

# “Uttering the Praises of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit:” John Calvin on the Divine Trinity<sup>1</sup>

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“It is impossible to praise God without also uttering the praises of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit”<sup>2</sup>

In a masterful study of the unfolding of early Christian thought, Jaroslav Pelikan, the doyen of twentieth-century Patristic studies, noted that the “climax of the doctrinal development of the early church was the dogma of the Trinity.”<sup>3</sup> And the textual expression of that climax is undoubtedly the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed that was issued at the Council of Constantinople (381), in which Jesus Christ is unequivocally declared to be “true God” and “of one being (*homousios*) with the Father” and the Holy Spirit is described as the “Lord and Giver of life,” who “together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified.” The original Nicene Creed, issued by the Council of Nicaea in 325, had made a similar statement about the Son

and his deity, but nothing had been said about the Holy Spirit beyond the statement “[We believe] in the Holy Spirit.” When the deity of the Spirit was subsequently questioned in the 360s and 370s, it was necessary to expand the Nicene Creed to include a statement about the deity of the Holy Spirit. In the end this expansion involved the drafting of a new creedal statement at the Council of Constantinople.<sup>4</sup>

Although some historians have argued that these fourth-century creedal statements represent the apex of the Hellenization of the church’s teaching, in which fourth-century Christianity traded the vitality of the New Testament church’s experience of God for a cold, abstract philosophical formula, nothing could be further from the truth.<sup>5</sup> The Nicene and Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creeds helped to sum up a long process of reflection that had its origins in the Christian communities of the first century. The New Testament itself provides clear warrant for the direction that theological reflection upon the nature of God took in fourth-century Christian orthodoxy. As Douglas Ottati, an American professor of theology once put it, “Trinitarian theology continues a biblically initiated exploration.”<sup>6</sup> Or, in the words of the early twentieth-century theologian, the American Presbyterian Benjamin B. Warfield: the “doctrine of the Trinity lies in Scripture in solution; when it is crystallized from its solvent it does not cease to be Scriptural, but only comes into clearer view.”<sup>7</sup>

### **THE SERVETUS AFFAIR**

Apart from the controversy between the Greek East and the Latin West over the *filioque*, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed essentially closed the door on debates about the Trinity for the next millennium. With the upheaval, however, caused by the Reformers’ questions about salvation, worship, and the source of authority, it is not surprising that some would broach questions about Trinitarian matters long thought settled. On three distinct occasions, for instance, John Calvin (1509–64) found himself embroiled in controversy about the Triune nature of God. One is all too well known, namely, the controversy with the Spanish humanist and physician Michael Servetus (1511–53), whose execution in Geneva on October 27, 1553, has defined, for many, Calvin’s character as a theocratic tyrant.<sup>8</sup> Servetus had been incessant in his rejection of the ontological deity of Christ and in his

anti-Trinitarian campaigning, even daring to call the blessed Trinity a “hell’s dog with three heads, [a] devilish phantom,” and “an illusion of Satan.”<sup>9</sup>

He also appears to have been obsessed with coming to Geneva to finally confront the man he regarded as the archenemy of the true Reformation.<sup>10</sup> For his part, Calvin viewed Servetus as a very dangerous heretic. Yet, while the French reformer did play a role in Servetus’ condemnation, Calvin’s Geneva was not a theocracy by any stretch of the imagination.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, at the time of Servetus’ execution Calvin did not have the political power to sentence anyone to death, and those who condemned Servetus in this regard were actually Calvin’s opponents, who used the occasion to assert their authority over the French Reformer.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, as Sebastian Castellio (1515-63), a one-time co-worker of Calvin who later became one of his most ardent opponents, observed in a work that he wrote against Calvin’s 1554 defence of the heretic’s execution:

To kill a man is not to protect a doctrine, but it is to kill a man. When the Genevans killed Servetus, they did not defend a doctrine, they killed a man. To protect a doctrine is not the magistrate’s affair (what has the sword to do with doctrine?) but the teacher’s. ... But when Servetus fought with reasons and writings, he should have been repulsed by reasons and writings.<sup>13</sup>

## THE CONTROVERSY WITH PIERRE CAROLI

Two decades before this controversy with Servetus, though, the shoe had been on the other foot, as Calvin, along with his close friends Guillaume Farel (1489-1565) and Pierre Viret (1511-71), had been charged with Arianism by Pierre Caroli (c.1480-c.1547). Like Farel, Caroli had come from the circle of reform associated with Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples (c.1455-1536), but, unlike Farel, Caroli never decisively committed himself to the theological agenda of the Reformation. A one-time professor of theology at the Sorbonne, Caroli had fled France in the 1530s after embracing Protestantism. He eventually made his way to Lausanne, where he was appointed the main preacher in the city. Caroli was theologically unstable, though, and returned to the Roman Church in the summer of 1537, only to leave that communion for Protestantism once again in 1539. B. B. Warfield has rightly described

him as “one of the most frivolous characters brought to the surface by the upheaval of the Reformation.”<sup>14</sup>

Caroli found ammunition for his charge against Calvin and his friends in the fact that Farel, in his *Sommaire et brève declaration* (1525), the first work in French to set forth the essential aspects of the Reformed faith, omitted any clear reference to the Trinity, as did the confession of faith drawn up in 1536 for the church in Geneva.<sup>15</sup> The emptiness of Caroli’s accusation is immediately apparent, however, when one considers that in the first edition of Calvin’s *Institutes*—published in Basel in March, 1536, and available to Caroli before he made his accusation—the French Reformer had set forth a decisive rejection of Arianism and a clear affirmation of his faith in the Trinity:

Persons who are not contentious or stubborn see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be one God. For the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Spirit is God: and there can be only one God.

On the other hand, three are named, three described, three distinguished. One therefore, and three: one God, one essence. Why three? Not three gods, not three essences. To signify both, the ancient orthodox fathers said that there was one *ousia*, three *hypostaseis*, that is, one substance, three subsistences in one substance.<sup>16</sup>

Here there is not only a solid declaration of the Trinity, but Calvin is also quite happy to express this declaration by means of non-biblical terms hammered out in the debates about the Trinity in the fourth century, namely *ousia* (“being”) and *hypostasis* (“subsistence”).

Caroli leveled his accusation against the French Reformers during a disputation between Calvin, Viret, and him at Lausanne on February 17, 1537, over the rectitude of praying for the dead.<sup>17</sup> Calvin’s immediate response was to cite a catechism that was used in the church at Geneva, in which there was a brief statement of the Trinity of God. It is noteworthy that he did not refer to the passage from his *Institutes* cited above. Caroli refused to consider the catechism to be an adequate expression of Trinitarian faith, and demanded that Calvin subscribe then and there to the time-honored Athanasian Creed. Calvin refused to acquiesce to Caroli’s demand, for, he explained, he was not prepared to regard any text as authoritative for doctrine unless it had first been tested against the Word of God. At this point,

Caroli apparently became incensed and dramatically yelled back that Calvin's explanation was "unbecoming a Christian man."<sup>18</sup> Nearly ten years later, in his pseudonymous *Defence of Guillaume Farel and his colleagues against the calumnies of Pierre Caroli* (1545), Calvin was also somewhat critical of the format of another of the Ancient Church's creeds, the Nicene Creed, which, as has been noted above, was regarded as the definitive expression of the Trinitarianism. Calvin felt that the creed contained needless repetition in clauses like "God of God, light of light, true God of true God." "Why this repetition?" he asked. "Does it add any more emphasis or greater expression? You see, therefore, it is a song, more to be sung, than a suitable rule of faith, in which one redundant syllable is absurd."<sup>19</sup>

Not surprisingly, such statements gave substance to Caroli's accusations and the suspicion that Calvin was unsound regarding Trinitarian doctrine dogged him for years to come.<sup>20</sup> But Calvin was unwilling to have his faith confined to the exact wording of the Ancient Church's creeds. The touchstone of Scripture was alone requisite in deciding between what was orthodox and what was not.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Calvin was equally insistent in the course and aftermath of the Caroli affair that he and his colleagues were fully committed to orthodox Trinitarianism. At a synod that was convened in the Franciscan church in Lausanne on May 14, 1537, to settle the Caroli controversy, Viret spoke for Calvin and Farel when he stated that:

We confess one God, in one essence of divinity (*sub una divinitatis essentia*), and we hold together the Father with his eternal Word and Spirit. We thus call the Father God in such a way that we proclaim the Son and his Spirit to be the true and eternal God with the Father. We neither confuse the Father with the Word, nor the Word with the Spirit. For we believe the Son to be other than the Father, and again the Spirit to differ from the Son, although there is [only] one [divine] being.<sup>22</sup>

What is noteworthy about this confession is that it is not only an unambiguous rejection of Arianism, but it also avoids another bugbear of the Ancient Church, namely Sabellianism or modalism.<sup>23</sup>

The Caroli controversy reveals Calvin to have been thoroughly convinced that one must reverently accept the Trinity of God as fully biblical, but also

determined to maintain an independence of the wording of the patristic creeds.<sup>24</sup> In the words of Arie Baars, Calvin “strongly opposes any theology that is characterized by a speculative … inquisitiveness that does not respect the boundaries of Scripture.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, in his conflict with Caroli Calvin made little use of the Patristic way of distinguishing the hypostatic differences within the Trinity, namely, that the Son is eternally begotten of the Father and that the Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.<sup>26</sup> But Calvin was determined to uphold the Trinitarianism of the Ancient Church and showed a willingness at times, as the first edition of the *Institutes* shows, to use extra-biblical terms to clarify Scriptural truth.<sup>27</sup>

### THE BATTLE WITH THE ITALIAN ANTI-TRINITARIANS

Controversy with anti-Trinitarianism in the 1550s, that of Michael Servetus earlier in the decade and then that of various Italian Protestants in the latter part of the decade, forced Calvin to develop a more explicit and detailed Trinitarianism, which is evident in the final edition of the *Institutes* (1559).<sup>28</sup> An Italian congregation had been meeting for regular worship in Geneva since 1542, but when their minister Celso Martinengo (1515–57) died in the summer of 1557, the community was wracked by quarrels over the doctrine of the Trinity. One of the instigators of these theological quarrels was Matteo Gribaldi (c.1505–64), who had taught law at the University of Padua before taking up a position at the university in Tübingen.<sup>29</sup> Gribaldi had been in Geneva at the outset of the trial of Servetus and had taken the heretic’s side though his own conviction about the Godhead appears to have been tritheistic.<sup>30</sup> Gribaldi’s opposition to orthodox Trinitarianism subsequently had a major influence over a number of the members of the Genevan Italian community, including Giorgio Biandrata (1516–88),<sup>31</sup> Giovanni Alciati (c.1515/1520–73) and Valentino Gentile (c.1520–66), from Calabria, who began to voice their views in the course of 1557 and 1558.

Biandrata, for example, argued that “Jesus never revealed to the world a God other than his Father.” In his teaching, Jesus never once taught about God being “one essence in three persons,” something that Biandrata deemed “clearly incomprehensible.”<sup>32</sup> Gentile, on the other hand, argued that there are indeed three persons in the Godhead, but “only the Father is *autotheos*, that is, has his essence (*essentiatus*) from no superior deity, but is God of

himself.<sup>33</sup> Neither the Son nor the Spirit are *autotheos*, for the Father poured, as it were, some of his divine being into them and thus deified them.<sup>34</sup>

Calvin responded to these arguments through a number of written texts as well as personal meetings with the Italians.<sup>35</sup> From New Testament texts like Romans 9:5, John 1:1, 20:28, and 2 Corinthians 12:8–9, Calvin can only conclude that Jesus is recognized to be fully God by the New Testament authors.<sup>36</sup> And to Biandrata's argument that "the one essence in three persons was not revealed by Christ," Calvin responded by referring, among other things, to the baptismal command of Matthew 28:19 where Christ "distinctly and undeniably named . . . [the] three persons of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>37</sup> This appeal to Scripture reflected Calvin's conviction that theological reflection about "the one essence and the three persons" is not a waste of time, for the Scriptural witness about God clearly proceeds from the presupposition of the Trinity.<sup>38</sup> In fact, at the close of his brief reply to Biandrata, Calvin appealed to the Nicene Creed and the writings of "Athanasius and other ancients," which, according to his reading of their texts, affirmed that though "the Son is distinct from the Father, nevertheless, he is true God, and the same God with him, except in what pertains to his person" and that there are "three coeternal [persons] but nevertheless one eternal God."<sup>39</sup>

In May of 1558, Calvin helped to draw up a Trinitarian confession of faith for the Italian church in which the errors of Gentile were specifically condemned: "whatever is attributed" to the Father's "deity, glory and essence, is suitable as much to the Son as to the Holy Spirit."<sup>40</sup> It is noteworthy that in this confession, Calvin uses the classical concepts of eternal generation and eternal procession to distinguish the Father from the Son and the Spirit. In his words: "we profess God the Father even to have begotten his Word or Wisdom from eternity, who is his only Son, and the Holy Spirit thus to have proceeded from them both since there is one sole essence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."<sup>41</sup>

In Calvin's main response to the arguments of these heterodox Italians, namely, the fifth edition of his *Institutes* (1559), Calvin employs Scripture to demonstrate the consubstantiality of the Father with both the Son and the Spirit.<sup>42</sup> And because Gentile also argued for his position from the writings of the second-century Fathers, Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130–c.200) and Tertullian (flourished c.190–220),<sup>43</sup> Calvin sought to show that neither of these

Patristic authors, properly interpreted, supported Gentile's position.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Calvin is confident that his own Trinitarian perspective is in complete harmony with that of the Ancient Church.<sup>45</sup>

### **THE FATHERS AS CONVERSATION PARTNERS<sup>46</sup>**

Calvin can be critical of the Fathers, but those occasions occur mostly in his exegetical commentaries, and then, in relation to the Fathers's unwarranted use of biblical texts to support their dogmatic statements.<sup>47</sup> In his 1548 commentary on Colossians, for instance, Calvin notes the fact that "the old writers" during the Arian controversy employed Colossians 1:15 to "emphasize the equality of the Son with the Father" and to assert the Nicene watchword, the consubstantiality (*homoousia*) of the Father and the Son.<sup>48</sup> One of the "old writers" that Calvin has in mind was John Chrysostom (c.347–407), the one-time Patriarch of Constantinople. According to Calvin, Chrysostom argued that the word "image" speaks of Christ's divine status since "the creature cannot be said to be the image of the Creator." Calvin, though, found this to be a very weak argument since Paul can use the very word "image" of human beings, as, for example, in 1 Corinthians 11:7, where Paul says man is "the image and glory of God." The word "image," Calvin points out, does not refer to Christ's essence, but is being used as an epistemological term. Christ is "the image of God because he makes God in a manner visible to us." He can only do so, Calvin avers, because he is "the essential Word of God" and consubstantial with the Father. Behind this affirmation lies a key principle that Calvin has drawn from his reading of the Church Fathers: only God can reveal God. Colossians 1:15 therefore does speak of the Son sharing the "same essence" (*homoousios*) with the Father and is "a powerful weapon against the Arians." Calvin thus arrives at the same place as Chrysostom, but he does so by a more rigorous hermeneutic that pays proper attention to the text. Calvin concludes that this text is a good reminder that "God in himself, that is, in his naked majesty" is invisible to both the physical eye and the eye of human understanding. Only in Christ is God revealed. To seek God elsewhere is to engage in idolatry.

A second example in which Calvin engages Patristic Trinitarian exegesis is his commentary on Hebrews 1:2-3,<sup>49</sup> which the French Reformer wrote the year following his commentary on Colossians. Hebrews 1 was regularly

mined in the Patristic era for proof of Christ's divinity, and understandably so in light of its high Christology. Following in the train of this exegetical tradition, Calvin deduces the eternal nature of Christ from the fact that he made the world. Since the Father is usually identified as the Creator of the world, this means that there are at least two "persons" involved in this divine work. Since Calvin assumes only God can do such creative work, the Son must be fully divine and share a "unity of essence" with the Father. As persons they are to be distinguished, but as God they have in common "whatever belongs to God alone."

Hebrews 1:3 also speaks of the deity of Christ, though Calvin is careful to note at the outset of his commentary that the reader of Hebrews should not seek to investigate the "hidden majesty of God" by enquiring into the exact way "the Son, who is of one essence with the Father, is the glory shining forth from his brightness." By describing Christ in this way, the author of Hebrews is not seeking to depict "the likeness of the Father to the Son within the Godhead," for "God is incomprehensible to us in himself." Rather, this description is yet another vital reminder that "God is revealed to us in no other way than in Christ."

Hebrews 1:3 also states that Christ is "the very image" of the Father's "substance" (*hypostasis*). By *hypostasis* Calvin understands the hypostatic distinctiveness of the Father, not the "essence of the Father." To make the latter point would be redundant, Calvin believes, since both the Father and the Son share the same essence. Calvin is conscious that his interpretation follows in the pathway of Patristic exegesis, for Latin exegetes like Hilary of Poitiers (c.300–c.368), a staunch opponent of Arianism, made the same point. In other words, Calvin is convinced that this clause declares that anything we know of the Father we find revealed in the person of Christ. While Paul's intention in this text is not to discuss Christ's divine being, which some of the Fathers might not have grasped, yet Calvin believes this clause "refutes the Arians and the Sabellians." It ascribes to Christ what belongs to God alone, namely the power to reveal God, and thus the reader is right to infer that "the Son is one God with the Father." At the same time it upholds the distinctiveness of the Father and the Son as persons.

Another key text used by Patristic authors like Athanasius (c.299–373) and Basil of Caesarea (c.329–79) to prove the deity of the Son and the Spirit was the baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19. Calvin likewise sees in this verse

evidence of the triune nature of God.<sup>50</sup> Until the coming of Christ, “the full and clear knowledge” of God’s nature remained hidden. While God’s Old Covenant people had some knowledge of the Wisdom and Spirit of God, it was only when the gospel began to be preached that

God was far more clearly revealed in three persons, for then the Father manifested himself in the Son, his lively and distinct image, while Christ, irradiating the world by the full splendor of his Spirit, held out to the knowledge of men both himself and the Spirit.

Tying this Matthean verse to another Trinitarian text, Titus 3:5, Calvin concludes that there is a very good reason for Jesus to mention all three persons of the Godhead since there can be no saving knowledge of God “unless our faith distinctly conceive of three persons in one essence.”

Finally, consider some of Calvin’s exegetical remarks on Isaiah 6, the commissioning of the prophet.<sup>51</sup> Calvin notes that verse 3 was often cited by the “ancients,” that is, the Church Fathers, when they wished to prove that there are three persons in one essence of the Godhead.” On one level Calvin does not disagree with this interpretation. He has no doubt that the angelic worship of God involves all three persons of the Godhead as it is impossible to praise God without also uttering the praises of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit.” But, Calvin argues, there are much stronger passages to prove this article of the Christian Faith. And he fears that the use of such “inconclusive” texts as this one will simply embolden the opposition of heretics. Calvin actually does find a good support for Trinitarianism a few verses later, when the question is asked by God, “Who will go for us?” Calvin believes that the use of the plural here, as in Genesis 1:26, unquestionably reflects the Father’s consultation “with his eternal Wisdom and his eternal Power, that is, with the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Finally, Calvin does not fail to reflect on the Trinitarian implications of the fact that the message given to Isaiah to deliver to Israel is twice cited in the New Testament. In the first citation in John 12:37–41, John states that when Isaiah heard these words he saw the glory of Christ. Then Paul cites this same passage as a word from the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25–28). From these two New Testament citations of the Isaiah text, it is evident, Calvin argues, that:

Christ was that God who filled the whole earth with his majesty. Now, Christ is not separate from his Spirit, and therefore Paul had good reason for applying this passage to the Holy Spirit; for although God exhibited to the Prophet the lively image of himself in Christ, still it is certain that whatever he communicated was wholly breathed into him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## A CONCLUDING WORD

From Calvin’s response to Pierre Caroli’s charges against him and his friends Guillaume Farel and Pierre Viret in the 1530s to his debates with the Italian anti-Trinitarians Giorgio Biandrata and Valentino Gentile in the 1550s, the French divine is increasingly conscious of being an heir of the Patristic formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. But as a minister of the gospel under the authority of the Word of God alone, he was also determined to refrain from making “any assertion where Scripture is silent.”<sup>52</sup> As Calvin read the Scriptures, he saw, as had the Fathers before him, that it clearly sets forth the oneness of the Three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. At the same time, though, the restraint of Scriptural declaration about the relationships within the immanent Trinity required great circumspection in theological reflection on the Godhead.

What needed to be said most clearly in the eyes of Calvin was well summed up by a saying of the Greek Christian author Gregory of Nazianzus (c.330-89), which, Calvin said, gave him vast delight: “I cannot think on the one without quickly being encircled by the splendor of the three; nor can I discern the three without being straightway carried back to the one.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For help in locating sources for this paper, I am indebted to Dr. David Puckett, and my one-time assistant at the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, Dr. Steve Weaver.

<sup>2</sup> *Commentary on Isaiah 6:2* in his *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (trans. William Pringle; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 1:205.

<sup>3</sup> *The Christian Tradition: Vol. 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 172.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of these two creeds, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1960), 215–216, 297–298. See also Johannes Roldanus, *The Church in the Age of Constantine: The theological challenges* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire/New York: Routledge, 2006), 123–126.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen M. Hildebrand identifies Edwin Hatch and Adolf von Harnack as two of the scholars who argued

along these lines. See his *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought and Biblical Truth* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 7.

<sup>6</sup> “Being trinitarian: The shape of saving faith,” *The Christian Century*, 112, no. 32 (November 8, 1995), 1045.

<sup>7</sup> “The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity” in his *Biblical and Theological Studies* (ed., Samuel G. Craig; Philadelphia: P&R, 1952), 22.

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009), 217. On Calvin’s controversy with Servetus, see Eric Kayam, “The Case of Michael Servetus: The background and unfolding of the case,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, 8, no.2 (Fall, 1992), 117–46; Gordon, *Calvin*, 217–32; Jean-Luc Mouton, *Calvin* ([Paris]: Éditions Gallimard, 2009), 302–42; Christoph Strohm, “Calvin and Religious Tolerance” in *John Calvin’s Impact on Church and Society, 1509–2009* (trans. David Ditchelle; ed., Martin Ernst Hirzel and Martin Sallmann; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2009), 176–9.

<sup>9</sup> Cited Kayam, “Case of Michael Servetus,” 123.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon, *Calvin*, 218–9.

<sup>11</sup> On Geneva not being a theocracy, see Mark J. Larson, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the State* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 1–19.

<sup>12</sup> J. I Packer, “John Calvin and Reformed Europe” in *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* (ed., John D. Woodbridge; Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 212–3; Gordon, *Calvin*, 217–29.

<sup>13</sup> *Contra libellum Calvinii in quo ostendere conatur haereticos jure gladii coercendos esse* (Holland, 1612). Though published in 1612, Castellio actually wrote this work in 1554 as a response to Calvin’s *Defensio orthodoxae fidei de sacra Trinitate* (1554), his justification of the execution of Servetus. For the quote, I am indebted to Marian Hiller, “Sebastian Castellio and the Struggle for Freedom of Conscience” (<http://www.socinian.org/files/castellio.pdf>; accessed February 13, 2017), 10, and Timothy George, “Calvin’s Biggest Mistake: Why he assented to the execution of Michael Servetus,” *Christianity Today*, 53, no.9 (September 2009), 32. For an overview of Castellio’s views on religious tolerance, see Strohm, “Calvin and Religious Tolerance,” 187–8.

<sup>14</sup> “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Trinity” in his *Calvin and Augustine* (ed., Samuel G. Craig; Philadelphia, PA: P&R, 1980), 204. For an extremely thorough overview of the so-called Caroli affair, see Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin* (trans., Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1995), 309–45. For the course of the affair, see also Warfield, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Trinity,” 204–12; Richard C. Gamble, “Calvin’s Controversies” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (ed., Donald K. McKim; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 199; Gordon, *Calvin*, 72–5.

<sup>15</sup> Guillaume Farel, *Sommaire et brève déclaration* (transcribed and edited Arthur-L. Hofer; Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Éditions « Belle Rivière », 1980), 13–14.

<sup>16</sup> *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.A.7 (trans. Ford Lewis Battles; rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: H. H. Meeter Center for Calvin Studies/Eerdmans, 1986), 45. For the rejection of Arianism, see *Institutes* 2.A.9 (p. 47–8).

<sup>17</sup> Barth, *Theology of John Calvin*, 317–8.

<sup>18</sup> Letter to Kaspar Megander [February, 1537] in John Calvin, *Tracts and Letters* (ed. Jules Bonnet, and tr. David Constable; 1858 ed.; repr. Edinburgh/Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 4:49.

<sup>19</sup> *Pro G. Farelo et collegis eius adversus Petri Caroli columnias defensio Nicolai Gallasii in Ioannis Calvinii opera quae supersunt omnia* (trans. Michael A. G. Haykin; eds. Wilhelm Baum, Eduard Cunitz and Eduard Reuss; Brunswick: C.A. Schwetschke and Son, 1868; repr. New York/London: Johnson Reprint Corp./Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, G.m.b.H, 1964), 7:315–6. Henceforth the works of Calvin will be designated as *Calvini opera* with the appropriate volume and column.

<sup>20</sup> A. Mitchell Hunter, *The Teaching of Calvin. A Modern Interpretation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: James Clarke & Co., 1950), 42–3; Bernard Cottret, *Calvin. A Biography* (trans. M. Wallace McDonald; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans/Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 124–6.

<sup>21</sup> Warfield, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Trinity,” 207–11; Hunter, *Teaching of Calvin*, 45–8.

<sup>22</sup> *Pro G. Farelo... defensio (Calvini opera, 7:312)*, trans. Michael A.G. Haykin.

<sup>23</sup> Barth, *Theology of John Calvin*, 324–5.

<sup>24</sup> Hunter, *Teaching of Calvin*, 41; Stephen M. Reynolds, “Calvin’s View of the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds,” *The Westminster Theological Journal*, 23 (1960–1961), 33–7.

<sup>25</sup> “The Trinity,” *The Calvin Handbook* (trans. Gerrit W. Sheeres; ed., Herman J. Selderhuis; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2009), 246.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Helm, *Calvin: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 44.

<sup>27</sup> Baars, “Trinity,” 245–6; Helm, *Calvin*, 41–4.

<sup>28</sup> Helm, *Calvin*, 44–5.

<sup>29</sup> On Gribaldi, see James T. Dennison, Jr. and George C. Young II with Francis X. Gumerlock and Andrea

Rafanelli, "Trinitarian Confession of the Italian Church of Geneva (1558)," *Kerux* 21, no.1 (May 2006), 3–4 and n.4; Peter Hughes, "Matteo Gribaldi" (<http://uudb.org/articles/matteogribaldi.html>; accessed February 13, 2017).

<sup>30</sup> Dennison, Jr. and Young II with Gumerlock and Rafanelli, "Trinitarian Confession of the Italian Church," 4, n.4.

<sup>31</sup> On Biandrata, see Joseph N. Tylenda, "The warning that went unheeded: John Calvin on Giorgio Biandrata," *Calvin Theological Journal*, 12 (April–November 1977), 24–62; Charles A. Howe and Peter Hughes, "George Biandrata" (<http://uudb.org/articles/giorgiobiandrata.html>; accessed February 13, 2017).

<sup>32</sup> Tylenda, "The warning that went unheeded," 52–3.

<sup>33</sup> *Impietas Valentini Gentilis detecta et palam traducta, qui Christum non sine sacrilega blasphemia Deum essentiatum esse fingit* (1561) (*Calvini opera* 9:374).

<sup>34</sup> *Institutes* 1.13.23–26. See also Thomas F. Torrance, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," *Calvin Theological Journal*, 25, no.2 (November 1990), 180–1; Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004), 256; Baars, "The Trinity," 250.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, John Calvin, *Ad quaestiones Georgii Blandratae responsum* (1558) (*Calvini opera* 9:321–32); "Confession of Faith set forth in the Italian Church of Geneva May 18, 1558" (Dennison, Jr. and Young II with Gumerlock and Rafanelli, "Trinitarian Confession of the Italian Church," 6–10); *Impietas Valentini Gentilis* (*Calvini opera* 9:361–420).

<sup>36</sup> *Ad quaestiones Georgii Blandratae responsum* (1558) (*Calvini opera* 9:327–9).

<sup>37</sup> *Ad quaestiones Georgii Blandratae responsum* (1558) (*Calvini opera* 9:328) (trans. Tylenda, "The warning that went unheeded," 58).

<sup>38</sup> *Ad quaestiones Georgii Blandratae responsum* (1558) (*Calvini opera* 9:331).

<sup>39</sup> *Ad quaestiones Georgii Blandratae responsum* (1558) (*Calvini opera* 9:331–2) (trans. Tylenda, "The warning that went unheeded," 61–2).

<sup>40</sup> "Confession of Faith set forth in the Italian Church of Geneva May 18, 1558" (Dennison, Jr. and Young II with Gumerlock and Rafanelli, "Trinitarian Confession of the Italian Church," 9).

<sup>41</sup> "Confession of Faith set forth in the Italian Church of Geneva May 18, 1558" (Dennison, Jr. and Young II with Gumerlock and Rafanelli, "Trinitarian Confession of the Italian Church," 8).

<sup>42</sup> *Institutes* 1.13.23–25.

<sup>43</sup> *Impietas Valentini Gentilis* (*Calvini opera* 9:394–396).

<sup>44</sup> *Institutes* 1.13.27–28.

<sup>45</sup> *Institutes* 1.13.29.

<sup>46</sup> This expression is that of Baars, "The Trinity," 247.

<sup>47</sup> Baars, "The Trinity," 247.

<sup>48</sup> Commentary on Colossians 1:15, trans. T. H. L. Parker, *The Epistles of Paul The Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians* (Calvin's Commentaries; Edinburgh/London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), 308.

<sup>49</sup> Commentary on Hebrews 1:2–3 in *The Epistle of Paul The Apostle to the Hebrews and The First and Second Epistles of St Peter* (trans. William B. Johnson; Calvin's Commentaries; 1963 ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans / Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1994), 6–9.

<sup>50</sup> Commentary on Matthew 28:19 in *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (trans. William Pringle; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949), 3:387.

<sup>51</sup> Commentary on Isaiah 6 in *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (trans. William Pringle; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 1:198–220.

<sup>52</sup> Commentary on Isaiah 6:2 (*Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, trans. Pringle, 1:203).

<sup>53</sup> *Institutes* 1.13.17.