

The Nature and Characteristics of Calvin's Piety

칼빈의 경건의 본질과 특징

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초록(Abstract)

본 소고에서는 칼빈의 경건의 본질과 특징을 살펴보므로 칼빈의 경건은 그가 겪어온 역사적 맥락과 분리할 수 없으며 그가 통과해 온 고난과 그의 신학의 여정속에서 고백하는 그의 신앙과 삶이라는 것을 밝힐 것이다. 아울러 칼빈의 경건은 대 하나님과의 관계만이 아니라 이웃사랑의 실천을 통해서 증명된다는 것을 드러낸다. 사실 그동안 칼빈의 경건에 대해 많은 고찰들이 있어왔다. 그러나 칼빈이 그의 저작 들에서 빈번하게 사용한 “경건”이라는 용어는 한 마디로 정의를 내리기에 그리고 정확하게 번역하기에는 어려운 용어이다. 그의 “경건”을 이해하기 위해서는 그가 지내온 역사적 상황과 그가 반대자들로 부터 직접 겪은 고난을 이해하지 않고서는 그의 “경건”에 대한 바른 이해를 가질 수 없다. 또한 칼빈의 “경건”을 바로 이해하기 위해서는 신학적으로만 접근해서도 바른 이해를 가질 수 없다. 오히려 칼빈은 그의 “경건신학”을 그의 목회와 고난에 둘러 쌓여 있는 실제적인 삶들을 통해서 보여주고 있다. 그런 의미에서 볼 때 그의 경건은 관념적이고 이론적이기 보다는 실제적이고 실천적이라고 할 수 있다. 또한 칼빈의 경건은 그의 신학적 특성인 이중구조를 통해서 더욱 발견된다. 칼빈이 강조하는 신지식은 우리 자신을 아는 지식과 깊이 연결되어 있고 이것은 경건을 신자에게 적용하는 칼빈

신학의 이중 구조속에서 더욱 증명된다. 칼빈의 경건은 믿음으로 하나님을 선택하신 아버지로 깨닫는 것에서 출발한다. 그런 점에서 경건과 하나님의 부성애는 연결되어 있다. 또한 성령을 통해 아버지의 신실하신 말씀들을 받아들이는 믿음은 경건의 터전이라 할 수 있다. 그러나 무엇보다도 수직적으로 하나님을 향해 갖는 태도 만큼이나 동일한 자세로 이웃과 사람들을 대하는 것이 칼빈이 강조하는 경건의 바른 모습인 것이다.

This article explores the nature and characteristics of Calvin's piety to reveal that his piety is inseparable from his experiences of his historical context. In through this, this article reveals that Calvin's piety is the declaration of his faith and life, developed through his suffering and theological journey and asserts piety not to only constitute a relationship with God but also to be evidenced through the practice of loving our neighbours.

In actual, there has been much study on Calvin's piety. However, the term, 'piety' which so frequently comes into use in his works is one difficult to clearly translate or define as a single word. In understanding his 'piety', it is evident a true understanding is not possible without consideration and understanding of his historical circumstances and the suffering he faced by his opponents. Moreover, nor will only a theological approach allow for an ascertainment of the true notion of his piety. Rather, Calvin demonstrates his theology of piety through his practical life surrounded by his ministry and suffering. So then in that sense, rather than his piety being conceptual or theoretical, Calvin's piety is revealed to be practical and realistic. The nature of Calvin's piety is further revealed through the characteristic of the 'dual frame' in his theology. Calvin's emphasis on 'Knowledge of God' is revealed to be deeply interlinked to the 'Knowledge of Ourselves' and like this, the dual frames within Calvin's

theology proves to further apply piety to believers. Calvin's piety starts with the faith that realises God is our good father. In that regard, piety is deeply interrelated to God's fatherhood. Moreover, the faith that accepts the true words of God through the Spirit can be called the foundations of piety. However, more than anything, loving our neighbours in the same attitude that God is vertically pursued is the true exemplification of piety that Calvin emphasises.

주제어: 칼빈, 경건, 불경건, 고난, 이중구조, 하나님을 아는 지식, 이웃사랑

Key words: Calvin, piety, ungodliness, suffering, Duplex frame, The knowledge of God, Loving our neighbors.

1. Introduction

Calvin's theology contains dynamic and abundant spiritual benefits rather than the building of systematic theology. As noted by I. John Hesselink, Calvin's *Institutes* as well as his other works demonstrate his pastoral passion and reflects his piety that is not only of informative value but also, and more importantly, inspiring as well as challenging.¹ In that respect, the purpose of Calvin's *Institutes* was not to be speculative but rather, practical.² Despite this, Calvinism - which is grounded on and developed from Reformed Scholasticism - weakens Calvin's theology of the "Reality of Christ's Grace" and "Christ's Spiritual Dynamics".³ However,

¹ I. John Hesselink, "Calvin's Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 75.

² Edited by David W. Hall & Peter A. Lillback, *Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing Company, 2008), 9.

in actual, Calvin contradicts this and his theology is one of practicing and tasting the Grace of God in his demonstration of pursuit of piety.⁴

In one sense, Calvin lived a life where his existence, faith and theology were all centred on piety. However, the problem that arises is such that though Calvin may consistently emphasise piety in his works, rather than being systematic and synthesised, such references may come across as sporadic and fragmentary.

Though there have been many scholars whom have examined the piety of Calvin⁵, there are not many instances of those who explore such within the limit of characteristics and nature of Calvin's piety. Thus the aim of this research is to synthesise the concept of Calvin's piety. Through exploration of the nature of his piety, this article will reveal the dynamic characteristics of piety in regards to its relationships to Calvin's context and his duplex model approach to examine key concepts within piety to provide a synthesis of his theology.

³ For a detailed discussion, see Richard A. Muller's, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴ Hesselink, "Calvin's Theology," 75.

⁵ In fact, there are many scholars who have studied Calvin's piety, such as Ford Lewis Battles, John T. McNeill, Joel Beeky, Elsie Anne McKee, Jones Serene, etc., Cf. Ford Lewis Battles, *The Piety of John Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978); idem, *The Piety of John Calvin*, The Calvin 500 series (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing Company, 2009); Donald K. McKim, *Readings in Calvin's Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co, 1984.); Joel R. Beeke, *Living for God's Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism* (Lake Mary: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008); edited and translated by Elsie Anne McKee, *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2001); *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, edited by Donald K. McKim, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jae Sung Kim, *Calvin, "I offer my heart to the Lord"*, (Seoul: Kingdom Books, 2012); Eun Soo Kim, *John Calvin & Reformed Faith*, (Seoul: SFC Press, 2011); Yoon Bae Choi, *An Introduction to the Theology of John Calvin*, (Seoul: Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary Press, 2012).

2. Calvin's emphasis on Piety

The word 'pietas' (piety, godliness) does not appear in history as many times as it does in Calvin's works; his *Institutes*, commentaries, along with many other works displays Calvin's tendency to use the word 'pietas'.⁶ The 1536 Latin edition subtitle of *Institutes* proves Calvin's pietas.⁷ Here, Calvin has called his title of the first edition (1536) "*Basic instruction (institution) in the Christian religion, embracing just about (fere) the whole sum of godliness (summa Pietatis), and all that needs to be known in the doctrine of salvation; a work very well worth reading by everyone zealous for godliness*"⁸

Many scholars define Calvin's Theology to be a Theology of Piety.⁹ For Calvin, piety is not only the motif of his theology, but also the

⁶ Compare these; when we look at the Subject Index of Calvin's *Institutes*. it can be seen that the word Piety appears a lot after *God, Christ*. Apart from this, piety is often seen throughout Calvin's many commentaries and his other works. This is particularly revealed when studying *Institutes*, which was written alongside his *Commentary on the Psalms*.

⁷ Cf. "*Christianae religion is institution total fere pietatis summam et quidquid est in doctrina salutis cognitu necessarium complectens, omnibus pietatis studios is lectu dignissimum opus ac recens editum*"

⁸ Lillback, *Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes*, foreword, ix.

⁹ Calvin's theology can be defined in one sentence to be the theology of piety (theologia pietatis). Many scholars and theologians have defined Calvin's theology to be the theology of piety as below; I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's Theology; The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, edited by Donald K. Mckim (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004); F.L.Battles, *The Piety of John Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978); Joel R. Beeke, *Living for God's Glory: An Introduction to Calvinism* (Lake Mary: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008); Refer to Chapter.13, Brian A. Gerrish, *Theology within the limits of piety alone: Schleiermacher and Calvin's Doctrine of God* (1981) reprinted in *The old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Refomeration Heritage* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1982); refer to Chapter. 12, John D. Witvliet, *Spirituality of the Psalter: Metrical Psalms in liturgy and life in Calvin's*

foundation that flows underground his belief. In fact, Calvin's *Institutes* is referred to as 'Summa Pietatis' due to his belief in which piety is pursued which is evident not only through his writings but also in his life.

The term "piety" appearing countless of times in his works, is evidently a pivotal motif that acts as a key in understanding Calvin. McNeil emphases this in his introduction to Calvin's *Institutes*,

One who takes up Calvin's masterpiece with the preconception that its author's mind is a kind of efficient factory turning out and assembling the parts of a neatly joined structure of dogmatic logic will quickly find this assumption challenged and shattered. The discerning reader soon realizes that not the author's intellect alone but his whole spiritual and emotional being is enlisted in his work..... He was not, we may say, a theologian by profession, but a deeply religious man who possessed a genius for orderly thinking and obeyed the impulse to write out the implications of his faith. He calls his book not a *summa theologiae* but a *summa pietatis*. The secret of his mental energy lies in his piety; its product is his theology, which is his piety described at length.¹⁰

The basis of Calvin's purpose in *Institutes* can be even seen to help people reach the true piety in his Prefatory Address to King Francis I.

When I first set my hand to this work, nothing was farther from my

Geneva, *Calvin Theological Journal* 32(1997), 273-297. Also Philip C. Hotrop, G.C. Berkouwer, J.T. Bakker, H.W. Rossouw, W.D. Jonker interprets Calvin who not only individually, but also socially practiced piety before God.

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion I*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 51.

mind most glorious King, than to write something that might afterward be offered to your Majesty. My purpose was solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true godliness.¹¹

In *Institutes*, Calvin stresses the importance of Christians' need to practice and the training for piety throughout their whole lives.

The whole life of Christians ought to be a short of practice of godliness, for we have been called to sanctification.¹²

Calvin further emphasises that piety is the main purpose of our lives in pursuing God in his First Timothy's commentary. Calling piety the "beginning, the middle and the end of Christian life," Calvin asserts piety alone will result in perfection, leaving God unwanting from us.¹³

Thus, Calvin stresses that his purpose in writing *Institutes* was for piety and that we as Christians have been called to practice piety and sanctification. Then, it raises the question as to the definition and intentions of 'piety' that Calvin refers to which will be discussed below.

3. Piety as Calvin intended

Calvin was placed in an ungodly era, surrounded by ungodly people. He warns of God's wrath being revealed from truth against those unrighteous and ungodly. In that sense, Calvin sought to live as a

¹¹ Ibid., 9.

¹² Ibid., 835.

¹³ John Calvin, *Commentaries on Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (rept; Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2009), 109-110.

witness to God's words and opposed the ungodly times. As he reveals in the introduction to his commentary on the Psalms, Calvin, by nature had been withdrawn and private, preferring seclusion.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Calvin was able to fight against those ungodly and unrighteous in his true love for God's words and with his compassion; to free those who had lost their freedom in the wrong knowledge given to them. True piety gives people freedom through God's invitation to His abundant love. Calvin had been thus very critical of the Roman Catholics who had smothered or corrupted people with their false doctrine.¹⁵ Calvin's piety begins through its recognition of God's fatherhood in his immense love for humans and emulates such love. It is thus why Calvin in his *Institutes* contrasts the knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves to reiterate the significance of true knowledge of God. A true understanding of God recognises his love, grace and his fatherhood wherein he has prepared all good things for us and is pleased in blessing us with such goodness.

This I take to mean that not only does he sustain this universe (as he once founded it) by his boundless might, regulate it by his wisdom, preserve it by his goodness, and especially rule mankind by his righteousness and judgment, bear with it in his mercy, watch over it by his protection; but also that no drop will be found either of wisdom and light, or of righteousness or power or rectitude, or of genuine truth, which does not flow from him, and of which he is not the cause. Thus we may learn to await and seek all these things

¹⁴ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms 1-35*, trans. James Anderson, 5 vols., vol. 1, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1996), 41.

¹⁵ *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, 47-49, 544-47.

from him, and thankfully to ascribe them, once received, to him.

For this sense of the powers of God is for us a fit teacher of Piety.¹⁶

Thus piety is shown to be born from our true knowledge of God's love and sacrifices for humans and the knowledge of the way in which to revere such grace. Calvin defined piety to be the reverence to God in the combined love of God with the knowledge of his benefits induced.¹⁷

Calvin, in his sermon on First Timothy, preaches about the "Mystery of godliness" wherein it is expressed to be the appearance of Christ as a human.¹⁸ In this, Calvin emphasises 1) how God loves us so much that in order to ensure our salvation, He took on the form of a human and came down to earth, 2) that the father's love that allows for the recovered relationship and unity between ourselves and God through Christ, 3) ultimately, Christ is the proof of God's love for us and is God's promise and words itself.

From above, piety is essentially the right and true knowledge of God (in truth, this knowledge is linked to the knowledge of ourselves - the depravity of humans), the fundamental word within this knowledge (the word is Christ himself, the gospel), that word of God being accepted through faith with the help of the Holy Spirit, and all this series of truths are actually alluding to the nature of piety. Here, it can be seen of the trinity, God, the Son and the Spirit, being smeared into the concept of Calvin's piety.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ John Calvin, *A Selection of the Most Celebrated Sermons of John Calvin* (New York: S. & D.A. Forbes, 1830), 21-33.

In addition, it is vital to consider that Calvin's doctrine is not merely of logical statements or doctrines as abovementioned. On the contrary, Calvin discusses a piety that deals with the soul, the state of human spirit, and the emotional matters of the human mind as well as exploring the real benefits related to piety. In that light, Calvin's piety is one that can be applied in practice to humans' lives and expects their real transformations through such piety.

To then understand Calvin's purpose of piety, it can be synthesised and defined to be the following; Piety is the knowledge of the God's grace as our father through the granting of salvation and the knowledge of its benefits, wherein our love for and reverence of God are one. That is to say, it is from the knowledge of belief that one willingly loves and reveres God and it is this love and reverence that the sanctified life is proven.

Until now, Reformation scholars researching Calvin had shown his piety to be a concept more focused on God with clear emphasis placed on humans' relationship with God, our fear and reverence for Him, the acknowledgement of His sovereignty, and our prayers to and worship of him in study of Calvin's piety. This is not to say they had not at all explored the relationships between neighbours or that piety had been solely focused on God. However, in understanding Calvin's piety, it had always been understood as a concept that had always placed God as first priority.

Conversely, in close study of Calvin's *Institutes*, though it may seem as though Calvin's piety had regarded God to be first, Calvin had

actually approached piety in such a way that when God's love was not shared between neighbours and humans, it could not be called piety. This is to say contrary to popular conception, Calvin's piety held human relations to be significant to his theology on Piety. The further relevant characteristics of Calvin's doctrine will be discussed in the following.

4. The Characteristics of Calvin's Piety

In following, Calvin's piety can be then studied under his portrayal of the different characteristics. Most generally, the features through which to study Calvin's piety is to focus on his thoughts and expressions about piety in his works and *Institutes* representatively. However, in order to gain a more in-depth insight into his piety, it is significant to realise Calvin's doctrine was not developed in a vacuum but was intrinsically influenced by the context in which he lived. This becomes particularly evident through Calvin's context in relations to other elements.

4.1 Ungodliness and Godliness – Exploring Calvin's Historical Context

Calvin's notion of the godly or ungodly highlights the significance of Calvin's context in shaping the characteristics of Calvin's piety.

Calvin's use and definition of piety is varied; his use of piety is depicted through the conflict between the opponents who persecuted the reformers - it can be seen that Calvin called them ungodly.²⁰

But here is not the place to tell how it has come about: certainly our cause lies afflicted. For ungodly men have so far prevailed that Christ's truth, even if it is not driven away scattered and destroyed,

¹⁹ I. John. Hesselink, T. H. L. Parker, Phillip Walker Butin and Phillip C. Holtrob have applied the theological structure of *Institutes* under the model of the Trinity.

²⁰ Ibid.

still lies hidden, buried and inglorious. The poor little church has either been wasted with cruel slaughter or banished into exile, or so overwhelmed by threats and fears that it dare not even open its mouth. And yet, with their usual rage and madness, the ungodly continue to battle a wall already toppling and to complete the ruin toward which they have been striving.²¹

The “ungodly men” who had claimed themselves to have been working to serve God, were actually imprudent, rather going against God with their misled biblical understandings and doctrines resulting in the persecution of reformers.²² Thus, Calvin's theology was set in the direction for the ungodly men of that time to recognize the true piety in the Bible whilst also to help all Christians to reach the right piety in their lives.²³

In truth, Calvin's piety is closely connected to the historical context that he endured. The social and historical conflicts that surrounded him sheds light on as to why Calvin stressed the significance of piety. Thus we can deduce that it is difficult to fully grasp Calvin's thoughts on piety without having some understanding of his historical background. Calvin's position of reformation differs from that of the first generation

²¹ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 11.

²² In commentary of Colossians, Calvin warns that differ from Papists that while we are both of us called Christians, and profess to believe in Christ, they picture to themselves one that is torn, disfigured, divested of his excellence, denuded of his office, in fine, such as to be a spectre rather than Christ himself. Cf. John Calvin, commentaries on the Epistle of Paul The Galatians and Ephesians, trans. William Pringle, (Grand Rapids, Baker books, 2009), 134.

²³ Calvin mentions in his preface to his commentary on the Psalms that the Psalms contain the knowledge to a fruitful and pious life which is the purpose of his theology. See, Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* 1-35, 1, xxxviii-xxxix.

Reformer, Luther. Through the faults and corruption of the medieval Roman Catholic Church, Luther finds the core of the gospel, “Justification by Faith” and ignites the reformation. However, Calvin, as part of the newly established Reformed church, was set between the battle between the Roman Catholics and the Anabaptists - a community of radical reformers. Calvin's experiences in opposing Roman Catholics as well as the Anabaptists required him to criticize both misguided theologies and defend the Reformed Church from a precise biblical perspective. Calvin was protecting the biblical doctrine of faith in contrast to the radical Anabaptists while aiding the wrongly persecuted people in that period from opposing sides. Calvin brilliantly performed this act of criticizing the wrong theology of Roman Catholics whilst at the same time, felt the need to dispute with the Anabaptists for their extremism as the ‘warriors of truth’. From this point, we can describe Calvin to have led a life of maintaining the truth and proclaiming the right piety through the biblical doctrine from the two erroneous, ‘ungodly’ sides.

Bedecking the grossest ignorance with this term, they ruinously delude poor, miserable folk. Furthermore, to state truly and frankly the real fact of the matter, this fiction not only buries but utterly destroys true faith. Is this what believing means-to understand nothing, provided only that you submit your feeling obediently to the church? Faith rests not on ignorance, but on knowledge.²⁴

From this, Calvin's intention of using true piety to teach the ungodly was so that they may be able to realize their wickedness for themselves to be seen.

²⁴ *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 544-45.

In that regard, Calvin's main focus is therefore shown in the preface to the 1560 French edition of *Institutes*. "Subject Matter of the Present Work" was to depict the biblical core of gospel to all people in by doing so, the misguided, wrong knowledge of the Bible and thus the ungodly would not prevail.

Thus, I exhort all those who have reverence for the Lord's Word, to read it, and to impress it diligently upon their memory, if they wish to have, first, a sum of Christian doctrine, and, secondly, a way to benefit greatly from reading the Old and New Testament.²⁵

When Calvin's dedication to King Francis I of France in the prefatory address of *Institutes* is examined, the purpose of his book can be clearly explained.²⁶

4.2 Suffering and Piety

Another point to consider when discussing Calvin's historical context in relations to piety is that of his life itself- a life filled with suffering. As Battles states, Calvin's theology and thoughts were developed and matured through the hardships he faced in his life of asylum.²⁷ This

²⁵ Ibid., 8.

²⁶ The 8 topics of institutes were listed in *The Prefatory Address to King Francis I of France* as below;

1. Circumstances in which the book was first written
2. Plea for the persecuted evangelicals
3. Charges of antagonists refuted: newness, uncertainty; the value of miracles
4. Misleading claim that the church fathers oppose the reformation teaching
5. The appeal to "custom" against truth
6. Errors about the nature of the church
7. Tumults alleged to result from reformation preaching
8. Let the king beware of acting on false charges: the innocent await divine vindication

is evinced through the continued revised editions of his *Institute*.²⁸ In truth, Calvin's theology was one that was developed in suffering. Calvin's understanding of such hardship was not merely theoretical. Rather, they were experiences he had continuously faced throughout his life. Calvin faced issues not only related to his health and family life but were also surrounded by Roman Catholics and Anabaptists.²⁹ Thus in one sense, Calvin's piety is closely related with the facing of suffering. In *Institutes*, Calvin dedicates a space in chapters 7 and 8 in Book 3 as "The Denial of Ourselves" and "Bearing the Cross" in relations to piety to summarize the pious life.

Calvin pursued to reach piety by delivering the true doctrine to those with a passion for religion and faced those against reformers (whom if were against piety, Calvin expressed as ungodly men) to rightly shape the true doctrine and to present the honourable model of the Church. Also as stated above, Calvin's piety is deeply related with suffering; such difficult experience not only shaped his piety but also gives way to a pious life in which we become able to humble ourselves. Furthermore, this suffering must be beared as a cross wherein it serves as proof of Christ; unless a believer faces torment in the name of the Lord, it cannot be said that Christ's suffering has been shared.³⁰

To sum these contents up, in Calvin, piety is displayed as the

²⁷ McKim, *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, 197-204.

²⁸ Cf. Battles emphasises that Calvin's theology underwent repeated development and progress as he continuously added to his *Institutes*. Also see, *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, 197-205.

²⁹ Cf. Thomas J. Davis in his *John Calvin*, expresses the era as the "age of anxiety". See Thomas J. Davis, *John Calvin* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005), 6.

³⁰ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 708. Also see, 1Peter, 4:12-13.

preservation of the truth as well as it being the practical principles of how should we then lives as Christians. In his opposition to the ungodly Roman Catholic Church as well as the Anabaptists, he believed in the need for a godly adherence to explicit faith. Calvin recognized the need for true knowledge not only of God but of divine will and adherence to such truth to lead to a pious life.³¹ In further, understanding his context allows for a richer understanding of his piety wherein his theology reflects his sentiments towards his historical background and experiences with suffering.

Having established the relationship between the historical context and characteristics of Calvin's piety, the following will examine the next characteristic, the duplex frame through which he approaches significant themes.

5. Duplex frame of Piety

Though there is no one, main, agreed point that scholars regard Calvin's theology to be the discourse of, Calvin's *duplex cognitio Dei* (God as creator and redeemer) about God is regarded as a key element and thus emphasised by some scholars to be a fundamental principle of Calvin's theology.³² It is not easy to find not only a logical structure

³¹ Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 545.

³² Refer to Edward A. Dowey, Jr. as a representative argument in his *Knowledge of God* (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994). Dowey discusses the distinction between Calvin's fundamental two-fold knowledge of God as the Creator and of as the Redeemer as well as the interrelated relationship within this *duplex cognitio Domini*. Richard C. Gamble also agrees *duplex cognitio Domini* to be a significant principle of Calvin's theology. Ronald S. Wallace emphasises Christ as redeemer in the twofold nature of *duplex cognitio Domini* (God as Creator). However, T.H.L. Parker as explained by K. Scott Oliphint place emphasis on the duplex nature of 'Knowledge of God' and 'Knowledge of ourselves' rather than the *duplex cognitio Domini* as

and methodology of Calvin's theology, but also the consistent theological characteristics.³³ So then in close study of *Institutes* alongside Calvin's other works, his concise literary style and his repeated use of dual frames can be said to be characteristics of his theology. In that sense, this logical duplex structure is revealed in his discourse of piety. Calvin's theology of piety can be seen to be explained more clearly when analyzing his piety through its duplex nature; the first of which through the twofold complex of knowledge - 'Knowledge of God' and 'Knowledge of ourselves'.

5.1 The Knowledge of God and The Knowledge of Ourselves

Calvin's *Institutes* in that sense begins with the statement of the 'Knowledge of God' and the 'Knowledge of Ourselves'. This is as emphasized by K. Scott Oliphint who stated that in study of *Institutes* under the thesis of Romans, the interrelated duplex knowledge of God and of ourselves

the main element of *Calvin's Institutes*. Herman Bauke and A. Ganoczy attempt to find Calvin's theology within its Dialectical structure. Refer to H. Bauke's *Die Problem der Theologie Calvins* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922), A. Ganoczy, *Young Calvin*, tr. D. Foxgrover and W. Provo (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987). However, it is clear that within Calvin's works lies his preference in using a duplex frame to present his thesis. Cf. K. Scott Oliphint "A Primal and Simple Knowledge" in David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback, *Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes*.

³³ Refer to essays that present Calvin's theological methodology as listed below: Ford Lewis Battles, "God was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity", in *Readings in Calvin's Theology* edited by D. McKim (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984); D. Hoitenga., "Faith and Reason in Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God", in *Articles on Calvin and Calvinism*, edited Richard Gamble (New York Garland, 1992); Richard Gamble, "Calvin's Theological Method. Word and Spirit - A Case Study", in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, edited R. Craig (Ann Arbor, Edward Brothers, 1988); John H. Leith, "Calvin's Theological Method and the Ambiguity of his Theology", in *Reformation Studies: Essays in Honor of Roland H. Baintoni* (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1962).

can be found.³⁴ Moreover, as suggested in the first page of his *Institutes*, Calvin raises the necessity of recognizing the knowledge of ourselves though the knowledge of God for humans, created in the image of God, in order to live a life of righteousness. This can be described to be fundamental for understanding the structure of Calvin's piety. As aforementioned, a primary purpose of Calvin's *Institutes* was revealed to act as a call for Christians to lead pious and righteous lives. It is thus why *Institutes*' first great proposition - the dual frame between 'Knowledge of God' and 'Knowledge of Ourselves' - can be regarded as a clue in understanding Calvin's piety. As pointed out by Hesselink, a distinction is critical between a misunderstanding of God and piety that takes heart in believers.³⁵ As Calvin notes, where there is no true knowledge of God, real piety cannot exist.³⁶

For us, this relationship is not a simple matter, but one of the most famous quoted statement in all theological declaration. It is evident that Calvin finds the relationship with God very important in piety. This is illustrated through Calvin's approach to declarations of a human's correct basic conduct in front of God in his theologies. Calvin so then describes the knowledge of ourselves and God's to be connected together.³⁷

It is also important to note that the knowledge of God itself is categorised in two parts, as established above; for humans, the knowledge of God is naturally implanted but also, the knowledge of God, as our saviour, is revealed through Jesus Christ. Calvin states that the knowledge

of God has been naturally implanted in our minds.³⁸ This knowledge may only allow the initial and forced fear of the Lord's judgement. However, it will not cause the fear of free will about God's dignity, reverence and majesty. Therefore, in order for this knowledge of God to be connected with true piety, it is compulsory to realize true knowledge about ourselves. However, the knowledge of ourselves is also divided into two ways. Firstly, "for what purpose he was created" and secondly, "his own abilities- or rather, lack of abilities."³⁹ This correct knowledge of ourselves is linked to piety, allowing us to serve God. It is knowledge of the history of Adam's fall which displays sin's nature and the realization of God's love revealed through Christ that draws us to the knowledge of faith of God's reverence. It is shown that the knowledge about God and the knowledge about ourselves are linked together where our love and respect found for God joins with God's grace which is revealed through Christ. Without realizing one's transgressions, we are unable to gain the truthful knowledge about God. It is only when we truly and rightly recognise God through the gospels, we are able to enter a relationship between God and us; our acknowledgement of our own sins allows our whole committal to God in our openness to admit our shortcomings.

For the knowledge of God is the beginning of life and the first entrance in to godliness. In short, spiritual gifts cannot be given for salvation, until, being illuminated by the doctrine of the gospel, we are led to know God.⁴⁰

³⁴ Lillback, *Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes*, 19.

³⁵ I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 191.

³⁶ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 47.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁴⁰ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul The Apostle to Hebrews*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids, Baker books, 2009), 369.

From this, it can be deduced that piety can be used as a measurement to correctly recognize God. When we realize on our own wretchedness and find God as our creator and our saviour, it is only then that we are able to recognise him as our God and serve him, and only at that moment are we able to enter the right relationship with our Lord. The knowledge of ourselves (our impropriety, wickedness, deceit and illicitness) found through the gospel becomes our faith of knowledge wherein knowing God allows us to be established in a correct relationship of full faith in Him.

Thus rather than the “Cognitio Dei” of God, piety is seen more to be the knowledge of faith. This is to say that knowledge is “experiential, not theoretical” which is made explicit in Calvin’s *Institutes*.⁴¹ It is seen through *Institutes* it is not only the knowledge of knowing God but “grasp[ing] what befits us and is proper to his glory” and “what is to our advantage to know of him.”⁴² To define those with knowledge of faith and those in pursuit of piety, “the mind always exercises the utmost diligence and care not to wander astray or rashly and boldly to go beyond his will.”⁴³ It thus recognizes God because it knows that he governs all things; and trusts that he is its guide and protector, therefore giving itself over completely to trust in him.”⁴⁴ That is then the definition of our relationship with God; with our trust in God as our father, we have complete faith and trust in him in his unconditional love for us as well as his continued acts of salvation.

In that regard, it is also vital to note the way in which God must be

⁴¹ Hesselink, “Calvin’s Theology,” 151. Refer to Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, 583.

⁴² Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, 39.

⁴³ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

known as; Calvin stresses the importance in recognising God as our Father. In that sense, Calvin iterates that humans’ practising true piety or godliness is the acknowledgement of God as our Father, involving our truest and sincerest hearts. He has thus stressed the significance of developing an understanding from the heart rather than from our head. This is to maintain a personal relationship and knowledge rather than ‘intellectual’; genuine piety, above all else, consists of love which underpins our reverence and faith in the Lord.

We can thus define that the true piety is our recognition of God as our Father and it is our reverence and love for our Father that leads to a well-established relationship with Him. Piety is particularly abandoning our sinful and self-centred nature as well as our ignorance and arrogance to instead be regenerated with a God-centred faith that we adhere to. For Calvin, piety originated from the faith in regarding God as our Father and it is this experience of faith that leads to conversion and true belief. Piety is realising this grace, and the joy that comes from this voluntary response to God. Thus the knowledge of God as well as the knowledge of ourselves can be then described as the root of piety in which faith is born from the word of God as well as from the grace of the Spirit.

5.2 Fatherhood and faith

The significance of the interrelated nature between faith and fatherhood can be also examined within Calvin’s piety. As confirmed before, Calvin experienced a personal and interactive faith in God through dealing with his sufferings in his life. This is proven not only by how he defines faith in his *Institutes*⁴⁵, but also displays his faith in the way he reflects through his life and personally facing God whenever problems arose.

Thus Calvin describes that a faithful life will not be plainly peaceful and will still encounter adversities and challenges throughout the way. However, he also asserts that no matter what conflicts one comes across, in no way will the sure assurance given by God's mercy to them through faith, be taken away or abandon them.

As aforementioned, Calvin defines the basis of faith lies upon knowledge and not "...upon pious ignorance", stressing the fundamental role of knowledge in faith.⁴⁶ In addition, he emphasizes that this knowledge is not one of mere "empty speculation" but a core belief and faith that a believer upholds in heart.⁴⁷ Moreover, Calvin is especially referring to not mere knowledge but knowledge of God and His heavenly will.⁴⁸ Here, he explains in detail of knowing God's will, which he defines to be, - because of our reconciliation with God through Christ⁴⁹- to know God as our merciful Father, and the imperative to realize and know the truth that Christ is our righteousness, sanctification and our new life.⁵⁰ This truth is not only the knowledge of God but also knowing the knowledge of ourselves - in which its significance was examined above. As aforementioned, it is thus why Calvin starts his *Institutes* with the connection between knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves.⁵¹ This "true knowledge"⁵² in Calvin's theology⁵³, can

⁴⁵ Ibid., 551. See also 562-567.

⁴⁶ Here, Calvin is conscious of scholastic scholars who self-righteously in their pious acts believe themselves to be following God, but due to the veil they have put upon Christ do not have true knowledge and therefore regards their faith to be blinded. Cf. Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, 544.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 61-62.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 545.

⁴⁹ Cf. Calvin clearly stresses that we believe in God through Christ (1 Peter 1:21).

⁵⁰ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, 545.

⁵¹ Ibid., 35.

be summarized to be the recognition that God is our Father.

Calvin in his *Institutes* reiterates the significance of the Fatherhood of God. His repeated mentioning of 'fatherhood' indicates his belief that God is first and foremost, a Father. Originally, Adam had been created in order to be the son of God. However, the separation between human and God through humankind's sin is an indescribable tragic affair. Accordingly, His adoption of us in our wretched state is a favor of His immense grace.⁵⁴ Thus when Calvin describes deliverance, in reference to the rehabilitation of the relationship between humans and God, he knows to use the term "reconciliation". Through sin, the relationship between humans and the Father had shattered, becoming hostile, a forfeiture of being his children. However, through the Father's offering of His hand, we, underserving of his grace were accepted back

⁵² Cf. Ford Lewis Battles translates this "true knowledge" to be just "truth".

⁵³ Here we can find another important part of Calvin's theology. This is that the first edition of his *Institutes* (1536) uses the exposition of the Apostle's Creed to explain faith. It can be seen that the grounds of faith is introduced to us in more detail through explaining the creed that the apostles had confessed. In addition, when looking at the catechisms (1538) that Calvin has published for use to teach his Geneva church two years afterwards, "faith" is placed first in the table of contents. This evidently shows the importance that faith held for Calvin that ultimately faith was again placed in front of his doctrine of Salvation in the last edition of his *Institutes* (Generally, systematic theologians, in their doctrine of salvation order repentance and regeneration before faith, but Calvin is seen doing the opposite and putting faith in front) thus showing the extent to which Calvin regarded faith to be crucial for the belief of his thoughts. Furthermore, in the last edition of *Institutes*, ultimately the faith he stresses is "knowledge", of that of truly knowing God as well as of one self and stresses the inter-connectedness of the two and emphasises that Faith is not "pious ignorance", nor "implicit faith" but true knowledge. Like this, it can be expressed, in all of Calvin's theology, including his *Institutes*, the doctrine of faith is centralized like the diamond of a ring. Not only in his *Institutes* but in all of Calvin's works, the focus of "faith" is a common trait that can be found.

⁵⁴ Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms 1-35*, 1, 548.

to be His children. Therefore according to Calvin, the fatherhood of God is the basis, the starting ground of believer's faith. In that sense, Calvin notes that discovering God as our father is the first step towards piety.⁵⁵

Thus Calvin often expresses faith to be the relationship between Father and His children.⁵⁶ The relationship between Fatherhood of God and true believers is made explicit in his *Institutes*.

Briefly, he alone is truly a believer who, convinced by a firm conviction that God is kindly and well-disposed Father toward him, promises himself all things on the basis of his generosity; who, relying upon the promises of divine benevolence toward him, lays hold on an undoubted expectation of salvation.⁵⁷

As Calvin stresses in his *Institutes* 1.1, our knowledge of ourselves is interrelated with God's knowledge.⁵⁸ Without one, there is no other. This is to say, mankind's starting point relies on God, all knowledge derives from Him, and only when one relies on him can they find and realize their own identity. This is the direct example that must appear when thought of the word 'faith', of the link between God's fatherliness and faith. Like this, Calvin holds that God's ultimate purpose is to show mercy and nurture as his foremost role as a Father and faith is the father-child relationship between mankind and Him.⁵⁹ God is

⁵⁵ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 347.

⁵⁶ *Commentary Upon the Book of Psalm 93-119*, trans. James Anderson, 5 vols., vol. 4, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Bakers Book House, 1996), 136.

⁵⁷ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 562.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁹ Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Bakeracademic, 2007), 247.

definitely our good Father.

However, it is integral to note of the ambivalence in Calvin's portrayal of fatherhood. From Calvin's definitions, one can begin to see what Calvin means by piety in relations to fatherhood; he depicts it to be "reverence joined with love". These two are equated to be the true worship of God but contains a paradoxical element within. In his treatment of 'Father', Calvin instills fear as well as love, highlighting the ambivalence in fatherhood. In that light, it is understanding that despite, or in spite of this fear, we owe our every happiness and every being to God as our father who is the reason for our every good which becomes the love we bear for Him.⁶⁰

From here a fundamental truth is revealed; no matter whether he deals with faith or is treating piety, there remains an emphasis on God's fatherhood. In following, the question then arises, 'Of all of God's attributes, why does Calvin stress the significance of fatherhood?'

For one, understanding Calvin's historical context brings to light of the appeal of fatherhood for Calvin. As abovementioned, Calvin in his life faced persecution, sufferings and distress.⁶¹ In consideration of that, for Calvin, God represented the attributes of a Father - protection, safeguard, and enclosure. It is in that sense that his affiliation with fatherhood rather than motherhood is revealed. Secondly, his personal context brings to surface of the significance of fatherhood for Calvin rather than serving as a reminder of maternal qualities; between his parents, Calvin's father yielded more influence on Calvin than did his mother.⁶² Calvin's Preface to his *Commentary on the Psalms* reveals

⁶⁰ Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 41.

⁶¹ As noted above, throughout his life, Calvin faced continuous distress and suffering with the Roman Catholics and the Anabaptists.

that under advice of his father, Calvin had been studying law before making the sudden conversion, choosing instead to study theology which had originally been advised by again, his father. In that light, it is suggested that throughout his life, Calvin had had a closer relationship with his father who had wielded greater influence on him.⁶³

Thus in consideration of those aspects, the imagery of God as Father had become embossed for Calvin. Through this then, it is crucial to understand that his piety was not a theology developed speculatively but one that has been impacted by his tumultuous experiences and sufferings induced. To surmise, for Calvin, piety was born out of his torment wherein through this suffering, he maintained his belief in God to be the faithful Father and in through this faith, Calvin tasted God's living word and experienced His grace.

5.3 The word of God and The Spirit

The study of Calvin's piety also leads to discovery regarding faith and the impact of God's word and the spirit. The recognition of God's living word is primarily needed in order to attain the true and experienced knowledge of God as the Father. Then the knowledge of God and thus the true knowledge of ourselves is formed by the revelation of God which is His written word. This word is first received by humans' consciousness but it is when the living Spirit applies it to us humans that we are able to experience that faith within our lives.

Thus Calvin described the faith to be in his *Institutes* as

...a right definition of faith if we call it a firm and certain knowledge

⁶² Calvin's mother does not appear in his works in comparison to the mentions of his father and the influence wielded by him.

⁶³ Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms 1-35*, 1, Author's Preface, xl.

of God's benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴

Calvin also stresses that faith and the word of God are closely interrelated.

Hence, we again infer what had been explained before: that faith needs the word as much as fruit needs the living root of a tree. For no others, as David witnesses, can hope in God but those who know his name(PS.9:10), but this knowledge does not arise out of anyone's imagination, but only so far as God himself is witness to his goodness.⁶⁵

This is similarly evinced in also his commentary on Psalms;

...certainly, where there is no godliness, there is no sense of the works God. It is also to be observed, that he attributes to the faithful the knowledge of God; because from this religion proceeds, whereas it is extinguished through the ignorance and stupidity of men.⁶⁶

The knowledge of the divine favour, it is true, must be sought for in the word of God; nor has faith any other foundation on which it can rest with security except his word.⁶⁷

From above, it is clear of the link between piety and faith; true piety

⁶⁴ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, 551.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 576-77.

⁶⁶ Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms 1-35*, 1, 120.

⁶⁷ Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Book of Psalm 36-66*, trans. James Anderson, 5 vols., vol. 2, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Bakers Book House, 1996), 146.

accompanies true faith. In that sense, a pious person is a faithful person and in that light, a faithful person rightfully recognises the word of God through the illumination of the Spirit.

Accordingly, without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Word can do nothing. From this, also, it is clear that faith is much higher than human understanding. And it will not be enough for the mind to be illumined by the Spirit of God unless the heart is also strengthened and supported by his power.⁶⁸

Also, faith contains a dual frame of knowledge, the first of which is the word of God sourced from the knowledge within the Bible. The other is the living knowledge gained through humans' journeys through life wherein true experiences of God's empowering presence have shown the application of simple knowledge gained from the scriptures. It is not enough to attain the knowledge of God as Father merely through the Bible; it is our actual human experiences with God as Father and the realisation and recognition of such truth through such interactions that becomes the foundation of knowledge. Thus according to Psalms 34:8, we must "taste" the goodness and graciousness of the Lord, which this knowledge is stressed by Calvin to come from the mind and accepted by heart.⁶⁹ With the slightest mistake, Calvin's faith may be misinterpreted as simple knowledge. In view of Calvin's emphasis that "faith rests upon knowledge, not on pious ignorance,"⁷⁰ whilst faith may be

⁶⁸ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, 580-81.

⁶⁹ Cf. "*Cor meum tibi offero Domine, prompte et sincere* : My Heart I Offer to You, Lord, Promptly and Sincerely ". In grim decision, Calvin expressed in his letter to Farel in August 1541 in preparation to return to Geneva from Strasbourg to offer his heart to God.

⁷⁰ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1*, 544.

misinterpreted as simple knowledge of God, the knowledge that Calvin refers to is not only the complete knowledge of the Scriptures but also the deep understanding of God's faithfulness and how His word is experienced in our hearts.

Moreover, this knowledge that Calvin references is not one of mere historical facts but one that holds its basis in the sincerity of Christ's promise which was given freely to us in which we are made to taste God's love for us in our lives. Calvin especially stresses in comparison to the vague or implicit faith of the Roman Catholics, faith has to be experienced to obtain. Therefore faith is not purely knowing God's law nor reading about it without interest or care but faith becomes engraved deep into our hearts.⁷¹ As follows, we know that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in which God's words are inscribed in our hearts. However in saying that, we are led to God on our own accord and not drawn to him regardless of our own hearts and emotions as though we are impassive beings or objects.⁷²

Though faith derives from and grounds itself on the word of God, without setting its foundation on the experiences of the Holy Spirit, it cannot be a faith, alive. Experience is the confirmation of God words, His faithfulness, His mercy and faith. Moreover, through the Holy Spirit, God must ensure in our hearts, the assurance of his words. In that sense, piety becomes the faithful attitude held towards God as our Father and our reverence for the Holy Father as well as our love and thanks for His mercy and grace bestowed upon us. Such recognition of God comes from the knowledge attained as above but such love for Him in the nature of piety must also be extended to others, which will be

⁷¹ Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Book of Psalm 93-119*, 4, 409.

⁷² Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Book of Psalm 36-66*, 2, 101.

further discussed below.

5.4 To God and To Neighbors

For Calvin, piety was primarily the reverence of God as Father, and the abidance to His will and the word revealed in Christ through reliance on the Spirit in which alongside this, there exists a deep relationship with believers' lives. This is due to the fact that those who solely revere God as Father and have been called to his greatness have also been called to practice a holy life of piety for its entirety. Calvin also insists that love is not easy to maintain in all respects unless humans sincerely revere God – that love is proof of human's piety.⁷³ However, it is important to note that this piety may be expressed in various ways. Though aforementioned, to reiterate, piety is to firstly recognise God as Father and live in love for and reverence of Him (worship, prayer, praise, obedience, and glorification⁷⁴, appearing as a religious life. Believers may normally regard such measures to be the final goal of piety. However, it is even more critical to realise that Calvin's piety cannot be called as such if the defining love for God is not extended to one's neighbours. So then, though Calvin emphasizes that piety first requires devotion to God with pure faith, on the other hand, it also commands humans to embrace their neighbours with earnest affection. Furthermore, Calvin explores piety through the Second Tablet of Law, as he interprets the term 'faith' as "truthfulness toward men" rather than "piety toward God."⁷⁵ Calvin even asserts that love is born out of true piety.

⁷³ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1, 416.

⁷⁴ Cf. Due to the large number of scholars who have already discussed this point in relations to piety, there will be no further discourse regarding this matter.

Now the perfection of that holiness comes under the two headings already mentioned; 'that we should love the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength' (Deut.6:5p; cf. ch 11;13), 'and our neighbour as ourselves.' (Lev.19; 18p; cf. Matt. 22;37, 39). First, indeed, our soul should be entirely filled with the love of God. From this will flow directly the love of neighbour. This is what the apostle shows when he writes that 'the aim of the law is love from a pure conscience and a faith unfeigned' (1 Tim. 1; 5p.). You see how conscience and sincere faith are put at the head. In other words, here is true piety, from which love is derived.⁷⁶

Thus in addition to our reverence of God, piety includes humility towards other humans and neighbours, firm stand in faith, righteousness in actions, the demonstration of mercy, and self-restraint in life; the ability to endure unrighteousness committed by others and thus the ability to maintain the peace between neighbours.

To embody piety in oneself, Calvin puts forward that there needs to be an equal respect to other humans as well as God. Thus, justice, mercy, faithfulness and love between humans are equally important as sincerity toward God. Following the understanding of piety in regards to human's relationship with God, that same piety can be applied to interactions and relationships between humans. In that sense, we explore that piety is directly related to the attitudes regarding toward God but love is the proof of piety between humans; humans can only truly revere God when they are able to also sustain love in all respects to fellow neighbours as well.

⁷⁵ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 415.

6. Conclusion

Through close study of his theology, it is revealed that Calvin's complex discourse of piety is difficult to succinctly define. However, it is clear of his preference in employing the term, "piety" rather than any other and the notion of Calvin's piety is revealed to be comprehensive and practically applicable.

In light of the complexities involved in Calvin's theology wherein the intricate build of his piety is revealed, Battles' point that the term 'pietas' as Calvin intended, is "untranslatable" unless with use of Calvin's own words is found to be correct.⁷⁷ In fact, as the above discourse into Calvin's piety has revealed, it is an impossible task to surmise Calvin's piety as one simple definition. However, the nature of his piety can be defined under the various characteristics.

1. Though piety is prevalent in *Institutes* alongside his other works, most scholars, in their study and understanding of the concept of piety, had the tendency of approaching his theology systematically. However, the piety within *Institutes* (as well as his other works) must be understood in a ministerial light and approached ethically and applied practically rather than as a systematic doctrine.

2. Calvin's concept of piety must not be understood as separate to his personal and historical context; his theology was closely interrelated to the background and circumstances at the time and so thoroughly displayed what constituted 'ungodliness' drawing from his context. Thus it is critical to consider this element of his theology wherein our disregard

of his personal and historical context will disallow for a true understanding of his piety.

3. Thus the concept of Calvin's piety is not merely speculative, doctrinal, or conceptual. Rather, in light of Calvin's sufferings and life experiences, the dynamical and practical qualities of Calvin's piety can be found. Thus in explanation of piety and faith, Calvin, rather than any others, heavily emphasizes the 'fatherhood' of God.

4. With some understanding Calvin's theological method in *Institutes* as a dialectical system and others to be the Duplex Cognito Dei, there has not yet been an agreed approach his theology. However, it is revealed of his preference for the duplex frame to describe his logic. In the same way, Calvin employs the duplex frame to discuss the concept of piety in order to iterate its notion and highlight its practical application. This characteristic of his theological method is also revealed to be smeared into his logic and explanation of the concept of piety.

5. Calvin's notion of piety is related to knowledge. This existential knowledge is that of the knowledge of God and knowledge of us. The knowledge of God involves not only the regard of Him as creator God but also the recognition of our own miserable existence and thus him as a redeemer God. It also vital to realize that this knowledge is not one to be merely grasped in the head but is rather related to the heartfelt belief in Him as a good Father and involves our faith and obedience to his words. Thus piety in this sense is not only about the knowledge of God and our existential knowledge to grasp a true understanding of ourselves but is also the practical belief of the right relationship to be entered with God.

6. From above, piety is essentially the right and true knowledge of

⁷⁷ Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary*, 190.

God (in truth, this knowledge is linked to the knowledge of ourselves - the depravity of humans), the fundamental word within this knowledge (the word is Christ himself, the gospel), that word of God being accepted through faith with the help of the Holy Spirit, and all this series of truths are actually alluding to the nature of piety.

7. The 'Knowledge of God' and 'Knowledge of Ourselves' serves as an entrance into Calvin's piety in his duplex frame wherein this true knowledge is linked to God's fatherhood and faith. This faith is then related to His words (Christ, gospel) and the Spirit wherein this ultimately produces the reverence for God as well as the love for neighbors which in turn is the proof of true piety. Also, close research into the duplex frame reveals the model of the Trinity; the knowledge of God and of ourselves are linked to the 'Father', and this knowledge is the faith in and reverence of God as Father which in turn, this faith in God's word is related to the 'Son', and finally, it is the 'Spirit' that engraves this faith into our hearts. It is thus why Calvin's piety can be seen to incorporate both the duplex frame and the trinity structure.

8. Generally, from the perspectives of the Reformed Church, the concept of piety was focused solely on humans' attitudes towards God. However, Calvin emphasizes that piety is not merely the reverence humans uphold for God. In actual, Calvin goes as far to state that the absence of love for one's neighbors displays the absence of piety. In that light, the love for neighbors and the relationship between humans becomes the test for the touchstone of true piety.

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