which is not of the Deity."⁶ Because of this,

⁴ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 138. Cf. *LW* 33:112.

⁵ Zwingli, "Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God," 138. For Latin text of this work, see Ulrich Zwingli, *Opera d. Huldrychi Zuinglii* (Tigurii: Apud C. Froshoverum, 1545), 1:352a-379.

⁶ Zwingli, "Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God," 143.

Zwingli argues: “I say, by divine oracles, we must admit that there is only one true cause of all things.”⁷ In addition, we find that Zwingli emphasizes that divine providence is active and never idle: “For this also is altogether incontrovertible, either Providence cares for all things and is nowhere idle or listless, or there is no Providence at all. And if there is no Providence, there is no Deity.”⁸ Zwingli is also not shy in naming God as author of sins: “What God does, He does freely, uninfluenced by any evil motion, therefore, also, without sin. David’s adultery, so far as concerns God as the author [*authorem*] of it, is no more a sin of God, than when a steer covers and impregnates a whole herd. . . . He instigates the robber, therefore, to kill even the innocent and those unprepared for death.”⁹ In the Bolsec controversy Calvin resented Bullinger for linking his position to some of the extreme sayings of Zwingli.¹⁰ Nonetheless, although Calvin’s presentation was not as pointed as that of Zwingli, he did adopt an active concept of divine will similar to that of the early Reformers.

In his discussion on providence, Calvin presents the active manner of divine omnipotence in a way similar to that of Luther:

And truly God claims, and would have us grant him, omnipotence — not *the empty, idle, [otiosam et fere sopitam]* and almost unconscious sort that the Sophists imagine, *but a watchful, effective, active sort, engaged in ceaseless activity. [sed vigilem, efficacem, operosam, et quae in continuo actu versetur]* Not, indeed, an omnipotence that is only a general principle of confused motion, as if he were to command a river to flow through its once-appointed channels, but one that is

⁷ Zwingli, “Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God,” 154.

⁸ Zwingli, “Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God,” 233.

⁹ Zwingli, “Reproduction from Memory of a Sermon on the Providence of God,” 182-83.

¹⁰ Cf. Venema, “Heinrich Bullinger’s Correspondence on Calvin’s Doctrine of Predestination, 1551-1553,” 61; Holtrop, *The Bolsec Controversy on Predestination from 1551 to 1555*, 810-11.

directed toward individual and particular motions. For he is deemed omnipotent, not because he can indeed act, yet sometimes ceases and sits in idleness, or continues by a general impulse that order of nature which he previously appointed; but because, governing heaven and earth by his providence, he so regulates all things that nothing takes place without his deliberation. For when, in The Psalms, it is said that “he does whatever he wills” [Psalm 115:3], *a certain and deliberate will is meant [certa et deliberata notatur voluntas]*.¹¹

Calvin uses words, like “watchful, effective, active sort,” (*vigilem, efficacem, operosam*) to present God’s omnipotence as an active, operative and directive will: “a certain and deliberate will.” Calvin also argues that God is not an idle God and there is no mere divine permission. At the very beginning of the *Institutes*, we find that Calvin rejects the idea of an idle God:

What good is it to profess with Epicurus some sort of God who has cast aside the care of the world only to amuse himself in idleness? What help is it, in short, to know a God with whom we have nothing to do?¹²

But to render their madness more detestable, David represents them as flatly denying God’s existence; not that they deprive him of his being, but because, in despoiling him of his *judgment and providence*, they shut him up idle in heaven.¹³

Calvin assumes that if we speak of mere permission, we speak of an idle God: “Yet from these it is more than evident that they babble and talk absurdly who, in place of God’s providence, substitute bare permission—as if God sat in a watchtower awaiting chance events, and his judgments thus depended upon human will.”¹⁴ Calvin clearly opposes a concept of divine omnipotence that is merely a passive kind of *divinus concursus*, or in

¹¹ *Inst.*, 1.16.3. Italics added. Cf. “Now where is God’s omnipotence, if such sovereignty is conceded to the devil that he carries out whatever he wishes, against God’s will and resistance?” *Inst.*, 1.14.3.

¹² *Inst.*, 1.2.2.

¹³ *Inst.*, 1.4.2. Italics added. Cf. *Inst.*, 3.22.6.

¹⁴ *Inst.*, 1.18.1. Cf. *Calvin’s Calvinism*, 294-95.

his words, “a general principle of confused motion,” that unavoidably goes along with the secondary causality.¹⁵ Calvin emphasizes that only an active government of all things, evil or good, may truly represent the essential characteristic of God as a creator:

For now I propose to refute the opinion (which almost universally obtains) that *concedes to God some kind of blind and ambiguous motion, while taking from him the chief thing: that he directs everything* by his incomprehensible wisdom and disposes it to his own end. And so in name only, not in fact, it makes God the Ruler of the universe because it deprives him of his control.¹⁶

Luther set the precedent of an active concept of God’s omnipotence, and Calvin followed closely. For them, the divine will is always active, never merely passive.

The second major precedent Luther set before Calvin is the emphasis on active and literal representation of hardening and reprobation. In addition to the principle of “the preference for biblical expressions,” Calvin also adopted Luther’s argument on the active presentation of hardening and reprobation. On these issues, Luther condemns Erasmus for not following Moses and Paul literally: “Absurdity, then, is one of the principal reasons for not taking the words of Moses and Paul *literally* [*simpliciter*].”¹⁷ Luther assumes that the active presentation is a literal way to read the Bible:

If we have carried conviction on this point, we have won our case, and having exploded the tropes and glosses of men, we can take the words of God *literally* [*simpliciter*], with no necessity to make excuses for God or to accuse him of injustice. For when he says, “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart,” he is speaking *literally* [*simpliciter*], as if he said, “I will act so that Pharaoh’s heart may be hardened” or

¹⁵ Cf. *Inst.*, 1.16.4: “Not so crass is the error of those who attribute a governance to God, but of a confused and mixed sort, as I have said, namely, one that by a general motion [*generali motu*] revolves and drives the system of the universe, with its several parts, but which does not specifically direct the action of individual creatures.”

¹⁶ *Inst.*, 1.16.4.

¹⁷ *LW* 33:173. *WA* 18, 707. Italics added.

“so that through my working and doing it may be hardened.”¹⁸

The word “literally” is very informative about Luther’s formulation. Luther argues that being offensive to human reason is not an excuse for not following the biblical tone and teaching.¹⁹ To Luther, no matter how, the biblical way should be preferred.²⁰ Hence, Luther strongly disagrees with Erasmus’s translation of the biblical text, changing it from “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart” to “I will permit it to be hardened.” The key for Luther is the “author’s intent.”²¹ Here, similar to the case of rejecting the term *liberum arbitrium*, Luther set a very important precedent for Calvin: Luther advocated a “literal representation of the biblical expressions.” Luther believes that only in this way, we may truly present the full force of the author’s intent in the texts.

To put it in a word, this license of interpretation comes to this, *that by a new and unprecedented use of grammar everything is jumbled up [ut nova et inaudita grammatica omnia confundantur]*, so that when God says “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart,” you change the person and take it to mean “Pharaoh hardens himself through my forbearance.” “God hardens our hearts” means that we harden ourselves when God delays our punishment.²²

For Luther, if we do not follow the principle of “literal representation of the biblical expressions” consistently, the divine Word would be easily twisted.

By what authority, for what reason, with what necessity is *the natural meaning of the word* thus twisted for me? What if the reader and interpreter should be wrong? What proof is there that this twisting of the word ought to take place in this passage? *It is dangerous, and indeed impious, to twist the word of God without necessity and*

¹⁸ LW 33:179-80.

¹⁹ LW 33:173.

²⁰ LW 33:175.

²¹ LW 33:165.

²² LW 33:167. Italics added. WA 18, 703.

without authority."²³

We find a similar argument in Calvin too. Calvin says, "We ought not to admit any distinction between God's permission and his wish. For we see the Holy Spirit -- the best master of language -- here clearly expresses two things; first, what God does; and next, what he does by his own will."²⁴ Calvin emphasizes the importance of this: "so do I deem it in no way dangerous if we simply adhere to what Scripture teaches."²⁵ This is a key conviction of Calvin: to teach the full force of the biblical texts. This conviction is reflected in Calvin's method as a preacher and commentator, namely, his insistence on examining every verse of the text rather than eliciting central themes or topics. Calvin understands the offensive nature of this active presentation of God's government of evil acts. Yet he strongly believes that it is the way of the Bible and he has to follow:

Since the expression seems harsh to delicate ears, many soften it away, by turning the act into mere permission; as if there were no difference between doing and permitting to be done; or as if God would commend his passivity, and not rather *his power*. *As to myself, I am certainly not ashamed of speaking as the Holy Spirit speaks, nor do I hesitate to believe what so often occurs in Scripture, that God gives the wicked over to a reprobate mind, gives them up to vile affections, blinds their minds and hardens their hearts.*²⁶

The core reason behind Calvin's adoption of an active presentation of God's sovereign will over hardening is that he adopts the rationale of Luther set in the early Reformation: "Speak as the Holy Spirit speaks." This "literal representation of the biblical expressions" clearly signifies the continuity between the two Reformers.

²³ *LW* 33:165. Italics added.

²⁴ Calvin, *Comm.* on Daniel 4:35.

²⁵ *Inst.*, 2.4.3. Cf. *Inst.*, 1.18.2.

²⁶ Calvin, *Comm.* on Ex. 4:18-23. Italics added.

The third important similarity is that Luther set the precedent of using the term “ordain” (*ordinare*) to characterize reprobation. Throughout his *Institutes*, Calvin repeatedly uses the term “ordain” to emphasize the idea that “Scripture teaches that all things are divinely ordained (*omnia divinitus ordinari Scriptura doceat*).”²⁷ In particular, in the famous passage where he calls the decree of the fall dreadful (*horribile*), Calvin emphasizes that “God foreknew what end man was to have before he created him, and consequently foreknew because he had so ordained (*ordinarat*) by his decree.”²⁸ We find similar precedent in Luther’s *The Bondage of the Will*: “For he is here speaking of the preached and offered mercy of God, not of that hidden and awful will of God whereby he *ordains* [*ordinantis*] by his own counsel which and what sort of persons he wills to be recipients and partakers of his preached and offered mercy.”²⁹ Calvin might find similar presentation in Bucer’s commentary on Romans. Bucer also used similar term to handle the topic of hardening:

Consequently, once it is agreed that it belongs to God’s glory to declare that he hardens, blinds, and gives up to depraved reason whom he chooses, it will be obvious that it can also be said that God foreknew and *ordained* [*destinasse*] these very people for such a fate before he created them; for he accomplishes all things according to a predetermined and settled plan.³⁰

Calvin’s usage is in line with the “literal representation of the biblical expressions.” In his *Institutes*, Calvin twice uses the term to translate Acts 13:48: “as many as were ordained (*ordinati*) to eternal life believed.” Probably, both the precedent set by the early

²⁷ *Inst.*, 1.17.1. Cf. *Inst.*, 1.16.8-9, 1.17.3, 3.23.6-9, 3.24.2; *Calvin’s Calvinism*, 246.

²⁸ *Inst.*, 3.23.7.

²⁹ *LW* 33:139. WA 18, 684.

³⁰ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 98; *Metaphrases*, 359a. Italics added.

Reformers and the biblical text in Acts 13:48 provided Calvin the incentive to extend the use of the word “ordain” and to apply it to the fall.³¹

The fourth precedent Luther set is that he defines the nature of this divine will over evil acts as a will to execute punishment. In *Lectures on Romans*, Luther says, “But to will such things is God’s prerogative alone. He is not forced not to will that there be sin, although by nature He can neither will it nor love it, but He can will and love it not as sin but as punishment.”³² And God wills it to be done because sin deserves severe punishment: “Therefore God wills that sin be done not for its own sake but for the sake of penalty and punishment.”³³ Luther rejects Lyra’s idea and argues that the sin itself, not the withdrawal of divine grace, is the punishment:

Therefore it is not correct, as Lyra says, that the sin is *per accidens* the punishment of sin for this reason, that the withdrawal of the grace of God presumably is the punishment and on that account the man commits sin. Not so! Not so! But sin, or rather the shame which is connected with sin, is itself the punishment of God, not the withdrawal of God’s grace.³⁴

Luther also says something similar in *The Bondage of the Will* and repeatedly argues that in hardening Pharaoh punishment is involved: “I have shown above that Pharaoh cannot rightly be said to have been hardened through being tolerated by the forbearance of God and not at once punished, since he was visited by so many plagues.”³⁵

Hardening is also counted as punishment by Calvin. Quoting Augustine, Calvin

³¹ *Inst.*, 3.24.13, 3.24.17. Divine “ordination” (*ordinatio*) is also a term frequently used by Calvin to represent similar ideas. Cf. *Inst.*, 1.16.8, 3.23.4, 3.23.6, 3.23.8-9, 3.24.3, 3.24.15.

³² *LW* 25:161.

³³ *LW* 25:161.

³⁴ *LW* 25:162.

says that hardening will “happen not only by God’s permission and forbearance, but by his might, as a kind of punishment for sins previously committed.”³⁶ This is another line of continuity between Luther and Calvin.

The fifth precedent Luther set is his use of a nominalist or perhaps Scotist concept of the divine will and his emphasis on the divine will being inscrutable:

For if there were any rule or standard for it, either as cause or reason, it could no longer be the will of God. For it is not because he is or was obliged so to will that what he wills is right, but on the contrary, *because he himself so wills, therefore what happens must be right*. Cause and reason can be assigned for a creature’s will, but not for the will of the Creator, unless you set up over him another creator.³⁷

It is enough to know simply that there is a certain inscrutable will in God, and as to what, why, and how far it wills, that is something we have no right whatever to inquire into, hanker after, care about, or meddle with, but only to fear and adore.³⁸

Calvin has similar nominalist idea of divine will: “For God’s will is so much the highest rule of righteousness that whatever he wills, by the very fact that he wills it, must be considered righteous.”³⁹ Quoting Augustine, Calvin also argues that the divine will is “unsearchable” and “inscrutable.” Similar to Luther, Calvin argues that we should not seek “a deeper cause than God’s secret and inscrutable plan.”⁴⁰ François Wendel points out that the echo of Scotus can hardly be contested.⁴¹ Nevertheless, he and many other

³⁵ *LW* 33:181. Cf. *LW* 33:167, 170, 294.

³⁶ *Inst.*, 2.4.3. Cf. *Inst.*, 2.4.4, 2.4.4; *Comm.* on Rom. 1:24; *Calvin on Secret Providence*, 51.

³⁷ *LW* 33:181. Italics added.

³⁸ *LW* 33:140. Cf. *LW* 33:139, 145, 147.

³⁹ *Inst.*, 3.23.2

⁴⁰ *Inst.*, 3.23.5, 3.24.12.

⁴¹ Wendel, *Calvin*, 128.

scholars do not directly link Calvin's idea with that of Luther. Heckel here makes a good contribution by arguing that both Luther and Calvin uphold "the nominalist principle that God's will is the unquestionable norm of righteousness."⁴² Both Reformers emphasize this nominalist idea of divine will, when they handle the problem of the bondage of the human will and the problem of God's sovereignty over sins. Steinmetz points out that Bucer also teaches something similar in his commentary on Romans (1536): "'The mere will of God,' he writes, 'is the cause of everything and that will is itself justice.'"⁴³ Hence, we may conclude that the similarity implies that the precedent of using nominalist concepts of the divine will set by the early Reformers in their handling of the bondage of the human will and predestination has a great impact on Calvin's formulation.

The sixth precedent Luther set is the argument that God should not be counted as the proper cause of the active governing of sins because the human will after the fall is by nature evil. Heckel points out that there are many similarities between Luther and Calvin on this issue.⁴⁴ Luther argues that God cannot do evil, "yet he uses evil instruments," and Calvin argues that God uses "even bad tools."⁴⁵ As Heckel points out, both Reformers argue that the responsible cause of the evils is the "inborn necessity in the wicked themselves."⁴⁶ Luther emphasizes that God "acts in them as they are and as he finds

⁴² Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 238.

⁴³ "Causam vero horum ne inquiremus, multo minus inesse aliquid iniquitatis in iudicii Dei suspicemur. Ipsa Dei voluntas Deo causa omnium et ea ipsa est iustitia." Bucer, *Metaphrases*, 395a. Cf. Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context*, 148, and 155, note 35.

⁴⁴ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 131-41.

⁴⁵ *LW* 33:176; Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 40; Cf. *LW* 33:17.

⁴⁶ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 134.

them.” Calvin quotes Luther explicitly and argues that “the doing of evil originates from them.”⁴⁷ Luther also points out that God does not do so “by creating evil from scratch.” Using a post-fall framework, Luther argues that God does not create the evil will of Satan. God “finds the will of Satan evil,” because after the fall of Satan, the will of Satan “has become evil through God’s deserting it and Satan’s sinning.” Hence, God “cannot help but do evil with an evil instrument.” Using the example of Pharaoh, Luther argues that in hardening Pharaoh, God does not do anything evil. It is because as God presents God’s words through Moses from without, Pharaoh “of necessity” hardened and provoked owing to “its inborn defect and natural corruption.” Based on this rationale, Luther argues that he “can take the words of God literally, with no necessity to make excuses for God or to accuse him of injustice.”⁴⁸ Calvin also draws a similar analogy:

Well and good, for he works through them. And whence, I ask you, comes the stench of a corpse, which is both putrefied and laid open by the heat of the sun? All men see that it is stirred up by the sun’s rays; yet no one for this reason says that the rays stink.⁴⁹

This simile of sun and heat was used in the debate between Erasmus and Luther. It is possible that Calvin picked up this simile from there.⁵⁰

Through this review of the six precedents Luther and the early Reformers set for Calvin and the fact that Calvin has similar ideas and explicitly defends Luther’s teaching

⁴⁷ LW 33:176; Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 49.

⁴⁸ LW 33:178-79. Cf. LW 33:176.

⁴⁹ *Inst.*, 1.17.5.

⁵⁰ Erasmus takes cue from Origen and uses the simile of the sun that “under the same sun wax melts and mud hardens” to explain the issue of hardening. Luther has a response on that and uses the simile. Cf. LW 33:170, 172.

on necessitarian concepts, we are convinced that Calvin basically adopts the line of thought of Luther's necessitarian concepts, though he does not employ the necessitarian arguments against the bondage of the human will. Hence, for any investigation of the origin of Calvin's concepts of providence and predestination, we should not neglect the possible influence of Luther's early formulation on Calvin.

C. Calvin's Re-interpretation of Augustine

We have pointed out in chapter 2 that to neglect the early Reformation and to compare Calvin directly and only with Augustine is a major methodological mistake. Calvin does not merely read Augustine directly, but in many specific issues he also reads Augustine through the lens of the early Reformation heritage. And in Chapter Six we have shown that, in rejecting the term *liberum arbitrium*, Calvin actually adopts and develops Luther's idea of two stages in Augustine. This adoption and development of the concept of two stages of Augustine also extends to the issue of necessitarian concepts. In issues related to necessitarian concepts, we find that Calvin adopts Luther's insight concerning two stages in Augustine and further develops Luther's argument with more proofs from the works of Augustine. In several important issues, Calvin reads Augustine through the convictions advocated by Luther.

Heckel, interacting with McSorley's observation, provides a substantial discussion of the continuity of the formulations of the two Reformers with Augustine.⁵¹ The key dividing line between McSorley and Heckel is on their assessment of the nature of the

⁵¹ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 193-212; McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 100-108.

change between Augustine's earlier teachings and his final writings. McSorley argues that if there is a significant change, Augustine should have stated it in his *Retractions* (426-427).⁵² Heckel, drawing on the insight of J. Patout Burns, believes that there are developments and reversals in Augustine and essential continuities between Augustine's later thoughts and that of the two Reformers. Heckel argues that "Pighius's interpretation, like McSorley's, recognized apparent inconsistencies in Augustine's position but favored certain earlier writings and appealed to *Retractions* to support the idea that Augustine did not actually change his views."⁵³ Muller also points out that "Luther's views on predestination arguably look to statements of the late Augustine, who in a few places, did affirm a double predestination of both the elect and the reprobate. . . . In this Luther was followed by Calvin."⁵⁴ We believe that Luther's use of the mature Augustine directs Calvin to locate those necessitarian ideas in the late Augustine. Calvin also elaborates Luther's insights with more texts from Augustine. Nevertheless, we shall show that Calvin does not maintain the post-fall framework as carefully as both Augustine and Luther do.

When the Reformers emphasize that divine permission is a kind of divine will, the *locus classicus* they use is Augustine's *Enchiridion* 26.100:

And hence it is that the works of the Lord are great, sought out according to all His

⁵² McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 106; quoted in Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 202.

⁵³ Heckel, "Calvin's Relationship to Luther's Doctrine of Will," 209-10. Cf. James Patout Burns, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Paris: Etudes Augustiennes, 1980); Burns, "A Change in Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace in 418," *Studia Patristica* XVI (1985): 490-96; Burns, "Grace," in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 391-98.

⁵⁴ Richard Muller, "Augustinianism in the Reformation," in *Augustine through the Ages*, 706.

pleasure, because in a way unspeakably strange and wonderful, even what is done in opposition to His will does not defeat His will. For it would not be done did He not permit it (and of course His permission is not unwilling, but willing); nor would a Good Being permit evil to be done only that in His omnipotence He can turn evil into good.⁵⁵

For example, Calvin quotes this several times to support his argument that in divine permission, God permits willingly.⁵⁶ Based on the late anti-Pelagian works of Augustine, Calvin argues that the active presentation of God's sovereign will over sins and reprobation has the support of the late Augustine. Calvin admits that in some places Augustine "says that hardening and blinding refer not to God's activity but to his foreknowledge (*non ad operationem Dei sed ad praescientiam*).” Nevertheless, he quotes Augustine's idea in *Against Julian* 5.3 to support the idea that Augustine finally grasps the biblical view that there is more than God's permission or foreknowledge:

And Augustine himself in the *Against Julian*, Book V, argues at great length that *sins happen not only by God's permission and forbearance, but by his might, as a kind of punishment for sins previously committed*. Likewise what they report concerning permission is too weak to stand. Very often God is said to blind and harden the reprobate, to turn, incline, and impel, their hearts [e.g. Isaiah 6:10], as I have taught more fully elsewhere. *The nature of this activity is by no means explained if we take refuge in foreknowledge or permission*. We therefore reply that it takes place in two ways. For after his light is removed, nothing but darkness and blindness remains. When his Spirit is taken away, our hearts harden into stones. When his guidance ceases, they are wrenched into crookedness. Thus it is properly said that he blinds, hardens, and bends those whom he has deprived of the power of seeing, obeying, and rightly following. *The second way, which comes much closer to the proper meaning of the words, is that to carry out his judgments through Satan as minister of his wrath*, God destines men's purposes as he pleases, arouses their wills, and strengthens their endeavors.⁵⁷

Calvin prefers the mature Augustine over the young Augustine. The young Augustine

⁵⁵ Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 26.100.

⁵⁶ *Inst.*, 1.18.3. Cf. Calvin, *Calvin's Calvinism*, 126, 290.

avoids the problem and treats the concept of hardening as mere foreknowledge or permission. But the mature Augustine in *Against Julian* finally recognizes the full force of the Scriptural concept and identifies God's hardening as the deliberate will to "carry out his judgments through Satan as minister of his wrath," "as a kind of punishment for sins previously committed."

As we have mentioned in chapter 3, in the early Reformation Luther quoted frequently from *Against Julian* to argue that the mature Augustine supported his idea that the will is "a bound will" (*servum arbitrium*) and Calvin follows this line of thought and finds more precedents given by Augustine in *Against Julian*.⁵⁸ Augustine's teaching in *Against Julian* provides Calvin the theological conviction for teaching the active presentation of God's sovereign will over sins, for the emphasis on punishment, and for the rejection of mere divine permission. Calvin, in his "Calumnies of a Certain Fellow against the Doctrine of John Calvin on the Secret Providence of God, with Calvin's Replies," explicitly mentions this work of Augustine to support his idea that "the will of God is the highest, or remote cause of hardening":

Lest I should be tedious, pious, and fair readers may take the help of this remark of Augustine, (Book fifth against Julian, chapter 3,) "Whereas the apostle declares that men are given over to vile affections," this is rashly and unskillfully restricted to sufferance, because the same Paul elsewhere joins power with sufferance, saying, "if God willing to show his power endured with much patience the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," etc.⁵⁹

It is very likely that Calvin follows Luther's hint and finds in *Against Julian* an

⁵⁷ *Inst.*, 2.4.3. Italics added.

⁵⁸ *LW* 31:48, 32:92, 25:375, 33:108, 34:186; Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, II, 8, 23; Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 89; *Inst.*, 2.2.8.

⁵⁹ Calvin, *Calvin on Secret Providence*, 50-51.

Augustine that supports the early Reformation concept that hardening and reprobation are more than mere permission. Hence, Calvin's departure from the classical Augustinian use of divine permission signifies not his unique insight, but his alignment with the convictions of Luther and the other early Reformers.

Calvin claims that the rejection of the concept of "mere passive permission" and that all things are ordained by God are taught by Augustine.⁶⁰ Following Luther's line of argument, Calvin would not admit that he truly differs from Augustine. He rather argues there are two stages in Augustine and he follows the better, the mature one, and the more scriptural Augustine.⁶¹

Augustine did, indeed, sometimes give way to this popular method of speaking; but where he devotes himself more closely to the consideration of the matter, and examines it more thoroughly, he by no means suffers the permission to be substituted for the act of God.⁶²

To Luther and Calvin, Augustine in *Against Julian* and in other of his later works represents the better and more biblical side of Augustine.

In a crucial passage in his treatise against Pighius, Calvin explicitly claims that his pattern of an active presentation of God's sovereignty over evil acts in human hearts is found both in the Scriptures and in Augustine:

Is it really the case that terms which both occur frequently in the Scripture and are constantly on the lips of the church's writers are deemed new and foreign to the

⁶⁰ Similar observation was made by Girardeau: "In the two testimonies cited from the Institutes and the treatise on Eternal Predestination, it will be noticed that Calvin, in affirming that the will of God is necessity, and that as he willed the occurrence of the first sin it was necessary, appeals for confirmation of that view to the same passage of Augustin." Girardeau, *The Will in Its Theological Relations*, 236.

⁶¹ Cf. *Inst.*, 1.16.8. Cf. Question 24, in Augustine, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*, trans. David L. Mosher, *The Fathers of the church*, v. 70 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982).

⁶² Calvin, *Calvin's Calvinism*, 244-45.

common mind of the faithful? I could easily cite over two hundred passages from Augustine where he uses those words.⁶³

Commenting on the last sentence, Lane argues, “A computer search of the passages where Augustine uses these words has revealed that he uses them frequently to describe the work of grace in human beings, but only a few times with specific reference to the human *heart*.”⁶⁴ Lane seems to imply that Calvin misinterprets Augustine. Nevertheless, we find that at least in three important works of Augustine, *Enarrationes* on Ps. 111:2,⁶⁵ *A Treatise on Grace and Free Will* and *Against Julian*, Augustine uses it the way Calvin argues.

In chapters 42, 43, and 45 of *A Treatise on Grace and Free Will*, Augustine has a lengthy discussion on God’s will in the hearts of the wicked. The title of chapter 42 is “God Does Whatsoever He Wills in the Hearts of Even Wicked Men.”⁶⁶ There Augustine uses an active presentation to describe God’s will in the hearts of the wicked. Augustine argues that “He who has made all things according to His own will, in heaven and on earth, also works [*operatur*] in the hearts of men.” In Chapter 42 alone, Augustine uses a lot of active terminology to present God’s will over the hearts of the wicked. There Augustine quotes many scriptures: 1 Kings 12: 8-15; 2 Chron. 21:16-17; 2 Chron. 25:7-8; Ps. 135:6; 2 Kings 14:10; 2 Chron. 25:20; Ezek. 14:9; Prov. 21:1; Ps. 105:25; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28, 2 Thess. 2:10-12. Including the title, the word “heart” (*cor*) appears 8 times. The

⁶³ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 204; CO 4:374. Cf. SW 2:132-33.

⁶⁴ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 204, n. 9.

⁶⁵ “Psalm 111,” in *St. Augustine on the Psalms*. Italics added.

⁶⁶ The Latin title is “Agit Deus in cordibus hominum ad inclinandas voluntates quocumque vult.”

middle section of this chapter is Augustine's thesis: "Both statements to be sure are true, because they both came by their own will, and yet the Lord stirred up their spirit; and this may also with equal truth be stated the other way: The Lord both stirred up their spirit, and yet they came of their own will." Augustine maintains both the integrity of the second causality and the inscrutable judgments of God in the hearts of the wicked.⁶⁷

In Chapter 43, "God Operates on Men's Hearts to Incline Their Wills Whithersoever He Pleases," including the title, the word "heart" (*cor*) appears 9 times. Here Augustine emphasizes that "God is able, either through the agency of angels (whether good ones or evil), or in any other way whatever, to operate in the hearts even of the wicked, in return for their deserts."⁶⁸ Augustine's aim is to argue, if God can act in the hearts of the wicked, he also "works good in the hearts of the elect." In Chapter 45, the word "heart" (*cor*) appears 3 times. And Augustine emphasizes that "it was that both God hardened him by His just judgment, and Pharaoh by his own free will."⁶⁹

In *Against Julian*, Augustine also emphasizes that God works in the hearts of the wicked: "God, knowing how to work his just judgments not only in the bodies of men, but also in their very hearts, acts in marvelous and ineffable ways; not causing evil volitions, but using them as He wishes, since he cannot will anything unjustly."⁷⁰ Augustine argues that in divine hardening there is not only mere permission, but also

⁶⁷ Augustine, *A Treatise on Grace and Free Will*, 21.42.

⁶⁸ Augustine, *A Treatise on Grace and Free Will*, 21.43.

⁶⁹ Augustine, *A Treatise on Grace and Free Will*, 23.45.

⁷⁰ Saint Augustine, *Against Julian*, trans. Matthew A. Schumacher, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 35 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 5.4.15.

punishment and just judgment. God acts not as a direct cause, but “acts in marvelous and ineffable ways.” In his handling of Rom. 1:24, 26, 28, Augustine argues that we should not accuse Paul for using exaggeration in calling God’s sovereign will over evil acts as “giving up.”⁷¹ Augustine argues that the wicked were guilty before God gave them up. And in giving them up, punishment is involved.⁷²

Then Augustine handles the question: “Is sin not also punishment for sin?”⁷³ Augustine quotes many texts concerning God’s will over evil acts: Sir. 18:30-31;⁷⁴ 2 Peter 2:19; Is. 19:14, 63:17, 64:5-6; Josh. 11:20; 1 King 12:15; 2 Chron. 25:20; 2 Thess. 2:10. Augustine concludes that this kind of hardening and blinding “comes from the blindness of heart which by a hidden but just judgment of God is also punishment for sin.”⁷⁵ Moreover, Augustine argues that “divine power” is also involved in giving up:

What do you mean by saying: “Even when they are said to be given up to their lusts, we should understand they are forsaken by divine patience, not compelled to sin by divine power,” as though this same Apostle did not mention both of them, patience and power together, when he says: “What if God, wishing to show his wrath and to make known his power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, ready for destruction?”⁷⁶

Augustine, as will Calvin, quotes Ps. 35:7 and Rom. 11:33 to describe the inscrutable nature of God’s judgments and calls the judgments both permission and willing.

But His judgments are as the deep [*abyssus*] sea. We know that, if we permit those

⁷¹ Augustine, *Against Julian*, 5.3.10.

⁷² Augustine, *Against Julian*, 5.3.10.

⁷³ Augustine, *Against Julian*, 5.3.11-12.

⁷⁴ The editor of *Against Julian* locates the text wrongly as Eccli. 8.30,31.

⁷⁵ Augustine, *Against Julian*, 5.3.12.

⁷⁶ Augustine, *Against Julian*, 5.3.13.

we govern to commit crimes before our eyes, we shall stand guilty with them; yet how innumerable are the crimes God permits men to commit before His eyes, which He would by no means permit if He willen not to do so [*noluisset*]; yet God is just and good.⁷⁷

Augustine repeatedly emphasizes that in all these “God is just and good” and God is not the author of sin, but the avenger of sin:

God inflicted death, not as its first author, but as the avenger of sin. You yourself answered the question fully when you said that man has been left to himself, so that his being a torment to himself comes from the divine judgment and also from his own free will. It is not contradictory that in his punishment he himself is the author, God the avenger.⁷⁸

Hence, Augustine argues that in giving up and hardening, there is no mere permission, but also the will of punishment and the manifestation of God’s power.

These two works, *A Treatise on Grace and Free Will* and *Against Julian*, give Calvin key support for his as for Luther’s necessitarian concepts. Nevertheless, we need to be aware of the fact that Augustine firmly defends the integrity of the second causality and places the issue of “giving up” a post-fall issue, as Paul does.⁷⁹

Another important development is Calvin’s reinterpretation of Augustine’s famous statement in *De Genesi ad Litteram*, VI, 15, 26. In his defense of the divine ordination of the fall, Calvin quotes this statement to support his idea:

As if God did not establish the condition in which he wills the chief of his creatures to be! I shall not hesitate, then, simply to confess with Augustine that “the will of God is the necessity of things,” [*voluntatem Dei esse rerum necessitatem*]⁸⁰ and that what he has willed will of necessity come to pass, as those things which he has

⁷⁷ Augustine, *Against Julian*, 5.4.14. Cf. *ibid.*, 5.3.13.

⁷⁸ Augustine, *Against Julian*, 5.9.36.

⁷⁹ Augustine, *Against Julian*, 5.4.14.

⁸⁰ Cf. Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, VI, 15, 26: “cuius voluntas rerum necessitas est.”

foreseen will truly come to pass.⁸¹

Calvin uses the language of “necessity” to talk about the certainty of the fall. After that, Calvin wants to argue that because of their internal quality, of God’s justice and of God’s inscrutable will, Adam’s fall was ordained by God:

For if predestination is nothing but the meting out of divine justice—secret, indeed, but blameless—because it is certain that they were not unworthy to be predestined to this condition, it is equally certain that the destruction they undergo by predestination is also most just. Besides, their perdition depends upon the predestination of God in such a way that the cause and occasion of it are found in themselves. For the first man fell because the Lord had judged it to be expedient; why he so judged is hidden from us. Yet it is certain that he so judged because he saw that thereby the glory of his name is duly revealed. Where you hear God’s glory mentioned, think of his justice. For whatever deserves praise must be just. Accordingly, man falls according as God’s providence ordains, but he falls by his own fault.⁸²

The problem is when Calvin uses Augustine’s argument in *Against Julian* and applies it to Adam, one may wonder what in Adam was deemed “unworthy to be predestined.”

Unlike Adam before the fall, fallen men have a sinful nature because of the fall and thus deemed unworthy. But how is it with Adam?

And if we go back to the context of Augustine’s work, Augustine only aims to argue that God has the freedom and owns the determination to create Adam either “as an infant or adult.” It is on this background that Augustine uses the quote to affirm the freedom of God’s choice: “For in that case it was determined in the causes that man could be created in such a way, not that he must necessarily be created in such a way. This determination was not in the created world but in the decision of the Creator, whose will

⁸¹ *Inst.*, 3.23.8. Italics mine.

⁸² *Inst.*, 3.23.8.

constitutes the necessity of things.”⁸³ Augustine’s emphasis is on the freedom of choice in God’s creation. Augustine never touches the issue of the fall of Adam here. Moreover, in two subsequent chapters, Augustine explicitly affirms the natural integrity of second causality in view of God’s foreknowledge. God’s foreknowledge makes things certain but never takes away the genuine freedom of the second causality.

For what He wills is of necessity going to be, and those things are truly going to be which He foreknew. Many things are going to be which He foreknew. Many things are going to be by virtue of secondary causes; but if they are also in the foreknowledge of God as things that are going to be, they are truly going to be. But if they are there as determined otherwise, then they will come about as they are in the foreknowledge of Him who cannot be deceived.⁸⁴

In the case of Adam, Augustine is careful to emphasize that no necessity has been imposed on him: “He established them, therefore, in such a way that they would contain the possibility, not the necessity, of causing the effect which would proceed from them. The other causes He hid in the original creation in such a way that there would necessarily come from them the effect which was only a possibility in the first kind of cause.”⁸⁵ Augustine never uses active causal terminology to describe the relation of God’s will to Adam’s fall.

It is quite obvious that Calvin adopts the perspective of Luther set in the early Reformation. He is convinced by the arguments of Augustine in *Against Julian* that the great church father did teach an active concept of God’s will in hardening. Calvin seems to follow the concept of the late Augustine in *Against Julian* and refuses to use the idea

⁸³ Aurelius Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John Hammond Taylor, vol. 1, Ancient Christian Writers, vol. 41 (New York: Newman Press, 1982), VI, 15, 26. Cf. *Ibid.*, VI, 13, 23.

⁸⁴ Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, VI, 17, 28.

⁸⁵ Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, VI, 18, 29.

of divine foreknowledge and mere divine permission to defend the issue of theodicy. In this aspect, Calvin is quite unique among some of the key Reformers of his times.

Nevertheless, without the clear post-fall framework Augustine and Luther had, Calvin, in his use of Augustine's quote in *De Genesi ad Litteram*, made a subtle but important difference with Augustine and Luther by applying the necessitarian concept to Adam before the fall too. Augustine certainly did not apply the necessitarian concepts to the fall of Adam. Hence, in Calvin's extension of these necessitarian concepts applying them to the fall of Adam, he introduced a controversial element in his reformulation something both Augustine and Luther did not teach, or at least did not explicitly affirm.

D. Calvin vs. Other Reformers on Divine Permission

Calvin's reception of Luther's necessitarian concepts was quite unique among his contemporary Reformers. Because of the emphasis on the theodical concern, many key Reformers in the second phase of the debate utilized the concept of passive divine permission. A key representative was Melanchthon. After 1535, Melanchthon not only adjusted his comments on "free choice," but he also readopted the concept of passive divine permission and did not maintain an active presentation of hardening. Theodicy became his key concern. In his *Commentary on Romans* (1540), Melanchthon uses divine permission to interpret the concepts of "giving up" and "hardening":

Moreover, here we think of the more unlearned ones regarding the phrase: "He gave them over to their desires," that is He permitted them to rush ahead. This phrase is customary among the Hebrews: "Lead us not unto temptation," that is, do not permit us to be led into it. These things must be understood of permission. For God is by no means the cause of sin, but the devil is, as it is written: "Whoever commits sin is of the devil." [I John 3:8] And he is truly the effective cause and instigator of these acts

of madness which are here described.⁸⁶

Thus “to harden” signifies not to liberate others, but to permit them to fight against God in order that they may perish. The meaning is: “Whom he wills he hardens,” that is, he does not send them free, does not convert them because they continue to fight against God who is calling them.⁸⁷

This change indicates a significant departure from the necessitarian position advocated by the early Reformers.

Bullinger also reuses the divine foreknowledge defense used by Augustine to defend the idea that “God is not the cause of sin, or the author of evil” in the fall of Adam:

I answered in the beginning of this discourse to this objection; and yet this I add here moreover, so that Adam did of necessity sin because God did foreknow that he would sin. A prudent father doth foresee, by some untoward tokens, that his son will one day come to an ill ending: neither is he deceived in his foresight; for he is slain, being taken in adultery. But he is not therefore slain, because his father foresaw that he would be slain; but because he was an adulterer.⁸⁸

Schulze says, “Calvin also differed from Bullinger who, trying as far as possible to evade anything that could lead to blame God as the author of evil, introduced again this concept of *praescientia* with regard to sin.”⁸⁹ Bullinger also quotes the teaching of the young Augustine in *De Libero Arbitrio* 3.4.⁹⁰ On the issues of giving up, hardening and

⁸⁶ Philip Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992), 82.

⁸⁷ Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, 191.

⁸⁸ Henry Bullinger, *Third Decade*, in *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, trans. H. I., and ed. Thomas Harding, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849-52), 365, 377-78.

⁸⁹ Schulze, “Calvin’s Reply to Pighius—A Micro and A Macro View,” 181.

⁹⁰ Bullinger, *Third Decade*, 378. “As thou by thy memory dost not compel those things to be done that are gone and past, so God by his foreknowledge doth not compel those things to be done which are to come. And as thou rememberest some things that thou hast done, and yet hast not done all things which thou rememberest; so God foreknoweth all things which he doth, and yet doth not all which he

blinding, Bullinger also differs from Calvin. Joel E. Kok says,

While he does not attempt, in dealing with Rom. 9:18, to reduce the offense of the word ‘harden’ by reading it passively, that is, as denoting permission, he deals with the word only briefly and speaks of God using Pharaoh’s own tyranny and obstinacy for the glory of his own name. Calvin, while also recognizing the limits of human understanding with respect to God’s predestination, speaks more often and more freely than Bullinger does regarding God’s secret will in election and reprobation. . . . While both attempt to bow humbly before the truth of revelation, *Calvin is more insistent regarding God’s propensity to speak words through Paul that are shocking to hear.*⁹¹

In his *Decades*, Bullinger on the one hand maintains the early Reformation’s emphases that this kind of divine actions is, as Augustine says, “a work of judgment and justice,” and that “God in the scriptures doth use our kinds of phrases and manner of speeches.”⁹² On the other hand, Bullinger uses passive concepts of divine permission to deny that God is the author of sin: “therefore the withdrawing of God’s grace is the hardening of man’s heart; and when we are left unto ourselves, then are we hardened.”⁹³ Bullinger is aware of the early Reformation concern, but he is more convinced by the theodical concern by using the classical Augustinian defense of divine permission. Venema observes that “Bullinger introduced the traditional expedient of a divine *permissio*. This divine ‘permission’ was inseparable from the divine providence, but it was not an *operatio* or

foreknoweth. But God is a just revenger of that whereof he is no evil author.”

⁹¹ Joel E. Kok, “Heinrich Bullinger’s Exegetical Method: The Model for Calvin?” in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, 250-51. Italics added. On the issue of God’s giving up, Kok also notes their difference: “While Calvin agrees with Bullinger with respect to exempting God from sin, he is not willing to soften *tradidit* into mere permission but, instead, argues that God directs the fall of sinners into their own folly.” *Ibid.*, 249.

⁹² Bullinger, *Third Decade*, 380-81.

⁹³ Bullinger, *Third Decade*, 381. Cf. *Ibid.*, 380-84. Another important simile Bullinger uses is this, “Now we are wont to say, This father doth by too much cockering or over gentle dealing mar or harden his son, he maketh him stubborn and stiff-necked; and yet the father doth not tender him to destroy, but to save him: the son indeed by the abuse of his father’s clemency doth both destroy and harden himself.” *Ibid.*,

‘operation’ of God. God neither willed nor impelled anyone to sin; he only permitted what he himself abhorred.’⁹⁴

Vermigli’s formulation is probably closer to Calvin’s than that of many other contemporary Reformers. Nevertheless, he still differs from Calvin in re-adopting the defense of divine permission. Vermigli pays much attention to the issues of giving up, hardening, and blinding in the Scriptures.⁹⁵ Vermigli, following the early Reformation heritage, argues that the will of God is involved in God’s sovereign role over sinful acts: “The usual excuse is that God permits but does not help. We say that this is not enough, for the offense remains in our minds. God still seems to will sin in some sense; he knows that men cannot stand by themselves.”⁹⁶

Nevertheless, Vermigli uses the classical concept of divine concurrence and passive divine permission to argue that God is not properly the cause of sin. Vermigli tries to maintain the early Reformation position that divine permission is a divine willing, but he also wants to keep the classical Augustinian view of divine permission. Vermigli argues that we may still call the permissive will will because divine concurrence is involved:

Further, we cannot deny that sin is a kind of human action; every act as act depends

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⁹⁴ Cornelis P. Venema, “Heinrich Bullinger’s Correspondence on Calvin’s Doctrine of Predestination 1551-1553,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 17/4 (1986): 444.

⁹⁵ Cf. Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 215-61; James, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination*; J. P. Donnelly, *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli’s Doctrine of Man and Grace* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976); J. C. McLelland, “The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination according to Peter Martyr,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8 (1955): 257-65; McLelland, ed., *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Italian Reform* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1980); Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 57-75.

⁹⁶ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 221.

on the first principle of all things. God is *primus actus*, as the philosophers acknowledge. Unless he sustains it there can be no act; therefore sin depends on God as upon the efficient cause.⁹⁷

If anything happens outside God's will, against his will, if it has any effects of which he is not the cause, then he is not the cause, then he is not the universal cause of all, nor is he God.⁹⁸

In addition, Vermigli repeatedly and guardedly emphasizes that God is not the proper, nor the efficient cause of sin, and God's role is only the role of withdrawing his grace:

They have the causes of their falling in themselves; yet whoever takes the prop away is said to cause the fall in some way, because he removes the support that prevented the ruin. So in his own nature God is good, but insofar as he is just, he will punish sinners, *he removes grace, and in a sense may be called the cause of those things which afterward may be termed evil. Not the true cause—that proper cause is inward, that is their evil will. . . .* When divine grace and favor are rightfully removed from us, sin naturally follows; *we need no other efficient cause*; I mean, no other cause is required apart from our infected and corrupt affections.⁹⁹

Vermigli follows the insights of Augustine and Luther and argues that the true and proper cause is human inward corruption.

Vermigli also makes an important contribution by his review of the existence of three other possible positions. The first one he condemns: “namely that of the Libertines, who say that God is completely the cause of sin.”¹⁰⁰ The third position Vermigli finds unsatisfactory: “The third opinion is of those who interpret all these places of Scripture by the words: he allowed or permitted, or as the Greek puts it, ‘did not prevent it’, and so

⁹⁷ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 220.

⁹⁸ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 222.

⁹⁹ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 225. Italics added.

¹⁰⁰ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 222.

on. In this way they think all dangers are avoided.”¹⁰¹ Vermigli is aware of Augustine’s idea in *Enchiridion* and *Against Julian*, and argues that the divine permission is not a mere permission, “but yet of a kind that belongs to the will.”¹⁰² The most interesting part is his description of the second position:

The second opinion comes from some learned men, who do not reject that sense which the Scriptures appear to have at first glance. They say that God hardens, that he punishes sins with sins; in the end they concede that he is the cause of sin. But they add that since these acts proceed from corrupt human nature, insofar as they are from God they have to do with justice—men are not excused because they are inclined to them; they do not blame God, who does his part rightly. They observe that if we cannot comprehend by reason how he does justly and we unjustly, we must rest in the judgment of Scripture. There are many other things that human reason cannot know, which we yet believe.¹⁰³

Who are these “learned men”? These may be Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and others. The interesting point here is that Vermigli does not comment about this position directly. But in his elaboration of his own opinion, Vermigli implicitly shows that he is not totally satisfactory with the formulations of these “learned men” and he uses several classical distinctions to qualify and clarify the idea that the divine will is involved in divine sovereignty over sins. First, the divine permissive will is a deficient cause:

Permission is a kind of willing, not absolutely, for God’s will is properly the cause of things: not like the human will, where we attempt many things that we do not accomplish. Why then doesn’t God will sin? Because sin belongs to those things that do not need an efficient cause, but a deficient. Therefore sin does not properly fall under the divine will. If God is put as the cause, not efficient but deficient, . . . What

¹⁰¹ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 223.

¹⁰² “We should note, however, that consent belongs to the genus of willing: not efficient will, but still a kind of will. As Augustine says in his *Manuel for Laurence*, . . . That Julian against whom Augustine argues claimed that there was a bare permission in such things, . . . If he desires suffering, he desires the acts as well; for suffering proceeds from someone who acts. This will is a permission, but yet of a kind that belongs to the will.” Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 224.

¹⁰³ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 223.

kind of will is this? A will not to hinder, a will not to relent, a will not to illuminate.¹⁰⁴

The second important distinction Vermigli uses, the one used also by Calvin, is the distinction between supreme cause (remote cause) and proximate causes. Vermigli argues that the evil works come “quite differently from the superior good cause than from the proximate cause which is corrupt.”¹⁰⁵ The third important distinction he uses is an Augustinian concept of the difference between the state of Adam before the fall, and the fallen state: “In this regard we say that we must make one judgment about the first man, and another about the corrupt nature that we now possess.”¹⁰⁶ This last distinction is the main difference between Calvin and Vermigli. Calvin is unique in not adopting the divine permission argument. Here once again Calvin follows Luther’s position closely.

E. Does Calvin Differ from Luther in His Affirmation of the Scholastic Distinction Regarding Necessity?

On whether Calvin truly differs from Luther in his affirmation of the validity of the scholastic distinction between absolute necessity (*necessitas consequentis*) and the necessity of consequence (*necessitas consequentiae*), Lane and Heckel have different judgments.¹⁰⁷ This debate reminds us the ambiguity in locating the exact teaching of Calvin’s idea of contingency and necessity and the exact continuity between the two

¹⁰⁴ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 235-36. James also points out that Vermigli does not shy away to speak something like, “God in a sense willed the first sin and was in a sense the author.” James, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination*, 86.

¹⁰⁵ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 228.

¹⁰⁶ Vermigli, *Philosophical Works*, 236.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Lane, “Bondage and Liberation in Calvin’s Treatise against Pighius,” 7-8; Lane, “Introduction,” xxviii; Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 8-21, 224. For the use of the terms, see Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 199-200.

Reformers. In *Lectures on Romans* (1516), *Disputation against Scholastic Theology* (1517), and in *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), Luther repeatedly rejected the distinction and argued that “how completely useless this invention is.”¹⁰⁸ But Calvin after his debate with Pighius (1543), in *The Eternal Predestination of God* (1552) and the 1559 *Institutes*, affirmed the validity of the scholastic distinction and argued that “we see that distinctions concerning relative necessity and absolute necessity, likewise of consequent and consequence, were not recklessly invented in schools.”¹⁰⁹

Lane argues that Calvin was embarrassed by Luther’s use of the concept of “absolute necessity” and he “could not say so openly without displaying Protestant disunity.” In 1552 it became a more appropriate opportunity for Calvin to clarify his own idea by “the uncharacteristic use of scholastic distinctions.”¹¹⁰ Heckel sternly disagrees. He argues that disregarding their different attitude towards the scholastic distinction, the two Reformers actually have a similar position: “Calvin did not use the scholastic terms to affirm the theological point that Luther rejected or even undermine Luther’s position.” And “Luther was only denying the distinction as used in the tradition of the *via moderna* which he had inherited, and which does not touch Calvin’s usage.”¹¹¹ The key issue is whether Luther, in affirming the voluntary nature of the second causality in several passages in *The Bondage of the Will*, may accept that “things could be otherwise” of

¹⁰⁸ LW 33:194. Cf. LW 33:39-41, 184-86, 190-95, 230-31; 31:11; 25:372-373. See also McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?*, 232-36, 242, 315-21.

¹⁰⁹ *Inst.*, 1.16.9. Cf. Calvin, *Calvin’s Calvinism*, 234-35.

¹¹⁰ Lane, “Bondage and Liberation in Calvin’s Treatise against Pighius,” 7-8.

¹¹¹ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 10, 19.

themselves.¹¹²

Luther repeatedly argues that only in a human limited perspective, things “seem to us” to be fortuitous and subject to choice.¹¹³ Luther’s sole concern is to uphold a complete sovereignty of God: “Does the contingency of an event impede the sure predestination of God? And the answer is that with God there simply is no contingency, but it is only in our eyes.”¹¹⁴ In defending his saying that “all things happen by necessity,”¹¹⁵ Luther does affirm the voluntary nature of the human will: “he does it of his own accord and with a ready will” [*sed sponte et libenti voluntate facit*].¹¹⁶ But he does not affirm, but rejects the idea that things by themselves have contingency. Erasmus tries to defend the idea that “Judas could change his mind (*voluntas*)” and he uses the scholastic distinction to support that. But Luther argues “how could Judas change his mind so long as the infallible foreknowledge of God remained? Could he change God’s foreknowledge and make it fallible?”¹¹⁷ In his sole concern to argue for the absolute sovereignty of God and the necessity of the will, Luther does not explicitly affirm the

¹¹² Cf. Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 184-93; *LW* 33: 64-65, 103, 176, 283.

¹¹³ “The free will which *seems* to bear on us and temporal things has no bearing on God, for in him, as James says, there is no variation or shadow of change, but here all things change and vary.” Luther, “Assertio,” 307. Italics added. “From this it follows irrefutably that everything we do, everything that happens, *even if it seems to us to happen mutably and contingently* [*contingenter*], happens in fact nonetheless necessarily and immutably, if you have regard to the will of God.” *LW* 33:37-38. WA 18, 615. Cf. *LW* 25:372-73, 54:260.

¹¹⁴ *LW* 25:273.

¹¹⁵ He also defends Wyclif’s usage: “For I take the view that Wycliffe’s article (that “all things happen by necessity”) [*articulum illum Viglephi (omnia necessitate fieri)*] was wrongly condemned by the Council, or rather the conspiracy and sedition, of Constance.” *LW* 33:160. WA 18, 699.

¹¹⁶ *LW* 33:64. Italics added. WA 18, 634.

¹¹⁷ *LW* 33:193.

theoretical possibility of doing otherwise. Luther also does not explicitly distinguish between the necessity caused by inward necessity and that by divine sovereignty.

Heckel is right to point out that both Luther and Calvin affirm the voluntary nature of a bound will: “Calvin, like Luther, held the difference between coerced or voluntary bondage was the key issue in the debate, and they both preserved the notion of *libens sponte*.”¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, in his comment concerning Calvin’s use of the distinction to affirm the fragility of the bones of Christ, Heckel fails to find the difference between Calvin and Luther. Heckel simply argues that both Reformers accept “things could be otherwise from the limited human perspective.”¹¹⁹ We are not very sure about what Heckel means by “the limited human perspective.” Nevertheless, we find that Calvin uses the distinction to affirm both that the breaking of the bones “could have happened naturally” (*naturaliter contingere*) and that it was “restricted to the necessity” (*restrinxit ad necessitatem*) of God’s plan.¹²⁰ Calvin explicitly affirms that of themselves “things could be otherwise.” But Luther does not explicitly say so. This is a significant difference.

In his treatise against Pighius, Calvin explicitly separates the issue of the necessity caused by inward necessity from that by divine sovereignty:

I could wish that I had an opponent who would attack me from every side but not rush at me in a blind and confused combat as this man does, for, having resolved to discuss two different issues separately, he now mixes them up together. He says, If even to think anything good or evil is in nobody’s power, but everything happens by “absolute necessity”. . . . But he has undertaken to deal with the providence of God,

¹¹⁸ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 189.

¹¹⁹ Heckel, “Calvin’s Relationship to Luther’s Doctrine of Will,” 19.

¹²⁰ *Inst.*, 1.16.9.

on which this necessity depends, elsewhere, and this is just what he does in the last four books of his work. Why then does he now mix up this issue with the other one?¹²¹

Here Calvin clearly follows the trend of the second phase of the Reformation to separate the issue of the bondage of the human will from the discussion of divine providence. He also explicitly affirms the existence of contingency: “But to take contingency out of the world altogether would be absurd.”¹²² In addition, he makes an important elaboration on necessity in his treatise against Pighius (1543), there he says,

In Aristotle at any rate the existence of alternative possibilities is always the opposite of necessity. And common sense lays down that we should regard as necessary whatever has to be as it is and cannot be otherwise [*ut necessarium censeatur quidquid sic esse oportet nec aliter esse potest*]. In this way unchangeability is included in necessity, from which it also immediately follows that God is good of necessity. . . . From this what I wanted [to prove] seems to have been proved with clarity: what is voluntary is not so different from what is necessary that they cannot sometimes coincide.”¹²³

Here Calvin explicitly argues that “the existence of alternative possibilities” and to be able to be otherwise is opposite to the concept of necessity. Calvin argues that voluntariness may coincide with necessity, but “to be able to be otherwise” cannot coincide with necessity. Therefore, Calvin teaches more than just a perspectival possibility, a possibility from a human perspective. Calvin does affirm the theoretical possibility of otherwise both the possibility of breaking or not breaking the bones of Christ and the freedom of choice of good or evil for Adam before the fall.

Nevertheless, in places where Calvin uses the necessitarian concepts and

¹²¹ Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 35.

¹²² *Calvin's Calvinism*, 234.

¹²³ Calvin, *The Bondage and the Liberation of the Will*, 149; CO 6:335. Cf. Aristotle, *Categories* 10; *Topics* 2.6.

perspectival language similar to Luther, the readers may draw confused impressions. The use of perspectival language appears frequently in his discussion: "I have elsewhere in my writings and ever taught that all those things which *seem to happen accidentally* are ruled and overruled by the secret Providence of God."¹²⁴ "Therefore I shall put it this way: however all things may be ordained by God's plan, according to a sure dispensation, *for us* they are fortuitous."¹²⁵ "Indeed, Scripture, to express more plainly that nothing at all in the world is undertaken without his determination, shows that things *seemingly most fortuitous* are subject to him."¹²⁶ The use of these perspectival presentations, together with his use of divine ordination even in the fall of Adam, may be the source of ambiguity in his concepts of contingency and necessity.

Nevertheless, we have to agree that as a whole Calvin does provide a more nuanced formulation, characteristic of the second phase of the debate, to distinguish the necessity caused by inward corruption from what caused by the divine sovereignty. He also provides a more explicit affirmation of natural freedom and the contingency of secondary causality in his reformulation than Luther does. He does this by affirming both the natural freedom of the human will and the existence of contingency, by reusing the scholastic distinctions, by his disusing the necessitarian argument, by affirming the theoretical possibility of otherwise in the case of the bones of Christ, and by

¹²⁴ *Calvin's Calvinism*, 332. Italics added. Cf. "Therefore I shall put it this way: however all things may be ordained by God's plan, according to a sure dispensation, *for us they are fortuitous*. . . Yet as far as the capacity of our mind is concerned, *all things therein seem fortuitous*." *Inst.*, 1.6.9. -34: "As, all those things which God really directs by His counsel but which, as generally viewed, *seem to be fortuitous*; concerning all such things the clear testimony of the Scripture runs thus, 'The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord!' (Prov. xvi. 33.)" *Calvin's Calvinism*, 233. Italics added.

¹²⁵ *Inst.*, 1.6.9. Italics added.

distinguishing the nature of the freedom of choice for Adam before the fall from that after the fall.

F. Calvin's Extension of the Active Concept of God's Sovereign Will to the Fall of Adam

One of most important modifications Calvin makes in his reformulation of Luther's view is that he does not limit the scope of the active concept of God's sovereign will to a post-fall framework, but he repeatedly applies it also to the fall of Adam. It is interesting that on the one hand, Calvin, in his core commitment to sticking with the Bible, repeatedly teaches that we should teach what the Bible teaches and we should stop when the Bible stops. Calvin explicitly reaffirms this principle when he begins his discussion on election:

For Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which as nothing useful and necessary to be known has been omitted, so nothing is taught but what it is of importance to know. . . . The best rule of sobriety is, not only in learning to follow wherever God leads, but also when he makes an end of teaching, to cease also from wishing to be wise.¹²⁷

On the other hand, in the case of the fall, Calvin seems to be pushed both by his convictions and the heated debates, to explicitly affirm a point on which the Bible does not say much. Calvin himself admits that "it is not stated in so many words that God decreed that Adam should perish for his rebellion." Rather it is the concept of God's sovereignty pushes him to question whether God "would have created the noblest of his creatures to an uncertain end." Calvin argues that as the fall had so great consequence,

¹²⁶ *Inst.*, 1.16.6. Italics added.

¹²⁷ *Inst.*, 3.21.3. Cf. *Inst.*, 3.21.2,

God must have ordained the fall and the fall in some way pleased Him.¹²⁸

We believe that one major discontinuity between Luther and Calvin is that Calvin did not restrict the discussion of the all-active concept of the divine sovereign will to the fallen will alone as Luther did. As we have pointed out that, though blurred by his use of necessitarian argument, yet implicitly in his argument, Luther clearly has a traditional Augustinian distinction of two states of Adam in mind and the post-fall framework for his discussion on the bondage of human will.

If Luther was not the main source for Calvin's concept of the divine ordination of the fall, the issue arises as to other possible historical antecedents. On this, we find that the formulations made by Bucer and Valla may constitute possible sources for Calvin's concept of the divine ordination of the fall. Valla clearly used active terminology to describe the relationship between God's will and the fall of Adam.

In his *Commentary on Romans* (1536), Bucer also uses similar concepts to defend God's hardening. First of all, Bucer argues that as God allows men to fall when he alone can save them from falling, the idea of mere permission does not work:

It also cannot fail to judge it inhuman that God even allows men to fall [*Deum vel permittere libi*] when he alone can save them from falling, and cruel, that he punishes the fallen when, bereft of his aid, they could not help falling.

We must accordingly reject the judgment of reason in this area, and confess that the judgments of God are 'a great abyss' and inscrutable, yet righteous. . . .

Consequently, once it is agreed that it belongs to God's glory to declare that he hardens, blinds, and gives up to depraved reason whom he chooses, it will be obvious that it can also be said that God foreknew and ordained [*destinasse*] these very people for such a fate before he created them; for he accomplishes all things according to a predetermined and settled plan.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ *Inst.* 3.23.7.

¹²⁹ Bucer, *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, 98; *Metaphrases*, 359a.

Here Bucer has many pieces that are common in Calvin's formulation: mere permission does not satisfy human reasoning; we need to confess the judgments of God as an abyss, inscrutable, yet righteous; the hardening is a just condemnation and punishment; it belongs to God's glory to give up; there was God's destination of man before God created them; and God accomplishes all things according to a predetermined and settled plan. This commentary is one Calvin highly praised and thoroughly knew. This may be one of the key sources for Calvin's necessitarian concepts in his doctrine of predestination. Yet here Bucer does not explicitly extend the scope to Adam. Moreover, Bucer's line is also compatible of what Augustine teaches in *Against Julian* and Bucer basically puts it in a post-fall framework to handle the problems of God's hardening.

Another possible precedent is Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457).¹³⁰ Valla is not a theologian. Yet in the context of the Reformation debate on the human will, he is an important figure. Luther and the young Melanchthon used Valla as an example to argue for the denial of free will. The most influential move was Luther's identification of his position with that of Valla in *The Bondage of the Will*:

On my side, however, there is only Wycliffe and one other, Laurentius Valla (though Augustine, whom you overlook, is entirely with me), and these carry no weight in comparison with those; so there remains only Luther, a private individual and a mere upstart, with his friends, among whom there is no such erudition or genius, no multitude or magnitude, no sanctity, no miracles—for they could not even cure a lame horse.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Cf. Charles Edward Trinkaus, Jr., "Introduction," in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. Ernst Cassirer and others (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 147-54.

¹³¹ Actually it is Erasmus who, in his treatise against Luther, first links Luther with Valla: "From the time of the apostles down to the present day, no writer has yet emerged who has totally taken away the power of freedom of choice, save only Manichaeus and John Wyclif. For the authority of Laurentius Valla, who comes nearest to agreement with them, has not much weight among theologians." Erasmus, *On the Freedom of the Will*, 43.

McSorley observes that “Apart from Bradwardine, and possibly Wyclif, we also find an antecedent for Luther’s attitude toward contingency in the writings of the Italian humanist, Laurentius Valla (1407-1457).”¹³² Nevertheless, following the growth of theodical concern, as we have pointed out in Chapter Four, Melanchthon completely reversed his position and severely condemned Valla as a representative of Stoicism in 1530s.

Both the mature Luther and Calvin do not follow Melanchthon’s change. In *Table Talk*, Luther maintains a similar stance on Valla: “Laurentius Valla was the best Italian I’ve ever seen or heard of in all my life. He argued well about free will.”¹³³ McSorley believes that the main agreement between Luther and Valla is that “Valla admits that man acts *voluntarily* but denies that he acts *contingently*.”¹³⁴ Valla teaches something similar to Calvin. Valla argues that there is a divine preordination involved in divine foreknowledge: “God foresees it because the future is preordained.” Valla, using fideistic concepts, teaches that the way to handle the theodical problem of reprobation is by faith in God: “Indeed the most worthy reason may be adduced as to why He hardens this one and shows mercy to that, namely, that He is most wise and good. For it is impious to believe otherwise than that, being absolutely good, He does rightly.”¹³⁵ Valla also explicitly applies the concept of reprobation and the concept of hardening to Adam

¹³² McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 325.

¹³³ *WA*, TR 1, No. 259. Quoted in “General Introduction,” *LW* 54. Quoted also in Trinkaus, “Introduction,” 153.

¹³⁴ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 326.

¹³⁵ Valla, “Dialogue on Free Will,” 176-77.

before the fall:

I will not hide the fact that certain men have dared to inquire into this purpose, saying, those who are hardened and reprobated are justly hardened and reprobated, for we come out of that lump polluted and converted into clay by the guilt of the first parent. Now, if I may cut across much and reply by one argument, *why was Adam, made of unpolluted matter as he was, himself hardened for sin and why did he make the universal lump of his offspring of clay?*¹³⁶

Here Valla extends the hardening logic to Adam too. And Valla goes further. He uses “hardening language” to describe the fall of the angels:

What was done to the angels was similar. *Some of them were hardened, some obtained mercy*, although all were of the same substance, from the same unpolluted lump which up to this point, if I may say so boldly, remained in the nature of a substance and in the quality of a material that is, so to speak, golden.¹³⁷

Valla ends this with an inscrutable concept of the divine will: “I said that the cause of the divine will which hardens one and shows mercy to another is known neither to men nor to angels.”¹³⁸ Valla asks us to cease reasoning, to stand by faith, and to be humble.¹³⁹

This extension of “hardening” terminology to Adam and angels before the fall is something the orthodox and Augustinian tradition earlier did not do.

We cannot conclusively locate the exact source of Calvin’s idea in extending the necessitarian concepts of the divine will to Adam before the fall. Nevertheless, we have clearly documented that Calvin basically adopts most of the necessitarian concepts taught

¹³⁶ Valla, “Dialogue on Free Will,” 177. Italics added.

¹³⁷ Valla, “Dialogue on Free Will,” 177. Italics added.

¹³⁸ Valla, “Dialogue on Free Will,” 180.

¹³⁹ “If because of ignorance on this matter and on many others angels do not lose their love of God, do not retreat from their service, and do not consider their own blessedness diminished on that account, should we for this same reason depart from faith, hope, and charity and desert as if from a commander? . . . We do not know the cause of this matter; of what consequence is it? We stand by faith not by the probability of reason. Does knowledge do much for the corroboration of faith? Humility does more.” Valla, “Dialogue on Free Will,” 180.

by Luther in *The Bondage of the Will*. He also is convinced that similar concepts are taught by the mature Augustine. Moreover, the brief example of Bucer and a similar argument by Valla are probably direct sources for Calvin. The refusal to use divine permission to handle the predestination of the fall of Adam, and the use of active language to affirm God's sovereignty over the fall, together with the adoption of the necessitarian concepts and presentations advocated by Luther, add a strong deterministic tone and character to Calvin's reformulation of the doctrines of providence and predestination.

Concluding this chapter, we find essential continuities in necessitarian concepts and presentation between Luther and Calvin, with the exception of the necessitarian argument. Calvin also follows Luther's conviction that the mature Augustine is more biblical. Calvin read Augustine's works, including *Against Julian*, through the lens of Luther's convictions. Nevertheless, there are subtle and important differences between the two Reformers, because Calvin has to deal with the shifted concern and diversified formulations in the second phase of the Reformation. In addition, Calvin, unlike Luther and many of his contemporaries, seems to follow an idea similar to that of Valla and injects a new necessitarian feature in his formulation by including the fall of Adam under the divine decree.

In his rejection of the necessitarian argument and in his clarification of the doctrine of the bondage of the human will, Calvin, following the trend in the second phase of the Reformation debate, amends the early Reformation formulation and provides more nuanced distinctions to affirm the genuine contingency of secondary causality. Nevertheless, in his adoption of Luther's necessitarian concepts and in explicit inclusion

of the fall of Adam in the divine decree, Calvin retains a strong dose of necessitarian features in his reformulation. Without considering carefully Calvin's historical context and possible antecedents, we may easily miss the complex composition of Calvin's reformulation.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Coming to the end of the dissertation, we are reminded of the importance of reading Calvin in his historical context and of reading the whole spectrum of his works. First of all, in the doctrine of the bondage of the human will and issues related to necessity, we have shown that we should read Calvin in the context of the early Reformation debate. Calvin, as a Reformer of the second generation, defended and adopted many early Reformation concepts advocated by Luther and other early Reformers. We have shown that the early Reformers, including Luther, Melanchthon, and Zwingli, in their zeal to defend the doctrine of *sola gratia* and the bondage of the will, used various necessitarian concepts and arguments to argue their case. Their necessitarian and less nuanced formulations deviated from the traditional Augustinian formulation and generated great confusion and misunderstanding in their times. Nevertheless, we need to point out that this was a reaction to the Pelagianizing tendencies of some late medieval theologians. Some of them defined *liberum arbitrium* and many related distinctions in such a way as to promote a Pelagian or semi-Pelagian concept. We also have shown that there are essential continuities between the formulations of Luther and Calvin. Calvin adopted four major characteristics of Luther's formulation: the rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*, an active presentation of God's sovereign will over the wicked, the preference for biblical expressions, and a reinterpretation of Augustine's heritage.

Second, we also need to read Calvin in the changing context of the second phase of

the Reformation debate. Calvin faced a very different theological environment and concern from that of Luther. In the zeal to attack the semi-Pelagian theology among their opponents, the early Reformers had a single focused concern to use necessitarian arguments and concepts to deny the existence of freedom of choice for the fallen will, to emphasize an all active sovereign will, and to question the existence of contingency and the natural integrity of secondary causality. Nevertheless, the Reformers in the second phase, including Calvin, had the apologetic and pedagogical need to shift from the necessitarian argument and many of the necessitarian concepts advocated by the early Reformers. They needed to defend the early Reformation formulation of the bondage of the human will against the accusation that the Reformation teaching implicates God as the author of sin. There was obviously a growing emphasis in theodical concern among the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation. Unlike Luther, Melancthon, and Zwingli in the early Reformation, they all put the argument for the bondage of the human will into a soteriological framework and set aside some of the early Reformation necessitarian arguments for the bondage of the human will. The “twin concerns” had replaced the single focused concern of the early Reformers. This gave way to a more balanced and more comprehensive formulation. They generally affirmed the genuine integrity of second causality, with a positive affirmation of the existence of contingency, the voluntary nature of the bound will, and the existence of freedom of choice for Adam before the fall. The process of codification and reformulation hastened. Nevertheless, the shift was not uniform among the key Reformers.

The main dividing line among them is whether they would prefer a more positive presentation of God’s sovereignty over sins and the fall of Adam. Melancthon, and to

some degree Bullinger too, basically stay away from the necessitarian arguments and many of the necessitarian concepts. Melanchthon makes a clear distinction between natural freedom and spiritual freedom. He distances himself from the necessitarian arguments, puts the issue back into a purely soteriological realm, and explicitly condemns some necessitarian concepts he considers Stoic. Yet both Calvin and Vermigli remain closer to the early Reformation formulation. And in Calvin's willingness to defend Luther's position and in his adoption of key necessitarian concepts of Luther, Calvin positions himself as one of the most loyal followers of Luther.

Third, we should read Calvin as a defender of the early Reformation formulation in the changing context of the second phase of the debate. A key characteristic of Calvin is that he treasures the united front among the Reformers. Calvin himself has reservations about some aspects of Luther's formulation. A major difference is that Calvin, following the trend in the second phase, explicitly affirms the genuine integrity of secondary causality. Nevertheless, Calvin treasured his role as a defense of Luther's legacy and rebuked the charge that there were inconsistencies among the Reformers. In the face of the Roman opponents and in order to diffuse the charge of inconsistency because of the change of position by Melanchthon, Calvin tried to maintain a united front before their common Roman opponents. Calvin chose not to be completely candid on the differences among the Reformers. This was the historical context when Calvin formulated his teaching. Therefore, Calvin rejected the term *liberum arbitrium* with a much softer tone and allowed a more diverse presentation than Luther did. We believe that the concern to maintain an unbroken front and the existence of diverse positions among the Reformers are key reasons behind Calvin's approach. Hence, we cannot always take Calvin's claims

uncritically. To investigate the validity of Calvin's claim of consistency among the Reformers, we need to compare their teachings directly.

Fourth, we should recognize that there was development in Calvin's formulation and the mature Calvin provided a much more nuanced formulation. McSorley observes that "a lack of conceptual clarity and an inadequate definition of terms by both Erasmus and Luther caused such confusion in their debate that a true meeting of minds rarely took place."¹ Similar comments may be made of Calvin's early formulation. Calvin in his 1539 *Institutio* reflected similar ambiguity, but the debate with Pighius and more interaction with the genuine tradition provided him the opportunity to clarify his concepts and indirectly also the early Reformation concept. This process of reformulation was in line with the general trend of the second phase of the debate. Basically all Reformers in the second phase went back to the genuine tradition of the church and used many Augustinian and scholastic distinctions and concepts to clarify and defend their positions. Calvin's clarification of important terms in his treatise against Pighius should be counted as an important contribution towards a better understanding of the Reformation concept of the bondage of the human will and issue related to necessity.² Calvin grew as he read more. In his refinement and elaboration of the integrity of Adam before the Fall in his *Institutes*, in his clarification of what is a "free," "bound," "coerced," or "self-determined" will, in his re-adoption of the scholastic definition of the two kinds of necessity, and in his threefold distinction regarding the will, Calvin firmly puts the issue

¹ McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?* 29.

² Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 69-70, 208.

of the bondage back to the soteriological realm and explicitly affirms the genuine integrity of secondary causality.

Fifth, our research reminds us that there was a major reformation in theological terminology launched by Luther. We believe that the changes and diversity in the use of theological terminology in the late medieval, in early Reformation, and in the second phase of Reformation debate generated significant differences in interpretation. We find that Calvin was deeply convinced of the importance of the preference for biblical expressions. Because of this, Calvin followed Luther closely in rejecting the term *liberum arbitrium* and in using active presentations to describe God's sovereign role over sin. This reformation of theological expressions was received differently among the Reformers in the second phase of the Reformation. While some other Reformers were mildly influenced by this, Calvin was probably the only key Reformer in the second phase of the debate that remained loyal to this Reformation agenda advocated by Luther. Calvin believes that this preference for biblical expressions is supported by the Scriptures and Augustine. This reformation of theological expressions has generated conflicting views of the exact nature of the teaching of the two Reformers. Yet in following the trend to adopt more traditional Augustinian and scholastic distinctions, Calvin retains both the necessitarian presentations advocated by Luther and the more nuanced distinctions. The combination of the necessitarian presentation and the reuse of scholastic distinctions give his teaching some degree of ambiguity and complexity, if not possibility of inconsistency. Reading his statements that affirm the freedom of choice in Adam and contingency, we may think that Calvin is in essential continuity with classical Augustinianism. Yet his statements that carry on the necessitarian concepts of Luther seem to teach something

different.

Sixth, on Calvin's continuities and discontinuities with his beloved Augustine, we find that the controversy with Pighius and the others pushed Calvin to have a deeper interaction with Augustine's works. We also show that Calvin was convinced by Luther's reinterpretation of Augustine: there are two stages in Augustine and the mature Augustine is better. On the issue of active presentations of God's sovereign role over sins, we believe that Luther's precedent pointed Calvin to dig more from Augustine's anti-Pelagian works, in particular, his *Against Julian*. Calvin's interpretation of Augustine was deeply shaped by Luther's perspective. Calvin also made an important contribution by substantiating the Reformation positions with many proofs from Augustine. Nevertheless, in Calvin's reinterpretation of Augustine's statement in *De Genesi ad Litteram*, in the extension of Augustine's necessitarian idea to include the fall of Adam, and in rejecting the permissive language, Calvin ends up using Augustine to argue something Augustine never explicitly affirms: God ordains the fall.

Seven, Calvin provides a comprehensive defense of his orthodoxy. We find that through this process, Calvin got a better appreciation of genuine tradition of the church. In particular, his use of Bernard and his differentiation of sounder Schoolmen against the extreme Sophists are very revealing. The scale and the affinity in his use of Bernard were without peers in his times. Among the Reformers, Calvin, following the precedent set by Bucer, was probably one of the pioneers in reusing the genuine tradition of the medieval churches. He was also a pioneer in using the Second Council of Orange as a witness of the early church. Calvin was also a key pioneer in providing a more comprehensive orthodox defense that draws the support from the Scriptures, from Augustine, from the

early church councils, and from Bernard.

Eighth, we believe that Calvin did not only adopt Luther's ideas but he was deeply convinced by Luther's insights in upholding an all active sovereign will. Calvin is a follower of Luther and a good student of Augustine. But in the case of the divine ordination of the fall, we believe that the logic of the necessitarian concepts Luther made in the early Reformation had the upper hand. Because of this, he rejected the concept of mere passive divine permission and read and used Augustine according to this perspective. Pushed by these concepts, Calvin was convinced that though the idea was scarcely spoken by the Scriptures, the consistency of an active concept of divine sovereign will must include the ordination of the fall. Calvin possibly finds precedent in Valla, and to some extent in Bucer and Luther. Here Calvin seems to deviate from one of his central convictions: To speak as the Bible speaks and to stop as the Bible stops. Calvin seems to be pushed both by his convictions and the heated debates to explicitly affirm and defend a point on which the Bible does not speak much. We also show that Calvin actually deviates from the post-fall framework of Augustine and Luther, in applying the active presentation of the divine will to the case of Adam before the fall. On this, Calvin was unique among his peers and was probably the first major codifier who explicitly and repeatedly teaches an active ordination of the fall. A small move by a giant is a big move in history. After him, theologians are forever divided on this most difficult and controversial issue in all his teachings.

Lastly, we conclude that Calvin formulated his defense of the doctrine of the bondage of the human will as a Reformer in the second phase of the Reformation debate, who was receptive to the early Reformation heritage and sensitive to the diverse

development in his times. With the exception of the divine ordination of the fall of Adam, Calvin made a great contribution by clarifying unnuanced early Reformation formulations, by defending the genuine integrity of secondary causality, by putting the issue of the bondage of the will back into the soteriological realm, and by providing a comprehensive orthodox defense of the doctrine. Calvin also grew as he learned and became more appreciative of the genuine traditions of the church and some Aristotelian and scholastic distinctions. Calvin's formulation reflected the influences of the early Reformation formulation of Luther, the shifted concern in the second phase of the debate, the Augustinian insights read through the lens of the early Reformation perspective, the classical and scholastic distinctions he learned from the genuine tradition, and his own biblical and theological convictions.

Because of this complex matrix, we find that there are two seemingly contradictory emphases in Calvin's formulation. In his reaffirmation of the genuine integrity of secondary causality, Calvin looks like a classical Augustinian. In his adoption of necessitarian concepts and in particular his idea of the divine ordination of the fall, the deterministic side of Calvin is revealed. The reception of the necessitarian concepts of early Reformation and the adoption of the theodical concern constitute two seemingly contradictory aspects of Calvin's reformulation. This may be the source of various debates among Calvin scholars on the exact nature of Calvin's view of determinism and human will and the ambiguity in reading Calvin.

How to judge Calvin and his reformulation is up to the individual commentator. For some Calvin is consistent, for some Calvin has two seemingly contradicting emphases in his formulation, and for some Calvin only tries to be faithful to the biblical

teachings and the Reformation heritage. Calvin is not a systematic theologian in the modern sense. Calvin tries to be a faithful biblical theologian in his setting as a Reformer of the second generation. Some scholars like to call Calvin a Biblicist. In the doctrine of the bondage of the human will and issues related to necessity, as in other doctrines, Calvin certainly wants to be a Biblicist. But Calvin is a Biblicist with a Lutheran-Augustinian perspective, a Biblicist who tries hard to teach the full force of the Scriptural teachings, a Biblicist who defends both the genuine contingency of a bound will and the active presentation of God's sovereignty over hardening and the fall of Adam. As a Biblicist who defends the early Reformation formulation in the changing context of the second phase of the Reformation, Calvin does not produce a systematic and consistent theology in the modern sense. His theology is a matrix of biblical, Augustinian, ecclesiastical, theological, and Reformation insights.

APPENDIX

THEOLOGICAL THESES FOR PUBLIC DEFENSE

Theses Pertaining to Calvin and the Bondage of Human Will

1. Calvin's formulation reflected the influences of the early Reformation formulation by Luther, the shifted concern in the second phase of the debate, the Augustinian insights read through the lens of the early Reformation perspective, the classical and scholastic distinctions he learned from the genuine tradition, and his own biblical and theological convictions.
2. To understand Calvin's nuanced and subtle adjustment in his formulation, we need to understand the changing historical context Calvin faced. With a conviction to defend Luther's heritage, and the need to accommodate the change of Melanchthon and the existence of more diversified formulations among the Reformers, Calvin could not be completely candid on the differences among the Reformers in his formulation.
3. Unlike the classical Augustinianism, which mainly uses soteriological argument to prove the bondage of human will, Luther, both in his *Assertio* (1520) and *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), develops a two-track argument to argue for the bondage of human will: a soteriological argument that argues the bondage of human will by the reason of original sin and the corruption caused by the fall, and a necessitarian argument that argues by the reason that the human will under the sovereign ruling of God does not have genuine freedom. It is this necessitarian argument that generated a lot of heated debates and issues for later Reformers to defend, to clarify, or to shift away from.
4. Luther launched a reformation of theological language through his principle of "the preference for biblical expressions" and a reformation of historical interpretation by claiming that "the mature Augustine is better than the younger Augustine." With the exception of the use of necessitarian argument to prove the bondage of human will, Calvin basically adopted all these key convictions in Luther's early Reformation formulation, including his adoption of active presentation of God's sovereign will over hardening and his rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*.
5. In Bucer, the mature Melanchthon, Bullinger, Calvin, and Vermigli, we observe a shift from a single focused concern of the early Reformation formulations to twin concerns in the second phase of the debate: while the Reformers still emphasize the *sola gratia*, the bondage of human will, and the sovereignty of God, they also at the same time spend much more effort denying that their teaching identifies God as the author of sin.
6. There was a steady growth and development in Calvin's understandings of the genuine tradition of the church concerning the bondage of human will. A more

comprehensive defense of the Reformation formulation with the supports of the genuine traditions and with the use of more scholastic and Augustinian definitions should be counted as major contributions and characteristics of Calvin's reformulation and defense of the doctrine.

7. Calvin, based on Luther's insight on the re-interpretation of Augustine, not only differentiates the young Augustine from the mature Augustine, but also adopts the line of thoughts of Augustine advocated in *Against Julian* and applies it in issues of hardening and the predestination of the fall of Adam.
8. As a whole Calvin does provide a more nuanced formulation, characteristic of second phase of the debate, to distinguish the necessity caused by inward corruption and that by the divine sovereignty. He also provides more explicit affirmation of the natural freedom and contingency of the second causality in his formulation than Luther does.
9. The refusal to use divine permission to handle the predestination of the fall of Adam, and the use of active language and concept to affirm God's sovereignty over fall, together with the adoption of the necessitarian concepts and presentations advocated by Luther, add a strong deterministic tone and character in Calvin's formulation of the doctrine of providence and predestination. In addition, Calvin, unlike Luther and many of his contemporaries, seems to follow idea similar to that of Valla, and injects a new necessitarian feature in his formulation by including the fall of Adam under the divine decree.
10. The reception of the necessitarian concepts of early Reformation formulation and the adoption of the theodical concern of the second phase of the debate constitute two seemingly contradictory aspects of Calvin's formulation. This may be the source of various debates among Calvin scholars on the exact nature of Calvin's view on determinism and human will and the ambiguity in reading Calvin.

Theses Pertaining to Ph.D. Course Work

11. John S. Feinberg, in advocating a modern Edwardsean concept of human will that to be a consistent Calvinist we must dismiss the whole free will defense of Augustine and we must not allow Adam genuine freedom of contrary choice, deviates from Calvin's and the Reformed Orthodoxy's position that explicitly affirms the genuine freedom of contrary choice for Adam before the fall. Feinberg's position does not represent classical Calvinistic or Reformed position.
12. Justin Martyr's use of theophanies as a proof of the pre-existence of Christ is a significant contribution to the development of the christological interpretation of the Old Testament. We find some similar precedents of Justin's interpretation in the works of Philo. Nevertheless, Justin's interpretation of the Old Testament Christophanies is governed mainly by the Biblical texts and his belief in the eternal Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.
13. Thomas V. Morris in his *The Logic of God Incarnate* develops a contemporary notion of Chalcedonian doctrine of Incarnation and successfully demonstrates that

it is rational and free from obvious incoherence in believing the doctrine of incarnation as against main contemporary philosophical challenges. His “two-minds theory” uses two subsets of properties to represent the two natures of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, without the notion of substance, a clear definition of the personhood of the pre-existing Son, and the use of reduplicative proposition, Morris’s formulation compromises the doctrine of Trinity.

14. James Arminius’s motive behind his severe criticism on Calvin and Beza is related directly with the issue of the author of the fall. He accepts and uses Molinist concept of *scientia media*, that God wills after He foreknows, to maintain the freedom of the will while at the same time provides the certainty of the knowledge. Arminius’s formulation sacrifices not only the divine immutability and the doctrine that God is the cause of all things, but also violates the doctrine of simplicity. The eternity of the decree and internal action of God is speculatively divided.

Miscellaneous Theses

15. There is speculation that claims that the number of the Christians in Mainland China has a population of more than 70 million. Some even speculates that close to a quarter or a third of China’s 1.3 billion people will become Christians in less than thirty years. Nevertheless, more reliable surveys point to a Christian population of only just more than 20 million. In addition, a great portion of Christian communities in China is not spiritually, intellectually, organizationally, nor economically strong. The projection to expect Chinese Christians to bear a significant portion of world mission in short period of time does not base on facts.
16. As most economists expect the economy of the United States of America to suffer a long-term stagnation, many data suggest that mission funds of Christian churches in America will drop dramatically in coming years. Many political analysts also project a growth of disagreements and condemnations among different wings of the American Christian communities. There will be a mission vacuum generated by the decline of mission activities of American churches. The Asian-African-Latin American Christian communities do not the have the spiritual, intellectual, organizational, nor economical strength to fill up all the gaps generated by the decline. Without extraordinary works by God, the population and the impact of the world conservative Christians will head for a decline in the coming decade.

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