

The Spirituality of the Heidelberg Catechism

Papers of the International Conference on the Heidelberg Catechism Held in Apeldoorn 2013



Academic Studies

24

V&R Academic

Refo500 Academic Studies

Edited by
Herman J. Selderhuis

In Co-operation with
Günter Frank (Bretten), Bruce Gordon (New Haven),
Ute Lotz-Heumann (Tucson), Mathijs Lamberigts (Leuven),
Barbara Mahlmann-Bauer (Bern), Tarald Rasmussen (Oslo),
Johannes Schilling (Kiel), Herman Selderhuis (Emden),
Günther Wassilowsky (Linz), Siegrid Westphal (Osnabrück),
David M. Whitford (Trotwood)

Volume 24

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

The Spirituality of the Heidelberg Catechism

Papers of the International Conference on the
Heidelberg Catechism Held in Apeldoorn 2013

Edited by
Arnold Huijgen

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

With 2 tables

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data available online: <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

ISBN 978-3-525-55084-7

You can find alternative editions of this book and additional material on our Website:
www.v-r.de

© 2015, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen/
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht LLC, Bristol, CT, U.S.A.
www.v-r.de

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form
or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording,
or any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from
the publisher.

Printed in Germany.
Typesetting by Konrad Triltsch GmbH, Ochsenfurt
Printed and bound by Hubert & Co, Göttingen

Printed on non-aging paper.

Contents

Preface	8
<i>Lyle D. Bierma</i> Ursinus and the Theological Landscape of the Heidelberg Catechism	9
<i>Andreas Mühling</i> Caspar Olevian und die Einführung des Heidelberger Katechismus	25
<i>Frank van der Pol</i> Aspects of the Theology of Controversie Two Early Modern Polemical Approaches of the Heidelberg Catechism	34
<i>Henk van den Belt</i> Anabaptist Spirituality and the Heidelberg Catechism	50
<i>Kyle J. Dieleman</i> The Heidelberg Catechism, Calvin's Genevan Catechism, and Spirituality A Comparative Study	62
<i>Kees de Wildt</i> Interpreting the Heidelberg Catechism in the Sixteenth Century Commentaries and Sermons on HC 53: the Holy Spirit	71
<i>Riemer A. Faber</i> The Function of the Catechism's Spirituality in the <i>Synopsis of Purer Theology</i> (1625)	84
<i>Christian Link</i> Glaube als lebensbestimmende Erkenntnis	95
<i>Wim Verboom</i> Regeneration According to the Heidelberg Catechism	108

<i>Dolf te Velde</i>	
The Heidelberg Catechism on the Doctrine of the Trinity	119
<i>Erik A. de Boer</i>	
Adoration or Idolatry?	
HC 80 in the Context of the Catechetical Teaching of Joannes	
Anastasius in the Palatinate	129
<i>Wim H.Th. Moehn</i>	
A Lasting Controversy on Mass and Supper?	
Meaning and Actuality of HC 80	148
<i>Frank Ewerszumrode</i>	
Holy Celebrations in the Power of the Holy Spirit	
A Roman Catholic Rereading of the Doctrine of the Sacraments in the	
Heidelberg Catechism	160
<i>Willem van Vlastuin</i>	
The Promise of <i>Unio Mystica</i>	
An Inquiry into the Functioning of a Spiritual-Theological Concept in	
the Heidelberg Catechism	168
<i>Eberhard Busch</i>	
Die Gebote des gnädigen Gottes nach dem Heidelberger Katechismus	186
<i>Gerard den Hertog</i>	
The Heidelberg Catechism and the Art of Dying and Living	194
<i>Arnold Huijgen</i>	
Practicing Gratitude	
The Spirituality of Prayer in the Heidelberg Catechism	206
<i>Pieter Veerman</i>	
Prayer and the Law of God	225
<i>Arie Baars</i>	
Theory and Practice of Preaching on the Heidelberg Catechism	232
<i>T. Theo J. Pleizier</i>	
Heidelberg as Best Practice Catechism	
A Practical-Theological Exploration of Constructing Catechisms in a	
Post-Christian and De-churched Context	257

Hans Burger

Gospel Presentation and the Structure of the Heidelberg Catechism . . . 268

Maarten J. Kater

Permanent Education

Lessons from the “*je lenger je mehr*”-passages in the Heidelberg
Catechism 280

About the authors 286

Preface

On the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism, an international conference was held at the Theological University Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, on June 21 and 22, 2013. The focus of this conference was the spirituality of the Heidelberg Catechism, for this document is famous for its opening question and answer on the only comfort in life and death. The present volume offers a collection of the plenary papers and a selection of the short papers presented at the conference. As the contributions demonstrate, the Heidelberg Catechism is a central document of the Reformed tradition, particularly with respect to spirituality. Moreover, it remains a vital source for theological reflection and catechetical practice. I am grateful for the assistance of Wouter Beinema in preparing this volume, and for the help of Christoph Spill (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht). Many thanks to Herman Selderhuis for accepting this volume into the Refo500 Academic Series. The Refo500 network has been a great help in bringing people together for the Heidelberg Catechism anniversary.

Arnold Huijgen, Apeldoorn

Lyle D. Bierma

Ursinus and the Theological Landscape of the Heidelberg Catechism

The theological landscape of the Heidelberg Catechism is as varied and complex as the physical terrain of the Electoral Palatinate where the catechism was born. In the 45 years from the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518 to the publication of the HC in 1563, the Palatinate had moved religiously from a weakening Catholicism under Elector Ludwig V, to a wavering Lutheranism under Frederick II, to a broadscale Melanchthonian reform under Otto Henry, and finally to a Philippist-Reformed orientation under Frederick III (Gunnoe: 2005, 15–47). Contributing to these shifts in the Palatinate was the influence, directly or indirectly, of individuals from every branch of the magisterial reformation: Luther, Melanchthon, Brenz, Bucer, Zwingli, Jud, Bullinger, Erastus, Calvin, Beza, à Lasco, Micronius, Boquinus, and Olevianus, among others. But when Frederick III commissioned the HC as part of his reform in the early 1560s, the person who loomed largest on the local theological landscape was Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583), rector of the Sapience College (a pastoral training school in Heidelberg), professor of dogmatics at the university, and primary author of the HC. In what follows, we will examine Ursinus's location on this landscape by addressing four questions: (1) Why does Ursinus belong on the landscape? (2) How did he get to this landscape? (3) How can we best determine his spot on the landscape? (4) What exactly is his place on the theological terrain of the HC? We will then make a few concluding remarks on the bearing that all of this has on the theme of the conference—the spirituality of the HC.

1. Why Does Ursinus Belong on the Landscape?

The most obvious answer to this question is that he was one of the authors, and probably the main author, of the HC. What might be somewhat surprising, however, is that there is very little direct evidence to support such a claim. Unfortunately, whatever records might have existed of the process by which the catechism was developed, they did not survive the wars and political upheavals in the Palatinate over the course of the following century and a half. In addition, the title page of the HC does not name an author or authors, and the most we can learn from Frederick's preface to the catechism is that a team

that included “the entire theological faculty in this place” provided advice and cooperation in the preparation of the document.¹ Even in the personal correspondence of some of those closest to the catechism—Frederick III, Erastus, Olevianus, and Ursinus—no author is ever singled out.²

It was not until the seventeenth century that Ursinus’s name began to be associated more closely with the composition of the HC. A work from 1603 by the Dutch Reformed minister Johannes Gerobulus referred in passing to Ursinus alone as the author of the HC,³ and in an edition of Ursinus’s theological works in 1612, Quirinus Reuter named two earlier catechisms by Ursinus as part of the preparation process.⁴ A decade later, in lectures delivered between 1619 and 1622, the German Reformed theologian Heinrich Alting became the first to identify Ursinus and Olevianus as the two most significant writers of the HC: “the authors, especially Dr. Ursinus and Olevianus ... after joint consultation and labors, completed the catechism” (Alting: 1646, 5). And some twenty years after that, in 1644, Alting had narrowed the list to those two men alone:

This task [of preparing the HC] was assigned in 1562 to two theologians, Olevianus and Dr. Ursinus, both of them Germans and accomplished in writing the German language. Each of them prepared his own draft: Olevianus, a popular exposition of the covenant of grace; Ursinus, a twofold catechism—a larger one for those more advanced, and a smaller one for the youth. From these two works the Palatine Catechism was composed (Alting: 1701, 189).

Of these putative co-authors, it was Olevianus who actually rose to greater prominence in the centuries that followed, since many argued that he was responsible for taking Ursinus’s Latin Smaller Catechism and converting it into the warm, devotional style of the German HC.⁵

None of these foregoing hypotheses, however, offered much in the way of evidence to support them, and a reevaluation of the whole question of the authorship of the HC was launched in the 1960s with Walter Hollweg’s (1961, 124–152) rigorous questioning of the role of Olevianus. This led to a growing scholarly consensus over the next fifty years that Ursinus, not Olevianus, was the primary and final drafter of the HC.⁶ The evidence is still circumstantial, but the cumulative weight of that evidence makes it compelling. Prior to his work on the Heidelberg project, Ursinus had experience in teaching,

1 Richards: 1913, 193, 195. On pp. 182–99 Richards provides a facsimile of the German text of the preface and an English translation on the facing pages. The German text can also be found in Lang: 1907, 2 ff.

2 For these references and a fuller treatment of the HC as a team project, see Bierma: 2005a, 53–57.

3 Gerobulus: 1603, 34. My thanks to Kees de Wildt for this reference.

4 Ursinus: 1612, 10 f (English translation in Richards: 1913, 51).

5 For an overview of this scholarship, see Bierma: 1982, 17 f.

6 Goeters: 1963, 15, 17; Staedtke: 1965, 130; Metz: 1970, 63–69; Benrath: 1983, 155; Henss: 1983, 27 f, 44; Klooster: 1986, 76, 97.

translating, and composing catechetical material, including the Smaller and Larger Catechisms that were identified already in the seventeenth century as major sources for the HC. Following the publication of the HC, Ursinus also became its leading homiletician, commentator, and apologist. In August 1563, just seven months after the catechism was published, Ursinus replaced Olevianus as the preacher of the catechism sermon in Heidelberg on Sunday afternoons. He also employed the HC as the basis for lectures on the loci that were later collected by his students and published as a kind of commentary on the catechism (Ursinus: 1616). Finally, in 1564 he produced three treatises, two of them representing the entire theological faculty at the university, in which he defended the catechism against Catholic and Gnesio-Lutheran attacks. If indeed, then, one person on the team of authors was responsible for crafting the final form of the HC, the most likely person was Zacharias Ursinus. And it is for that reason that he holds a prominent position on the theological landscape of the catechism.

2. How Did Ursinus Get to this Landscape?

Ursinus came to Heidelberg by way of Wittenberg, Zurich, and Geneva—both literally and theologically.⁷ He was born in 1534 into a first-generation Lutheran family in Breslau, Silesia, and was probably catechized there by the Melancthonian preacher Ambrosius Moibanus, who himself had written a catechism for youth that highlighted the comfort of the gospel. At the age of fifteen, Ursinus matriculated at Wittenberg University, where he became a deeply-devoted student and protégé of Philip Melancthon. After completing his university studies in 1557, Ursinus left Wittenberg on a tour of some of the major cities of the Reformation era: Worms, where he joined Melancthon at a religious colloquy between Catholics and Protestants, Strasbourg, Basel, Zurich, Bern, Lausanne, and finally Geneva, where he first encountered John Calvin. On the way back to Germany, he stopped again in Zurich and became better acquainted with Zwingli's successor Heinrich Bullinger and with the Italian Calvinist Peter Martyr Vermigli, who seems to have had a significant theological impact on Ursinus.

In 1558, at the age of twenty-four, Ursinus was invited by the Breslau city council to become a professor of classical languages and Christian doctrine at his alma mater, the St. Elizabeth Gymnasium. However, his enthusiastic use of Melancthon's *Examen ordinandorum* (German: 1552; Latin: 1554) as a classroom textbook and his friendship with some of the Reformed theologians he had met a year earlier rankled several Gnesio-Lutheran ministers in the city,

7 Detailed biographical information on Ursinus can be found in Sudhoff: 1857; Good: 1914; Bouwmeester: 1954; Sturm: 1972; Visser: 1983.

especially because of his rejection of Christ's bodily presence in the eucharistic elements, a position that they regarded as "sacramentarian." To explain his views and defend himself against these charges, Ursinus (1584, 1:339–382) composed 123 "Theses on the Sacraments" (1559), many of which echoed the voice of his teacher Melanchthon. This treatise made such an impression on Melanchthon that he is reported to have said that he had "never seen anything so brilliant as in this work."⁸

The incessant theological bickering between the Philippists and Gnesio-Lutherans in Breslau eventually led Ursinus to request a leave of absence in early 1560, just a week after the death of Philip Melanchthon. Against the urging of friends who wanted him to join the university faculty in Wittenberg, Ursinus decided instead to return to Zurich, where he studied with Vermigli for nearly a year before accepting an invitation from Frederick III to assist with the reformation in the Palatinate. All of these events in such close proximity—the loss of his long-time mentor, his exodus from Breslau, his decision not to join the faculty in Wittenberg, his return to Zurich for more study, and his acceptance of the invitation to Heidelberg—suggest that this was a critical juncture in Ursinus's shift away from the Lutheranism of his youth and toward the Reformed convictions of the second half of his life. Nevertheless, Melanchthon seems to have left a mark on Ursinus's theology and reform that was never erased as he moved more and more into the orbit of Reformed Protestantism (Richards: 1913, 28, 133; Good: 1914, 45; Sturm: 1972, 1 ff; Muller: 1986, 124).

When Ursinus arrived in Heidelberg in 1561, therefore, he had made a long pilgrimage, theologically as well as geographically, from Wittenberg to Heidelberg by way of Geneva and Zurich. The influence of the Calvinist tradition on his theology is unmistakable, but it should not be forgotten that he had received most of his theological training and developed some of his closest friendships in Wittenberg and Zurich. What he brought to the theological landscape of the HC was an exposure and, to some degree, an indebtedness to all the major streams of mid-century Protestantism.⁹ Since by the early 1560s all these parties were also present in the Electoral Palatinate, and part of Frederick's plan was to bridge the gaps between them, the elector's choice of Ursinus as the lead author of a new union catechism could hardly have been more prudent.

8 According to Sudhoff: 1857, 5, Melanchthon's reaction was reported in a letter Ursinus received from his friend Ferinarius.

9 Sturm: 1972, 1 ff, *passim*; Lang: 1907, LXIVff; Benrath: 1963, 24 ff; Neuser: 1979, 181 ff. Muller: 1986, 124 concludes that "in the years between 1563 and 1577 Ursinus ... produced a synthesis of Reformed theology with the established scholastic method, related in its central motifs not only to the thought of Calvin but also to the theology of Bullinger, Vermigli, [and] Musculus, and to that of Luther, Melanchthon, and Bucer."

3. How Can We Best Determine Ursinus's Spot on the Landscape?

Perhaps the best way to get a reading on Ursinus's theology around the time he was working on the HC is to examine his *Summa Theologiae* ("Summary of Theology"). Because this work covered the standard elements of Christian catechesis—law, creed, prayer, and sacraments—and was organized into 323 questions and answers, it is sometimes referred to as Ursinus's *Catechesis maior*, or Larger Catechism (LC). It may seem odd not to turn instead to his *Catechesis minor*, or Smaller Catechism (SC), on which so much of the text of the HC was based. No fewer than 110 of the 129 questions and answers of the HC contain parallels to the text of the SC, whereas only 22 questions and answers in the HC appear dependent in some way on the LC. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to prefer the Larger over the Smaller Catechism if we want a snapshot of Ursinus's theological thinking in the early 1560s.

For most of the four centuries since the accounts of Reuter and Alting in the early 1600s, it was assumed that both of Ursinus's early catechisms were commissioned by the magistrate as preparatory documents for the HC. It was also assumed that the LC was composed before the SC and that the SC was essentially an abridged version of the LC. All of these assumptions were challenged, however, in the early 1970s by Erdmann Sturm, who had come across the inaugural address that Ursinus gave in September 1562 as a newly-appointed professor at the university. In that address, Ursinus mentions first of all that the catechism currently being prepared for the Palatinate (the HC) was nearing completion. He goes on to say that he intended to launch his university lectures in dogmatics with "a summary of doctrine" (*summam doctrinae*) that would steer a middle course between a basic catechism, on the one hand, and an in-depth explanation of the traditional topics of theology, on the other. Of all of Ursinus's known works, it is his catechetical "Summary of Theology," or LC, that looks the most like the "summary of doctrine" he was proposing (Sturm: 1972, 239ff, 246; Bierma: 2005b, 137ff). If that identification is correct, then the LC was not commissioned by the elector, it was not written before the SC, it was not a document that the SC had abridged, and it was not intended as a draft for the HC. Even though there are some striking parallels in wording between the LC and the HC, the original and primary purpose of the LC was to serve as a classroom text for theological students at the university.

Why, then, is the LC such a good indicator of Ursinus's place on the landscape of the HC? First of all, it was written virtually simultaneously with the HC itself. As Ursinus noted in his inaugural address, by the fall of 1562 the HC was just about finished and his summary lectures on theology were just about to begin. The LC, therefore, can give us insight into Ursinus's thought at the very time he was working on the official catechism for the Palatinate. Second, the LC provides a fairly comprehensive view of Ursinus's theology, covering the whole range of Christian teaching as summarized in the Apostles'

Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Third, as a graduate-level textbook it reflects on the Christian faith at a deeper level than was possible in a more popular work like the HC. Finally, and most importantly, the fact that the LC was designed not for a committee drafting a territorial catechism but for students in a university classroom meant that Ursinus could compose it with less concern for the religious politics of the day. He alone would be the author, and he would not have to be accountable to a committee or feel constrained by the impact his positions might have on those of other points of view. In an academic setting he could deal with such sensitive theological topics as covenant without worrying about how Lutheran theologians in and around the Palatinate might react. Or again, he could mention the communication of the substantia of Christ in the Lord's Supper without offending the Zwinglians. The LC, in other words, gives us the clearest picture of where Ursinus himself stood theologically in the early 1560s.

4. What Exactly Is Ursinus's Place on the Theological Terrain of the Heidelberg Catechism?

The picture that emerges from an analysis of the LC is of a theology that was influenced by the variety of sources and theologians that Ursinus had encountered on his ten-year trek to Heidelberg. Indeed, all three of the major traditions to which he had been exposed—Wittenberg, Zurich, and Geneva—appear to have left their mark on both the text and the texture of the LC. Let us look briefly at the impact of each of those three traditions in turn.

4.1 Wittenberg

The influence of Lutheran sources on the text of the LC can be seen most clearly in the definitions of two of the most important doctrines in the catechism: faith and the sacraments. The definition of faith in LC 38¹⁰ contains several phrases that are strikingly reminiscent of Melanchthon's definitions in the German (1552) and Latin (1554) editions of his *Examen ordinandorum* (Melanchthon: 1955/1855, 23/19):

LC 38: [Faith] is to assent firmly to every word of God related to us
EO (1554): Faith is to assent to every word of God related to us

10 All quotations from the LC are from Bierma: 2005b, 163. The Latin text on which this English translation is based is found in Lang: 1907, 152–199.

LC 38: a firm trust ... that God has graciously granted him remission of sins, righteousness, and eternal life

EO (1552): a truly wholehearted trust ... that ... we have forgiveness of sins, grace, and salvation

LC 38: because of Christ's merit and through him

EO (1552): because of [Christ] and through him

After a question and answer on the Apostles' Creed as a summary of that which we believe (LC 39), Ursinus proceeds in LC 40 to outline the divisions of the creed:

Q. How many main parts does this creed have?

A. Three. The first has to do with creation and preservation; the second with redemption; and the third with our sanctification.

This threefold summary is almost certainly based on Luther's Small Catechism of 1529, which also and in almost identical language connects the three parts of the creed to the works of creation, redemption, and sanctification by the three persons of the Trinity, respectively (Luther: 2000, 354 f).

As Gooszen (1890, 65 f) and Neuser (1964, 311) suggested already many years ago, Ursinus's definition of sacraments in LC 275 was also very likely based on the text of Melancthon's *Examen* (1855, 23/39). Once again, the parallel phrasing is striking:

LC: Sacraments are ceremonies instituted by God

EO (1554): A sacrament ... is a divinely instituted rite

LC: added to the promise of grace

EO (1554): added to the promise related in the gospel

LC: by these visible pledges and public testimonies

EO (1554): to be a testimony and pledge

LC: that this promise most certainly belongs to them

EO (1554): of the promise of the grace that is presented and applied [to them]

Direct dependence is indeed a possibility here, since Ursinus (1584, 344) had used the *Examen* as a textbook in his classes in Breslau and had even quoted its definition of a sacrament in 1559 in his theses defending Melancthon's position.

The influence of the Lutheran tradition can also be seen in some of the themes and structure of the LC. In the first place, it is worth noting the reference to comfort in the opening question of the LC, "What firm comfort do you have in life and in death?" The term *comfort* actually appears only five more times in the LC's 323 questions and answers (LC 64, 103, 110, 131, 141), and it is not connected to the structure of the document or designated as the main theme. Nevertheless, its inclusion in the very first question does give it a

prominent place in the catechism, and the motif can still be found throughout the LC even though the term itself is not always used.¹¹ This is an emphasis that had been more dominant in the Lutheran than in the Reformed theological tradition, and one to which Ursinus had likely been exposed at the feet of his boyhood teachers Moibanus and Melanchthon. In Melanchthon's *Examen ordinandorum* in particular, comfort as the assurance of salvation is a common and pervasive term, occurring more than fifty times throughout the document.¹²

Another aspect of the LC that betrays its Lutheran heritage is the law-gospel dialectic built into the structure of the catechism. In LC 9 we learn that Christian doctrine consists of four basic parts: "the summary of the divine law, or Decalogue; the summary of the gospel, or Apostles' Creed; the invocation of God, or the Lord's Prayer; and the institution of the ministry of the church." These four elements form the basic divisions of the rest of the catechism: law, gospel, prayer, and the ministry of the church. Actually, the structure is law-gospel-law-prayer-ministry, since Ursinus expounds on good works as the fruit of faith in a long exposition of the Decalogue between the sections on the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer (LC 148–223). Nonetheless, he places his initial treatment of the law (in its summary) *before* his treatment of the gospel (in the creed) and in such a way that it stands in stark contrast with the gospel. The law requires our perfect obedience; the gospel reveals how Christ has met that requirement. The law shows us the sinful state into which we have fallen; the gospel shows us how we are delivered from sin and death. The law threatens eternal punishment to those who disobey; the gospel promises eternal life to those who believe (LC 10, 35, 36). Ursinus sharpens this polarity with a further contrast between the natural covenant and the covenant of grace. The law contains the natural covenant, established by God with humanity in creation; the gospel contains the covenant of grace, established by God with humanity in redemption (LC 10, 35, 36). Covenant, as we will see, was a concept with roots in the Reformed tradition, but here Ursinus connects it to the more Lutheran dialectic of law and gospel that shapes the first two sections of the LC.

4.2 Zurich

Nowhere in the LC do we find any obvious verbal parallels to texts from the Zurich tradition, but one of the noteworthy features of the LC is, as we have just seen, its teaching on covenant, both the covenant of grace and what Ursinus calls the "covenant ... in creation" or "natural covenant." The doctrine of the covenant of grace owes its origins and most extensive

11 For just a few examples, see LC 35, 38, 68, 78, 88, 97, 101, 112, 127, 130, 219.

12 For an overview of this theme in the Lutheran and Reformed traditions and examples of it in Melanchthon's *Examen*, see Bierma: 2013, ch. 2.

development in early Reformed theology to Zwingli, and especially to Bullinger (1534), who had written the first full-length treatise on covenant. Bullinger had also “built his entire concept of Christian society and ethics on the covenant idea,” and “interpreted the entire experience of God’s people within the context of the covenant theme” (Baker: 1980, 141). Ursinus likely learned this doctrine from his teacher Bullinger and, to a lesser extent, from Calvin and Vermigli. The concept of a natural covenant, however, was original with him, and although the idea may reflect the influence of Melancthon or Calvin,¹³ the term itself first appeared in Protestant theological literature in Ursinus’s LC.

Two key questions concerning Ursinus’s covenant doctrine are, first, what role it plays in the theology of the LC as a whole and, second, why it virtually disappeared from the SC and HC so soon after the LC was composed. First of all, did Ursinus, as August Lang (1907, LXIV) claimed, place the covenant idea at the very foundation of the LC, or even, as Cornelis Graafland (Graafland: 1994, 2:13) alleged, assign it a “structurally determinative” role in the document? At first glance, this might appear to be the case, especially because Ursinus introduces the covenant theme into the very first answer of the catechism:

Q. What firm comfort do you have in life and in death?

A. That ... out of his infinite and gracious mercy God received me into his *covenant of grace*... It is also that he sealed this, his covenant, in my heart by his Spirit ...; by his Word; and by the visible signs of this covenant. (emphasis added)

Ursinus also refers to covenant in the introductory questions or answers that lead off each of the four major divisions of the LC. The divine law “teaches the kind of covenant that God established with mankind in creation, how he managed in keeping it, and what God requires of him after establishing a new covenant of grace with him” (LC 10). The gospel teaches “what God promises us in his covenant of grace, how we are received into it, and how we know we are in it” (LC 35). *Prayer* is a necessary part of the Christian life for three reasons:

First, because it is among the most important parts of the worship of God that the covenant of grace requires of us. Second, because this is the way God wants the elect to acquire and retain ... the grace of the Holy Spirit necessary for keeping his covenant... Third, because it is a testimony in their hearts to the divine covenant. (LC 224)

And God instituted the *ministry* of the church “so that through it he might receive us into his covenant, keep us in it, and really convince us that we are and forever will remain in it” (LC 265). At other points in the document Ursinus relates covenant also to such topics as our incorporation into Christ

13 For a summary of this debate about influences, see Lillback: 2001, 276–282.

(LC 2–3), the comparison between Old and New Testaments (LC 33), the difference between law and gospel (LC 36), Christ as Mediator (LC 72–74), the sacrifice of Christ (LC 87), the preaching of the Word (LC 272), and the sacraments and church discipline (twenty times throughout LC 274–323).

The argument that covenant plays a constitutive role in the LC, however, must reckon with the fact that the word *covenant* appears in only forty of its 323 questions and answers, just twelve percent of the total, and that the natural covenant is mentioned only three times (LC 10, 36, 135). Furthermore, in the key questions where Ursinus introduces the structure and major topics of the catechism (LC 8–9), he does not refer to covenant at all. As we have already seen, he does integrate it into the questions and answers that lead off each major section of the LC, but he usually then proceeds through the section itself with no further mention of the topic. In his treatment of the Decalogue (LC 148–223), for example, there is a stretch of seventy-three questions and answers—the entire exposition of the Ten Commandments!—where the term covenant never appears. In fact, most of the references to covenant in the LC are found in just two theological contexts, the doctrines of the gospel and of the sacraments, the same two contexts where it would later appear in Ursinus’s catechetical lectures on dogmatics.

This last point is important because it is part of an answer to the question about the alleged receding of the covenant idea in Ursinus’s later catechisms. If Sturm is right that the LC was written after the SC and not before, then covenant is actually something that Ursinus added to his theology in the LC, not something that he removed in the SC. The fact that he also inserted an excursus on covenant into his later catechetical lectures indicates that this was a doctrine that in his more technical theological works, at least, was there to stay, even though it did not serve as the foundational or organizing principle of his system of theology (Ursinus: 1616, 96–100). That covenant played only a minor role in the SC and HC, even while it was a fixture on the theological landscape around them, can be explained by the fact that they were composed as lay catechisms, one a draft and the other the finished product, for the catechizing of youth and untutored adults in the Palatinate schools and churches. A state catechism for a general audience was not the place to unveil a fledgling Reformed doctrine like covenant, especially one that could prove unpalatable to Lutherans in what was still an officially Lutheran territory.

4.3 Geneva

Direct reliance of the LC on sources from Geneva can perhaps best be demonstrated by the long list of linguistic parallels between the LC and Calvin’s Genevan Catechism (GC) of 1542 (French) and 1545 (Latin), which Ursinus was translating into German around the very time he was working on the LC and HC. We will limit ourselves to a small sampling of these parallels

from the LC's and GC's expositions of the Apostles' Creed, Ten Commandments, and Lord's Prayer.

In his explanation of the creed, first of all, Ursinus answers the question "Why did [Christ] ascend into heaven?" with five reasons, the last two of which are as follows: "Fourth, so that he might testify that the gates of heaven have been thrown open also for us... . Fifth, so that as intercessor and advocate he might prepare a place for us in the presence of God" (LC 96). This response echoes closely the twofold answer Calvin (1954, 101) gives to the same question in GC 77: "[Christ] opens up for us a way there; so that the gate is now open to us... . Then, too, he appears before God as intercessor and advocate on our behalf."

In his exposition of the second commandment of the Decalogue (the LC follows the Reformed, not Lutheran, ordering of the commandments), Ursinus responds to the question "Why doesn't God want to be portrayed in visible form?" by saying that because God is "an eternal and incomprehensible spirit, every representation of him in corporeal, corruptible, mortal form is a lie about God" (LC 166). Once again, this is very close to Calvin's answer (1954, 109) in GC 145: "Because there is no resemblance between him, who is Spirit eternal and incomprehensible, and corporeal, corruptible, and dead figures." Furthermore, in his treatment of the fourth commandment, Ursinus states that corporate worship on the Sabbath Day is a time for three things: "the true doctrine about God is taught and learned, the sacraments are rightly administered and used, and public invocation of and confession to God are made" (LC 186). This is almost a direct quotation from GC 183, where Calvin encourages the people of God "to attend the sacred assemblies for the hearing of the Word of God, the celebration of the mysteries, and the regular prayers as they will be ordained" (Calvin: 1954, 113).

Finally, in his explanation of the Lord's Prayer, Ursinus defines "daily bread" as "whatever is necessary to maintain the present life" (LC 250), again an almost verbatim quotation from GC 275: "whatever contributes to the preservation of the present life" (Calvin: 1954, 126). In addition, in the sixth petition, according to Ursinus, we are praying "that God outfit us with the power of his Spirit against the Devil and our flesh, so that we not fall into sin" (LC 259); according to Calvin (1954, 128), it is "that the Lord do not permit us either to rush or to fall into sin; that he do not allow us to be overcome by the devil, or by desires of the flesh" (GC 289). And Ursinus and Calvin respond with almost identical answers to the question of how God can lead someone into temptation when that is usually thought of as the work of the devil:

LC 261: those whom God wishes to punish he deprives of his grace, strikes with blindness, and hands over to the Devil.

GC 293: those whom [God] intends to punish he not only leaves destitute of his grace, but even hands over to the tyranny of Satan, [and] strikes with blindness. (Calvin: 1954, 128)

Beyond the many verbal parallels between the LC and GC, however, are there any larger Calvinian footprints in the theology of the LC? Could one point, for example, to the way the LC treats the doctrine of predestination? Probably not. The words *elect* or *elected* appear 21 times in the text of the LC but never the words *predestination* or *reprobate*. Only once does Ursinus refer to “those who are not elected to eternal life” and this is in the context of a question about the impact of the gifts of the Holy Spirit on those in the church who are not saints (LC 111). He does speak in two questions of those whom God has elected “from eternity,” but he does not go beyond that to posit an eternal decree in which election and reprobation are rooted. Even in his discussion of the assurance of election (LC 219), he points only to the experience of faith as evidence that one is elect, not, as Calvin does, to Christ as the mirror of election (see Calvin’s Institutes 3.14.5).

Another possible trace of Calvin’s influence is in the LC’s use of the terms “instruments” to describe the sacraments in general (LC 278) and “substance of Christ” to explain what is communicated to believers in the Lord’s Supper (LC 300), both of which were characteristic of Calvin’s, over against Bullinger’s, way of speaking about the sacraments.¹⁴ Perhaps the clearest Calvinian footprints in the theology of the LC, however, are found, once again, in the list of verbal parallels between the LC and GC in two doctrines that were original with and unique to Calvin—the threefold office of Christ and Christ’s descent into hell on the cross. With respect to the threefold office, Calvin (1954, 95) responds to the question “What force then has the name Christ?” with “It signifies that he is anointed by His Father to be King, Priest, and Prophet” (GC 34). Ursinus’s answer to the corresponding question in the LC is virtually identical: “That he was anointed by the Father as prophet, priest, and king” (LC 59). But the similarity does not stop there. Both Calvin (1954, 95) and Ursinus understand this christening as an anointing with the Holy Spirit (GC 36; LC 60), both speak of the priestly office as having an intercessory and sacrificial dimension (GC 38; LC 62), and both see Christ in his prophetic role as bringing to fulfillment the prophecies of the Old Testament (GC 39; LC 61).

There is also a striking similarity in their interpretation of the clause in the Apostles’ Creed concerning Christ’s descent into hell. According to Calvin (1954, 99 f), Christ literally went through hell on the cross as he experienced “the pains of death,” agonies of soul, and “torment of conscience” in the face of the wrath of God against human sin (GC 65–70). Ursinus, too, talks of the “pains of death and horror of God’s wrath” that Christ “experienced in his soul and conscience” as he was dying (LC 84). Calvin and Ursinus also wrestle in this context with the trinitarian conundrum created by the fact that on the cross Christ, who is God, is also forsaken by God. Both Calvin (1954, 99) and

14 Cf. Calvin: 1954, 137 (GC 353). Neuser: 1964, 311 n. 12 notes that in 1557 Bullinger strongly rejected “substance” terminology when Beza, with Calvin’s approval, employed it in a proposed formula of unity.

Ursinus limit this experience to Christ's human nature: for Calvin "[Christ's] divinity was for a short while concealed, that is, it did not exercise its power" (GC 68); for Ursinus, God "hid his favor and help for a time" (LC 85).

5. Conclusion: The Larger Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism

It is not the purpose of this essay to examine the relationship between the texts of the LC and the HC; our task has been only to determine from the LC where Ursinus stood on the theological landscape of the HC in the early 1560s. What we have found is that the three Protestant traditions in which Ursinus had been schooled—Melanchthonian, Bullingerian, and Calvinian—all left distinctive traces in the text and theology of the LC. Nevertheless, because the LC and HC were virtually contemporaneous documents, we will conclude with a few brief reflections on the possible connections between them, particularly when it comes to the theme of this conference, the spirituality of the HC.

First, the Lutheran, and especially Melanchthonian, emphasis on the comfort of the gospel that we encounter in LC 1 emerges in the HC in a more strategic role: it provides the theme and sets the pastoral tone for the entire catechism. What is also worth noting, however, is that even though the term comfort appears only six times each in the LC and the HC, four of these occurrences are in the same theological contexts in both documents, and three of those four have no parallel references to comfort in the SC, the primary base text for the HC.¹⁵ Whether the LC influenced the HC here or vice-versa, the Melanchthonian theme of comfort clearly had an impact on both—in fact, on the HC at the very center of its theology and piety.

Second, the Reformed, especially Bullingerian, doctrine of covenant has a much lower profile in the HC than in the LC—for reasons that we have already explained. Nonetheless, Ursinus's references to covenant in the LC allow us to interpret parallel passages in the HC covenantally, even though the word itself does not appear in those passages. In HC 1, for example, we learn that our only comfort in life and in death is that we belong to Jesus Christ, who, among other things, has fully paid for all our sins and by his Holy Spirit assures us of eternal life. Covenant is not mentioned here, nor is it in the parallel passage in Luther's Small Catechism from which this part of HC 1 seems to be derived (Luther: 2000, 355). LC 1, however, answers almost the identical question about our comfort in life and death in covenantal language: our comfort is that God receives us into his covenant of grace, grants us the benefits of Christ's work, and seals that covenant in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The comfort of belonging to Christ, therefore, that Ursinus highlights in HC 1 can be read

15 Cf. LC 1, 103, 110, 131; HC 1, 52, 53, 58; and SC 1, 52, 53, 58.

through the lens of LC 1 as the comfort of being in covenant with God, of experiencing the security and dependability of a covenant relationship.

Finally, two of the distinctive Calvinian doctrines in the LC, Christ's threefold office and his descent into hell on the cross, are both found in the HC as well, not just in their theological content but also in the applications of these doctrines to the practice of the Christian life. To cite just one example, in LC 64 Ursinus notes that believers are made prophets, priests, and kings with Christ. As priests we "offer ourselves and all that is ours as thank offerings to God," and as kings we "have dominion with him over all creatures for eternity." The wording is remarkably similar to HC 32: as one who is a member of Christ and thus shares in his anointing, I am, as priest, "to present myself to him as a living sacrifice of thanks," and as king "to reign with Christ over all creation for eternity (Christian Reformed Church: 2013, 80).

These are but a few of many examples that could be cited of possible cross-fertilization between the LC and HC. What they all demonstrate is not only that Ursinus's place on the landscape of the HC was molded by the traditions of Wittenberg, Zurich, and Geneva but also that, through his mediation, those same traditions helped to shape the theological and spiritual topography of the Heidelberg Catechism itself.

Bibliography

- ALTING, Heinrich (1646), *Scriptorum theologicorum Heidelbergensium tomus tertius, continens Explicationem Catechesos Palatinae*, Amsterdam.
- (1701), *Historia ecclesiae Palatinae*, in Ludwig Christian Mieg, *Monumenta pietatis et litteraria virorum in re publica et litteraria illustrium selecta*, Frankfurt: Sande.
- BAKER, J. Wayne (1980), *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- BENRATH, Gustav A. (1963), *Die Eigenart der Pfälzischen Reformation und die Vorgeschichte des Heidelberger Katechismus*, *Heidelberger Jahrbücher* 7, 13–32.
- (1983), *Zacharias Ursinus als Mensch, Christ und Theologe*, *Reformierte Kirchenzeitung* 124, 154–158.
- BIERMA, Lyle D. (1982), *Olevianus and the Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism: Another Look*, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 13/4, 17–27.
- (2005a), *The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism*, in: Lyle D. Bierma, *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 49–74.
- (2005b), *Translations of Ursinus's Catechisms*, in: Lyle D. Bierma, *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 137–223.

- (2013), *The Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism: A Reformation Synthesis*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology, Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- BOUWMEESTER, G. (1954), *Zacharias Ursinus en de Heidelbergse Catechismus*, The Hague: Willem de Zwijgerstichting.
- BULLINGER, Heinrich (1534), *De testamento seu foedere dei unico & aeterno* Heinrychi Bullingeri brevis expositio, Zürich: Froschouer.
- CALVIN, John (1954), *The Catechism of the Church of Geneva*, in: J.K.S. Reid (ed.), *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, The Library of Christian Classics 22, Philadelphia: Westminster.
- CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA (2013), *Our Faith: Ecumenical Creeds, Reformed Confessions, and Other Resources*, Grand Rapids: Faith Alive Christian Resources.
- GEROBULUS, Johannes (1603), *Waerachtich verhael van den staet der Gereformeerde Kercke*, Utrecht: Jan Willemszoon van Rhenen.
- GOETERS, J.F.G. (1963), *Entstehung und Frühgeschichte des Katechismus*, in: Lothar Coenen (ed.), *Handbuch zum Heidelberger Katechismus*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 3–23.
- GOOD, James I. (1914), *The Heidelberg Catechism in Its Newest Light*, Philadelphia: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States.
- GOOSZEN, Maurits (1890), *De Heidelbergsche Catechismus: textus receptus met toelichtenden teksten*, Leiden: Brill.
- GRAAFLAND, Cornelis (1994), *Van Calvijn tot Comrie: Oorsprong en ontwikkeling van de leer van het verbond in het Gereformeerd Protestantisme*, Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum.
- GUNNOE, Charles D. JR. (2005), *The Reformation of the Palatinate and the Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism, 1500–1562*, in: Lyle D. Bierma (ed.), *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 15–47.
- HENSS, Walter (1983), *Der Heidelberger Katechismus im konfessionspolitischen Kräftespiel seiner Frühzeit*, Zurich: Theologischer Verlag.
- HOLLWEG, Walter (1961), *Bearbeitete Caspar Olevianus den deutschen Text des Heidelberger Katechismus?*, in: *Neue Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Heidelberger Katechismus*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Lehre der Reformierten Kirche, vol. 13, Neukirchen, 124–152.
- KLOOSTER, Fred H. (1986), *The Priority of Ursinus in the Composition of the Heidelberg Catechism*, in: Derk Visser (ed.), *Controversy and Conciliation: The Reformation and the Palatinate 1559–83*, Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 73–100.
- LANG, August (1907), *Der Heidelberger Katechismus und vier verwandte Katechismen*, Leipzig: Deichert.
- LILLBACK, Peter A. (2001), *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

- LUTHER, Martin (2000), *The Small Catechism*, in: Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (ed.), *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 345–375.
- MELANCHTHON, Philippus (1855), *Examen Ordinandorum* [1554], in: C.G. Bretschneider and H.E. Bindseil (eds.), *Philippi Melanthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, vol. 23, *Corpus Reformatorum*, reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1963.
- (1955), *Examen ordinandorum 1552*, in: Robert Stupperich (ed.), *Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl*, vol. 6, *Bekenntnisse und kleine Lehrschriften*, ed. Robert Stupperich, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.
- METZ, Wulf (1970), *Necessitas satisfactionis? Eine systematische Studie zu den Fragen 12–18 des Heidelberger Katechismus und zur Theologie des Zacharias Ursinus*, Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag.
- MULLER, Richard A. (1986), *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins*, Durham, NC: Labyrinth.
- NEUSER, Wilhelm H. (1964), *Die Erwählungslehre im Heidelberger Katechismus*, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 75, 309–326.
- (1979), *Die Väter des Heidelberger Katechismus*, *Theologische Zeitschrift* 35, 177–199.
- RICHARDS, George W. (1913), *The Heidelberg Catechism: Historical and Doctrinal Studies*, Philadelphia: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States.
- STAEDTKE, Joachim (1965), *Entstehung und Bedeutung des Heidelberger Katechismus*, in: W. Herrenbruck and U. Smidt (eds.), *Warum wirst du ein Christ Genannt?*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 11–23.
- STURM, Erdmann (1972), *Der junge Zacharias Ursinus: Sein Weg vom Philippismus zum Calvinismus*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.
- SUDHOFF, Karl (1857), *C. Olevianus und Z. Ursinus: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften*, Elberfeld: Friderichs.
- URSINUS, Zacharias (1584), *Theses complectentes breviter et perspicue summam verae Doctrinae de Sacramentis*, in: *Zachariae Ursini ... volumen tractationum theologiarum*, 2 vols., Neustadt: Harnisch, 1:339–382.
- (1612), *D. Zachariae Ursini ... Opera theologica*, ed. Quirinus Reuter, Heidelberg: Lancellot.
 - (1616), *Corpus doctrinae orthodoxae*, Geneva: Samuel Crespin, English Translation: *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Williard, Cincinnati: Bucher, 1851; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954.
- VISSER, Derk (1983), *Zacharias Ursinus: The Reluctant Reformer—His Life and Times*, New York: United Church.

Andreas Mühling

Caspar Olevian und die Einführung des Heidelberger Katechismus

Der junge, 23-jährige Trierer Jurist Caspar Olevian wurde Ende 1559, als Folge der Niederschlagung jener von ihm angeführten evangelischen Bewegung in seiner Heimatstadt, nach mehrwöchiger Haft des Landes verwiesen (vgl. hierzu insg. Franz: 2009). Doch er blieb nicht lange ohne eine Beschäftigung. Graf Valentin von Erbach erkannte scharfsinnig die hohen juristischen, theologischen und organisatorischen Fähigkeiten und warb ihn deshalb rasch in den kurpfälzischen Dienst an. „Noch zur selben Zeit“, erinnerte sich Piscator (1994, 25), „als Doktor Olevian noch im Gefängnis saß, hat der kurfürstliche Gesandte Valentin Graf zu Erbach ihn im Namen des Kurfürsten Friedrich in den kurfürstlichen Dienst berufen und Olevian auch gleich mit sich nach Heidelberg geführt. Dies geschah im Jahr 1560.“ Ein zur selben Zeit vom Pfalz-Zweibrücker Herzog Wolfgang an ihn gerichtetes Angebot, umgehend in seinen Dienst treten zu können, schlug Olevian umgehend aus. So erschien er zusammen mit dem ehemaligen Metzger Prediger de Cologne in Heidelberg und wurde dort am 22. Februar 1560 an der Universität immatrikuliert (Mühling: 2009a, 48).

Die Wahl zwischen der Kurpfalz und der Pfälzer Nebenlinie Pfalz-Zweibrücken wird Olevian nicht schwergefallen sein. Um nachvollziehen zu können, in welcher kirchenpolitischen Lage sich dieses bedeutende Territorium befand, als Olevian in Heidelberg zu leben und zu arbeiten begann, ist an dieser Stelle ein Exkurs zur kirchenpolitischen Entwicklung der Kurpfalz notwendig (vgl. hierzu Mühling: 2009b; Ehmman: 2013).

Im Jahr 1559 starb der lutherische Pfälzer Kurfürst Ottheinrich überraschend. Die konfessionell nicht ausdifferenzierte Haltung des Kurfürsten trug nach seinem frühen Tod zur weiteren Entwicklung in der Kurpfalz maßgeblich bei (Engehausen: 2013). Ottheinrich hatte kirchenpolitische Grundentscheidungen getroffen, die den Gang der kommenden Ereignisse wesentlich beeinflussten. Zudem zeigte sich, dass die „Unfertigkeit des gesamten pfälzischen Kirchenwesens“, so ein Diktum des Reformationshistorikers Gustav Adolf Benrath,¹ die Hinwendung der Kurpfalz zum reformierten Bekenntnis erheblich erleichterte. Denn das nur in Ansätzen ausgebildete reformierte Beziehungsnetz in Heidelberg hielt nach dem Tod Ottheinrichs. So erwies sich—wie sich rasch zeigen sollte—der Regierungsantritt des neuen Kur-

1 Zitiert nach Press: 1970, 220.