

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

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ON A *PRIMA FACIE* reading of the Heidelberg Catechism it may seem reasonable to assume that the Reformed expression of the Christian Faith is incomplete because of its seeming lack of emphasis on the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> After all, this fact speaks for itself: there is only one question and answer devoted to the Spirit of God in the Catechism (Q&A 53). This has led Eugene Heideman to comment that,

in the Catechism one finds, only the barest outline of Christian teaching about the Holy Spirit...the Catechism's discussion of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the church is deficient for our day, in that the biblical concept of evangelism and mission as being essential to the ministry of the Spirit and the life of the church is absent."<sup>2</sup>

Heideman's thesis is incorrect for at least two reasons. First, the Heidelberg Catechism is an ecclesiastical document that was intended to be a curriculum for children, a basis for catechetical preaching, and a form of unity for a region beset by theological

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<sup>1</sup> And so statements like, "Reformed theology has ... ended up creating a monster of theology that dampens the place of our passion and partnership with God," are not uncommon in evangelical circles. Tim Stafford, "The Pentecostal Gold Standard," *Christianity Today* 49:7 (July 2005): 26.

<sup>2</sup> Eugene P. Heideman, "God the Holy Spirit," in *Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude: A Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, ed. Donald J. Bruggink (New York: The Half Moon Press, 1963), 112.

and political strife.<sup>3</sup> A document such as this cannot be expected to say all there is on any given subject, nor can we expect a sixteenth-century document to answer or anticipate all our modern theological questions. The second reason Heideman's thesis is incorrect is the concern of this essay: the person and work of the Spirit are integrated into the overall structure and essential content of the Heidelberg.<sup>4</sup>

As we look closer at what the Heidelberg Catechism says about the Holy Spirit, we will see that it is a pastoral exposition of the Spirit's work.<sup>5</sup> From beginning to end the Spirit is described in his Person as well as work, both in relation to Christ and to the believer.<sup>6</sup>

### The Overall Structure of the Catechism

The first feature we want to recognize in this light is the macrostructure of the Catechism itself. Question and answer 1 gives the overall theme of the Catechism as being the Christian comfort derived from the work of Christ, the providential care of

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<sup>3</sup> Lyle D. Bierma, "The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism," in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*, ed. Lyle D. Bierma, Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 50-2.

<sup>4</sup> Thus Karl Barth commented on the Catechism, saying, "One may say that it is distinctively a theology of the third article, a theology of the Holy Spirit...." *Learning Jesus Christ through the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 25; cf. Phil Butin, "Two Early Reformed Catechisms, the Threefold Office, and the Shape of Karl Barth's Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 44:2 (1991): 209-13.

<sup>5</sup> Fred H. Klooster, *A Mighty Comfort* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1990), 59.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 59; cf. Appendix 4a, 4b, 5 and Fred H. Klooster, *Our Only Comfort*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2001), II:660, 674. We also do well to keep in mind that the influence of John Calvin, who has been called "the theologian of the Holy Spirit," and under whom both Caspar Olevianus and Zacharias Ursinus studied, is seen in the Catechism. B.B. Warfield, "John Calvin: The Man and His Work," in *Calvin and Calvinism*, The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, ed. John E. Meeter, 10 volumes (1932; New York: Oxford University Press, reprinted 2000), V:21.

the Father, and the work of the Spirit in assuring us of eternal life and producing within us heartfelt gratitude. The Spirit, then, is of the essence of the Catechism's theme. Question and answer 2 gives the overall structure of the Catechism, drawing upon "the common stock of Protestant theology" of the threefold knowledge of guilt, grace, and gratitude.<sup>7</sup> As Walter Holweg has shown, this common division has at least one of its expressions in Theodore Beza's *Altera brevis fidei confessio* (1559), where Beza described the threefold knowledge of Heidelberg Q&A 2 as the threefold work of the Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

As we move into the body of the Catechism, question and answer 8 brings home the all-too-real predicament the sinner finds himself in; being "wholly unapt to any good, and prone to all evil."<sup>9</sup> The way out of this situation of guilt and misery (Q&A 3-11) is to be "born again by the Spirit of God." Here the Catechism draws upon Jesus' words about the work of the Spirit in John 3. Furthermore, those to whom the Spirit gives new life are also given true faith. This faith is created in us by the Holy Spirit (Q&A 21) and has its object in the work of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Q&A 22-23). At this point the Catechism expositis the Trinitarian structured Apostles' Creed

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<sup>7</sup> Bierma, "The Sources and Theological Orientation of the Heidelberg Catechism," in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*, 86; cf. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 272-3.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Bierma, "The Sources and Theological Orientation of the Heidelberg Catechism," 83. Bierma goes on to demonstrate that Holweg's thesis of this threefold work of the Spirit as found in Beza being the source of Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 2 is incorrect since both the *Augsburg Confession* (1530) and *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1531) contained this very same language. *Ibid.*, 85; cf. Lyle D. Bierma, "What Hath Wittenberg to Do with Heidelberg? Philip Melancthon and the Heidelberg Catechism," in *Melancthon in Europe: His Work and Influence Beyond Wittenberg*, ed. Karin Maag, Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 108-11.

<sup>9</sup> All references to the Heidelberg Catechism are from *The Creeds of Christendom*, ed. Philip Schaff, rev. David S. Schaff (1931; Grand Rapids: Baker, reprinted 1996), III:307-55.

(Q&A 24-64).<sup>10</sup> Appended to this section is an explanation of the means of grace (Q&A 65-82), which are described as the work of the Holy Spirit in creating and confirming faith in the people of God.

The final section of the Catechism (Q&A 86-129) is organized around the theme of the Spirit who renews us after the image of Christ in a life of gratitude. Within this section the Holy Spirit is found in the summary question on the Ten Commandments (Q&A 115) and at the beginning of the section on prayer (Q&A 116). In understanding this macrostructure of the Heidelberg Catechism, we see that far from being barely outlined, the Holy Spirit is connected to its overall structure and content.

### The Person of the Holy Spirit

As we move into the actual contents of the Catechism, we will see that the Holy Spirit is not deficiently taught, but is substantially present throughout. Along with catholic Christianity, the Heidelberg Catechism teaches the deity of the Person of the Holy Spirit. Zacharias Ursinus says that contrary to heretics who reject the use of “unbiblical” terms such as Trinity, essence, and person, “We, however, correctly retain the form of speech used by the church in her early and purer days.”<sup>11</sup> We see this in three questions and answers. First, in question and answer 24 the Catechism asks how the articles of the Creed are divided, to which the answer is given, “Into three parts: The first is of *God the Father* and our *creation*; the second, of *God the Son* and our *redemption*; the

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<sup>10</sup> Zacharias Ursinus even shows the reason for the seemingly random division of the Apostles’ Creed, saying that the clauses, “...a holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting” are all the benefits of Christ bestowed upon the believer by the Holy Spirit. *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Williard (1852; Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, reprinted 1985), 220. Cf. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *A Plain Exposition of the Twelve Articles of the Christian Faith*, in *Early Writings*, ed. Joseph C. McLelland, trans. Mariano Di Gangi, The Peter Martyr Library, Volume 1 (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, 1994), 59.

<sup>11</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 132.

third, of *God the Holy Ghost* and our *sanctification*” (emphasis in the translation). In explaining the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, question and answer 25 speaks of “these three distinct Persons,” the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, being “the one, true, eternal God.” Finally, in question and answer 53, the only question explicitly on the Person of the Holy Spirit in the Heidelberg, we read, “What dost thou believe concerning the *Holy Ghost*?” The answer is, “First, that he is co-eternal God with the Father and the Son....”

The Heidelberg Catechism, then, takes its stand with the ancient church, against the Arians, Eunomians, and Macedonians, who rejected the deity of the Holy Spirit, in confessing his full divinity with the catholic creeds:

And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets.” (*Nicene Creed*)<sup>12</sup>

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is: such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost.... The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten: but proceeding. (*Athanasian Creed*, 6, 7, 23)<sup>13</sup>

### The Work of the Holy Spirit Upon the Lord Jesus Christ

The second major aspect we see in relation to the Holy Spirit in the Heidelberg Catechism is his work in and upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we will see the intimate union between the Spirit and Christ, the anointing and anointed, respectively. In speaking of Christ in such pneumatological terms, the Heidelberg Catechism evidences the influence of John Calvin. One author described Calvin’s view of the union between Christ and the Holy Spirit when he said, “Christ works through the spirit and the Holy

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<sup>12</sup> *The Creeds of Christendom*, II:59.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, II:66, 68.

Spirit works for Christ.”<sup>14</sup> Another has said of this feature of Calvin’s doctrine: “Calvin will not speak of the Spirit apart from Christ any more than he will speak of Christ without the Spirit.”<sup>15</sup> This is also evident in the Heidelberg Catechism.

### *Incarnation*

Question and answer 35 explains the article in the Creed that our Lord was “conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,” saying,

That the eternal Son of God, who is and continues true and eternal God, took upon him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, so that he might be the true seed of David, like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted.

The Holy Spirit was essential in bringing the Son of God into our world as a man, as the efficient cause of the Incarnation.<sup>16</sup> By the Spirit’s work, the Son of God derived his humanity from his mother Mary alone.<sup>17</sup> Yet, if our Lord was and is a true human “like his brothers in every respect” (Heb. 2:17; ESV), what about a sin nature like us? This is where the operation of the Spirit was most essential, in protecting our Lord from the contagion of original sin.<sup>18</sup> Thus our Lord was conceived *by the Holy Spirit*, not by the ordinary means of man, and Mary was “overshadowed” by the Spirit of holiness in the conception and birth of our Lord.

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<sup>14</sup> Jelle Faber, “The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit in Calvin,” in *Calvin and the Holy Spirit*, ed. Peter De Klerk, Sixth Colloquium on Calvin & Calvin Studies (Grand Rapids: Calvin Studies Society, 1989), 3.

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin Milner, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Church* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 130.

<sup>16</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 205.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>18</sup> Caspar Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, trans. and ed. Lyle D. Bierma, *Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 49; Ursinus, *Commentary*, 206.

*Ministry*

The work of the Spirit upon the Lord did not end at the Incarnation. We also have in our Catechism the words of question and answer 31, which speak of the meaning of our Lord's title, "Christ," saying, "Because he is ordained of God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our chief Prophet...our only High Priest...and our eternal King, who governs us by his Word and Spirit..." Ursinus comments on this question and answer, referencing the patristic father Irenaeus, who described the Father as the anointer, Christ as the anointed, and the Spirit as the anointing.<sup>19</sup> Our Lord was anointed "with the oil of gladness" beyond his companions and with the "fullness of the Holy Spirit."<sup>20</sup> Ursinus continued when he said, "He alone received all the gifts of the Spirit in the highest number and degree."<sup>21</sup> As our prophet he writes his teaching upon our hearts,<sup>22</sup> and does not merely declare outwardly because his ministry is efficacious by the Spirit.<sup>23</sup> As our interceding priest, he applies his sacrifice to us by his Spirit.<sup>24</sup> As a king, he has a kingdom, that is, "a kind of rule over the people of God." This rule is exercised by the means of the Word, sacraments, and discipline.<sup>25</sup> Its purpose is to incline our hearts to do his will and to furnish us with all the weapons necessary to fight our enemies.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 172.

<sup>20</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 36 cf. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 3.1.2. On the benefits of this translation see Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 68, 218 n26.

<sup>21</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 170.

<sup>22</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 43-4.

<sup>23</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 173.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>25</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 37.

<sup>26</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 176.

*Ascension*

Moving through the life of our Lord, the Heidelberg Catechism then speaks of the work of the Spirit in the ascension of our Lord. In questions and answers 47 and 49, in response to the Gnesio-Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquitous humanity of our Lord,<sup>27</sup> we are taught that Christ is not now on earth according to his humanity, but that “according to his Godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit, he is at no time absent from us” (Q&A 47). Here the Catechism echoes our Lord’s teaching that it’s not as if our Lord has left us as orphans, but that he is now with us by his Spirit. As Caspar Olevianus said, “Therefore we believe both in Christ seated at the right hand of God, and we believe him to be nearer to us in power, to reign in us, than he should be with his body on the earth.”<sup>28</sup> R. Scott Clark has recently summarized this aspect of Olevianus’ theology, saying, “The ascension and outpouring of the Spirit brings Christ to the elect in a way not hitherto possible.”<sup>29</sup> One of the benefits of our Lord’s ascension is that “he sends us his Spirit, as an earnest, by whose power we seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, and not things on the earth” (Q&A 49). The Spirit is the down payment of what we experience now in principle, but will one day experience in perfection. His heavenly state is the impetus behind our new heavenly life of desiring God.<sup>30</sup>

*Session*

Intimately linked with our Lord’s ascension to the right hand of the Father is his present session there. Because our Lord is

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<sup>27</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 247; Bierma, “The Sources and Theological Orientation of the Heidelberg Catechism,” 79-80.

<sup>28</sup> Caspar Olevian, *In Epistolas D. Pauli Apostoli ad Philippenses et Colossenses*, ed. Theodore Beza (Geneva, 1580), 23, cited and translated in R. Scott Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant: The Double Benefit of Christ*, Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2005), 111-2.

<sup>29</sup> Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant*, 112.

<sup>30</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 252-3.

glorified, we profit because “by his Holy Spirit he sheds forth heavenly gifts in us, his members...” (Q&A 51). Notice that it is the work of *Christ* that gives us the Spirit. What this means is that “the mediatorial work of the ascended Lord is now made known and executed in the ministry of the Spirit.”<sup>31</sup> In the words of Martin Luther: “The Spirit and the gifts are ours, *through him* who with us sideth” (emphasis mine).

This present work of the ascended Christ is explained further in question and answer 54, which explains the meaning of the phrase in the Creed, “I believe a holy catholic church”: saying,

That out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by his Spirit and Word, gathers, defends, and preserves for himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion in the unity of the true faith....

As one of the few references to election in the Catechism,<sup>32</sup> Ursinus comments that here the Catechism is speaking of the invisible church within the visible church on earth.<sup>33</sup> Contrary to Eugene Heideman’s assertion that the Catechism does not address missions, here is where the Catechism evidences that Calvinistic enticement for more fervent prayer for the lost, more passionate and powerful preaching of the Gospel, and holy Christian living as the salt and light of the world since we know Christ is gathering a church from all peoples and places. And so when we pray, “*Thy kingdom come,*” we are praying, “So govern us by thy Word and Spirit that we may submit ourselves unto thee always more and more...” (Q&A 123), one of the things we are seeking to submit to is Christ, who enlists us into his army of witnesses.

### The Work of the Holy Spirit Upon the Christian

Continuing through the Catechism, we now want to look at the work of the Holy Spirit with reference to his work in and

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<sup>31</sup> Heideman, “God the Holy Spirit,” 113.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Bierma, “The Sources and Theological Orientation of the Heidelberg Catechism,” 94-6.

<sup>33</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 287.

upon the believer. In this section we will see that the covenant theology of both Olevianus and Ursinus comes to the forefront, in which Calvinistic piety is based on our partnership with Christ in the covenant of grace. As Bierma has shown, Ursinus' doctrine of the covenant broke new ground in Reformation theology by viewing the Holy Spirit as both one of the benefits of our covenant relationship with God as well as the One who seals in our hearts all the other covenantal benefits won for us by Christ.<sup>34</sup> As a side note, whereas the above section on the work of the Spirit upon our Lord is a corrective to the excesses of Pentecostalism and Charismatic theology, this section of our essay is a reminder that we *do* believe in the personal work of the Spirit in our lives, from our vivification to glorification. There is no room for hyper-Calvinism in the Catechism. This is the reason why the Heidelberg is known as the warmest, most devotion of all Reformation catechism. As one has said, "It is baptized with the Pentecostal fire of the great Reformation."<sup>35</sup>

### *Regeneration*<sup>36</sup>

In the first part of the Catechism, which deals with our guilt and sin, question and answer 8 asks, "But are we so far depraved that we are wholly unapt to any good, and prone to all evil?" The hopelessness into which we have been plunged by Adam's Fall is equally reversed by the power of the Spirit, who raises us with Christ to new life, as the answer states, "Yes, unless we are born

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<sup>34</sup> Lyle D. Bierma, *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age: The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 59.

<sup>35</sup> *The Creeds of Christendom*, III:542.

<sup>36</sup> It must be kept in mind that at this point in Reformation history, "regeneration" was used to describe the general work of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying sinners (e.g., *Belgic Confession*, art. 24; cf. Ursinus, *Commentary*, 466; Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.9), while later, during the debate with the Remonstrants, it came to be used for the specific work of the Spirit in initially bringing to life the sinner (*Canons of Dort III/IV*, 11, 12, 13). On this issue see Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (1941; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 4<sup>th</sup> rev. ed., reprinted 1994), 466-8.

again by the Spirit of God.”<sup>37</sup> In contrast to Pelagianism, the Catechism confesses the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s “special grace” to bring about the new birth in us because we have no free will to do so on our own.<sup>38</sup>

### *Faith*

Having been made alive by the Spirit, the Catechism speaks of the work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian in terms of faith. In question and answer 53 we are taught in a very summary way that the “office” of the Holy Spirit is to be “that bond of union by which Christ abides in us and we in Him” and “the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself.”<sup>39</sup> As the bond between Christ and us, the Holy Spirit’s “principal work” is to create faith in our hearts, which “is not from ourselves, but a gracious gift of God.”<sup>40</sup> This is necessary because of our miserable condition (Q&A 3-11). We hear the echo of Martin Luther’s Small Catechism in which he explained the third article of the Apostles’ Creed as meaning, “I believe that I can not, by my own reason or strength, believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by his gifts....”<sup>41</sup> As the Catechism says, the Holy Spirit “makes me

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Peter Martyr Vermigli, who said, “We are so weighed down and powerless to rise, ever oppressed by our sinful nature and bodily senses, that we would never be uplifted apart from the work of the Spirit. He turns our carnal minds upward to heaven even as the soul upholds the fragile and perishable body.... Our corrupt nature by itself would neither desire nor do anything but what displeases God and deserves his condemnation. But the divine Spirit comes between us and those wrong attitudes, so that what we henceforth do by his power will be acceptable and pleasing to God.” *A Plain Exposition of the Twelve Articles of the Christian Faith*, 56.

<sup>38</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 56.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 277; Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 92; Bierma, *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age*, 73-4; cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.1.1; cf. 3.1.3.

<sup>40</sup> Caspar Olevian, *In epistolam ad Romanos notae, ex Gasparis Oleviani concionibus excerptae* (Geneva, 1579), 150, cited in Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant*, 154; cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.1.4; cf. 3.2.8, 35, 39.

<sup>41</sup> *The Creeds of Christendom*, III:80; cf. John Calvin, who said, “Faith itself has no other source than the Spirit.” *Institutes*, 3.1.4; cf. 3.2.34.

by a true faith partaker of Christ and all his benefits..." (Q&A 53). Clark explains this in Olevianus' theology, saying,

For Olevian, one of the great blessings of the new covenant (*foedus novum*) is that God promised to be our God and to write his law on our hearts which is principally the work of God the Spirit. Because of our union with Christ through the Spirit, there is in the new covenant and intimacy with God not possible under the old.<sup>42</sup>

Being a partaker of Christ and all his benefits is spelled out in more detail in question and answer 21, in which we are taught that the Spirit is "the efficient cause of justifying faith."<sup>43</sup> This faith receives "forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation," is "not only a certain knowledge" (*notitia*) whereby I hold for truth (*asensus*) all that God has revealed to us in his Word, but also a hearty trust (*fiducia*) which the Holy Ghost works in me by the Gospel..." (Q&A 21). Here we see a dependence on Calvin, who defined faith as "a firm and certain knowledge of God benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts though the Holy Spirit."<sup>44</sup> Calvin went on, saying,

there is no right faith except when we dare with tranquil hearts to stand in God's sight. This boldness arises only out of sure confidence in divine benevolence and salvation. This is so true that the word 'faith' is very often used for confidence.<sup>45</sup>

We note here the conjunction of both the Word and the Spirit in the Catechism, a theme common to the Reformed tradition via Calvin.<sup>46</sup> The Heidelberg Catechism particularly applies that to the inseparability of the Spirit and the *preached* Word to create

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<sup>42</sup> Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant*, 189.

<sup>43</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 110.

<sup>44</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.2.7.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.2.15.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.9.1, 3 cf. 4.8.13.

justifying faith within us, in particular the preaching of the Gospel.<sup>47</sup> As question and answer 65 says,

Since, then, we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence comes this faith? The Holy Ghost works it in our hearts by the preaching of the Holy Gospel....

The Catechism describes the preaching of the Gospel as the chief *media gratiae*, since it is the means whereby sinners become saints. For this reason Olevianus called the minister of the Gospel the “organ of the Holy Spirit” (*Spiritus Sancti organum*),<sup>48</sup> and, the preaching of the gospel the “chief testimony and principle organ of the Holy Spirit by which the substance of the covenant is offered to us.”<sup>49</sup>

### *Sanctification*

The Spirit, as we have seen, regenerates sinners and gives them the gift of faith. His work is also to continue the ongoing renewal of the Christian. This work of the Holy Spirit is characterized as a life-long repentance from sin. This is why he is characterized primarily as our Sanctifier (Q&A 24) in the Heidelberg Catechism. He works in us to sanctify us by making us a “partaker of...[Christ’s]...anointing” (Q&A 32). As Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our Prophet, Priest, and King, so we share in that anointing and are called to “confess his name” (prophet), “present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness” (priest), and “fight against sin and the devil” (king).

The Catechism locates this in relation to the preaching of the Ten Commandments. Question and answer 115 asks, “Why, then, doth God so strictly enjoin upon us the ten commandments, since in this life no one can keep them?” After saying that this is in

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<sup>47</sup> Wilhelm Niesel, “The Witness of the Power of the Holy Spirit in the Heidelberg Catechism,” (unpublished essay; 1963): 9, 10.

<sup>48</sup> Olevianus, *De substantia*, 2.33, cited in Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant*, 192.

<sup>49</sup> *De substantia*, 2.51, cited in Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant*, 193.

order to teach us to turn from sin and flee to Christ, the answer states, “that we may continually strive and beg from God the grace of the Holy Ghost, so as to become more and more changed into the image of God, till we attain finally to full perfection after this life.” In contrast to the Antinomians and Libertines who deny the normative use of the law in the Christian life, the Holy Spirit “uses the doctrine of the law, for the purpose of inclining them [i.e., believers] to true and cheerful obedience.”<sup>50</sup> And as Ursinus comments, although there is no condemnation for the Christian, he is freely and cheerfully bound to obedience: “We are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh, but to the Spirit.”<sup>51</sup> So the Catechism teaches the irony that those to whom the Spirit has been “given unto” (Q&A 53) are by the strict preaching of God’s law to strive and beg throughout their lives for the grace of that very same Spirit. The purpose of this is so that we might receive his life-giving work in experientially changing and transforming us into the image God intended for us. Here the Catechism draws upon such texts as Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18, and 2 Corinthians 4:16, which describe the conformation/transformation/renovation of the believer into the image of God as it is found in Christ, the image *par excellence*.

Furthermore, question and answer 86 explains the reason why we are to strive and beg for the Spirit of renewal. In it we are asked, “Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works?” The answer opens by saying, “Because Christ, having redeemed us by his blood, renews us also by his holy Spirit after his own image...” (cf. Q&A 1). Here the Catechism speaks of the *duplex beneficium*, that is, the double benefit Christ merited for us: redemption and renewal, justification and sanctification.<sup>52</sup> The second benefit, the renewal of the Holy Spirit, Ursinus describes as the Christian becoming “the habitation of God ... by the Holy

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<sup>50</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 616-7.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 617.

<sup>52</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 466. Cf. Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant*, xvii-xx, 137-209.

Spirit.”<sup>53</sup> Being the temple of God, then, consists of two things: (1) “that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for his blessing,” and (2) “that he may be glorified through us.” As Bierma has shown, unlike other catechetical material during this period, the nature of sanctification is located in renewal, not obligation.<sup>54</sup> Good works, therefore, “are the fruits of our regeneration by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>55</sup> Because of this renewal, two results follow, namely, “that we ourselves may be assured by our faith by the fruits thereof,” and, “by our godly walk may win our neighbors also to Christ.”<sup>56</sup>

At this point the catechism gets very specific in describing one of the ways we “show ourselves thankful to God for his blessing.” In question and answer 109 the seventh Commandment is explicated. The broad application of this command is that because our bodies and souls “are both temples of the Holy Ghost,” it is God’s will for us “that we keep both pure and holy.” The believer lives a holy life as a holy temple by abstaining from “all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever may entice thereto.”

### *Prayer*

This life of grateful sanctification by the power of the Spirit is also discussed in the Catechism’s teaching on Christian prayer. As those regenerated into God’s children, the necessity of prayer is found in the fact that it is “the chief part of the thankfulness which God requires of us” (Q&A 116). As well, prayer is necessary to the Christian because “God will give his grace and Holy Spirit only

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<sup>53</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 466.

<sup>54</sup> Bierma, “What Hath Wittenberg to Do with Heidelberg? Philip Melancthon and the Heidelberg Catechism,” 116-7. This “renewal” is described in the *Augsburg Confession* as an awakening to the virtues laid out in the Commandments; cf. Bierma, “The Sources and Theological Orientation of the Heidelberg Catechism,” 86

<sup>55</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 465.

<sup>56</sup> On this interpretation of Q&A 86 cf. Bierma, “What Hath Wittenberg to Do with Heidelberg? Philip Melancthon and the Heidelberg Catechism,” 115 n56.

to such as earnestly and without ceasing beg them from him and render thanks unto him for them.” Here the words of Q&A 115 reverberate, as we are to “continually strive and beg from God the grace of the Holy Ghost.” As Ursinus says, the Spirit “is given to none, except those who seek and desire him.”<sup>57</sup>

At this point in his *Commentary*, Ursinus answers the objection that the effect (begging for the Spirit) does not precede the cause (the Holy Spirit himself). Basically the objection is that we cannot beg for the grace of the Spirit before we are given the Spirit. Here Ursinus shows his appreciation for the mystery of the Holy Spirit by giving a twofold response. First, it is true that the cause precedes the effect according to order and nature. Yet, chronologically, they “exist together.” Ursinus describes this, saying,

For we begin to desire the presence of the Holy Ghost as soon as he is given unto us, and he is also given just as soon as he is desired and sought, or in other words, God effects in us a desire of the Holy Ghost and gives him unto us in the very same moment...because the Holy Ghost is a gift of such a character, that he is given, received and prayed for at one and the same time.<sup>58</sup>

Second, Ursinus employs a fine distinction between the beginning of the Spirit in being given to us, and the increase of the Spirit in being asked for by us. The Catechism’s point is that prayer is effected and affected by the Spirit of prayer.

#### *Assurance*

The Catechism also explains the assurance of salvation by reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Heidelberg opens by asking, “What is thy only comfort in life and in death?” (Q&A 1) The answer is that we wholly belong to our Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood does three things for us: (1) satisfies for our sins; (2) redeems us; and (3) preserves us. Christ also works in us

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<sup>57</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 620.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 621.

by the power of his Holy Spirit to assure us of eternal life.<sup>59</sup> We are assured of our comfort in Christ by the testimony of the Holy Spirit to us. Question and answer 53 of the Catechism describes this as the Holy Spirit comforting and abiding with us forever, echoing texts such as John 14:16 and 1 Peter 4:14. But this testimony is not without means. As Ursinus makes clear, the Spirit testifies through the gospel as an outward, objective means of grace.<sup>60</sup>

### *Spiritual Warfare*

The Spirit's work of testifying to our hearts of our belonging to Christ is necessary because of the "spiritual war" in which we are involved. In times of doubt and struggle with assurance the Spirit is needed. Question and answer 127 is a glimpse into Reformed piety as it expositis the petition, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." We pray this because "we are so weak in ourselves that we can not stand a moment, while our deadly enemies—the devil, the world, and our own flesh—assail us without ceasing." Because of this continual battle we pray, "...be pleased to preserve and strengthen us by the power of thy Holy Spirit, that we may make firm stand against them, and not sink in this spiritual war, until we come off at last with complete victory."

Here we see that while we are unceasingly assailed we are to unceasingly strive and beg for the Holy Spirit (Q&A 115, 116) because it is the Spirit, primarily, who preserves us from falling in battle while strengthening us to fight. The entire Christian life, then, is described by our Catechism as living "in the Spirit."

### *Personal Eschatology*

Another area of exploration in regards to the Spirit in the Catechism is found in question and answer 103. Having described

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 19; cf. Joel R. Beeke, "Faith and Assurance in the Heidelberg Catechism and its Primary Composers: A Fresh Look at the Kendall Thesis." *Calvin Theological Journal* 27 (1992): 54-5.

<sup>60</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 18.

the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation's initiation (Q&A 8, 65), continuation (Q&A 86), confirmation (Q&A 65), and preservation (Q&A 127), we come to its consummation, that "complete victory" question and answer 127 expressed. In Heidelberg question and answer 103 we find the explanation of the fourth Commandment, the Sabbath day.<sup>61</sup> The answer speaks not only of the Christians' grateful duty in terms "diligently attend[ing] church" on "the day of rest" in particular, but of his experience in this life of the "everlasting Sabbath." This is to be no one-day in seven experience, though, but a constant one as "all the days of my life I rest from my evil works" and "allow the Lord to work in me by his Spirit." Having been made a "partaker of Christ" (Q&A 53) by the Spirit, we share in his coronation blessings, especially "sitting at the right hand of God." His work was completed, and so we have ceased from our works. The Catechism is saying that since we have already been given spiritual rest in Christ, this causes us to long for our ultimate rest as we day by day "begin in this life the everlasting Sabbath."

In saying this, the Heidelberg draws upon the theology of John Calvin in his Geneva Catechism of 1545.<sup>62</sup> In that catechism, Calvin explains that the Sabbath Commandment was given for three reasons (Q&A 172), the first of which is "to figure spiritual rest" (Q&A 173). The Geneva Catechism goes on to explain that the meaning of this spiritual rest is that we cease from labor so that "God may perform his works in us" (Q&A 174). And what is the meaning of ceasing from labor? "By crucifying our flesh, - that is, renouncing our own inclination, that we may be governed by the Spirit of God" (Q&A 175). Finally, the Heidelberg echoes Calvin in that "this spiritual rest is only begun in this life, and will not be perfect until we depart from this world" (Q&A 178).

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<sup>61</sup> See Zacharius Ursinus, *A Verie Profitable and Necessarie Discourse Concerning the observation and keeping of the Sabbath day*, trans. John Stockwood (London 1584).

<sup>62</sup> *Selected Works of John Calvin*, ed. & trans. Henry Beveridge, 7 vols. (1849; Grand Rapids: Baker, reprinted 1983), II:61-2; cf. Calvin, *Institutes* 2.8.29; Ursinus, *Commentary*, 255-66.

*Preaching*

So far our survey has shown that the Spirit of Christ is intimately united to the believer. In the context of what we have seen Heideman, again, mistakenly comments about the theology of the Catechism, saying,

It must be noticed that in this exposition of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit the Catechism easily leads one to the conclusion that the work of the Holy Spirit takes place largely in the secret places of the heart. In its emphasis upon the individual heart to the neglect of other aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit, the Catechism both showed itself to be still closely bound to the spirit of the mysticism of the Middle Ages, and opened the way to the abuses of pietism which arose in the following centuries and continues in many places today.<sup>63</sup>

As we continue to examine the content of the Catechism we will see that this mistaken notion misses the plethora of material in the Catechism in which the Holy Spirit is bound with the *media gratia*, the external means of Word and Sacraments in the Church.<sup>64</sup>

In turning to this feature of the Catechism's theology, we notice the vital link between the work of the Spirit and preaching. Question and answer 65 speaks of the origin of true faith as the work of the Holy Spirit "by the preaching of the holy Gospel" (cf. Q&A 21). Here Ursinus utilizes the classic categories of causality in saying that the Spirit is the efficient cause of faith while the preaching of the Gospel is the instrumental cause.<sup>65</sup> In saying this, we can see that the Word and Spirit are so linked together that the

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<sup>63</sup> Heideman, "God the Holy Spirit," 114.

<sup>64</sup> This is in direct contrast to Ulrich Zwingli's 1530 *Fidei Ratio*. On the subject of the means of grace and the centrality of the Church in the Catechism, cf. J. W. Nevin, "Church Spirit of the Catechism," in *History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Chambersburg: Publication Office of the German Reformed Church, 1847), 139-62.

<sup>65</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 340.

Word can be said to be the external form of the Spirit, and the Spirit the internal power of the Word.<sup>66</sup>

Moving into question and answer 67, the Catechism asks, “Are both these, then, the Word and the Sacraments, designed to direct our faith to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?” In speaking of the preached Word, the Heidelberg answers, “Yes, truly; for the Holy Ghost teaches in the Gospel...that our whole salvation stands in the one sacrifice of Christ made for us on the cross.” We find in these words a commentary on what the Catechism elsewhere describes as the “lively preaching” of the Word (Q&A 98), as preaching is the living Word of the Holy Spirit to his Church. The “real presence” of the Holy Spirit is found in the voice of the minister, as well as the elements of the sacraments.<sup>67</sup>

#### *The Sacraments in General*

These sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Q&A 68), are used by the same Holy Spirit primarily to confirm the faith he has already created in the hearts of believers according to question and answers 65 and 67.<sup>68</sup> By teaching us through these means (Q&A 67), the Holy Spirit condescends through the ordinary. According to the Heidelberg Catechism, then, the mission-minded, evangelistic church that Eugene Heideman laments is not sufficiently envisioned in the Catechism, is found in the church that preaches the Gospel in a lively way (Q&A 98), and that faithfully administers the sacraments (Q&A 65). The Spirit is found in the church that is filled with the preached Word, the waters of baptism, and the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. Through these means his mission of bringing the evangel of Christ to the world becomes the Church’s mission.

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<sup>66</sup> Heideman, “God the Holy Spirit,” 118

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *Second Helvetic Confession*, Ch 14 “Wherefore when this Word of God is now preached in the church by preachers lawfully called, we believe that the very Word of God is preached, and received of the faithful” *The Creeds of Christendom*, III 832

<sup>68</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 352

### *Baptism*

Turning to the sacraments in particular, we see an indisputable fact about the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is mentioned in all six questions and answers devoted to the doctrine of baptism. What this means is that baptism is no mere symbol, nor is it a work whereby sins are forgiven just by placing water on someone *ex opere operato*, but is a means of the work of the Spirit in our lives.

Question 69 asks, “How is it signified and sealed unto thee in holy Baptism that thou hast part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross?” Thus:

that Christ instituted this outward washing with water, and has joined therewith this promise, that I am washed with his blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as certainly as I am washed outwardly with water whereby commonly the filthiness of the body is taken away.

The outward sign of water, which in human terms washes the body, signifies the parallel inner reality of the cleansing of the soul by Christ’s blood *and* Spirit. Bierma describes Olevianus’ parallelism between the outer and inner action of baptism, saying,

It is the Holy Spirit who purifies, not the water. But he will go so far as to say that the water of baptism is more than mere water (*schlecht wasser*), for the water is so bound to the promise of God that the physical cleansing becomes if not the instrument at least the occasion for the spiritual cleansing. In every baptism there are two parallel baptizers, two baptizands, and two washings. As the outer self is washed with the water by the minister, the inner self is washed with the blood of the Christ by the Holy Spirit. Physical baptism is still only a sign or outward testimony of spiritual baptism, but the two events do coincide and are bound together in the relationship between promise and sign.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Bierma, *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age*, 87.

Question and answer 70 goes on to explain this doctrine, asking, “What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?”

It is to have the forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, for the sake of Christ’s blood, which he shed for us in his sacrifice on the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ, that so we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.

We notice here, again, the theme of the *duplex beneficium*.<sup>70</sup> Baptism is an outward sign and seal that Christ’s blood justifies while the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, by putting to death our sin and bringing us to new life.

Where, though, do the Scriptures promise this? Question 71 clearly wants catechumens to be able to locate this doctrine in Scripture, by answering,

In the institution of Baptism, which runs thus: *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* This promise is also repeated where Scripture calls Baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins.

Here, not only are the Dominical words cited, but also Paul’s words from Titus 3:5 and Acts 22:16. Especially by referencing Titus 3:5, the Catechism understands this washing as the work of the Holy Spirit spoken of in the rest of verse 5. This renewal spoken of in the Catechism was incorporated into the “Form of Baptism” of the Palatinate Liturgy, which explains what it means to be baptized “in the name of the Holy Ghost”:

... we are assured that the Holy Ghost will be the Teacher and Comforter of us and our children to all eternity, and make us true members of the body of Christ. (And further that we have fellowship with all His benefits in common with all the members of His Church, so that our sins shall be remembered no more

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<sup>70</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 358, 61.

forever, and that the corruptions and infirmities, that still cling to us may be continually mortified and a new life be commenced, which finally in the resurrection, (when our body shall be made like unto the glorious body of Christ), shall be completely revealed in us.)<sup>71</sup>

At this point the Catechism takes a polemic turn, distancing itself from Rome and Wittenberg: “Is, then, the outward washing of water itself the washing away of sins?” (Q&A 72) This question is succinctly answered, “No; for only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin.”<sup>72</sup>

Question and answer 73 presses this point, no doubt to impress upon catechumens and those listening to catechetical sermons, “Why, then, doth the Holy Ghost call Baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins?” The answer:

God speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby that like as the filthiness of the body is taken away by water, so our sins also are taken away by the blood and Spirit of Christ; but much more, that by this divine pledge and token he may assure us that we are as really washed from our sins spiritually as our bodies are washed with water.

Although we know that it is the Holy Spirit who washes us from our sins, he interchanges the sign and the thing signified when he speaks. The Spirit does this because it is “through the use

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<sup>71</sup> John H. A. Bomberger, “The Old Palatinate Liturgy of 1563.” *The Mercersburg Review* 2 (May 1850): 280. This form was brought into the Dutch Reformed Churches through Petrus Dathenus, the minister of the Dutch refugee congregation in Frankenthal and later preacher in the court of Frederick III. This form from his 1566 *Psalter* is found in “Baptism of Infants: Form Number 1,” in *Psalter Hymnal* (Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Church, 1976), 123, and reads: “...the Holy Spirit assures us, by this holy sacrament that He will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, imparting to us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot among the assembly of the elect in life eternal.”

<sup>72</sup> Here Ursinus explains the use of “sacramental” language. *Commentary*, 364-5.

of the signs” that our faith is confirmed. Therefore, the waters of baptism are the pledge that our sins are forgiven.<sup>73</sup>

The final question and answer on the topic of baptism is meant to show the catholicity of the Reformed Faith by distancing itself from Anabaptism on the subject of whether infants should be baptized. Even here the Catechism mentions the Holy Spirit, saying that the “sign of the covenant” is to be given to children of believers

since they, as well as their parents, belong to the covenant and people of God, and both redemption from sin and the Holy Ghost, who works faith, are through the blood of Christ promised to them no less than to their parents. (Q&A 74)

The Holy Spirit speaks to the children of believers through baptism “in a manner adapted to their capacity” to teach them that they belong to the covenant of God.<sup>74</sup>

#### *Lord's Supper*

With its presentation of the holy Supper, the Heidelberg Catechism uses language meant to unite Zurich, Geneva, and the Melanchthonians.<sup>75</sup> To do this the technical jargon of the mode of Christ's presence is absent. Instead, the role of the Holy Spirit is put in its place in three key questions and answers. The way to do this was to In question 76 we are asked, “What is it to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?”

It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, but moreover, also, to be so united more and more to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us, that although he is in heaven, and we on the earth, we are nevertheless flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones,

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<sup>73</sup> *Commentary*, 365.

<sup>74</sup> *Commentary*, 366.

<sup>75</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 354; cf. Bierma, “The Sources and Theological Orientation of the Heidelberg Catechism,” 75-102.

and live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are governed by one soul.

To eat and drink Christ is not only to believe, as Zwingli consistently pointed out, quoting St. Augustine,<sup>76</sup> but also to be united to Christ's body by the Holy Spirit. The inherent polemical note must be recognized here against Rome and Gnesio-Lutheranism, as it is the Holy Spirit who unites partakers to the body of Christ, not the oral manducation of the corporal presence of Christ in the bread and wine.<sup>77</sup> It was the role of the Holy Spirit in the Lord's Supper that distinguished Calvin's doctrine of the Supper from the Roman and Gnesio-Lutheran. This emphasis is followed by the Heidelberg.<sup>78</sup> In the words of B. A. Gerrish, "The catechism explicitly teaches a communion with the body of Christ and, like Calvin, makes the Holy Spirit the bond of union between Christ's body in heaven and ourselves on earth."<sup>79</sup> This language of "spiritual" eating was common among the Reformed, as expressed in 1549 in the ecumenical Consensus Tigurinus (paragraphs 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 23, 25) as well as Heinrich Bullinger's Second Helvetic Confession (21.5, 6), which was commissioned by Frederick III of the Palatinate.<sup>80</sup>

This emphasis of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Lord's Supper is also expressed in question and answer 79, which asks, "Why, then, doth Christ call the bread his body, and the cup his

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<sup>76</sup> "On the Lord's Supper," in *Zwingli and Bullinger*, ed. G. W. Bromiley, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 197-8.

<sup>77</sup> Ursinus, *Commentary*, 382, 406-15; cf. Bierma, "The Sources and Theological Orientation of the Heidelberg Catechism," 75-80.

<sup>78</sup> Bierma, "What Hath Wittenberg to Do with Heidelberg? Philip Melancthon and the Heidelberg Catechism," 112.

<sup>79</sup> B. A. Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 125.

<sup>80</sup> Bierma, "What Hath Wittenberg to Do with Heidelberg? Philip Melancthon and the Heidelberg Catechism," 113. The English text of the *Consensus* is found in Ian Buning, trans., "The *Consensus Tigurinus*," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 44:1 (March 1966): 45-61.

blood, or the New Testament in his blood; and St. Paul, the communion of the body and the blood of Christ?”

Christ speaks thus not without great cause: namely, not only to teach us thereby that like as bread and wine sustain this temporal life, so also his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink of our souls unto life eternal; but much more, by this visible sign and pledge to assure us that we are as really partakers of his true body and blood, through the working of the Holy Ghost, as we receive by the mouth of the body these holy tokens in remembrance of him; and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly our own as if we had ourselves suffered and done all in our own persons.

Again it is emphasized that Christ is received not by mere eating, contra Rome and Lutheranism, nor by simply remembering, contra Zwingli, but through the Holy Spirit's work. Finally, this is expressed in the controversial question and answer 80, which asks, “What difference is there between the Lord's Supper and the Popish Mass?” The answer, in part, is that we are and “ingrafted into Christ” by the Holy Ghost.

As this section of our essay has shown, the Catechism does not teach that the Spirit works in a secretive way directly upon the soul of the believer, as mysticism and pietism teach. Instead, it is clear that the Heidelberg Catechism teaches that the Holy Spirit works in the Church through its public, external means of preaching and sacraments.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, what we have seen is that far from presenting a bare outline of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, minimizing the person and work of the Holy Spirit for the mission and life of the Church and the Christian, the Heidelberg Catechism is a catechetical presentation of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit from beginning to end. The authors clearly utilized the Person and work of the Spirit as an organizing part of its macrostructure. Furthermore, the Catechism teaches throughout

that the Holy Spirit is that personal, intimate, comforting bond of union between Christ, the anointed, and his people, who share in his anointing. The Spirit of God permeates question after question of the Heidelberg Catechism so much so, that we can say there is no doctrine in our Catechism from which the Holy Spirit is absent.