

**THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE
IN REFORMED PERSPECTIVE**

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jesus came not to call the righteous but rather to call the sinners to repentance (Lk. 5:32). And the first message of Jesus in Scripture was “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mt. 4:17).” Repentance was the basic requirement of the teachings of Jesus and his apostles to receive the forgiveness of sins in Scripture. And the doctrine of repentance was an important issue for the Reformers as well as in Scripture. The problem of repentance was to become one of the causes of Luther’s Reformation. For Reformers, repentance is produced by the Spirit of Christ in the regeneration and sanctification of a sinner and is absolutely essential to the character of a true Christian. The Christian Church has always preached repentance from sins as one of the main messages from her pulpits.

The doctrine of repentance in the Reformed perspective is a difficult issue but Calvin deemed it “not very complicated”¹ because although repentance is complicated with conversion and regeneration and even sanctification, we can easily come to know and understand this doctrine through the Bible with the help of the Holy Spirit. Therefore my starting point for the understanding of repentance is Scripture because only through Bible we can understand this doctrine obviously and easily.

However, since the time of the early medieval Church, the doctrine of repentance has been corrupted by the guise of nomism and by the medieval doctrine of penance. Berkouwer stated that this penance-nomism is a parasite on the true relationship

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), Bk. 3. Ch. 4. 1; Hereafter, Inst.

between repentance and grace.² And since the time of Tertullianus,³ the doctrine of repentance has degenerated into a sacrament of the Roman Church, which is what led to the Reformation.

I think that the restoration of true repentance was, in actuality, the very starting point of the Reformation because the main concern of Luther's 'Die 95 Thesen' was the restoration of true repentance, and the Reformation began as a debate over the meaning of the words "repentance or penitence."⁴ In Art. 1 of 'Die 95 Thesen', Our Lord Jesus Christ, Luther said: "Repent you, *et cetera*, intending that the whole life of believers should be repentance."⁵ He criticised the doctrine of penance preached by the Roman Catholic Church, thus showing that he wanted to establish the *Sola fide* on true repentance. He may have thought that the restoration of true repentance was the first step for the restoration of 'justification by faith alone.' And Luther's very first thesis touched on the central issue: Jesus Christ announced the imminent coming of

2 G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Justification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 180; hereafter FJ

3 In the second century Tertullianus rejected the possibility of second repentance with Hebrews 6:4-6, and in rigorism Tertullianus believed that those who backslide may not be taken back again to repentance. But he believed in the possibility of divine forgiveness after lapses into sin only by the Church. Cf. G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance* tr. Robert D. Knudsen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 119; hereafter, FP

4 David C. Steinmetz, "Reformation and Conversion," *Theology Today* 35(1978-79): 25; Anthony N.S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic Protestant Dialogue: An Evangelical Assessment* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 100-107.

5 Henry Bettenson, ed. *Documents of the Christian Church* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 185-91. Latin, Art. 1. *Dominus et magister noster Iesus Christus dicendo 'Penitentiam (Matt. 4, 17) agite &c.' omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse voluit.* German, Art. 1. *Da unser Herr und Meister Jesus Christus spricht : Tut Busse usw.(Matt. 4, 17), hat er gewollt, dass alles Leben der Gläubigen Busse sein soll.*

the Kingdom of God and invited his listeners to repent.⁶ Zwingli also expressly adopted the central thesis of Luther that “the whole of the Christian life must be penitence,”⁷ and Calvin wrote, “repentance and forgiveness of sin are the sum of the Gospel”⁸ and also “there is no faith in Christ without repentance, without regeneration.”⁹ According to Calvin, “with good reason, the sum of the gospel is held to consist in repentance and forgiveness of sins. Any discussion of faith, therefore, that omitted these two topics would be barren and mutilated and well-nigh useless.”¹⁰ The meaning of true repentance was thus a matter of the utmost importance to Calvin and the other Reformers.¹¹

Steinmetz also looked at the necessity of repentance in the contemporary Church.¹² For him, debate over the meaning of repentance is basic to Protestantism. From the early and formative decades of the Protestant Reformation through the Evangelical Awakening of the eighteenth century up to today, Protestants have

6 David C. Steinmetz, op. cit., 26.

7 Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*, tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge, U. K. : Wm B. Eerdmans, 1995), 100.

8 Inst, 3. 3. 1. Repentance is a very important idea in salvation. One can see that Calvin’s thought was based on the two pillars that are repentance and the forgiveness of sins, because Calvin believes that the Gospel consists of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. J. Calvin, *Commentary on Mt 3:2*; Hereafter, Comm.

9 Philip Schaff, ed. *The Creeds of Christendom Vol. I* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 467-71; Art. 29 of Geneva Catechism.(1537) in *Theological Treatises*, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXII, ed. by J. K. S. Reid (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 88-139.

10 Inst., 3.3.1.

11 Pete Wilcox, “Conversion in the Thought and Experience of John Calvin,” *ANVIL* 14, no. 2 (1997): 116.

12 David C. Steinmetz, op. cit., 25-26.

returned again and again to the themes of penitence and conversion.¹³

Repentance is necessary in our salvation because when God seeks to have fellowship with us in Christ, He hates our sinful way of life.¹⁴ For this reason we must believe in the name of Jesus Christ, trust in His righteousness and repent of our sins. In order to fellowship with God, we must hate our sin and remove our trespasses from ourselves because the original corruption of nature is not entirely removed by regeneration and the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:21).

Nevertheless, since the Reformation era, repentance has been dealt with unjustly as though it were merely a worthless part of faith or an unimportant aspect of soteriology in Reformed theology. It has been dealt with comparatively indifferent ideas up until now, even though Calvin called it the sum of the gospel.

The main ideas of the Reformation are, as all of Christianity agrees, ‘justification by faith alone’, the honour of God and the glory of God.¹⁵ We know the main mottos of the Reformation: *Justus ex fide vivit* or *Sola fide, Sola gratia, Sola scriptura*. There is no doubt that they are important starting points of the Reformation.

In comparison with the emphasis of ‘justification by faith alone’ in Reformed soteriology, repentance was underestimated by Reformed theology and the only

13 Ibid., 25.

14 Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, tr. Harold Knight (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 126.

15 Ibid., 11-12 ... “the whole edifice of Calvinistic theology rests upon a certain fundamental principle, This principle is certainly not anything formal but is something lived out in the depths of the soul: the honour of God”

interest of the modern Christian, especially in the Reformed Church, is justification and whether or not it is related to salvation. The doctrine of repentance has been treated as a mostly subjective element in the *Ordo Salutis*, whereas justification by faith in Christ is treated mostly as an objective element. It is true that only the Reformed Church has held to the doctrine of justification and the atonement of Christ, but they have held that repentance is no more than an ethical element of the Christian religion and it does not have an important role in soteriology.

But it is also true that the Reformed church has preached two main topics: the first being the idea of ‘justification by faith alone’ and forgiveness of sins, and the second being that of repentance. Both repentance and forgiveness of sins are inextricably related to hamartiology because repentance and forgiveness of sins starts from the problem of sin, and the problem of sin can be solved by repentance and forgiveness of sins in Christ. But modern Christians rarely experience the sense of guilt and do not even know what the genuine meaning of ‘sin’ is exactly, because since the Reformation, the Reformed Church has neglected the sense of sin and its fatality in her preachings.

The Reformed church has the signs of the true Church: baptism, the Holy Supper, correct preaching of the word of God and discipline. All of these require repentance as preliminary steps. But only ‘justification by faith alone’ has had its position of presupposition for the signs of the Church. Therefore, today we must consider the authentic role of repentance in Reformed theology and the biblical response to it. In this thesis I will argue that true repentance is urgently needed in the modern Reformed Christian because I think that the doctrine of repentance is one of the most important

aspects of the Reformed faith.

In the Bible, both the doctrine of repentance and ‘justification by faith alone’ are the heart of the Gospel. Nevertheless, the modern Reformed church has lost this heart because ‘justification by faith alone’ in the Reformed theology has covered up the position and role of repentance. In the Scripture, faith and repentance stand together, with the former growing out of the latter and the latter coming from the former. And the true doctrine of repentance helps one to understand the true ‘justification by faith alone’ because they are inseparable and indissoluble in soteriology and they are one gospel.

In the sense intended by Scripture, repentance is not merely a subjective change or a simple confession of sin by mouth, but a complete change of life, a gift of God and His ministry only to be found in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. According to this doctrine, God alone can initiate the change of the whole man. God changes not only the inward man and thoughts, but also the whole life of man. Therefore, through repentance of sins to God, man not only has good thoughts, but also does good works. True repentance precedes good works, therefore Christians do good works in repentance by the grace of God. So, Reformed theology sustains both the subjectivity and the objectivity of salvation; that is objectivity as a work of God and subjectivity as a response of man to God’s operation.

The Korean Church, as is the case with other Christian Churches, has many problems concerning the doctrine of repentance. The repentance movement in the Korean Church is related to group repentance rather than individual repentance, especially in Friday Prayer meetings. Korean Christians have hardly experienced the

complete change of life through repentance and they do not know that repentance is a ministry of God that comes from God Himself because, with the influence of revivalism and pietism, Korean Christians have tended to understand repentance as a personal and subjective experience concerning the forgiveness of sins, in contrast to Reformed theology.

My approach to the doctrine of repentance according to the Reformed perspective should be helpful to the Korean Presbyterian Church, which is made up of over half of all Korean Christians that have been touched by Reformed theology. Reformed theology overemphasises the objectivity in repentance, whereas the Korean Presbyterian Church overemphasises the subjectivity in repentance. Through this study, Korean Presbyterian Christians will be shown that the operator of repentance is God alone and that there is a balance between subjectivity and objectivity in soteriology.

I think that repentance is an important means in salvation (Ps. 7:12; Lk. 13:3, 5). And the Gospel is accompanied with not only ‘justification by faith alone’ but also ‘assurance of forgiveness of sins through repentance.’ Therefore, in my thesis I will deal with the relationship between sin and repentance, faith and repentance, sanctification and justification, repentance and Christ and the Holy Spirit for roles of God in repentance, repentance and the kingdom of God and the image of God, repentance and forgiveness of Sins and the unforgivable sin, repentance and conversion, the unique role of “Moment and Progression” repentance in salvation and finally, for the external proof and the human role in the doctrine of repentance, I will look at repentance and good works as evidence of it.

The reason why I deal with the doctrine of repentance of Calvin, K. Barth, G. C. Berkouwer and Hyung-Nong Park in this thesis is, first of all, that they have greatly contributed to Protestant theology, especially to Reformed theology. And I will deal first with Calvin's doctrine of repentance in order to investigate the position of the early Reformation and to know the position of traditional Reformed theology; second, Karl Barth's doctrine of repentance will be dealt with because in modern Reformed theology his influence is great and he fought against the subjectivism of nineteenth century liberal theology to protect Reformed theology from liberal theology; third, I will look at G. C. Berkouwer's doctrine of repentance and through it I will examine the process of change in Reformed theology because Berkouwer is an important theologian of Reformed theology who can present the modern context of Reformed theology; fourth, I will deal with the doctrine of penance in official Roman Catholicism; the Trent, the fourth Lateran, and the first and second Vatican Council, through it showing the history of penance and knowing the meaning of penance in the counter-Reformation and criticising the Roman Catholic Church's problems with penance; fifth, I will deal with Hyung-Nong Park, a representative systematic theologian and the greatest theologian to want to establish Reformed theology, separating it from liberal theology and religious subjectivism in the Korean Church. Through Hyung-Nong Park I will clarify the doctrine of repentance of the Korean Presbyterian Christian from where I stand.

Through this thesis I will compare the theology of four Reformed theologians, and Roman Catholic theology, with the biblical idea regarding the doctrine of repentance, and suggest a perspective relevant for twenty-first century Korean Christians in the position of Reformed theology.

PART ONE

Chapter 1. The Doctrine of Repentance in the Theology of John Calvin

1. 1. The Necessity of Repentance in Soteriology

1. 1. 1. The Nature and Importance of Repentance

Following the growth of the Church in the last decade it is an appropriate time to subject a term such as repentance to fresh scrutiny because, as Calvin said, “repentance and forgiveness of sin are the sum of the Gospel”¹⁶ and there is no faith in Christ without repentance and without regeneration.¹⁷ Actually, repentance is the basis of Church revival and spiritual awakening. So first of all repentance is necessary in the contemporary Church;¹⁸ as it is through repentance¹⁹ that God cleanses the elected of all sin before He saves His people. Even though, through regeneration (which gives new life), the elected Christians are freed from the sway of sin and God has abolished their guilt and sin ceases to reign over them, it does not stop sin from dwelling in Christians.²⁰ Repentance thus becomes an event that needs to have repercussions upon our sinful way of life when God seeks to have fellowship with

16 Inst., 3.3.1. Repentance is a very important idea in Calvin’s soteriology. He always presents the doctrine of repentance with the doctrine of forgiveness of sins. Calvin prefers to use the term repentance rather than the term sanctification in his soteriology. This implies that forgiveness of sins plays a pivotal role in his theology. Comm. on Mt. 3 :2.

17 J. K. S. Reid, ed. Art. 29 of Geneva Catechism (1537) in *Theological Treatises, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXII* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 88-139.

18 David C. Steinmetz, op. cit., 25-26.

19 Pete Wilcox, “Conversion in the Thought and Experience of John Calvin,” 113.

20 Inst., 3.3.11.

Christians in Jesus Christ.²¹

Calvin defined repentance as an inclination and justification as a purpose; the former aims at newness of life and the latter at free reconciliation with God.²² The inclination of repentance is newness of life to God as a process but the purpose of justification is free reconciliation with God once-and-for-all. He also draws parallels with repentance and forgiveness of sins where repentance is called conversion, newness of life, rebirth and sanctification, whereas forgiveness of sin is called free reconciliation, justification and faith. Therefore repentance and faith can be called the sum of the Gospel and the heart of Calvin's teachings.

I will write about repentance and faith and their relationship in Calvin's *Commentaries* and *Institutes* in my thesis because Calvin's works rests on these two main writings and Calvin himself distinguished between in *Scripturae expositione* (exegesis) and in *Dogmatibus* (doctrine): the exposition of the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, in the comprehensive commentaries and the systematic principal work, *Institutes of Christian Religion*.²³

Calvin abandons the medieval term *poenitentia agite* (do penance), instead of it he takes up the Greek words 'μετάνοια' and 'ἐπιστρέφειν', which signify the conversion of the mind that the whole man may be renewed and made another man.²⁴

21 W. Niesel, op. cit., 126.

22 Inst., 3.3.1.

23 Hans J. Kraus, "The Contemporary Relevance of Calvin's Theology," *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*, ed. by David Willis & Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.:WM. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 325.

24 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

In the New Testament, the terms ἐπιστρέφειν and μετανοεῖν, according to the apostles and evangelists, have a twofold theological meaning: they are directed “to God” and accomplished “by God.” Basically, conversion is not detachment (disgust, refusal, and break) but rather a positive position of attachment (a higher love, acceptance, and commitment).²⁵ But medieval scholasticism used the terms *convertere* and *conversio* as often in a secular or philosophical sense as in a strictly religious way. Medieval commentators frequently insist that the will of man cooperates with “assisting grace” like a Semi-Pelagian tendency. According to this perspective, the subjective conditions of conversion were ‘right will,’ ‘humility’ and ‘fidelity to grace’, but its objective conditions included believing certain truths, observing moral precepts, receiving the sacraments and obeying ecclesiastical authority. In this view, the work of the converted was stressed more than the work of God, and the juridical and ecclesiastical aspects were stressed more than the spiritual and biblical elements.²⁶

Contrary to the medieval idea of repentance, Calvin tries to reevaluate the concept of repentance in spiritual and biblical terms. He upholds the concept of repentance instead of penance of the Roman Catholic Church because he follows the idea of Erasmus who especially opposed some scholastics who wanted to find the sacramental triad of contrition, confession, and satisfaction in some way in the biblical idea of μετάνοια. For this reason, Erasmus preferred to translate μετάνοια into ‘repentance’ rather than ‘penitence.’²⁷ Differing with him, Luther eagerly takes up the

25 Alexandre Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin*, tr. by D. Foxgrover and W. Provo (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 243.

26 Ibid., 244.

27 Erasmus, Op 6, 773 F (2 Cor. 11); cited from Alexandre Ganoczy. Ibid. footnote 15. The intention of Erasmus is: Repent, μετανοεῖτε.... But our commoners think that doing penance means to atone by a

biblical concept of repentance wherein repentance comes about through the experience of one's own evil and through trusting faith in the infinite mercy of God. In other words, for Luther, the turning of man to God presupposes the turning of God to man; and that the "true conversion of peace" can only be the work of the Holy Spirit.²⁸ Luther criticised Erasmus's free will in the doctrine of repentance and instead of the sacramental penance of the Roman Catholic Church he presented biblical terms. In the same way that man "by his own power" is incapable of loving God above everything else, he can do nothing to convert himself to God. Calvin, like Luther, preferred "turn to me and I will turn to you (Zechariah 1:3)" which contains the position of two sides:

Here conversion is undoubtedly twofold. One conversion is ours toward God; the other is God's toward us...But God demands conversion from us, not because we can fulfill it in our own strength, but so that in acknowledging our weakness we may implore the help of the Spirit, by whose agency we can be converted.²⁹

Like all Reformers of the mid-sixteenth century, he arrived at his definition of the concept in reaction to the prevailing sacrament of penance in the Roman Catholic Church. In an annotated edition of the Greek New Testament published in 1516, Erasmus had questioned the translation of Mk 1:15 which had been adopted in the Vulgate where the Vulgate had "Do penance (*poenitemini*) for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," but Erasmus proposed that the Greek 'μετάνοια' is rendered

prescribed punishment for (sin) committed;... a serious error in certain theologians who distort what Augustine wrote about penance, that is, public satisfaction for the anguish of the soul which they call contribution...The Greek word ... is derived not from 'punishment'...but from 'recovering one's senses,' which changes the meaning.

28 Alexandre Ganoczy, op. cit., 244.

29 M. Luther, *Werke*, Weimar, 1883 ff. 13, 551.

“repent (*resipiscimini*).”³⁰ The Hebrew word for “repentance” is derived from conversion for return; the Greek words are derived from change of mind and intention. The issue stills vexed scholars forty years later and Calvin’s treatment of repentance in the context of the doctrine of sanctification³¹ reflects this controversy concerning the doctrine of repentance.³²

Calvin regarded the traditional teaching of the Roman Catholic Church as a perversion of biblical doctrine as he believed that it had completely externalised *Poenitentia* or *Conversione*.³³ Furthermore, he based his teaching on what he considered to be the original meaning in the New Testament of μετάνοια. He clarified it in his *Institutes* that the Hebrew term for *poenitentia* means a conversion and the Greek word means a change of mind. Terms aptly express what *poenitentia* really is, viz., a putting off the old mind and turning to God. Hence he would define *poenitentia* as true conversion of a life to God, which arises from a sincere fear of Him and which consists in putting aside the old man and vivification of the spirit.³⁴ This is what both the Prophets³⁵ and the Apostles preached; all used such terms as *converti*, *reverti ad Dominum*, *resipiscere* promiscuously as synonyms to designate this *poenitentia* or

30 P. Wilcox, “Conversion” op. cit., 117. Comm. on Mk 1:15; *et dicens quoniam impletum est tempus et adpropinquavit regnum Dei poenitemini et credite evangelio*; καὶ λέγων ὅτι πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ.

31 In Calvin, repentance includes conversion, rebirth, renewal, and even sanctification. In contradistinction to the modern connotation of these terms repentance in Calvin works is a wider concept than sanctification. So sometimes I will translate sanctification as repentance in considering this line of thought.

32 *Inst.*, 3.3.5.

33 See. Comm. Acts 2: 38.

34 *Inst.*, 3.3.5. CO. I, Col. 688.

35 Comm. on Amos 5: 4-6.

conversione.³⁶ But as a matter of fact Calvin continually uses repentance, *repentir*, amendment, *s'amender* as the French equivalents of *μετάνοια* and never uses the term penitence to mean sacramental penance.³⁷ And a part of Beza's *Novum Testamentum* reveals that he consistently translates *μετάνοια* into *resipiscentia* and *μετανοεῖν* into *resipiscere*. The translators of Zurich and Geneva and individual translators such as Diodati and Castalio, all reject the exact equivalents of the Vulgate *poenitentia* in their respective languages.³⁸ In this fashion the term repentance came into prominence as rendering for *μετάνοια* in Calvin.

Calvin did not see his works in the context of a great history of philosophy but in a fairly relative realistic context.³⁹ So the doctrine of repentance in the theology of Calvin also started from an endeavor to solve a realistic problem. Calvin's theology had the purpose of edifying human beings and the Church. This emphasis upon edification was carried forward in Calvin's persistent belief in the transformation of mankind to correspond to the image of God. The Christian life, for Calvin, is neither simply being, nor simply believing, but also doing.⁴⁰ To conform to the *Imago Dei* is not a theological hypothesis but specific restoration of the image of God. Although

36 Inst., 3.3.5.

37 CO, XXIX, Col. 366; XLVII, Col.462; XLV, Col.747; XXX, Col. 109; and XXVII where he uses the text of the Geneva Translation, edition of 1546 and gives the variants of other editions of the text, and of his commentary in the footnote.

38 Beza writes as follows in his note to Mt3: 2; "*Ceterum quum est verbum absolutum, proprie significat Post factum sapere, & de errore admissio ita dolere ut corrigas: quod Latinis proprie significat Resipiscere.*" *Testamentum Nuvum* with the annotations, fourth edition, 1588, 10

39 Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 22.

40 John Leith, *Calvin's Theological Realism in Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*, ed. David Willis & Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.:WM. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 344.

Calvin was a logical man it is difficult to easily understand his doctrine of repentance in his logical thought because Calvin deliberately and intentionally rejected speculation and logic in his theological works.⁴¹ He placed the doctrine of repentance in the praxis of the Christian himself. Calvin insisted that theology must deal with the concrete reality of human life in the language of ordinary human experience. His theology is addressed to concrete human beings with relation to quite specific human experiences.⁴² In Calvin's theology, repentance is not matter of theory but praxis of Christians. His doctrine of repentance is not an object of study but one of reality in the religious life of Christians. He wanted to place his doctrine on a practical level so he clarified the definition of the doctrine of repentance in his *Form of Prayer for the Church* that

Effacing our faults, and washing away all our pollutions, daily increase to us the gifts of thy Holy Spirit, that we from our inmost hearts acknowledging our iniquity, may be more and more displeasing to ourselves, and so stimulated to the repentance, and that he mortifying us with all our sins, may produce in us the fruits of righteousness and holiness pleasing to thee.⁴³

Furthermore, knowledge of God is not a theory but a practical experience: that of trust and obedience and of life under God and His will. Just as the knowledge of God has a practical dimension or application so, too, is it a theology as charismatic praxis because, according to Calvin, doctrine of repentance stands with accepted practice in a threefold definition: when executed correctly, it works *aedificatio* (the

41 Ibid., 340.

42 Ibid., 343.

43 T. F. Torrance, ed. *Form of Prayer for the Church: Tract and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church*, Vol. II tr. by the original Latin and French by Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1958), 100.

establishment of the unity and the life of the Christian), bears *fructio* (fruit), and is characterised by *utilitas* (usefulness).⁴⁴ Calvin's doctrine of repentance starts from this cognition and understanding of his context.

Calvin believed that the doctrine of repentance is a most serious matter in the Christian life because when we know this doctrine rightly, "we should most certainly know that forgiveness of sins may be obtained in it."⁴⁵ But in spite of being a serious matter, he considered it as "not very complicated"⁴⁶; he believed that it was not only serious but simple because it stands not on speculative ground but is based on concrete ground. Nevertheless he treated it importantly because "unless this knowledge remains clear and sure, the conscience can have no rest at all, no peace with God, no assurance or security; and it continuously trembles, wavers, tosses, is tormented and vexed, shakes, hates, and flees the sight of God."⁴⁷ Thus, true repentance is regarded as that which offers rest to the conscience and peace with God.⁴⁸ This belief is found in his *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*. In Article XXIV of *Confessio Fidei Gallicana* he rejects meritorious things to which aid forgiveness and salvation, auricular confession and indulgences and so on because these impose a yoke upon the human conscience.⁴⁹ Calvin rejects the notion that Christians confess their sins in the manner which the Catholic Church requires. The requirement of

44 Hans J. Kraus. op. cit., 327.

45 Inst., 3.4.2.

46 Inst., 3.4.1.

47 Inst., 3.4.2

48 Ibid.

49 Philip Schaff, ed. *Confessio Fidei Gallicana: The Creed of Christendom*, Vol. III Reprinted (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 374. Article XXIV.

complete confession, Calvin asserts, diminishes the rest of man's soul because he does not know all of his sins against God.⁵⁰ Calvin asserts that the only condition of absolution is God's mercy through Christ's sacrifice. The sinner can, indeed, embrace true and clear absolution when that simple condition is applied; that of embracing the grace of Christ according to the general rule of the Lord himself.⁵¹

God, by way of free favour, pardons our sins, but that is only when we renounce them. And more, God accomplishes in us one thing but through two avenues: being renewed by repentance, which we are delivered from "the bondage of our sins"; and, being justified by faith, we are delivered also from "the curse of our sins." Calvin regards them as inseparable fruits of grace. And consequently, due to their invariable connection, repentance may with fitness and propriety be represented as an introduction to salvation, but in this manner of speaking it is represented as an effect rather than as a cause.⁵² For Calvin, repentance is never a cause but rather an effect of salvation and of grace. The only cause of salvation is the grace of God whether it is repentance or faith. So the hope and assurance of salvation rests upon the free mercy of God alone and the forgiveness of sins shall, notwithstanding, be any cause of sluggish security.⁵³ For that reason to separate the grace of Christ from repentance is a perversion of the Gospel.⁵⁴ The meaning of repentance was a matter of the utmost importance for Calvin. When a man repents, in which he puts off the old man and lives in newness of life, he tastes salvation prepared for him in Christ. But we can

50 Inst., 3.4.17.

51 Inst., 3.4.23.

52 Comm. on 2 Cor. 7:10.

53 Comm. on Eph. 4:22; Acts. 11:18.

54 Comm. on Acts. 26:19-20.

never obtain forgiveness of sins without repentance; it is presented, in a variety of passages, as the mercy of God alone that forms the grounds for our obtaining it.⁵⁵ He continues that even though the Lord's mercy alone brings about forgiveness of sins, and that repentance is not the cause of forgiveness of sins, nonetheless, forgiveness of sins can never come about without man's repentance.⁵⁶

The design of God's benevolence is to convert sinners to him⁵⁷ and repentance is a fatherly invitation for sinners.⁵⁸ Because of this connection with a fatherly invitation, this presupposes a benevolent God and paternal goodness. So, we can come to before his countenance bravely. Calvin prefers rendering the word 'leads' rather than 'invites' and he does not take repentance in the sense of 'driving,' but 'leading' as it were by the hand.⁵⁹ This presents that though at first Calvin's doctrine of repentance comes from the grace of God, at the same time God wants voluntary repentance of sinners following God's grace in faith.⁶⁰

True repentance, Calvin announces, always comes from the grace of God. And he alludes to the fact that repentance might apply to salvation equally. Nonetheless he prefers the term repentance.⁶¹ He appears to make repentance the grounds of salvation. Nevertheless he does not regard repentance as the ground of salvation but simply commends repentance as the fruit that it produces. He says, that "it is a way by which

55 Comm. on 2 Cor. 7:10.

56 Inst., 3.4.3.

57 Comm. on Rom. 2:4.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Comm. on Acts 2:38.

61 Comm. on Rom. 2:5.

we arrive at salvation. Nor is it without good reason; for Christ calls us by way of free favor, but it is to repentance.”⁶² And when we become hardened against the admonition of the Lord, impenitence follows; and those who are not anxious about repentance openly provoke the Lord.⁶³ Calvin states that “the ungodly not only accumulate for themselves a heavier weight of God’s judgments daily, as long as they live, but also that the gifts of God also, which they continually enjoy, shall increase their condemnation.”⁶⁴

Repentance is, by reference, the expression of the love of God; because “God even defers his coming to invite all mankind to repentance and to give all time to repent” and God would have all, “who had been before wandering and scattered, to be gathered or come together to repentance.”⁶⁵ God leads his chosen people to salvation with great love:

So wonderful is his love towards mankind, that he would have them all to be saved, and is of his own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost. But the order is to be noticed, that God is ready to receive all to repentance, so that none may perish; for in these words the way and manner of obtaining salvation is pointed out. Every one of us, therefore, who is desirous of salvation, must learn to enter in by this way.⁶⁶

Calvin, in his *Institutes*, contrasts between “sorrow according to God” and

62 Comm. on Rom. 2:5.

63 Comm. on Rom. 2:5. What follows in the text, according to Calvin, is this, “*et Corinthians pœni tere nescium* — and a heart that knows not to repent; “ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς,” which Schleusner renders thus, “*animus, qui omnem emendationem respuit* — a mind which rejects every improvement.” It is “an impenitible” rather than “an impenitent heart,” that is, a heart incapable of repenting.

64 Comm. on Rom. 2:5.

65 Comm. on 2Pet. 3:9.

66 Comm. on 2Pet. 3:9.

“sorrow of the world,” and between “the joy of the world” and “the joy that is according to God” to make clear the definition of repentance. These, “sorrow according to God” and “the joy that is according to God,” are caused by fear of His judgment and mourning over our sins. This sorrow, as Calvin calls it, is the cause and beginning of repentance. In as much as repentance begins with dread and hatred of sin,⁶⁷ godly sorrow works repentance to salvation but the sorrow of the world works death.⁶⁸ In Calvin’s theses sorrows are classified; the former is the beginning of true repentance, which is our initial act of becoming wholly converted to God in the elected but the latter is nothing but the pricks of conscience in the unelected. But it is impossible for a man to experience a sorrow of the former kind without its giving birth to a new heart.⁶⁹ He notes the double fruits of repentance; first, that we are touched with the feeling of sorrow; and, secondly, that we are obedient to the preacher’s counsel. This is the beginning of repentance; this is the entrance into godliness, to be sorry for our sins, and to be wounded with the feeling of our miseries. And Calvin adds that surely a contrite spirit and a humble heart are a sacrifice acceptable to God.⁷⁰

The correlation between regeneration, repentance and conversion is implicated in the title of *Institutes* III. iii, where Calvin introduces his discussion of the subject: “Our regeneration by faith; a discourse on repentance.”⁷¹ Calvin explicitly interprets

67 Calvin sees fear of God and hatred of sins as the same. Inst., 3.3.7.

68 Comm. on 2 Cor 7:10.

69 Comm. on 2Cor. 7:9.

70 Comm. on Acts. 2:37.

71 Inst., 3.3. Chapter heading

repentance as regeneration.⁷² Furthermore, when he proceeds to define repentance in *Institutes* III.iii.5, it emerges that one further term, which is conversion, is related to these others. The final association of repentance with conversion is as significant for Calvin's theology as those that have been identified already.⁷³ Calvin identifies ἐπιστρέφειν (*convertere*) and μετανοεῖν (*resipiscere*), it is condensed as accurately as possible in Calvin's text.⁷⁴ Calvin treats the doctrine of regeneration and doctrine of conversion within the doctrine of repentance. In the *Institutes* as well as in Calvin's expositions of the prophets the concept of conversion stands alongside the themes of repentance, sanctification and regeneration, except that there it is more usual to find him introducing repentance, regeneration, and sanctification, having taken 'conversion' as his starting point.⁷⁵ It is more common in these expositions to find Calvin defining conversion in terms of repentance and regeneration than the other way around.⁷⁶

Calvin does equate conversion with the inner change viz., "regeneration by his spirit."⁷⁷ Many people have their eyes fixed on the outward fruits of repentance alone, but conversion refers to the renovation of the mind and heart.⁷⁸ Calvin defines conversion as the giving of the entire heart to the Lord and concerning the ridding not of garments, but of the heart.⁷⁹ Therefore repentance consists of *mortificatio* of the

72 Inst., 3.3.9.

73 A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 245-246.

74 Inst., 3.3.21.

75 Comm. on Ezek. 18:24.

76 Comm. on Dan. 2:47, Ezek 7:13; 18:24, Hos. 2:7.

77 Comm. on Lam. 5:21, Mal.5:21.

78 Comm. on Ezek. 18:30.

79 Inst., 3.3.17.

flesh and *vivificatio* of the spirit.⁸⁰ The meaning of *mortificatio* of the flesh demands the destruction of the whole flesh and the denial of ourselves.⁸¹ Calvin made a distinction between two forms of repentance with *mortificatio* and *vivificatio* according to Melanchthon.⁸² *Mortificatio* means that sorrow of the soul and dread conceived from the recognition of sin and the awareness of divine judgment, whereas *vivificatio* means that consolation that arises out of faith.⁸³ Calvin calls the former contrition and the latter desire arising from rebirth or faith. Luther also calls the former contrition, but the latter only faith.⁸⁴ Article XII of *Augsburg Confession*, which was authored by Lutheran Reformers, states that “repentance consists of two parts: one is contrition, that is, terror smiting the conscience with a knowledge of sin, and the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, believes that sins

80 Both things happen to us by participation in Christ. Inst 3.3.9

" *poenitentiae nomen hebraeis a conversione, graccis a mentis consiliique mutatione deductam est. Nec utrique etymologicae res ipsa male respondit; cuius summa est, ut a nonis demigrantes ad Deum convertamur, et deposita pristina menta novan induamus. Quamobrem non male eo quidem iudicio, sic poenitentia definiri poterit; esse veram ad Deum vitae nostrae conversionem, a sincero serioque Dei timore profectam, quae carnis nostrae veterisque hominis mortificatione et spiritus vivificatione constet.*"

81 Inst., 3.3.8

82 Philip Melanchthon, *THE LOCI COMMUNES of PHILIP MELANCHTHON*, tr. by Hill C L. (Boston: Meador Publishing Company, 1944), 249-258. This expression Augustine used, too. See The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. First series, Vol. V; Anti Pelagian Writings. Ch 7-9 ed. Philip Schaff. Especially ch.9 ... to the wholesome mortification of repentance by...; NPNF. First series, Vol. VIII: Exposition on the Psalms. 119: 49-56 ed. Philip Schaff... each man humbles himself by confessing his sin, and by not arrogating righteousness to himself; but when each man is humbled by some tribulation or mortification which his pride deserved;...

83 Inst., 3.3.3.

84 Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary*, tr. by John H. Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 134.

are forgiven for Christ's sake, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terror."⁸⁵ For repentance is that one died to sins and lives to God through Jesus.⁸⁶ For in that He died, he dies unto sin once: but in that He lives, he lives unto God. Likewise "reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁸⁷

Yet repentance is, for Calvin, one of the most significant and profound dimensions of the Gospel.⁸⁸ For in this way we flee from God who calls us to himself through repentance. God calls us to Himself through repentance.⁸⁹ So repentance is a means of calling,⁹⁰ and without which there is naturally no election as a prerequisite.⁹¹

Calvin considers repentance and faith as a progression through the whole course of our life.⁹² But he classifies the first repentance and general repentance; the former is repentance from dead works and the latter is part of our whole lives for though "every sin is a dead work, either as it leads to death, or as it proceeds from the spiritual death of the soul; yet the faithful, already born again of the Spirit of God, cannot be said properly to repent from dead works." The beginning of repentance,

85 Ibid.

86 Comm. on 1 Pet. 2:24

87 Inst., 3.3.5: Repentance is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivification of the Spirit.

88 John Witvliet, "Baptism as a Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Thought of John Calvin," *Studia Liturgica* 27/2 (1997): 152.

89 Inst., 3.3.15.

90 Ibid.

91 Inst., 2.3.11.

92 Comm. on Heb. 6:1.

which he refers to, is the first time that one is consecrated to the faith and commences a new life.⁹³ Thus Calvin treats repentance, which is repentance as regeneration, as not indeed made perfect in us but we have the seed of new life through it.⁹⁴

In *Confessio Belgica* (1561) it avers, “we are regenerated by the hearing of the word of God and operation of the Holy Spirit and made a new life”⁹⁵ but it is difficult to find the dialectic tension in it, unlike Calvin’s doctrine of repentance. Calvin emphasised faith and grace as a *cause* of repentance but he did not neglect the role of repentance in salvation to such an extent that it sometimes even seems that he presents repentance as conditional to salvation.

The repentance, which Calvin speaks of, is not a duty but a privilege of the elected. Calvin summarises the characteristics of repentance very well in *Form of Prayer for the Church*, by stating we may “be ashamed and grieved at our conduct, and turning to the Lord with unfeigned repentance and a better life, suppliantly and submissively beg pardon of him.”⁹⁶ And in *Second Defense of the Sacraments*, in *Answer to the Calumnies of Westphal*, he advocates that,

If he denies that they were members of the Church before baptism, then faith and repentance have no effect. If those whom God has regenerated by his word, whom he has formed again after his image, whom he has honored with the celestial light of faith, whom he has enriched with the gifts of his Spirit, belong to the body of the Church.⁹⁷

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Philip Schaff, ed. “*Confessio Belgica*,”: *The Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. III Reprinted (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 410. Article XXIV.

96 *Form of Prayer for the Church*, 106.

97 J. Calvin, *Second Defense of the Sacraments*, in *Answer to the Calumnies of Westphal : Tract and*

Contrary to Pighius' belief in the universality of grace, which is God's will that all be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and that God does not will the death of the sinner (Ezek. 18:23; 33:11), Calvin asserts that "this has conditions" and especially the latter, "exhorts the people to repentance."⁹⁸ Calvin does not contradict the harmony between the universality of grace and conditional salvation in his thought. He says that

It is no wonder that he (Ezekiel) proclaims God's willingness that all be saved. But we must also consider the mutual relation between threats and promises, and then we realize that such forms of speech are conditional... Ninevites... king of Gerar and Egypt ... But because of their repentance the punishment was not fulfilled.⁹⁹

In all fairness to Calvin, the threats and promises should be read together. God wills that man should turn back to Him and that man should live. He wills not only that he should live but also demands a turning from evil, because He leads all to repentance by His word. Wherever He finds conversion, He gives the promised life. This is not contradictory to His hidden counsel, "by which He has determined to convert none but the elected. Neither is there any variation in God, for in the first instance He is acting as Lawgiver, illuminating all by the external preaching of the Gospel and calling them to life, and in the second instance He is acting as Father in regenerating His elected by the Spirit."¹⁰⁰

Norman Geisler blames extreme Calvinists for monergism, that the very first moment of conversion is totally a result of God's operation, without any cooperation

Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church, Vol. II, 337.

98 L. F. Schulze, *Calvin's Reply to Pighius*, Diss., D. Rs., University of Strasbourg (1968), (Potchefstroom: Pro Rege-Press, 1971), 105.

99 Comm. on Ezek. 18:23; 33:11

100 L. F. Schulze, op. cit., 105.

on man's part. He says "this is sometimes called operative grace, as opposed to cooperative grace but it is just a monergistic act. And man is purely passive with regard to the beginning of his salvation, but is active with God's grace after that point."¹⁰¹ But principally Calvin's doctrine of repentance corresponds to the opinion of extreme Calvinists as Norman Geisler has asserted. Conversion and repentance according to Calvin are solely God's work even though sometimes Calvin's doctrine of repentance seems synergic. In fact it is not synergism but God's work only. For Barth, the most serious problem with Calvin is the concept that repentance can be a single act that effects forgiveness of sins.¹⁰² But on the contrary, Calvin says repeatedly "men are not converted to God of their own accord, nor is the gift of conversion common to all."¹⁰³ Calvin insists on both the presupposed responsibility of man in the exhortation, and the free, powerful and effective power of God's grace, and he says that the Lord does indeed frequently "exhort us to repentance, but He himself is asserted to be the author of conversion."¹⁰⁴ God's law is said to convert souls¹⁰⁵ and this office is elsewhere transferred to the ministers of the word.¹⁰⁶ But while we labor by praying, sowing and watering, it is God alone that gives the increase. So it is no wonder that it is ascribed to Him to open the heart of his own, so "they may attend to the word they hear."¹⁰⁷ So Calvin concludes, therefore, that the

101 Norman, Geisler, *Chosen But Free*, A Balanced View of Divine Election, 2nd edition (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 2001), 241.

102 Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 190-191.

103 Comm. on 2Tim. 2:25.

104 Comm. on 2Tim. 2:25.

105 Comm. on Ps. 19:18ff.

106 Comm. on Lk. 1:17.

107 J. Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, translated with an introduction by J. K. s.

will of God to salvation is no other than the will that appears in the external preaching of the Gospel. God wills the salvation of all whom He mercifully invites (by preaching) to Christ.¹⁰⁸

Although beyond human logic, Calvin's intention is that in identifying the will to save all by the invitation of the Gospel he gives it a conditional character which safeguards the responsibility of living fully with human beings; on a deeper level he sees the efficacious grace of God, giving to the elect those gifts with which they can comply with the conditions given by God.¹⁰⁹ Predestination is, for Calvin, primarily not a matter of God's wrath¹¹⁰ but the grace of God as it was revealed in Christ. It stimulates preaching and at the same time humiliates the faithful.¹¹¹ In repentance God changes our hearts and gives us a new disposition and a new inclination. He plants a desire for Christ in our hearts. So "we can never trust Christ for our salvation unless we first desire him"¹¹² by the grace of God.

The purpose of God's punishment, in the thoughts of Calvin, is only an admonition for His children to lead them to repentance but not as a punishment for sin: "The children are beaten with rods, not to pay the penalty for their sins to God but in order thereby to be led to repentance and the sole purpose of God in punishing his

Reid (London, 1961), 107; L. F. Schulze, op. cit., 106.

108 L. F. Schulze, *Ibid.*, 107.

109 *Ibid.*

110 Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 117-118: This is the heart of Calvin's doctrine of predestination. Briefly, those who are obedient should never forget for a moment that they are not the recipients of grace because they are obedient, but obedient because they are the recipients of grace.

111 L. F. Schulze, op. cit., 117.

112 R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1986), 118.

Church is that the Church may be brought low and repent.”¹¹³ And he continues, “God inflicts punishment on this account that He may call those who persevere in evil doing to repentance after repentance has been shown, penalties will already be superfluous.”¹¹⁴

All these things (earnestness, carefulness, excuse, indignation, fear, longing, zeal) are under all circumstances attendant upon repentance, but there is a difference in the case of an individual sin secretly before God, or openly before the Church. Concerning the confession of repentance Calvin distinguishes between personal sins and public sins. And they have different treatments: on the one hand, “if a personal sin is secret, it is enough if he has this disposition (that of repentance) in the sight of God. On the other hand, where the sin is open, an open manifestation of repentance is required besides.”¹¹⁵ Calvin states that one who had sinned must openly give evidence of his repentance by this token.¹¹⁶ Calvin’s doctrine of repentance is connected to the relationship with one’s neighbor and the Christian community. So, Calvin requires public confession of sins that were committed openly or sins against congregations and reconciliation with the Church in the face of the congregation. Because he insists on public confession it should lead to a just estimation of oneself and for the love, which was broken by our offense, to thus be repaired by our acknowledging the wrong we have committed and asking pardon for it.¹¹⁷

113 Inst., 3.4.32.

114 Inst., 3.4.35.

115 Comm. on 2Cor. 7:11.

116 Comm. on 2Cor. 7:11.

117 Inst., 3.4.10-13.

Contrary to the penance of the Roman Catholic Church, he presents two phases of the doctrine of true repentance, which are negative and positive; the first is that of falling down before Him with a troubled and humbled heart; wholeheartedly accusing and condemning ourselves before Him and the latter is that of seeking to be acquitted by his goodness and mercy.¹¹⁸ In Article XXII of *Confessio Fidei Gallicana* as well as in Article XII of the *Augsburg Confession* repentance has various attributes, which are faith, the Gospel, the Holy Spirit, good works, and newness of life; thus involving all the attributes of repentance.¹¹⁹ This indicates that these authors treat repentance, faith, the Gospel, the Holy Spirit, good works, and newness of life cohesively.¹²⁰ In the *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* as well as in Article XXII of *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*, Calvin defines repentance as: “Dissatisfaction with and a hatred of sin and a love of righteousness, proceeding from the fear of God, which lead to self-denial and *mortificatio* of the flesh, so that we give ourselves up to the guidance of the Spirit of God, and frame all the actions of our life to the obedience of the Divine will.”¹²¹ Even though Calvin does not treat faith in repentance in the same way as the *Augsburg Confession* does, he puts faith and repentance in the grace of God and he never forgets both sides of repentance.

1. 1. 2. Sin and Repentance

Forgiveness of sins and repentance were the principal issues in Calvin’s

118 Inst., 3.4.9.

119 According to relationship between these elements of repentance in this confession I will argue the importance and the role of repentance in soteriology.

120 Philip Schaff, ed. *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*, 371. Article XXII.

121 T. F. Torrance, ed. *Catechism of the Church of Geneva: Tract and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church*, Vol. II, 56.

soteriology and in the whole Scripture, and they are shown to mankind through certain visible gifts of Christ, which are Scripture and baptism.¹²² Without Christ a human being cannot know himself, nor have the assurance of salvation through forgiveness of sins and repentance. So Calvin said “our understanding is so smitten with blindness, our heart in its motions so evil and corrupt, in fact our whole nature so depraved, that we can do nothing else but sin until God himself creates in us a new will.”¹²³ It is noteworthy that in a mild debate with Augustine Calvin does not consider the pride of man to be the real ground of all evil.¹²⁴ According to Calvin’s view, the root of the trouble lies much deeper. The defection of man is grounded in something purely negative; in the fact that he no longer cleaves to the word of God in his radical unbelief and disobedience.¹²⁵

Sin is, for Calvin, a product of our own will and we commit sins freely because sin would not be sin if it did not happen in freedom of will but we are so given over to sin that we can voluntarily do nothing else but sin because the evil that reigns in us constantly impels us to do so.¹²⁶ And this unbelief engenders and is indeed itself separation from God and furthermore it spells the loss of the divine likeness and is the root of sin in man. Sin can only be described as a surrender of man’s right relation to his Creator.¹²⁷

Sin is not confined to one part of man’s being but completely embraces body and

122 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

123 CR 14, 35. Cited from W. Niesel, *op. cit.*, 80-81.

124 *Inst.*, 2.1.4.

125 *Ibid.*

126 W. Niesel, *op. cit.*, 87.

127 *Ibid.*, 81.

soul.¹²⁸ According to Calvin, “the whole man from head to foot is thus, as it were, drenched in a flood of wickedness so that no part remains without sin and so everything which springs from him is counted as sin.”¹²⁹ In the whole of his nature no element of integrity remains and he affirms this through using of the biblical expression that the entire man in this fallen condition is ‘flesh’¹³⁰ and every part of us is “saturated in evil.”¹³¹ Calvin understands its seriousness and solution on the basis of Christ.

If it is undisputed that the righteousness of Christ is appropriated by us through our fellowship with Him, as is also eternal life, then it follows that both were lost in Adam and restored to us in Christ; hence sin and death entered in through the fall of Adam and have been destroyed by the work of Christ.¹³²

As noted above, a correct awareness of sin must incline to a glory of the merits of Christ.¹³³ Calvin removes fatalistic features from the doctrine of sin. So “if we sin, it does not happen from compulsion, as though we were constrained to do so by an alien power, but all sin results from our own will and inclination.”¹³⁴

Forgiveness of sins cannot be dissevered from repentance and therefore, for Calvin, repentance is a necessary part of forgiveness of sins.¹³⁵ Calvin goes on to

128 Ibid., 82.

129 Inst., 2.1.9.

130 Inst., 2.3.1.

131 CR 33. 728.

132 Inst., 2.1.6.

133 W. Niesel, op. cit., 85.

134 CR 28, 560 ; W. Niesel, op. cit., 86.

135 *Antidote to the sixth session on Acts of Council of Trent in Tract and Treatises in defence of the reformed faith*, Vol. III, 118.

deem as appropriate the Augustinian-Lombardian notion of original sin as concupiscence as long as it is understood that the whole man is nothing but concupiscence.¹³⁶ According to Luther's notion of sin, sins which are committed after baptism remain and sin is active in believers. Calvin upholds that baptism does not free one from original sin and sin acts in the life of the believers. But baptism promises believers that sin will not overcome them, but as long as they live, traces of sin (*reliquia peccati*) will dwell within.¹³⁷

On the basis of the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15:29, Tertullianus regarded idolatry, fornication and the shedding of blood as “unforgivable” sins. And Origen condemned ill-qualified priests who remitted sinners that had committed these sins.¹³⁸

But Calvin presented some kinds of unforgivable sins in a different dimension.¹³⁹ Even though this view seems inconsistent with other parts of Scripture, where God's mercy is offered to sinners as soon as they sigh for it, especially in Calvin's theology it is not an inconsistency with the Gospel. Calvin explained the reason that “the reprobates cease not to add sin to sin, until being wholly hardened they despise God, or like men in despair, express madly their hatred of him.”¹⁴⁰ And the apostates are either smitten with stupor and fear nothing or curse God their judge because they

136 Babara Pitkin, “Nothing But Concupiscence: Calvin's Understanding of Sin and the Via Augustine,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 34 (N 1999), 358.

137 Inst., 4.15.10-13.

138 J. T. McNeill and H. M. Gamer, *Medieval handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 5. See. Footnotes 5. “αἱματος” being understood in the sense of “bloodshed,” and “πνικτων” omitted.

139 See. For the unpardonable sins in Patristic literatures, Ibid., 18-20.

140 Comm. on Heb.6:6.

cannot escape from him. In short, Calvin warns that repentance is not at the will of man but that it is given by God to only those who have “not wholly fallen away from the faith.”¹⁴¹ And Calvin does not use it as means of condemnation against his opponents but uses it to stress the urgency of repentance:

God’s intention is a warning very necessary to us, lest by often delaying until tomorrow, we should alienate ourselves more and more from God. The ungodly indeed deceive themselves by such sayings as this, that it will be sufficient for them to repent of their wicked life at their last breath. But when they come to die, the dire torments of conscience that they suffer prove to them that the conversion of man is not an ordinary work.¹⁴²

Calvin does not allow that the notion of unforgivable sin is in contradiction with the covenant. Now, as then, the Lord promises pardon to none but those who repent of their iniquity, he goes on to say that “it is no wonder that they perish whom either through despair or contempt, rush on in their obstinacy into destruction.”¹⁴³ God always brings up the possibilities of repentance but it only happens when one rises up again after falling.¹⁴⁴ He also adds this to defend God’s severity against the calumnies of men; “for it would be wholly unbecoming, that God by pardoning apostates should expose his own Son to contempt. They are then wholly unworthy to obtain mercy”¹⁴⁵ because this would be regarded as an action to crucify Christ again on the Cross.¹⁴⁶

141 Ibid.

142 Comm. on Heb.6:4-6.

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid.

146 Comm. on Heb.6:6.

For Calvin, unpardonable sin is willful apostasy,¹⁴⁷ the willful apostates who, while they fall away from faith in the Gospel, mock God, scornfully despise his grace, profane and trample Christ's blood, as much as it lies in their power, crucify him again.¹⁴⁸ But he teaches "apostasy deserves no excuse, so that it is no wonder God avenges such sacrilegious contempt of himself with inexorable rigor."¹⁴⁹ From this it follows that pardon is not denied to any individual sins except one, which, arising out of desperate madness, cannot be ascribed to weakness, and clearly demonstrates that a man is possessed by the devil.¹⁵⁰

The apostates commit sins against the Holy Spirit with evil intention and resist God's truth although by its brightness they are so touched that they cannot claim ignorance and "such resistance alone constitutes this sin." So, according to Christ and Scripture, Calvin says, "he who speaks against the Son of man will have his sin forgiven but he who blasphemes against the Spirit will not be forgiven."¹⁵¹

Calvin presents that the limit and boundary of these sins are only concerned with the consciousness of sinners:

People whose consciences, though convinced that what they repudiate and impugn the word of God, yet cease not to impugn it; these are said to blaspheme against the Spirit, since they strive against the illumination that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus if ignorance joined with unbelief caused him to obtain pardon, it follows that there is no

147 Hermas permits the restoration of the apostate, but Calvin restricts "willful apostasy." See. J. T. McNeill and H. M. Gamer. *Medieval handbooks of Penance*, 5.

148 Inst., 3.3.21.

149 Ibid.; Comm. on Heb. 10:26-27.

150 Inst., 3.3.21.

151 Inst., 3.3.22.

place for pardon where knowledge is linked with unbelief.¹⁵²

For Calvin, apostasy is not concerning “one particular lapse or another” but concerning the “universal rebellion” by which the reprobates forsake salvation; that a return to the communion of Christ is not open to those who knowingly and willingly have rejected it. But those who reject it are not those who with dissolute and uncontrolled life simply transgress the word of the Lord but those who “deliberately reject its entire teaching.”¹⁵³ Hence it is not any particular failing but a complete turning away from God; apostasy of the whole man. Whoever “choke the light of the Spirit with deliberate impiety and spew out the taste of the heavenly gift, they will cut themselves off from the repentance of the Spirit and trample upon God’s word and the powers of the age to come.”¹⁵⁴

Calvin thought that pardon is refused even though one turns to the Lord because he utterly disbelieves that “they can rise to repentance because they have been stricken by God’s just judgment with eternal blindness on account of their ungratefulness.”¹⁵⁵

According to heading of *Institutes* III. iii. 24, (1559)¹⁵⁶ “it is sure that the mind of man is not changed for the better except by God’s prevenient grace. Also, his promise to those who call upon him will never deceive.”¹⁵⁷ Sometimes the reason why God

152 Ibid.

153 Inst., 3.3.23.

154 Ibid.

155 Inst., 3.3.24.

156 Those who cannot be forgiven are those who cannot repent

157 Ibid.

gives his forgiveness to hypocrites is “for their own sake as for an example to all”¹⁵⁸ but it is not true repentance. So Christians may apply their minds and their efforts to sincere repentance. According to Calvin the indulgence of the Roman Church is blasphemy; that they can have no excuse¹⁵⁹ and would purposely try to extinguish the proffered light of the Spirit.¹⁶⁰

Calvin categorically disagreed with Augustine’s contention that final impenitency could be the sin against the Holy Spirit,¹⁶¹ but he remained under Augustine’s influence. Calvin understood that the unforgivable sin is a “state of enmity” against God rather than a “specific act of blasphemy,” and he assumed that “the enmity would persist until death.”¹⁶² But Calvin wanted to warn potential backsliders about this unforgivable sin; in that not all Church members would be saved and he believed that “God uses fear of apostasy as a salutary safeguard against apostasy itself.”¹⁶³ There is the difference between unbelievers and believers: “the former, like slaves of inveterate and double dyed wickedness, with chastisement become only worse and more obstinate but the latter, like freeborn sons, attain repentance.”¹⁶⁴ Conclusively, repentance is the barometer of the difference between unforgivable sins and forgivable sins because God gives the chance of repentance only to the elected and the regenerated in Christ.

158 Inst., 3.3.25.

159 Inst., 3.5.5.

160 Inst., 3.5.7.

161 Comm. on Heb. 6:4-5; Baird Tipson, “A Dark Side of 17th Century English Protestantism: the sin against the Holy Spirit,” *Harvard Theological Review* 77/3-4 (1984):311-312.

162 Ibid., 309-310.

163 Comm. on Heb. 6:4-5; Ibid., 311-312.

164 Inst., 3.8.6.

1. 2. The Roles of Repentance in Soteriology

1. 2. 1. Repentance, Faith and Word

Calvin calls apostles ‘teachers of repentance’¹⁶⁵ because through their ministry of repentance God sets up his kingdom. Repentance and faith include the fullness of the Gospel because Jesus commands his disciples to preach repentance and faith.¹⁶⁶ Actually His disciples’ messages are simple; being repentance and faith.¹⁶⁷ Through this idea Calvin expresses what the fullness of the Gospel is. The whole doctrine of the Gospel is comprehended under two branches: faith and repentance.¹⁶⁸ Faith is the inner form of salvation while repentance is the outer. Calvin states that “faith is hidden in the heart, and therefore conscience must be its witness before God. Repentance is manifested by works, and must therefore be apparent in our life.”¹⁶⁹

Calvin demonstrated the priority of faith and Word of God to repentance through encompassing portions of his *Institutes* and his *Commentaries* and he thought that this issue is available key of his whole doctrines. He also asserts that Scripture is full of such testimonies of repentance and forgiveness of sins, and when God offers forgiveness of sins to sinners, man reaches repentance.¹⁷⁰ Because of this importance

165 Comm. on Acts 20:21.

166 Comm. on Heb. 6:1.

167 On this point we can presume that first intention of the preached messages of Jesus’ disciples concerning repentance, is sudden conversion because they have no room to emphasise the Christian life as sanctification.

168 *Catechism of the Church of Geneva*, 55-56.

169 T. F. Torrance, ed. *Short treatises on the Lord’s Supper*, 28: *Tract and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church*, Vol. II, 179.

170 Inst., 3.3.20.

of repentance we ought not to forget that Christ offers repentance and forgiveness of sins and we receive it through faith. Repentance is the result of faith that comes from the grace of God, given to the elected.

Therefore, the foundation of repentance is faith and repentance is attendant upon faith; but repentance, as well as faith, is the means of receiving the grace of God. Repentance has its peculiar position in Calvin's soteriology because the fountain of grace is the mercy of God and both faith and repentance are nothing but a means of salvation. But Calvin does not treat it as a matter of unimportance but rather regards it as a matter of importance. Therefore both faith and repentance are important in salvation because God gives his grace through each of them differently.¹⁷¹ The origin of repentance is faith, which does not mean that there is a chronological order between faith and repentance, but rather it shows that man cannot apply himself seriously to repentance without knowing himself to belong to God.¹⁷² For Calvin, if one has first recognised God's grace one can then know faith but "no one is truly

171 Inst., 3.3.2.

172 This is an important motif of understanding. Calvin is not concerned with the chronology of repentance and faith or with which initiates the other; rather he is only concerned with the fact that one who has true faith must repent of his sins. So the order between faith and repentance in Calvin's soteriology is not a chronological order, it is nothing but a logical order. When Calvin says 'faith is fountain of repentance,' that means that he criticizes the sacrament of penance which limits to a paltry few days for receiving the grace of God and has no foundation of it in faith. Calvin emphasises that certainly true repentance is connected with faith and at the same time he blames the sacrament of penance in his contemporary Roman Catholic theology for saying that after penance one can have faith. His saying, hence, is based on the above interpretation, "a repentance that for the Christian man ought to extend throughout his life." Luther's Art. 1 of 95 Thesen can be understood in this context.

persuaded that he belongs to God unless he has first recognized God's grace."¹⁷³

The concept of double grace in Calvin's teachings protects the doctrine of repentance from the destroying of balance by the doctrine of justification in Reformed soteriology. He preserves the imperative and the significance of Christian obedience. Repentance, for Calvin, is not an afterthought neither is it a problem or an implication nor a psychological human response to justification. Repentance, just as is justification, is salvation. Justification, for Calvin, is a change of status but repentance is a change of state, which is compatible with one's new status. Although it comes from the grace of God it is not optional or dispensable but necessary and inevitable.

Furthermore, repentance is, for Calvin, Christ-centered and Christ-shaped. He finds the unity of "double grace" in the saving works of Jesus Christ. In view of pastoral ministry, this means that the believer is leading the person to Christ for both righteousness and holiness and both the preacher's proclamation of free forgiveness and exhortation to obedience rest upon Christ.¹⁷⁴

The scarcity of repentance in men, according to Calvin, indicates a lack of faith in them.¹⁷⁵ Calvin insists that faith is the work of God which "alone" justifies but he dedicates a large portion of his discussion of faith in Chapters vi-x of Book III of his *Institutes* to faith as human knowledge and action.¹⁷⁶

173 Inst., 3.3.2.

174 Jonathan H. Rainbow, "Double Grace: John Calvin's View of the Relationship of Justification and Sanctification," *Ex Auditu* 5 (1989): 104.

175 Inst., 3.14.7.

176 Alexander Mckelway, "*The Logic of Faith*": *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*, ed. by David

Through the title of *Institutes* III.iii.1, as “Repentance as a Consequence of Faith,” Calvin unveils his thinking about the relationship between repentance and faith. Because when “this topic is rightly understood it will better appear how man is justified by faith alone, and simple pardon; nevertheless actual holiness of life, so to speak, is not separated from free imputation of righteousness.”¹⁷⁷

That faith precedes repentance¹⁷⁸ is included not only to emphasise the power of faith but also to stress repentance.¹⁷⁹ So Calvin says that “any discussion of faith that omitted these two topics (repentance and forgiveness of sins) would be barren and mutilated and well-nigh useless.”¹⁸⁰

So Calvin does not regard repentance lightly although faith has an initiative in salvation. Rather he says, “forasmuch as we obtain none of all these without Christ, the name of Christ is therewithal set forth unto us as the only foundation of faith and repentance.” And so we begin repentance when we are turned unto God that we must prosecute the same things during our life.¹⁸¹

Calvin considered repentance as a second justification on the basis of the believer’s *insitio in Christum*.¹⁸² For Calvin the thing which separates repentance

Willis & Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.:WM. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 211.

177 Inst., 3.3.1.

178 Comm. on Jn. 1:13. ... That faith does not proceed from ourselves, but is the fruit of spiritual regeneration...

179 Inst., 3.3.1.

180 Ibid.

181 Comm. on Acts 2:38.

182 Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, Vol. II (Cambridge/ London/ New York/ New Rochelle/ Melbourne/ Sydney: Cambridge University Press,

(sanctification) from justification is tearing asunder the body of Christ in parts, so also we receive these two things in Him simultaneously and together (*simul et coniunctim in ipso*) that “justification and repentance (sanctification) are never dissociated from each other.”¹⁸³ And justification and repentance are a reality in Jesus Christ and form in Him a living unity. When we attempt to separate repentance from justification we are in fact seeking to break up the unity of one Christ.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, Niesel adds that, for Calvin, “the two things, justification and sanctification (repentance), are one in Him but only in Him.”¹⁸⁵

Repentance is not the cause of salvation, but the grace of God is the cause of repentance because it cannot be separated from faith and the grace of God,¹⁸⁶ and it is caused by faith and the grace of God.¹⁸⁷

It is in vain to speak of repentance unless faith is added¹⁸⁸ and he adds that “the Spirit of regeneration must be begged at the hands of God” and that we must draw

1986), 37.

183 Inst., 3.11.6; W. Niesel. op. cit., 137.

184 Inst., 3.16.1; W. Niesel. Ibid.

185 W. Niesel, Ibid., 138. I do not agree completely with Niesel on this matter because his term “one in Him but only in Him” has the inclination to despise the reality of repentance. Even though salvation is an event from outside and God’s own work, we must not overlook the risk of Osiander, but where repentance concerns the life of Christ and His ministry, we must repent to God as a response to Him. If repentance is only treated just like justification, then we are ignoring Jesus’ death and resurrection as a model of Christian life. Even though Niesel has held to the Christocentric idea and he continually asserts the reality of repentance, he has lost the hidden meanings of the event of Christ and of “in Him.” To Niesel, repentance is nothing more than forensic justification.

186 Comm. on Acts. 11:18.

187 Inst., 3. 3. 21.

188 Comm. on Acts. 20:21.

godliness, righteousness and goodness from Him who is the fountain of all good things.¹⁸⁹

Confessio Fidei Gallicana (1559), based on a draft prepared by Calvin supports that “by faith we are regenerated in newness of life, being by nature subject to sin and by faith we receive grace to live holily and in the fear of God.”¹⁹⁰

For faith which reconciles us with God means that it is not only that He may be favorable unto us, by acquitting us of the guiltiness of death, by not imputing to us our sins, but also by purging the filthiness of our flesh by his Spirit, he may fashion us again after his own image.

Repentance and faith are so linked together that they cannot be separated. Nonetheless Calvin notes the distinction between faith and repentance, which some do falsely and unskillfully confuse, saying, that repentance is a part of faith. They cannot be separated because God shows that no man is regenerated to newness of life without faith. Calvin is opposed to Melancthon who includes repentance in faith because he believes that repentance and faith are inseparable but distinguishable.¹⁹¹ Yet they must be distinguished because repentance is a “turning” unto God when we form ourselves and all our life to obey him but faith is a “receiving” of the grace offered us in Christ.¹⁹²

189 Ibid.

190 Philip Schaff, ed. *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*, 371. Article XXII.

191 Inst., 3.3.5. There he reckons repentance and faith as two different things...But even though they cannot be separated, they ought to be distinguished... require to be joined rather than confused.

192 Comm. on Acts. 20:21.

Calvin regards faith as a process as is repentance, in which the action of God and the reaction of the believer are more clearly distinguishable. The believer will not be fully healed of unbelief until his deathbed.¹⁹³ This is why Calvin could say, on the one hand, that as an extension of God's action faith alone is the means of our salvation and faith is a thing merely passive and even more bluntly faith itself is of no value.¹⁹⁴ Calvin argues that though faith ought to be assuring, no perfect assurance exists in this life without repentance.

To prioritise the difference between repentance and faith, Calvin says, "Repentance not only constantly follows faith, but is also born of faith."¹⁹⁵ On account of this Calvin rejects the practice of the Catholic's penance, which requires the transitional preparation before having faith and hearing the word of God.

Calvin also insists that "both repentance and forgiveness of sins, that is, newness of life and free reconciliation, are conferred on us by Christ, and both are attained by us through faith."¹⁹⁶ For that reason faith precedes repentance in that after one embraces the grace of the Gospel, one can repent.¹⁹⁷ In other words, without faith one cannot repent, and we attain repentance and forgiveness through faith.

For the way in which we know that we are sinners and that we need to repent is

193 Inst., 3.2.18-20.

194 Inst., 3.14.9; 3.11.7.

195 Inst., 3.3.1.

196 Ibid.

197 Surely no one can embrace the grace of the Gospel without betaking himself from the errors of his past life into the right way, and applying his whole effort to the practice of repentance. Inst., 3.3.1.

that firstly we need to believe in God's benevolence toward us¹⁹⁸ and secondly we must run to keep the law. We then will know the time and reason of repentance.¹⁹⁹

Faith precedes repentance but the beginning of repentance is a preparation for faith. In his *Commentary on the Acts*, which was published from 1552 to 1554, Calvin allows reflecting on conversion more from the point of view of its cause than of its result. So for Calvin faith is not only the cause of repentance but also the result of it.²⁰⁰ Repentance and faith are inseparable fruits of the grace of God and, in consequence of their invariable connection, repentance may, with fitness and propriety, be represented as an introduction to salvation but in this way of speaking it is represented as a result, rather than as a cause.²⁰¹

When one hears the Word of God one can truly repent and believe in God. And through the Word of God one is controlled by God and recognises the benevolence of God. Calvin calls the Word of God "the sword" because it mortifies our flesh, which we may offer to God as a sacrifice.²⁰² A human being cannot apply himself seriously to repentance without knowing himself to belong to God through the Word of God.²⁰³

198 This is an important definition of Faith: that is "Now we shall possess a right definition of faith if we call it a firm and certain knowledge 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."

199 Repentance to Calvin entails uprightness of life and observance of the law. In other words, repentance is clearly inward change, but uprightness of life and observance of the law as well. So Calvin has the important notion that if one repents, and remains repentant, one will keep the law.

200 Comm. on Acts. 20:21

201 Comm. on 2Cor. 7:10; Inst., 3.3.21.

202 Comm. on Acts. 2:37.

203 Inst., 3.3.2.

For Calvin, the word of God is essentially the Holy Scriptures as well as the Gospel and its proclamation.²⁰⁴

And only through the Word of God can a human being know his misery and the necessity of repentance in his salvation. For Calvin, *mortificatio* and *vivificatio* depend on the Word of God because without it human beings cannot know their real miserable position. This theme of the Word of God is connected in Calvin's writings. (In *Institutes*, the heading of III, iii, 2 is "Repentance has its foundation in the Gospel, which faith embraces" and the heading of III, iii, 3 is "*Mortificatio* and *Vivificatio*.") (1559) No one knows grace, according to Calvin, without the Word of God. It is self-deception that many are overwhelmed by qualms of conscience or compelled to obedience before they are imbued with the knowledge of grace.²⁰⁵ He emphasises that it is the Word of God that effects conversion and enables the sinner to pass from death into life.²⁰⁶

Conversion is the wholesome effect of the Word of God and through it the conversion of men becomes not only the beginning of health but it also becomes a certain resurrection from death to life.²⁰⁷ Repentance is held forth and received and is actualised through His word and the Spirit in all who believe.²⁰⁸

Calvin also presents God's mercy and His commandments as fountains of

204 Tony Lane, "The Quest for the Historical Calvin," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 55(1983), 96-97

205 Inst., 3.3.2.

206 Comm. on Acts 28:27; A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 47.

207 Comm. on 2Cor 4 :3.

208 T. F. Torrance, ed. *Tracts and treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, Vol. I, 37.

repentance.²⁰⁹ So Repentance depends on the grace of God and His words. In Calvin's writings, the kingdom of God and the grace of God and His commandment are intimately connected to each other. The Commandment of God reveals the kingdom of God by following the grace of God.²¹⁰

Repentance is the gift and work of God and authentic repentance begins with the knowledge of the truth.²¹¹ Repentance, which is not less than the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom, is the gift of God.²¹² Calvin submits that what repentance does depend on the Gospel, and then why does Mark separate it from the doctrine of the Gospel? Two reasons may be assigned. Firstly, God sometimes invites us to repentance when nothing more is meant than that we ought to change our life for the better. He afterwards shows that conversion and newness of life are the gift of God as well. The Lord commands us to turn to him but at the same time he promises the Spirit of regeneration and therefore we come to receive this grace by faith.²¹³ God offers us salvation freely, in order that we may turn to him and live in righteousness.

Through the word of God, we are called to deny the flesh. And by the preaching of the Gospel, the kingdom of God is set up and established among men, and that in no other way does God reign among men.²¹⁴

209 Comm. on Mt. 3:2.

210 Ibid.

211 Comm. on 2 Tim. 2:25.

212 Comm. on Mt. 3:2

213 Comm. on Mk. 1:14.

214 Ibid.

Repentance, for Calvin, strengthens the assurance of salvation in us.²¹⁵ God leads his people to willing obedience by the preaching of the Gospel, and this conversion was effected only under the management and government of Christ.²¹⁶

1. 2. 2. Repentance, Christ and the Holy Spirit

Calvin clearly summarises the progression of repentance under the roles of Christ and Holy Spirit in *Reply to Sadolet*:

Since, therefore, according to us Christ regenerates to a blessed life those whom he justifies and, rescuing them from the dominion of sin, hands them over to the dominion of righteousness, transforms them into the image of God, and so trains them by his Spirit into obedience to his will, there is no ground to complain that by our doctrine lust is given free rein.²¹⁷

As we see above, the progress of repentance is totally influenced by Christ and the Holy Spirit from the first to the end. Therefore the Holy Spirit, who regenerates us in Christ, leads us wholly into obedience to Him. This is God's ministry, especially the ministry of Christ and the Holy Spirit. In man's repentance, the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit are intimately joined to renew the whole man and where Christ is, there too is the Spirit of holiness who regenerates the soul to newness of life. Wherever Christ is not, there is no righteousness and indeed no faith; for faith cannot

215 "Second Defense of the Sacraments": *Answer to the Calumnies of Westphal*, 251.

216 Comm. on Ps. 22: 27.

217 J. K. S. Reid, ed. *Reply to Sadolet* in Theological treatise, *The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXII* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 235.

lay hold of the Christ of righteousness without the Spirit of sanctification.²¹⁸

Calvin classified repentance into repentance of grace and repentance of pangs of conscience; saying that the former is authentic repentance but the latter is not true repentance in the strictest sense of the word because true repentance in the theology of Calvin is based on grace through the Holy Spirit only. The Holy Spirit causes human beings to repent and as such repentance is the work of the triune God, not of man. Our repentance is generated from God's immeasurable pardon in that, according to Calvin, "by God's free pardon to our sins we can avoid of the condemnation of eternal death, and be formed anew to His image." In addition, he willingly adopts us as His sons and freely regenerates us by His Spirit. In this manner, Christ washes away our sins by his blood and reconciles us with God by the sacrifice of his death but, at the same time consequently "our old man being crucified with him and the body of sin destroyed"²¹⁹ in Christ; through Christ we are made "alive" unto righteousness. Calvin attributes the merit of repentance to God only because the purpose of repentance is to be freely reconciled with God through the satisfaction of Christ.²²⁰

Therefore the triggers of repentance are regeneration by the Holy Spirit in Christ and Christ's atonement and His reconciliation with us. The sum of the Gospel is God's turning to us and our turning to God, that God through his Son takes away our sins and admits us to fellowship with him, which we, denying our own nature, and

218 *Reply to Sadoleto*, 234-235.

219 Comm. on Rom. 6:6.

220 T F. Torrance, ed. *Articles by the Theological faculty of Paris, ARTICLE III, 'OF PENITENCE' in Tracts and treatises on the Reformation of the Church, Vol. I*, tr. by Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1958), 78-80.

ourselves may live soberly and righteously.²²¹ But indeed, without hatred of sin and remorse for transgressions, no man will taste the grace of God.²²² For Calvin, the hatred of sins and remorse for transgression are necessary on the side of man in the doctrine of repentance.

Calvin states that our Lord invites us who were by nature averse to follow him by the power of the Holy Spirit. God's initiative is requisite in Calvin's doctrine of repentance.²²³ Calvin intends that repentance comes from the grace of God but the grace of God happens in repentance. In other words, in repentance we can experience the grace of God. And God entreats and exhorts us, in a variety of ways, to repentance.²²⁴ If man repents voluntarily following God's grace in faith, he will avert God's chastisements.²²⁵ God has once reconciled men with himself in Christ by not imputing their sins unto them and does now imprint the faith thereof by His Spirit in our hearts.²²⁶ We were cleansed by Christ's blood and also we were entered into a new life by the benefit of his death and resurrection. So thus, repentant sinners shall receive the gift of the Spirit.²²⁷ Repentance is a singular gift of God and indeed God declares that "he wills the conversion of all and he directs exhortations to all in

221 Comm. on Mt. 3:2

222 Ibid.

223 Comm. on Mt. 11:20; Lk.10:13-16.

224 Comm. on Mt. 11:21. *Que Par les miracles ils n'ont esmeus pour convertir a repentance*: that by the miracles they were not moved to be converted to repentance. In here we can distinguish with conversion and repentance. One emphasizes the direction, but the other emphasizes the purpose, so that is then conversion to repentance.

225 Comm. on Lk. 13:12.

226 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

227 Ibid.

common.” Yet the efficacy of this depends upon the Spirit of regeneration because only the regenerated can repent their sins to God.

Calvin connected repentance with the re-creation of the soul so that the whole course of regeneration will be called “God’s handiwork”²²⁸ and whomsoever God wills to snatch from death is quickened by the Spirit of regeneration. This fact indeed stands firmly that wherever the fear of God flourishes, the Spirit has worked toward the salvation of man.²²⁹ Naturally regeneration is connected with repentance as cause and result.

In the theology of Calvin, repentance whereby man converts himself to God is an impossible thing, as he cannot create it himself. This only comes to pass when Christ regenerates us by His Spirit.²³⁰ Repentance is voluntary conversion, but when God leads us to repentance then only do we have the chance of a change of heart because God changes our stony heart that it may be made fleshy. As God begins repentance in us he also gives us perseverance. This is an inestimable grace but it has no worth unless it was coupled with forgiveness of sins. The Gospel would be lame and corrupt unless it consisted of these two elements and unless men are taught that they are reconciled with God by Christ by the free imputation of righteousness and that they are fashioned again unto newness of life by the Spirit of regeneration.²³¹

The doctrine of repentance is not a matter of theory but a matter of the living

228 Inst., 3.3.21.

229 Ibid.

230 Comm. on Acts. 5:31.

231 Ibid.

Lord Himself, and when Jesus Christ apprehends us we escape the bondage of death and are called to newness of life through repentance. So repentance is very important in the theology of Calvin. Calvin arranges these two doctrines of repentance and justification in Christ.²³² For Christ does not reconcile us with God in part but wholly, neither can we obtain remission of sins by him unless it should be whole and perfect.²³³ Both our soul and life are saved by Jesus therefore we need to repent for life.

The pardon of sins is bestowed upon us in Christ not by God who may treat us with indulgence but by healing us from our sins.²³⁴ Furthermore, because we are reconciled with God only by the intercession of Christ's death, the name of Christ is therewithal set forth unto us as the only foundation of faith and repentance.²³⁵ Forgiveness of sins is grounded in Christ alone and there is no other satisfaction for it. And we are saved only by the sacrifice of his death.²³⁶ So our *mortificatio* and *vivificatio* happen by participation in Christ alone. If we truly partake in his death that "our old man is crucified by his power and the body of sin perishes" the corruption of our original nature will no longer thrive. If we share in his resurrection we are raised up into newness of life to correspond with the righteousness of God.²³⁷ Therefore, Calvin's theology is strictly based on the revelation of God, not on personal feeling

232 W. Niesel, op. cit., 131.

233 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

234 Comm. on Mt. 3:2.

235 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

236 Ibid.

237 W. Niesel, op. cit., 127; Inst., 3.3.9.

and experience.²³⁸

Man's conversion is in the hands of God, who instantly changes a sinner, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into another man.²³⁹ And "since he engrafted us into his body, we must take especial care not to disfigure ourselves, who are his members, with any spot or blemish."²⁴⁰ Calvin calls conversion a resurrection from eternal death. We are utterly ruined so long as we are turned away from God but when we are converted, we return to his favor and we are delivered from death; not that we deserve the favor of God by our repentance but because in this manner God raises us up from death to life.²⁴¹ Calvin notes that God creates us anew in Jesus. *Confession of Faith* (1536), which was, though not written by him, at least approved by him states in section VI,

We acknowledge that by his Spirit we are regenerated into a new spiritual nature. That is to say that the evil desires of our flesh are mortified by grace, so that they rule us no longer. On the contrary, our will is rendered conformable to God's will. Therefore we are by him delivered from the servitude of sin.²⁴²

According to Calvin, God's works in reconciliation and in repentance were not completed at Easter or on Ascension Day. Neither is this given in a moment but it must grow daily throughout one's whole life until one be fully joined to God; which shall be then when one have put off our flesh.²⁴³ Calvin teaches "if we would come

238 Ibid., 128

239 Comm. on 2Tim. 2:25.

240 Inst., 3.6.3.

241 Comm. on Isa. 19:22.

242 J. K. S. Reid, ed. *The Genevan Confession* in *Theological treatise*, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXII (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), 28.

243 Comm. on Acts. 5:31.

then to true repentance, we must endeavor to make our whole life conformable to the example of Jesus Christ.”²⁴⁴ The work of the Holy Spirit continuously brings Christ to the election and the elected to Christ.²⁴⁵ Therefore we can say that repentance, as taught by Calvin, is done in Christ and by the Holy Spirit. However the Holy Spirit has two attributes: the initiator of faith and the maintainer of salvation. Thus, for Calvin, “assuring faith compels an indissoluble tie between saving knowledge, the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, God’s promises, the works of the Holy Spirit, and election.”²⁴⁶

In order that believers may reach this goal, God assigns to them a race of repentance, which they are to run throughout their lives. Because Christ is the most complete image of God and because Christ himself showed repentance in his whole life through his death and resurrection,²⁴⁷ through him we shall be restored into His likeness so that we may bear the divine image in true godliness, righteousness, purity, and knowledge through our whole life. Repentance is an accomplished event by God and a received event by humans. The role of Christ is not simply to set in motion a process of salvation within us when we encounter Him, neither he alone has died the decisive death nor he alone has overcome death with the effect in Him but that the divine image in man is restored,²⁴⁸ and his death becomes our death and his life becomes our life in repentance.

244 *Short treatises on the Lord’s Supper*, 24. *Self-Denial Necessary*, 176.

245 Peter Toon, *Justification and Sanctification* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1983), 76.

246 Joel R. Beeke, *Assurance of Faith: Calvin, English Puritanism, and the Dutch second Reformation* (New York/ San Francisco/ Bern/ Frankfurt am Main/ Paris/ London: Peter Lang, 1991), 49.

247 Inst., 3.3.9.

248 W. Niesel, op. cit., 127-8

1. 2. 3. Repentance, the Kingdom of God and the Image of God

The kingdom of God, for Calvin, is intimately related to repentance and faith on the basis of the first preaching of Jesus in the Commentary of Mark 1:14. And the summary of whole doctrine in Christ's preachings consists of two parts: repentance and the announcement of grace or salvation. Calvin intimately connected forgiveness of sins with repentance on the basis of the interpretation of the preachings of John the Baptist and of Jesus that "in substance there is the most perfect agreement: for they all connect repentance with the forgiveness of sins."²⁴⁹ In Calvin, both forgiveness of sins and repentance present the kingdom of God.

Calvin considers repentance a prerequisite of the kingdom of God because God undertakes to govern his people who have true and perfect happiness through it. Christ rules over to save his people that he brings as his own to repentance and reconciles them with God through the forgiveness of sins. So Calvin states that the sum of the Gospel contains these two things.²⁵⁰ He treated the Christian life with repentance and renewed forgiveness in the light of the tension between the present age and the next world. Insofar as Christians are still subject to sin, they lived in constant need of repentance and faith and insofar as Christians are 'in Christ,' their salvation is completed and inasmuch as they are still in the world, they experience a constant progress of regeneration towards its final consummation.²⁵¹

At an institutional level, the kingdom of Christ is only established gradually and

249 Comm. on Mt. 3:2

250 Comm. on Acts 5:31.

251 P. Wilcox, "Conversion":119-120.

by stages although it is discerned in his treatment of Christ's kingdom in connection with the regeneration of individuals, which is entered into once and for all. Calvin considers each individual as the whole Church that was caught between the inauguration of Christ's kingdom and its completion. The parallel here between the experiences of the Church and the individual believer exists in the theology of Calvin because he believes that there is an intrinsic relationship between Christ's body and its members. For Calvin, the solidarity between Christ and the members of his body is recognised in the experience of each individual Christian. With regard to Christ's kingdom, the same unwavering progress is to be discerned in both of them.²⁵²

That the kingdom of God is at hand means that men who were alienated from the righteousness of God and banished from the kingdom of heaven must again be gathered to God and live under his guidance.²⁵³ Repentance is the gate by which to enter the kingdom of God and at the same time by repentance sinners live under His reign. God, according to Calvin's words, accomplishes his kingdom through free adoption and forgiveness of sins. In a word, the kingdom of heaven is just newness of life in Christ.²⁵⁴ Therefore the kingdom of heaven among men, to Calvin, is nothing else than a restoration to a happy life, in other words, it is true and everlasting happiness.

As noted above, Calvin indicates that the kingdom of God, as well as repentance, is a present event and at the same time the kingdom of God is connected with a future event. God restores us to the hope of a blessed immortality and our pilgrimage of

252 Ibid., 120.

253 Ibid.

254 Comm. on Mt. 3:3

restoration on earth continues in Christ²⁵⁵ because, according to Calvin, human beings are in a state of deadly enmity with God and altogether shut out from the heavenly kingdom before God receives them into favor.²⁵⁶ The only key that restores God's favor is repentance and forgiveness of sins through Christ.

The doctrine of repentance, for Calvin, is intimately associated with the progress of Christ's kingdom. Calvin repeatedly used the phrase "the progress of Christ's kingdom" in his expository writings. And the term "the kingdom of heaven is near" means that the kingdom of heaven is repentance.²⁵⁷ Calvin construed this progress chiefly in institutional terms, equating it directly with that of the Reformed Church.²⁵⁸ Calvin identifies with Christ's kingdom and the institution of the true Church that has the experience of the true Christian,²⁵⁹ and insofar as it conforms to the word of God Calvin describes the life of an individual believer, as well as the policy of the Reformed Church, as a manifestation of Christ's kingdom. The kingdom of Christ in Calvin's view is truly established only where individual human beings respond appropriately to the preaching of God's word.²⁶⁰ And the splendor of this kingdom lies in the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is given to individual believers.²⁶¹ Clearly the kingdom of Christ is related with repentance because the Holy Spirit rules the individual from the time of repentance; thus the purpose of the kingdom of heaven is

255 Comm. on Mt. 3:3; Eph. 1:3.

256 Inst., Mt. 3:2

257 In a word, the kingdom of heaven is nothing else than "newness of life," .Comm. on Mt. 3:2.

258 P. Wilcox, "Evangelization in the Thought and Practice of John Calvin," *ANVIL* 12 (1995), 201-217.

259 P. Wilcox, "Conversion": 113.

260 Ibid.

261 Repentance, not less than the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom, is the gift of God. Comm. on Mt. 3:2

newness of life as well as repentance.

Calvin thought that Christ's kingdom is within time and space²⁶² as he identifies the kingdom of God with the visible Church that Christ's reign is truly the kingdom of God, and as such the true Church is the institutional form of Christ's kingdom. Nevertheless, Calvin clarified that the kingdom of Christ has this institutional form incidentally, not essentially. Although the true Church is the form taken by Christ's kingdom within time and space the kingdom itself is neither temporal nor spatial since in essence it is 'eternal' and 'spiritual.'²⁶³

T. F. Torrance suggests that in Calvin "the kingdom of Christ is designed primarily to distinguish between the present condition of the Church and its future glory."²⁶⁴ Calvin certainly knew that the appearance of Christ's kingdom, whether in the age of the prophets or the apostolic era, or the period of the Reformers, is insignificant because its true glory will only be manifest in the future and in spirit.²⁶⁵ Calvin underlines the contrast between the way of Christ's kingdom, which appears at its beginnings or in the present, and the way in which it will be manifest at its consummation at the last day. And yet beyond this Calvin makes a more fundamental contrast between the essential character of the kingdom of Christ and its present and accidental form. Calvin's point is not that this kingdom will have a worldly splendor that it lacks at present but that its splendor is by nature spiritual and its future glory

262 P. Wilcox, "Evangelization": 207-210.

263 See, Comm. on Ps. 45:7, Ps. 21:4, Ps. 8:7, Mic. 7:11, Dan. 7:27, Jer. 31:12.

264 T. F. Torrance, "The Eschatology of Hope' in kingdom and Church: A study in the Theology of the Reformers (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd 1956), 122.

265 Comm. on Ps. 78:70 recite from P. Wilcox. "Conversion": 114.

will be a manifestation of it. Calvin sometimes gives the impression that “his kingdom is already completed; on the other hand, he also affirms that the kingdom of Christ has not yet been complete, and that its consummation will occur only at the last day.” Calvin, concerning the kingdom of Christ, implied that it is not only begun here but also will be completed on the last day.²⁶⁶

As Torrance stresses, the characteristic feature of Calvin’s statements about the nature of the kingdom of Christ can be called eschatological tension.²⁶⁷ Therefore we cannot neglect the eschatological tension in the doctrine of repentance because for him repentance stands in the present and in the future; now and forever, in relation to his hamartiology. For that reason, repentance is connected with the eternal kingdom because repentance is the door of eternal life and it prepares man for the heavenly kingdom.

Wilcox is apprehensive of Torrance’s interpretation of Calvin’s accent on the future, which is at times in danger of obscuring the fact that when Calvin states that Christ’s kingdom is spiritual,²⁶⁸ he only means that it is by nature spiritual.²⁶⁹ But Calvin mainly regards the kingdom of Christ as spiritual and celestial not only by nature but also in actuality.

The kingdom of God is connected with our faith in the resurrection and the progress of Christ’s kingdom. So, conversion or repentance is not only the first step

266 Comm. on Isa. 35:1.

267 Ibid.

268 Comm. on 14:2-3. Sin is spiritual leprosy. So, as the contrary of sin repentance is inevitably spiritual.

269 P. Wilcox, “Conversion”: 114.

but also full of the kingdom of Christ because Christ requires of us repentance for the kingdom of God and because Christ's kingdom is spiritual, everything is connected with it.²⁷⁰

In Calvin's view of repentance, the kingdom of Christ is spiritual and it is established by the power of the Holy Spirit. In a word, the qualities of Christ's kingdom must be viewed as referring to the inner person who is regenerated by God for true righteousness.²⁷¹ Calvin's statement has an important meaning in this step that Christ's kingdom is not external, but it is related to the inner person.²⁷² The dominion of Christ is exercised by the Spirit who rules over the regenerated and who reforms them according to the image of God. The adjective 'spiritual' conveys Calvin's conviction that the reign of Christ effects the regeneration of individual human beings by the agency of the Holy Spirit. The significance of the eschatological tension in all his statements about the kingdom of Christ becomes clear in this light.²⁷³ Therefore repentance as well as regeneration is related to inward change of man and the spiritual kingdom by the Holy Spirit. Though its initiative is spiritual, an inward repentance, as a conversion of inner person who is regenerated by Christ and the Holy Spirit, it has signs in the external life and the visible kingdom by obedience to God.

Calvin's summary of the Gospel can be clarified in the relationship between the kingdom of Christ and regeneration of saints in his thought. Perhaps the clearest such summary is to be found in a passage in *Institutes* III, xi, 1, where Calvin refers to "the

270 Comm. on Jer. 23: 5-6.

271 Comm. on Isa 7 :7 ; Eph. 1 :3.

272 Comm. on Isa. 42:1; Inst 3.4.1

273 P. Wilcox, "Conversion" 115-117.

double grace” of Christ.²⁷⁴

By partaking of him, we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ’s blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ’s spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life.²⁷⁵

Nevertheless, according to Calvin, Christians experience Christ’s kingdom only as far as we have made progress in newness of life fully under Christ’s authority.²⁷⁶ Christians are still far short of the consummation of Christ’s reign, and the complete fulfillment of prophecies about Christ’s kingdom in individual experience is not to be expected on earth. Believers must always think of making progress.²⁷⁷ Repentance as well as sanctification, or one phase of sanctification, in the Reformed tradition is also in the progress of Christian life and it will continue until the deathbed.

Calvin formulates the functions of the doctrine of Christ’s kingdom as a framework for his exposition of the history of salvation. He construes the history of God’s people, at least from the time of the return of the people of Israel from exile as the history of the kingdom of Christ.²⁷⁸ The proper inauguration of the kingdom of Christ only took place at the coming of Christ. Even this is not to be thought of as a momentary event since the means by which the ascended Christ established his reign was by the promulgation of the Gospel: repentance and forgiveness of sins. For this reason Calvin identifies the beginning of Christ’s kingdom with the apostolic

274 Ibid.

275 Inst., 3. 11.1.

276 P. Wilcox, “Conversion”: 118.

277 Comm. on Isa. 2:4

278 P. Wilcox, “Evangelisation”: 203.

period.²⁷⁹ Sometimes Calvin also speaks as if the apostolic era is the period in which the kingdom of Christ attained its consummation. This appears especially when he expounds prophetic texts which refer to the rule of God over the nations.²⁸⁰ He says, “The prophet had respect to the kingdom of Christ here. There is no doubt that the promise extended right up to his coming, for he is speaking about the calling of the Gentiles, which God deferred until he manifested his Son to the world.”²⁸¹

Calvin also sought to do justice to the decisive significance of the history of salvation of the coming of Christ. He regards the effect of the Gospel as ‘extraordinary’, ‘amazing’, and ‘incredible’, ‘sudden’, and ‘total.’²⁸² He does not separate the kingdom of God and those things which belong to Christ as diverse things but rather adds the second thing by way of exposition that the kingdom of God is grounded and contained in the knowledge of the redemption purchased by Christ. Therefore, men are strangers and foreigners from the kingdom of God until having their sins done away with and they are reconciled to God and are renewed into holiness of life by the Spirit.²⁸³

And the kingdom of God is then erected and does then flourish among them, when Christ the Mediator does join them to the Father, having both their sins freely forgiven them, and being also regenerate unto righteousness, that beginning the heavenly life upon earth, they may always have a longing desire to come to heaven, where they shall fully and perfectly enjoy glory.²⁸⁴

279 Comm. on Dan 7:8.

280 P. Wilcox, “Evangelisation”: 205.

281 Comm. on Jer. 49:6.

282 Comm. on Mic. 4:1-2.

283 Comm. on Acts 28:30.

284 Ibid.

And, according to Calvin, the kingdom of Christ is connected to the *imago Dei*, which is the purpose of repentance and the spiritual life and is governed by God directly.²⁸⁵ Actually the matter of the *imago Dei* is one of the most difficult issues in Calvin's theology²⁸⁶ but Calvin says that the purpose of repentance is the restoration of *imago Dei*. The "sole end of repentance as regeneration is to restore in us the image of God that had been disfigured and all but obliterated by Adam's transgression."²⁸⁷ The object of repentance is to manifest in the life of believers a harmony and agreement between God's righteousness and their obedience and thus to confirm the adoption that has been received as children.²⁸⁸

Calvin's *imago Dei* concerns both nature and humankind, both body and soul, both natural and supernatural, both obscured and lost, both Adam and Christ. The distinctive dynamic perspective structure that pervades this area of his thought, however, provides his various statements on the *imago Dei* with broad unity; a unity in which these necessarily contradictory yet complementary claims are interconnected as parts of a larger whole. Since Calvin's definition of the *imago Dei* includes the notions of reason, the will, the soul and his development of these anthropological issues may be expected to follow similar lines.²⁸⁹ To Calvin, the deformation of the whole of parts of *imago Dei* can be understood under the Doctrine of Sin. The divine image in man was destroyed and effaced by his sins. The divine similitude in man, in

285 Comm. on Jer. 23: 5-6.

286 M. Engel, *John Calvin's Perspectival Anthropology* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), 37.

287 Inst., 3.3.9.

288 Inst., 3.6.1.

289 M. Engel, op. cit., 37-63.

the strictest sense, and his original uprightness no longer exist.²⁹⁰ Therefore repentance becomes an important means for restoration of the *imago Dei*.

To sum up the whole doctrine of repentance, which Calvin speaks of, is that believers ought to be constantly thinking of repentance. And this repentance is to be a renewal of the whole man; renewal of life or regeneration of the spirit is exactly the restoration of the *imago Dei*.²⁹¹ The strength of the *imago Dei* and its continuous maintenance in man lie in the word of God. Regeneration through the Holy Spirit is like another creation and it far surpasses the first creation.²⁹² The meaning of the restoration of the image of God, according to Calvin, does not mean that the image of God is the soul or any natural property of the soul but that the soul is the mirror that reflects God's image in it, or ought to reflect it in it.²⁹³ To Calvin, Christ is not only the image of God, in so far as he is the eternal word of God, but even in his human nature, which he has in common with us, the likeness of the glory of the Father has been engraved so as to form his members to the resemblance of it.²⁹⁴ Therefore *imago Dei* links God's will and his action and our obedience to the word of God. And thus it is understood fully from the believers' regeneration in Christ and this characterises the whole man. Spiritual regeneration is nothing other than the restoration of this image and therefore "righteousness and true holiness are by the figure of synecdoche, for

290 Inst., 1.15.4.

291 T. F. Torrance, ed. *Antidote to the Sixth Session on Acts of Council of Trent : Tract and Treatises in Defence of the Reformed faith*, Vol. III, , 142.

292 Thomas F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub., 1957), 52-53.

293 Ibid., 53.

294 Ibid., 58.

though this is the chief part, it is not the whole of God's image."²⁹⁵

T.F. Torrance distinguishes Calvin's *imago Dei* in a twofold sense:

In the general sense, in which all creation is said to reflect (as in a mirror) the glory of God. God images himself in nature, by beholding the works of His hands. In a particular sense, in which man specially is said to reflect (as in a mirror) the glory of God, by an intelligible response to the word, and more strictly speaking, it is God who images himself in man, and that means that He graciously embraces man as His child in Christ the express image of his glory.²⁹⁶

The repentance, which must embrace our whole existence, must not be understood as simply an improvement of the faculties which we already possess; what is in question is rather a new creation.²⁹⁷ This is a second creation through Christ where everything that is effaced, which is part and parcel of our ordinary nature,²⁹⁸ is restored; everything is better than the old. As Calvin saw it, the establishment of Christ's reign over an individual human being was no less God's proper prerogative than the establishment of the kingdom of Christ by the restoration of the Church. As a result, Calvin presents a close relationship between the kingdom of God, *imago Dei*, forgiveness of sins and repentance through his lifeworks; that by the coming of Jesus Christ the kingdom of God is completed and by the forgiveness of sins and repentance *imago Dei* is restored and for the restoration of the *imago Dei* and the kingdom of God, Jesus Christ preached repentance and forgiveness of sins.

295 Ibid., 60.

296 Ibid.

297 W. Niesel, op. cit., 90.

298 Inst., 2.3.6. "It is created anew; not meaning that the will now begins to exist, but that it is changed from an evil to a good will."

1. 3. The Characteristics of Repentance and Sanctification

1. 3. 1. Repentance and Conversion

Nowadays many Reformed theologians and Reformed Christians easily make the mistake of using conversion as *terminus technicus* on the basis of the conceptions of pietism and English Methodism. Thus many people are disinterested in the Reformed doctrine of repentance and Calvin's doctrine of repentance, which leads Christians to the assurance of salvation and certainty of faith and 'repentance of life' as a progress in faith.²⁹⁹ And there are many pains taken to understand Calvin's personal conversion in *terminus technicus* of modern evangelicalism and revivalism.

Calvin's "*subita conversione*" in the *Preface in Commentary of Psalms* and *conversio ad docilitatem*, which was translated as "turning to teachableness"³⁰⁰ in Calvin's autobiography, has been known to illuminate both his theological thoughts and his understanding of his personal religious experiences. It is true that his experience of conversion shows well the nature and origin of conversion.³⁰¹ Throughout his narrative, Calvin notes that it is God who is presented as the active party; man is passive; God acts, man is acted upon.³⁰²

Many Calvinistic scholars have tried to explain his conversion within modern

299 W. Neuser, *Calvin's conversion to teachables: Calvin and Christian Ethics*, ed. by De Klerk (Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin Studies Society, 1987), 70.

300 W. Neuser, *op. cit.*, 68-69.

301 Ganoczy argues that Calvin's concept of repentance is reminiscence of conversion recently experienced by Calvin himself. Ganoczy, *op. cit.*, 246.

302 Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture* (Oxford, U.K.: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 70.

Reformed systematic terms or as *terminus technicus* on the basis of the conceptions of pietism and modern evangelicalism but they have neglected Calvin's own intention and its original meaning in Calvin's whole theology.

In his *Preface to the Commentary on the Psalms* Calvin contrasted the words obstinacy and teachableness, and his father's intention and God's hidden intention³⁰³ to show the characteristics of his personal conversion. In the narrative of his life Calvin wrote that "the world is governed by the hidden providence of God."³⁰⁴ In next part of its preface Calvin treated eternal predestination and election. This implies that his *conversio ad docilitas* is just one step of the whole progress of God's providence to save his elected.³⁰⁵

Conversion, for Calvin, is caused by God's direct intervention, and it is not described in theological terms in the strict sense and avoids contemporary account about it. And furthermore the description of his conversion as the result of God's providential grace "fits exactly into Calvin's theological emphasis on election as the divine initiative in the process of redemption."³⁰⁶

W. Neuser presents twelve stories, especially Zaccheus, the Samaritan woman and the Scribe (Mk 12:32-33), from the Gospels as examples of *conversio ad*

303 As a matter of fact, we can feel that through his autobiography he wants to show God's hidden intention or counsel.

304 Joseph Haroutunian and Louise Pettibone Smith, ed. *Commentaries and Letters, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXIII* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 51-55.

305 Ibid., 56.

306 H. T. Kerr and J. M. Mulder, *Famous Conversion: The Christian Experience* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1983), 24.

*docilitas*³⁰⁷ but these stories acknowledge nothing but docility as a part of the providence of God. Especially, in the story of the Samaritan woman Calvin avers that “repentance is the beginning of true teachableness,”³⁰⁸ meaning that man knows a sense of guilt by the grace of God.³⁰⁹ Neuser is partially correct in that he puts *docilitas* in the decree of God: “God himself seeks those who are wandering in the errors of their way and changes the obstinate passions of our heart.”³¹⁰ The means of conversion to teachableness and repentance are based on the word of God or God’s calling, and teachableness is the subjective attitude of God in the process of development.³¹¹

Calvin’s theology is concerned with the realistic phase in which it authentically reflects the faith of the author. Calvin’s theology is not the figment of his mind but the concrete statement of what God is actually doing in the world, in Calvin’s own life and in Geneva and in the Church. Calvin’s life was congruent with the theology he wrote of.³¹²

Until now many scholars have been interested in Calvin’s personal conversion, what it is, its date and meaning: H. Lecoultre argues that Calvin was converted to Protestantism when he understood that it was necessary to combat and replace the

307 W. Neuser, op. cit., 60-63.

308 Comm. on Jn. 4:19.

309 W. Neuser, op. cit., 61.

310 Ibid., 62.

311 Ibid., 64-67.

312 John Leith, *Calvin’s Theological Realism* in *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*, ed. by David Willis & Michael Welker (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.:WM. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 345.

church of his fathers rather than amend it.³¹³ P. Sprenger firstly makes Calvin a ‘fanatical’ adversary of the “new doctrine” and then presents him as having broken with the Mother Church.³¹⁴ K. Müller advances the hypothesis that Calvin may have been converted during his last participation in public prayers (“certain sacred ceremonies”) at the Cathedral of Noyon, where in so doing he discovered the falsehood of Roman worship.³¹⁵ J. Pannier describes the conversion in these terms: “Openly, in some official sense, Calvin broke the ties that held him within the framework of the Roman Church, on 4 May 1534, the day when he resigned his benefices.”³¹⁶ F. Wendel writes of Calvin’s break with the Church and Christian humanism; this occurred after a long period of stubbornness³¹⁷ “which for some time held him within the bosom of the Roman Church.”³¹⁸ A. Lang sees in the “*subita conversione*” a sudden break by Calvin with his former aspirations and ideals or with the errors of the “old Church”; this break is followed by the adoption of a “new concept of life” and commitment to the true God.³¹⁹ To the extent that they tend to make the mistake of separating it from the Bible and Calvin’s notion of conversion, which essentially means “repentance,” it has nothing to do with a confessional change. And the debate of what the precise date of Calvin’s conversion was is worthless in the study of conversion or repentance, because Calvin’s main concern is not a date or a

313 H. Lecoultre, “La conversion de Calvin,” *RThPh*, 1890, 24.

314 P. Sprenger, *Das Rätsel um die Bekehrung Calvins* (Neukirchen, 1960), 14, 28, 66.

315 K. Müller, “Calvins Bekehrung” *NGG* (1922):213-214.

316 A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 265.

317 François Wendel, *Calvin: Sources et Évolution de la pensée Religieuse* (Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), 21: ... susso en avait connu un et qui sont d’ordinaire le resultat d’une longue préparation inconsciente.

318 Ibid., 23-25

319 A. Lang, “Die Bekehrung Johannes Calvins,” *StGThK*, 1897, Vol. II.,fasc.1, 37.

reason but conversion to teachableness itself and conversion to the providence of God purposely.

Furthermore, they seem at times to be influenced by a pietistic view of conversion when they attach so much importance to determining its date, place, and setting.³²⁰ However in Calvin's case the conversion is understood not just as confessional but also as penitential³²¹ because he never mentioned the contents and reasons for his conversion. And Ganoczy notes the distinction between 'conversion as repentance' as God's ordinary work and 'conversion as a miracle' as God's extraordinary work.³²² And Ganoczy adds that Calvin's conversion is 'conversion as repentance.' But Calvin did not distinguish between the conversion of non-Christians and the repentance in Christians in its broad meaning. In addition he uses the terms *conversion* and *resipiscere* more broadly. The whole of conversion to God is understood under the term repentance.³²³ And for Calvin 'conversion as a miracle' is dealt along with 'conversion as repentance' in the same meaning. Therefore he never explicitly distinguishes 'initiatory' conversion experiences from conversion experiences more generally³²⁴ because for him it is not necessary make a distinction.

Nevertheless, a central theme of Christian spirituality is that notorious sinners are redeemed from their waywardness through a single, often dramatic, moment of

320 Althaus, "Die bekehrung im reformatorischen und pietistischen Licht," in *Um die Wahrheit des Evangeliums* (Stuttgart, 1962), 224ff.

321 A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 266.

322 Ibid., 262.

323 Inst., 3.3.5.

324 P. Wilcox, "Conversion": 121.

conversion.³²⁵ Paul and Augustine, the two fountainheads of western Christianity, both underwent conversion experiences that later generations took as a model.³²⁶ Conversion is not merely turning but a volte-face and revolution of human life by divine intervention:

To speak of “conversion,” however, is not merely to draw attention to a sudden change of mind or heart: it is to suggest, discreetly yet definitely, that behind this volte-face there is to be discerned the hand of God. Conversion is something directed toward and accomplished by God.³²⁷

In certain aspects, the conversion of Calvin is as radical as Paul and Augustine’s was. McGrath compares Paul’s conversion with Calvin’s from the standpoint that they were opponents of the new beliefs and of the background to their conversion. Parker, however, demonstrates that Calvin did not compare his conversion with Paul.³²⁸

A certain parallel was noted between medieval Catholicism and Judaism on the one hand, and evangelicalism and New Testament Christianity on the other. Just as Paul symbolized the momentous transition between Judaism and Christianity, so his conversion might be paralleled in the sixteenth century by one who broke with his catholic background, in order to assume, deliberately and decisively, an attachment to the Reformation.³²⁹

Furthermore McGrath compares Calvin’s conversion with Augustine, in which they have different religious backgrounds. To investigate this comparison is useful to this study in that it makes known the nature of conversion. And through these

325 Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*, 69.

326 cf. Fredricksen P, “Paul and Augustine: Conversion narratives, Orthodox tradition and retrospective Self”. *Journal of Theological Studies*. Vol. 37 (1986): 3-34.

327 Alister E McGrath, op. cit. 69.

328 See. T.H.L. Parker, *John Calvin* (Herts, England: Lion Publishing, 1982), Appendix 2. 192.

329 Alister E McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*, 69.

comparisons (Paul and Calvin, Augustine and Calvin) offer the utilities about two aspects of conversion:

The decisive conversion experience narrated by Augustine was also assimilated by image-makers of the Reformation. Were there not parallels between Augustine's gradual disillusionment with pagan superstition (as they saw it), culminating in a decisive change of course and an open embracing of the Gospel, and their own spiritual pilgrimages from the religious superstitions of the medieval Church to the rediscovered religion of the Gospel?³³⁰

The conversion of Calvin is the same as the conversion of Paul in the sense of change and turning but in method and direction they are different. However the conversion of Paul is a rare and special case.

In *Das Rätsel um die bekerhrung Calvins* P. Sprenger subjected Calvin's mention of his conversion to a close investigation. He does not think that it is useful to analyse the terms and the concept of "conversion" in the text of the Psalms Commentary itself.³³¹ In *The Young Calvin* A. Ganoczy examines Calvin's account theologically, seeking to understand what the conversion meant in relation to Calvin as a Churchman.³³² McGrath suggests that "conversion, to Calvin, does not designate merely a private and interior religious experience; it embraced an outward, observable and radical shift."³³³ We cannot neglect the radical shift of conversion but Calvin treated it as one of the things in a process even though his conversion has characteristics of suddenness.

330 Ibid., 70

331 A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 242.

332 T.H.L. Parker, Appendix. 192

333 Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*, 70.

Sprenger's comparison of Calvin's conversion, as related in the Psalms commentary, and Calvin's mention of Paul's conversion is illuminating lexicographically, but it is misleading in that it relates Calvin's conversion to Paul's. Parker presents the reason why this is so:

Now, Calvin himself does not do this, and his silence is pregnant. It is not difficult to see why he did not link himself to Paul. On the one hand, Paul before his conversion had been a persecutor of the Church: Calvin was never persecutor of either the evangelicals or the Romanists. And on the other hand, Calvin did not wish to associate himself with any miraculous revelations from heaven, with their suggestions of 'les spirituals'.³³⁴

Neuser draws a parallel between Calvin's conversion and the conversion from paganism to Christianity or from Judaism to a disciple of Christ.³³⁵ However Calvin's conversion is different to Paul's because Calvin's conversion is, in Calvin's words, "not to turn away from the profession of Christianity but to take it back to its own source or form of doctrine and restore it, cleansed of all its corruptions, to its essential purity,"³³⁶ and the whole story of his youth notes that his conversion is the "unreserved, wholehearted commitment to the living God."³³⁷

After Parker quotes the portion concerning the unexpected conversion in *Preface in Commentary on the Psalms* he presents his opinion. It is useful to investigate Calvin's "*subita conversione*" in this text.³³⁸

334 T.H.L. Parker, op. cit., 192-193

335 W. Neuser, op. cit., 57.

336 G. R. Potter and M. Greengrass, *John Calvin* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), 7-8.

337 John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 107-118.

338 On the basis of Calvin's Seneca Commentary, Parker translates *subita* as unexpected. See. Alister E

God drew me from obscure and lowly beginnings and conferred on me that most honorable office of herald and minister of Gospel. My father had intended me for theology from my early childhood. But when he reflected that the career of the proved everywhere very lucrative for its practitioners, the prospect suddenly made him change his mind. And so it happened that I was called away from the study of philosophy and set to learning law: although, out of obedience to my father's wishes, I tried my best to work hard, yet God at last turned my courses in another direction by the secret rein of his providence. What happened first was that by an unexpected conversion the tamed to teachableness a mind too stubborn for its years- for I was so strongly devoted to the superstitions of the papacy that nothing less could draw me from such depths of mire.³³⁹ And so this mere taste of true godliness that I received set me on fire with such a desire to progress that I pursued the rest of my studies more coolly, although I did not give them up altogether. Before a year had slipped by anybody who longed for a purer doctrine kept on coming to learn from me, still a beginner, and a raw recruit.³⁴⁰

Here the clue to the solution of this issue may be found. To be teachable is the opposite of being hardhearted and stubborn.³⁴¹ And his conversion was not the result of any wish or of intention, but rather it took place unexpectedly.³⁴² As McGrath explains, Calvin's conversion with the term "*subita*" implies that most conversions are "unpremeditated but not necessarily sudden."³⁴³ Calvin mentioned "for a year" as a period of progression. However, Calvin merely seems to be clarifying the unusual meaning of the term *subita* in the sense of "unpremeditated."³⁴⁴

Many theologians overlook the whole story. That is, that they do not see the

McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*, 70. Footnote.

339 "la prise de conscience du péché a joué le rôle décisif dans la conversion de Calvin. "

340 François Wendel, op. cit., 25.

341 See. Comm. on 2Cor. 7: 8. Calvin here also contrasts docility and obstination and he explains "Obstinez et endurcis."

342 See, Comm. on Heb. 6:2-6; on 1 peter 2:3

343 Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*, 70.

344 Ibid. Footnote. 5.

wood for the trees. Through his autobiographical narrative, Calvin presents the Providence of God that has worked throughout his life; he mentions “my father had intended me for theology from my early childhood.” God accomplishes this and in mentioning this story Calvin shows the ‘conversion as a progress,’ which he consistently asserted in the *Institutes* and *Commentaries*. Actually in the *Institutes* of 1551, Calvin considered the “preparation for conversion or for repentance.”³⁴⁵ He did not consider that ‘conversion as a miracle’ is different from ‘conversion as repentance.’ For Calvin “conversion as a miracle” is dealt with as a particular kind and special form of “conversion as repentance.”³⁴⁶ Furthermore, in the story of Paul in his Commentary Calvin depicts that Paul’s conversion is “a universal example or type of the grace that God manifests daily in calling all of us.”³⁴⁷

Reflecting on conversion in the *Institutes* of 1539, Calvin includes the idea of both ‘conversion as a miracle’ and ‘conversion as repentance,’ and he says that in essence they are not different; both are equally the exclusive work of God. Besides Calvin never tries to suggest that conversion must have a particular time and location as the pietists will do later.³⁴⁸

The prerequisite for understanding Calvin’s personal conversion is that he does not take up another Credo or other ethics that depart from the mother Church. Calvin had depended on the faithfulness of God and his covenant for the Church in Christ.³⁴⁹

345 A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 247.

346 Ibid., 248.

347 Comm. on Acts 9:1ff. following summary of A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 248-49.

348 A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 252.

349 Ibid., 253-54.

Above all, this gives an insight into the context of Calvin's conversion and his followers. Calvin used verbs in the present tense several times in his autobiographical narrative. These allusions show that he has little concern for chronological precision.³⁵⁰ Some theologians try it to interpret this in theological aspects. Wernle understands '*subita conversione*' as a reflection of his faith³⁵¹ and Sprenger sees it as a "judgment of faith," or a "theological judgment" which transcends chronological precision.³⁵² Even Ganoczy agrees with them.³⁵³ Ganoczy says that the entire *Preface to the Commentary on the Psalms* belongs to this prophetic genre and Calvin likens himself to the prophets, and as such his conversion is on the basis of a "theological statement."³⁵⁴ Ganoczy understands Calvin's conversion as a theological statement.³⁵⁵ He sees it as theological retrospection but he fails to allude to the possibility of Calvin's conversion in a special point in time³⁵⁶ and the fact of his conversion itself. It seems clear that the exact meaning of '*subita conversione*' should therefore be sought in a theological-prophetic context and not from a purely historical point of view.³⁵⁷ As K. Müller stresses this interpretation is also the best way to avoid the dispute between the slow improvement attested by the earliest documents and the spontaneous

350 Ibid., 259-60.

351 Wernle, "Noch einmal die Bekehrung Calvinus," ZKG Vol. 27 (1906): 90-95. cited from A. Ganoczy, Ibid. 262: "However, this is immediately clear: it is not a historical reference; he wants to give his reader his reflection based on faith."

352 Sprenger, *Das Rätsel um die Bekehrung Calvins*. (Neukirchen, 1960), 4, 12.

353 A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 262

354 Ibid., 263.

355 Ibid., 262.

356 Ibid., 245.

357 Ibid.

transformation affirmed by our text.³⁵⁸

But although it includes the theological intention, it cannot only be called a theological statement because in his opinion Psalms cannot be classified as a prophetic book. Furthermore, Calvin's conversion is nothing but a personal experience and has no theological intension because throughout his works he never mentioned this experience of conversion as a means for explaining his theological viewpoint. According to Bouwsma, Calvin, in his many discussions of the Christian life and the way of salvation, attached little or no significance to 'conversion' as a precise event.³⁵⁹ Tony Lane argues that Calvin does not regard his personal story as the "norm" of conversion³⁶⁰ but through his story he wants to attest to God's providence and grace in his life.

Calvin wishes to demonstrate, forcefully and eternally, the valid theological truth that the grace of God is stronger than man's resistance.³⁶¹ Ganoczy concludes his assertions about Calvin's '*subita conversione*' in the *Preface to the Commentary on the Psalms*, by indicating that the personal conversion of Calvin is not the dominant theme but rather it is the triumph of divine power over every human obstacle. Calvin's life changes direction without his intention to do so; "God by the secret bridle of his providence finally turned my course in another direction." And in the French text,

358 K. Müller, "Calvins Bekehrung" *NGG* (1922): 188-255. cited from A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 263.

Footnote. 124: "This 'sudden conversion' is therefore something entirely different from the development that we so far have been able to trace. This is not presented as a break or a sudden turn in either its beginning or its continuation."

359 W. J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A sixteenth Century portrait* (Oxford: OUP, 1988), 11.

360 A.N.S. Lane, "Conversion: A Comparison of Calvin and Spengler" *Themelios*, 18 (1987): 20.

361 A. Ganoczy, op. cit., 264.

Calvin says, “by His secret providence God nevertheless finally pulled the bridle to the other side.”³⁶² Calvin may seem to regard this narrative as actual providence although Ganoczy regards it as just a metaphor. This idea ‘hidden’ connects to ‘*subita*’ through his narrative and Calvin presents the ‘hiddenness of the Providence of God’ and ‘secretly.’ This gives the idea that God’s providence happened in his life secretly.

Calvin’s soteriology is characterised by an eschatological.³⁶³ that the kingdom of God is completed with the coming of Christ but yet uncompleted in individual experience. Christians are not only described as those who “are being converted” but they are also those who are already “converted to Christ.”³⁶⁴

During the history of Dogmatics, the relationship between the will of God and the human will in the doctrine of repentance has been a matter of controversy. It is a fact that Calvin gives no credit for a human contribution to conversion: “people never turn to God voluntarily,”³⁶⁵ and “people cannot convert to God by their own free will, unless he first changes their stony heart into hearts of flesh. Indeed, this renovation is a work surpassing that of creation itself.”³⁶⁶ Human beings can no more convert themselves than create themselves. Regeneration is nothing other than God’s own creation. From Calvin’s point of view, this is true at every stage of the Christian life. Conversion and repentance are the work of God alone. He maintains that God must

362 Ibid., 262. See. Footnote 111.

363 P. Wilcox, “Conversion”: 119.

364 Ibid., 120.

365 Comm. on Mal 4:6.

366 Comm. on Ps 81:14.

forcibly subdue the will of the unregenerate.³⁶⁷ The only preparation that he recognises occurs not when a sinner acts in some way but when the sinner is acted upon by God. Calvin regards “the sinner is slain” as true preparation for conversion.³⁶⁸ People can be converted when the Lord subdues their wicked inclination;³⁶⁹ when the Lord has determined to have pity on men in the end they may repent to God.³⁷⁰ Repentance is essentially the gift of God.³⁷¹ Through his experience Calvin knew very well the problems of auricular confession, which could not give rest to the penitent. He knew that true repentance must give “assurance of salvation that is found only in the mercy of God shown to us in Jesus because in Him alone is accomplished that which appertains to our salvation.”³⁷² In ‘*subita conversione*’ Calvin mentioned that conversion is exclusively the work of God, not the work of man. He is not attempting to explain the suddenness and progression of conversion. Furthermore, it can be regarded as his personal experience and theological reflection thereon and the unexpected change of theological alignment brought about by God.

1. 3. 2. Moment and Progression

Nowadays, debate concerning the characteristic of conversion is usually polarised between those who emphasise ‘decision’ or ‘suddenness’ and those who

367 P. Wilcox, “Conversion”: 121.

368 Comm. on Ezek. 13:22-23.

369 Comm. on Isa. 65: 25.

370 Inst., 3.3.20.

371 Inst., 3.3.21

372 John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, 117.

stress ‘gradual progression.’ Calvin sets forth conversion in an eschatological framework that encompasses both ideas. On the basis of God’s ‘double grace,’ which is reconciliation and sanctification, Calvin does not ignore the view of ‘sudden’ conversion but rather he focuses on “change in the gradual progress in the holiness of life.”³⁷³ Sometimes Calvin treats conversion and repentance, regeneration and sanctification as one process. So repentance as restoration to the image of God is a progression.

It does not take place in one moment or one day or one year; but through continual and sometimes even slow advances God wipes out in his elect the corruptions of the flesh, cleanses them of guilt, consecrates them to himself as temples, renewing their mind to true purity that they might practice repentance throughout their lives and know that this warfare will end only at death.³⁷⁴

The repentance of a human being, according to Calvin, does not take place in an instant. On the contrary, repentance is a process in which it is necessary to make progress. “We are converted to God little by little, and in various stages for repentance has its progress.”³⁷⁵ For Calvin, “no one is converted to God in a single day.” and even he says, “Sudden conversion is never to be found in a human being.”³⁷⁶ Believers, Calvin says, are renewed from day by day, gradually step-by-step and that they do not put off ‘the old man’ in a day. It is seen that repentance has many stages forming a progression.

The Spirit of God calls us to repentance every where, in the law, the prophets, and the Gospel; at the same time.... when he orders us to be renewed in our hearts, to be

373 P. Wilcox, “Conversion”: 113.

374 Inst., 3.3.9.

375 Comm. on Jer. 31:18.

376 Comm. on Jer. 24:7.

circumcised to the Lord, to be washed, and to cease from wicked pursuits, to loose the bond of iniquity bound within us, to rend our hearts and not our garments, to put off the old man, to renounce our own desires, and be renewed in the image of God; besides enumerating, as the fruits of repentance, acts of charity, and the exercises of a pious and holy life.³⁷⁷

Believers are gradually converted to God in stages; repentance has its own stage in this progress.³⁷⁸ There is an important contrast to be made between the instantaneous conversion of modern evangelicals generally and Calvin's concept of conversion as a process.³⁷⁹ Alluding to the Pilgrim's Progress, Steinmetz suggests that for Calvin and his fellow Reformers, in contradistinction to the American evangelical experience of the last two centuries, conversion 'is not the little wicket gate' through which John Bunyan's pilgrim pass but the entire pilgrimage to the celestial city.³⁸⁰

In the context of the discussion in the *Institutes*, it is clear that Calvin criticises the Anabaptist's belief that moral perfection was to be experienced in the present, and he calls it "mad excess."³⁸¹ Calvin adds, "We are purged by the Spirit's sanctification in such a way that we are besieged by many vices and much weakness so long as we are encumbered with our body. Far removed from perfection, we must advance steadily forward."³⁸² And "Just as certainly as Jesus Christ alone will bring about the consummation, so certainly the change which He effects in our lives does not take

377 *Articles by the Theological faculty of Paris*, 77-78.

378 OC 38, 671

379 A.N.S. Lane, op. cit., 20.

380 D.C. Steinmetz, "Reformation and Conversion": 30.

381 Inst., 3.3.14.

382 Ibid.

place in a moment,”³⁸³ nor does “it represent the beginning of a process of development by which man gradually attains the goal of perfection.”³⁸⁴ It is rather that throughout our entire lives we must practice repentance.³⁸⁵

Even though Christ broke the dominion of sin we are still engaged in a constant struggle because sin dwells in Christians. Repentance is militancy against sin and the restoration of the *Imago Dei* in us. This state of affairs persists for our whole life and only comes to an end with death.³⁸⁶ No doubt in the struggle laid upon us there is progress. The process of repentance takes place for one’s whole life and is at the same time one of gradual growth. But our entire advance is attended by tottering and limping and indeed crawling on the floor.³⁸⁷ Believers are forced to recognise ever more and more our essential incapacity.³⁸⁸ God trains us daily in humility to prevent us from becoming proud and forgetting our dependence on grace. We realise that the source and strength of the new life does neither lie in ourselves nor have we any security about attainment of perfection. Such security is given us solely in Jesus

383 Inst., 3.3.9.

384 In *Adversus Haereses*, IV. xxxviii.1; in *Sources Chrétiennes*, Vol. C, ed. by A. Rousseau (Paris: Cerf, 1965), 942.1-946.17. Irenaeus notes on human progress. This shows well as a progress of repentance, “And being newly created they are therefore childish and immature, and not yet fully prepared for an adult way of life. And so, just as a mother is able to offer food to an infant, but the infant is not yet able to receive food unsuited to its age, in the same way, God, for his part, could have offered perfection to humanity at the beginning, but humanity was not capable of receiving it. It was nothing more than an infant.” Recited from Alister E. McGrath, ed. *The Christian Theology Reader* (Oxford, UK/ Cambridge, USA: Blackwell Pub., 1995), 212; 6.1.

385 Inst., 3.3.8.

386 Ibid.

387 Inst., 3.6.5.

388 Inst., 3.3.10.

Christ.³⁸⁹

Calvin clearly allows for various degrees of faith and assurance of salvation. Calvin utilises such concepts as infancy of faith, beginnings of faith and weak faith even more frequently than Luther.³⁹⁰ In relation to the process of maturation of faith, its secret beginnings or final realisation, Calvin asserts that assurance of salvation is directly proportional to faith's development. More specifically, the Spirit is continually presented not only as the initiator of faith but also as its maintainer and the cause of its growth and advancement.³⁹¹ Regeneration, sanctification, repentance, faith, and assurance are all progressive.³⁹² Sometimes Calvin treats both repentance and regeneration in the same sense.³⁹³

Calvin goes on to refer to repentance as regeneration and reconciliation as justification in the double grace. Hereby we see that repentance as sanctification indicates that the whole life of believers is repentance. In Calvin's soteriology double grace is linked closely with repentance. This 'double grace' provides the structure of *Institutes* Book III; after an introduction on faith, Calvin spends the remainder of the book in an explanation of sanctification and justification. The emphasis on the twofold grace of Christ is a consistent feature of Calvin's soteriology that is presented in his biblical expositions as well as in the *Institutes*. Even in the *Institutes*, however, he uses various terms to distinguish between its two parts. In *Institutes* III, iii, 1, for

389 Inst., 3.2.17-21

390 Ibid.; Comm. on Gal. 4:6.

391 Inst., 3.2.33.

392 Inst., 3.2.14; Comm. Jn 2:11.

393 Sometimes we need to distinguish regeneration from repentance to improve the understanding definitely.

example, having stated in his usual way that the sum of the Gospel is said to consist of repentance and the forgiveness of sins, he proceeds to explain these concepts with reference to “newness of life and free reconciliation.”³⁹⁴

Calvin uses several pairs of words for twofold grace: ‘Justification and sanctification’, ‘reconciliation and regeneration’ and ‘forgiveness of sins and repentance.’³⁹⁵ For Calvin they are synonymous pairs and each of them serves to aid in comprehending the grace of Christ and to summarise the message of the Gospel. He warns that these two aspects of Christ’s grace are not to be separated from one another.³⁹⁶ On the other hand, he insists that for the purposes of exposition the two must be distinguished precisely although they are neither separated nor confused.³⁹⁷

The association in Calvin’s mind between Christ’s *duplex gratia* and his *munus duplex* (Priestship and Kingship) is possibly indicative of the correlation between them. Calvin draws a distinction between Christ’s work, as Priest in the case of our justification and his work as King with reference to our sanctification.³⁹⁸ However, the intrinsic inseparability of these two aspects of Christ’s grace in Calvin’s theology means that, occasionally, the exploration of one inevitably spills over into the other.

Christ brings about repentance throughout the totality of our lives. This acknowledges that we are at war against sin. Repentance must be a daily undertaking

394 Inst., 3.3.1.

395 Usually Calvin uses a pair of terms. Through this Calvin intends that repentance is forgiveness of sins.

396 Inst., 3.9.6.

397 Comm. on Isa 59:20.

398 P. Wilcox, op. cit., 116.

in the Church as it is necessary for us during the whole course of our lives.³⁹⁹ According to Calvin, true repentance is firm and constant and it creates a war with the evil that is in us, not just for a day or a week but “without end and without intermission.”⁴⁰⁰ Calvin places great emphasis on genuine repentance as a continuing process of growth in grace.⁴⁰¹ Authentic repentance is a life under the cross in hatred of self and under continuous mortification of the flesh.⁴⁰² And it takes place in us when we are regenerated by the Spirit to newness of life.⁴⁰³ His main concern in repentance is surely newness of life for one’s whole life.⁴⁰⁴

Calvin connects the gradual aspect of repentance with the forbearance of Christ. The forbearance of Christ is great in greatness, Calvin says, so “Christ receives men even those whose faith is very small. Man’s faith grows and pursues perfection in the progression of life. Christians make daily progress towards the fulfillment of their faith.”⁴⁰⁵ Bouwsma asserts that Calvin always emphasises the gradualness of repentance rather than the suddenness of conversion in the Christian life⁴⁰⁶ but on the contrary Calvin does not always stress the gradualness of conversion alone.⁴⁰⁷ Calvin does not forget the tension in repentance even though he emphasises the gradualness

399 Comm. on Acts. 2:38

400 *Short treatises on the Lord’s Supper*, 27, 178.

401 Peter Toon, op. cit., 77.

402 Leif Grane, op. cit., 138.

403 Comm. on 1Cor.1:2.

404 This means that the image of God will be recovered through our lives. In Christ, His righteousness imputed to us, but the point of the whole rediscovery is that when the time comes, Christ will receive us.

405 Comm. on Jn. 2:11.

406 W. J. Bouwsma, op. cit., 11.

407 P. Wilcox, “Conversion”: 122.

of repentance. Assurance, for Calvin, is free from doubt, yet not free. It does not hesitate, yet can hesitate. It contains security but may be beset with anxiety.⁴⁰⁸ This is the paradox in Calvin's doctrine. So, through the whole life the Christian needs to be strengthened in true repentance.

1. 3. 3. Repentance, Fruits and Evidence

For Calvin, the relation between faith and good works is clearly explained in his theology and at the same time this explanation can help in understanding the necessity of them in soteriology. And he adds that this is not a contradiction in the veil of his theology that we are saved by faith alone. He called it '*Duplex acceptio hominis*' or '*Operum Justitia.*' Calvin says,

But when the promises of the Gospel are substituted, which proclaim the free forgiveness of sins, these not only make us acceptable to God but also render our works pleasing to him. And not only does the Lord adjudge them pleasing; he also extends to them the blessings which under the covenant were owed to the observance of his law. I therefore admit that what the Lord has promised in his law to the keepers of righteousness and holiness is paid to the works of believers.⁴⁰⁹

And he presents the three reasons why God accepts them;

The first is: God, having returned his gaze from his servants' works, which always deserve reproof rather than praise, embraces his servants in Christ, and with faith alone intervening, reconciles them to himself without the help of works. The second is: of his own fatherly generosity and loving-kindness, and without considering their worth, he raises works to this place of honor, so that he attributes some value of them. The third is:

408 Joel R. Beeke, op. cit., 54.

409 Inst., 3.17.3.

He receives these very works with pardon, not imputing the imperfection with which they are all so corrupted that they would otherwise be reckoned as sins rather than virtues.⁴¹⁰

This is important in understanding why the doctrine of repentance precedes the doctrine of justification in the *Institutes*. This is a polemical issue for scholars studying Calvin. Niesel says that the reason Calvin places his doctrine of repentance before his doctrine of justification is in order to forestall the objections of Romanism from the start.⁴¹¹ Wendel presents a concrete reason why Calvin puts repentance before Justification as being that Calvin wants to emphasise that “to be righteous in the sight of God is solely by faith, in other words, we are justified in the sight of God by faith alone.”⁴¹² But at the same time the priority given to the doctrine of repentance expresses something peculiar to Calvinistic theology. Calvin explains it as his wanting to show how we appropriate salvation by pointing to our communion with Christ.⁴¹³ There is, for Calvin, no repentance apart from communion with Christ.⁴¹⁴

Calvin argues the reason for it in the *Institutes*,⁴¹⁵ saying, “for when this topic is rightly understood, rather, it will better appear how man is justified by faith alone, and simple pardon; nevertheless actual holiness of life, so to speak, is not separated from free imputation of righteousness.”⁴¹⁶ This order just follows the logical order. However his argument is more persuasive.⁴¹⁷ Concerning the position of

410 Inst., 3.17.3.

411 W. Niesel, op. cit., 130.

412 François Wendel, *op. cit.*, 180.

413 W. Niesel, op. cit., 130-31.

414 Inst., 3.14.4. In here Calvin includes good works in the doctrine of repentance.

415 François Wendel, op. cit., 180. See. Footnote. Wendel misquotes this. Not Inst., 3.1.1. but Inst., 3.3.1.

416 Inst., 3.11.1.

417 François Wendel, op. cit., 177.

repentance,⁴¹⁸ both Niesel and Wendel fail to catch the real intention of Calvin. This is one of the important issues in this thesis because the position of repentance in Calvin's *Institutes* offers insight into its importance. From this order, Calvin presents the necessity of good works as fruits of repentance.

Because it was more to the point to understand first how little devoid of good work is the faith, through which alone we obtain free righteousness by the mercy of God; and what is the nature of the good works of the saints, with which part of this question is concerned.⁴¹⁹

Calvin intends to announce what the nature of the good works of the saints is. As Wendel notes, it is not more focus on repentance than Justification, but this form shows particular causality. Calvin parallels justification and repentance at the same level⁴²⁰ and at least this shows that repentance is one of the two important streams in Calvin's Reformation. Repentance is more meaningful than just the confession of sin before God.⁴²¹ About the necessity of good works in the life of Christians, Calvin presents a fourfold classification for the kinds of righteousness that are possible for man through the whole course of his life; "For men are either firstly, endowed with no knowledge of God and immersed in idolatry, or secondly, initiated into the sacraments, yet by impurity of life denying God in their actions while they confess him with their lips, they belong to Christ only in name, or thirdly, they are hypocrites who conceal with empty pretenses their wickedness of heart, or fourthly, regenerated by God's

418 For Calvin Regeneration and Repentance is the same term (I interpret repentance as regeneration...
Inst., 3.3.9.

419 Inst., 3.11.1.

420 François Wendel, op. cit., 175.

421 Inst., 3.3.1

Spirit, they make true holiness their concern.”⁴²²

From the first to the third types in this fourfold classification, which Calvin speaks of, are the unregenerated men who have no power to do good works because they have no faith, even if they have faith, it is only in name and they do not have true living faith. So they have no good works.⁴²³ Repentance is a prerequisite to the turning of the heart and when the turning of the heart appears in the whole life, Calvin calls it “producing fruits worthy of repentance.”⁴²⁴ Herein, for Calvin, repentance includes not only conversion to God, but also good works. For him, generally repentance happens throughout the life, but conversion indicates the direction of it, to God, to the Lord through his lifeworks, in the strictest sense.

Calvin distinguishes between repentance itself and the fruits of repentance. For him repentance is an inward turning but the fruits of repentance are presenting a life of good works.⁴²⁵ However, the turning of life to God requires a transformation, not only in the soul itself but also in outward works.⁴²⁶ Because Christ took on both divine and human nature, he can sanctify our soul and flesh.⁴²⁷ But the purpose of the Holy Spirit coming is to sanctify us; so by the power of the Holy Spirit we continually advance through entangling vices, daily fighting against them, because we are far

422 Inst., 3.14. 1.

423 Inst., 3.14.1-8.

424 Inst., 3.3.5.

425 Ibid.

426 Inst., 3.3.6.

427 Inst., 3.11.8-9.

from perfection,⁴²⁸ even though we are justified once and for all.

Repentance is transformation of the soul and it is called a new heart; circumcision of the heart. Repentance is a change from our inmost heart.⁴²⁹ The renewal by the fruits of repentance is righteousness, judgment and mercy. Repentance is not acting upon the righteousness, judgment and mercy but rather putting on the inclination of righteousness, judgment and mercy.⁴³⁰

So, in relation to repentance, vivification means that the regenerated nature puts on new inclinations in Christ. The nature of the fruits of repentance is the duties of piety toward God, of charity toward men and holiness and purity in the entire life.⁴³¹ As such, weeping and fasting are not subjoined as perpetual or necessary effects of this, but have their special roles.⁴³² Calvin does not place them on the same level as the fruits of repentance for Christians but he considers their particular worth on occasions; and as such he calls them “privilege of Christians.”⁴³³ Christians must repent sincerely because through it God forgives our sins⁴³⁴ and amends our lives towards godliness.⁴³⁵ When repentance is applied to this external profession it is sometimes improperly diverted from its true meaning. Overemphasising the role of

428 Inst., 3.3.14.

429 Inst., 3.3.6.

430 Inst., 3.3.8.

431 Inst., 3.3.16.

432 Inst., 3.3.17. Calvin asserts the need of weeping and fasting today. “The pastors of the Church would not be doing ill today if, when they see ruin hanging over the necks of their people, they were to cry out to them to hasten to fasting and weeping.”

433 *Form of Prayer for the Church*, 106.

434 Inst., 3.3.25.

435 Ibid.

faith in justification has possibility of diminishing the works of Christ and glory of God⁴³⁶ because faith is one of the means of grace but not all the works of Christ and His ministry.

According to Calvin, confession of sins is “a testimony of repentance.”⁴³⁷ Confession of sins is our duty and obligation but more concretely it is our privilege, so Calvin’s attitude to repentance is not abstract but concrete and repentance is an ongoing, lifelong process that also needs concrete confession of sins and external figures of it. This idea suggests that repentance is an event in Christ like justification, but at the same time an event in this world. But Calvin criticises the Roman Catholic Church for torturing for confession and forcibly demanding a preparation for faith with it. So Calvin points out her iniquity concerning it saying, “the whole performance would be nothing but an idle mockery.”⁴³⁸

Calvin’s doctrine of repentance is almost always connected with good works. Repentance, for Calvin, which is attested by words, is of no value, unless it is proved by the conduct.⁴³⁹ Calvin affirms that good works will make it evident, over a period of time, whether or not they have seriously repented. He indicates another step of repentance: seriousness. However Calvin takes up good works as evidence of authentic repentance.⁴⁴⁰ Good works are called fruits of repentance by Calvin, but he

436 François Wendel, *op. cit.*, 199. elle n’en est pas moins nôtre, une fois que nous l’avons reçue, et nous pourrions donc. En insistant trop sur le rôle qu’elle est appelée à jouer dans la justification, nous en prévaloir et réduire d’autant la part du Christ et la gloire de Dieu.

437 Comm. on Mt. 3:6; Mk. 1:5.

438 Comm. on Mk. 1:5.

439 Comm. on Mt. 3:8; Lk.3:8.

440 Comm. on Mt. 3:8

is in two minds over it; on the one hand he rejects Papist penance, which so corrupts this other part of the Gospel that it quite excludes the remission of sins, which is to be obtained by Christ, and on the other hand he emphasises the necessity of the fruits of repentance.⁴⁴¹ Even though Berkouwer did not regard it as a violation of the correlation between penance and repentance in Calvin's theology,⁴⁴² in fact, their correlation is violated. Calvin blames the Papists for overthrowing the whole doctrine of the Gospel; since, "first, they take from men's consciences the certainty of faith; that done, forasmuch as they part the forgiveness of sins between the death of Christ and our satisfactions, they do altogether deprive us of Christ's benefit."⁴⁴³

On the contrary, true repentance, says Calvin, lifts us up with "hope of pardon" because Jesus promised us forgiveness of sins in the two parts of the Gospel, repentance and remission of sins.⁴⁴⁴ Calvin observed this order of repentance in his doctrine that those who yet live unto the world and the flesh and who may begin to crucify the old man are raised unto newness of life and that those who have already entered the course of repentance may continually go forward towards the mark of salvation. Furthermore, repentance cannot be rightly taught unless works are required because conversion of the inward heart ought to bring forth fruits in the believer's life.⁴⁴⁵ Calvin emphasises the inward change of heart in the doctrine of repentance. Repentance is an inward matter, which has its seat in the heart and soul, but afterwards yields its fruits in a change of life. So thus we, says Calvin, cannot be

441 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

442 G.C. Berkouwer. *Sin*. Tr. Philip C. Holtrop (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 349.

443 Comm. on Acts. 2:38

444 Comm. on Lk. 24:47.

445 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

justified freely through faith alone without at the same time living holy.⁴⁴⁶ But Calvin refers to this distinction that repentance is an inward renewal of the man which manifests itself in the outward life as “a tree produces its fruit.”⁴⁴⁷

In spite of Calvin’s positive assertions, there is the dissoluble question of cause and effect in repentance concerning an inward change and good works as outward evidence. The most important aspect of the doctrine of repentance is an inward change and change of the entire man. Conversion, or turning unto God, is directly linked to repentance,⁴⁴⁸ which is an inward thing and placed in the affection of the heart.⁴⁴⁹ Although repentance is initially a matter of inward change, external evidence of repentance is required. Calvin’s doctrine of repentance has this tension that they (justification by faith alone and necessity of good works) are not a contradiction but a matter of priority in his soteriology although he states that there is not always occasion for those outward figures of repentance.⁴⁵⁰

As examples of outward attitudes of repentance, Calvin presents, sackcloth and ashes, these being strictly related to the beginning of conversion in Calvin’s doctrine of repentance and which must be preceded by hatred of sin, fear of God and mortification of the flesh.⁴⁵¹

446 Comm. on 1Cor. 1:30.

447 Comm. on Mt. 3:8; Lk.3:8.

448 Here, Calvin again tries to distinguish between conversion and repentance. He indicates that repentance refers to the more static and conversion the more active and dynamic aspects in his doctrine of repentance.

449 Comm. on Acts. 26:19-20.

450 Comm. on Lk. 10:13-16.

451 Comm. on Joel 2:13; Mt 11:21.

Calvin regards baptism as the very sealing of the remission of sins by Christ and Him being established in our consciences. Therefore Calvin joins faith and repentance together in the same sense⁴⁵² because in baptism, Christ declares our forgiveness of sins and calls us to repentance.⁴⁵³ Calvin infers that the true sacrament arising from preaching is the baptism of repentance.⁴⁵⁴ He further suggests that baptism is the outward sign of repentance for forgiveness of sins. In this manner he treats the baptism of John the same as the baptism of Christ; that the latter is the essence but the former is an outward sign. He makes a distinction between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ. This is the peculiarity of Calvin's doctrine of baptism that it is said to be an outward representation of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.⁴⁵⁵ Calvin's doctrine of baptism is developed in terms of a various metaphors: Calvin sees "it as a sign of forgiveness of sins, mortification, renewal, adoption of entrance into the Church and separation from the world."⁴⁵⁶ He sees baptism as a help to confirm and increase our faith and remission of sins, which is an effect of faith; it is annexed to it as to the inferior mean. Moreover, baptism is regarded by Calvin as a means by which our old man is crucified and is a sign and token of repentance that is taught through whole the Scripture.⁴⁵⁷ Calvin also regards circumcision of Old Testament as a sign of repentance.⁴⁵⁸

452 Comm. on Acts 2:38.

453 Comm. on Mk. 3:5.

454 Comm. on Lk. 3:3.

455 Ibid.

456 John. Witvliet, op. cit., 152-165. See. Footnote 7.

457 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

458 *Catechism of the Church of Geneva*, 88: Comm., on Deut. 30:6; Comm. on Jer.4:4; Comm. on Rom. 4:11.

Calvin says that repentance does signify that it is an inward turning of man to God which is shown afterwards by external works. Calvin consistently considers good works as also the work of God, in Christ. “For Christ gives us the Spirit of repentance for this cause, that he may renew us inwardly; to the end that a new life may afterward follow the newness of the mind and heart. And if it belongs to Christ to give repentance, then it follows that it is not a thing that is in man’s power.”⁴⁵⁹ He continues by saying that “it is a certain wonderful reformation, which makes us new creatures, repairs in us the image of God, and brings us out of the bondage of sin unto the obedience of righteousness.”⁴⁶⁰

The holy life of a Christian is the purpose of election⁴⁶¹ and without the repentance of the Christian there is naturally no election.⁴⁶² Calvin blames Scholastic Sophists for not teaching repentance as the inward renewal of the mind, which bears with it true correction of life, but of only teaching repentance with discipline and austerity that serves partly to tame the flesh, partly to chastise and punish faults.⁴⁶³ Calvin, however, regards mortifying our flesh as our inability in aiding our salvation. With this idea in mind, Calvin criticises the synergic elements in the doctrine of penance of the Roman Catholic Church⁴⁶⁴ because, for him, true repentance is not ceremonial repentance but inward repentance given only by God.⁴⁶⁵

459 Comm. on Acts. 5:31

460 Ibid.

461 Comm. on 1Cor. 1:2.

462 Inst., 2.3.11.

463 Inst., 3.4.1.

464 Comm. on Acts 9:5.

465 T. F. Torrance, ed. *Antidote to the seventh session on Acts of Council of Trent in Tract and Treatises*

Calvin does not neglect the polarity between the divine action of God and the reaction of man. Where Luther sees that faith is a single event comprised of the action of God and the reaction of man, Calvin posits justification and faith at two places, before and after conversion and regeneration.⁴⁶⁶ Whereas Luther represented a suspension of the problem of the active life, of ethics in the broadest sense, for Calvin faith and ethics were in practice coincident.⁴⁶⁷

According to the Roman Catholic Church the best satisfaction is to sin no more and to do all possible good toward one's neighbor.⁴⁶⁸ As the *Augsburg Confession* states, "then good works, which are the fruits of repentance, are bound to follow,"⁴⁶⁹ and "no mention is made of works of satisfaction, but rather of good works, which are the fruits of repentance."⁴⁷⁰ So faith and works are again joined by this phase. It is interesting to note why Calvin emphasises good works as the fruits of repentance. He wants to criticise the use of satisfaction in the Roman Catholic Church, he replaces satisfaction with good works, which, as he has explained, is the successor of true repentance. Like Luther says, repentance is "God's strange work which is meant to drive people to their proper work. The Christian's life as repentance is nothing else than a life in faith which alone gives God the Glory."⁴⁷¹

in defense of the Reformed faith, Vol. III, 175.

466 Alexander Mckelway, op. cit., 212.

467 Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*, 49-87.

468 Leif Grane, op. cit., 140.

469 Ibid., 134.

470 Ibid., 135.

471 Ibid., 141.

Assurance, confidence, certainty, trust are the very essences of faith.⁴⁷² Wilhelm Niesel maintains that Calvin rejects the *sylogismus practicus* of later Calvinism but Calvin did utilise the principles of the syllogism in a practical sense.⁴⁷³ The secondary support of works can be regarded as essential, since for Calvin, justification as the ground of assurance and repentance as the support of assurance are inseparable.⁴⁷⁴ Though good works are not the ground of salvation they do form a secondary ground of assurance. The *sylogismus practicus* may never push aside the ground of assurance in God's promises. It must always retain a secondary, supporting role.⁴⁷⁵ *The Heidelberg Catechism* (1563) also presents clearly the relationship between the doctrine of repentance and good works as fruits of it. Part 3, especially Q86-91 of the Heidelberg Catechism teaches, "we must show our gratefulness to God with good works, that are done out of true faith in accordance with the Law of God –Ten Commandments- and for his glory, and through good works we may be assured of our faith."⁴⁷⁶ It adds in Q. 88 and Q 89, "true repentance and conversion have two parts: they are the dying of the old self and the birth of the new. One is "sincere sorrow over our sins and more and more to hate them and to flee from them," the other is complete joy in God through Christ and a strong desire to live according to the will of God in all good works."⁴⁷⁷ This catechism particularly links the new life and good works of

472 Joel R. Beeke, op. cit., 48.

473 Ibid., 72.

474 Inst., 3.14.18; David, Foxgrover, *John Calvin's understanding of Conscience*. Diss., Ph. D. (Clarmont, 1978), 436-437.

475 Joel R. Beeke, op. cit., 78.

476 Mark A. Noll, ed. *The Heidelberg Catechism in Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 154-155.

477 Ibid., 155.

the *Institutes*.⁴⁷⁸ Calvin explains that furthermore the “Christian’s good works - to live according to the holy will of God and in His Communion- is done in reality, and is not a difficulty for them as they have the power of Holy Spirit.”⁴⁷⁹

Calvin presents sincere love for one’s neighbor as another outward figure of repentance that “if he is endued with faith and repentance, if he entertains sincere love for his neighbor, if he has his mind pure from all hatred and malice, those are the proof of being a true member of Christ.”⁴⁸⁰ So we notice that repentance is one of the proofs of being a member of Christ.

Calvin notes that faith maintains this holy work and helps to have good works in the life. *Confessio Fidei Gallicana* also supports it that “faith is the product of the word of God and this faith does not hinder us from holy living, or turn us from the love of righteousness, but of necessity begets in us all good work.”⁴⁸¹

Calvin does not link sin only in our relationship with God but also with the Church and our neighbors. He draws the distinction between secret sins and open sins and especially for the latter, he emphasises that there should be solemn rebuke by the Church.⁴⁸² Calvin advocated “the mutual private confession between Christians” as a way of public repentance and confession to ministers in accordance with

478 Inst., 3.6-8.

479 Otto Thelemann, *An Aid to the Heidelberg Catechism*, tr. M. Peters (Grand Rapids, MI: Douma Publications, 1959), 311-312.

480 *Catechism of the Church of Geneva*, 92.

481 Philip Schaff, ed. *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*, 371. Article XXII.

482 Inst., 4.12.3.

James 5:16.⁴⁸³The purpose of discipline, advocates Calvin, is to bring the sinner to repentance and to call him back to salvation.⁴⁸⁴ But he warns us about public sins, which are committed openly and bring offense to the entire Church, that “it is not enough if he, who by setting a bad example through his misdeed has gravely injured the Church, be chastised only with words.”⁴⁸⁵ He argues that one who openly sinned ought “for a time to be deprived of the communion of the Supper until he gives assurance of his repentance.”⁴⁸⁶

Barth posits that “Calvin’s self-denial, which is one of fruits of true repentance in *Institutes* III, vii, is affected by the medieval abnegation of mysticism⁴⁸⁷. This is caused by Barth’s misunderstanding of the theology of Calvin; as he regards it as a phase of ethics whereas Calvin regards it as grace by the work of God in Christ.⁴⁸⁸ In Mysticism abnegation is a means of immediacy and a simultaneous means of meeting God but Calvin regards self-denial as only a step of repentance and external transformation by Holy Spirit. They (Calvin and mysticism) use the same terms but their purpose and application are different.

For Calvin, repentance is an integral part of prayer and should form the beginning of prayer, and as such, prayer is an important means of repentance. The

483 John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of penance*, Num XXIX (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 415.

484 Inst., 4. 12.5, 10: Bryan. D. Spinks, “A Seventeenth Century Reformed Liturgy of Penance and Reconciliation,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42 (1989), 183-197.

485 Inst., 4. 12. 6.

486 Ibid.

487 On this position, Wendel has the same opinion. François Wendel. op. cit., 189.

488 Comm. on Acts 5:31.

plea for forgiveness of sins is the most important part of prayer. Through this we understand one truth of repentance; prayer is a good means of repentance and even though prayer is practiced outwardly, repentance is mainly related to an inward changing of sinners.⁴⁸⁹ So Calvin said that repentance is the mother of prayer.⁴⁹⁰

Calvin maintains the ‘third use of the law’; that the Decalogue is the rule of conduct for the justified believer, as it makes us recognise sins and when sinners know what sins they have committed they can repent before God. He also allows a space for the Christian life in the three chapters on the grounds of his ‘third use of the law’, where the Christian life and good works are not the law. These grounds are Christ; Christ is the pattern to which the believer must conform, that is “set before us as an example, whose pattern we ought to express in our life.”⁴⁹¹ According to Berkouwer “Calvin did not entirely succeed in steering clear of the cliffs of legality.”⁴⁹² But Calvin knew well the position of the law and the third use of it in the Gospel. Actually he escaped from antinomianism and legalism and he pursued balance between them. As such, his doctrine of repentance emphasised both sides, that of the divine grace and of human activity by the grace of God.

The culmination of the Christian life, according to Calvin, is a life conformed to the will of God.⁴⁹³ And salvation is both forgiveness of sin and repentance, both God’s grace as mercy and God’s grace as power. The proper unity of these two aspects of the

489 Inst., 3.20.9.

490 Comm. on Acts. 8:22.

491 Jonathan H. Rainbow, op. cit.:103.

492 G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952), 170; hereafter, FS

493 J. H. Leith, Rvds ed, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition* (Atlanta, Georgia : John Knox Press, 1981), 79.

one experience of salvation is the art of the Christian life and is never easy to achieve.⁴⁹⁴ But the salvation of a Christian, for Calvin, stands in the faith and fruits of faith in Christ. They are dissoluble in Calvin's doctrine of repentance.

According to Berkouwer Calvin "was not interested in the intrinsic subjectivity of impenitence but only in subjectivity as the correlate of the salvation which has now appeared, and the knowledge of this which man now has."

SUMMARY

For Calvin repentance is an important element of salvation. This is not a mere confession of sin but a change of the whole life to God. Therefore repentance is a requisite element of salvation. Even though we are saved by faith alone we cannot overlook the importance of repentance in salvation because repentance is given only to the regenerated by the grace of God. Therefore for him repentance, as well as faith, is necessary in salvation. Calvin proves the necessity of repentance in salvation with *Duplex gratia* and *munus duplex* of Christ.

This repentance is a result of listening to the word of God, not only the Gospel or the law, but the total Scripture. And through the word of God man can become aware of his sins and repent of them to God.

Through repentance a human repents of his sins but the one who makes us aware of our sins and repent of our sins is the Holy Spirit and Christ. Therefore

494 Ibid.

repentance can be called the ministry of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Although there can be a lot of subjectivity about repentance it is surely a gift of grace from God which is given to the elected. Through repentance Christians experience the kingdom of God and go there eschatologically and at the same time they restore the *imago Dei* that we have lost by our sins. God wants to forgive the sins of all mankind. Even though some sins are very serious, God forgives our sins through repentance. Impenitence becomes an unforgivable sin.

Many theologians try to find the essence of Calvin's doctrine of repentance from his personal experience of conversion but for Calvin his personal conversion is nothing but a personal experience and through his personal conversion Calvin only affirmed that his conversion was a direct result of the providence of God.

For him repentance or conversion is not only a miraculous event but also a turning of the whole life to God and throughout our entire life we must complete this repentance.

In this repentance is borne the fruit of repentance in the Christian's life. Calvin supported the notion of a *Practicus Syllogismus* arguing that the fruit of repentance is the mark of salvation and a sign of true repentance and an important means of Church discipline. Calvin explained the necessity of good works in his soteriology suggesting a *Duplex acceptio hominis* and *Operum Justitia*.

Calvin's doctrine of repentance is comparatively balanced between subjectivity and objectivity. He emphasised the absolute necessity of salvation through faith and repentance; that we are saved by faith and we are forgiven only by the merit of Christ

and repentance. Calvin, as well as Luther, wanted to change penance-centered Christianity to grace and faith-centered Christianity. We must not only understand repentance in the *Ordo Salutis* of Reformed Theology, but rather we must regard it as the supporting presupposition of faith as well as the grace of God. Therefore for Calvin, repentance becomes the life of the Christian and the grounds of and effect of all *Ordo Salutis*; meaning that Christ lives but I die and Christ dies for me and through Him I live. Even though comparatively he focused on the subjectivity of salvation in Reformed theology, he pursued the balance between the task of man and the work of God. He never forgets this tension in the Bible and Reformed theology.

Chapter 2. The Doctrine of Repentance in the Theology of Karl Barth

2. 1. The Necessity of Repentance in Soteriology

2. 1. 1. The Nature and Importance of Repentance

Karl Barth is a one of the most eminent scholars in the history of theology, especially in the twentieth century. His influence is so dominant that, as John Baillie says, “nobody seems to be able to talk theology these days without mentioning him.”⁴⁹⁵ Whether Barth’s ideas are used for good or for evil, their influence is bound to be great.⁴⁹⁶ However, we cannot overlook the fact that Barth was one of the most impressive and commanding theologians of the last century.⁴⁹⁷ Inevitably, therefore, when dealing with the doctrine of repentance according to Reformed perspectives, Barth’s doctrine of repentance cannot be bypassed because, as Sykes remarked, “we clearly stand at the threshold of a period of evaluation of Barth’s significance for Christian theology, which will most certainly be more exhaustive in extent than anything known hitherto.”⁴⁹⁸

It will also be necessary to compare Barth with Calvin because Barth has frequently used the terms of Calvin in his theology, although his doctrine of

495 S. W. Sykes, ed. *Karl Barth: Studies of his theological method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 2. Recited from, J. Baillie. *Our Knowledge of God* (London, 1939), 17.

496 C. Van Til, *Karl Barth and evangelicalism* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1964), 5-6.

497 Richard A. Muller, “The Place and Importance of Karl Barth in the Twentieth Century: a Review Essay” *Westminster Theological Journal* 50/1 (S 1988): 127-128.

498 S. W. Sykes, op. cit., 1.

repentance is different from that of Calvin. In order to understand the doctrine of repentance according to Karl Barth, we must first understand the pivotal idea of his theology. According to Ford, the central ideas of Barth's doctrines are the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ.⁴⁹⁹ As F. H. Klooster says, the real heart and unity of Scripture in Barth is Jesus Christ, and his central idea is resurrection⁵⁰⁰ because the resurrection of Christ reveals the central mystery of the gospel in Him. Thus, for Barth, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis for the entire Gospel.⁵⁰¹

However, Barth's position is to be distinguished from the orthodox evangelical and Reformed understanding concerning the resurrection of Christ because his doctrines are based not on the *Historie* but on the *Geschichte*. The loss of the genuine historicity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its parallel loss of significance in redemptive accomplishment are a facet of the fundamental divergence between Barth's theology and the teaching of the Holy Scripture.

Barth fought against the religious individualism and historical relativism of

499 Ibid., 13. According to Sykes, for the understanding of Barth's theology we can consider two methods. "Two of the authors, Dr Roberts and Dr Ford, have written doctoral theses which are, in effect, analyses of the strategies pursued by Barth chiefly in his *Church Dogmatics*. Dr Roberts takes the theme of time and eternity, and uses it as a tool for the systematic analysis of Barth's view of the structure of reality.... Dr Ford, on the other hand, explores Barth's persistent emphasis upon the theme of story and narration, and tries to bring out the way in which his use of Scripture is structured by a fundamental pattern provided by the sequence of Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost." Even though Barth uses both methods to explain his doctrine of repentance, time and eternity and Good Friday and Easter, he uses the former for the presupposition of this doctrine; the latter for the content of it.

500 Fred H. Klooster, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ" *Westminster Theological Journal* 24 (May 1962): 138.

501 Ibid., 137.

liberal theology of the nineteenth century which “rejected the traditional view of the absoluteness of both biblical revelation and the Scriptures” and argued that “the believer’s final authority was his and her own Christian experience.”⁵⁰² Contrary to the liberalism of the nineteenth century, Barth emphasised the absoluteness and objectivity of faith and salvation. It is for this reason that Barth labels his theology evangelical. This implies that he thinks that his theology “recalls both the New Testament and at the same time the Reformation of the sixteenth century,”⁵⁰³ but evangelical theologians do not agree that Barth is, in fact, an evangelical theologian. Cornelius van Til in particular does not regard Barth’s theology as evangelical theology because, at least for van Til, evangelical theology must consent to its own fundamental issues, but the theology of Barth does not consent to the fundamental truths of evangelical theology. Therefore Barth’s theology, in the strictest sense, is not evangelical.

In particular we are thinking of all Protestants, whether Lutheran, Arminian or Reformed in their theology, who subscribe to the infallibility of Scripture and therefore to the idea of temporal creation, and the historicity of the Genesis account, the substitutionary atonement through Jesus Christ the son of man and son of God and his bodily return on the clouds of heaven to judge the living and the dead.⁵⁰⁴

However one cannot easily summarise Barth’s doctrines and what he has to say in the corpus of his writings because they are massive and complex⁵⁰⁵ and his ideas

502 David L. Mueller, “Karl Barth and the Heritage of the Reformation” *Review and Expositor* 86 (W 1989): 46.

503 *Ibid.*, 45.

504 Cornelius. Van Til, “Has Karl Barth become orthodox” *Westminster Theological Journal* 16 (May 1954): 135.

505 J. B. Webster, ed. *The Cambridge companion to Karl Barth* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York:

changed over time. So, as J. B. Webster says, Barth's views "on any given topic cannot be comprehended in a single statement, even if the statement be one of his own, but only in the interplay of a range of articulations of a theme."⁵⁰⁶ It is also difficult to express the doctrine of repentance in Barth's theology in a single statement because it is sometimes complicated with other. Furthermore, the doctrine of repentance sometimes seems to be neglected by Barth himself. However, we cannot deny the fact that Barth is interested in the doctrine of repentance and that his doctrine of repentance differs from traditional Reformed theology. Even though B. Ramm suggests in his *apologetics* that "many of Barth's seminal ideas may be found in Calvin and parallel ideas in Abraham Kuyper, judged to be the greatest Reformed theologian since Calvin,"⁵⁰⁷ the similarity of his ideas to great Reformed theologians in regards to the doctrine of repentance cannot provide an identity of substance *in se* with them.

For Barth, sanctification is one of two central ideas in his doctrine of reconciliation, the other being justification. His doctrine of repentance includes conversion, penitence and sanctification, but in fact he regards sanctification as a general Scriptural term that includes both conversion and penitence and he prefers the term 'sanctification' to 'repentance'.

What is meant by sanctification (*sanctificatio*) might just as well be described by the

Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8.

506 Ibid., 9.

507 Fred H. Klooster, "Barth and the future of evangelical Theology" *Westminster Theological Journal* 47/2 (Fall 1985): 317.

less common biblical term regeneration (*regeneratio*) or renewal (*renovatio*), or by that of conversion (*conversio*), or by that of penitence (*poenitentia*) which plays so important a role in both the Old and New Testament, or comprehensively by that of discipleship which is so outstanding especially in the synoptic Gospels.⁵⁰⁸

The way in which Barth explains sanctification as being described by the terms ‘regeneration’, ‘renewal’, ‘conversion’ and ‘penitence’ shows that he uses the same terms as Calvin.⁵⁰⁹ Calvin treats sanctification in terms of repentance, but Barth treats repentance in terms of sanctification, although Barth extracts repentance from the reconciliation as justification in Christ Jesus.

Barth treats the doctrine of repentance in the light of sanctification. He prefers to use the term sanctification to repentance because it has meaning itself (“saints”), and it deals with “the being and action of God.”⁵¹⁰ And this sanctification depends on the Holiness of God because He is only originally and properly holy in and for Himself. In fact, God sanctifies the unholy that depend on Him by His actions towards them⁵¹¹ in circumstance and in human history. According to Barth, ‘sanctified’ in the Bible does not mean ‘devout’ or ‘virtuous’, but rather ‘separated by God’. Thus sanctification is not a quality immanent in human action itself but divine separation. “Knowing the divine act of sanctification we can and should offer our action to God

508 CD 4/2, 499-500.

509 Ibid.

510 Ibid.

511 Ibid.

as penitence and conversion just as a sacrifice is offered (Rom. 12:2).”⁵¹²

Through an understanding of Barth’s doctrine of ethics, which is concerned with sanctification and repentance, we should be able to understand his doctrine of repentance more easily and correctly, since his doctrine of repentance includes the doctrine of sanctification and his doctrine of sanctification includes the doctrine of repentance and the ethical life of Christians. For Barth forgiveness of sin and repentance are put in parallel and distich. Concerning the doctrine of repentance, Barth contended that the ethical life is the work of the Spirit in the covenant community in which the good man is created. However, the foundation of Barth’s ethics is always Jesus Christ. So he states that “ethics as the doctrine of God’s command, and therefore as the doctrine of sanctification given to man by God, is grounded in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.”⁵¹³

As has already been stated, the starting point of Barth’s doctrine of repentance is the event of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Barth’s close identification of sanctification and ethics shows the necessity of fulfillment of the Gospel in the ethical sphere. But he never makes ethics a replacement of the Gospel. According to Barth, repentance is the first, basic element of the Gospel, the foundation of human activity and human ethics, but it is the work of God only and through this act man can look forward to God.

Repentance is not the last and noblest and most refined achievement of the righteousness of men in the service of God, but the first elemental act of the righteousness

512 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 113. Barth used to refer to this scripture portion for explanation of the basis of his ethics and sanctification.

513 CD 2/2, 777.

of God in the service of men; the work that God has written in their hearts, and which, because it is from God and not from men occasions joy in heaven; that looking forward to God, and to Him only, which is recognised only by God and by God Himself.⁵¹⁴

In Barth's theology repentance is both the first demand of all Christians and, at the same time, the beginning of Christian Life.⁵¹⁵ And repentance is demanded by God and converts man to God in order to give glory to God. In repentance man gives up his honour and becomes a perfectly new being.⁵¹⁶

The great contribution of Barth to the reconstruction of the doctrine of sanctification, which includes the doctrine of repentance and conversion, is that he shows the personal and relational phases of sanctification for the dynamics of reconciliation within the covenant.⁵¹⁷ In reconciliation, man is both justified and sanctified. So our approach to repentance must consider this relational condition. Both justification and sanctification are found in the reconciliation of Jesus Christ.

Sanctification is a particular scope of the second part of the doctrine of reconciliation in the theology of Karl Barth⁵¹⁸ and is indissolubly bound up with justification.⁵¹⁹ For Barth, the justification of man originates in the statement "I will

514 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*. tr. from the sixth edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 68.

515 J. C. Lombard, *Die Leer van Die Heiligmaking by Karl Barth* (n.v. Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1957), 50. See footnote 262. *Barth beskou die Buße as Primêr etiese handeling, en gehoorsaamheid bv. Aan ander gebooie as sekondêr.*

516 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 60.

517 Hans, Küng, *Justification: the doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic*, tr. Thomas Collins, Edmund E. Tolk, and David Granskou. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 211.

518 CD 4/2, 499.

519 Ibid.

be your God,” and the sanctification of man originates in the statement “Ye shall be my people.”⁵²⁰ Therefore sanctification is an event willed and accomplished by God.⁵²¹ God’s sanctifying involves a modification of a person’s situation and constitution; they must deduce the consequences of it, but it is wholly and exclusively God’s own act.⁵²² Justification is also God’s act and the action of man is useless in it. But we must not neglect the fact that Barth intends to deliver the doctrine of sanctification from the pitfalls of legalism and quietism.⁵²³

If we want to abstract our penitence from God’s acceptance of it, over which we have no control, then we have no means to differentiate its salutary disquiet from the useless disquiet of our own self-knowledge when this is left on its own. With our penitence as such, be it ever so sincere and serious, we cannot force the mercy of God which alone gives meaning.⁵²⁴

Through sanctification God leads His people to His purpose not *de jure* but *de facto*. Sanctification is not merely rectification but instruction and God’s direction.⁵²⁵ Jesus’ action is not for Him but for saints as the true covenant-partners of God in fellowship and co-operation with Him. Saints’ sanctification is positive “in contrast to others upon whom this has come *de jure* but not *de facto*.”⁵²⁶

To this extent the Marxist Milan Machovec is correct in stating that sanctification in Barth’s theology is a very “sophisticated attempt to make possible the survival of

520 Ibid.

521 CD 4/2, 500.

522 CD 4/2, 501.

523 FS, 118.

524 Karl Barth. *Ethics*, 113.

525 CD 4/2, 527.

526 Ibid.

religion in an age of atheism,⁵²⁷ and that it is sometimes nothing but theological sophistication or hypothesis.

2. 1. 2. Sin and Repentance

Barth does not speak of the covenant of works based on Genesis 2:16-17, but of the covenant of grace. Therefore his doctrine of sin must be treated differently than that of Reformed tradition.⁵²⁸ Because of his view on the covenant of grace the doctrine of sin is understood obscurely in Barth's terms.⁵²⁹ And we cannot easily grasp the idea of sin which is a counterpart of repentance in Barth's theology because his doctrine of sin is a reduction of sin as an ontological idea.

The genuine understanding of the idea of sin in the theology of Karl Barth is very important to the understanding of the doctrine of repentance that requires man to turn away from sin. Principally Barth attributes our incapacity to our finiteness rather than to our sinfulness⁵³⁰ so he defined sin not as a result of man's evil works but as an inevitable character of creatures. According to his theology, sin does not require the responsibility of sinners, therefore repentance is not an essential element of the forgiveness of sins. And sin can be recognised only through *analogia fidei* that I am a

527 Klaus Bockmuehl, *The Unreal God of Modern Theology*, tr. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard Pub., 1988), 97.

528 Sometimes Barth argues that sin means transgression, deviation and man's eternal lostness. Cf. Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 149-151.

529 Fred H. Klooster, "Karl Barth's doctrine of reconciliation: a review article," *Westminster Theological Journal* 20 (May 1958): 172.

530 H. Francis Davis, op. cit, 137.

sinner, the enemy of God, others and self.⁵³¹

Since justification is the fulfillment of the covenant, man will never be reconciled to God without being pronounced free from guilt and without being justified.⁵³² Reconciliation is a reaction of God against sin.⁵³³ Sin is the interchanging of God and man, that exalting of man to divinity or depressing of God to humanity, by which we seek to justify and fortify and establish ourselves.⁵³⁴ So to live in sin means that by an invisible necessity we cannot do otherwise than wilfully and consciously exalt ourselves to divinity and depress God to our own level and to our own side.⁵³⁵

Barth classifies sins into three large groups, namely pride, sloth and deception. These categories are connected with the threefold office of Christ. According to Barth, pride is man going his own way, following his own will, sloth is man choosing his lowliness and remaining in his own darkness, and finally deception is man closing his door to truth. At any rate Barth deduces 'sin is pride' from the meaning of *vere Deus* because God humbles Himself by becoming man. Sin in its first form is pride and for this Christ has His high priestly office:

When God condescends to man, when He makes Himself one with Him in order to be truly his God, man cannot fall away from the work of this mercy of God to him. But what Adam did, what Israel did... what even the Christian does when he forgets that he is a Christian, is the very thing which is forbidden by this first form of grace, the very thing which is made impossible, which is excluded, which is negated because it is itself a

531 Ron, Highfield, *Barth and Rahner in Dialogue toward an Ecumenical Understanding of Sin and Evil* (New York, Bern Frankfurt am Main, Paris: Peter Lang, 1989), 15.

532 Hans Küng, *Justification* (London: Burns and oats, 1964), 23.

533 Ibid.

534 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 190.

535 Ibid.

negation. It is the fall in the form of presumption, acting as though God had not humbled Himself to man....His high-priestly office.⁵³⁶

Sin in its second form is sloth and for this Christ has His kingly office:

He wills and seeks us as we are, in our creatureliness, as men, that we may be raised to the status of children. That is why He humbled Himself. That is the meaning and force of His mercy... and against that sin in its second form is sloth....the doctrine of His kingly office.⁵³⁷

And sin in its third form is deception and for this Christ has His prophetic office:

When God Himself is the pledge that He has done all this, man cannot pretend that he knows better. When the truth speaks for itself, man's knowing better is only falsehood, a lie. ...we are incorrigible liars....the doctrine of prophetic office.⁵³⁸

Barth connected *Trägheit* (sloth)⁵³⁹ especially with the repentance of man in the grace of God. Sloth is the refusal of God's gift of freedom out of an indolent self-contentment. The kingdom of God is the repentance and the counterpart of sin, and all sloth contradicts the kingdom of God, which is basically the reflection of the opportunity to live in communion with God.⁵⁴⁰ The breaking of the kingdom of the world is accomplished by the coming of the kingdom of God and through repentance. The kingdom of God means that God calls His saints in Jesus to make them His disciples⁵⁴¹; thus sloth is the refusal of God's calling. So, the call of Jesus will be

536 CD 4/1, 142-3.

537 CD 4/1, 143.

538 CD 4/1, 144.

539 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik: Ein einführender Bericht* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1977), 258. "Die Sünde ist-konfrontiert mit der in Jesus Christus geschehenen Erhöhung und Aufrichtung des Menschen-Trägheit."

540 CD 4/2, 524.

541 CD 4/2, 545-48.

along the lines of the encounter between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world.⁵⁴²

How can man know that he is a sinner? In Barth's theology he can know it in Jesus Christ because "Jesus Christ is the representative of all humans before God" and when He died He showed that the whole human being is completely corrupt and becomes the man of sin.⁵⁴³ But Barth does not try to show that Jesus Christ is this mirror and the fact that it is presupposed in faith. He asks only how "Jesus is the mirror."⁵⁴⁴ Sin may not be given an independent, self-originating and self-contained treatment, but has to be seen in the light of the atonement.⁵⁴⁵ There is no need of hamartiology and the doctrine of repentance of traditional understanding because Barth's doctrine of sin is based on the Christocentric sphere only.

Sin is not regarded as the breaking of covenant of works or lawlessness or disobedience of a specific command given to the first man⁵⁴⁶, but sin is 'No' where God says 'Yes'⁵⁴⁷ and the self-surrender of the creature to "Nothingness."⁵⁴⁸ And sin has "no positive part to play in God's plan; it is the object of God's uncompromising 'No'."⁵⁴⁹

Das Nichtige is a counterpart of God's will and sometimes it is used for the

542 CD 4/2, 552.

543 CD 4/1, 407.

544 Ron, Highfield, op. cit., 20-21.

545 CD 4/1, 139.

546 CD 4/1, 508.

547 CD 4/1, 139

548 CD 4/1, 79; Barth uses the German term "*Nichtige*." It is translated as Nothingness in English.

549 Ron, Highfield, op. cit., 20.

expression of evil. For Barth *das Nichtige* is not a description of his categories of pride, sloth, and deception, but rather the senselessness, ridiculousness and worthlessness of sin. Therefore it is a “disqualification in contrast to the noble activity of God.”⁵⁵⁰ Barth defined *das Nichtige* as the opposition and resistance to God’s world-dominion, the stubborn element and alien aster.⁵⁵¹ *Das Nichtige* exists simply as that which God does not will.⁵⁵² Repentance and sanctification are obedience to God, but *das Nichtige* is rebellion and disobedience against God’s will.

And *das Nichtige* can have value or attain validity “only insofar as universal revelation has not yet been finished, as the whole creation still waits for it and looks forward to it.”⁵⁵³ Evil is the incursion of *das Nichtige* into creation. Barth treats *das Nichtige* as powerful, dynamic, menacing, destructive factor. So *das Nichtige* is “the power of darkness that haunts our world,”⁵⁵⁴ menace and cosmic menace. For that reason only God can break it and crash it.

550 G.C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, 280.

551 CD 3/3, 289. According to Nicholas Wolterstorff, Evil is *das Nichtige*. Evil is not *defined* as *das Nichtige* by Barth. Rather, evil is *identified* by Barth as *das Nichtige*. To the question of real evil, Barth gives the *das Nichtige*. *Das Nichtige* is what the English word “evil” designates. Scriptural words for *das Nichtige* are chaos and demonic. And the fundamental feature of *das Nichtige* is that it menaces God and creature alike, especially those creatures that are human. Evil is the actualization of this menace. Furthermore, Barth regards Heidegger and Sartre’s comprehension of *das Nichtige* as shallow compared to that available to the Christian, he thinks that they did nevertheless recognize *das Nichtige*. But throughout his Church Dogmatics 3/3, he criticises existing ideas of sin, such as those of Leibniz, Schleiermacher, Müller, Heidegger and Sartre, because in Christianity we have God, who removes the origin of our pains and forgives our sins, against *das Nichtige*. cf. Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Barth on Evil” *Faith and Philosophy* 13 (O 1996): 584-608

552 Gustaf Wingren, op. cit., 36. Wingren prefers to translate *Nichtige* to Non-being.

553 Ibid., 37.

554 Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Barth on Evil” *Faith and Philosophy* 13 (O 1996): 586.

Holy Scripture regards *das Nichtige* as a kingdom, based upon a claim to power and a seizure of power...always on the march, always invading and attacking. Its decisive insight is that God Himself is the superior and victorious opponent of *das Nichtige*....It is for the Bible no mere figure of speech or poetic fancy or expression of human concern but the simple truth that *das Nichtige* has this dynamic, that it is a kingdom on the march and engaged in invasion and assault.⁵⁵⁵

Das Nichtige is that menacing tendency which forces the creature, by means of the creature's ontological non-self-sufficiency, to sink out of existence, and it is that menacing tendency which forces God, also by means of the creature's non-self-sufficiency, toward the overthrowing of the demarcations made by God at creation for the sake of fellowship with the creature.⁵⁵⁶

Because naturally man has no self-sufficiency he falls easily to back-sliding. But he thinks that God's preservation preserves humans from the risk of falling into *das Nichtige*. In spite of the fragility of man God keeps his people in the providence of preservation.

For Barth, to deny such a power is to trivialise what transpired at the cross and in the resurrection.⁵⁵⁷ For him, *das Nichtige* is "not non-being as such. Non-being is, precisely, not anything." Whereas "*das Nichtige* is something, there is *das Nichtige*." But however the power that *Nichtige* has over us is an illusion and it is a dangerous illusion with a real power because we do not know the essential reality. Therefore we have been continuously deceived by it.⁵⁵⁸ But since sin has been defeated by Jesus

555 CD 3/3, 523-4.

556 Nicholas Wolterstorff, op. cit., 591.

557 Ibid., 586.

558 Gustaf Wingren, op. cit., 36.

Christ, it is not real and it has no future. In short, the reality of God is eternal, with past, present and future coinciding in pure duration because “the reality of nothingness is only past.”⁵⁵⁹ Throughout his works he frequently says that evil is a power but he denies the objective existence of evil.⁵⁶⁰ And *das Nichtige* is “not a creature of God but comes about as the inevitable accompaniment of God’s bringing forth of creatures.”⁵⁶¹ *Das Nichtige* is not a creature of God but rather *Nein* as a shadow of God’s creation. But this explanation has a logical contradiction that becomes evident when Barth explains the falling of Satan, who was a created being and became evil in the book of Jude 6 and II Pet. 2:4.⁵⁶²

In sin, which is the concrete form of *das Nichtige*, we should find the negative aspect of creation.⁵⁶³ Sin is not only the creature’s act of disobedience but also the creature’s submission to *das Nichtige*, therefore sin is the concrete form of *das Nichtige* which is opposite to God. And the reality of *das Nichtige* is the wrongdoing of the average man, but this is sometimes confused because Barth’s assertion to sin is not that which man does.⁵⁶⁴ However, he tries to explain sin in the real sense that sin and evil are factual things without illusion, and not fate but human deliberate action, even though he asserts hereditariness of sin. Actually Barth prefers *Ur-Sünde* to *Erb*

559 Ron, Highfield, op. cit., 15.

560 Gustaf Wingren, op. cit., 126.

561 Nicholas Wolterstorff, op. cit., 587.

562 Gustaf Wingren, op. cit., 37-38.

563 CD 3/3, 307.

564 J. B. Webster, *Barth's moral Theology: human action in Barth's thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 68-71.

Sünde.⁵⁶⁵

Wingren criticises Barth, saying that, according to Barth, “original sin now consists in wrong thinking and that faith becomes correct thinking.”⁵⁶⁶ This Wingren regards as “intellectualism and its accompanying abstractions.”⁵⁶⁷ And he treats it as “symptoms of the unreality of God’s work in Barth’s theology.”⁵⁶⁸

There is in Barth’s theology no active power of sin, no tyrannical, demonic power that subject man to slavery and which God destroys in his work of redemption. There is no devil in Barth’s theology. This is a constant feature in his theological production.⁵⁶⁹

For Barth, the forgiveness of sins is regarded as already having been given by event of reconciliation and Christ’s death and His resurrection. For Barth, forgiveness of sins has already been fulfilled and this ‘fulfilled’ (τετελεσθαι) perfect tense is also the future tense which has procured for us. Thus Barth sometimes used “thou hast done it once and for all.”⁵⁷⁰ The reason that Barth stressed the perfect tense and the ‘already’ of the forgiveness of sins is that he wished to give assurance of salvation to contemporary Christians⁵⁷¹ and he therefore put the problem of forgiveness of sins in the event of Jesus Christ.

565 J. B. Webster, *Barth's moral Theology: human action in Barth's thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 72-75.

566 Klaus Bockmuehl, *The Unreal God of Modern Theology*, 96.

567 Ibid.

568 Ibid.

569 Gustaf Wingren, op. cit., 24. According to G. Wingren the reason for this situation is that there was no evil power in the liberal theology against which Barth continually reacts.

570 J. B. Webster, *Barth's moral Theology: human action in Barth's thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) 56.

571 Ibid.

But Barth argues that forgiveness of sins will only be thoroughly fulfilled when we pray for forgiveness for our sins. And we cannot receive God's pardon unless we pray that He forgive us our offenses, even though this was inaugurated by the death of Jesus Christ.⁵⁷² Nevertheless, we must thoroughly understand that it is not possible for us to speak seriously in this fashion with God. Barth criticises Calvin because he "departed from the Christological basis and norm of Christian theology, appealing to another sources of knowledge, knowledge deduced from an abstract concept of a holy, all-powerful, all-determining God."⁵⁷³ So Barth "undercut the whole of Calvin's theology."⁵⁷⁴ But the source of Calvin's theology is Jesus Christ and, contrary to Barth's accusation, he never appealed to abstract ideas. Rather, Calvin is more biblical than Barth in regards to the doctrine of sin because all of Calvin's theology is deduced from the Bible itself and from Jesus Christ and, as Barth agrees, Calvin is a man of material commitments.⁵⁷⁵

Barth considers Heb 6:1-8, which has been regarded as referring to an unforgivable sin, as including "a good deal of anxiety and admonition and even warning."⁵⁷⁶ And he regards the rejection of the grace of God as a sin against the Holy Spirit. Barth thinks that these verses include God's faithfulness and conversion, which were initiated once and for all. So Barth suggests that unforgivable sins in the Bible are just admonitions and threats to the Christian.⁵⁷⁷ For Barth, the only and ultimate

572 Ibid., 58.

573 Ron, Highfield, op. cit., 18.

574 Ibid.

575 Ibid.

576 CD 4/2, 569.

577 CD 4/2, 568-69.

unforgivable sin against the Spirit is work-righteousness.⁵⁷⁸ For that reason Barth criticises the Roman Catholic Church for corrupting true repentance into a “sacrament of penance” and discipline of Christians. Calvin confirmed the doctrine of repentance as discipline and admonition in order to maintain the purity of the Church, whereas Barth argues for the uselessness of discipline because repentance as discipline in salvation is not necessary.

But there is no Church discipline- and it is a misunderstanding and misapplication of the saying about the key of the kingdom of heaven in Mt. 16:19.... As we can only believe the Christian community as such in its identity with the holy community of Jesus Christ, so we can only believe ourselves and others as its holy members.⁵⁷⁹

He is critical of Rome’s identification of repentance with an act of penance. Barth, as Calvin did, rejects the Catholic notion of penance. But whereas Calvin regards penance as Christian discipline, Barth does not admit the worth of Christian discipline in the doctrine of repentance because it is apt to slide towards the sacrament of penance and work-righteousness.

The post-apostolic and early Catholic Church failed to take note of these warnings in the Gospel, Paul, John and Hebrews. Relapsing into the way of thinking of later Judaism, it again made the conversion which rules the whole life of Christians into a matter of particular acts, and later of a special penitential discipline. This led finally to the special “sacrament of penance” which Luther contrasted so sharply with the μετανοεῖτε of Jesus.⁵⁸⁰

Concerning the forgiveness of sins, Barth has a broader sense than Calvin and it

578 Karl Barth, *De apostolisch Geloofsbelijdenis*, ed. K. H. Misskotte, 1935, 150; cited from G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, 227.

579 CD 4/1, 698.

580 CD 4/2, 569.

is more sensitive than other modern conservative theologians, but he has the wrong idea of sins, and these ideas themselves have problems from the start because Barth thinks that although we may acknowledge and regret that we have sinned, we do not need to confess that we are sinners.⁵⁸¹ Even though Barth tried to solve the doctrine of sin in the event of Jesus Christ and said that it is an impossible possibility, this is nothing but modern theological Docetism because it is nothing but opium for the certainty of redemption.

2. 2. The Roles of Repentance in Soteriology

2. 2. 1 Repentance, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Grace of God

2. 2. 1. 1. Repentance, Christ and the Holy Spirit

When one understands the doctrine of repentance in the doctrine of salvation, one more clearly recognises the importance and value of the doctrine of repentance. Salvation is the fulfillment of a covenant, an eternal covenant, according to which God purposes to bring the human race into reconciled relation with him, and “reconciliation between God and the human creation that he loves in Christ.”⁵⁸² The basis of the Church is the correlation between repentance and the Church that rests on the incarnation of the Christ who summons us to repentance.⁵⁸³ According to CD 4/1-3, salvation is achieved “by the self-same historical happening characterized as,

581 CD 4/2, 394.

582 Colin Gunton, *Salvation: The Cambridge companion to Karl Barth*. (ed) J. B. Webster (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 144.

583 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 517.

respectively, a divine act, a human act and a divine-human act.”⁵⁸⁴ Therefore salvation is the work of Christ alone. For this reason, repentance is inevitably connected to reconciliation through faith in Christ.

Participatio Christi is also at the heart of Barth’s doctrine of sanctification. In Calvin’s *Commentaries*,⁵⁸⁵ Calvin tried to connect repentance and sanctification with only Christ himself but that not of man. Christ washes away our sins by his blood, and reconciles us with God by the sacrifice of his death. Christ makes us “alive” unto righteousness. But Barth criticises Calvin’s concept of *participatio Christi* because he thinks that it is lacking to have objectivity in salvation. It shows that Calvin wants to treat both sanctification and repentance in the objective sphere, and Barth emphasises the objectivity of salvation in Christ only.

In Calvin’s concept of *participatio Christi* there is lacking that which we have described as the objective presupposition of the participation of the saints in the sanctity of Jesus Christ, the sanctification which has come to man *a priori* in Him, which is absolutely sure to the saints, and which gives to their existence teleological meaning among men...This means that Calvin’s doctrine of sanctification does not have the foundation which is finally needed to carry it.⁵⁸⁶

Barth’s criticism of Calvin is not proper. It is true that Calvin emphasises human responsibility more than Barth, but the starting point and initiative of sanctification are only God and Jesus Christ.

And man’s sinful action is disturbed by Jesus’ action. By the disturbance of Jesus Christ we are separated from the world. This is the end of our calling, where the

584 Colin Gunton, *Salvation: The Cambridge companion to Karl Barth*. 146.

585 John Calvin, Comm. on Mt. 3:2; Comm. on Mt. 11:20; Lk.10:13-16.

586 CD 4/2, 520.

Church of Jesus is made up of saints (ἐκκλησία) and this is man's sanctification. By this disturbance man is set at the side of God and "may be the witnesses of the Holy One."⁵⁸⁷

Like other Reformed theologians, Barth has as the most important keys in his doctrine of repentance that Christ has died for man and that the Holy Spirit has been given to man. This is renewal and is the chief element of salvation.⁵⁸⁸ And God makes the regenerated sinners who are his children and who are sought and found by God in Christ and through Holy Spirit repent.⁵⁸⁹

So, first of all, the doctrine of repentance is connected preferentially with Jesus Christ who died and was resurrected from the dead. Through His resurrection, and only in Him, man has true repentance. And when man is grafted in His resurrection, our Head and true God and true Man, man can enjoy His works in the Holy Spirit. For Barth, the benefits of the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit in us and for us are our regeneration and conversion, the establishment of the law of God, and the sanctification of our lives.⁵⁹⁰ Therefore the cause of our conversion is Jesus Christ in the power of Holy Spirit.

We ask who the man is of whom we have spoken continually as one who is engaged in conversion. And the answer is simply that in the true sense it is He alone. It is not He without those to whom He is revealed as such in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is He as their Head. But it is He, and He alone, as the origin and basis of the conversion of the

587 CD 4/2, 526.

588 Karl, Barth, *The Christian Life*. 63.

589 Karl Barth, *Ethics*. 416.

590 Karl, Barth, *Credo*, tr. by J. Strathearn McBab (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 156-8.

many.⁵⁹¹

In Barth, sanctification is based principally on Christ Jesus and on the Holy Spirit.⁵⁹² Therefore conversion is in the compulsion of the Holy Spirit and its actualisation also depends wholly on Jesus Christ. In other words, God has sanctified us in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Not because I am that in my self, but because in Christ He has called and chosen me, has promised these his gifts to me through the Holy Spirit, because He has sanctified me..., led by His Hand.⁵⁹³

Jesus Christ is the whole power of our conversion.⁵⁹⁴ And conversion is the coincidence of both 'still' and 'already' in Christ Jesus. But "it is not the *simul* of a balancing or co-ordination of two similar factors. But rather it is in falling-out of both 'still' and 'already'" ⁵⁹⁵ because this 'still' and 'already' only coincide in him. For Barth, the new life which is the effect of justification has such little reality that Barth denotes it "only by the verbs may, can, ought, and will. As these verbs painfully indicate, the new life is still to come, strictly eschatological."⁵⁹⁶ Because "Christ is our sanctification," it is not inadequate to describe it as the process by which we continually turn from the old to confront the new in the realities of present history, but it is proper that sanctification is not accomplished in this present and the fulfillment of it is eschatological. Barth used the term 'decision' (*Entscheidung*) as an idea of

591 CD 4/2, 582.

592 David Mueller, "Karl Barth in Dialogue on the Foundation of Salvation" *Review and Expositor* 91 (Fall 1994): 487-503.

593 Karl Barth, *The Christian Life*. 14.

594 CD 4/2, 583.

595 CD 4/2, 572-573.

596 Klaus Bockmuehl, *The Unreal God of Modern Theology*, 82.

repentance, but it is not the same as the Reformers and pietists and is rather the decision of God in Jesus. Therefore this ‘decision’ is for the decision and conversion of man that participates in it.⁵⁹⁷

Repentance as well as forgiveness of sins occurs in Christ, only in Him and always with Him. Forgiveness of sins through Christ Jesus is sanctification to His people and by the forgiveness of sins through Christ we are sanctified. And we can understand this properly and effectively in Christ only because it becomes actualised in Him. Appropriately it is an event only in Christ Jesus.⁵⁹⁸

Sanctification consists of the fact that in and through Jesus Christ man is called by God into freedom, summoned to use the freedom which he has already been granted in Jesus Christ.⁵⁹⁹ It allows men even as sinners to render obedience and establish themselves as people of God.⁶⁰⁰ Man’s action in sanctification is nourished by the Holy Spirit who has united us with Jesus.⁶⁰¹ Sanctification is understood only in Jesus Christ, even though the Holy Spirit shows us the direction, because in Christ “God (*vere Deus*) is for man, and man (*vere homo*) is for God” and the reality of conversion has “its basis and origin in this climax, in Jesus Christ.”⁶⁰²

In the second Christological aspect, Jesus Christ as *vere Homo*, Barth reveals the dialectical counterpart of the first Christological aspect, *vere Deus*. And Barth urges

597 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 380.

598 CD 4/2, 582.

599 CD 4/1, 101.

600 CD 4/2, 499.

601 CD 4/2, 529.

602 CD 4/2, 581-82.

that in Christ Jesus all people convert to God and therefore conversion is once and for all in Christ. Likewise, the reconciliation of the world with God takes place in the person of a man in whom, because He is also the true God, the conversion of all men to God is an actual event.⁶⁰³ And what has happened in Him as the true man is “the conversion of all of us to God, the realization of true God.”⁶⁰⁴ In so far as Christ was and is and will be very man, the conversion of man to God took place in Him; the turning and therefore the reconciliation of all man, the fulfillment of the covenant.⁶⁰⁵ According to Barth, conversion is God’s work makes us his own possession, so that “God is for us and that we are His.”⁶⁰⁶

And the beginning of repentance and the continuation of it are all from the works of the Holy Spirit. This is the operation of the Holy Spirit, not only to initiate conversion (*operatio initialis*), but also to continue it throughout the believer’s life (*operatio perpetua*). And even through their continuing sinfulness, by the work of Holy Spirit the miracle of grace of God never ceases in their heart.⁶⁰⁷

In the face of the instruction of the Holy Spirit there can be only the most concrete obedience.⁶⁰⁸ In the Holy Spirit the realisation of this new existence is not the result of man’s own decision, rather each man is “the man concerning whom decision

603 CD 4/2, 131.

604 Ibid.

605 Ibid.

606 Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “Doctrine of reconciliation: a survey of Barth's Kirchliche Dogmatik; pt 4/2” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 10 (Mr 1957):82.

607 George Hunsinger, *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Spirit: The Cambridge companion to Karl Barth*, ed. J. B. Webster (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 183.

608 CD 4/2, 372.

has already been made in the existence of the man Jesus Christ.”⁶⁰⁹ Through Jesus Christ Christians are justified; still they remain in sin because they are “in the battle with old man” but he will grasp “the new freedom in Christ.”⁶¹⁰

So, sanctification, or the response of man, comes from the Holy Spirit⁶¹¹ because the forgiveness of sins and the new creation of God are given us by Holy Spirit. Barth regards sanctification as not being nominal,⁶¹² neither formal nor in *de jure*, but sanctification is a real change, even in this restricted sense, and the creation of a new form of existence in which man becomes the true covenant-partner of God.⁶¹³

And this happens in Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ God has made us a new creature.⁶¹⁴
By the power of Holy Spirit the event in Christ Jesus becomes ours.

Thou have given us thy Holy Spirit in order that the work of this creation which thou hast accomplished in this new human being, Jesus Christ, may become a living thing in us; in order that thy grace, displayed in this event, may become ours.⁶¹⁵

Barth declares that conversion is “above wholly creaturely and wholly divine.”
He means that the initiation of the action is in God and the occurrence wholly and

609 CD 4/2, 363.

610 O. G. Otterness, *The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Theology of Karl Barth*, Unpublished Ph.D. Diss. (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1969), 125.

611 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 203. *Er (Heilige Geist, Geist Jesu Christi) ist belebende Macht und erleuchtende Macht.*

612 H. Francis Davis, “The essence of Barthism” *Downside Review* 68 (Ap 1950): 137. But Barth is called as a nominalist.

613 CD 4/2, 525.

614 Karl Barth, *Prayer*, ed. by Don E. Siliers, tr. Sara F. Terrien. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 57.

615 *Ibid.*,

utterly on the creaturely level. What happens in conversion is a “subordinate moment in the act of majesty in which the Word became flesh and Jesus Christ rises again from the dead.”⁶¹⁶ Repentance and sanctification are works of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but, in the strictest sense, they occur only in Christ.

Sanctification is not the achievement of human beings in the history of God’s salvation, but rather the grateful acknowledgement of God’s accomplishment for all. The aim of sanctification “does not break but keeps the covenant which God has made with him for all eternity.” And the man who “is awakened and empowered by the action of the holy God does this sanctification.”⁶¹⁷ Sanctification of Christians has a reality only in Jesus Christ’ sanctification because sanctification of Christians is participating in the sanctity of Christ. In other words, sanctification is participation in Jesus’ holiness.

Repentance is not mechanical, but a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit which occurs in the heart of man. And sanctification in man is ascribed to the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, but no attempt is made to describe that work. This bestowal makes us not a corrected and revised edition of the old human being “but a new human being and a new creation altogether.” Conversion is “the isolation in which this individual must perish as he was, and can and may become new.”⁶¹⁸ A new subjectivity is “bestowed at the core which affects one’s being as a whole.”⁶¹⁹ In all its actions the work of the Holy Spirit is always and everywhere a wholly new thing. The

616 CD 4/2, 556.

617 CD 4/2, 514

618 CD 4/2, 565

619 George, Hunsinger, 1991, op. cit., 164.

Holy Spirit calls for conversion, even more “radical conversion.”⁶²⁰ A man is not a Christian if he does not follow the impulsion and direction of the Holy Spirit.

Barth states that the sanctification of man in Christ provides for all man *de jure* but can be realised as *de facto* in Christians. The realisation of *de facto* sanctification is limited to those who are brought to conscious faith in Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. Barth has criticised universalism in his doctrine of salvation and he presents the limited salvation in Jesus Christ as Calvin did. The problem has been “the difficulty in maintaining that the believer participates in a *de facto* sanctification.” This difficulty arises because “Barth affirms a *de facto* sanctification in man and then paradoxically feels constrained to deny it.”⁶²¹ The very difficulty at the heart of Barth’s doctrine of sanctification is that he fails to deal with the distance between the *de jure* and *de facto* sanctification.

2. 2. 1. 2. Repentance and the Grace of God

Barth believes that in the New Testament, the terms ἐπιστρέφειν and μετανοεῖν have the twofold theological meaning that they are directed to God and accomplished by God. Repentance is an absolute, pure and vertical miracle from God and it is an act of God because in fact repentance is only possible from God and we can see the value of it only through Him.⁶²² The cause of true change, repentance, is the love of God for sinners. Therefore, love of God is the starting-point for this proving and knowing of

620 CD 4/4, 39.

621 O. G. Otterness, op. cit., 197.

622 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 119.

change. Repentance is the true ground of boasting before God; it is the work which is valued by God and for which he renders his Spirit. According to these ideas, repentance is only God's act and through it new conversion is brought forth to glorify God's glory in sinners. Furthermore, repentance, or conversion, is something perfectly new that has never been done before by the hand of God through Jesus Christ. God's action that is always holy in His mercy is man's sanctification.⁶²³ Through this sanctification man "can live as the loyal covenant-partner of God who is well-pleasing to and blessed by Him."⁶²⁴ In and with His sanctification ours has been completed as well and "we are saints and sanctified because we are already sanctified, already saints in this One."⁶²⁵

Barth regards *mortificatio and vivificatio* as turning from the old world and turning to the new world, but they are not a consciousness of man but are gratitude to God's mercy.⁶²⁶ This process is rather near to re-creation. And in the process of repentance human beings are grasped as whole persons who have all their possibilities and experiences and attitudes and "they come to be 'wholly oriented' upon He who is their Head."⁶²⁷ Karl Barth regards repentance as difficult and severe.⁶²⁸ This means that it is, on the one hand, not easy, and on the other hand it has more meaning than simple gratitude and mere conversion of thoughts. The way of repentance is that in

623 CD 4/2, 511-13.

624 CD 4/2, 514.

625 CD 4/2, 516.

626 Karl Barth, *The Christian Life*, 59-64.

627 George, Hunsinger, *How to read Karl Barth: the Shape of his Theology* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 162.

628 Karl, Barth, *The Christian Life*, 62.

the face of God's will there is nothing for our will but a radical re-creation, not a reforming, but a re-creating and a becoming new.⁶²⁹

Even though God requires the transformation of thinking of sinners, there is only room for His work, and it is “enough for grace sufficient, even for ethics.”⁶³⁰ The realisation of repentance is rooted in God who is the basis of man's hope for deliverance from sin and death. The attempt to claim sanctification for ourselves will “inevitably have the smack of hyperbole and even illusion.”⁶³¹ As sinners, “since nothing has been done, the exhortation to renewal of mind, to re-thinking, to repentance, an exhortation which can be obeyed and which, being obeyed, can lead to action, is inevitable.”⁶³² Repentance is an action of eternity, of God and of the grace of God.

Grace is sufficient to destroy the noxious assurance of men and to give them the status of the new man in Christ. Grace is sufficient to awaken them from the sleep of righteousness, and to make of them men who have been sacrificed. Grace is sufficient to prevent men being removed altogether from that which is good and acceptable and perfect.⁶³³

The grace of God is not impersonal power but the gift of God by which He stands in personal relationship to man through Jesus Christ and the covenant

629 Karl Barth, “Die Gerechtigkeit Gottes” (lecture delivered to the Aarau Church Council, 16 January 1916), in idem, *Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie*, 10. Cited from B. L. McCormick. *Karl Barth's critically realistic dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development (1909-1936)*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 134.

630 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 436.

631 CD 4/2, 582.

632 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 438.

633 Ibid., 437.

community. And the election of grace is the sum of grace and the essence of all good news is that God is for man the One who loves in freedom.⁶³⁴ God's command is not a second thing which stands alongside his grace but rather grace itself. Barth says that "grace has the form of command, the Gospel the form of the Law."⁶³⁵ Therefore repentance is required by God as a command of Him but it is not an auxiliary element of grace and salvation.

By faith and by grace we receive forgiveness of sins,⁶³⁶ and to receive grace means to receive forgiveness of sins.⁶³⁷ Barth says that repentance and obedience are gifts by the grace of God.⁶³⁸ Barth treats forgiveness of sins and repentance as the same from the viewpoint of God's grace.⁶³⁹ Forgiveness of sins is a "gift to man and received by him as a gift" and "grace is forgiveness of sins."⁶⁴⁰

By faith we can perceive the forgiveness of sins and it will be our repentance in Christ. It is authentically fulfilled "*in Christ and Christ alone.*"⁶⁴¹ Furthermore we can know it to be authentically fulfilled by *us* only as we believe in Christ Jesus.⁶⁴²

In our impotence of repentance to both God and our neighbours we can just render obedience thereby, bringing the sacrifice that is required of us. Therefore all of

634 CD 2/2, 3-13.

635 CD 4/2, 535.

636 Karl, Barth, *Credo*, 151.

637 *Ibid.*, 153.

638 Karl, Barth, *Credo*, 153.

639 *Ibid.*, 148-151.

640 *Ibid.*, 154.

641 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 439.

642 *Ibid.*, 439.

these are accomplished by grace only.⁶⁴³

This awakening is both wholly creaturely and wholly divine. Yet the initial shock comes from God. The reality of this event depends wholly on the reality of God.... Thus there can be no question of co-ordination between two comparable, but only of the absolute primacy of the divine over the creaturely.⁶⁴⁴

In a broader sense, repentance is God's work and it is a proof of election and reprobation because God has the initiative of repentance and God Himself sanctifies His chosen people in Christ. Because Barth's doctrine of repentance is based on the mercy of God and God shows His mercy to those whom He has elected; God gives the chance of repentance to His people only. And the man who is impenitent neither knows nor repents because he is separated ultimately from God. Therefore this is not a work of man and man cannot know or repent among us. But this hardening is ours. God shows His mercy to the invisible man who is "miraculously united with God, the new born man."⁶⁴⁵ The man who repents on the basis of the mercy of God becomes a new born man. And, according to Barth, "through the call to conversion by the Word of the Cross, human subjectivity is opened up, re-established, and redetermined."⁶⁴⁶ The essential point is that the work of conversion, in the theology of Barth, always stands before us afresh because the living Word of God is never done with us but always moves on before us.⁶⁴⁷

643 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 203. For him grace of God is *die Rechtfertigung des hochmütigen Menschen, die Heiligung des trägen, die Erleuchtung und Berufung des in der Lüge Lebenden*.

644 CD 4/2, 557-8.

645 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 353.

646 CD 2/1,14

647 George, Hunsinger, *How to read Karl Barth: the Shape of his Theology*, 162.

Calvin also regards repentance as God's handiwork⁶⁴⁸ which is the accomplished event by God, but is the received event by man.⁶⁴⁹ For Calvin, true repentance is inevitably related with the conformity of our whole lives to the example of Jesus Christ.⁶⁵⁰ But, for Calvin, God gives responsibility to man and it is not the boastfulness of man but the confession of sinners, while for Barth, on the other hand, repentance is only the work of God and it becomes the boastfulness of man in the Spirit and an invisible event in eyes of sinners.⁶⁵¹ Even though repentance is a work of God, it takes place inwardly and happens like the circumcision of the heart in His people. Grace is the transformed relationship for man's renewal, not mere change, and it provides the basis for man's responsible action in personal terms. As did Calvin, Barth emphasises the daily penitence⁶⁵² of Christians through the Holy Spirit. This indicates that he has the idea of new life in daily life.

2. 2. 2. Repentance and Faith

Contrary to Calvin's doctrine of repentance which is concerned with the matter of fact, the great matter in Barth's doctrine of repentance is that he regards repentance as the matter of knowledge. Barth's soteriology is epistemological, although he said that "this is a matter of confession, being awakened to faith."⁶⁵³ Even though his

648 Inst., 3.3.21.

649 W. Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 127-8

650 *Short treatises on the Lord's Supper*, 24. *Self-Denial Necessary*, 176.

651 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Roman.*, 119.

652 CD 4/4, 39. Christian life is indeed a daily penitence itself.

653 Colin Gunton, *Salvation: The Cambridge companion to Karl Barth*. 151.

doctrine of repentance has epistemological characteristics it does not mean that we cannot find any factors of the concrete confession and action in the doctrine of repentance. Conversion is presented primarily in noetic terms. This is a peculiarity of Barth's theology.

According to Barth's objectivity of salvation, man's sanctification is completed by Christ Jesus and man should accept it only by faith. Therefore faith is instrumental to accepting the objectivity of salvation and true repentance, both on the divine side and the human side. The necessity of repentance is known through faith and faith allows man to know his situation to be one of brokenness and alienation. So faith is as related to sanctification as it is to justification.

And repentance is "being open to the strangeness of resurrection and to the free and boundless initiative of faith."⁶⁵⁴ Barth argues that repentance is connected with faith which is the beginning of it. Faith precedes repentance. So human beings have "no protection against the necessity of repentance" because it is the standing point of our faith.⁶⁵⁵ Barth connects faith, repentance and obedience intimately; the former being God's address and latter being the hearing of the address of God by man. Therefore for Barth faith and repentance are in unity.

Yet there are still two things in the unity, and the vitality of the revelation to God depends on there being two: that I put myself under grace but also under judgment, under the promise but also under the demand, under the gospel but also under the law, in faith but also in penitence and obedience.⁶⁵⁶

654 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 386-389.

655 Ibid., 395.

656 Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics Introduction in the Christian Religion Vol. I*, ed. by Hannelotte

For Barth, faith and repentance are inseparably related to each other and “we never have the one without the other.”⁶⁵⁷ Repentance is not separated from our faith. And faith and obedience to God are “inseparable moments of the one occurrence”⁶⁵⁸ However, the two are not identical because “faith is not obedience.” But, as obedience is “not obedience without faith, faith is not faith without obedience.”⁶⁵⁹

Consistently Barth tries to connect faith and obedience, and he criticises Reformed dogmatics about the relatedness of the two because “this pair is so universal and distinctive that Reformed dogmatics cannot possibly fail to assert them.”⁶⁶⁰ Repentance is needed for true faith and faith brings about repentance. The proclamation of grace demands repentance from man and repentance is “only preparation and good works are only the result of faith.”⁶⁶¹ Faith is sanctification as well as it is connected with justification and plays an important role in repentance, obedience and the Christian life, too.⁶⁶²

Sanctification is a transformation and a new determination, which has taken place *de jure* for all men.⁶⁶³ But *de facto* it is not known by all men as justification, but is awakened to faith. Only God Himself knows the extent of the justified.⁶⁶⁴ And Christians know their repentance in faith. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit makes

Reiffen, tr. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 195.

657 Ibid.

658 CD 4/2, 537.

659 CD 4/2, 538.

660 Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics Introduction in the Christian Religion Vol. I*, 172.

661 Ibid.

662 Ibid.

663 CD 4/2, 511.

664 Ibid.

saints in reflection of His own holiness. So holiness is only in God and His singular act. God alone is originally and properly Holy. But the sanctification and justification are revealed in faith and Christians received them through faith in Christ. Barth connects sanctification with obedience and he connects justification with faith as a pair.

The fact that sanctification is accomplished in Jesus as our Lord and Head means that we are asked for our obedience, or supremely our love; just as the fact that our justification is accomplished in Him means that we are asked for our faith.⁶⁶⁵

But repentance itself is quite impossible without faith in God. To believe in God means to believe in the “awakening of man to conversion.”⁶⁶⁶ Barth rejects repentance as a mere action of man, instead calling repentance faith or faith through the Gospel. Therefore repentance involves faith and true faith includes repentance. By faith, repentance becomes good news and a proclamation of grace.

Interpreted by faith, repentance can no longer be what it could be alone. It can no longer be understood as the condition which man must fulfill to attain to forgiveness of sins, as penitence in the later gloomy and legalistic sense of penance. Repentance as faith in the good news of the kingdom which has come is not a burden.⁶⁶⁷

Barth translated πιστις θεου, which has usually understood as man’s faith in God, as faithfulness of God. A statement about man’s believing becomes, through his daring translation, a statement about God’s faithfulness. Technically speaking, *fides qua* becomes *fides quae*: “the attitude of faith is absorbed into faith’s object and the

665 CD 4/2, 516-17.

666 CD 4/2, 558.

667 CD 4/4, 81-82.

emphasis on a human action is removed.”⁶⁶⁸ Thus Barth excludes the merit of man’s part in faith. For this reason Barth does not clearly see the problem of repentance and the problem of sin which the Reformation had, even though he thinks that his thought is congruent with the theology of the Reformers.⁶⁶⁹

Without any merit of man and by grace alone, repentance is granted and imputed to us with the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ, if only we accept such benefits with a believing heart.⁶⁷⁰ Only through faith in Christ Jesus can the Christian hold His action and His grace. As a matter of fact, substance of faith in the forgiveness of sins consists in holding on to the ‘yet’ in view of Jesus Christ as the One who claims us by taking our place and who therefore claims us in free grace.⁶⁷¹

Barth does not forget to warn of the danger of fideism and of hypostatizing faith. Thus he states that “we cannot have knowledge in relation to God without action.”⁶⁷² Action means repentance and obedience. But Barth does not want to distinguish between what is the work of God and what is the work of man because both faith and obedience is works of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁷³ Through the power of the Word of God, those who are called by Jesus are transformed from within, existentially and totally. And we become a different person than we were before, called instead of uncalled,

668 Klaus Bockmuehl, *The Unreal God of Modern Theology*, 81.

669 Gustaf Wingren, *Theology in conflict*: Nygren, Barth, Bultmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1958), 26.

670 Karl, Barth, *Credo*, 160

671 Ibid.

672 Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics Introduction in the Christian Religion Vol. I*, 172.

673 Ibid., 173.

and the external Word thus meets us with inwardly victorious power.⁶⁷⁴ Sanctification of Christ and sanctification of Christians are recognised in faith and in the knowledge of faith only. Christ takes our place and through faith in him we can and should be completely and absolutely satisfied. Our proper faith is completely and entirely our adjustment towards Christ Jesus.⁶⁷⁵

Man's conversion only has meaning where it depends on the conversion of God. So Barth said that "the proclaimed conversion to God is an action and being ascribed and promised personally to each individual."⁶⁷⁶ His belief regarding forgiveness of sins is that Jesus Christ's righteousness became man's righteousness in Him.⁶⁷⁷ But forgiveness of sins requires the responsibility of Christians. It is from this standpoint that real ethics derives and we can have standards of good and evil. "Living by forgiveness is never by any means passivity, but Christian living in full activity."⁶⁷⁸ This is the sign of the Christian because we will be judged by it.⁶⁷⁹

Barth points out that the word μετανοεῖν expresses the missing second aspect of repentance because "only forgiven sin can really be recognized and confessed sin, the recognition and confession, if they are to be serious, are not possible without conversion."⁶⁸⁰ In faith the concept of repentance is not only to know what sin is and

674 CD 4/2, 520, 526.

675 Karl, Barth, *Credo*, 159.

676 CD 4/2, 565-6.

677 Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, tr. by G.T. Thomson (London: SCM Press, Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1949, 1966), 152.

678 Ibid.

679 Ibid.

680 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 110.

what it means that we are sinners, but also to know that God is merciful to us and our sin is forgiven even though we stand under God's judgment⁶⁸¹ because Christ forgives our sins. The forgiveness without repentance is God's denial, his nonacknowledgement of sin.⁶⁸²

How can we know that the sanctification in Christ affects the sanctification in man? Barth argues the sanctification of Christians with the idea of the brotherhood of Christ. And Jesus' sanctification is fulfilled indirectly in all Christians who are members of the Head. This idea shows us how we can take part in God's holiness, and through this idea the *de jure* sanctification becomes the *de facto* sanctification. Barth identifies ontologically between men and Jesus Christ. Through this identity repentance and conversion in the event of Jesus Christ as our Head becomes our repentance and conversion. With this Barth applies Jesus' event to the sanctification and justification of man. The purpose of the incarnation of Jesus Christ is "to accomplish in His own person the conversion of man to himself."⁶⁸³

As those who are of like humanity with Him, in Him as our Head and Lord, we are claimed as those who regenerate and converted, as those who are already engaged in the turning to God, and therefore in Jesus Christ before in truth, that it can be said of us that we are righteous before God, and that we are also holy before God.⁶⁸⁴

Barth argues that the transition has already been effected in Jesus Christ as Royal Man.⁶⁸⁵ Barth never confronts the question of how sanctification takes place in the

681 Ibid., 431.

682 Ibid., 110.

683 CD 4/2, 274-275.

684 Ibid.

685 CD 3/4, 3.

historical existence of the believers. To be assured that God has taken responsibility in the obedience of Christ for man is a necessary presupposition for sanctification, but it does not answer the question about man's own sanctification. Barth maintains that his Christological solution to the problem of how God's saving action is related to man does not deny the sovereignty of God's grace, or the responsibility of man as a covenant-partner. Even though sanctification is an act of God alone, and not an act of man, through Him we are sanctified and become covenant-partners and witnesses of Him and of His event because Christ gave the power to Christians and they are witnesses "to the sanctification of man as accomplished in Him."⁶⁸⁶ And our conversion is taken in consequence of Jesus Christ that the witnessing about Him to us has the power to set us in the freedom of conversion.⁶⁸⁷

This is possible when God's works are distributed in the Christians. Through this distribution, the Christian belongs to Jesus and sanctification is to be gotten as his own. Through this concept we can easily know how the sanctification in Christ can come to us. "He allows us to have a share in that which belongs to Him."⁶⁸⁸

And repentance becomes man's works in Christ only by the power of Holy Spirit because Jesus is our Head and Brother, and we are his brother and we are members of our Head. By virtue of the works of the Word and Spirit of God we are sanctified⁶⁸⁹ and by God's goodness we are called to repentance.

686 CD 4/2, 528.

687 George, Hunsinger, *How to read Karl Barth: the Shape of his Theology*, 79.

688 CD 4/2, 582.

689 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 108.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification man's weakness is overcome and God's purpose is fulfilled. The greatest difficulty in Barth's sanctification is the denial of *de facto* sanctification in order to affirm that sanctification is only real in Jesus Christ.

L. W. Wood criticised Barth's Trinitarian Christology that "it had neglected the Holy Spirit because Barth had wanted to avoid falling into the subjectivism of pietism and liberalism."⁶⁹⁰ Nominally, Barth did not overlook the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in his theology, especially in his doctrine of sanctification, and he makes the Triune God the starting point of Christian doctrine in the history of salvation.⁶⁹¹ And contrary to L. W. Wood's assertion, he uses pneumatology to support the objectivity of faith, even though sometimes his doctrine of pneumatology is seen as nominal and hypothetical.

However, according to James J. Buckley, the problem with Barth's pneumatology is its "lack of distinctiveness of the identity of the Spirit with Christ in election, creation, and ecclesiology." That is why Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is re-enforced by the use of that doctrine as the theological background for a Christological rather than a pneumatological description of God's identity *pro nobis*.⁶⁹² For this reason, it is difficult to find the importance of ministry and the role of the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of repentance in Barth's theology. Another reason is

690 Laurence W. Wood, "From Barth's Trinitarian Christology to Moltmann's Trinitarian Pneumatology" *Asbury Theological Journal* 55/1 (S 2000): 51.

691 CD 1/1, 345-346.

692 James J. Buckley, "A Field of Living Fire: Karl Barth on the Spirit and the Church" *Modern Theology* 10 (Ja 1994): 84-85.

that, even though he has consistently argued in favour of the traditional Trinity, Barth regards the Holy Spirit not as a Person but rather as a power of God or relatedness of God.⁶⁹³ According to Barth, the Holy Spirit is “no other than the presence of Jesus Christ”⁶⁹⁴ and the work of the Spirit is nothing other than the work of Jesus Christ.⁶⁹⁵

Generally, in the soteriology of Karl Barth, the doctrine of repentance is placed in the unity and distinction between the saving work of the Spirit and the saving work of Christ. According to Rosato, Barth lays “the whole emphasis on the soteriological role of the Spirit, and he subordinated any thought of an activity of reconciliation in Christ to that.”⁶⁹⁶ Even though Barth tries to maintain the balance of the ministry of the trinity through *filioque* in the soteriology of his Dogmatics, in actual fact, in Barth’s doctrine of repentance the works of the Holy Spirit are neglected correlatively. It is especially difficult to find the role of the Spirit in the section that deals with the awakening to conversion in CD 4/2. This shows that Barth’s own interest in the doctrine of conversion is in Christ alone. Calvin puts the weight of repentance down to works of the Holy Spirit, but Barth, in his doctrine of repentance, puts the weight of repentance down only to works of Christ.

It is true that in his soteriology Karl Barth excessively emphasises the assurance of salvation so that he loses the balance of the roles of both God and man in his doctrine of sanctification, especially in his doctrine of repentance. We cannot neglect

693 Karl, Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, tr. Grover Foley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 42-52.

694 CD 4/2, 319.

695 CD 4/2, 241.

696 George S. Hendry, “The Spirit as Lord: The Pneumatology of Karl Barth” *Theology Today* 43/3 (O 1986): 419-423.

Barth's endeavour to save contemporary theology from the earlier form of liberal humanism which attempted to isolate its ethical concerns from the experience of reconciliation, but he loses the true response of man and the actuality of Christianity even though he has asserted the term before God.

Doctrine has to have the power to change man's whole life in the presence of God and in the world. But there is no benefit in the categorical proposition as logical tautology. To this extent, Barth's doctrine of repentance is nothing but the pursuit of the trace of history of his era.

However, it is difficult to find the reality of cognition in the theology of Karl Barth. On comparison with Calvin, Barth is near to agnosticism. Between God and man there is a qualitative differentiation and abyss as Kierkegaard said, but God wants to make Himself known to mankind through His revelation and He Himself approaches His creatures in Christ and in revelation.⁶⁹⁷

2. 3. The Characteristics of Repentance and Sanctification in Soteriology

2. 3. 1. Repentance and Justification

It is necessary to connect sanctification and repentance because Barth puts the doctrine of repentance in the category of the doctrine of sanctification. Barth, however, prefers the term 'sanctification' in *Church Dogmatics* to such terms as 'rebirth',

⁶⁹⁷ Cf. Inst., 1.1.1.

‘repentance’, ‘conversion’ and ‘discipleship’ because its root meaning is holiness and because he wants to emphasise that sanctification is the work of God alone and the Holy God is the acting agent in sanctification as in justification.⁶⁹⁸

For Barth justification and sanctification, which includes repentance, are not separated from salvation. So Barth rejects the idea of putting justification and sanctification in the chronological *Ordo Salutis*.⁶⁹⁹ As Hans Küng described, the relationship between sanctification and justification in the theology of Karl Barth is not a chronological but rather a natural relationship.⁷⁰⁰ Barth does not agree with the *Ordo Salutis* of the seventeenth century, but rather he regards that order as a *simul* event, even though he sometimes tries to distinguish between sanctification and justification.

Repentance is not repentance without faith, and faith is not faith without repentance.⁷⁰¹ This is why it is difficult to separate repentance from reconciliation and even from justification in Barth’s theology. Between sanctification and justification there is no such order (*Prius* and *Posterius*, superiority and subordination) in the temporal sense.⁷⁰² Although justification is logically prior to sanctification, they are, Barth maintains, not two things but simply two views of the same act of God known in its totality as reconciliation.⁷⁰³ Thus there is no temporal priority of justification

698 CD 4/2, 511-533.

699 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 261.

700 Hans Küng, *Justification: the doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic*, 68.

701 CD 4/2, 538.

702 CD 4/2, 507.

703 See. Anno Quadt, *Gott und Mensch: zur Theologie Karl Barths in Ökumenischer sicht* (München, Paderborn, Wien: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1976), 122. “Heiligung ist also nicht ohne

followed by sanctification.

Justification is in any event the dominating presupposition of sanctification. On the side of purpose sanctification precedes justification, but on the side of divine action, or in order of action, justification precedes sanctification.⁷⁰⁴ According to Barth, sanctification is not a second divine action, but a different moment of divine action in reconciliation with God. When Barth considers the relationship between sanctification and justification, he maintains that they are two moments in one action and are thus inseparable.

The first considers the relationship of sanctification and justification. The two are not successive stages but two ‘moments’ in the one action. They present aspects which are genuinely different but they are also inseparable, so that there can be no cheap grace or quietism.⁷⁰⁵

Barth asserts that sanctification “rests wholly and utterly” on man’s justification before God. Justification deals with the forgiving love of God by which man’s sinful pride is overcome, but sanctification deals with the way in which the grace of God overcomes man’s sloth and establishes him as God’s covenant-partner. In sanctification man becomes God’s covenant-partner in the on-going history of reconciliation. Repentance is based on the doctrine of justification, which is “you are saved.” Therefore if one has no faith in justification in Jesus Christ, one cannot repent

Rechtfertigung, Rechtfertigung nicht ohne Heiligung denkbar.”

704 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 264. *Dem Ziele nach (strategisch) ist die Heiligung der Rechtfertigung überzuordnen. Der Reihenfolge innerhalb des einen göttliche, Tuns jedoch geht die Rechtfertigung voran(taktisch).*

705 Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “Doctrine of reconciliation: a survey of Barth's *Kirchliche Dogmatik*; pt 4/2” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 10 (Mr 1957): 81.

to God.⁷⁰⁶ The forgiveness of sins aspect of justification is connected with the Christian life continuously and it always involves the demand for sanctification.

Barth insists that the New Testament makes sanctification dependent upon justification, but justification is never dependent upon sanctification. If sanctification becomes the condition of justification, the Gospel is turned into the law. On the other hand, if sanctification is absorbed into justification the result is cheap grace.⁷⁰⁷ In certain respects both justification and sanctification are subordinate and both have priority.⁷⁰⁸ Barth regards the life of sanctification as the goal of justification. Justification aims at the external manifestation of sanctification.⁷⁰⁹

However justification and sanctification are “different aspects of the one event of salvation.” This idea originated in the *ασυγχυτως* (*inconfuse*) and *ατρεπτως* (*immutabiliter*) of Chalcedon⁷¹⁰, in which he deduces the justification and the sanctification in Christ who is humiliated and exalted on the Cross. Barth consistently tries to distinguish between justification and sanctification in his theology, for they are not identical. For him they are not the same and one cannot include the other.

As the two moments in the one act of reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ they are not identical, nor are the concepts interchangeable... Justification is not sanctification

706 Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 151.

707 Ibid., 135

708 Ibid.

709 O. G. Otterness, op. cit., 135.

710 Philip Schaff, ed. *The Creed of Chalcedon: The Creed of Christendom, Vol. I*, 29-34. This distinction is used for maintaining the nature of Christ against Eutychianism. The nature of Christ, even after the act of incarnation, is “without confusion or conversion (*ασυγχυτως*, *inconfuse*) and *ατρεπτως*, *immutabiliter*” and “without division or separation (*αδιαρέτως*, *indivise*, and *αχωριστως*, *inseparabiliter*).” So, “the divine will ever remain divine, and the human ever human.”

and does not merge into it. Sanctification is not justification and does not merge into it. Thus although the two belong indissolubly together, the one cannot be explained by the other.⁷¹¹

It is important, according to Barth, to make a distinction between justification and sanctification, but only for dialectic a purpose. Barth wants to distinguish sanctification from justification because he wants to put the weight on both of them, because if one neglects and overemphasises only one side it perverts the works of God and man and one will never understand the essence of Gospel. Barth believes that if one does not give any independent significance to the problem of sanctification, one will necessarily obscure in a very suspicious way the existential reach of the atonement.⁷¹²

So there is confusion when justification is absorbed into sanctification. The reason Barth continuously distinguishes between them is that they have particular significance: God turns in free grace to sinful man, and in the same grace He converts man to Himself. As God turns to sinful man, man's conversion to God cannot be lacking. And the conversion of man to God presupposes at every point and in every form that God turns to him in free grace.⁷¹³ As Hans Küng points out, in the theology of Karl Barth justification and sanctification are not considered to be the same thing. Rather, Barth "has treated the relationship between justification and sanctification in a very discriminating fashion."⁷¹⁴

711 CD 4/2, 503.

712 CD 4/2, 504.

713 CD 4/2, 505.

714 Hans Küng, *Justification: the Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic*, 68.

For Barth, justification is not the central idea of his theology, instead Christ is the center of his theology. Justification is nothing but the confessional characteristic of the Lutheran tradition.⁷¹⁵ According to this idea, sanctification is not a subordinated event of justification, but starts from Christ just as justification does; that is to say, they are different things which are related in the event of Christ. Therefore their distinction is necessary to the understanding of the atonement and salvation through Christ. Justification grasps the righteousness promised in Jesus Christ, whereas sanctification is obedience and love as man's correspondence to the holiness imparted to him in Jesus Christ.

There is no justification without sanctification and there is also no sanctification without justification. Therefore no one can apprehend the grace of the Gospel without true *meditatio poenitentiae* or sanctification.⁷¹⁶ But Barth states that the question of the order in this relationship is also confused in Calvin's theology, although Barth calls Calvin the theologian of sanctification in the light of *Institutes* chapters' iii-x of Book III.⁷¹⁷

It is obvious that in the *simul* of the one divine will and action justification is first as basis and second as presupposition, sanctification first as aim and second as consequence. In this there is no contradiction. But for Barth sanctification does not merge with justification and each of them has their own position.⁷¹⁸ As a twofold

715 Gustaf Wingren, *Theology in Conflict: Nygren, Barth, Bultmann*, 30.

716 CD 4/2, 506.

717 CD 4/2, 509.

718 CD 4/2, 508-511.

answer, it corresponds to the substance of the matter.⁷¹⁹

As Calvin did, Barth uses the idea of *Duplex gratia*, in order that the separation of sanctification from justification tears asunder the body of Christ, so these two things which we receive in Him simultaneously are never dissociated from each other.⁷²⁰ Therefore they are a unitary event from Christ and in Christ.

As we now turn to consider sanctification in and for itself, we are not dealing with a second divine action which either takes place simultaneously with it, or precedes or follows it in time. The action of God in His reconciliation of the world with Himself in Jesus Christ is unitary.⁷²¹

Justification and sanctification must be seen in the unity of their diversity.⁷²² For Barth they are surely two events, but his interest lies in their unity because they come from one Christ.

A separation of justification and sanctification, says Barth, can have “its basis only in a separation within the one actuality of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.”⁷²³ And the separation of and relationship between sanctification and justification, first of all, is understood explicitly in *participatio Christi*.⁷²⁴ But the essence of Gospel must include either sanctification or justification.

But we have to say that to ignore the mutual relationship of the two can only lead at once to false statements concerning them and to corresponding errors in practice: to the idea of a

719 CD 4/2, 508-09.

720 Inst., 3.11.6.

721 CD 4/2, 501-02.

722 Hans Küng, *Justification: the Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic*, 68.

723 CD 4/2, 505.

724 CD 4/2, 509-511.

God who works in isolation, and His ‘cheap grace’ (D. Bonhoeffer) and therefore an indolent quietism, where the relationship of justification to sanctification is neglected; and to that of a favored man who works in isolation, and therefore to an illusory activism, where the relationship of sanctification to justification is forgotten.⁷²⁵

Barth rejects the understanding of justification as God’s work for man and sanctification as the work of man for God because the grace of God is as necessary for sanctification as it is for justification.⁷²⁶ Barth states that “our sanctification is God’s work, not our own.”⁷²⁷ In Barth’s theology every attempt to measure the sanctification of man in a quantitative way was rejected.⁷²⁸ And justification is for the justified, but sanctification is never for the sake of the sanctified. Rather it is for the sake of the witness to the world.⁷²⁹ Therefore we are witnesses in His sanctification and repentance is the external manifestation of justification. And the sanctification of man that takes place in Jesus Christ is witnessed in the community of Christians.

That Barth’s emphasis is on repentance as obedience to God’s command in his doctrine of sanctification shows the extent of his dependence on Calvin. Barth uses the dialectics in his theology, *simul Justus et simul peccator*, but he forms his ethics in the concreteness of God’s commandment that “the concrete individual must give concrete obedience to God.”⁷³⁰ His dialectical theology is “not the end of itself, but

725 CD 4/2, 505.

726 Anno Quadt, op.cit., 123. “*Allein das Werk der Gnade.*”

727 CD 2/2, 645.

728 O. G. Otterness, op. cit., 137.

729 Ibid., 135.

730 H. U. von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*. tr. by John Drury (New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 89.

only a means and a method to arrive at the real things.”⁷³¹ Sanctification takes the shape of justification.

Even though Von Balthasar does not entirely agree with Barth’s position, he does give a good evaluation of Barth in his Catholic position. Von Balthasar and Jean Louis Leuba agreed that we must not approach Barth as one who was static and systematic, but rather as one who was prophetic in his *Church Dogmatics*. The sanctification of man is dynamic in terms of his conversion to God, not static.⁷³² Justification, according to Barth, “can be perfectly accomplished in one era, while in another his sanctification is just begun.” So his doctrine of sanctification is understood as a prophetic answer of his era.

First of all, this is very important whether Barth truly understands the Reformation of Calvin and Luther or not. According to Von Balthasar, Barth intended to keep the theology of Calvin and Luther from the attack of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, and Troeltsch.⁷³³ This intention strengthens his theological standing in Reformation theology. In order to solve this problem Barth needs objectivity and actuality, and he especially needs sanctification and repentance to be an action of God only, not of the self-understanding of man, because he believes that his pre-generation lost the essence of Christianity through anthropocentrism and individual piety.

Although Barth makes it clear that the sanctification of the Christian has an objective reality apart from the self-understanding of man, and Jesus Christ already

731 Ibid., 46.

732 Ibid., 89.

733 Ibid., 25-32.

makes stand men rightly in His obedience⁷³⁴, he consistently maintains that sanctification cannot be separated from man's subjective awareness of it⁷³⁵ through faith. This is because although, for Barth, justification and sanctification are "God's supratemporal act on man,"⁷³⁶ faith is the "paradoxical fact of the appropriation of this act of God in the consciousness of man, and in deed of the individual man."⁷³⁷

But although Barth suggests the *analogia fidei* as a tool of appropriation of God's work, and to the extent that he emphasises the appropriation of acts of God through faith, ultimately the work of God is incomprehensible because man cannot understand God and can never save himself by his own power except through the light of revelation in Jesus Christ.

But Louis Berkhof charges that Barth "virtually confuses justification and sanctification" so as to negate the Christian life.⁷³⁸ Actually L. Berkhof is correct in the statement regarding Barth's view on sanctification because in his *Church Dogmatics* sanctification is almost identical to justification as a statement on God and His work.

Barth's view is criticised by I. Rilliet, who says that "Gnosis replaces faith, and an indifference which is very dangerous in practice replaces ethics."⁷³⁹ In fact, in Barth's theology the grace of sanctification merges with the grace of justification and

734 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 267.

735 CD 4/2, 296.

736 Klaus Bockmuehl, *The Unreal God of Modern Theology*, 81.

737 Ibid.

738 Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: The Banner of Truth Press, 1959), 537.

739 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 84.

the law merges with the gospel. This is the great problem with sanctification and justification in his theology.

Barth classifies the forms of sanctification into four large categories, namely conversion, discipleship, good works and the cross.⁷⁴⁰ These categories will be dealt with next since these forms of sanctification become not only the forms of repentance, but also the fruits and evidence of repentance.

2. 3. 2. Repentance and Conversion

As mentioned above, sanctification includes conversion, repentance, rebirth, discipleship, good works and the cross, and at the same time conversion includes repentance. Barth prefers the term ‘conversion’ to the term ‘repentance’ because, for him, conversion is related to God’s conversion to man in Jesus Christ and conversion as a work of God is more objective than repentance which has more subjective elements. Nevertheless, sometimes Barth, as Calvin, uses repentance and conversion in the same sense.⁷⁴¹

Barth divides sanctification into two parts: sanctification as a wider definition and conversion as a concrete realisation of sanctification. For Barth, repentance is shown as a kind of conversion in faith because man cannot convert to God by himself and God’s conversion to man is the cause of human repentance and this can only be

740 CD 4/2, 515.

741 CD 4/2, 500.

understood through faith in Christ.⁷⁴² In and with the reality of God and Jesus Christ, the reality of conversion in which men are lifted up from the sloth of death also “impinges upon us, and becomes our own problem.”⁷⁴³

Throughout his writings, Barth sometimes makes mention of conversion as a mere change, or a changing from unbelief.⁷⁴⁴ Throughout the works of Barth conversion means the transformation to the holy by Jesus Christ to serve God, and it includes conversion from unbelief, conversion of gentiles, conversion of Jews and conversion of Christians to follow Jesus.⁷⁴⁵ This differs from Calvin’s notion of conversion as an act of conversion.

For Barth, reconciliation is primarily in a man-ward direction as “the conversion of man to God” and the goal of it is surely “complete conversion of the world to Him.”⁷⁴⁶ Barth shifts from the picture of awakening to that of warfare to illustrate another aspect of conversion. This concept is well expressed by the German word *Auseinandersetzung* which conveys the idea of a “falling out” or a “quarrel.” Barth describes conversion as a “falling out with the self.”

Yet conversion is not an end in itself. The encompassing of the whole life-movement of man is the final quality of conversion emphasised by Barth. Barth agrees with both Calvin and Luther in that they emphasise that the whole life of man

742 G. C. Berkouwer, *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*, tr. by Harry R. Boer (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 21-31.

743 CD 4/2, 560.

744 CD 2/2, 499.

745 CD 2/2, 268-299.

746 CD 4/1, 75.

is involved in repentance. Therefore conversion which “affects the whole man is not an individual matter or sectional, or once-for-all, but is in company with others and means a whole life of conversion.”⁷⁴⁷ Repentance as a daily experience is “not with the regrettable traces of his being and action”⁷⁴⁸ of his past, but with his whole life. It is neither a single act in the past or a series of continuing moments. Man in conversion is a continuous awakening and participation in the movement of covenant history because forgiveness of sins does not occur only in the moment of Christian man’s conversion, but whenever the Christian looks back, he is looking at the forgiveness of sins.⁷⁴⁹

For Barth, repentance concerns the whole life of man, not an instant movement. Therefore repentance is “not to be regarded as an instant that can be left behind after it has occurred.”⁷⁵⁰ The movement is regarded as an ongoing event that recurs throughout one’s life. Repentance is “neither exhausted in a once- for- all event, nor is it accomplished in a series of such acts.”⁷⁵¹ Repentance is not a matter of “individual moments” but of “the totality of the whole life movement” of the particular person concerned.⁷⁵²

Barth sees the moment of conversion as *vocatio continua* instead of *vocatio unica* because “*vocatio continua* the call to conversion is an ongoing event, recurring

747 Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “Doctrine of reconciliation: a survey of Barth's Kirchlliche Dogmatik; pt 4/2” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 10 (Mr 1957):82.

748 CD 4/2, 571.

749 Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*. 149-150.

750 George, Hunsinger, *How to read Karl Barth: the Shape of his Theology*, 162.

751 CD 4/2, 566.

752 Ibid.

through one's existence in time."⁷⁵³ And because this conversion is movement by God, it "cannot be interrupted but extends over the whole of his life."⁷⁵⁴ Conversion has to do with a movement of the whole man. For Barth, conversion is the movement in the process even though he regards it as a once-for-all event in Christ. Like Calvin he has both aspects of conversion, in process and in moment.

Barth thinks that repentance and conversion have characteristics of gradualness as a process. Sanctification is only absolute in God's time. The fruits of it are not fully accomplished in this time. At present man is still involved in the process of turning, in the warfare of conversion. Fulfillment of conversion waits for the eschatological event. And conversion is a once-for-all event that is constantly happening.

Christians are those who constantly stand in need of reawakening and who depend upon the fact that they are continually reawakened. They are thus those who, it is to be hoped, continually waken up.⁷⁵⁵

Barth understands conversion as a repetition which is moving toward conversion because it is necessary in our present time and we are still sinners.

We cannot understand the conversion of man as a matter for only one period in his life...or in which he might have to repeat it at this or that specific point, the prior or intervening times being periods in which he does not live in conversion, either because he is already converted, or is in need, and capable, of conversion but is only moving toward it.⁷⁵⁶

But Barth sees that *μετάνοια* in the sense of the Baptist and Jesus Christ includes

753 George, Hunsinger, *How to read Karl Barth: the Shape of his Theology*, 163.

754 CD 4/2, 566

755 CD 4/2, 555.

756 CD 4/2, 566.

the new beginning of human life at a particular time and “all kinds of action commanded at a particular time.”⁷⁵⁷ Conversion is an act which is constantly renewed in the event of Jesus Christ. In spite of the continuity of repentance Barth asserts the possibility of sudden conversion through the Gospel.⁷⁵⁸ For him, momentary repentance is nothing but a part of the fullness of repentance for the whole life in Christ Jesus. But repentance inevitably evokes a momentary event whether once-for-all or repeated. However, Barth believes that if *paenitentia agite* “takes place only in these moments, and not in the whole context of human life, it does not take place at all.”⁷⁵⁹

Christians live in *simul justus et simul peccator*, partially right and partially evil, and they are in tension between *de jure* and *de facto* sanctification. Barth sets the definitive limit of men’s conversion because men are still sinners, still live in the flesh. According to Barth, this is the real figure of our conversion.

It is true that the situation seems to cry out for this separation. It seems to be much more illuminating if, instead of saying that the whole man is still the old and yet already the new, in complete and utter antithesis, we say that he is still partially the old and already partially the new.... It is in this way that man knows himself when he is really engaged in conversion.⁷⁶⁰

And this conversion is brought about by the word of God. Therefore, when one encounters the word of God, one is being caught up “in a process of conversion.”⁷⁶¹

757 CD 4/2, 567.

758 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 309.

759 CD 4/2, 567.

760 CD 4/2, 572.

761 George, Hunsinger, *How to read Karl Barth: the Shape of his Theology*, 161.

This process entails man being *simul (totus) justus, simul (totus) peccator*, that is the old man having to perish and the new one to come.⁷⁶² Barth warns against the overstressing of *mortificatio* in Calvin's doctrine of repentance and he moves away from Calvin's doctrine of repentance because Calvin emphasises both sides with balance.

Barth criticises, as Calvin did, the scholastic understandings of *mortificatio* and *vivificatio* because he thinks that justice cannot be done to the objective content of the weighty words *mortificatio* and *vivificatio* by overemphasising the subjective and psychological side of the process.

This is obviously because they have to do only with the subjective and psychological side of the process and therefore cannot do justice to the objective content of the weighty words *mortificatio* and *vivificatio*-no matter how strong may be the expression used (*consternatio, humiliatio* and even *desparatio*), or how fine the description of the *consolatio*.⁷⁶³

Barth is critical of both Calvin and Kohlbrügge for emphasising the *mortificatio* at the expense of *vivificatio*. In Barth's words, for them the call to advance is overshadowed by the call to halt. Barth criticises Calvin's overemphasis of the negative side and he criticises that Kohlbrügge emphasises both the positive and negative sides exaggeratedly *in extremis*. But both Calvin and Kohlbrügge "failed to allow its origin, Jesus Christ, to speak for itself with sufficient force and clarity, and therefore to bring out the teleology of the dispute, i.e., the fact that *vivificatio* is the

762 Ibid. Bromiley says that at this point Barth warns against the danger of overstressing *mortificatio* at the expense of *vivificatio*.

763 CD 4/2, 575.

meaning and intention of *mortificatio*.”⁷⁶⁴

In contrast, Barth emphasises the teleological aspects of conversion. There is a real rising and coming and appearing of the new that makes it possible for there to be a *mortificatio*. It is really *vivificatio* that is the meaning and end of repentance. Barth places more emphasis on *vivificatio* in the doctrine of repentance than did Calvin.⁷⁶⁵ Conversion is based not on the law but on the Gospel of liberation. By the ‘yes’ of God man can live for God and is awakened to conversion. This makes us free in Christ and, therefore, by the living Spirit it binds and engages us with God.⁷⁶⁶ It is for this reason that Barth criticises Calvin’s doctrine of repentance for having a somber character in virtue of overemphasising the side of *mortificatio* because “he develops his doctrine in the light of a concept of law which cannot be regarded as identical with the law of the Spirit of life of Rom. 8:2.” Contrary to Calvin’s view, Barth argues the primacy and the Gospel “in virtue of which the decisive work of that event of revelation is new life, the *vivificatio*, of man.”⁷⁶⁷

Barth approaches the basis and origin of conversion in three steps. In order to understand these, it is helpful to understand the idea of conversion. Firstly, conversion is not the figure with the magical and mechanical or automatic associations which it might conjure up, and calls the thing intended by its proper name.⁷⁶⁸ And the omnipotence of God creates and effects in man awakened to conversion a true ability.

764 CD 4/2, 574-77.

765 CD 4/2, 575.

766 CD 4/2, 580.

767 CD 4/2, 581.

768 CD 4/2, 578.

In the exercise of freedom man does not stay where he was, but lives for the future, still as the man he was, already as the man he will be, and so he fulfils his conversion. As a result of this, repentance is inseparably connected to the faithfulness and mercy of God.⁷⁶⁹

Secondly, the dynamic principle of movement of conversion is the truth, revealing to man that God is for him, and that, in virtue of the fact that God is for him, he is for God. So the conversion of man is a decision of God for man, which not only makes possible a corresponding decision of man for God, the free act of his obedience, but makes this act and obedience real, directly causing it to take place. And God precedes and sets man in the movement in which he follows.⁷⁷⁰

Thirdly, conversion is not a mere suspicion, neither hypothesis, nor construct, nor axiom of philosophical metaphysics, nor dogma of theology, but is really the case with unassailable objectivity. And it “must be merely the manifestation of a real event which takes place with incontestable objectivity.”⁷⁷¹

For Barth, conversion is not the ultimate purpose of redemption, but one of the steps towards the ultimate redemption. But in spite of its relativity “it is a real change.” And it is “not a possibility but the new actuality.”⁷⁷² Conversion is a changing of direction and it changes Christians who were living in the old way. But the man who is involved in the act of conversion is no longer the old man. He is not

769 CD 4/2, 578-9.

770 CD 4/2, 579-80.

771 CD 4/2, 581.

772 CD 4/2, 530-1.

even a corrected and revised edition of this man. He is a new man.⁷⁷³ Therefore, conversion is an event of mystery and miracle by God. Conversion is not improvement but alteration⁷⁷⁴ and newness of life. Conversion means, for Barth, the turning on an axis.⁷⁷⁵ This axis turns the man into a new man because we are the possessions of God and he is a proprietor of us.⁷⁷⁶ If anything is not brought under this axis, we have nothing to do with God because if a man still remains in the continuity of his previous being as the old man, “he can be and have and do it only *per nefas*.”⁷⁷⁷

Barth maintains the ideas of Calvin, who abandoned the medieval term *poenitentia agite* (do penance), taking up instead the Greek words *μετάνοια* and *ἐπιστρέφειν*, in order to explain that conversion signifies the conversion of the mind and that the whole man is renewed and made another man.⁷⁷⁸ Barth uses, as Calvin did, the biblical term *μετάνοια* to explain his doctrine of repentance. For him, therefore, repentance, like conversion, is a change of direction and a turning away from old thoughts. In Barth’s explanation of the term *μετάνοια* we may take as our starting point the fact that “literally it speaks first of a change of mind, of a shift of judgment, of a new disposition and standpoint.”⁷⁷⁹ For Barth, conversion is a change of man’s whole aspect and attitude, therefore he prefers man to be transformed by the renewing

773 CD 4/2, 563.

774 CD 4/2, 560.

775 Ibid.

776 CD 4/2, 561-3.

777 CD 4/2, 563.

778 Comm. on Acts. 2:38.

779 CD 4/2, 564.

of the mind.⁷⁸⁰ Conversion is also more than a mere change of situation, but a change of direction for the future and for consummation. And conversion is always the presentation to new life.

Conversion is not a purely outward movement, but it is “a matter of his heart, his thinking, his will, his disposition and also of his consequent action and abstention on the same ultimate basis.” It is a matter of his “disposition and action together, of the two as a totality.”⁷⁸¹ Conversion has something to do with inward things. So Barth criticises the past sermons of many preachers on Hos.6:1ff; “*Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.*” In that verse he points out the problem that “there is obviously no lack of deeds, neither of willingness, nor religious zeal, in the performance of them. But there is lacking in this case, not the outward but the inward thing which makes the movement in which they are engaged in conversion.”⁷⁸² Even though conversion seems to be a concern of the individual only, in terms of man’s inward and outward change, it is the concern of God alone.⁷⁸³

In the fulfillment of the movement of conversion, a man finds himself under a twofold determination. Firstly, through repentance he repents and renounces what he

780 For Barth repentance is the change of the whole person. So he quotes Rom 12:1-2. This portion frequently has been quoted throughout his Ethics. Especially see, Karl Barth, *The Christian Life*, tr. by J. Strathearn McNab (London: Student Christian Movement, 1962) ; (ye present your bodies a living sacrifice) (be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind)

781 CD 4/2, 564.

782 CD 4/2, 565.

783 Ibid.

was and did and his old ways and he affirms and apprehends him in the future.⁷⁸⁴ And secondly, even though he repented he still sins and even though he affirms himself in the future he does “so as the one who has also his past.”⁷⁸⁵ But these two moments in conversion, ‘still’ and ‘already’, are coincidental events only in Christ Jesus our head. They are “not the simul of a balancing or co-ordination of two similar factors. Nor are the position of the two moments which are simultaneously present, the old and the new, in any sense interchangeable.”⁷⁸⁶ Although a decisive turning point may have been experienced, repentance or conversion is conceived as something that is never past except in such a way that it is always future as well.

Ethics is included in the doctrine of sanctification. For Barth, ethics is indispensable to sanctification. He says that “whoever says *theology* has already said *ethics*.”⁷⁸⁷ So, Barth connects the Christian doctrine of God and the concept of the good⁷⁸⁸ because in his theology the God of the Holy Scripture “cannot be thought of for one millionth of a second as separate from His Holiness, and when one thinks of a

784 CD 4/2, 570. According to Barth, “he repents and renounces what he previously was and did, leaving his old way, abandoning himself as he was, boldly enterprising a completely new and different being and action, entering a new this way, affirming and apprehending himself in the future which thereby opens up for him-and all this, commensurate with the powerful cause which sets him in this movement, in the unqualified totality of his existence and being as a man.”

785 CD 4/2, 570-71. According to Barth, “he repents, but he does so as the one who previously knew nothing of repentance. He boldly enterprises a new being, but he does so as one who previously had no boldness to do so. He affirms and apprehends himself in the future indicated by this cause which effectively moves him, but he does so as the one who has also his past.”

786 CD 4/2, 572-73.

787 Bernard L. Ramm, op. cit., 147.

788 Ibid., 149.

Holy God one has already thought of ethics.”⁷⁸⁹

Conclusively, for Barth, repentance and conversion are gifts of God. Conversion especially is a human action which simply responds to divine conversion. Barth called conversion man’s response to God who turns to man. So conversion is not man’s own action as in pietism, but God’s activating action.

For the maintaining of the objective sphere of salvation in the understanding of the *Ordo Salutis*, Barth understands *Ordo Salutis* not as “a series of different divine actions but only as the order of different ‘moments’ of the one redemptive occurrence coming to man in the *simul* of the one event.”⁷⁹⁰ But actually his doctrine of repentance in soteriology is antinomianistic and leaves no room for the subjective application of the redemption wrought by Christ.⁷⁹¹

For Barth, repentance is the inevitable action of God only and in Christ only. Through the *participatio Christi* the Christian has the sanctification of Christ, repentance and conversion. As a result of this event the Christian is called the child of God. Nevertheless, Barth maintains that the Christian must bear witness to repentance with good works, love and freedom in Christ. By taking this position, Barth has balanced the event as an action of God and an action of man. However, there is room for debate that all of this occurs in the time of eternity and *Geschichte*, not in earthly time, although Barth treats it as an act of God only to sustain the objectivity. And in

789 Ibid ., 147.

790 CD 4/2, 502-3.

791 See, Louis, Berkhof, *Reformed Dogmatics* (WM. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1937), 227-228; Antinomian soteriology in this book.

the strict sense his doctrine of repentance is not confession of the sins of sinners, but a change of direction of the heart that believe the act in Christ. So, Barth's doctrine of repentance is different from Reformed theology since Calvin.

2. 3. 3. Repentance, Fruits and Evidence

2. 3. 3. 1. Inward Change and Change of Thought

In the doctrine of forgiveness of sins and the doctrine of repentance Barth excludes all kinds of human merits because repentance and forgiveness of sins are absolutely the works of the Son of God, the identity of His people to Him and their conformity to Him, and because it is an act of God only and an event in Christ.⁷⁹² Consistently Barth states that no human action is a good work in itself. Human actions can only be good works when they depend on Jesus' merit because no human merit is enough to warrant the forgiveness of sins.

Our faith, our repentance, our obedience, our brotherly love, our patience and zeal, our watching and praying - all these as our work and as our accomplishment and exhibition cannot suffice to display our righteousness before God.⁷⁹³

And the faithfulness of God is one of Barth's main ideas: that the faithful God wants to save His people from the dead in His faithfulness. Nevertheless, now He commands men everywhere to repent.⁷⁹⁴ Through Jesus Christ "the righteousness of

792 Otto Weber, *Karl Barths Kirchliche Dogmatik*, 199. "als ob wir es in ihr nun doch mit dem menschlichen Beitrag zu seiner Versöhnung mit Gott zu tun bekämen."

793 Karl, Barth, *Credo*, 158.

794 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 94.

God has been exposed and presented to us and through Him the mercy of God to be the end of all things and the new beginning.” For Christians the mercy of God means that “we must be led unto repentance.”⁷⁹⁵ This correlation provides that God’s faithfulness and requirement of repentance are not contradicted in Him. Even though repentance is not principally an action of man, man does not connive at the importance of repentance and the worth of the commandment of God.

Sanctification of man takes place not only among spirit, nature and soul, but also in body. Barth derived this idea from the Cross and resurrection of the body of Christ and incorporated it as a main theme of his theology, that “the Cross is the dying of His body and the resurrection is the awakening of His body.”⁷⁹⁶ Barth called it the change of the whole man.⁷⁹⁷ Inward illumination of a human subject is itself conceived as the great transformation.⁷⁹⁸ If so, does forgiveness of sins according to Barth relate to all aspects of sinners? For Barth, repentance and forgiveness of sins change all facets of man.

For Barth, the mercy of God is firstly related to inward change, like the doctrine of repentance of Calvin,⁷⁹⁹ and the necessity of repentance is, first of all, related to the change of the inward man as well. So by the mercy of God our inward man increases

795 Ibid., 106.

796 Karl, Barth, *The Christian Life*, 34-35.

797 Ibid.

798 It occurs “not with new and special organs, but with the same organs of apperception with which we know other things, yet not in virtue of our own capacity to use them, but in virtue of the missing capacity which we are now given by God’s revelation.” CD 4/3, 509.

799 Comm. on 1Cor. 1:30; Inst., 3.3.5.

and grows, and God's mercy not only has no end but also grows and increases.⁸⁰⁰

And repentance is based on the change of thought and faith. The origin of change is faith that Jesus died for our sins. From this our transformation takes place. Repentance is a renewing and changing of our thought (*das Um-denken*). Repentance is fundamentally a return to correct thinking. It involves a renewal of reason and understanding. Repentance is the commencement of new thinking.⁸⁰¹ In this expression, however, thought plays a decisive role in repentance. The reason is installed as the place where unceasingly a renewal is to come about, where this turning is to be affected, the turning from and the turning to, because we cannot act without thinking. In repentance change of thought precedes the change of doing. The great demand that the mercy of God imposes on us is primarily the demand of right thought and a knowledge out of which then the right action must come. Repentance means that effect must be given in our thought to the knowledge, which puts our will in motion, which we have to be thankful to God.⁸⁰²

Repentance is, for Barth, an act of thinking and thought of eternity, which is a “thinking of the thought of grace, of resurrection, of forgiveness, and of eternity.”⁸⁰³ And these thoughts “exhort others to think eternity; to summon them to a renewal of mind and to demand repentance.”⁸⁰⁴ And when we have this thought, our thinking is renewed. Barth referred to this thought as transformed repentance. For Barth, this

800 Karl, Barth, *The Christian Life*, 31.

801 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 415-6.

802 Karl, Barth, *The Christian Life*, 60-61.

803 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 437.

804 Ibid.

thinking of the thought of eternity is never a thing completed in human time, for it is full of promise. As an act of thinking it dissolves itself; it participates in the pure thought of God, and is therefore an accepted sacrifice, living, and holy, acceptable to God. And its thought actually takes place because “it is the *KRISIS* of all our other thoughts.”⁸⁰⁵

For Barth, transformation of thinking is primary ethics but transformation of action is secondary ethical conduct. First of all repentance is connected with primary ethics as the act of rethinking and it directs man to secondary ethics as the new behaviour.

Repentance is the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what the will of God is, even what is good and acceptable and perfect.... Repentance, as the ‘primary’ ethical action, is the act of rethinking. This transformation of thought is the key to the problem of ethics, for it is the place where the turning about takes place by which men are directed to a new behaviours.⁸⁰⁶

2. 3. 3. 2. Good Works

According to Barth, throughout Scripture the existence of good works is counted on markedly. But a good work always “follows the acts of God and their consequences.”⁸⁰⁷ That the works of God are good shows us what is meant by the fact

805 Ibid.

806 Ibid., 436.

807 CD 4/2, 587.

that the works of man are good. In the witness of Scripture the work of God stands in a primary and basic relationship to man.⁸⁰⁸ Therefore when we want to see what is the possibility and actuality of good works on the part of man we must start from the completed good works of God.⁸⁰⁹ In the theology of Karl Barth, God's good works are directed towards a specific goal: His covenant with man, His own glory in this covenant and the salvation of man.⁸¹⁰ According to Barth, our good works are subordinate under the works of God on the basis of the first chapter of Genesis. God accomplishes His works in Jesus Christ who becomes the *vere homo*, and manifests it in totality, in history, in creation, in Himself. In this work He is good in Himself only as He is good to man⁸¹¹ and it is actualised only with man's salvation.

Barth actually mentioned the basis of the good works of man referring to the Johannine saying, "My father worketh hitherto, and I work." As a brother of Jesus, man can work in this history. Barth criticises the action of religious men that are repenting in dust and ashes, wrestling in fear and trembling within the sphere of human activity, contrary to God's works⁸¹² because he believes that repentance is the work of God, not the work of man and these men have neglected the completed works of Christ.

The difference between the life of the one in conversion and that of others is not

808 CD 4/2, 588.

809 CD 4/2, 589.

810 CD 4/2, 588.

811 Ibid.

812 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 252-254.

that the former moves itself but “that it has an axis on which to turn.”⁸¹³ But conversion, as Barth has emphasised, characterises sanctification as a “real happening which takes place to men here and now in time and on earth.”⁸¹⁴ It is real because it takes place in fellowship with the life of the holy Son of Man. And Christian works are inevitably related to the particular relationship to God and to Jesus Christ, who is the true God, the true man and the Head of us. Christian works are not processes and products of organic nature but primarily the acts and the fruits of human operation.⁸¹⁵

Good works attest to the fact that we are co-workers in the work of God. But it is possible neither by our nature nor by ourselves.⁸¹⁶ In the particular goodness of the work of God a man may participate in his own good works.⁸¹⁷ Therefore, this is God’s free gift if his work is a real declaration of God’s work, and in the performance of it he may genuinely share in the annunciation of proclamation of Jesus Christ. Good works flow from the forgiveness of sins by Christ Jesus. The goodness of man’s works is to declare what God has done, the goodness in which He has turned to man and given Himself for him.⁸¹⁸ “The work of God which has taken place for them as for

813 CD 4/2, 560-61.

814 CD 4/2, 553.

815 CD 4/2, 584.

816 CD 4/2, 593.

817 CD 4/2, 594.

818 CD 4/2, 590: CD 4/2, 598. *Q. 91.* But what are good works? *Answer*-Only those which of a true faith take place according to the Law of God and to His glory, and are not grounded in our own opinion or the evaluation of men. In Barth’s *the Heidelberg Catechism for today* he summarizes these related section. A command is given just to the man who, as a living member of the Christian church, may believe that God’s righteousness in Jesus Christ has already been fulfilled for him. The command is that he should live in accordance with the decision about the right of God and of man which was made in the death and resurrection. See. Karl Barth, *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today*, 114.

all men also takes place in them in the form of this illumination, with the result that as the men they are they have a share in it only as its witnesses, but such a real share.”⁸¹⁹

When God works with men’s works, Christians can and should and may and will bear witness to the works of God and it will be their good works.⁸²⁰ According to Barth, this is not abstract but real and concrete because God the judge will ask “for then you surely have been merciful as well and have forgiven your debtors”⁸²¹ So Barth connected Christian life with sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2) and he argues that God wants our “will and obedience as a witness of obedience rather than sacrifice itself.”⁸²²

According to Barth, if we do not have such works, “we have no evidence of a real alteration of the human situation effected by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”⁸²³ Repentance bears witness to the works of God in the history of forgiveness of sins. So, “the historical framework is broken through when the secret of history is laid bare.”⁸²⁴ And “we have no occasion to deny the plain meaning of history, since it is history which bears witness to the many of the one forgiveness of sins.”⁸²⁵ Barth regards good works as one of the factors of certainty of salvation.⁸²⁶ And in faith we

819 CD 4/2,592.

820 CD 4/2, 597.

821 Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 152

822 Karl, Barth, *The Christian Life*, 35-40.

823 CD 4/2, 529.

824 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 139.

825 Ibid., 139. cf. As proof Barth submits Acts 11:18; *When they heard this they were silenced. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life."*

826 CD 4/2, 598. *Heidelberg Catechism Q. 86*. As we are redeemed from our plight by grace through Christ without any merits of our own, why should we do good works? *Answer-* because Christ,

can and may and will grasp it.

Barth regards the work of love and faith⁸²⁷ as the fruits of the good tree and fruits of conversion.⁸²⁸ For Barth, the essence of sanctification is love. Christian faith is the human response to God's justifying judgement and Christian love is the human response to God's indication for man. This love follows from the obedience of faith and the obedience of love. Faith is the work of the Holy Spirit and through this faith man can do good works. Furthermore the believing man will certainly also do good works in faith.⁸²⁹

The good work of man is always a work of repentance, a work that is done in repentance and distress and with a cry for the mercy of God.⁸³⁰ And good works are "works of conversion, works done on hearing the appeal to the new man that I am, not in myself, but in Christ."⁸³¹ Man's works are good only in their participation in the good work of God. They are good in Jesus Christ, good purely because they come from the grace of God. Repentance is a substitute achievement, which is an improper making-good of our infinite fault before God, which cannot be made by us.⁸³² So

having bought us by His blood, has also renewed us by His Holy Spirit, that we should show ourselves grateful to God for His benefit with our whole lives, and that He should be magnified through us. Also in order that we may have assurance of our faith from its fruits, we win our neighbors to Christ by our godly conversation.

827 According to Barth, the works of God will be explained briefly and clearly as believing in him who he has sent.

828 CD 4/2, 595.

829 Karl, Barth, *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today*, 92.

830 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 109.

831 *Ibid.*, 111.

832 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 411.

repentance of man cannot “support our reconciliation with God or complete it.”⁸³³

In the section on the praise of works Barth shows a twofold meaning of praise, that “God praises them, affirming and acknowledging and approving them; and that their works praise God, affirming and acknowledging and approving Him.”⁸³⁴ This twofold meaning converges to good works. God is pleased by the good works of man. That Christians should do good works in twofold sense⁸³⁵ is their obligation. Even though we are sanctified by the mercy of God we must present our bodies as concrete and observable and historical existence as a sacrifice. Barth calls this sanctification and its purpose is to give glory to God.⁸³⁶ But the works of Christians can be seriously called ‘good’ on the presupposition of justification by faith alone because our salvation can be considered as the justification in Jesus Christ.

2. 3. 3. 3. Neighbours

God’s existence, for us, is not merely partially but a total reality in the process of repentance.⁸³⁷ Barth criticises the individualistic approach of repentance of the modern Church that has emphasised the “personal conversion, renovation of life, or renovation of human society, or the knowledge of higher words, or of heroic piety.”⁸³⁸ Repentance takes place both inwardly and outwardly in sinners, therefore repentance

833 Ibid.

834 CD 4/2, 584.

835 CD 4/2, 585.

836 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 430-433.

837 George, Hunsinger, *How to read Karl Barth: the Shape of his Theology*, 162.

838 Karl, Barth, *Credo*, 151.

is “not only our relationship to God but also our relationship to others, not only our inward position but also our outward action, not only our private affairs but also our public responsibilities, all these are at stake in the movement from the old form of life to the new.”⁸³⁹

Barth almost follows Calvin’s idea on repentance. And he reduces that idea from the first and second articles of Luther’s 95 Theses; Jesus Christ willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance. But he rejects both the notion of conversion of the Romanists, who regards it as a form of reception, and of the pietists and Methodists, who believe in simple or complex experience of conversion, because their ideas are not identical with biblical concept of conversion to God and because, Barth argues, as Calvin did, that conversion is a “totality of movement of sanctification which dominates and characterises human life.”⁸⁴⁰ At the same time it implies that the repentance of a whole life can be extended to obedience to God and service to neighbours. Conversion necessarily involves the relationship of brothers. Barth’s anthropology makes it clear that “man is not man without his brother.” Barth writes that the self-denial of conversion expresses itself in society as “humility, gentleness, a readiness to serve, responsibility, and loyalty.”⁸⁴¹ It consists of an “affectionate love which does not humiliate or bind others but exalts and liberates them” because it is a “matter of the *Gloria Dei* in the life of the new man.”⁸⁴²

Actually Barth tries to connect repentance with sacrifice and service to

839 CD 4/2, 563-566.

840 CD 4/2, 567.

841 CD 4/2, 563.

842 CD 4/2, 564.

neighbours because for him they are co-subordinate factors of repentance. Repentance is a service to the neighbour and obedience to the order of God when obedience is related to repentance as subjection.⁸⁴³ It gives rise to a new idea that our repentance has to be connected with forgiveness of our neighbours' trespasses because Christ forgives our sins and He commands us to forgive our neighbours' sins. So, for Barth, to forgive the sins of others is a sign of repentance and of obedience to God.

Barth identifies the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification with the transformation of relationships among and through the people of God. Barth's personalistic understanding of reconciliation regards it as a change in relationship and not the importing of a new *habitus* of soul. Sanctification becomes the exercise of love by and through the grace of God made available through our neighbours in the communion of saints.

Therefore Barth's notion of sanctification is extended from the sanctification of the individual Christian to the Christian community. So, for Barth, there is no "individual sanctification apart from the work of Holy Spirit within the communion of saints."⁸⁴⁴ This is worthy of consideration in the present protestant church. Sanctification comes to individuals, but only in their common life, not only as individuals.⁸⁴⁵ The holy person is not the end or purpose of sanctification. In his doctrine of sanctification Barth prefers the usage of 'saints' to the individual 'saint'⁸⁴⁶ because Barth found a plurality of this term in the New Testament. Thus he connects

843 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 400.

844 CD 4/2, 126.

845 CD 4/2, 513.

846 Ibid. ; For Barth the saints of New Testament exist only in plurality, not as individuals.

this idea with the Christian community. The conversion of man is his conversion to God “when in and with it he adds himself as *sanctus* to the *communio sactorum*.”⁸⁴⁷

Barth is concerned with the sanctification of a community of saints. Barth regards the covenant life of the church as an essential element in the process of sanctification. It shows that Barth sees the event of Jesus’ resurrection as already achieved, but at the same time puts it in the process of sanctification within the Christian community.⁸⁴⁸ The Holy Spirit is the living Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the work of the sanctification of His particular people in the world, of His community and all its members.⁸⁴⁹

Through this idea one can more easily recognise the idea of the doctrine of repentance in the theology of Barth. This shows that even though repentance is the act of God alone, it has external proof like sacrifice and service to neighbours.⁸⁵⁰ For Barth, God’s absolution requires our “penitence and sorrow, the confession of sin, the work of contrition, the work of self-denial and faith, and the work of sacrifice.”⁸⁵¹

Barth makes an effort to escape from the abstraction of the concept of repentance because, if not, it is nothing but a working hypothesis of theology. So he wants to give the reality of it to Christians in relation to their neighbours. The concept of repentance would be an abstraction if the required sacrifice were understood only in its relation to

847 CD 4/2, 566.

848 O. G. Otterness, op. cit., 127.

849 CD 4/2, 522.

850 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 403.

851 *Ibid.*, 412.

God and not at one and the same time as service to our fellow man as well.⁸⁵²

Therefore, throughout his works, Barth makes occasional use of the terms ‘repentance before God’ and ‘service to our neighbours’ to explain the truth and actuality of repentance. Repentance is expressed as act and expression before God. For Barth, the service to God and the service to man in repentance is *sine qua non* to each other. So, we can “neither lose repentance before God in service to the neighbours nor service to the neighbour in repentance before God.”⁸⁵³ Neither of them can be genuine without the other. One must say of the former that it acquires its concreteness and seriousness only through the latter. But one must say of the latter something even more far-reaching, namely, that it has meaning and is possible only against the background of the former. But they are not the same. Nevertheless, we can not deny that repentance before God “comes first and service to the neighbour must follow.”⁸⁵⁴

Barth solves the problem concerning repentance and service in relation to the concept of sacrifice in the Old Testament and in the event of Christ. Christ accomplished the sacrifice with the office of a Mediator and High-priest as *vere Deus* and *vere homo*. The ministry of Christ gives the satisfaction to God and to the necessity of man.

Christ is not only the proper sacrifice but also the complete and perfect sacrifice because the sacrifice of his life at one and the same time offered *to God*, an act of repentance that makes good our human disobedience, and also offered *for men*, an act of

852 Ibid., 418.

853 Ibid.

854 Ibid., 419.

service to the neighbour whose whole plight Christ carries and whose need he meets with his obedience.⁸⁵⁵

For Barth, repentance solves the relation with neighbours and opens up “the path to service”⁸⁵⁶ to them even though he criticises the social Gospel of North America and the Thou-and-I theology of Bultmann and Gorgarten. But Barth connects this repentance only with the church. So he says that our repentance can “take place only in the church, as there is faith only in the church.”⁸⁵⁷

2. 3. 3. 4. Obedience

The reason why the saints do good works is that we have no other alternative but to be thankful. Nothing is left of our existence but whatever exists in Christ. No other possibility remains except for us to be thankful.⁸⁵⁸ Good works are an expression of thankfulness to God who saved us from the dead and gave us sanctification.

In *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today* Barth argues that the thankfulness to God is “reception of grace which automatically is new life.”⁸⁵⁹ These good works are out of gratitude to God. Sanctification is essentially nothing more than being thankful for grace because grace has been made concrete here and now through Jesus Christ alone. So sanctification of thankfulness is just as concrete in us. The obedience of

855 Ibid., 420.

856 Ibid., 424.

857 Ibid., 426.

858 Karl, Barth, *The Heidelberg Catechism for Today*, tr. by Shilrey C. Guthrie, Jr. (Worcester and London: The Trinity Press, 1964), 138.

859 Ibid., 139.

man in sanctification is the reflection of God's self-giving love and thus a witness to God's reconciling work. Barth emphasises that the chief part of gratitude is prayer. Sanctification is proved by the Word and Spirit of God, and by prayer on the human side. It is not mere prayer, but prayer for the mercy of God. Therefore prayer for the mercy of God should be the external figure of repentance on the human side.⁸⁶⁰

Another fruit of repentance is obedience to God. Obedience, which is one of the main fruits of repentance and which is sometimes repentance itself, is the submission to authority that is the commandment of God or law. And when the fellow man comes between man and God with his claim, repentance and humility are final words to describe obedience.⁸⁶¹

According to Barth, to be free means to be under the command of God and to allow the command to determine one's action. The genuine freedom is freedom for God, that is, obedience to God. Barth maintains that obedience⁸⁶² can never take on the character of merit or virtue because man has no claim upon God and true obedience is claimless obedience.

And in sanctification, obedience and repentance are connected with each other intimately. The action of man is good "in so far as he is the obedient hearer of the Word and command of God." The one called is empowered to hear and obey, to move from one form of existence to another through the self-giving of Jesus Christ. There is

860 Karl Barth, *Ethics*, 113.

861 *Ibid.*, 483.

862 For Barth obedience is a means of repentance and sanctification, and it is a figure of repentance at the same time.

no other basis than the obviously all-sufficient basis of his call.⁸⁶³ This becomes our sanctification and the word of God is “measure and source of this sanctification.”⁸⁶⁴ According to Barth, Obedience is congruous to the Gospel of Salvation. Therefore obedience is a proof of true change of the whole person by the power of God.

Obedience is the sense for the specific peculiarity of the Divine and for the Wholly-Other-ness of God, the King, the monarch, the Despot. It follows from this that obedience means being committed to a particular course of action, a readiness to surrender individual freedom of movement to the free movement of God, a readiness to offer up everything that the known man of the world supposes to be important and necessary and right, a readiness to retreat from every concrete position which we have occupied, from every undertaking, alliance, compromise, or daring venture upon which we have embarked; in fact, from every method of thought or manner of behaviour.⁸⁶⁵

But Barth contends that God will not give this obedience to all. God never gives repentance to all people, but only to those who are known. However, the Church continues to provoke men to repentance in fear and trembling because she has neglected the freedom of God as a secret of Him.⁸⁶⁶ The guilt of the Church is that she has neglected the freedom of God. When we find it we are concerned only with obedience.⁸⁶⁷

According to Barth, obedience means repentance and repentance means preparedness to enter upon the divine, eschatological possibility, to bow before the

863 CD 4/3,530.

864 CD 3/4, 4.

865 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 386-387.

866 Ibid., 385-389.

867 Ibid., 386-389.

wrath of God and before the exclusive claim which God makes upon men.⁸⁶⁸

It is repentance, for Barth, to have the forgiveness of sins in *participatio Christi* and by doing as Jesus Christ did; in repentance man forgives brothers and world. Freedom in *participatio Christi* is the basis of Christian ethics or obedience. Freedom is a result of Christ's works because Christians are no longer sinners required to sin. By the freedom of Christ, the Christian can do His works because the Christian is no longer a slave of sins. Christians do not sin any more because they have been freed from the compulsion to sin in Christ.⁸⁶⁹ Freedom in Christ which is given from the Holy God is not based on law but on freedom, therefore freely they can be obedient to God through this freedom.⁸⁷⁰ The Holy One actually gives His chosen people the freedom to be free.⁸⁷¹

The freedom which the Holy God gives to His people to be free takes place in Christ and this is the foundation of Christian ethics. Freedom is not given as a law or ideal proclaimed in the void. You can make use of the freedom in which you have been made free in Christ. Freedom is a presupposition of Christian ethics. "Without this assumption (you are free) there would be no such thing as Christian ethics even for us."⁸⁷²

In the light of the relationship with predestination, God elects His saints who will be disciples in Jesus Christ by grace, and through this grace the saints become

868 Ibid., 386.

869 CD 4/2, 532

870 Ibid.

871 Ibid.

872 Ibid.

disciples. Therefore, to be called to discipleship means to believe Jesus.

(Discipleship) is not the recognition and adoption of program, ideal or law, or the attempt to fulfill it. It is not the execution of a plan of individual or social construction imparted and commended by Jesus.... In practice the command to follow Jesus is identical with the command to believe in Him.⁸⁷³

Self-denial as part of a Christian life⁸⁷⁴ in faith is the one evidence of repentance in the theology of Barth. Of course, first of all the prerequisite of self-denial is faith in Christ. The relation between obedience and self-denial is intimate. The Disciples of Christ cannot deny themselves without faith in Jesus.⁸⁷⁵ Anybody who wants to be a disciple of Christ must deny himself in word and in deed because this self-denial will be obedience to Jesus Christ. The self-denial as well as the brave act of faith is the only possible obedience to Jesus' call to discipleship.⁸⁷⁶

Accordingly, wherever Jesus calls man in His discipleship, there can be no avoiding genuine self-denial.⁸⁷⁷ For Barth, in genuine self-denial we can have freedom for the world. The self-denial and faith in repentance are true fruits of discipleship. And discipleship, which is one of the hearts of Barth's doctrine of repentance, is one of bases of Christian ethics. The call to discipleship binds the disciple to Christ by whom he is called. When such discipleship is realised, it will testify both to the

873 CD 4/2, 536.

874 Barth here quotes Luther's axiom for his assertion that "Our lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying 'Repent ye, etc.' meant the whole life of the faithful to be an act of repentance." But he misunderstands this saying. Because Luther used it against indulgence to make rightly penitence like Calvin did. However Barth in here uses it for the whole Christian life.

875 CD 4/2, 538.

876 CD 4/2, 540.

877 Ibid.

sovereign grace of God and the responsible action of man.

So, what Jesus wills with His ‘follow me’ can be chosen only in obedience to His call by Christians.⁸⁷⁸ And God demands faith in the form of obedience to Himself because this is the commitment to Him which constitutes the content of the call to discipleship.⁸⁷⁹ “There is no discipleship which does not consist in the act of the obedience of this faith in God and therefore in Him.”⁸⁸⁰ And discipleship and the call to Him is a coincidental event and faith also cannot be excluded from this event.

All these are inseparable moments of the one occurrence. There is no discipleship without the One who calls to it. There is no discipleship except as faith in God as determined by the One who calls to it and frees for it.⁸⁸¹

Barth regards baptism as one element of conversion because it can be treated as a form of obedience to God. Conversion is understood as “the obedience and hope which inseparably constitute the meaning of Christian baptism.”⁸⁸²

And baptism is the conversion which is grounded in knowledge of the work and word of God. So the conversion in baptism is the decision of man and these decisions and this action are connected with God “as the basis, origin and norm.”⁸⁸³ Barth tries to connect the witness of holy baptism and daily repentance because he thinks that baptism shows that we were sinners in our sins and at the same time through daily repentance we confess them.

878 CD 4/2, 536.

879 CD 4/2, 537.

880 Ibid.

881 Ibid.

882 CD 4/4, 135-136.

883 CD 4/4, 139-140.

Baptism can attest nothing but what the Holy Spirit attests, but as a baptized person I may myself be the witness to the Holy Spirit and restore myself by this witness. Baptism recalls me to the service of witness, since it recalls me to daily repentance. It is a signal set up in our life. As the motions of swimming come again to one who has fallen into the water, so baptism recalls us to witness.⁸⁸⁴

Baptism to Barth is a representation of Christ's death in the midst of our life. And it is a "correspondence to our conversion as it is already accomplished in Jesus Christ," but daily repentance is "a free fulfillment of this correspondence."⁸⁸⁵

2. 3. 3. 5. Bearing the Cross

Barth also connects repentance with the bearing of the cross. It is intimately related with faith because when we believe that Jesus Christ bore the Cross for us, the benefits which we receive from the bearing the Cross of Christ – sanctification, discipleship, conversion, and doing good works – become ours. By Jesus' bearing of and suffering on the Cross, Christians are called to "discipleship and set in conversion and freed for the doing of good works" and by the fact of Jesus' Cross Christians also "come to bear and suffer their cross."⁸⁸⁶

The cross borne by a Christian is not identified with Jesus' Cross, but throughout works of Barth, it is marked and characterised by its influence and effects. It is not possible for one's own sake but for Jesus' sake. That Jesus bears and endures the cross

884 Karl, Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, 150-151.

885 CD 4/2, 305.

886 CD 4/2, 599.

is “opening the way for actualization of the election of all men.”⁸⁸⁷ So the special fellowship of Christians with Christ involves participation in the passion of His Cross. Their obedience will never be more than the work of the freedom which they are given.⁸⁸⁸

For the Christian the bearing of the cross strengthens his faith and obedience and love and it is Christian-particular verification. It brings the Christian’s life to the praise of God. Therefore the Christian shows particular figures externally. “There may be particular good works of faith and love, works which are particularly well-pleasing to God and which redound particularly to the praise of God.”⁸⁸⁹

For Barth, this cross is persecution and isolation. The irruption of sufferings into the life of Christian is the sign of fellowship with Jesus. In this fellowship with Jesus we have to reckon seriously with the fact that “our cross will take, and may never lose.”⁸⁹⁰ But to bear the cross is provisional and cannot compare with future glory. To bear the cross, therefore, is a gift of God.⁸⁹¹

The process to good works from justification is well summarised in Barth’s work where he says that sinners are saved from their sins by Christ and as a result of salvation they can do good works: 1. The Christian is a disturbed sinner. In contrast to the unreconciled man who is still undisturbed in his sin, the sanctified man under the direction of the Holy Spirit experiences a radical awakening. He is a sinner, but he

887 CD 4/2, 603.

888 CD 4/2, 607.

889 CD 4/2, 608-9.

890 CD 4/2, 612.

891 CD 4/2, 528.

recognises his sin. 2. A limit has been set to his sin. The direction of God encounters the sloth which binds man. 3. The sanctified man is also one who continues to look in faith to Jesus in whom he is sanctified. As a result of this turning, real and concrete changes take place in the life of sanctified man, but his covenant relationship with God is only relative because it is not glorification. 4. The direction of the Word has the power to give man the freedom to live for God and his neighbour. If he continues to sin, it is only because he has not availed himself of this new freedom.⁸⁹²

Notwithstanding Barth's endeavours, it is difficult to find the 'how' of good works; for him it is only the "what" of good works. Jesus completes the work which is the acts of God as the Lord. But it is not important to know that man's good works are secured ontologically and eschatologically, for this does not reveal *how* it is actually realised in man's present warfare. It is, however, true that Barth neglects the practical action in his doctrine of sanctification because he regards practical acts as only dimension of ethics.⁸⁹³ Actually, his ethics is exposed as practical impossibility, although Barth sees sanctification as an event in history and as a fact in the common life of all men.⁸⁹⁴

Good works for Barth are different to Calvin's view on good works. That is to say, it means that God's work predestined is shown in human life by the event of Jesus as a work, but is not related to good work as the real works of sinners. So, in the strictest sense, Barth's good works are nothing but the declaration of God. The distinction of a human work is that it is to declare the occurrence of the good work of

892 CD 4/2, 530.

893 CD 4/2, 518.

894 CD 4/2, 529.

God. By the works of the Man Jesus sinners can do good works.⁸⁹⁵ The completed work of the Lord can cleanse them in spite of their sin and “works can be good only as they declare what God has done and accomplished the goodness in which He has turned to man and given Himself for him.”⁸⁹⁶ For this reason the good works of man are a declaration of the work of God. In the strictest sense Barth’s idea is the same as Eduard Thurneysen’s, a close friend of Barth. Thurneysen “had rejected the perceptibility of the work of faith” and abandoned the idea of fruit in the New Testament.⁸⁹⁷

In the Scripture, although Jesus Christ completed the forgiveness of sins on the Cross, He required our repentance, and although his disciples saw the resurrection of Christ and the completeness of the ministry of Christ, they showed their repentance by going to God and taking the first step by believing in the name of Christ.⁸⁹⁸

In Barth’s old age, he gives more room for human response to God’s grace in his doctrine of salvation than in his early writings.⁸⁹⁹ Barth saw that the Reformation had no real penitence or good works. So he criticised it, saying that “even the regenerate and the converted stand in absolute need of forgiveness and justification in all their works of penitence and obedience, in which of themselves cannot possibly justify

895 CD 4/2, 589.

896 CD 4/2, 590-1.

897 Klaus Bockmuehl, *The Unreal God of Modern Theology*, 88.

898 We must remember that the later book of the Gospel the Pauline and Johannine letters require repentance. This shows us that his disciples and Paul, in spite of the completeness of the ministry of Christ, preached the necessity of repentance.

899 David L. Mueller, “Karl Barth and the heritage of the Reformation” *Review and Expositor* 86 (W 1989): 52.

them.”⁹⁰⁰ In his view, the repentance of the Reformation pursued the human action in it, so it cannot be true repentance. There are great differences between Calvin and Barth in their Pneumatology. Barth does not treat the doctrine of sanctification in the light of synergism, but it has a gulf in the light of *sylogismus practicus* to prove faith and salvation.

Even though he argues throughout his books that good work is concrete and objective and real, it is not worthy of good works in salvation. His main aim was to set aside the bad effects of nineteenth century liberalism and the legalism of pietism. It is not easy to evaluate Barth’s theological approach under the Reformation leaders of the sixteenth century, such as Calvin and Luther, or of the seventeenth century because he does not define his approach according to their theological situation.⁹⁰¹ Barth’s son, Markus Barth, says that “my father was not the complete anti-Pietist sometimes presumed.” As evidence he gives “lengthy discussions between Barth and Billy Graham based on the many things they held in common.”⁹⁰²

Furthermore, Eberhard Busch also gives as evidence that although his father was pietist Barth did not neglect his father’s faith in pietism.⁹⁰³ For Barth, his main enemy is not true pietist but the subjectivity of pietism and its bad effect. He achieved his intention to set aside the bad effect of nineteenth century liberalism and the legalism of pietism, but he did not do full justice to the reality of repentance on earth.

900 CD 4/2, 506.

901 Bernard L. Ramm, ed. *After Fundamentalism: the Future of Evangelical Theology* 1st. (San Francisco, London: Harper & Row, 1983), 12.

902 Ibid., 54.

903 Eberhard Busch, Memories of Karl Barth in *How Karl Barth changed my mind*, ed. McKim, Donald (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 9.

Subjectivity is not always good, but it has merits that remove the abstraction between God and us. Contrary to Barth and the exceeding objectivism of salvation, Berkouwer argues that “theological subjectivism did not err” because it stressed too heavily the living relationship of divine truth to human faith. And, more positively, Berkouwer surely argues the objectivity of salvation, added that “this relation is so essential that theological reflection dare not for a moment turn it into an abstraction.”⁹⁰⁴

SUMMARY

The problem with Barth’s doctrine of repentance, as well as his other theological spheres, is caused by his Christo-centralism. His Christo-centralism is also centered in his understanding and horizon of hermeneutics. Repentance is obviously the work of God and His work alone. And genuine repentance takes place in Christ only and it is possible by the grace of God.

Christians can participate in the event of Christ and when they believe that Christ did everything for them in faith, repentance in Christ becomes their repentance. Therefore there is no human merit in repentance, but, as opposed to justification, it takes place in human life on earth.

Repentance is a perfect and concrete change obeying the calling of Christ and this is a sign of salvation which only takes place in Christians. But only through faith

904 FJ, 16.

can Christians receive repentance and see it as a fact. Therefore in faith Christians receive repentance as well as justification as a gift of God. But repentance is accompanied by concrete change of life. By repentance, inward change happens and the man who is changed does good works, in other words, gratitude, obedience, self-denial, bearing the cross and service to neighbours.

On account of repentance, Christians obey the will of God and never forget thankfulness in persecution and sufferings and bear the fruits of life. But in the strictest sense, Barth does not present the direction of concrete action because his theology is concentrated on the objectivity of salvation in order to escape subjectivity.

Chapter 3. The Doctrine of Repentance in the Theology of G.C. Berkouwer

3. 1. The Necessity of Repentance in Soteriology

3. 1. 1. The Position of Berkouwer in Reformed Theology

G. C. Berkouwer (1903-1996) has been widely regarded in the Netherlands and in the field of Reformed theology as one of Reformed theology's most influential theologians of the twentieth century.⁹⁰⁵ Although evangelical theologians have been evaluating whether he is evangelical theologian or not, he has an eminent position in the history of the Dutch Church and the Gereformeerde Kerken in particular⁹⁰⁶ and Reformed theology in general. In 1957, Carl Henry wrote that Berkouwer was the "most impressive living theologian of the Netherlands in the field of dogmatics."⁹⁰⁷

Berkouwer was the successor of the dogmatic theology of the great Reformed theologians A. Kuyper and H. Bavinck. But, according to A. A. Hoekema, Berkouwer's theology has a unique position in Reformed theology because he tried to re-evaluate the traditional doctrines. And his theology is not simple, but deep and profound. Therefore the influence of Berkouwer's theology on Reformed theology should never be overlooked.

If one wishes to find neatly packaged and concisely phrased answers to theological questions, one should not read Berkouwer. If, however, one wishes to explore theological

905 Dirk, van Keulen, *Bibliografie: G. C. Berkouwer* (Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok, 2000), 25.

906 Ibid., 26.

907 Alvin L. Baker, *Berkouwer's doctrine of election* (Phillipsburg, N. J: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1981), 23.

problems in depth (without necessarily finding a satisfactory solution), and to engage in animated dialogue with a number of past and present theologians on various facets of a doctrinal topic, Berkouwer is the man to read.⁹⁰⁸

Another reason for making an in-depth study of Berkouwer's theology in relation to repentance in soteriology is that Berkouwer was "one of the few contemporary theologians who, possessed of a fine, perceptive, and judicious exegetical skill and acquainted with the exegetical literature in the requisite language, weds systematics to exegetics."⁹⁰⁹ The reason that Berkouwer wedded systematics to biblical exegetics is that he believed that "systematic theology ought to act as the quality control and compass of Biblical teaching, but not be the dictator of the exegesis of any passage."⁹¹⁰ He also thought that exegetical foundations of systematic theology "must always be open to view; human and therefore fallible systematizing must be open to further correction and refinement from Scripture itself."⁹¹¹

Berkouwer freed "theology from the letter of the confession"⁹¹² not because he wanted to deny the traditional confession, but because he wanted to give a modern answer regarding Scripture and confession to contemporary Christians. He committed

908 Anthony A. Hoekema, "Sin, by G. C. Berkouwer" a Review, *Calvin Theological Journal* 8 (Apr 1973): 80-84.

909 S. Lewis Johnson, "G C Berkouwer and the doctrine of original sin" *Bibliotheca sacra* 132 (O-D 1975): 324.

910 Paul Helm, "Proof Texts-II," *Presbyterian Journal* (August 8, 1973: 10. cited from S. Lewis Johnson. "G C Berkouwer and the doctrine of original sin" *Bibliotheca sacra* 132 (O-D 1975): 324.

911 Ibid. This is evaluated in two aspects, one is that he endeavors to save the confession of Reformation; another is that his attitude to it shows compromise between confession and contemporary theology.

912 Lewis, B. Smedes, *G. C. Berkouwer: Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology*, ed. Philip E. Hughes (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966), 92.

his life to the new interpretation of confessions of the Reformed tradition. His new explanation for the confessions of the Reformed tradition met the needs of his time.

Throughout his writings, Berkouwer argues that “a theory (*a priori*) corresponds to reality” and “reality is a different dimension from theories and logic and systematics.”⁹¹³ Thus, when we approach Berkouwer’s doctrine of repentance we must distinguish between reality and theory justly and must understand his real intention, which he has mentioned consistently.⁹¹⁴ The basic starting point of Berkouwer’s theological method changed from historical to *noumenal*, therefore we must look to understand his theological concepts in this light.⁹¹⁵ This gives us a new view-point for understanding his ideas, especially in relation to sin and repentance. Van Til criticises Berkouwer’s basic methodology, saying that Berkouwer’s theological world is not based on the reality and actuality of things. His main theological concern (as is true for Karl Barth) is the world of *Geschichte*.

This man lives and moves and has his being in Kant’s noumenal realm. The existentialist philosophers and their theological followers today often speak of this realm as being that of *Geschichte*. The realm of Kant’s phenomenal world is now often called *Historie*.⁹¹⁶

Van Til regards Berkouwer’s terminology as identical to that of neo-orthodoxy and therefore he places Berkouwer within “the Kantian framework of modern

913 Carl William Bogue, *A Hole in the Dike: Critical Aspects of Berkouwer's Theology* (Cherry Hill, N. J: Mack Publishing, 1977), 12.

914 *Ibid.*, 8. Carl Bogue suggests real intent of theological matters as one of the keys.

915 *Ibid.*, 10-27.

916 Cornelius, Van Til, *The Sovereignty of Grace: An Appraisal of G.C. Berkouwer's View of Dordt* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1969), 86.

theology.”⁹¹⁷

The key concepts of Berkouwer’s theology are reality and correlation. Correlation, in particular, is very important since it is, as Smedes says, a “guiding principle” and “perhaps the single most influential principle”⁹¹⁸ in Berkouwer’s theology. His correlation is picked up from Melancthon’s Apology that “the promise and faith are to be correlated,” and “the promise of mercy must be correlated with faith, for it cannot be apprehended without it”⁹¹⁹ In every consideration of relationship or correlation, various forms of subjectivism begins to dominate the structure of correlation. But Berkouwer’s use of the word *correlation* for his guiding concept differs from others’ usage of it because in his theology it is “an objectivistic conception of Divine revelation (that leaves) no room for a genuinely human subjectivity.”⁹²⁰

However, the meaning and intent of such correlation can only be derived from the total context. Correlation, as De Moor says, has “nothing to do with polarity, interdependence, subjectivism, and existentialism.”⁹²¹ It is very difficult to analyse the real meaning of correlation because Berkouwer had a particular, special usage for the term “correlation.”

917 Carl William Bogue, *A Hole in the Dike: critical aspects of Berkouwer's Theology*, 20.

918 Ibid., 10. Cited from Lewis, B. Smedes. *G. C. Berkouwer: Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology*, 65.

919 J.C. De Moor, *Towards a Biblically Theological Method: A structural analysis and a further elaboration of Dr. G. C. Berkouwer's hermeneutic-dogmatic method* (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. kok, 1980), 65.

920 Ibid., 61-63.

921 Ibid., 65.

But according to G. L. Watts, Berkouwer's concept of correlation is regarded as similar to that used by Barth and T. F. Torrance.⁹²² The influence of Barth in Berkouwer's correlation theology cannot be denied, but Berkouwer had a unique balance between faith and sanctification in his concept of correlation because, whereas Barth only emphasised the objective side of salvation, Berkouwer tried to obtain a balance between subjectivity and objectivity in soteriology. Nevertheless, he did not overcome the limit set by Barth with regards to the relationship between God and man in the area of the doctrine of repentance, and he did not show the real figure of repentance. In the strictest sense, for him repentance is nothing but proposition or tautology, and, therefore, he never show the method or concrete activity of it.⁹²³

For the understanding of true repentance, the kingdom of God and hell, election and reprobation are necessary. They are the source of grace and the result of sins. At the same time they support the necessity and urgency of repentance. For Berkouwer, the Scriptures are asymmetrical in its witness on election and reprobation and there is no reprobation because he thinks that it is nothing but a logical corollary.⁹²⁴ Certainly,

922 For her argument she quoted Torrance's statement that "It is this interlocking correlation of faith with the intelligible, objective reality of God's self-revelation in the incarnation and resurrection, that does not allow us to make 'faith' itself the ground of our 'belief' in the incarnation and /or resurrection. The only proper ground of faith is the reality to which it is correlation as its objective pole." T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time and resurrection* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1976), 19. Cited from Gary Lynn Watts, *The theological Method of G. C. Berkouwer*, Diss., Ph.D., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1981. 130.

923 Carl William Bogue, *A Hole in the Dike: critical aspects of Berkouwer's Theology*, 10-27.

924 Lewis, B. Smedes, *G. C. Berkouwer: Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology*, 78; According to summary of Lewis B. Smedes "Perhaps the most significant contribution that Berkouwer has made to the doctrine of election is his rescue of it from the doctrine of reprobation as its logical corollary. The notion of reprobation as a logical consequence of election is inescapable, as long as election is

“unless one is prepared to state that hell exists, all warnings continue to be hollow threats.”⁹²⁵ Berkouwer dislikes speaking of hell as an independent topic, for which reason M. J. Arntzen, who is one of Berkouwer’s Dutch critics, doubts whether Berkouwer believes in the reality of hell.⁹²⁶ Thus, in his soteriology, only election has its position, and the judgment of God of the result of sin is weakened in the significance of salvation.

3. 1. 2. Repentance and Sin

Like other Reformed theologians, salvation and forgiveness of sins are central ideas in Berkouwer’s theology.⁹²⁷ Following Lord’s Day 44 of the Heidelberg Catechism,⁹²⁸ Berkouwer classified the genuine progress of sanctification into four

viewed as an arbitrary selection of individuals. To Berkouwer this is as objectionable as it is logical.”

925 Alvin L. Baker, *Berkouwer's doctrine of election* (Phillipsburg, N.J: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1981), 13.

926 M. J. Arntzen, *De Crisis in de Gereformeerde Kerken*, 2de druk (Amsterdam: Buitjen & Schipperhejn, 1965), 56ff. cited from Alvin L. Baker, *Berkouwer's doctrine of election* (Phillipsburg, N.J : Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1981), 12-13.

927 G. C. Berkouwer, *General Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 181.

928 Heidelberg Catechism. Lord's Day 44

Q. 113. What does the tenth commandment require of us?

A. That even the smallest inclination or thought, contrary to any of God's commandments, never rise in our hearts; but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole heart, and delight in all righteousness.

(a) Q. 114. But can those who are converted to God perfectly keep these commandments?

A. No: but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; (a) yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God.

(b) Q. 115. Why will God then have the Ten Commandments so strictly preached, since no man in

elements: Firstly there is an increasing knowledge of one's sinful nature. Secondly, there is an increasing earnestness in seeking for the forgiveness of sins. Thirdly, there is the eschatological perspective in which the goal of perfection is sought. Lastly, there is the pneumatological underpinning which is always seminal to sanctification. It consists of prayer to God for the grace of Holy Spirit⁹²⁹ and a constant endeavour to be renewed more and more in the image of God.⁹³⁰

This summary of sanctification includes all of the elements of repentance. Moreover, repentance consists of “the confession of guilt and prayer in humility and faith and in actively doing the will of God.”⁹³¹ So the proper understanding of hamartiology is necessary first of all for the understanding of Berkouwer's doctrine of repentance. And when we examine three elements of sanctification in detail, the elements of the true doctrine of repentance will become clear. They are the elements of sanctification and repentance, and at the same time they are the steps of the procession of sanctification and repentance.

Actually, Berkouwer rejected the *Ordo Salutis*, which is described as a human experience of salvation in the subjective Christian life, regarding it rather as the

this life can keep them?

- A. First, that all our lifetime we may learn more and more to know (a) our sinful nature, and thus become the more earnest in seeking the remission of sin, and righteousness in Christ; (b) likewise, that we constantly endeavor and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God, till we arrive at the perfection proposed to us, in a life to come. (c)

929 G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, 128; For Berkouwer the perfect prayer of the believer asks first for forgiveness of God.

930 FS, 110.

931 *Ibid.*, 212.

description of the fullness of the Christian Life because, for him, all of the facts, sanctification, justification, conversion, faith, and good works, of the *Ordo Salutis* are placed on the same level.⁹³²

In order to understand genuine repentance, we must first understand sin and its seriousness with regards to man and God. And first of all God is not the author of sin.⁹³³ One of Berkouwer's master themes regarding sin is that "sin is the ultimate irrational fact of the universe in which we live,"⁹³⁴ "the origin of sin is a mystery"⁹³⁵ and "sin itself, in its source and cause, can never be explained."⁹³⁶ Even though its origin is a mystery, by the revelation of the Gospel and the law of God we can see the fatality of sin and the atonement for sinners. "By the law sin is revealed in its damnable guilt" and by the good news man can know "how much it costs to redeem us from our sin."⁹³⁷ We can know the essence of sin only "in the light of knowledge of the true God and in repentance."⁹³⁸ Repentance is not a mystical or an abstract miracle but "the radical and the decisive process from death to life" and it is tied up with the preaching of salvation and guilt.⁹³⁹ Therefore, for Berkouwer, repentance is an important instrument which allows us to know who God is and which makes us

932 Gary Lynn Watts, *The Theological Method of G. C. Berkouwer*, 126-27.

933 G. C. Berkouwer, *The Providence of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952) 152; in relation to the author of sin he emphasises the abandonment of speculation.

934 S. Lewis Johnson, "G C Berkouwer and the Doctrine of Original Sin" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132 (O-D 1975): 317.

935 Ibid.

936 Ibid.

937 Ibid., 318.

938 Ibid.

939 G.C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, tr. Philip C. Holtrop (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 220. Hereafter SIN.

convert from sin to God.

Berkouwer does not define sin in one idea; rather he approaches the idea of sin in all its different aspects as it is found throughout the Bible because he believes that preference for any single term may become a failure to appreciate the richness of the biblical languages. “No one has ever defined our sin in a way that embraces the multiplicity of the biblical expressions.”⁹⁴⁰ So, for Berkouwer, sin is defined together with lawlessness, lovelessness, violence against God, evil against God and man, anarchy, disobedience, rebellion, pride and selfishness, unthankfulness unrighteousness, unbelief and faithlessness.⁹⁴¹ These ideas or terms are mutually illuminating and ought to be seen as such. Berkouwer’s concept of sin covers the whole Bible and he does not set it within an artificial system of theology, but rather leaves it as restatement of the Bible itself.

Sin is not the abstract but the personified (Rom. 7:8; 7:9; 7:11-12) and the real matter that was never unreal in relation to man and God.⁹⁴² And sin itself cannot be analysed as a phenomenon but can be understood in relation to “the life and glory, the day and the light of God.”⁹⁴³ Sin is “loss, destruction, severance.”⁹⁴⁴ And it “presupposes the creation of man and his standing in fellowship with God.”⁹⁴⁵ So man cannot escape from this responsibility and curse. In this world, for us, Christ and repentance are required.

940 SIN, 254-55.

941 SIN, 267.

942 SIN, 264-65.

943 SIN, 267

944 Ibid.

945 SIN, 269.

In Berkouwer's theology, sin can first of all be understood in relation to God: it is "enmity, rebellion, disobedience and alienation from God."⁹⁴⁶ And Berkouwer treats sin against man and sin against God in the same way, even though they are not exactly the same. For him, "never is a sin against our fellowman any less serious than a sin against God."⁹⁴⁷ He sees two sides to repentance and reconciliation, the first aspect of which is repentance to God and reconciliation with God in Christ, and the second aspect of which is action after repentance to God and reconciliation with neighbours in Christ. Thus one solution for the problem of sin is found in Christ. And Berkouwer has a unique and concrete solution to the problem of sin.

Because of the influence of Karl Barth, Berkouwer's doctrine of sin is Christocentric, as was Barth's concept. So in Berkouwer's doctrine of sin, it is difficult to avoid the same problem found in Barth's doctrine of sin, that "if sin is not conditioned in some manner by temptation outside of man, (then) it would seem that man's guilt is unforgivable."⁹⁴⁸ But for Berkouwer sin is "never an abstraction but is only real in *concreto*."⁹⁴⁹ And "sin is dissolved, if not in reality, at least in possibility."⁹⁵⁰ Therefore, "sin works and it manifests itself in reality."⁹⁵¹ Thus we can see that Berkouwer's doctrine of sin is different to Barth's in this sense, that is to say, his doctrine of sin stands in *concreto* as did Calvin's, whereas Barth's is more abstract. According to Berkouwer's doctrine, sin is concrete and concrete repentance is

946 SIN, 242.

947 SIN, 244.

948 Dale, Moody, "Sin" *Review and Expositor* 69 (Spr 1972): 239-240.

949 SIN, 61.

950 SIN, 97.

951 SIN, 64.

necessary for the forgiveness of sins

Berkouwer refuses the transmission of original sin and the imputation of original sin in his writings. In its place he presents the “corporative” point as the way to solve the problem.⁹⁵² He argues, as do H. Wheeler Robinson and the Dutch theologian De Fraine, that the idea of “corporative” is the best way to explain the problem of original sin and it was because of the “Old Testament covenant alliance, which was foreign to all individualism and atomism, that the union of the individual and the community was so strong”⁹⁵³ and because “the entire group could be regarded as acting as the ‘representative’ of the group.”⁹⁵⁴ In this way, “the group participates in what the individual Adam does” and one man represents the whole of humanity, since, as Paul says, “all have sinned.”⁹⁵⁵ In short, the concept here is a concept of the “representation of an individual who includes within his person all those individuals of whom he is the representative.”⁹⁵⁶ His ‘corporateness’ is useful in terms of the atonement of Christ for sinners. It implies that we were with Adam, our representative, and we are with the second Adam, Jesus. The term ‘corporateness’ or ‘corporative’ is given in Romans 5:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:14.⁹⁵⁷ According to Berkouwer, realism and *imputatio* of

952 S. Lewis Johnson, “G C Berkouwer and the Doctrine of Original Sin” *Bibliotheca sacra* 132 (O-D 1975): 323.

953 Ibid.

954 SIN, 513.

955 S. Lewis Johnson, op. cit. 323; Rom. 3:23.

956 SIN, 516.

957 SIN, 517; “Within this corporative mode of thought, it is entirely impermissible to adopt the conclusions of *either realism or federalism*. This is because realism converts the words of Paul into an anthropological concept in which the corporative aspect can only be cancelled out (speculatively) by an assumed ‘pre-existence’ in man’s Ur-reality. On the other hand, federalism shows numerous similarities to the corporative idea but lies, nonetheless, on a very different plane. That fact is evident

federalism are lacking in the Reformed confessions, but the corporative concept of original sin “may be the guide that can lead the Calvinists out of the cave of confusion.”⁹⁵⁸ Even though Berkouwer sharply points out the weakness of both realism and federalism and gives wise counsel to the federalist, he is “not successful in providing a fruitful alternative,”⁹⁵⁹ as John Murray has commented.

However, Berkouwer stresses “the necessity of confessing in our doctrine of original sin that it is *our* sin.”⁹⁶⁰ Berkouwer argues that we must repent for our original sin because even though we were washed by the blood of Jesus Christ we had participated in the original sin with Adam. For the original sin Berkouwer presupposes that *Deus non est causa, auctor peccati*. To Berkouwer God is the ‘cause’ of salvation; man is the ‘cause’ of unbelief and hence of rejection.⁹⁶¹ This fact is proved through the self-proof of man, through Christ and through the Scriptures consistently.⁹⁶² The idea of atonement in the theology of Berkouwer cannot be understood apart from the concept of penal satisfaction. And in this respect, Berkouwer opposes not only his own pupil, Wiersinga, but also Barth and Pannenberg.⁹⁶³

when the concept of ‘representation’ is worked out (by means of *imputatio*) in a concept of being ‘held responsible,’ in and with Adam, for his first sin. In this being ‘held responsible’ (as a forensic judgment) the very idea of a ‘corporate reality’ is already rejected in principle. Moreover, this surely the case when we relate the *imputatio* to something which, as a matter of fact, is *not real*.”

958 SIN, 517.

959 John Murray, “Review of Sin” *WTJ* 35(Win 1973): 230.

960 S. Lewis Johnson, *op. cit.*, 325.

961 G.C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 181ff.

962 SIN, 26-34.

963 S. Lewis Johnson, *op. cit.*, 318.

The sin against the Holy Spirit is “antipathy against the acts of Christ by means of the Spirit and the finger of God.” In Fitzer’s view, that sin is the “conscious and radical renunciation of the Holy Spirit and his Work,”⁹⁶⁴ and, sometimes, despising Christ is treated in this light as “outraging the Spirit of grace.”⁹⁶⁵ Berkouwer tries to distinguish or articulate meaning between sin against the Holy Spirit and sin against the Son of Man, although both kinds of sins have to be treated as one sin because through the Scripture Christ is identified with the Spirit.

Actually, Berkouwer rejects the sin against the Holy Spirit as a riddle or a mystery or an isolated special vice. Instead, he asserts that the sin against the Spirit is “rather a real menace to be guarded against in the concreteness of our living before the gracious face of God and the critical gaze of our fellows.”⁹⁶⁶ In this vein, he suggests that pastors must deliver the word of God in comfort and consolation because “false preaching can lead to serious traumatic disturbances.”⁹⁶⁷

Berkouwer maintains that the sin against the Holy Spirit “must not be equated with the outraging of the Holy Spirit in Hebrews”⁹⁶⁸ because the sin against the Holy Spirit in the Gospel has special historical reference. He says that “the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not offer a view concerning the apostasy of the saints, but he comes with his earnest admonition to the endangered Church and calls her to keep the faith and to avoid all toying in her thoughts with possibilities to the right or to the

964 SIN, 329-340.

965 Ibid.

966 SIN, 344-45.

967 SIN, 345.

968 Ibid.

left,⁹⁶⁹ and because the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the same book suggests that the only way to salvation is through Jesus Christ, our high priest.⁹⁷⁰ Actually, Berkouwer believed that Hebrews 6 and 10 are not the unforgivable sin, but simply admonition and warning.

3. 2. The Roles of Repentance in Soteriology

3. 2. 1. Repentance and Faith

Berkouwer's doctrine of repentance starts with faith. Faith is the central idea and has the main position in his idea of correlation. Salvation in Christ is the center from which the lines are drawn to every point of the *way of salvation*. Berkouwer calls these lines 'faith'. They connect every step on the way of salvation to salvation in Christ.⁹⁷¹ Repentance is "a boon companion of true faith; the man justified by faith is justified not as an innocent man, but as a guilty sinner, and, thus, repentance is also related to justification."⁹⁷²

According to Berkouwer, sin and guilt are a mystery and only through faith in Christ can they be known. "For it is within faith that repentance is real. And only as repentance is real does knowledge of sin and guilt become real."⁹⁷³ Without faith man does not know that he is a sinner and there is no urgency for repentance.

969 FP, 120.

970 FP, 121.

971 FJ, 29.

972 FJ, 179.

973 Lewis, B. Smedes. *G. C. Berkouwer: Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology*, 88.

Therefore, Berkouwer, following Herman Bavinck, asserts that faith precedes repentance and faith is the basis of repentance. He argues that “Calvin also recognized a *poenitentia* which precedes faith, but that this was gradually driven to the background as he increasingly emphasized the repentance which flows from faith and has its place *within* the Christian life.”⁹⁷⁴

Faith is an instrument through which we can receive the grace from God. In fact, Berkouwer does not consider faith as a subjective activity of man, but as an objective activity of God because he thinks that throughout the Scriptures faith is regarded as gift of God and an instrument of grace to man. He recognises that faith which is under the grace of God has the inclination to flow to solifidianism, therefore the doctrine of repentance and sanctification needs to be careful.⁹⁷⁵

Even though faith is “neither creative nor meritorious but completely receptive”⁹⁷⁶ in correlation to God’s grace, the doctrine of repentance is not completely receptive in it.⁹⁷⁷ Sometimes Berkouwer considers faith as man’s faith, as opposed to Barth, but he does not allow it flow to extreme subjectivism. But Berkouwer knew well that although justification requires only divine action, faith requires human activity. He holds an objectivistic belief but this is balanced in faith because Scripture has a

974 Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, III, 521ff. cited from FJ, 183-84.

975 FJ, 61-89.

976 Gary Lynn Watts, *The Theological Method of G.C. Berkouwer: Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, 198.

977 SIN, 195; it is important to take note of Berkouwer’s definition of *μετάνοια*: “It is clear that *metanoia* is not exhaustively defined by the term repentance. *Metanoia* is conversion, changing one’s course of direction, contrition in acts, in which the direction of this activity is evident, as in the case of the Old Testament “turning to Jehovah.”” See foot note 23.

balance between objectivity and subjectivity in faith.

The great levelling process in which faith and justification became “two subjective or psychological poles of interdependence also affected repentance.”⁹⁷⁸ For Berkouwer, sanctification without faith degenerates into a humanism without God. Berkouwer, of course, never regards self-sanctification and moralism as sanctification because sanctification is generated by faith alone and “faith is the pivot on which everything resolves”⁹⁷⁹, although it is not the power itself. Berkouwer argues that faith is never interdependent from repentance, but it is bound inseparably to repentance.

Berkouwer rejects the subjective factor of repentance that is the meritorious factor, and rejects the meritoriousness of faith as well because repentance is a boon companion with faith as an absolute work of God. He is inclined to neglect the actual daily sins and the necessity of repentance in daily life, as well as living faith, because he regards repentance as wholly a ministry of God. And he neglects the concrete factor in repentance when compared with Calvin’s doctrine of repentance. Berkouwer’s critique of the penance of Roman Catholicism shows us why he tried to argue the appropriateness of the doctrine of repentance of Reformed theology. His criticism was that “penance and nomism are parasites on the true relation between repentance, sorrow, and grace.”⁹⁸⁰

Berkouwer expresses concern regarding unsound repentance that destroys the simplicity of the Gospel. For him, the true significance of the Reformation is the

978 FJ, 180.

979 FS, 93.

980 FJ, 180.

rediscovery of the correlation between repentance and faith and the simplicity of the Gospel,⁹⁸¹ so he never considers repentance as a preliminary condition which we must fulfil, unlike Calvin who criticised Roman Catholicism in which faith is a presupposition of repentance. Berkouwer criticises repentance as a payment which man offers to God and also the psychological act of penance. Following Calvin, Berkouwer writes that repentance and forgiveness of sins are intimately related, but the action of repentance is not the cause of forgiveness of sins. And the act of repentance itself is not the cause of forgiveness of sins, but rather the cause of forgiveness of sins is faith in the grace of God. He denied the absolute necessity of repentance in salvation because the cause of judgment is not concerned with repentance but with faith.⁹⁸²

And faith and sanctification are indissolubly bound in Berkouwer's soteriology. The Scriptures always speak of "sanctification in the existential sphere of faith" and "never presented apart from faith." Therefore the holiness of Christians is never a "second blessing" placed next to the blessing of justification, rather it must feed on "the first blessing, the forgiveness of sins."⁹⁸³ Berkouwer maintains only the real sanctification through faith, but he opposes synergism.⁹⁸⁴ Berkouwer knew the importance of faith and repentance in salvation, but he rejects the idea of repentance as a meritorious action.

Berkouwer thought that "the Reformation lives or dies with the contrast between

981 FJ, 182.

982 FJ, 180.

983 FS, 64.

984 FS, 90.

humilitas and *superbia*, between penitence and the works of supererogation.”⁹⁸⁵
Genuine repentance is, as Luther says, humility, and it denies all meritoriousness of man. So a proper definition of repentance was the Reformers’ first task. Berkouwer knew well that the Reformers proclaimed *sola fide* to attack the problem of penance in the Roman Catholic Church. And he thought that “*sola fide* was smirched by a meritorial idea of faith” and so “the true nature of penitence was corrupted into an obligatory human pre-requisite.”⁹⁸⁶

Faith is not mere intellectual assent; it thrusts man, as a sinner, before God’s holiness. So now, by means of faith the sinner knows that he cannot escape from judgment because in faith he must accept that God’s judgment is just. Thus, faith “is bound inseparably to repentance; and meritorial worth is ostracized as much from the realm of penitence as from that of faith.”⁹⁸⁷

In many parts of his doctrine of repentance Berkouwer follows the ideas of Calvin. Calvin’s main issue in his doctrine of repentance is forgiveness of sins in Christ. Forgiveness of sins is given through the grace of God and the grace of God is given in the way of repentance. The source of repentance is only the grace of God, therefore any kind of human merit is useless in salvation.

The believer receives forgiveness, Calvin says, in the way of penitence. This phrase in the way of is the customary Reformation response to any idea of meritorial penance, as it is to any misformation of the faith-justification relationship.... Repentance is necessary to the correlation, but it never earns or merits grace. Grace is given *in the way of penitence*, but it

985 FJ, 182.

986 Ibid.

987 Ibid., 183.

is always independent and undeserved.⁹⁸⁸

The term *in the way of* is neither the way of salvation nor the condition of salvation.⁹⁸⁹ Repentance is a *sine qua non* in salvation, but it cannot be a meritorious condition of salvation. For Berkouwer, as for the Reformers, the only power for the conversion of the lost is that of God Himself.⁹⁹⁰ Berkouwer never considers faith as a meritorious work of man because “faith is not a human act that complements God’s act of grace”⁹⁹¹ and God is the only One who affects the salvation of man.

3. 2. 2. Repentance and the Word

For Berkouwer, the essential heart of the word of God, both in the Gospel and in the law, is repentance.⁹⁹² Berkouwer never depreciates the worth of the law in repentance because it allows us to know what the sin is and it is “a source for the knowledge of our sin.”⁹⁹³ So, both the law and the Gospel are necessary in repentance.

For Berkouwer, not only the Gospel is the cause of repentance, but also the law. Many theologians have argued that the Gospel is joy and hope but the law is desperation and hopelessness, and through the Gospel we can know grace, but through the law we can see our guilt. But the law and the Gospel as a Gospel, make us

988 FJ, 184.

989 FJ, 184-85.

990 Gary Lynn Watts. *The theological Method of G. C. Berkouwer*, 120.

991 FJ, 80

992 SIN, 195. “The concept of *metanoia* (repentance) is essential to the entire Gospel message,” and “*metanoia* (repentance) has everything to do with both the law and the Gospel.”

993 SIN, 184.

know our sins and will be summoned to the repentance. And repentance is the echo of the proclamation and the response to the calling of the law and the Gospel.

Berkouwer agrees with Luther that one of the causes of repentance is the adoption as children of God; another cause of repentance is the word of God. Berkouwer asserts, like Luther, that the foundation of sanctification is “the adoption to son.”⁹⁹⁴ Repentance, and also sanctification, is to live as a child of God with Him. That is to say, the man who is adopted as a child of God by the power of Holy Spirit has repentance and by the word of God the sinner is able to recognise that he is a sinner. Therefore, the word of God is an important external means of repentance. For Berkouwer, repentance, as has been mentioned, occurs not by the mystical power or by our recognition of sin, but by the word of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. He writes that even Zinzendorf, the German pietist, did not regard “the dread of law and the pangs of sin” as an essence of conversion. Rather, he thought that “true repentance springs up from the Gospel.”⁹⁹⁵ A motive for the repentance of sinners is “the word of God, that is to say, Gospel.”⁹⁹⁶ In fact, man can only have the knowledge of sin in the preaching of the Gospel because, as Calvin writes, “we never hate our sin unless we have previously been seized with a love of righteousness”⁹⁹⁷ through the Gospel.

And where the Gospel speaks about Jesus as a judge of the final seat, this incurs repentance and conversion because eschatological preaching stimulates the act of

994 FS, 33.

995 SIN, 190.

996 Ibid.

997 SIN, 192-93.

repentance and conversion.⁹⁹⁸ True repentance is caused by the Gospel but “it does not automatically subdue our hearts.” True repentance takes place when the preacher supports it with constant prayer because, even though “the call to repentance and conversion must be urgent and real,” the Gospel is addressed to sinful, confused, and very stubborn men.⁹⁹⁹

In this doctrine, Berkouwer for the most part follows Calvin’s ideas and uses Calvin’s concepts in support of his ideas. There is no repentance that stands apart from the Gospel, and faith and repentance are intimately bound as “*extra controversiam*” for the members of the Church.¹⁰⁰⁰ In Berkouwer’s theology, both repentance and the Gospel are for the salvation of man. Although repentance is necessary to salvation, as is the Gospel, repentance is not the cause of salvation. Therefore he warns that “the man who severs the bond between repentance and the Gospel can only lose both of these.”¹⁰⁰¹ We cannot neglect that aspect of repentance that calls for confession of our sins because “sin is only removed when sin is fully confessed.”¹⁰⁰² Even though we repent of our sin by the word of God and faith and revelation in Christ, our repentance is necessary for the removal our sins.

For Berkouwer, the proclamation of salvation means “the summons to repent,”¹⁰⁰³ and true repentance is comprehended in relation to the forgiveness of sins and the word of God because true repentance is the password for the kingdom of

998 SIN, 225-26.

999 SIN, 210-11.

1000 SIN, 197.

1001 SIN, 194.

1002 SIN, 229.

1003 SIN, 194.

God.¹⁰⁰⁴ True repentance “can only be viewed within the scope of the Kingdom of heaven and can only be preached within the message of that Kingdom, not as its presupposition but as its consequence.” And conversion and repentance are not “the *anticipation* of the Kingdom to come but the decisive attestation that we have *already entered the Kingdom*.”¹⁰⁰⁵ Berkouwer understood “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Mt 3:2, 4:17) to mean that even though the kingdom of heaven and repentance are closely tied up with each other, repentance is not the first condition to enter the kingdom of God. Rather repentance itself is motivated by the approaching of the kingdom of God.¹⁰⁰⁶ So both repentance and forgiveness of sins can be called an essence of the word of God and at the same time repentance is a consequence of the proper preaching of the word of God.

3. 2. 3. Repentance, Christ and the Holy Spirit

Berkouwer tries to exclude the fact of human experience from salvation. So salvation in Berkouwer’s soteriology is, first of all, recognised as an act of God alone, even though it is in correlation between God and man. Throughout his writings, Berkouwer deals with sanctification within a broader framework than Barth, and he regards the Trinity as the operator of the salvific process

In his book *Sin* Berkouwer defines confession of sin and forgiveness of sin such that they are indissolubly bound. He does not want to depreciate the confession of sins,

1004 SIN, 19-95.

1005 SIN, 195-196.

1006 SIN, 193.

but confession of sin (repentance) is “not the ground or the cause of God’s pardon: but it does form the avenue or way along which salvation is received and experienced.”¹⁰⁰⁷

By the forgiveness of sins through Christ Jesus man repents his sins and converts to God totally, so the forgiveness of sins through Christ and the Holy Spirit is the foundation of human conversion. Therefore the baptism of repentance through Christ and the Holy Spirit is the very forgiveness of sins and, as Calvin writes, is “the act of total and radical conversion and never an isolated fact or a merely preparatory stage on the road to salvation.”¹⁰⁰⁸

Even though Luther distinguishes between mortal sin and venial sin (the former has no possibility of repentance but the latter has the possibility of repentance), Berkouwer, like Calvin, writes that “every sin in itself is mortal sin” and can therefore not be cleansed by human merit, but only washed by the “divine grace in Christ.”¹⁰⁰⁹ To Berkouwer all sins are equally mortal and the redemption of man was accomplished by the grace of God in Christ.

Repentance is necessary for salvation because without repentance, returning to God’s countenance, one cannot have the consolation of soul as expressed by the Canons of Dort.¹⁰¹⁰ Nevertheless, repentance is not the means of restoration of the lost

1007 SIN, 156-57.

1008 SIN, 194.

1009 FP, 63-65.

1010 FP, 28. Canons of Dort. V. v. “By such enormous sins, however, they very highly offend God, incur a deadly guilty, grieve the Holy Spirit, interrupt the exercise of faith, very grievously wound their consciences, and sometimes lose the sense of God’s favor for a time until on their returning into the

grace of God, but rather obedience and thankfulness to God in perseverance of the saints and the irresistible grace of his chosen people. This renewal of human life in gratitude and love has always been considered the work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰¹¹ In this context, Berkouwer thinks of repentance as total humiliation. This means that it is absolutely the work of God and excludes the meritoriousness of man. True humiliation is “one with faith, confronting and opposing every earned merit.”¹⁰¹² Like justification by faith alone, repentance is total humiliation in the confession of guilt and sorrow for sin, not just the act of confession but the whole life of Christians, and it is the main message of Scripture and the constitutional and essential message in the religion of faith.¹⁰¹³

Berkouwer rejects the idea of any meritorious acts of man in repentance because he considers repentance to be a work of God and the grace of God. For him, repentance is neither the preliminary act of faith nor the condition of salvation, although faith and repentance are bound firmly together. And faith “simply and finally excludes human merit and understands that we are drawn by the power of the Holy Spirit to a living fellowship with our Lord.”¹⁰¹⁴ The assurance of salvation rests on the *sola gratia* of God. Berkouwer’s concept is very close to that of the Reformers, especially Calvin. He believes that the assurance of salvation does not rest on the human decision and the agreement of Christians,¹⁰¹⁵ as pietists and Roman Catholics

right way by serious repentance, the light of God’s fatherly countenance again shines upon them.”

1011 FS, 78.

1012 FJ, 180.

1013 FJ, 180.

1014 FS, 96.

1015 Gary Lynn Watts. *The theological Method of G. C. Berkouwer*, 123.

believe, because “assurance came from a secure trust in God’s grace which is infinitely far beyond our human weakness and lays the foundation of God’s preserving faith for ever and ever in the consolation of such grace and God’s promise.”¹⁰¹⁶

In Berkouwer’s theology, “repentance (*penitence*) was opposed to the earning of grace by penance”¹⁰¹⁷ as suggested by Roman Catholic dogma. Therefore, like other Reformers, Berkouwer criticised the penance of the Roman Catholic Church¹⁰¹⁸ thoroughly because the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the sacrament of penance plays a big role in salvation and the grace of God is held in the man who has lost that grace and he is restored to a state of grace through this penance.

The sufficiency of Christ’s reconciling work “made it impossible to speak any longer about penitence and penance as *satisfaction* for sin.” Berkouwer goes on to say that in the Canons of Dort, in the way of penitence, in which God’s fatherly countenance once more appears, “there is no suggestion that this penitence is meritorious and satisfying.”¹⁰¹⁹ So, in his theology God has an initiative in repentance.¹⁰²⁰ Therefore only repentance by the will of God and His good pleasure work for salvation.¹⁰²¹ Berkouwer thinks that repentance is a gift of God.¹⁰²²

1016 G. C. Berkouwer, *The conflict with Rome*, tr. David H. Freeman (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1957), 122.

1017 FJ, 137.

1018 FP, 48.

1019 FP, 53.

1020 FS, 23-25.

1021 FP, 91.

1022 Ibid. Romans 11:29. Berkouwer connects “the gifts of grace of God without repentance” with

Like Calvin and Barth, Berkouwer's main idea in the doctrine of repentance is the Cross of Christ¹⁰²³ because this idea shows us what sin is in relation to God and its event completes our salvation. He writes that "the cross of Jesus Christ motivates and defines the call to repent,"¹⁰²⁴ a belief shared by other Reformed theologians in terms of the doctrine of repentance. And the message of Christ Jesus gives us every reason to repent. Without this starting point, repentance just becomes human meritoriousness, a meaningless matter in relation to Christ. For Berkouwer the cross as the mid-point of the Bible is the key to the solution of the problem of sin and the mystery of reconciliation,¹⁰²⁵ for it manifests the love of God and the justice of God, and then summons the necessity and nature of repentance and conversion from sin.¹⁰²⁶

Berkouwer understands the whole doctrine of repentance as the expression of God's sovereign and gracious act of forgiveness. The Holy Spirit is the giver of life and the One who renews the life of man. Since the Holy Spirit calls us into adoption with Christ, sanctification reveals itself in this adoption and in the growing awareness of sonship; a renewal that conforms itself after the image of God.¹⁰²⁷ Sanctification shows itself to be our adoption as children of God in the Spirit, and simultaneously our growing awareness of this sonship. And the Holy Spirit alone can perform the miracle of making man walk on the way of sanctity without a sense of his own

man's conversion in the same idea.

1023 SIN, 60.

1024 SIN, 196.

1025 SIN, 60.

1026 Ibid.

1027 FS, 110.

worth.¹⁰²⁸

The word of God is appropriated in faith only by the power of the Spirit. This indicates that the word of God has power and strength only through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the doctrine of repentance, repentance will happen with the power of the Gospel through the Holy Spirit. We cannot overlook the power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit removes false and feigned repentance and it shall show the emergency and reality of repentance.¹⁰²⁹

In the biblical message the motivation of forgiveness is “not set in the context of watering down or relativizing man’s sin,”¹⁰³⁰ but only concerns God’s attitude to men and their sins. So Berkouwer rejects Max Scheler’s synthesis between the “self-eradicating power of repentance and forgiveness as the act of God”¹⁰³¹ because, although men have always been concerned about the relation of forgiveness and repentance, and their interest has been motivated by the real lines of connection which the Scripture itself draws between these two, sinners never deduce the “divine forgiveness (as a taking away of guilt) from the mere phenomena of penance and remorse.”¹⁰³² Furthermore, in any part of the Scripture, remorse and contrition of man are neither the cause of forgiveness nor “the foundation of forgiveness.”¹⁰³³ And “communion depends on God’s own free and very gracious pardon, which is known

1028 FS, 78.

1029 SIN, 213-217.

1030 SIN, 388.

1031 SIN, 390.

1032 Ibid.

1033 SIN, 391.

and experienced in the *penitence of man*.”¹⁰³⁴ Berkouwer also argued with the Heidelberg Catechism’s explanation of the Lord’s Prayer, saying that “no ground is given as a *motivation* for forgiveness.”¹⁰³⁵ Even though he does not reject the essential correlation between God and man, he maintains that the forgiveness of sin does not depend on the sinner who repents, but only on Christ Jesus.¹⁰³⁶

Actually, for Berkouwer sanctification has no foundation in man and the Reformed confessions never teach that “believers, having gone through the gate of justification, now enter upon a new territory where they must, without outside help, take their sanctification in hand.”¹⁰³⁷ More clearly, he argues, with the Canons of Dort, that “God moves believers to repentance, to sincere and godly sorrow for their sins that they may seek and obtain remission in the blood of the Mediator.”¹⁰³⁸ Both repentance and sanctification are only God’s work and work in Jesus Christ the Mediator.

Berkouwer asserts that both the theology of Kuyper and the Canons of Dort were unfairly incriminated in this theological debate as a result of the type of terminology contained in their expositions. The work of the Holy Spirit in man must be tied to the orientation of man’s faith in divine grace, since this orientation is effected by the Holy Spirit and not by man’s independent will. He wrote that “the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit is designed precisely to prevent us from viewing man as an

1034 Ibid.

1035 Ibid.

1036 SIN, 391-92.

1037 FS, 77.

1038 FS, 77.

independent dynamistic unit.”¹⁰³⁹

Berkouwer rejected the inwardness and mysticism that were the foundation of repentance of Roman Catholic penance. Only the internal grace of God is the foundation of true repentance. The doctrine of internal grace is “a continual warning against the hubris of activism, against sanctification without forgiveness, against a ‘Christian’ life without the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁴⁰ Conversion is the working of God and the miracle of the Holy Spirit in the faith of sinners. God changes sinners’ hearts, wills and minds powerfully by His grace.¹⁰⁴¹ Conversion is not the illumination of the mind as suggested by amyraldism, but a “radical turn-about: a transformation from apostate pseudo- independence to a meek and active faith in God’s mercy.”¹⁰⁴²

Berkouwer tries to correct Barth’s one-sided theology. Actually, Barth deals with sanctification as justification in such a way that it is a declarative act in Jesus Christ. Berkouwer, on the other hand, tries to overcome both objectivism and subjectivism with the concept of correlation in his doctrine of sanctification. Sanctification is not a “moral quality of a Christian which arises from their own actions and achievements” but is a divine sanctifying action. Therefore repentance is also, for him, related to a divine action calling man to repent. Berkouwer thinks of repentance as having a twofold aspect: “Being sanctified and therefore to be sanctified.”¹⁰⁴³ The repentance of

1039 FS, 83.

1040 Ibid., 86.

1041 FS, 94.

1042 Ibid.

1043 FS, 25.

man has its roots “in the sanctifying action of God.”¹⁰⁴⁴ In other words, repentance or sanctification is not a combination of gift of God and obligation of Christian.¹⁰⁴⁵ Berkouwer holds the balanced position with the initiative of God in the doctrine of sanctification.

As Berkouwer held, forgiveness of sin is absolutely the ministry of Christ (Mark 2:5), and at the same time Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, the apostles and the prophets preach that man has only to repent to receive the forgiveness of sins. In repentance, the subject of forgiveness of sins is, of course, Christ Jesus and clearly there is no other way to achieve forgiveness of sins, but God waits for the penitent and converted sinners to come to Him. The only fountain of forgiveness of sins is Christ Jesus, but he does not neglect the repentance of man and the fruits of this repentance (Mt. 3:8; Lk. 3:8; Mk. 1:15; LK13:3, 5; Acts: 8:32) because God requires sinners to pray for the forgiveness of their sins. So the subject of forgiveness of sins is Christ only, but the value of the repentance of man must not be ignored. In this vein Berkouwer fully follows the teachings of Scripture concerning repentance.

3. 3. The Characteristics of Repentance and Sanctification

3. 3. 1. Repentance and Justification

Berkouwer knows well the problem of justification-salvation; the way of salvation from sanctification to perseverance has often been lost because theology

1044 FS, 23.

1045 FS, 22.

went wrong at the point of justification.¹⁰⁴⁶ As Calvin, Berkouwer regards justification not as a one moment but as the whole life of the saints. For him, justification is not “one specific phase among many on the way of salvation,” but rather a whole way of the salvation of the saints. For Berkouwer, the doctrine of justification is forensic and declarative justification, as it was for the Reformers, because “reconciliation through Christ’s cross broadcasts God’s righteousness”¹⁰⁴⁷ and sanctification begins with justification. Berkouwer rejects the idea of synergism in the salvation of man. So for him the imperative calling to repentance is also considered in the forensic justification because God’s act, forensic justification, is the only cause of forgiveness.

That the reformation, its stress on the imperative of real conversion and renewal of life notwithstanding, preserved the forensic nature of justification only underscores how well it understood justification as the forgiveness of sins.¹⁰⁴⁸

Berkouwer knows that sanctification always depends on justification, but nevertheless he pursues a balance between justification and sanctification on salvation because he wants to avoid the error of Holl and Roman Catholic Theology.¹⁰⁴⁹ Berkouwer thought that once this doctrine is understood correctly the confession of true sanctification is rescued.¹⁰⁵⁰

In Christ, justification and sanctification are “inseparable” but need to be distinguished from one another. Taking the same position as Calvin, Berkouwer

1046 FJ, 18.

1047 FJ, 89-100.

1048 FJ, 94.

1049 FJ, 18.

1050 FJ, 89-100.

rejects Osiander's view on justification¹⁰⁵¹ as well as that of the Roman Catholic Church; essential justification and infused justification because he believes that these two positions should be explained as well as how in both cases sanctification becomes the basis of justification.¹⁰⁵²

In fact, Berkouwer does not treat sanctification and justification separately, but regards them as one thing. Neither sanctification nor justification is prior to other in faith, although sanctification follows justification in order.

The 'sola-fide' of justification made it possible, once-for-all, to regard justification and sanctification as almost identical acts of God, operative, in concentric circles of increasing radius, on the plane of individual human life.¹⁰⁵³

Sanctification is "not a corollary or afterward of human faith, but an act of God received in faith. So it is also with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints."¹⁰⁵⁴ Berkouwer knew and made use of Barth's dialectical method for solving the tension between sanctification and justification. And he knew the difficulty of distinction between justification and sanctification. "A widely voiced fear was that sanctification would be absorbed by the act of justification and that, on this view, the distinction

1051 Andreas Osiander (1496-1552). In his *De Justificatione* (1550) he opposed Luther's doctrine of justification by faith maintaining that justification was not a mere imputation of Christ's merits, but a substantial transference of His righteousness to the believer. E. A. Livingstone, *Concise dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd edition (New York, Oxford University Press, 2002), 420.

1052 FJ, 89-100.

1053 FS, 27-28. cf. Gary Lynn Watts. *The Theological Method of G.C. Berkouwer: Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, 198.

1054 Ibid.

between the two was hardly warranted.”¹⁰⁵⁵

According to Berkouwer, sanctification is not the spark and seed that is generated in justification, but is rather the works of God through Christ in faith. He never derives sanctification from justification because they start from Christ together. Sometimes sanctification seems to be a work of man. The heart of sanctification is “the life which feeds on his justification.” Therefore “there is no contrast between justification as act of God and sanctification as act of man.”¹⁰⁵⁶

3.3.2. Moment and Progression

For Berkouwer, concern regarding the regularity of repentance has two aspects: once-and-for-all and progressive. Repentance is spoken of on the way of salvation, not only during the first stage of conversion, but, as Christ becomes more wonderful to us, in crescendo.¹⁰⁵⁷ Repentance occurs once as a ministry of God, but it is progressive in that God changes man from sinner to righteous and the Holy Spirit is indwelling in the heart of sinners.

Real conversion is once-and-for-all and is a change, from death to life. There can be a “reminder of the once-and-for-all of the transition, of conversion, of the passage from death to life.”¹⁰⁵⁸ In the change from death to life, “God’s grace is mirrored.”¹⁰⁵⁹

1055 FS, 13.

1056 Ibid., 93.

1057 FS, 112.

1058 FP, 121.

1059 Ibid.

Conversion has to do with far more than human subjectivity as a human attitude.

But according to Scripture, repentance has the characteristic of progression. And Berkouwer does not regard the progress concept in the Bible as a dilemma: he accepts both sanctification as being holy through the Spirit of faith and sanctification as a process of becoming holy through the indwelling operation of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁶⁰

Berkouwer regards repentance as a process, but this process or progress is not a moral process but rather “it is being holy in Christ and having part, through faith, in his righteousness.”¹⁰⁶¹ But even though he does not deny the value of moral activity, for Berkouwer sanctification is not a process of human works, neither enthusiasm, nor even ascetic practices.¹⁰⁶² This process includes regeneration, rebirth, sanctification and repentance. The reason for the logical distinction in the *Ordo Salutis* is that he wants to help others to understand it more easily.

But ‘progressive’ in sanctification does not mean working out man’s own salvation under man’s own impulse and effort. On the contrary, it means “working out one’s own salvation with a rising sense of dependence on God’s grace.”¹⁰⁶³ And

1060 John Newton Johnson, *Intimations of a Pneumatology in the Dogmatic Studies of G.C. Berkouwer*, Diss. M. Th, university of Durban-westville (1985), 84; Johnson presents a progressive concept of sanctification in his dissertation. Firstly, it is an increasing knowledge of one’s sinful nature; secondly, there is an increasing earnestness in seeking for the forgiveness of sins; thirdly, there is the eschatological perspective in which the goal of perfection is sought; fourthly, there is the pneumatological underpinning which is always seminal to sanctification. Cf. FS, 109.

1061 FS, 104.

1062 Lewis, B. Smedes, *G. C. Berkouwer: Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology*, 90.

1063 FS, 112.

Berkouwer states that “to be able to walk on this road is the work and miracle of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁶⁴ For this reason he places regeneration¹⁰⁶⁵ with faith in the first step of sanctification because “faith simply and finally excludes human merit and understands that we are drawn by the power of Holy Spirit to a living fellowship with our Lord.”¹⁰⁶⁶

Berkouwer supports Abraham Kuyper’s argument that we must have “the simultaneous growth of sanctification and the consciousness of sin”¹⁰⁶⁷ because a simple and evolutionistic doctrine of sanctification would never harmonise with an increasing sense of guilt and would be unthinkable, and more, such a process would rather diminish the devout man’s sense of guilt.

Sanctification is a kind of progress, not from justification, but within justification. This growth and progress leads man “in grace to confession of guilt, to constant prayer, to a deepening sense of dependence on the faithful mercies of God” in faith.

¹⁰⁶⁸

3. 3. 3. Repentance, Fruits and Evidence

Although salvation is the perfect work of God, God requires man’s responsibility

1064 FS, 121.

1065 In here his idea of regeneration is narrower than the meaning of the Bible because he intends only logical order in them.

1066 FS, 96.

1067 Abraham Kuyper, *Uit het Woord*, first series I, 219; cited from G. C. FS, 117,

1068 Lewis, B. Smedes. *G. C. Berkouwer: Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology*,90.

in salvation. But this does not mean nomism or salvation by human meritoriousness or synergism because it presupposes that God gives the power and opportunity for true repentance to the justified children.¹⁰⁶⁹ And Berkouwer connects repentance and the holiness of man's actual life because he believes that this occurs in the forgiveness of sin among neighbours and in our daily life.¹⁰⁷⁰ Although the confession of sins in repentance only seems to be related to God, the confession of sin has to appear in concrete love for neighbours. The doctrine of repentance as a solution to the problem of sin must be not only connected with God, but also with fellow man because sin is not only connected with God but also with fellow man. Even though it is not easy to find the concrete application of repentance to neighbours in Berkouwer's theology, naturally, it proceeds to confession, love and good works.

Sanctification has two phases, namely, "sanctification as being holy through the Spirit of faith" and "sanctification as process" which is "a becoming holy through the indwelling operation of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁷¹ Both of these have a ground in Scripture. The former is treated like justification in Christ Jesus and the latter is treated as the bearing of fruits in the Holy Spirit. Berkouwer especially connects the bearing of fruit with fleeing from sin.¹⁰⁷² The doctrine of repentance in the theology of Berkouwer can be treated as the "becoming" aspect of sanctification. Thus, for him, sanctification is not just objectivity; he never lost the indwelling operation of the Holy Spirit.

1069 FP, 63-65.

1070 SIN, 230.

1071 FS, 104; It will be evaluated as his contribution in the doctrine of sanctification. In modern Reformed theology he uniquely has emphasized the indwelling operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Christian.

1072 FS, 105-108.

For Berkouwer the basic idea both of justification and sanctification is “being sanctified and therefore to be sanctified.”¹⁰⁷³ But God’s sanctification and self-sanctification of the believer are “two equipoised, mutually limiting magnitudes.”¹⁰⁷⁴ Hence the sanctification of the believer “is never an independent area of human activity” and “the sanctification of the believer is a corollary of his faith.”¹⁰⁷⁵

Scripture fully honours man’s activity but never makes it part of a synergistic synthesis. For Berkouwer, synergism¹⁰⁷⁶ steals honour from God. He rejects the synergism in soteriology because synergism reduces God’s election to the “level of a human decision,” and it makes God’s decision depend upon man’s decision.¹⁰⁷⁷ With

1073 FS, 25.

1074 FS, 26.

1075 Ibid.

1076 Concerning the definition of synergism, I wholly agree with B.B. Warfield: Accordingly, Peter exhorts us (II peter 1:10), to make our ‘calling and election sure’ precisely by diligence in good works. He does not mean that by good works we may secure from God a decree of election in our behalf. He means that by expanding the germ of spiritual life which we have received from God into its full efflorescence, by ‘working out’ our salvation, of course not without Christ but in Christ, we can make ourselves sure that we have really received the election to which we make claim. The salvation of God, being a ‘salvation in sanctification of the Spirit,’ ought, when worked out, to manifest itself in such forms as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly love, love. By working out the salvation which we have received into such a symphony of good works we make sure that it is the very salvation to which God has chosen his people. Good works become thus the mark and test of election, and, when taken in the comprehensive sense in which Peter is here thinking of them, they are the only marks and test of election. We can never know that we are elected of God to eternal life except by manifesting in our lives the fruits of election...” B. B. Warfield. *Selected Shorter Writing of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter (Nutley, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1970), 1:129; cited from Alvin L. Baker. *Berkouwer's doctrine of election* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1981), 162.

1077 Alvin L. Baker, *Berkouwer's doctrine of election* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1981), 50.

corruptio totalis Berkouwer argues that man is still a sinner in the image of God and man cannot generate faith in Christ on his own, but by the Holy Spirit man can be called to believe and be generated.¹⁰⁷⁸ For this reason the cause of good works is Christ and the Holy Spirit because we are totally corrupted and have no hope of salvation in us, but by the grace of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit we are regenerated. Therefore, our action is no more than gratitude and obedience to the grace of God. With regards to sanctification, Berkouwer never deviates from the Reformers' emphasis on the sovereignty of grace.

Shunning all one-sidedness and steering clear of all besetting heresies, we must cling through faith to God's grace alone. Then we shall be able to do justice to the real beginning of sanctification: the regeneration by faith of which Calvin and the Confessions speak.¹⁰⁷⁹

Berkouwer regards obedience as an essential feature of repentance.¹⁰⁸⁰ This obedience is the cause of good works.¹⁰⁸¹ He agrees with Calvin and the Lutheran idea that confession of sin represents a new obedience and the fruits of gratitude, as previously mentioned. The word of God sets us under a new law and makes us live in a new subjection. The subjection or obedience to the new commandments and the new law is evidence of true repentance, and this is our freedom in Christ and Christ's right in us.

How little this diminishes from the importance of the law is apparent when we see that Christ's fulfillment of the law actually set the lives of believers under a "new law." Therefore we read of repentance and conversion and a joyful subjection to this "new

1078 Ibid., 50-51.

1079 FS, 18.

1080 SIN, 197.

1081 FS, 39.

commandment” which is “not burdensome” (I John 5:3). This subjection is the clearest evidence of true repentance. In repentance God has every right to expect of believers that they fulfill his “new law.”¹⁰⁸²

And Berkouwer argues continuously that we have to see repentance as an event in which one takes up one’s cross and follows Jesus. Of course, this also is one of the main themes in Calvin’s doctrine of repentance. Repentance is for man to bear his cross, and it becomes the discipleship of Christ. And this is the central idea of Christian life and piety. Berkouwer knew well the heart of the messages in the early church, which is “the repentance and contrition unto the forgiveness of our sins.”¹⁰⁸³ True repentance, as true obedience, is not the submission of the lips, but the submission of the heart. To this extent, Berkouwer’s idea can be connected with Calvin’s idea of repentance as an inward change of man.

Berkouwer does not substitute the *syllogismus Practicus* for faith in Christ as the fountain for certainty of salvation, and for him “sound understanding of the *Syllogismus Practicus* does not imply a second foundation but, instead, implies the realization of sanctification in everyday life.”¹⁰⁸⁴ Berkouwer thought that if the *Syllogismus Practicus* were to be distorted it would become a form of natural theology, where men deduce, apart from faith, their own election.¹⁰⁸⁵ Especially, Berkouwer’s balanced view of the *Syllogismus Practicus* is in agreement with the teaching of Scripture.

1082 SIN, 196.

1083 SIN, 212.

1084 G. C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 303.

1085 Alvin L. Baker, op. cit., 162-163.

According to Berkouwer, assurance of salvation deduced from good works can have value only “if it is exercised in the midst of a life of faith, prayer and struggle.”¹⁰⁸⁶ But as with the Puritans, his theology has always emphasised the importance of sanctification and it was his belief that Christian faith “always bears fruit in the practical affairs.”¹⁰⁸⁷

Good works are spoken of as the fruits of a good tree.¹⁰⁸⁸ “If faith will but lift up its blossoms to catch the sunlight of God’s grace, the fruit will be a life imbued with holiness.”¹⁰⁸⁹ As true faith produces good fruit and good works, true repentance bears “the fruits of repentance” and “moral improvement”¹⁰⁹⁰ because, throughout the Bible, there is no possibility of an ungodly life in salvation.¹⁰⁹¹ But this does not mean sanctification is a process of moral perfection in the life of the Christian.¹⁰⁹² Hence he writes that “true faith is the key to good works” and “good works witness to that faith.”¹⁰⁹³ He believed that faith is “not merely an intellectual affirmation of a distant and alien righteousness but that it is a power which renews man and expresses itself in good works.”¹⁰⁹⁴ True faith is to be “the foundation of good works. And it follows from the nature of faith which clings to divine grace that it cannot possibly be

1086 Ibid.,165.

1087 G. C. Berkouwer, “The Gospel in the world” *Christianity Today* 12 (sep. 27, 1968): 1296.

1088 Ibid., 79.

1089 Ibid., 193.

1090 FS, 36.

1091 FS, 40; “With an appeal to Scripture the possibility of salvation conjoined with an ungodly life is rejected.”

1092 FS, 104.

1093 FS, 36-8.

1094 FS, 39.

fruitful.”¹⁰⁹⁵

Repentance “proceeds always from faith to works and thence back to faith.”¹⁰⁹⁶ Therefore *sola fide* and repentance have a significant bond with each other. And by the power of the Holy Spirit sanctification comes to us only through our faith and may not be separated from it. In Reformation theology, *Sola fide* “was not one-sided sectarianism or a weakening of the reality of salvation but by grace alone are we saved.”¹⁰⁹⁷ Therefore the *Sola fide* is the only sound foundation for sanctification. Berkouwer writes that the relation between faith and good works is homogeneity. So, works do not cooperate with faith but “faith with works.”¹⁰⁹⁸ True faith “is experienced in the daily reality of human life.”¹⁰⁹⁹

In reference to good works, Kuyper distinguishes between eternal life and rewards, saying that the former is a gift to whomever believes in Jesus Christ, while the latter is an additional or “extra gift”. His idea is the same as the biblical concept about rewards. And Bavinck says that the reward is differing levels of glory. He agrees with Kuyper to that extent in this phase. “The reward of grace can hardly be the same as the eternal life given to the entire host of redeemed souls. It must be a special gift, something additional.”¹¹⁰⁰ But for Kuyper, the “reward is given, not of merit, but of grace.”¹¹⁰¹ Berkouwer criticises both Kuyper and Bavinck, saying that in

1095 FS, 41.

1096 FS, 42.

1097 FS, 43.

1098 FS, 137.

1099 Ibid.

1100 FJ, 119.

1101 FJ,120.

this sense they are incapable of scriptural defence. Contrary to Kuyper's idea of reward, Calvin, Ridderbos and Grosheide hold out that the reward in scripture is eternal life flowing from the merit of Christ's sacrifice. It is not important whether rewards are a result of a certain things or not. The importance here is in the intention of the Bible regarding rewards. If we distinguish between eternal life and additional grace, we may make the mistake that divides justification and rewards of good works. According to Berkouwer's idea of reward of good works, rewards come from the merit of Christ, therefore there is no human merit or reward because it comes from Christ as well as faith.

Confession of sins of sinners is one of external evidences of true repentance. Berkouwer sees repentance as having two phases: repentance is the work of God and, at the same time, it requires man's confession before God. The former is totally by the grace of God, but confession of sin is the fruit of true repentance.¹¹⁰² Apart from confession of sins our repentance is nothing but fraud and "has nothing to do with the Kingdom."¹¹⁰³ In the true confession our knowledge of sin is a concretisation of our guilt. And by confession of sin man is living not only for God but also for his neighbours. In the act of confession the way is opened up for a man to live for others and not for himself.¹¹⁰⁴

According to Berkouwer, in Church history the Church did not reject good works as signs and witnesses of faith, but he rejected good works as a law. In his theology, sanctification occurs only by the power of God and our faith and does not come about

1102 SIN, 229.

1103 Ibid.

1104 SIN, 229-30.

through man's meritorious action. Berkouwer acknowledges himself to be in line with traditional Reformed teaching which rejects the Catholic concept of grace as a *donum superadditum*, a new dimension in the world. Nevertheless, the problem in Berkouwer's doctrine of sanctification is that it is theoretical because he bypasses the concrete problems of this life.¹¹⁰⁵

Sometimes Berkouwer uses the terms 'conversion' and 'repentance' with the same meaning. When we approach his doctrine of repentance we must consider this. For Berkouwer, as for Calvin, repentance and conversion are works initiated by God. To an extent, Berkouwer rejects Calvin's concepts of faith, rebirth, and new creation, as hints of a meritorious transition because he, as we see in the Canons of Dort,¹¹⁰⁶ thinks that Calvin's concept did not admit wholly "the priority of grace" in this.¹¹⁰⁷

Therefore, repentance requires the humility of man. So, "true humility and repentance are the portion of those who live in the Kingdom of God and the very criterion of their entrance"¹¹⁰⁸ because humility is the greater gift of the Holy Spirit and therefore it is identified with conversion and the gift of conversion. Even though

1105 D. Ivan Dykstra, "Faith and Sanctification" *Theology Today* 10 (JI 1953): 263-266.

1106 Synod of Dort, THIRD AND FOURTH HEAD: ARTICLE 3. Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, or to dispose themselves to reformation.

1107 FS, 95.

1108 SIN, 228.

humility is the evidence of conversion, “conversion can never be regarded by a humble man as the product of his own achievement or the condition for his gaining salvation.”¹¹⁰⁹

SUMMARY

Berkouwer’s doctrine of repentance is not easy to summarise in a single word because sometimes he follows the traditional orthodox Reformed line and sometimes he has his own unique interpretation.

Berkouwer has no serious knowledge of sins and sense of guilt even though he explains sin in terms of concreteness and in relation to God. Therefore there is no reprobation and hell because he regards them as a corollary of salvation.

But, as with other Reformed theologians, the starting point of Berkouwer’s doctrine of repentance is the grace of God and faith in Christ. Thus he deals with the doctrine of repentance in his book, *Faith and Justification* because he wants to treat it in terms of the correlation between faith and repentance and he wants to show the position of repentance in faith.

Faith and repentance are not interdependent, but closely connected in the grace of God in Christ. By faith the sinner knows that he is a sinner and understands the necessity of repentance. Since, to Berkouwer, faith is the only means of salvation, he did not want repentance to deal in meritoriousness. Repentance is an act of God

1109 SIN, 227.

received in faith. Repentance is a means of strengthening faith.

Repentance is a *sine qua non* in salvation, but it cannot be a meritorious condition of salvation. Berkouwer never considers faith as a meritorious work of man because sinners never deduce the divine forgiveness from human repentance. God is the foundation of repentance and the cause of repentance. God moves believers to repentance.

Repentance is an essential element of the Gospel and the law of God; Law gives us the knowledge of sin and through the Gospel we can know the grace of God and Christ. So repentance and forgiveness of sins can be seen as the essence of the word of God, and, at the same time, repentance is a consequence of the proper preaching of the word of God.

True repentance is understood in the scope of the Kingdom of heaven and is preached in the message of the Kingdom of God, but repentance is not the anticipation of the kingdom but its consequence.

Repentance occurs once as a ministry of God, but it is progressive in that God changes man from sinners to righteous people. Repentance is a kind of progress, not from justification, but within justification.

The presupposition of sanctification is 'being sanctified and therefore to be sanctified.' The foundation of man's good work is the grace of God and it is gratitude and obedience to God. Obedience to God is an essential element of repentance. This is our freedom in Christ. As true faith produces good fruit and good works, true repentance bears the fruits of repentance and moral improvement. True faith is the key

to good works and good works witness to that faith. But this never becomes synergism.

Berkouwer tries to overcome the offset by Barth in the relationship between God and man in the doctrine of repentance with a great wealth of knowledge of the Bible, but he does not overcome it. Therefore one does not find sufficient specific guidelines with regard to the manner in which repentance should be dealt with in pastoral ministry.

PART TWO

Chapter 4. The Doctrine of Penance in the Theology of the Roman Catholic Church

4. 1. The Necessity of Penance in soteriology

4. 1. 1. A Short Historical Background of Penance

The Roman Catholic Church argues that the early church believed that true Christians never sin against God after receiving the baptism that was given to them by Christ. So, most Christians, according to the Roman Catholic Church, have tried not to sin in their lives and they have even postponed their baptism till their deathbeds to prevent them from post-baptismal sin. This idea was the trend of the early Church and was one of main traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.

First century Christians believed in repentance as being once-and-for-all on account of impending eschatology of the Lord's imminent return, but during the persecution under the Roman authorities, the Church needed new ways for those who had fallen from the way of salvation. As a result "the view that God always forgives the person who is repentant"¹¹¹⁰ was brought into the second century Christian beliefs.

The reason that penance came about was that with the fading of the intense

1110 Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church: Theological Investigations*, Vol. XV, tr. Lionel Swain (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 9. Actually many theologians have almost the same view about the history of the evolution of penance of the Roman Church. For further information of the history, methods, and kinds of penance, See, McNeill John T. and Gamer, Helena M., *Medieval Handbooks of penance*, no. XXIX (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938).

eschatological expectations of primitive Christianity, many of them were afraid of grave post-baptismal sins because they could find no absolution from them. So through this they were provided with the institutional means and paedobaptism to solve the “problem of post-baptismal sins.” Thus they believed that baptism was given as a permanent seal or character, but as a solution for grave and venial sins that would unavoidably be committed penance was required.¹¹¹¹

And on account of the relaxation of “the extreme rigorism of those who would not allow any repentance or forgiveness for sins committed after baptism”¹¹¹² both the Church and the penitent had to mitigate discipline. The sacrament of penance was the result of this.

During the period of persecution under the Roman Empire, the Church had defined items of unforgivable sins. But in spite of trends in the early Church, the Church condemned Montanism and Novatianism that had rigorism against a gradual erosion of the unforgivable nature of capital sins and defined the items of unforgivable sins: impurity, murder, apostasy. Since this was so, penance was an important issue from the beginning of the Church.

Thus, step-by-step, sinners could not only participate in the Eucharist but also re-enter the Christian community after confessing their sins to a bishop and receiving penance from him. Especially for the perfect reconciliation with the Church particular dress, particular place in celebration of the liturgy and penitential obligations, such as

1111 John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments* (London: SCM Press, 1997), 89-93.

1112 *Ibid.*, 93

fasting of the penitents were required.¹¹¹³

The sacramental nature of penance, according to Karl Rahner, was externalised into public Church penance and official celebration but there was no receiving of subjective penance. Post-baptismal sins were regarded as destroying the grace of baptism; therefore one should submit to Church penance.¹¹¹⁴ For that reason penance and reconciliation as a way of restoration became an important means of salvation and especially “peace with the Church (*pax cum ecclesia*) is considered the means of reconciliation with God.”¹¹¹⁵ The Church believed that this authority came from Christ’s commission.

Rahner criticized the thoughts of Poschmann concerning penance, claiming that in “*Penance and the Anointing of the Sick*” he did not adequately indicate the characters of public penance in early Church. According to Rahner, “Christian penance developed primarily and exclusively as *paenitentia publica* with all its external and juridical character.”¹¹¹⁶ As we know from Rahner’s criticism, the penance of the early Church is the public penance.

But for now it is important for us to understand how we can connect with the doctrine of repentance of Reformed theology and penance. So as Poschmann presents it, when we deal with the sacrament of penance we must treat the following elements prominently: the necessity of subjective repentance for sins committed after baptism

1113 Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 10.

1114 Ibid., 8.

1115 Ibid., 12-13.

1116 Ibid., 20

as a factor in the remission of sin, the relation between subjective repentance and cooperation with the Church and intercessory prayer of the priests for sins.¹¹¹⁷

The reason why the Roman Catholic theology has a different view about penance as compared to Reformed theology is that the Roman Catholic Church believes in the loss of interior grace that is given to man through Christ Jesus and for the restoration of this grace it is necessary for there to be an impulse from outside.¹¹¹⁸ But a loss of interior grace after baptism or the loss of grace through sin, according to Rahner, does not appear in the Bible and early apostolic documents, but it rather appears very clearly in documents of the later apostolic fathers, especially in the second letter of Clement and the Shepherd of Hermas.¹¹¹⁹

In fact, in the book of Hermas *μετάνοια*, according to Rahner, is penance on the occasion of baptism, once and for all and it has an unrepeatable character. And the problem of what is forgivable and unforgivable, for him, depends on whether it is true repentance or not.¹¹²⁰ And Hermas had a positive view towards post-baptismal penance and opens the possibility of it. But he held a negative position towards the possibility of Church-penance. Because even though there are some exceptional cases and methods, he thought that in general it is difficult for Church-penance to exist.¹¹²¹

Irenaeus, according to Rahner, clearly expressed the connection between sins, the

1117 Ibid.

1118 Cited from Ibid., 27-28.

1119 Hugh Connolly, *Sin: New Century Theology* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 41-49.

See for more information of sin and penance in the early Church.

1120 Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*, 79-80.

1121 Ibid., 81.

loss of grace and exclusion from the kingdom of God. Nevertheless it was nothing more than exhortation in Irenaeus' days but after Tertullianus this theme became an object of the explicit and direct truths of the faith. For Tertullianus, some sins cause the loss of the grace of God but there is only one baptism for sin.¹¹²² Tertullianus classified sins as forgivable sins or unforgivable sins, and he argued that some kinds of sins can not be forgiven. Therefore, in the Roman Catholic Church, for a Christian who commits serious sins that cause the loss of grace of God after baptism penance became a second baptism that restored the grace of God to sinners.¹¹²³

Some kinds of sins, Hermas mentioned, can destroy the grace of God and baptismal seal, while by the second baptism any kinds of sins can be forgiven. For Hermas penance is an important means to restore the baptismal seal of the saints and it is equivalent to baptism.¹¹²⁴

In the book of Shepherd of Hermas, J. Grotz argued, "penance as a church-sacramental event and penance of excommunication are identical," but such an understanding, according to Rahner, is contradicted by the sources. Rahner argues that the penance of the early Church is nothing but an external event of church discipline. But in spite of Rahner's argument, penance of the early Church is totally different to

1122 In Tertullianus' idea for baptism it is clear that man is redeemed by Christ's unrepeatable suffering on the Cross. This redemptive offering is appropriated by man at baptism which, however, he is able to receive only once. For him the passion of Christ on the Cross and baptism are unrepeatable because they are once in salvation. Specifically, unforgivable sinners who commit the capital sins cannot be tolerated in the community of the Church because these kinds of sins annul the effects of baptism. Tertullianus presented martyrdom, "the baptism of blood," as the only means for forgiveness of these sins. Ibid., 47-49.

1123 Ibid., 42.

1124 Ibid., 68.

the sacramental and institutional penance of modern Roman Catholicism in intention and method because it was not yet institutionalised as well as being an admonition to sinners.

The Roman Catholic Church institutionalized it to gain authority for the Church but excluded the assurance of salvation and peace for the Christian. Nevertheless the intention of the inception of penance may have been the keeping of the spiritual safety of Christians and the Church. This shows us that the initial intention of penance was a practical answer for Christians who committed sin under the persecution. So we can conclude that sacramental and institutional penance were not a product of Scripture, but an invention of the later Christian Church. Even though the Roman Catholic Church has asserted that the starting point of the sacrament of penance is Biblical, actually the starting point of it is traditional especially where it is related to the treatment of apostates who were brought to martyrdom and persecution.¹¹²⁵

From early Church history the power of the bishop in penance was absolute. In penance the power of the bishop, according to Tertullianus, was decisive and penance began with “the excommunication of the sinner which was necessarily expressed by the bishop.”¹¹²⁶

Concerning this idea Rahner argued that even though Tertullianus acknowledged subjective penance he also acknowledged penance through the Church because in fact, he presupposed that Christ and Church have an indissoluble relationship and it is supported by the power of the Holy Spirit. And Rahner argues that if he

1125 John M. T. Barton, *Penance and Absolution* (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), 30-45.

1126 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 138.

acknowledged personal penance he, then, inevitably becomes semi-pelagian or Stoic.¹¹²⁷ But, however, as a matter of fact, Tertullianus did not avow penance through the Church but he acknowledged subjective penance or personal penance between God and man through Christ and the Holy Spirit as the only form of penance. Tertullianus regarded subjective penance or the penance of personal satisfaction exclusively as the work of man. Therefore the sacrament of penance through the Church was to come into being after Tertullianus.

The characteristics of penance which is from the Apostles' era to the early of sixth century, according to Regis A. Duffy, can be classified into four areas: First, reconciliation with the official church is considered necessary for salvation;¹¹²⁸ secondly, the Church uniquely possesses the Holy Spirit as a mediator of penance; thirdly, impact on the community is stressed rather than analysis of sin *per se*; and fourthly, in canonical penance, conversion is implicitly treated not as a once in a lifetime experience but “as a life long process.”¹¹²⁹ The classification of Regis A. Duffy shows the change of method of penance from “once in a lifetime” to “life long process.”

And, especially, in the third and fourth centuries under the persecution by Roman authorities, many Christians had beliefs about ‘apostasy of Christians’ and ‘their readmission into communion’ that “martyrs had the power to win forgiveness from

1127 Ibid., 150-51. He may criticize the doctrine of repentance with this idea but for Reformed Church the starting point is always objectivity of God.

1128 Regis A. Duffy, *Penance: Systematic Theology*, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 235.

1129 Ibid., 237.

Christ for the sins of others”¹¹³⁰ and by the power of martyrs they could enter again into the Church and live without obstacles.

Cyprian objected to this situation as he wanted to keep the purity of the Church, and that “admitting the lapsed to communion, even under the patronage of martyrs, was not only inappropriate but extremely dangerous” because he believed that persecution by Roman authorities was a means of God to cleanse the church and to remove the unfit members. Therefore he rejected the readmission of the lapsed to the Church without “repentance or the fuller performance of their religious duties.”¹¹³¹ Nevertheless the Church opened its door for the lapsed that made public confessions and for indulgence because she believed that public confession can reverse the prior failure of apostates.¹¹³²

“Irish tax and tariff penance” that was personal and repeatable, adopted by Irish missionaries from the sixth century, was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church.¹¹³³ Originally auricular confession began with public scandal, but after the Synod of Toledo of AD. 589 it became a legal obligation for all Christians.¹¹³⁴ On account of this new penance, penitents came to confess their sins to priests and priests gave

1130 J.P. Burns, *Confessing the Church: Cyprian on Penance*, ed. Maurice F. Wiles, et al *Studia Patristica. XXXVI*, Critica et philologica, Nachleben, First two centuries, Tertullian to Arnobius, Egypt before Nicaea, Athanasius and his opponents. International Conference on Patristic Studies, 13th, Oxford, 1999. Louvain: Peeters, 2001, 340.

1131 Ibid.

1132 Ibid., 141.

1133 For the tariff penance and the beginning of private penance, see, Michael S. Driscoll, *Penance in Transition: Popular Piety and Practice: Medieval Liturgy*, ed. Lyzette Larson Miller, Garland Medieval casebooks; Vol. 18, (New York: Garland Pub., 1997), 121-163.

1134 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 13.

satisfaction and absolution¹¹³⁵ to penitents. Because of this, penance was changed from once to repeatable, community-centered to personal-centered and Church-centered to priest-centered. Therefore the idea of reconciliation with the Church community through the sacrament of penance through public confession was weakened.

As far as the sacrament of penance is concerned, the discomforts and humiliation that once attended it gradually disappeared. Confession of sins became a private matter between the penitent and priest therefore “both the sacrament of baptism and the sacrament of reconciliation were in danger of losing their seriousness and of becoming matters of routine.”¹¹³⁶

Since the fourth Lateran Council of 1215 seven sacraments had been formalised; penance became a requisite element concerning those guilty of mortal sins and Christians had to do obligatory penance at least once a year. Therefore “from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, private penance steadily grew in importance and other forms of ecclesial penance declined in the estimation of theologians.”¹¹³⁷

The Council of Trent re-intensified a system of auricular penance for the Roman Catholic Church as opposed to Reformation, and the Council of Trent clarified her own view about penance. Therefore, some theologians have criticised the Council of Trent for not being able to provide a balanced theology to the Church because it was

1135 Dallen argued that there was no absolution in the period of Irish penance but Rahner mentioned absolution in that period.

1136 John Macquarrie, *A Guide to the Sacraments*, 93

1137 James Dallen, *The Reconciliation Community: The Rite of Penance* (New York: Pueblo Publishing company, 1986), 139.

exceedingly inclined towards anti-Protestantism.¹¹³⁸

The reason why the Roman Catholic Church asserts auricular confession in the presence of a priest was that she believed that she had the power of forgiveness of sins which were committed to the apostles of Christ. Another reason was that because sin was not only breaking a relationship with God, but also with the Church, penitents had to reconcile with the Church through a priest who was seen as its formal representative, as well as with God. And the reason for the necessity of penance, according to Roman theology, was that through the sacrament of penance the penitent was reconciled with God and was given peace and conviction and at the same time it had the effect of prevention of sins.

We can summarise the reasons for the necessity of penance of the Roman Church: Firstly, through it penitents were forgiven from sins and reconciled with God and neighbors. Secondly, the penitent was spared God's punishment on him, that is, eternal punishment and temporal punishment. (Eternal punishment is punishment that is breaking the relationship with God and temporal punishment is the punishment which if penitent does not compensate to the satisfaction of the priest on this earth he must compensate for it in purgatory.) Thirdly, it liberates the penitent from the swamp of sin. Fourthly, his merit before God is lost by sin but when his sins are forgiven by penance he can restore his merit of good works. Fifthly, the penitent gains the conviction of having been forgiven through the priest's absolution and he may live as a child of God in peace and hope. Sixthly, he can decide to sin no more and resist the flesh, secular pleasures and the temptation of Satan by the grace of God. Seventhly,

1138 Regis A. Duffy, *op. cit.*, 238.

by confession of sin the penitent receives the grace of God and by admonition of the priest he can do good works. He can turn his heart to good because he has been forgiven. Finally by penance the penitent does not carry the seriousness of sin any more and the life of Jesus Christ dwells in his body. Thus, often penance elevates the Christian to the level of saints. Even though the Church does not hold with the deification of the Eastern Orthodox Church it nonetheless pursues perfect sanctification through penance.

4. 1. 2. Penance and Sin

A study of the hamartiology of the Roman Catholic Church supplies an important key to understanding the sacrament of penance because through her hamartiology one can know the original cause and necessity of penance which started with the problem of forgiveness of sins. Her hamartiology is not only concerned with God but also with the Church.

Sin is “an offense towards God,” Andrew Cuschieri wrote at Vatican Council II, and “hurts the church; thus sin also assumes the nature of infliction of pain upon the Church.”¹¹³⁹ Therefore penance, which is related to the problem of forgiveness of sin, inevitably concentrates on the restoration of the relationship with God and the Church. Generally, sin is man’s self-estrangement from God.¹¹⁴⁰ And one’s sin affects oneself,

1139 Andrew Cuschieri, *The Sacrament of Reconciliation: A Theological and Canonical Treatise* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1992), 61.

1140 Mark Searle, *Penance: Pastoral Liturgy, A Symposium* ed. Harold Winstone (London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1975), 199.

other neighbors and the church and even society. So sinners have a responsibility to all the above as it destroys the relationship with them. Therefore, the sacrament of penance became a way of reconciliation with God and the church. An ecclesial aspect of sin and confession was endorsed by many theologians and Vatican II.¹¹⁴¹ As in the disposition of sin we know, it is closely connected with God and Church.

No concept of sin could ever be comprehensive unless it is formulated within the context of the two great commandments and their intimate inter-relatedness. These two commandments are distinct, yet inseparable; so intimately connected that one necessitates the other, one cannot be implemented without the other; disobedience to one has repercussions over the other. By reason of this intimacy, sin cannot but embrace these two commandments at the same time.¹¹⁴²

But actually concerning sins, the Roman Catholic Church gives weight to a relationship with the Church rather than with God.

As to the classification of sin, the Roman Church has various opinions. Mortal sin is described as “any great offence against the law of God,” as trespass against the law of God, and it destroys love in our heart and betrays God who is our end and happiness. It damages the relationship with God irreparably, causes rebellion against God and finally turning away from God. But venial sin is “small and pardonable offences against God, or our neighbor.”¹¹⁴³ In general apostasy, murder and adultery are classified as mortal sin. In more detail, mortal sin includes the so-called “seven deadly sins”: “pride, covetousness, lechery (lust, lewdness), anger, gluttony, envy, and

1141 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 17.

1142 Andrew Cuschieri, op. cit., 61.

1143 Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968), 199-200.

sloth.”¹¹⁴⁴ These are not only sins themselves, but also reason for inducting other sins. But the dividing point of these sins is that the individual is conscious of mortal sins and deliberately commits these sins, knowing that it will lead to a break in his relationship with God. These sins prevent sinners from entering the kingdom of God and finally they go to Hell. Therefore sinners who have committed mortal sins cannot participate in the Lord’s Supper.¹¹⁴⁵ But it does not mean that unintentional sin does not require penance.

The Dutch Catechism clearly explains the relationship between mortal sins and venial sins in the Roman Catholic theology. For it the main differentiations between them are rather relationship with the law, knowledge and the person’s moral intention, than matters of sins.

We commit mortal sin if we transgress the law of God in an important matter with full knowledge and completely free will. We commit venial sin if we transgress the law of God in a small matter, or if we transgress God’s law in an important matter, but without full knowledge or complete free will.¹¹⁴⁶

But the definition of mortal sins by the Roman Catholic Church has room for problems because sometimes “violations of the rules of the Church are treated as mortal sins, while transgressions of the commandments of God are treated as venial sins.”¹¹⁴⁷ But Scripture does not divide sins into mortal and venial but rather Scripture

1144 H.V.S. Eck, *Sin: The Oxford Library of Practical Theology*, ed. W. C. E. Newbolt and Darwell Stone (London, New York, Bombay, and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), 117-138.

1145 Pierre, Remy, *Theology of the Sacrament of Penance: The Sacrament of Penance* (Glen Rock: Deus books Paulist Press, 1966), 56.

1146 F. J. Heggen, op. cit., 72.

1147 H.V.S. Eck, *Sin*, 86-144.

regards all sins as the same. (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4; Jas. 2:10) Therefore, this classification of sins is arbitrary and absurd in the light of the Bible because it comes not from Scripture but rather from tradition.¹¹⁴⁸

The Roman Catholic Church argues that at all times penance is necessary for all “who have stained themselves by some mortal sin.”¹¹⁴⁹ Mortal sin necessitates the full and immediate sacrament of penance, but there is no obligation to do penance for venial sin. Venial sin can be forgiven without penance and Holy Communion, but penance for venial sin will be a source of receiving the greater grace of God. The confession for venial sin is not necessary but useful for piety and the souls of Christians.

As a matter of fact the dividing line between mortal sins and venial sins is obscure because the church has not classified what is mortal or venial and what is intentional or unintentional accurately. Therefore it is very difficult for the individual to understand the kinds of sins. Even though the Roman Church suggests reflection of the conscience as a dividing line, when one considers the total corruption by sins and total depravity, it is very difficult to accept that the human conscience has become the criterion for judging them because due to the depravity of original nature mankind lost his ability to do judge right and wrong for himself. The reason that the Roman Catholic Church has argued that the individual can judge the dividing lines between

1148 F. J. Heggen, *Confession and the Service of Penance*, tr. Peter Tomlinson (London, Melbourne: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 71.

1149 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 14, Teaching concerning the most holy Sacraments of Penance and last Anointing, of Council of Trent 1551: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils. Vol. II, Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 703.

sins is that she believes that human beings can be restored to that perfect and holy condition by baptism. But ultimately the dividing line between sins depends on “the definition of the priest who is successor to the apostles and has the power of forgiveness of sin and the nature of the purpose to be served.”¹¹⁵⁰

The Roman Catholic Church classified the conditions of sin in three forms: The first condition is bad conduct; that it is conduct and a heart that does not conform to the will of God. This is a breach of the law of God, ethics and the authoritative commandment of the Church. Second condition is its intention; if the sinner is conscious of his bad conduct it becomes a sin but if not, it is not a sin. Lastly it must be “freely agreed sin.” In other word even though it is bad conduct and intentional sin it can not be sin if the sinner does not freely agree to commit the sin. If the sinner knowingly commits sin but is coerced by external forces; as in situations of oppression by authorities, it is not a sin.¹¹⁵¹

With regards to penance, Rahner, classified sins into three forms based on the effects of sins: firstly, “the juridical-ethical or moral approach.” In it sin is considered “a transgression of the divine law.” The second is called the “end-of-time or eschatological approach.” And finally it is from the point of view of grace that “the person who sins destroys the life which he has received in baptism; he expels the Spirit from his innermost being and destroys the seal which he received in baptism.”¹¹⁵² But all three, according to Rahner, correspond necessarily to the very nature of sin and have “the same value in practice for a dogmatic proof in a particular

1150 Loraine Boettner, op. cit., 264.

1151 H.V.S. Eck, *Sin: The Oxford Library of Practical Theology*, 61-85.

1152 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 24-25.

question, and one can take the place of the others.”¹¹⁵³

In general Roman Catholic theology has taught that the sins of a Christian are forgiven by baptism so he lives a holy life but in spite of this teaching Christians have committed sins continuously and it is a menace to the justified and regenerated; hence the necessity for penance and beginning of Christian repentance.

On original sin, the Council of Trent wrote that by the transgression of Adam he was lost his “holiness and righteousness in which he had been established,” and his transgression of disobedience against the law of God incurred the wrath and indignation of God, and his original sin transmitted to all mankind by propagation.¹¹⁵⁴ But through baptism man can have remission of sin which he lost in Adam.

The Council of Trent disclaimed the merits of good works of man without the grace of God and the merits of free will without grace through Jesus Christ. But it also disclaimed salvation by the grace only without free will. It never underestimates the free will of man in soteriology. It shows that even though man lost his righteousness he does not lose his free will all.¹¹⁵⁵ Sin can be defined in other words as an action of man and the will of man that destroys and hurts the relationship with God by offending the will of God. Sin is man’s action that resists the justice of God therefore penance which is the counterpart of sin is an action of man to bring about the restoration of the justice of God.¹¹⁵⁶

1153 Ibid., 25.

1154 Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, 262.

1155 Ibid., 263.

1156 Andrew Cuschieri, *op. cit.*, 131.

Consequently the Roman Catholic Church rejects justification by faith alone because she acknowledges the value of cooperation works of human beings in soteriology. Moreover, good works in her theology are not fruits of justification but have their own independent role in soteriology. So the Roman Church anathemised the saying “that justification once received is not preserved and even increased in the sight of God through works; but that these same works are only signs of justification, not the cause of its increase.”¹¹⁵⁷ To the church sin is the free act of man against God and as such is guilty in the presence of God. Therefore penance which is the means of restoration of the grace of God is necessary for salvation in Catholic theology. So penance is the action of man and at the same time it is the action of God upon men that forgives sin.¹¹⁵⁸

The Roman Catholic Church forgives post-baptismal sins through the act of penance.¹¹⁵⁹ The process starts with contrition and confession and is completed with satisfaction. The sacrament of penance forgives both mortal sin and venial sin and through forgiveness of sins the penitent restores lost merits and he receives a special grace to avoid sin in the future. In the Roman Catholic Church however the supreme judge of sins is the priest and he has the power of forgiveness of the post-baptismal sins of penitents in the sacrament of penance. The priest judges the kinds of sins, and the level of penance and method of carrying it out arbitrarily. The reason why he imposes penance is that even though he has the power of forgiveness of sins he has no power of abolishing penalty; so to be rid of sin’s penalty he imposes penance to

1157 Henry Bettenson, op. cit., 263.

1158 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 4.

1159 H.V.S. Eck, *Sin: The Oxford Library of Practical Theology*, 167-175.

penitents.¹¹⁶⁰

On the basis of Matt. 16: 19 and John 20: 21-23 the Roman Catholic Church asserts that she has the apostolic succession and is entrusted with the power of forgiveness of sins from Christ, therefore the priests as her servants have the power of forgiveness of sins. As a result, all Roman Catholic Christians must confess their sins to a priest at least once a year.¹¹⁶¹ If the penitent omits one of them his confession is, then, meaningless. So he must confess his sins in detail and openly. But exegesis of these verses must be interpreted figuratively rather than literally because these verses are connected with the preaching of the word of God.

The interpretation of the Roman Catholic Church concerning of Heb. 6:4-6, Mt. 12:12 and 1Jn 5:16 on unforgivable or irremissible sin is different to the ideas of the Reformers because all sin can be forgiven by the sacrament of penance since there are, in fact, no unforgivable sins in its theology. Although, for the Roman Catholic Church as well as Calvin, these sins are not any particular kind or class of sins but rather the state of the heart of sinners towards God.

Actually, examination of the passage that seems to refer to an irremissible sin suggests that the emphasis is not on any particular class of grave fault, but upon the obduracy and hardheartedness of the sinner, who is unwilling to seek pardon and reconciliation with God.” And “it is not the sin itself that is beyond pardon; rather the state of mind of the sinner makes it exceedingly hard for him to ask for pardon, and to be again converted to God.¹¹⁶²

1160 Mark Searle, op. cit., 190-191; Austin Flannery, ed. *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents: Vatican Council II*, Vol. I (New York: Costello publishing company, 1975), 39-40.

1161 James Dallen, *The Reconciliation Community: The Rite of Penance*, 139.

1162 John M. T. Barton, *Penance and Absolution* (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), 28-29.

Therefore concerning unforgivable sins and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the Roman church has noted that these are not a reference to irremissible sins but “challenge and warning about obstinacy to God that contradicts baptismal commitments.”¹¹⁶³

In conclusion, penance is only one way to solve the problem of forgiveness of post-baptismal sins and the priest has the power of forgiveness of sins. And therefore irrespective of the kinds of sins and the levels of sins, penance ordered by the priest can forgive sins.

Recently the Roman Catholic Church was faced with the problems of the modern world so her hamartiology clashes with the problems of the twenty-first century: “our knowledge of the age of the planet; our sense of the evolution of the species; our growing knowledge of our continuity with other forms of life; sexuality and emotion; the inadmissibility of guilt without responsibility.”¹¹⁶⁴ But she solves this problem of sin with the position of the Council of Trent because she thinks that the latest official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church concerning sin is the teaching of the Council of Trent and it preserved reinterpreting the sins of modern times. Therefore in the light of hamartiology she never changes her position of the Council of Trent.

1163 Regis A. Duffy, op. cit., 234.

1164 Roger Haight, *Sin and Grace: Systematic Theology, Roman Catholic Theology Vol. II*, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 78-89.

4. 1. 3. Penance and Baptism

From the early Church baptism has been associated primarily with forgiveness of sin, reconciliation, conversion and penance. Especially in reconciliation baptism is a primordial principal.¹¹⁶⁵ On the basis of Matthew 18, the Roman Catholic Church pointed to the parallel between baptism and penance.

In Roman Catholic theology the cause and the necessity of the sacrament of penance are different from repentance of Reformed theology. In Roman Catholic theology penance is a valuable means or sacrament to take hold of grace and restore the penitent once again to the state of grace.¹¹⁶⁶ Sometimes Roman Catholic theology treats penance and baptism as a chain of events where baptism is the bestowal of new life and penance is restoration of the bestowed new life. Therefore they can be treated as the same in meaning to life.

It is thus also incorrect to assume that penance affects a man who has lapsed in the same way that baptism affects the unbaptized. True enough, penance as well as baptism is called a sacrament of the dead, and the seriousness of sin and of falling into mortal sin must be fully recognized; but it is given to those who have this ‘unindelible character.’¹¹⁶⁷

But in the Council of Trent the points of difference between the sacrament of penance and the sacrament of baptism are cleared. Baptism, in the Roman Catholic

1165 Robert J. Kennedy, *Reconciliation: The Continuing Agenda*, ed. Robert J. Kennedy (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 48.

1166 G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance*, tr. Robert D. Knudsen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 48.

1167 *Ibid.*, 50-51. In his footnote 23 of chapter 3, Berkouwer criticized that “Sacraments of the dead (penance and baptism) are distinguished from sacraments of the living (the other five). The former effect justification; the latter increase grace which is already present. Trent said that both of these were functions of the sacraments, but later theologians arrived at the above distinction.”

Church, is grace that is given through Christ but penance is the decision of it through a priest. Characteristically, baptism occurs once and there is no repetition but penance occurs often and is repeatable. Baptism is for the unregenerated but penance is for those who have fallen after Baptism. Finally through baptism “we put on Christ and become in him an entirely new creature, gaining full and complete remission of all sins” but penance is a product of great weeping and labor, so that it is called “a laborious kind of baptism.”¹¹⁶⁸

Penance is “the response given by the baptized believer to a situation of mortal sin; it is manifested in a laborious ascetic process of penance, in order to recover that first of conversion and grace of baptism, through which the sinner is reborn by forgiveness and is accepted and welcomed into full communion with God and the Church.”¹¹⁶⁹

The justification which is obtained through baptism can be lost by committing sins. In other words, grace through Christ can be lost by apostate and mortal sins, which are fornication, adultery, wantonness, sodomy, theft, avarice, drunkenness, slander, plundering and so on. Those involved in these sins are “severed from the grace of Christ.”¹¹⁷⁰

1168 Norman. P. Tanner, op. cit., 704.

1169 Dionisio Borobio, *Sacramental Forgiveness of Sins: Forgiveness*, tr. Dinah Livingstone, ed. Casiano Floristán and Christian Duquoc; English language Editor. Marcus Lefébure. Concilium 184 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 97.

1170 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 6 of Council of Trent 1546: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils. Vol. II, Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 677.

The Roman Catholic Church accepts baptism as the first conversion and penance as the second conversion. Baptism is given freely to man from God and penance is brought about by works of penance by the penitent. The latter is called ‘a second raft after a shipwreck’¹¹⁷¹ and implies the restoration to the first status.

Nevertheless both baptism and penance play a more important role than other sacramental elements. Baptism is a means of forgiveness of original sins and all sins before believing in Christ but penance is a means of reconciliation with God whenever they fall into sin after baptism.¹¹⁷² By Baptism children are “snatched away from the dominion of the devil and adopted as children of God.”¹¹⁷³ In this baptism the Roman Catholic Church sees the victory of Christ against sin and by the baptism of Christ “the old man is crucified with Christ” so that we may serve sin no longer. And we are raised with Christ and live for this new life in the baptism. Through this belief the Roman Catholic Church emphasises the importance of one baptism for the remission of sins.

The Roman Catholic Church adopted the forgiveness of sins through baptism in the Creed of the Council of Trent in that “I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.”¹¹⁷⁴ This is an exceptional confession that was never mentioned in

1171 Norman. P. Tanner, Session 14, 711.

1172 Henry Bettenson, op. cit., 264.

1173 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Bull of Union with the Corps, Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence-Rome-1442: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils. Vol. I, Nicaea I to Lateran V* (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 576-77.

1174 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 3 of Council of Trent 1546: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils. Vol. II, Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 662.

the original form of Nicene Creed¹¹⁷⁵ and the Apostle's Creed. The Roman Catholic Church and Greek Orthodox Church promulgate this article to facilitate forgiveness of sin by penance which is concerned with sin after having received baptism in the Church. Therefore she argues that anyone who denies that the righteousness through Christ is applied to us by the sacrament of baptism becomes an anathema.¹¹⁷⁶ (Let him be an anathema).

On the basis of “unless a person is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” of John 3:5, the righteousness of Christ, who is the Son of God and our Savior, is applied to us by the waters of rebirth and we become adopted children.¹¹⁷⁷ For Roman Catholic theology baptism of water is used as an important means of salvation. In the sacrament of baptism, for her, water is not a metaphor but true and natural water because those who are baptised are not only obliged to be faithful but also to observe the whole law of Christ.¹¹⁷⁸ Baptism is necessary for salvation and even a baptism by priests in the state of mortal sins is also

1175 The original form of the Nicene Creed, as adopted at Nicaea, 325 and the Latin Version of Hilarius Pictaviensis, between 356 and 361 had had no “I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins (*Confiteor inum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum*) but *Formula Recepta Ecclesiae Orientalis* and *Formula Recepta Ecclesiae Occidentalis at Nicaea, 381* added it to original form of Nicene Creed later. See, Philip Schaff, ed. *Symbolum Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum: The Creed of Christendom, Vol. III*, 57-61; Philip Schaff, ed. *The Nicene Creed: The Creed of Christendom, Vol. I*, 24-29; Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, 24-26.

1176 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 5 of Council of Trent 1546: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils. Vol. II, Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 666.

1177 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 6 of Council of Trent 1546*, 672.

1178 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 7, Canons on the Sacrament of Baptism , of Council of Trent 1547: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils. Vol. II, Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 684.

effective.

Penance, as well as baptism, is, according to the Roman Catholic Church, instituted faithfully by Christ but in essence they are different sacraments. Baptism itself is not the sacrament of penance¹¹⁷⁹ and they have distinct roles in the sacrament.

But penance and baptism in Roman Catholic theology have an important relationship. If one is baptised, his sin that was committed before baptism is forgiven and he becomes a new man, yet the problem of post-baptismal sin is serious. Especially for mortal sins it is necessary for the forgiveness of sins to be tangible. As a result of this problem the Roman Catholic Church requires confession of sin and penance in respect of mortal sins, and furthermore it is not mere inward change but accomplished by external duty because she believes that this can prevent future sins. For this reason the Christian who is baptised confesses his sins to a priest regularly and the penitent will receive approval of forgiveness of sins from the priest in the sacrament of penance.

Calvin considered repentance as a process of a lifetime, but the Roman Catholic Church divided Calvin's term 'repentance' into baptism and penance; baptism is the ultimate decision or change of life and death to sin (*mortificatio et vivificatio*); penance is the action for forgiveness of post-baptismal sins. Baptism is based on the grace of God, but actually penance, although, like baptism, it presupposes the grace of God and the Cross of Christ, focuses on man's external attitude. Although the Roman Catholic Church has emphasised the internalisation of penance, her main interest is

1179 Henry Bettenson. op. cit., 265.

the external means of penance in relationship with the Church because she believes that by concentrating on the inward manifestation to sin one may be placed in danger of forgetting about the sin itself.¹¹⁸⁰ This is based on the ideal classification between penance and baptism. Consequently, penance is not included in baptism but it has a continual character of baptism even though it is dealt as an independent sacrament from baptism.

By the baptism of the Church infant and adult Christians are saved; Christians who are consecrated by the waters of baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity are saved.

The sacrament of baptism is consecrated in water at the invocation of the undivided Trinity-namely Father, Son and Holy Spirit and brings salvation to both children and adults when it is correctly carried out by anyone in the form laid down by the church. (*Sacramentum vero baptismi, quod ad invocationem individuae Trinitatis, videlicet Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti, consecratur in aqua, tam parvulis quam adultis in forma ecclesiae quocumque rite collatum proficit ad salutem.*)¹¹⁸¹

Furthermore, salvation through baptism can be restored by true penance even though sin has been committed. “If someone falls into sin after having received baptism, he can always be restored through true penitence. (*Et sin post susceptionem baptismi quisquam prolapsus fuerit in peccatum, per veram poenitentiam semper potest reparari.*)”¹¹⁸² For that reason, the relationship between baptism and penance in

1180 Dom Hubert van Zeller, *Approach to Penance* (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1957), 1-12.

1181 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Constitutions of IV Lateran Council 1215: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils: Vol. I, Nicaea I to Lateran V* (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 230.

1182 *Ibid.*, 230-31.

the Roman Catholic Church is obvious. As the fourth Lateran Council promulgated, the Church as an institution of salvation performs Eucharist and baptism, and by baptism one is saved and through penance the Church forgives sins after having received baptism.

In the Council of Trent, repentance, to turn from sin, to turn against sin, has been presented as a condition of preparation for baptism. In the Roman theology repentance and penance are different because in its theology repentance, as a turning from sin and turning to God, precedes baptism and baptism precedes penance. In other words, repentance must occur before baptism, which hates sins and detestation for the sake of Christ. (*Deus sibi propter Christum propitium fore, illumque tamquam omnis iustitiae fontem diligere incipient ac propterea moventur adversus peccata per odium aliquod et detestationem, hoc est, per eam poenitentiam, quam ante baptismum agi oportet*).¹¹⁸³ Consequently penance is a means of restoration of grace after having received baptism, and repentance and conversion, turning from sin and turning to God, are preliminary steps for baptism that is a means of salvation from God.¹¹⁸⁴

For that reason penance as a “second plank for the grace shattered in a storm” is necessary to the one who is baptised by Christ and wants to be restored to the grace of God. Surely this penance is different from repentance placed before baptism. “The repentance of a Christian after a fall is very different from repentance at baptism.”

1183 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 6 of Council of Trent 1546*, 673.

1184 Through this understanding of terms, we can clearly understand her definition of those terms. Repentance and conversion, in her theology, are attitude and mind to turn to God but penance is satisfaction and absolution by priests. Therefore both penance and repentance in their direction and on relationship with Church are clearly different because repentance emphasizes the action of man to God but penance focuses on the action of the priest to satisfy the penitents.

*(Christiani hominis poenitentiam post lapsum multo aliam esse a baptismali).*¹¹⁸⁵

Therefore penance can be called second repentance and second baptism.¹¹⁸⁶

Since it is so, penance or second repentance “includes not only ceasing from sins and detestation of them, or a humble and contrite heart, but also confession of them in the sacrament of penance, to be made with an open heart and in due season, to receive absolution by a priest, and also satisfaction by fasting, almsgiving, prayers and other devout exercises of the spiritual life,”¹¹⁸⁷ Penance is given variously according to circumstances of men because they have different ways of participation in the suffering of Christ from each other and their own crosses that they must bear are different.

According to the Second Vatican Council, by baptism men are grafted into the paschal mystery of Christ, receive the spirit of adoption as sons and called God as “Abba, Father.”¹¹⁸⁸ The sacrament of baptism is a starting point of the sacraments of the Roman Church and becomes a prerequisite of the sacrament of penance.

So, the first institutor of penance as a victor over sins, in Roman Catholic theology, is Christ Jesus. This penance is a means of receiving grace and reconciliation with God. Penance, as well as baptism, is a very important sacrament in the Roman Church because she believes that “the Church has both water and tears: the water of baptism, the tears of penitence.”¹¹⁸⁹ In “its innermost nature it (penance) is a

1185 Ibid. 677.

1186 Lawrence E. Mick, *Penance* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 18-19.

1187 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. Session 6, op. cit., 677.

1188 Austin Flannery, op.cit., 4.

1189 Austin Flannery, ed. *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents: Vatican Council II*, Vatican

complement of baptism.”¹¹⁹⁰

Both penance and baptism are necessary for salvation even though their essences are different in that baptism is a means of regeneration but penance is means of restoration to grace.¹¹⁹¹

4. 2. The Characteristics of Penance in the Sacrament

4. 2. 1. Contrition

For Roman Catholic theology the sacrament of penance is “a process of conversion,” and in penance both the Church and God play a decisive role; nominally in their different ways.¹¹⁹² Conversion is not a sudden event but a hard and intense process manifested through “an ordering of elements and a particular formal structure.”¹¹⁹³ Inward conversion is accompanied by the external form in penance and after passing many steps or elements, penitents reach the grace of God. For Roman Catholic theology internal and external conversion are parts of the same whole. Nevertheless, principally it emphasises the priority of internal conversion as an essence and priority. For that reason, conversion is “the pivot and centre of penance

Collection Vol. II (New York: Costello publishing company, 1982), 36.

1190 International Theological Commission, “Reconciliation and Penance,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 51 (1985): 172. Regis A. Duffy, op. cit., 247.

1191 John M. T. Barton, op. cit., 103-104.

1192 Dionisio Borobio, op. cit., 97.

1193 Ibid., 98.

from the subject's point of view,¹¹⁹⁴ and authenticity of penance depends on it. And by it "penitential confession and satisfaction become authentic" because for it conversion is its embodiment, "its personal, ecclesial visible shape and its sacrament."¹¹⁹⁵

The sacrament of penance, according to the Council of Trent, is defined: it requires contrition and repentance. And on the basis of Jn. 20:22ff Christ established this sacrament, which consists of contrition, confession, satisfaction as roles of penitents and the absolution of priests. A penitent must enumerate items and the kinds of sins and confess what situation he committed the sins in. The forgiveness of sin confessed is not only a proclamation of the priest of forgiveness of sins but also a judgment which takes effect on the forgiveness of sin as juridical judgment of the judge. Finally satisfaction is the punishment of sins and it helps the penitent to break the habit of evil and has the effect of prevention in that he sins no more.

The Roman Catholic Church has classified penance into steps concretely. The first step is reflection about what his fault to God and neighbors is, and looks at his state. The second step is contrition; that he sorrows for his sin and repents of his sins, for the glory of God. The Roman Catholic Church classifies it into contrition (*contritio* for sorrow in general) which is sorrow that is for the glory of God and attrition (*attritio*, or *contritio imperfecta*) which is sorrow from fear of the penalty of sins.¹¹⁹⁶ Generally the Roman Church regards contrition as a principal element of

1194 Ibid., 99.

1195 Ibid.

1196 Bernhard Poschmann, *Penance and the Anointing of the Sick*, tr. and revised Francis Courtney (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), 198; For more information of differentiation between

penance but attrition is the least condition of penance.¹¹⁹⁷ The third step is resolution; that resolves to sin no more and strives towards the life of a Christian in its fullness.

The fourth step is confession to a priest. Although the sinner might feel remorse and confess to God, if there is no confession to a priest, it is not a true confession. Sins in Reformed theology are confessed in the presence of God, whereas sins in the Roman Church are confessed before a priest. Priests have argued that repentance is not useful without confession before priests because they alone received this power from Christ. One can not imagine any forgiveness of sins without this step where the penitent confesses their sins one after another, fully and truly before God.

The fifth step is satisfaction and absolution. Satisfaction is given to penitents according to his circumstance and the degree of sins. And the penitent is forgiven through the absolution of the priest but only when he hears the absolution of the priest and comes out from confessional is he forgiven. The final step is compensation. The idea of compensation is based on the church's ecclesiology: that is, through baptism, according to her ecclesiology, penitents become children of God and a member of the holy Church.¹¹⁹⁸ Therefore sin is not only in relation to God but also with the Church and neighbors because through the sin, the sinner broke the relationship with God and brought disgrace on both church and neighbors. Since The second Vatican Council,

contrition and attrition, see, 202-09.

1197 Mark Searle, *op. cit.*, 195.

1198 A. H. Dirksen, *The New Testament Concept of Metanoia*, Diss. of St. Charles Seminary, Carthagen, Ohio. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1932. Through his dissertation he sustained Roman Catholic position that contrition, confession and satisfaction are supported by OT, NT, and Church history. But the problem of his position is started from the misinterpretation of Scripture and dependence on Catholic tradition.

the Roman Catholic Church has emphasised the communal aspect of the sacrament of penance rather than the personal aspect.¹¹⁹⁹

In general, Reformed theology considers self-examination, contrition,¹²⁰⁰ decision and confession as one in repentance but the Roman Church is not satisfied with this idea of Reformed theology. Penance is a means of reconciliation with God and by this the Christian is given a clear conscience.

Furthermore contrition is “made perfect by charity.”¹²⁰¹ Contrition properly so styled is motivated by the love of charity and perfect contrition, not attrition, “brings about forgiveness of all sin whether mortal and venial.”¹²⁰² But attrition has two aspects that firstly, it is insufficient to justify a man and secondly, it is “sufficient to obtain justification in and with the help of the sacrament of penance.”¹²⁰³ Nevertheless it can not effect essential change in sinners because it is fundamentally different to contrition with the starting point being fear of punishment.

Contrition is “a grief for and detestation of the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin in the future.” So, for pardon of sin sorrow is necessary because, the church believes, it is linked with and is a pre-condition to receiving the mercy of God. Contrition, according to John M. T. Barton, has four characteristics: “it must be

1199 Regis A. Duffy, *op. cit.*, 242-48.

1200 Following of scholastic distinction Trent distinguished between contrition (sorrow for sin motivated by the love of God) and attrition (whose motivation was less the love of God than fear of punishment).

1201 Bernhard Poschmann, *op. cit.*, 198.

1202 John M. T. Barton, *op. cit.*, 54-55.

1203 *Ibid.*, 55-56.

sincere, interior contrition,” “it must be a *supernatural* sorrow,” “the sorrow must be supreme in so far as the penitent should persuade himself that sin is the greatest of all evils,” and “sorrow must be universal, that is, it must extend to all mortal sins” and to all venial sins,¹²⁰⁴ adding that the submission of sinners to ecclesial penance is evident proof of true contrition.¹²⁰⁵

Therefore the Council of Trent declares that contrition “includes not only ceasing from sin, the resolve of a new life, but also a hatred of the old in accordance with the words.”¹²⁰⁶ But attrition which is an imperfect contrition, according to the Council of Trent, does not “make a person a hypocrite and even more a sinner, but that it is even a gift of God and impulse of the holy Spirit, not yet actually dwelling in a penitent, but only moving him, helped by which he prepares himself for a path towards justice; and although it cannot of itself and without the sacrament of penance lead the sinner to justification, yet it disposes him to beg and obtain the grace of God in this sacrament of penance.”¹²⁰⁷

Reformed theology puts emphasis on confession of sins before God in the doctrine of repentance but for Roman Catholic theology confession of sins is not at the core of penance. Rather the cores of penance are contrition and satisfaction

As an initial approach to penance, the Second Vatican Council requires a contrite heart.¹²⁰⁸ The word *μετάνοια* is chosen to explain the contrition needed in the

1204 Ibid., 60-62.

1205 Peter Riga, op. cit., 108.

1206 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 14*, 705.

1207 Ibid.

1208 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Second Vatican Council-1962-1965*, op. cit., 1048.

sacrament of penance, that is, “heart-felt sorrow and detestation of sin, with a firm purpose not to sin again” and a profound change of the whole person. Penance has an interesting positive aspect to it in as much as contrition is different from remorse and regret because contrition is “forward-looking rather than backward looking” and “more concerned with others, God, than with oneself and one’s feeling.”¹²⁰⁹ Sorrow that is not aided by the Holy Spirit is not true penance.

One of the most important aspects in the sacrament of penance is a change in those who have sinned and it is possible through contrition because true contrition requires “the intention to amend lifestyle,”¹²¹⁰ but its concern regarding penance is more concentrated on external proof than inward change.¹²¹¹ And penance requires visible works that have been assigned by a priest rather than an inward change of heart or changing of direction from the heart. This has come about by the misunderstanding in the interpretation of *paenitentiam agite*. She emphasises ‘*agite* or doing’ in the penance.

4. 2. 2. Confession

In this step confession of sin before a priest is done by the penitent who confesses his sins in detail. As mentioned the penitent must enumerate items and kinds of sins and confess the situation in which he committed the sins. From this step the penitent first confesses his sin before a priest and declares his sins to others. In

1209 Mark Searle, op. cit., 195.

1210 John M. T. Barton, op. cit., 12.

1211 Ibid., 14.

this step, the subjectivity of contrition in penance changes to the objectivity of confession in penance. Actually the problem of penance in the Roman Catholic Church comes out of this element of penance.

When Christians reach the age of discernment they are bound to go to confession to see a priest at least once a year and individually must confess all their sins in a faithful manner.¹²¹²

By the institutionalisation of confession in the Roman Catholic Church, reconciliation with the Church means reconciliation with God. This being so the Church is both the subject of reconciliation and at the same time the object of reconciliation.

One of reasons why the Roman Church requires a full confession before a priest is that “it is clear that priests could not exercise judgment in cases where there were unknown factors, nor could they have preserved fairness in imposing penances if the faithful had declared their sins only in general.”¹²¹³ In other words, a priest is a human being and as such can not know the penitent’s sins without hearing his confession.

The content of confession is the mortal sins which he has committed after baptism which must be confessed to a priest, including sins of thought; because these sins seriously damage the soul and cause them to be children of the wrath of God. Venial sins are forgiven without confession because “we are not cut off from the grace

1212 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Constitutions of IV Lateran Council 1215*, op. cit., 245.

1213 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 14*, op. cit., 706.

of God as a result of them.¹²¹⁴ In the confessional the penitent's attitude must be open and humble, and without forgetting any sins, he must confess his mortal sins, which will be pardoned by the faithful endeavor of Christ. But absolutely this presupposes the confession before God.

Confession is not just a meaningless list of sins and the penitent must give reasons why he committed the sins because without such information, "the sins themselves are not being completely revealed by the penitents nor made known to the judges, and it is impossible for the latter to rightly estimate the gravity of the faults and to impose on the penitents the penance appropriate to them."¹²¹⁵

According to Roman Catholicism, the root of the sacramental confession is the law of God or the word of God but its manner of confessing to priests secretly is auricular confession.¹²¹⁶ Although it is known that private or secret confession to a priest alone (auricular) began after the sixth century, the Roman Church has argued that this is not a human invention nor did it begin with the fourth Lateran Council, but originates from the Bible and the early Church.¹²¹⁷ The Roman Catholic Church teaches that it is necessary for salvation and it has "always been observed by the Catholic Church from the start down to this day."¹²¹⁸

The Council of Trent as well as the fourth Lateran Council insisted on auricular

1214 Ibid.

1215 Ibid., 707.

1216 Ibid., 712.

1217 Ibid., 707.

1218 Henry Bettenson, *op. cit.*, 265.

confession at least once a year.¹²¹⁹ Through this auricular confession the Roman Catholic Church put Christians in fetters, claiming that all baptised believers must go to confessional at least once a year and confess all of their sins to a priest instead of confessing to God.

The Roman Catholic Church sets the place of confession: normally a church, public oratory and semi-public oratory, according to Canon law, are the place for confession.¹²²⁰ Except in special cases, believers must go to the prescribed place to make a confession. In penance only the confession needs an arranged place because of the need to meet a priest for confession. The place of confession is part of the requirement in the sacrament of penance because the confessional is necessary to confession.

The Roman Catholic Church, in an unavoidable case, allows group confession. This is not an ordinary custom, for this reason the Church encourages avoidance of it where possible. Although through group confession penitents receive communal absolution the Roman Church requires auricular confession for grave sins. This indicates that it is auricular confession-oriented.

In the confession of the Roman Church, penance is intimately related to the priests. Confession presupposes “in the penitent the willingness to open his heart to God’s minister,”¹²²¹ because it presupposes that the priest has the power of the key of

1219 The Council of Trent proclaimed that the best time for penance is the season of Lent. Cf. Hugh Connolly, *Sin: New Century Theology*, 51.

1220 Austin Flannery, ed. *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents: Vatican Council II*, Vatican Collection Vol. II (New York: Costello publishing company, 1982), 51. See, footnote 44.

1221 *Ibid.*, 38.

the kingdom of God, that is judgment of the forgiveness of sins and the retention of sins.

Public confession was prevalent in early the Christian Church, where the Church may have required a public compensational period for some grave sins. Public confession of the early Church can be called a “penance of excommunication” because it entrenched the idea of acceptance of sinners to the Church again. But gradually it evolved into individual and private form.

Public confession and auricular confession of the Roman Church, even though both of them confess before a human being, are essentially different because public confession is before neighbors who has been hurt by the penitent and this is admittance about their sin before the community after they have confessed their sins before God. Auricular confession however happened before a priest alone. Auricular confession is different from the repentance and prayer of the Bible in method and in the object of confession.¹²²²

In the Roman Catholic Church confession and public mass are not carried out together because confession must be carried out privately and seriously so principally, confession is auricular.¹²²³

1222 Loraine Boettner, op. cit., 207. Mt. 6:6, 12. Jesus teaches us the method and the object of our prayer and confession of sin that the place for prayer is not a confessional but inner room, the method of prayer is not before priest but “secretly,” and the object of prayer is not a priest but God alone. Lk. 18:13. Jesus criticizes the prayer of a Pharisee but speaks well the prayer of tax-collector. This prayer of tax-collector shows the method and the object of prayer and repentance.

1223 *Responsa ad dubia proposita: Notitiae* (37 No 417-420 Jun-Jul, 2001) 259-260. cf. John Paul II, *Misericordia Dei* (7th of April, 2002)

It is believed that confession is a dialogue and encounter with Christ,¹²²⁴ not a counseling session, and prayer becomes an important instrument within this dialogue. But this is a psychological approach to it, and the difference between confession and counseling is that both penitent and priest stand together in the presence of God as instruments, where both use prayer as a language. In confession each of them prays for the other but because it is for God it is just dialogue or conversation which uses the form of prayer. Actually confession of sin before a priest or auricular confession is not true biblical confession and confession to a priest is a corruption of true confession to God; in the Bible the only source of forgiveness of sin is God and His Son Jesus. Therefore the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church are different from that of the Reformed Church and its interpretation of the Bible.

4. 2. 3. Satisfaction

Usually penance requires three factors for entire and perfect remission of sin which are contrition,¹²²⁵ confession, and satisfaction. The Roman Catholic Church argues however, that they are not sacramental distinctions but three acts performed by a penitent. Of these three only contrition and confession are recognised in Reformed theology. The dimension of satisfaction is a unique idea of Roman Catholic theology.

1224 Mark Searle, op. cit., 202.

1225 David. N. Power, *Contrition with Tears: Church and Theology, Essays in Memory of Carl J. Peter* ed. Peter C. Phan (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 215-40. David. N. Power explains and argues the role and import of contrition in the sacrament of penance of Roman Catholicism. He emphasizes the necessity of contrition in penance. He adds that the cause of contrition is a “proper appreciation of the holiness of God.”

The starting idea of satisfaction, according to Roman Catholic theology, is related with incarnation of Christ as a satisfaction of the wrath of God.¹²²⁶ But in satisfaction she emphasises the satisfaction by man. She requires the external discipline of the penitent for satisfaction in addition to satisfaction by Christ. This shows that the Roman Catholic Church is no longer an inward religion, but an external religion and not a religion of faith but a religion of human meritoriousness.¹²²⁷

Principally the idea of satisfaction began from her idea of sins; that sin is an offence against God and breaks our friendship with God, neighbors and Church because they are also injured by our sins. For Roman Catholic theology, the meaning of satisfaction can be classified as two kinds; restitution, which gives back goods that have been stolen and damaged, and satisfaction which is in the case of an offence and injury to another person. So, penance must have the factor of reconciliation with the Church and neighbors as well as with God. For that reason satisfaction is generally a means of reconciliation and a requirement of reconciliation. It requires the restoration of the relationship with others by a suitable means chosen by the priest.

As such, the priest presents satisfaction to penitents as a means of reconciliation between penitents and the church, penitents and neighbors. Although by confession the penitent is forgiven of sins there still remains the damage that he did to God and neighbors, and as such the penitent can restore the broken relationship to the priest's

1226 John M. T., Barton, op. cit., 80.

1227 The Roman Catholic Church argues that emphasis of Trent on satisfaction is a product of consideration against the emphasis of the Protestant Reformation; true satisfaction is in Christ only, but in the Roman Catholic Church satisfaction is still necessary in salvation. M. E. Brinkman, *Sacraments of Freedom. Ecumenical Essays on Creation and Sacrament, Justification and Freedom* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1999), 110-112.

satisfaction by doing good works, ascetic practice, self-denial, amnesty, attending mass, prayer, reading the Bible, fasting and almsgiving. The Roman Catholic Church adds some kinds of concrete examples of satisfaction that “helping out a poor person; visiting the sick; making a deliberate effort to understand and sympathise with the person against whom one has sinned; taking positive steps to remedy a situation which is conducive to sin; scripture reading; prayers to be said daily over a period of time; renunciation of specific luxuries for a prescribed period; using time or money for some charitable purpose.”¹²²⁸ In the Roman Church satisfaction, as one factor of the sacrament of penance, is necessary. The purpose of this satisfaction shows the gravity of sins and effects of it to the penitent.

As Christ became satisfaction for our sins, according to the Council of Trent, we need to become partakers in satisfaction for our sins. We can see the insufficiency of the atonement of Christ and human cooperation as related with the forgiveness of sins in Roman Catholic theology. The satisfaction of the Roman Catholic Church is the responsibility of Christians because her satisfaction becomes their merits. And she argues that “with his cooperation we can do everything in him which strengthens us.”¹²²⁹ To be sure, the Council of Trent does not totally neglect the power of expiation of Christ.¹²³⁰ But even though the Roman Church says that she depends on the merit

1228 Mark Searle, *op. cit.*, 204-05.

1229 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 14*, *op. cit.*, 709.

1230 *Ibid.* According to the Council of Trent, she highly evaluates the value of the merit of Christ that “Thus we have nothing of which to boast; but all our boasting is in Christ, in whom we live, in whom we merit, in whom we make satisfaction and *yield fruits that will benefit repentance*, which have their worth from him, are offered by him to the Father, and through him are accepted by the Father.”

of Christ she does not exclude the cooperation of man in satisfaction. The Roman Church emphasises not only the merit of Christ but also the cooperation of “the priest of the Lord” who has the key for releasing and binding because through satisfaction the Roman Church seeks to emphasise the validity of satisfaction and the role of priests. Nevertheless the Roman Church has asserted that she has no intention to obscure and to diminish the merit and satisfaction of Christ.¹²³¹

Satisfaction includes not only the judgment of the priest and volunteering will of the penitent but also God’s judgment through temporal affliction¹²³² so that satisfaction includes temporal sufferings of man and punishment by God. In this one may regard the problem of man as God’s satisfaction.

The Roman Catholic Church denies an assurance of salvation and conviction of eternal life. Therefore Roman Catholic Christians have no conviction of redemption through Christ; they must depend on priests and the Roman Catholic Church continuously because the absolute power and standard of their salvation depends upon the Roman Catholic Church.

Through the suffering of satisfaction, penitents can participate in the Passion of Christ.¹²³³ Satisfaction, for her, is the true fruit of repentance and loyalty to the justice of God,¹²³⁴ but satisfaction can be adapted differently even for the same sins because the priest must consider the ability of the penitent and his circumstances,¹²³⁵ which is

1231 Ibid.

1232 Ibid.

1233 Austin Flannery, ed. op. cit., 36-7.

1234 Andrew Cuschieri, op. cit., 134.

1235 Ibid., 137.

why the Roman church imposes various means of satisfaction, namely, suffering, mercy and charity and so on.

In Roman Catholic theology good works are not a duty and right of the justified by the grace of God but an important means to earn the reward of salvation and to obtain the merit of forgiveness of sins. In other words, good works as a compensation for sins is the cost of those sins and at the same time ensures protection against sins. Good works which are done over and above the requirements of satisfaction become merit; much the same as a positive balance in one's bank account, and as such serve to enhance the salvation of the believer and his relatives. In this manner good works as well as faith become means of salvation in the Roman Catholic Church.

This idea assumes the insufficiency of repentance of sin before God because in Roman Catholic theology temporal punishment for the offence to God still remains after the penitent confesses his sin before God and before a priest. It shows the insufficiency of forgiveness imputed to Christians by Christ because satisfaction requires human compensation and merit for guilt.

The voluntary acceptance or endurance of the penance imposed by a confessor, in order to compensate for the injury offered to God, and for the remission of the temporal punishment that may still remain, even after the guilt of the sin has been pardoned.¹²³⁶

The main purpose of satisfaction is eradication of bad habits and as a deterrent from other sins. Barton highlights the benefits of satisfaction in the position of the Council of Trent that firstly, satisfaction makes penitents know that “sin is the greatest of evils, and worthy of tremendous penalties,” second, it renders “the sinner more

1236 John M. T. Barton, *op. cit.*, 81.

cautious and vigilant, so that he is less likely to fall again into sin,” third, “it is a remedy for the remains of sins and helps to eradicate bad habits of sin that have been acquired,” and last, “it makes us like Christ who is the atonement made for our sins(1Jn 2:1), since we have a most sure pledge that: if we suffer with him...with him we may also be glorified”(Rom. 8:17).¹²³⁷

Satisfaction, according to the Roman Catholic Church, is a requisite factor to complete the sacrament of penance whose aim is the “improvement of life and repair of the damage” caused by sin; it is a real remedy for sins and contributes to renewal of life.

And satisfaction shows the completeness of true conversion which includes amendment of conduct and restoration of injury.¹²³⁸ In the theology of the Roman Catholic Church satisfaction has two kinds of outcomes, one is positive and the other is negative. The positive benefit of satisfaction is providing and protecting new life but the negative side is expiation and punishment of trespasses of the past. Satisfaction which they impose “should not only be aimed at protecting the new life and at being a remedy against weakness, but also be for the atonement and punishment of past sins.”¹²³⁹ For her the emphasis of satisfaction is not God’s wrath for past sins but rather on the direction of new life. Nevertheless in the sacrament of penance the actual emphasis of satisfaction is punishment for past sins.

1237 John M. T. Barton, *Penance and Absolution* (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), 85.

1238 George A. Kelly, ed. *Appendix-Text of the Rite of Penance: The Sacrament of Penance in Our Time* (Boston: the daughters of St. Paul, 1976), 146.

1239 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 14, Teaching concerning the most holy Sacraments of Penance and last Anointing, of Council of Trent 1551: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils*. Vol. II, Trent to Vatican II (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 709.

4. 2. 4. Absolution and Indulgence

The Roman Catholic Church holds that principally for the Christians the most total, meaningful and effective expression of forgiveness of sin is sacramental forgiveness.¹²⁴⁰ So, for her, sacramental forgiveness is “the symbolic culmination of existential forgiveness, the ecclesiological ‘certifier’ of divine forgiveness, the Christian needs for the forgiveness of the Church.”¹²⁴¹ As such, sacramental forgiveness is necessary in the full forgiveness of God, Church, human being and the world.

The last element of penance is absolution, which is emphasised much more than the other elements in the sacrament of penance because in this element the priest as a judge proclaims juridically the forgiveness of sins to the penitent. But nevertheless even absolution and indulgence in the Roman Catholic Church can not give “the assurance of salvation and the sense of spiritual security”¹²⁴² because they are not an assurance of salvation given by Holy Spirit in true faith.¹²⁴³

1240 Dionisio Borobio, op. cit., 96.

1241 Ibid.

1242 Loraine Boettner, op. cit., 265.

1243 M. E. Brinkman, *Sacraments of Freedom. Ecumenical Essays on Creation and Sacrament, Justification and Freedom*, 106-108; Cf. Inst., 3. 4. 13. The Roman Catholic Church has argued recently that Calvin admitted the private form of penance and “ministerial pronouncement of absolution” by a priest. But this is her misunderstanding of Calvin’s idea because Calvin’s idea about “confession to shepherd in Lord’s supper” is totally different with the idea of the Roman Catholic Church in that he wants to use this confession and Shepherd’s admonition for only admonition.

Forgiveness of sin by the righteousness of Christ Jesus in Reformed theology is compared with absolution and indulgence by the Church in Roman Catholic theology. But forgiveness of sin by God through Jesus in Reformed Theology shows perfection of forgiveness of sins whereas absolution by Christ in Roman Catholic theology shows imperfection of forgiveness of sins, rather she believes that indulgence by the Church can show the perfection of forgiveness of sins and conviction of salvation which is better than Christ's.

The Roman Church, like Reformed theology, teaches that turning to God is to turn to God with the whole heart but actually for her outward appearances are more emphasised than inward attitudes even though she says that “conversion must affect a man inwardly.”¹²⁴⁴ Absolution and indulgence are representative and formal external figures of forgiveness of sins.

Absolution is a sign of forgiveness of sin through the priest in true conversion to God. This is the final step of the sacrament of penance, and by this action of the priest penance is completed. This is especially a visible sign of the absolution of God and restoration of the broken covenant.¹²⁴⁵

The Roman Catholic Church has two positions about the absolution by a priest. Firstly, according to declaratory theory, the priestly absolution is “the authoritative expression of the forgiveness which has already been given by God alone,” and

1244 Austin Flannery, *op. cit.*, 38.

1245 *Ibid.*; K. Lehmann and W. Pannenberg, eds., *The Condemnations of The Reformation Era: Do They still Divide?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 58. The Roman Catholic Church has argued recently that the Reformers' disparagement of the sacrament, which is an outward thing, is caused by the Reformers' misunderstanding of God's wise ordinance.

secondly, the Church “does not indeed forgive guilt, but remits the eternal punishment or changes God’s conditional forgiveness of guilt into an absolute forgiveness.”¹²⁴⁶ Indeed, the Roman Catholic Church as a judge holds with both theories and as a result absolution is not only the authoritative expression of the forgiveness which has already been given by God alone but also remittance of the eternal punishment or changes God’s conditional forgiveness of guilt into an absolute forgiveness. It should be noted here that the most important aspect in this step is that only the priest has the power to declare and remit the sins of the penitent fully.

In the Roman Catholic Church absolution which is conferred by priests as a judicial act of judgment¹²⁴⁷ is a very important discipline, especially for heinous and serious sins. In particular, she declares that if one has committed heinous and serious sins, the penitent should go to a higher ranked priest because they have supreme power of absolution to grant absolution.¹²⁴⁸ Since A.D.1603, absolution is only available “orally in the presence of the penitents.”¹²⁴⁹ Therefore penitents must be in the presence of the priest to receive his absolution.

Indulgence, which is intimately related with the cause of Luther’s Reformation, does not forgive mortal sins but forgives sins which have been confessed to priests and which have received absolution from priests and is remitted by the Church by virtue of the merits of Christ and the saints. Indulgences presuppose that “sin must

1246 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 15.

1247 Bernhard Poschmann, op. cit., 201.

1248 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 14*, op. cit., 708.

1249 Andrew Cuschieri, op. cit., 198-99. So she never allows the artificial sound, i.e. phone, because for her the presence of penitents is important.

have a penalty either on earth or in purgatory, even after the sinner has been reconciled to God by penitence and absolution.”¹²⁵⁰ The Church can administer the benefit of these merits because through the Communion of Saints all Christians can share in the merits of Christ. This presupposes the martyrs have privileges that allow them to intercede with God on man’s behalf and can be used by the Church for sinners. Therefore she believes that the merits of saints and martyrs as well as that of Christ can shorten canonical discipline. She argues that indulgence sprung from the earliest times of the Church and it was approved by the authority of sacred Councils and was granted by Christ Himself.¹²⁵¹ However, in the Bible there is no teaching of indulgence of priest or man, but rather that sins are forgiven by Christ alone.

Paul IV revised the practical application of the traditional doctrine of indulgence and promulgated that “the Church’s object was not merely to help the faithful to make due satisfaction for their sins, but chiefly to induce them to a greater fervor of charity.”¹²⁵²

The Roman Catholic Church says that indulgence is not connected to the remission of sins but rather that it is connected to the penalty for what is already forgiven. Therefore the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church defines it as “the remission of the temporal pain due to sin,” and the Canon outlines it in more detail as: “indulgences are the remission before God of the temporal pain due to the already-forgiven sin of the guilty person.” And ecclesiastical authority adds that it “grants

1250 E. A. Livingstone, ed. *Oxford concise dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, New York : Oxford University Press, 2000), 288.

1251 Henry Bettenson, op. cit., 266.

1252 E. A. Livingstone, ed. op. cit. 288.

them from the treasury of the Church, for the living under the form of absolution and for the deceased under form of intercession.”¹²⁵³ It is not a commercial practice, according to the Roman Catholic Church, even though it was sold in medieval ages, but rather that it started from the love of God in the same sense as satisfaction.

The indulgence which is intimately related with absolution and which is an external proof of absolution stands in close connection with the sacrament of penance in Roman Catholic theology. In a narrower sense indulgence is “an authoritative remission of temporal punishment, valid before God, which the Church grants outside the sacrament after the guilt of sin has already been forgiven.”¹²⁵⁴ And for her it is not a divine institution, but church usage for penitential procedure and the prototype for it are an early medieval tariff penance and intercessory prayer which is means of relief of penance.¹²⁵⁵

Indulgence was granted for “no other purpose than for the remission of the temporal punishment due to actual sin.”¹²⁵⁶ But however the effect of it extended from this world to purgatory. What is more she controlled the living and the dead in purgatory through indulgence. There is no biblical proof to support this idea.

There are two kinds of indulgence in Roman Theology: the one is plenary,¹²⁵⁷ the

1253 Christian Duquoc, *Note on Indulgence: The Sacrament of Penance* (Glen Rock: Deus books Paulist Press, 1966), 76-77.

1254 Bernhard Poschmann, op. cit., 210-11.

1255 Ibid., 211.

1256 John M. T. Barton, op. cit., 138-139.

1257 Plenary Indulgence “remits the whole of the temporal punishment due to an individual’s sins.” And its efficacy depends on the perfection of the soul’s disposition and by it soul has profited to the full. E. A. Livingstone, ed. op. cit., 456.

other is partial indulgence. The former indulgence is known in the example of Urban II for the Crusaders, that it “remits, in the intention of him who grants the indulgence, the whole of the temporal punishment still remaining to any man who has the right disposition for gaining an indulgence,” and the latter remits “some, but not all, of the debt that still remains.”¹²⁵⁸

The Council of Trent added the last anointing to the sacrament of penance. And according to the Roman Church, penance is not finished by completing the stages of penance, from contrition to absolution, but must be accomplished throughout the Christian life. This means that the act of penance will not be finished in a defined period, and as such even when man is near death or has suffered through disease, the Church takes away the sins and “comforts and strengthens the soul of the sick person” through the last anointing (*extremae unctionis*). In this step ordained priests and bishops¹²⁵⁹ can help penitents as well. Anyone who holds beliefs contrary to this is condemned as anathema through the canon concerning the sacrament of penance.

4. 3. The Roles of Penance in Soteriology

4. 3. 1. Penance and Church

In the Roman Catholic Church penance, conversion, confession, reconciliation and repentance are used as a similar means. They are used differently or similarly. As

1258 John M. T. Barton, op. cit., 150.

1259 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Session 14*, op. cit., 710-11. The Roman Catholic Church translates presbyters (*presbyteros*) to priests or bishops.

mentioned above conversion and repentance are normally used with the same meaning and penance, confession and reconciliation are attributed a similar meaning. Nowadays penance and reconciliation are frequently used comparatively in the Roman Catholic Church. However each of the terms has uses with their emphases, on a dimension of conversion or confession or repentance. The modern Catholic Church rather uses reconciliation as a means of reconciliation with the Church than penance or doing penance that emphasises satisfaction and compensation but it does not change the meaning and emphasis in essence.¹²⁶⁰ For the church, reconciliation is a goal but penance constitutes external and interior actions and processes that facilitate sanctification.¹²⁶¹

Discussing the differences with Reformed theology, sometimes Roman Catholic theology calls conversion “conversion-confession” or “conversion-penance.” This may influence its sacraments in relation to traditional baptism-penance. Conversion-penance can be divided into two; one is sudden conversion which happens by the compelling grace of God over a short period and the other the work of a lifetime, requiring the devoted aspiration to a Godly life over a long time. It is valid to understand it rather as a vocation than a conversion because both of them, conversion-confession or conversion-penance, are not yet approved officially.¹²⁶²

1260 Robert J. Kennedy, op. cit., 47. Robert J. Kennedy classifies the meaning of penance and reconciliation more concretely. Reconciliation, according to Kennedy, is “the process of return of serious sinners to communion of the Church,” but penance is “the system of those actions and processes that facilitate the sanctification, moral transformation, and ongoing conversion of the Church and its members at every level of corporate and individual Christian life.”

1261 Ibid., 48.

1262 Adrienne Von Speyr, *Confession: The Encounter with Christ in Penance*, tr. A. V. Littledale

And conversion is understood as human acts inspired by love, external confession and satisfaction.¹²⁶³ This is called the anthropological dimension of conversion in Roman Catholic theology. Another aspect of conversion is the ecclesial dimension according to which the power of forgiveness of sin in the name of Christ was given to the Church and for that reason the Church, bishops and priests can bring about the salvation of man in the Church. This is a power given to the ecclesial community. The reconciliation presupposes reconciliation with the ecclesial community, which is a presupposition of salvation and a necessary requirement of redemption.

The relationship between the Church and Christ is likened to the relationship between bride and bridegroom. The bride has a responsibility and duty to keep herself holy till the coming of the bridegroom.

Through confession or penance penitents pertain to the church and they recognise that sin is not only a personal problem but also a corporate problem of the Church and the problems of sins can be solved by intercession of the Church or the mediatory office of the Church that has been given by Christ Jesus¹²⁶⁴ because the Church has received the Spirit, the mind of Christ and the power to bind and to loose.

A sign of the authenticity of the church, according to Roman Catholic theology,

(Freiburg: Herder; Edinburgh-London: Nelson, 1964), 112-113.

1263 William H. Woestman, *Sacraments, initiation, penance, Anointing of the sick: Commentary on Canons 840-1007* (Ottawa: Faculty of Canon Law, Saint Paul University, 1996), 219. Conversion can be defined: conversion of traditional meaning and penance as a process of life in the Roman Catholic Church.

1264 Adrienne Von Speyr, *op. cit.*, 87-88.

is the power and authority in the sacrament of penance. Through the sacrament of penance penitents become members of the Church and through Christ the Church distributes the grace of God to penitents. Therefore penance facilitates the readmission to the Church from being sinners. Penance brings about the restoration of the original state of wholeness that is lost by sin. Penance is situated in the heart of the Church's works and utterances. Therefore Holy Communion is connected with what we are, but a sacrament of penance is related to what the sinners do.¹²⁶⁵

One of the characteristics of penance in the twentieth century, according to James Dallen, is that it emphasises the social and ecclesial dimension of the sacrament of penance in comparison to previous centuries.¹²⁶⁶ At the Second Vatican Council as well as Trent, the main purpose of penance is reconciliation with God and the Church.¹²⁶⁷

Reconciliation with God, according to the Roman Catholic Church, is impossible without reconciliation with the Church; that is, there is no reconciliation with God without reconciliation with the Church¹²⁶⁸ “which is performed through the confession and penance of the sinner.” Therefore reconciliation with the Church is an infallible

1265 Ibid., 96. Holy Communion is related to identity of sinners in that through Holy Communion the Christian is participating in the work of Christ and in the Christian community, but penance is related to positive action for a restoration of the relationship with God, Church, and community that is destroyed by sin.

1266 James Dallen, *Recent Documents on Penance and Reconciliation: Reconciliation: The Continuing Agenda*, ed. Robert J. Kennedy (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 107.

1267 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Second Vatican Council-1962-1965: Priests: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils. Vol. II, Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed & Ward and Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1047.

1268 William H. Woestman, op. cit., 219.

sign of reconciliation with God.

The Church is only an agent of salvation although it has emphasised the role of faith and the role of the grace of God because she believed that all the power of God is entrusted to the Church on earth. Therefore, the power of Christ that forgives sin and governs the universe is actually no more than a nominal idea in its theology. Through penance of sinners they take their place in Church and participate in her mission fully¹²⁶⁹ because penance is a restoration of the relationship with God, Church, and community as much as sin is the destruction of the relationship between them.

The Roman Church does not accept the individual's direct confession to God but instead of that presents confession through the Church¹²⁷⁰ believing that it is body of Christ, and in confession it alone has the power to bind and to loose that which is received from Christ. But the sacrament of penance of the Roman Catholic Church is not biblical in the strictest sense of the word. Rather it has evolved out of necessity in Church tradition.

The Church is an instrument of salvation; therefore one can be saved through the Church alone. (*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*). Outside of the one universal Church of the faithful “nobody at all is saved.” (*Una vero est fidelium universalis ecclesia, extra quam nullus omnino salvatur.*)¹²⁷¹ Only penance done through the Church brings about the possibility of an individual relationship with God because, she believes that

1269 Paul Anciaux, *The Ecclesial Dimension of Penance: The Mystery of Sin and Forgiveness*, ed. Michael J. Taylor (New York: Alba House, 1971), 160-161.

1270 Gabriel M. Nissim, *Communal Penance: a Liturgical Commentary and Catechesis: The Mystery of Sin and Forgiveness*, ed. Michael J. Taylor (New York: Alba House, 1971), 203-211.

1271 Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Constitutions of IV Lateran Council 1215*, 230.

the Roman Catholic Church is a unique organism for salvation. There is, therefore, no salvation and no forgiveness of sins outside of the Church, stretching the meaning of the term “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” to “*extra ecclesiam nulla remissio peccatorum.*”¹²⁷²

The Council of Trent, according to Rahner, used John 20 as the ground for the authority of the power of Church but Tertullianus and early Church fathers used the phrase ‘to bind and to loose’ of Matt 16 and 18 for the Church’s official attitude toward penance. Through the above scriptures it believes that the authority of Matt 18 was given to the Church and only through the Church can sinners be reconciled with God.

4. 3. 2. Penance and Priest

Concerning the interpretation of John 20:21-23 as the source on authority of the Catholic Church regarding the remission of sins according to the promulgation of the Council of Trent, it is” to be understood that they have the power of remitting or retaining sins in the sacrament of penance.”¹²⁷³ Officially she has not interpreted these verses as the authority to the preaching of the Gospel but instead this authority of preaching, John 20:21-23 has been used to justify her power of remitting sins. Therefore the church condemned the interpretation of Reformed theology; that it is the power of preaching the word of God and of proclaiming the gospel of Christ. The

1272 Peter Riga, *Sin and Penance: Insights into the Mystery of Salvation* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1962), 108-116.

1273 Henry Bettenson, op. cit., 265.

bishop, according to the liturgy of Hyppolitus, has the power which can loose every bond of evil in virtue of Christ's authorisation to his apostles.¹²⁷⁴ The absolution granted by the priests, according to Mark Searle, is a product of twelfth and thirteenth centuries. After that time the Roman Catholic Church changed the focus of the sacrament of penance from penitent-centered to priest-centered.¹²⁷⁵

In Roman theology, in fact, all power to loose and to bind lies with the priests who are successors of Peter, the Apostle. According to her beliefs, after the resurrection of Christ he sent his Spirit to his Apostles so that "they might have the power to forgive sins or to retain them."¹²⁷⁶ Since that time, their successors have the power of preaching and remission of sins. Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter that what ever is bound on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever is loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven(Mt 16:29). The Church has believed this – see his sermon in Acts 2:38, 'Repent, and baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins', and from there they argue succession to the priest of today; giving priests of the Church, as successors of the Apostles, the power of forgiveness of sins and instituting penance as a means of remission of sins.

In the sacrament of penance the Roman Catholic Church has considered intercession through a priest as only instrument for it. It is mentioned as an office of

1274 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 10.

1275 Mark Searle, op. cit., 190-191.

1276 Austin Flannery, ed. *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents: Vatican Council II, Vatican Collection Vol. II* (New York: Costello publishing company, 1982), 35.

the Church but actually it is an intercession by the priest.¹²⁷⁷ “Nobody can effect this sacrament (Eucharist) except a priest who has been properly ordained according to the church’s key, which Jesus Christ gave to the apostles and their successors.” (*Et hoc utique sacramentum nemopotest conficere, nisi sacerdos, qui fuerit rite ordinatus secundum claves ecclesiae, quas ipse concessit apostolis et eorum successoribus Iesus Christus.*)¹²⁷⁸ Therefore the term Church-centered is nothing but priest-centered in the ministry of salvation.

On account of their positions and roles, priests in the Roman Church are called leaders of the Church, judges of criminal trials and successors of the Apostles.¹²⁷⁹ They are endowed with the power of the Church and have the key of binding and loosing. So, actually without them believers can not enter the kingdom of heaven. In the sacrament of penance the priest’s roles are more important than in other sacraments because he alone takes the initiative of the sacrament of penance.

Priests in the Roman Church occupy a special position; they are confessors and at the same time penitents, and givers of absolution and at the same time sinners. Their right of absolution is guaranteed by the authority and power that Christ gave to his Apostle. And in the disposition of sins there is a difference between the sins of priests and of parishioners; the sins of parishioners “spring up from neglect of what faith requires” but the sins of priests are focused on the danger of neglect of his obligation and office, by becoming wholly absorbed by his external functions.¹²⁸⁰ And

1277 Austin Flannery, *Ibid.*, 39-40.

1278 Norman. P. Tanner, *Constitutions of IV Lateran Council 1215*, op. cit., 230.

1279 Mark Searle, op. cit., 198-99.

1280 Adrienne Von Speyr, op. cit., 120.

the priest himself confesses and conducts himself following the rules of penance.

The position and role of the priest is passed down from Christ himself and he serves as Christ's vicar. The role of the priest in the sacrament of penance is as a representative of Christ that forgave sinners, and as such the priest guarantees their forgiveness of sins, their reconciliation with God and their true conversion. Thomas Aquinas described it articulately and Paul Anciaux summarised it briefly: "Christ as a doctor of souls acts in two ways: he calls to the sinner's interior through the Spirit; he completes through his minister what he has begun in the sinner's heart. The intervention of the minister 'brings about' and 'completes' the sinner's conversion so that there is full reconciliation with God and liberation from sin."¹²⁸¹ The priest is, according to Canon 978, "at once both judge and healer"¹²⁸² and he has a role of teacher¹²⁸³ in his ministry.

For her, priests are not more than a reflection of Christ himself. The relationship between confessor and penitent is "the echo of a definite relationship between God and the sinner."¹²⁸⁴ It can be questioned whether he actually trusts in the merit of Christ or whether he himself lives as another Christ, seeing that the priest regards the

1281 Paul Anciaux, *The Ecclesial Dimension of Penance: The Mystery of sin and forgiveness*, ed. Michael J. Taylor (New York: Alba House, 1971), 154-160.

1282 Andrew Cuschieri, op. cit., 241-42. Canon 978§1; In hearing confessions the priest is to remember that he is at once both judge and healer, and that he is constituted by God as a minister of both divine justice and divine mercy, so that he may contribute to the honour of God and the salvation of souls.

1283 Canon 978§2; In administering the sacrament, the confessor, as a minister of the Church, is to adhere faithfully to the teaching of the *magisterium* and to the norms laid down by the competent authority.

1284 Adrienne Von Speyr, op. cit., 178.

life of Christ as his own and that he substitutes as Christ who is head of the Church. The term “successor of the Apostle” shows that the origin of his power and authority is nothing but a definition of terms. In the presence of God, according to her, Christ is a penitent who has no sins and he stands for his people as a priest, like the human priest. Therefore, as a matter of fact, the priest is Christ Himself who is the penitent and God the Judge Himself.¹²⁸⁵

We find no examples of forgiveness of sins by a priest in any part of Scripture. Furthermore, it is neither the commandment of Christ, Apostles nor of prophets. If the Roman theology regarding forgiveness of sins by priests and their guarantee of absolution are biblical we would be able to find support for this in Scripture but the Bible regards priests as sinners who need forgiveness of sins and it presents the grace of God as the only means of forgiveness of sins, the Cross of Christ and faith in Christ who died on the cross and was resurrected from the dead for sinners.

This notwithstanding, the priest in the confessional, according to Roman church theology, has not only the power to declare sin but also to judge it through the assigning of penance.¹²⁸⁶ From this reasoning it can be seen that her religion is idolatry which is priest-centered, in as much as the priests have deceived their penitents, claiming power belonging only to Christ is theirs. Moreover they acknowledge the direct link between God and his people and place themselves as mediator between them. As a matter of fact the only mediator between God and man

1285 Ibid., 119-124. Norman. P. Tanner, ed. *Second Vatican Council 1962-1965: Decree of the Ecumenical Councils Vol. II*, 835-836, 873, 881, 882, 1046-1050, 1051, 1054.

1286 M. E. Brinkman, *Sacraments of Freedom. Ecumenical Essays on Creation and Sacrament, Justification and Freedom*, 112-114.

is Christ; there is no other medium for mediation between them. As such “they have religion, but not the religion of the Bible.”¹²⁸⁷

But the idea of Tertullianus on the function and ministry of the priest in the sacrament of penance is our idea and best response to the idea of Roman Catholic theology regarding it: “the decision (to forgive sin) belongs to the Lord, and not the servant, to God Himself, and not to the priest.”¹²⁸⁸

The penance and absolution by priests who commits the mortal sins, according to Roman Catholic theology, also valid in sacrament because they have power to discharge penitent’s sins as “ministers of Christ having the function of forgiving sins by the power of the Holy Spirit conferred in ordination.” So the Roman Church admits that penance and absolution by her priests are valid in any case absolutely. Besides which, the declaration by a priest is not a “bare service,” but it is treated like a judicial act pronounced by a judge (*sed ad instar actus iudicialis, quo ab ipso velut a iudice sententia pronunciatur*).¹²⁸⁹

The Council of Trent objected to the Reformers’ idea that we are forgiven by

1287 Loraine Boettner, op. cit., 204.

1288 Peter Riga, op. cit., 108.

1289 Norman. P. Tanner, *Council of Trent 1545-1563: Session 14*, 707; ; H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, eds., *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (Freiburg, 1965 and frequently), 1685: cited from K. Lehmann and W. Pannenberg, eds., *The Condemnations of The Reformation Era: Do They still Divide?*, 62-63. Recently, the Roman Catholic Church has argued that absolution by a priest is for the assurance of salvation and *actus iudicialis* is nothing but “an analogy,” that *actus iudicialis* is “comparable with human tribunal only in an analogous sense.” But she does not reach to heart of problem. The essence of the problem of absolution is neither “just as,” nor “as an analogy,” nor “in an analogous sense” but, according to Scripture, the power of absolution is based on Christ and Christians receive it through faith.

faith in Christ alone because she has the idea that forgiveness of sin by faith alone neglects the seriousness of salvation. The decisions of the Council of Trent had the intention of objecting to the Reformers' doctrine of the 'justification by faith alone' as the council of counter-Reformation.

In the broadest sense, the penance of the Roman Catholic Church, according to Boettner, includes "the act of confession on the part of the penitent," "together with the priest's pronouncement of absolution" and "the priest's assigning of certain works to be done by the penitent," but in the narrower sense, penance is exclusively connected with "the works assigned by the priest."¹²⁹⁰ As this is the case, the priest should be regarded as belonging to the center of penance.

4. 3. 3. Penance, Christ and Holy Spirit

Forgiveness of sin through penance, according to the Roman Catholic Church, belongs to the ministry of the Trinity and it is a single process even though it has many dimensions. Principally, the Roman Catholic Church does not overlook the importance of the Trinity in the sacrament of penance and the forgiveness of sins by God.

Conversion lays more stress on the active and strenuous participation of the human being moved by *the Spirit*; reconciliation is more concerned with the Church's mediation that continues the work of reconciliation done by *Christ*; and forgiveness is principally the merciful and gratuitous action of *God the Father* towards his lost child.¹²⁹¹

1290 Loraine Boettner, op. cit., 254.

1291 Dionisio Borobio, op. cit., 97.

Through penance God welcomes the penitent as a home-coming son and Christ returns the repentant sinner to his flock and the Holy Spirit sanctifies his “temple” and dwells in it fully. Avoiding grave and venial sins they arrive at the “full freedom of the children of God” and they have a chance to examine their consciences, bring to perfection the grace of their baptism and deeply conform to Christ and “become more submissive to the voice of the Spirit.”¹²⁹²

The initial purpose of penance was not to escape punishment but “to do the will of God and to give him glory.”¹²⁹³ So penance is accompanied by God’s prompting and man must follow the grace of God. This is a more positive approach to penance.

The view on sanctification of the Roman Catholic Church is qualitatively different from that of Reformed theology that sees “the way of salvation primarily under the aspect of God’s gracious disposition in Christ Jesus and under the aspect of unmerited forgiveness.”¹²⁹⁴

In the sacrament of penance the Roman Catholic Church does not neglect the roles of God and a relationship with Him because penance comes from the grace of God. As Rahner puts it, penance is a reaction to sin due to the grace of God.¹²⁹⁵ Therefore the grace of God is the starting point of the sacrament of penance because without the grace of God man is not able to know God and to find the way of forgiveness of sin.

1292 Austin Flannery, ed. *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents: Vatican Council II, Vatican Collection Vol. II* (New York: Costello publishing company, 1982), 39.

1293 Dom Hubert van Zeller, op. cit., 51.

1294 G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952), 27.

1295 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 3.

And by the grace of God man decides “to renounce the permanent menace of sin”¹²⁹⁶ and to do penance. The grace of God is a cause of penance which precedes all else.

Penance has two aspects; that of turning from evil and conversion to God, but the most important thing in penance is trusting upon the grace of God as a positive activity so it is based on charity rather than austerity. For that reason the Roman Catholic Church asserts that the authentic cause of true penance is a holy fear of offending God’s love and true penance is the surrender of the whole self to God and by true penance Christian recognises the hope and love of God. The notion of penance in Roman theology is derived from the notion of sin and the nature of justification but penance always requires cooperation with the grace of God for satisfaction and expiation.

It is important to study the relationship between penance and the word of God because in Reformed theology by the word of God sinners can turn to God. To hear the word of God, for her, is the beginning of penance. The sacrament of penance in Roman theology begins with the reading of the word of God by both confessor and penitent, choosing a message appropriate to the penitent. The word of God guides in the examination of the penitent’s conscience, leading the penitent to know the mercy and forgiveness of God. The word of God outlines God’s judgment and the sacrament of penance is “a total response to this message,”¹²⁹⁷ arousing faith and hope in God’s power to save. In Reformed theology the word of God which is concerned about repentance has the forms of proclamation through preaching and reading but in the

1296 Ibid., 4.

1297 Mark Searle, *op. cit.*, 203.

Roman Catholic Church it has only the form of reading.

For the Roman Catholic Church penance comes from the grace of God and union with Christ's passion.¹²⁹⁸ The Roman Catholic Church has argued that penance is based on the commandment of the resurrected Christ; receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained (Jn. 20:22-23).

The Roman Catholic Church does not accept the sufficiency of the blood of Christ and believes in the good works of man as a means in order to accomplish salvation. So, the Council of Trent clearly criticises justification by faith that is based on Christ's merit alone¹²⁹⁹ and the Roman Catholic Church has added external means

1298 Ibid., 25.

1299 "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sin for Christ's sake alone; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema" (Sess. VI, Can. 12). But First Vatican Council (1869-1870) promulgated the idea that "without faith it is impossible to please God and reach the fellowship of his sons and daughters, it follows that no one can ever achieve justification without it (faith), neither can anyone attain eternal life unless he or she perseveres in it to the end." But for her this faith means the faith under the guidance of the Roman Catholic Church and its origin is not only Scripture but also her tradition. Therefore the "justification by faith" in the Roman Catholic Church is different to that of Reformed theology. Norman. P. Tanner, *First Vatican Council 1869-1870*: 807-809. And although the Roman Catholic Church has discussed 'justification by faith' with the Protestant Church; *Lutherans and Catholicism Dialogue VII: Justification by Faith* (1983), *ARCIC II: Salvation and the Church* (1987), *English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee: Justification-A Consensus Statement* (1988/1992), *Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission: Church and Justification* (1994), *The Gift of Salvation* (1997), and *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999), she never abandons the idea of the Council of Trent but only tries to re-interpret it because the Council of Trent's standpoint on 'justification by faith' is still accepted as a stem of that idea in the Roman Catholic Church. M. E. Brinkman, *Sacraments of Freedom. Ecumenical Essays on Creation and Sacrament*,

through a priest for the Christian's salvation to it.

And penance, according to the Roman Catholic Church, assumes the will to be good and helps in the progress towards perfection. This is necessary to both those who are “not good already” and “good already”¹³⁰⁰ because the purpose of penance is to draw closer to God and a more perfect life. The church believes that “the Church has a vast treasury of unused merits which have been accumulated primarily through the sufferings of Christ but also because of the good works of Mary and the saints who have done works more perfect than God's law requires for their own salvation.”¹³⁰¹ It is believed that the merits of salvation rest not only on Christ but includes the merits of Mary and other saints.

The grounds for forgiveness of sins are based on “the suffering and death of Christ” and “the good works of Mary and the saints.”¹³⁰² This doctrine was begun by Pope Clermont VI (1342-1352) who proclaimed that “the Church has control of a treasury of merit, and that it can give to one believer the excess merits of another.”¹³⁰³ And Pope Sixtus IV expanded it to include the dead as well as to the living. This infers that “the sacrifice of Christ was not sufficient to atone fully for sin and that it must be

Justification and Freedom, 111-114 and See. Anthony N.S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic Protestant Dialogue: An Evangelical Assessment* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2002); Alister McGrath, *Justification by Faith: What It Means for Us Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988).

1300 Dom Hubert van Zeller, op. cit.,64.

1301 Loraine Boettner, *Ibid.*, 263.

1302 *Ibid.*

1303 *Ibid.*, 265.

supplemented to some extent by these good works.”¹³⁰⁴ Therefore our salvation depends on ourselves and our good works. Penance goes totally astray from repentance taught in Scripture; throughout the Bible there is no salvation through our merits or the merits of the saints, but rather it is connected totally to the grace of God.

In spite of the misunderstanding of the power and position of penance, the starting point of penance in the Roman Catholic Church is the whole life of Christ. For that reason, the passion of Christ and his suffering and resurrection are the beginning of penance in the Roman Catholic Church.¹³⁰⁵ The life of Christ becomes the life of the Christian, his death becomes the death of the Christian, his resurrection becomes our resurrection and his passion becomes our passion. And the extent to which we live in Christ is “the measure of our penance and our service.”¹³⁰⁶ Because Christ reconciles himself to the world we must reconcile ourselves with the world and because he died for sins and he lives for God we must die to sin and live for God.

Therefore in the first place the church’s penance is based on unity with Him in Christ’s mystical body. The Passion of Christ has strength in itself and it is “the basis of the effective power of the sacrament of penance.”¹³⁰⁷ As a result the Roman Church denounces the notion of the imputed grace of God taught by Reformed theology as fanciful and that individual confession to God is an illusion. Christ is the starting

1304 Ibid., 255.

1305 Eric Luijten, *Sacramental Forgiveness as a Gift of God: Thomas Aquinas on the Sacrament of Penance*, Publication of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht, New Series, Vol. VIII (Nijmegen: Stichting Thomasfonds, 2003), 172. Thomas Aquinas referred to the life of Christ with a one word “*Passio Christi*.”

1306 Dom Hubert van Zeller, op. cit., 101.

1307 Eric Luijten, op. cit., 172.

point and archetype of penance and all action which imitates Christ becomes penance. For the church the life of Christ is considered as our whole life and “our lives are part of it (Christ’s passion).”¹³⁰⁸ So the sacrament of penance originated from the whole life of Christ, his life, death, resurrection and, suffering and passion. Furthermore the sacrament is effectively demonstrated in Christ Jesus. This, she believes, is an essential element of the sacrament of penance. It is believed that” to suffer as a Christian in defense of a righteous cause serves to identify one with one’s Lord and Master.”¹³⁰⁹

As Christ suffered in his passion, we ourselves participate voluntarily in the discipline of suffering because we are followers of Christ and we are always to follow behind him.¹³¹⁰ The foundation of this idea of penance is identified with the life of Christ. The Roman Catholic Church presents participation through penance in the suffering of Christ as a token of being Christians because “Christ has suffered for our sins; we show our love for him by suffering with him.”¹³¹¹ As mentioned above, outwardly the Roman Church argues that all the merits in salvation are in Christ so there are no merits within us but this argument is no more than a front.

The actual heart of belief is that through participation in suffering one can acquire merit and this plays an important role in salvation, so as such voluntary mortification has an important role in penance as well. Penance puts off the corrupted old self and puts on the new life through Jesus Christ, which is why the Roman

1308 Dom Hubert van Zeller, op. cit. 101.

1309 Loraine Boettner, op. cit., 257.

1310 Dom Hubert van Zeller, op. cit., 23.

1311 Ibid., 14.

Church believes in the union between Christ and the Christian in soteriology. In the sacrament of penance our whole personality, which is intellect, mind, heart, affection, soul and body, are intimately connected with Christ. Through penance we die with Christ and live with Him.¹³¹² Because in Christ we are one with others and with God, we must reconcile with others and with God through penance that represents the life and death of Christ.¹³¹³

The Roman Catholic theology presents peace, perseverance, joy, humility and charity as the evidences of true penance and the soul finds them in penance as the reward and result of obedience, but they are not the aim of penance. And obedience alone can prove the quality of penance therefore “obedience is the most effective of all penances.”¹³¹⁴ They are different from the spontaneous upwelling service.¹³¹⁵ They come from Christ and are proof of true penance in Christ and are products of the ministry of Christ. Christians have them in obedience. Therefore in true penance, most of all, obedience is necessary.

But in the sacrament of penance the accomplishment of redemption and its proclamation are completed not by Christ, nor by the word of God, but by the Holy Spirit and by a priest of the Roman Catholic Church. Although theoretically in the Roman Catholic Church penance is based on the life of Christ and it is related to the passion of Christ and justification through faith in Christ as well as baptism, actually the effects and fruits of penance are caused by the Holy Spirit and it is more

1312 Ibid., 26-47.

1313 Ibid., 89-94.

1314 Ibid., 75-76.

1315 Ibid., 70-71.

intimately related with the Holy Spirit and sanctification which sanctifies the Christian than Christ Jesus and justification through Him. For her, it is true that the forgiveness of sin is the gift of the Holy Spirit; therefore, forgiveness of sin is, as Thomas Aquinas commented on Jn. 20: 22-23 says, “the fitting effect of the Holy Spirit.”¹³¹⁶ The reason why the Roman Catholic Church emphasises the ministry of Holy Spirit in penance is that she wants to relate it to the power of the key, to bind and to loose, because she believes that the gift of the Holy Spirit is associated with the power of the keys and the power of the keys is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit in a priest of the Roman Catholic Church.¹³¹⁷

Therefore the necessity of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of penance does not mean that one must receive the Holy Spirit for forgiveness of sin, but that the Holy Spirit makes us see and understand the things of God and the assistance of the Holy Spirit is necessary “in order to see the ministers of the sacraments as instruments in the hand of Christ.”¹³¹⁸ And principally the Holy Spirit can help others to be led to God, therefore, “the Church is the community of the Holy Spirit”¹³¹⁹ because the Holy Spirit dwells in the each member of the body of Christ. But, with respect to the sacraments and the ministers, the Holy Spirit plays an important role in aiding the penitent in his approach to the sacrament of penance: examination of conscience, understanding the meaning of the rite itself, in particular the instrumentality of the priest, reception of the absolution, and the new life in the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit

1316 Eric Luijten, *op. cit.*, 185.

1317 *Ibid.*

1318 *Ibid.*, 186-88.

1319 *Ibid.*, 217.

plays only a secondary role to the work of Christ.¹³²⁰

By the Holy Spirit one can be justified and by the Spirit one can live in the Spirit because “the gifts of the Spirit are given in order to adapt man in such a way that he can be moved by the divine instinct.”¹³²¹

Nevertheless comparatively, the position of pneumatology in the doctrine of penance of Roman theology is weakened. In Reformed theology the ministry of Holy Spirit is principally the cause of repentance but in Roman theology the starting point of penance is the life of God’s children who want to imitate Christ and earn the guarantee of the priests. Therefore the imitation of Christ is at the root of penance in Roman Catholic theology but the Holy Spirit plays a secondary role with the result that the work of the Holy Spirit is not the cause of penance but it leads penitents into the way of Christ.

It is a fact that the Roman Catholic Church has emphasised more the effect and necessity of penance than the repentance of the Reformed Church, but in the strict sense it is not by the Holy Spirit in Christ because priests of the Roman Catholic Church appropriate the role and position of the Holy Spirit Christ between the Church and penitents in penance. And the sacrament of penance is substituted for repentance by the power of the Holy Spirit.

For the Roman Catholic Church the sources of penance are God’s grace, tangible accomplishment of justifying faith and participation in Christ’s Cross. The penance in

1320 Ibid., 190-91.

1321 Ibid.

the Roman Catholic Church presents uniquely ‘a tangible accomplishment of justifying faith’ as one of the sources because she interprets *metanoia* of New Testament as only the change of attitude and she believes that it is always a matter of tangible things.¹³²² Therefore she changed the repentance of the New Testament, emphasising an inward change, to penance, emphasising exterior change.¹³²³

The study of faith in penance is important as in the Scripture faith and repentance accompanies each other and stands together. In Reformed theology through faith sinners can repent to God which necessitates that faith precedes repentance. But in Roman Catholic theology the position of faith and justification by faith are weakened and faith does not precede penance.

By both sacrament and faith, according to the Roman Catholic Church, Christians are united with Christ, therefore the sacrament of penance is the sacrament of faith and through this faith sanctification and justification may happen in the sacraments.¹³²⁴ The starting point of justification and sanctification in Roman Catholic theology, according to G. C. Berkouwer, is the same, but their inter-relationship in soteriology is obscure and cannot be divided articulately. So, according to Berkouwer,

1322 Karl Rahner, op. cit., 5.

1323 The Roman Catholic Church has argued recently that Calvin’s position, that faith precedes good works and the sinner is forgiven by faith and grace of God, “seems more in agreement with the position of Trent.” But it shows that she still holds her position of the Council of Trent without sign of regret and she wants to amend the misunderstanding of Protestant theology about the penance and justification of the Roman Catholic Church in the discussion with other churches. M. E. Brinkman, *Sacraments of Freedom. Ecumenical Essays on Creation and Sacrament, Justification and Freedom*, 116. ; K. Lehmann and W. Pannenberg, eds., *The Condemnations of The Reformation Era: Do They still Divide?*, 56-69.

1324 Eric Luijten, op. cit., 181.

the Roman Catholic Church “turned the relation between penitence and grace into a legalistic conditional stipulation.”¹³²⁵ And even though faith may perform its now very modest function of preparing for justification, justification itself becomes almost “indistinguishable from sanctification” because justification and sanctification in Roman Catholic theology are a relationship between forces and counter-forces. Therefore “the cultivation of the grace received, after its initial infusion, is then the essence of sanctification. In this process the sacraments must, of course, play their part.”¹³²⁶

The position of faith in the Council of Trent, H. Morsorley wrote, was in harmony with Luther’s. In Roman Catholic theology faith is no more than “one of four requirements of justification of the godless that is signified in the sacrament of penance.” And one is justified by faith and the sacrament of penance “must be the sacramental expression of this justifying faith.”¹³²⁷ The some of Roman Catholic theologians regards Luther’s position on faith as a dogmatic divergence as Luther’s teaching on faith does not separate faith from penance.¹³²⁸ But both of them are absolutely different because for Luther faith is only an instrument of justification but in Roman Catholic Theology faith is no more than one of the elements of penance.

For Reformed theology faith is the start of all of new recognition that is prompted by grace of God, whilst in Roman Catholic theology faith does not play an

1325 FJ, 182.

1326 FS, 27.

1327 Eric Luijten, op. cit., 173.

1328 Harry Morsorley, “Luther and Trent on the Faith needed for the Sacrament of Penance: Concilium no. 7/1-10 (London: Burns & Oates, 1971), 89-98.

important role in the sacrament of penance. She believes that faith is prompted by charity and is nothing but the correct institution of knowledge, and although faith becomes a means of recognition of sin, it does not become a means of salvation. Penance is nothing but “one more burdensome element in their life as a whole”¹³²⁹ because it is not completed by the grace of God and by faith.

Theoretically, the sacrament of penance should be a very useful part of the spiritual life of Christians because it encourages and strengthens the communion of saints and protects them from sins but practically the sacrament of penance of today is far from its original intention. Penance has many problems, not only in relation to Scriptural teachings but also in the practical aspects where it can not help to have the assurance of salvation. Thus in penance Christ and the Holy Spirit are not the subject of the forgiveness of sins and faith in Christ is not the only means of salvation; rather the Roman Catholic Church has become the only institution of salvation.

Roman Catholic theology presents the history of penance in the Church as proof of the legitimacy of the sacrament of penance, because for her the revelation not only includes Scripture but also tradition and because she believes that if Scripture is only a revelation, and separates Scripture from historical settings in the life of the Church.¹³³⁰ For her, theological traditions of the Church have important roles as standards of faith in addition to Scripture.

The sacrament of penance of the Roman Catholic Church has the probability of change and variety with the changes of the times because she has changed its form out

1329 Adrienne Von Speyr, op. cit., 109-110.

1330 Aidan, Nichols, *The Shape of Catholic Theology* (Edinburgh: T& T Clark, 1991), 165.

of the necessity of the times as we have seen in Church history. What we can conclude is that there are many ways of celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation and that the Church, which is the whole body of believers, has shaped them and “can shape them to the needs of the members in changing times and places.”¹³³¹ So the sacrament of penance is not based only on scriptural revelation, but rather on tradition and necessity and it is largely a product of the Roman Catholic Christian’s necessity, meaning that whenever she wants to, she can diverge from the position of Scripture.

SUMMARY

In the Roman Catholic Church penance is necessary for one who commits mortal sin but not in the case of venial sin. The Roman Catholic Church has the power to differentiate between the types of sins. For her there are no unforgivable sins, as through penance mortal sins are forgiven and penance is the beginning of the sinner’s endeavor to annul unforgivable sin, such as apostasy.

Penance can be understood in relation to baptism; a Christian is forgiven his sins that were committed before baptism; the sins of a Christian that were committed after baptism are forgiven through penance. Therefore penance, theoretically and practically, together with baptism, are requisite elements in soteriology. There is no salvation without penance and only through penance penitents can have the assurance of salvation but this is of little assurance and is no more than a fetter to Christians.

1331 Monica K. Hellwig, *Sign of Reconciliation and Conversion: The Sacrament of Penance for Our Times* (Wilmington: Michael Glazer, 1982), 151.

Furthermore, without satisfaction and absolution given by a priest, forgiveness of sins and salvation cannot be accomplished.

Penance consists of four elements; contrition, which looks for the grace of God and sorrow for one's sins; confession, in which one confesses one's sins to a priest; satisfaction, which grants satisfaction due to one's confession of sins to the priest and absolution, granted as sins forgiven by the priest as an assurance of salvation. But, her main interest is not in the inward change of sinners but rather external change. For her the sufficiency of atonement through Christ's cross is insignificant and offers no assurance of salvation, so she presents absolution, through priests, as the conviction of salvation. For her the heart of repentance is not the grace of Christ and confession of the penitents, but satisfaction and absolution or indulgence awarded by priests.

The Roman Catholic Church was handed-down the power of forgiveness of sins through baptism and penance from Christ and his successors, and only the Roman Catholic Church has this power. So the doctrine of repentance of the Reformed Church, according to which we are forgiven by faith alone and confession of our sin before God alone are not true repentance in her eyes, in as much as sins can only be forgiven by the Church.

The main character in the sacrament of penance is the priest. He evaluates the sins of penitents and gives satisfaction in light of their sins and dispenses absolution from sins and his power to do so continues not only in this world but also into purgatory.

For the Roman Catholic Church the atonement of Christ and guidance of the

Holy Spirit in the sacrament of penance are weakened because, she argues, the priest has been entrusted with total power of forgiveness of sins by Christ.

The main problem of Roman Catholic theology in the doctrine of penance, even though it is presented with concrete directions and categories, is that it is not based on biblical repentance but is a human invention. This penance has an inclination towards synergism.

This form of religion is idolatry as its focus is not on Christ but man, and as such is incompatible with the beliefs of the Reformed Church. Furthermore the penance of the Roman Catholic Church is nowhere near that of biblical repentance and offers nothing to Christians; rather it converts Christianity into a religion without the righteousness of Christ.

PART THREE

Chapter 5. The Doctrine of Repentance in the Theology of Hyung-Nong Park

5. 1. The Historical and Theological Background of Hyung-Nong Park

5. 1. 1. The Life of Hyung-Nong Park

Korea has become the most prosperous Christian nation in East Asia since the Gospel was first preached by western missionaries in the nineteenth century. Almost 25% of the Korean population is Christian and their faith is incomparably ardent now. Hyung-Nong Park played the role of locomotive in the growth of the Korean Church and in the theological conservatism of the Korean Church. During his lifetime Korea was under Japanese occupation for 36years (1910-1945) and the Korean War, which lasted three years (1950-1953), was fought. Since that time the Korean Presbyterian Church has been continuously divided between conservative and liberal theology. In 1952 the Ko-shin denomination¹ was formed as an offshoot of the Presbyterian denomination due to a divide over the issue of worship to Japanese Shinto.² In 1953 the Cho-shin denomination³ was formed, also as an offshoot of the Presbyterian denomination, due to a divide over the issue of theological Liberalism. In 1959 the Tong-Hap⁴ denomination was formed due to a divide over the W.C.C. from Hap-Dong, which is the biggest denomination of the Korean Church.

1 Koshin required discipline and public repentance of Pastors who worshipped at Japanese Shinto (ShinSaChamBae) under the Japanese occupation. Cf. Dong-Min, Jang, *The Theology of Hyung-Nong Park* (Seoul: the Institute of Korea Christian History Press, 1998), 343-347.

2 Hereafter ShinSaChamBae (Japanese Shinto Persecution)

3 Choshin took the Barthian Theology and Biblical Criticism and rejected the infallibility of the Bible. Cf. Ibid., 362-376.

4 Tong Hap was divided from Presbyterian denomination by the pastors who want to engage the W.C.C. Cf. Ibid., 376-388

Hyung-Nong Park (1897-1978) was born in Byuk Dong, Pyung An Buk Do. In 1926 he received both his B.Th. and his M.Th. from the Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, and at 1932 he received his Ph. D within Apologetics from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. When he returned from his studies, Korea was still under Japanese occupation, but he taught students at the Pyung Yang Theological Seminary, which was founded by Presbyterian missionaries in 1928. He lectured in Apologetics, Christian Ethics and the difficult issues of theology. When Pyung Yang Theological Seminary was closed by Japanese imperialists on account of the issues of ShinSaChamBae in 1938, Hyung-Nong Park took religious asylum in China, where he taught students who had also sought religious refuge in China. From 1951 to 1972 he lectured at the Chong-Shin Theological Seminary as a Principal and Professor.¹³³⁶

Hyung-Nong Park held on to theological conservatism at the Chong-Shin Theological Seminary and in the Hap Dong denomination until his deathbed. Some people criticised him, saying that his theology was confined, dependent on western missionaries, and that it was not based on authentic Reformed theology, but rather on the evangelicalism of the nineteenth century, fundamentalism that is tied by the infallibility of the Bible,¹³³⁷ religious transcendentalism and the five Essentials of American fundamentalism.¹³³⁸ But Han Chul Ha, who was Hyung-Nong Park's

1336 Hyung-Nong Park, *Theological tradition of Korean Presbyterian Church: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 9-12.

1337 Actually he was criticised by Korean liberal theologians as extreme fundamentalist because of his Biblicism.

1338 Dong-Min, Jang, op. cit., 405-428. Dong-Min, Jang criticises the theology of Hyung-Nong Park in comparatively moderate views, but Dong-Min, Jang does not see in the central contents what he

colleague at the Chong-Shin Theological Seminary and is Emeritus president of the Asian United Theological University, argued that this criticism was based on a misunderstanding of his theology. According to Han Chul Ha, Hyung-Nong Park's theology represents the apostolic and evangelical faith¹³³⁹ that is preserved throughout the Bible, Pauline theology, medieval theology and Reformed theology.¹³⁴⁰ In Korea, the Presbyterian Church is the main Christian denomination and Hyung-Nong Park had taught theology at the main seminaries of the Presbyterian Church. So, even Kim Jung Jun, who was an opponent of Hyung-Nong Park, said of him that "Hyung-Nong Park contributed to the formation of the Church and Korean Conservative theology and helped to give them direction, and looking beyond the denominational view in terms of Korean Church History he was a colossal figure over the denominations."¹³⁴¹

While studying at the Princeton Theological Seminary, Hyung-Nong Park was influenced by the tradition of Princeton theology, to which Archibald Alexander, C. Hodge, A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield belong. He was especially influenced by the teachings of Gresham Machen after Machen suffered a bitter insult on account of fundamental issues. They and their theology became the basis of the Presbyterian

wants to say through his theology because Jang's approach is limited to a historical and linguistic approach. Cf. Chul-Ha, Han, "Hyung-Nong Park, Elijah of World Church of 20th Century, Special Edition: The Theology of Hyung-Nong Park and Korean Church/centenary" *Presbyterian Theological Quarterly* (64/3 Fall, 1997), 23-43. hereafter, PTQ

1339 Hyung-Nong Park Collections. Vol. XIII, 304. Hereafter Collections; Hyung-Nong Park defined Christian faith that "Evangelical Christian faith is 「Good News」 or 「Joyful News」 that God planed redemption for man. This faith affirms that redemption from sin is given not by good works of man and meritoriousness but only by grace of God." This shows his theological main concern that is redemption from sin.

1340 Chul-Ha, Han, op. cit., 23-43.

1341 Jung-Jun, Kim, "Evaluation of Theology of Hyung- Nong, Park" *Theological Thought* 25: 281-282.

theology that Hyung-Nong Park taught throughout his life.¹³⁴² Hyung-Nong Park was not a confined fundamentalist of negative view, but can rather be called a real Reformed theologian who united fundamentalism with the Presbyterian theology of America and Europe and the Reformed theology of the Dutch. As both his critics and his supporters acknowledge, he took much of his theology from the systematic theology of L. Berkhof,¹³⁴³ which “is regarded as similar to the Reformed dogmatics of Herman Bavinck that is composed of four volumes.”¹³⁴⁴ At least in terms of theology, many Korean Presbyterian Churches have followed Park’s theology and they have thought of it as a Reformed and Puritan theology.

Opinion about Hyung-Nong Park varies. Some people regard him as having laid the theological foundation of the Korean Church, others criticise him as having been a confined fundamentalist who spent the last part of his life in separation and was lacking in historical consciousness.¹³⁴⁵ Whichever view one takes, it is sure that he is a dominant theologian in the Korean Church and that his influence extended to

1342 Gil-Sung, Kim, “Understanding and evaluation of Theology Dr. Hyung-Nong Park” *PTQ* (71/4, Win 2004): 104.

1343 In pages of doctrine of repentance in systematic theology his pages are much more than Louis Berkhof’s, but yet he follows the structure of Louis Berkhof. Cf. Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Reformed Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1933), 241-247.

1344 Gil-Sung, Kim, op. cit., 104.

1345 The estimate of Hyung-Nong Park by Dong-Min, Jang is not valid. As Jang states in the preface of his book, he depended on the sources of Institute for Christian History. Therefore his position is excessively national and political rather than theological. His only concern with Hyung-Nong Park is the apology of Christianity and the protection of traditional-orthodox-Reformed theology from the liberal theology. Therefore, the evaluation of Hyung-Nong Park must be treated from the viewpoint of apologist and theologian. And the reason we cannot require his contribution to social issues is that after Japanese occupation and the Korean War he was too old to concentrate on the social issues.

all Korean churches.

5. 1. 2. The Theological Background of Hyung-Nong Park

According to Hyung-Nong Park, the theological tradition of the Korean Presbyterian Church is the process of the “introduction and growth of the Puritan-Reformed theology of the American-European Presbyterian Church as presented in the Westminster Confession.”¹³⁴⁶ This is a “Presbyterian theology that adds British-American Puritan characteristics to the Calvinism of the European Continent.”¹³⁴⁷ According to the writings of Dr. A. J. Brown, the reason that the Korean Church is seen as the Puritan of the Reformed Churches is that missionaries to Korea since 1886 have been of the Puritan style.

Hyung-Nong Park classified Protestant theology into the Modern style and the Puritan style, according to the method of evangelism. The Modern style states that man can repent and have faith by a decision of the mind and that he comes to God by his decision rather than by the grace of God, whereas the Puritan style states that the repentance of the sinner is accomplished only by the graceful and sovereign work of God.¹³⁴⁸ According to Hyung-Nong Park, the Korean Presbyterian Church is based on

1346 Hyung-Nong Park, *Theological tradition of Korean Presbyterian Church: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 35.

1347 Ibid., 47.

1348 Collections, Vol. XX. 345-353; Hyung-Nong Park, Ibid., 37. In the view of Puritanism Hyung-Nong Park uses the term ‘effectual calling’ rather than the term ‘conversion’ because he wants to emphasise the fact that the cause of repentance is only God. (cf. Westminster confession, Ch.X and Shorter Catechism, XXXI)

the latter. He regarded the doctrine of repentance in Reformed theology as being of the Puritan style and showed that he, himself, was of the Puritan style. In his classification of theological tradition, the doctrine of repentance is the main reference point of distinction. And in the definition of the doctrine of repentance, Hyung-Nong Park rejects Pelagianism and Arminianism, but maintains the Reformed tradition which emphasises the sovereign grace of God.

However, contrary to the above definition, even though the early Korean Presbyterian Church appeared to be interested in Bible classes rather than revival meetings or united evangelical meetings, it in fact followed the modern pattern of evangelism in its services and especially in revival meetings.¹³⁴⁹ Thus we can see that the doctrine of repentance and the form of the early faith of the Korean Christian was influenced by Puritanism, Reformed theology and American revivalism.

In fact, in Korean churches a Reformed Christian is known as a Calvinist Presbyterian and, generally, the Presbyterian Church is the Reformed Church.¹³⁵⁰ So the Korean Presbyterian Church has characteristics of both the Puritanical and the Reformed Church. Hyung-Nong Park contributed Puritanical-Reformed theology to the roots of Korean churches.

Hyung-Nong Park's position and importance in the Korean theological world was described well by certain theological articles that appeared after his death; 'Theological Thought', which took an antagonistic view of Hyung-Nong Park, published a special edition of 'The theology of Hyung-Nong Park' and his theological

1349 Ibid., 44.

1350 Ibid., 47.

opponent Jong-Sung, Lee (*Theological Thought*, Summer, 1979, 229-300) described him as an incomparable person in the Korean theological world.¹³⁵¹ And according to Harvie M. Conn, a missionary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in America, Hyung-Nong Park is a representative theologian of Korean conservative theology.¹³⁵² Professor Chul-Won, Seo called Hyung-Nong Park ‘the theologian’, comparing him with Gregory of Nazianzus who formulated and announced the Pneumatology in A.D. 380 before the Constantinople Council.¹³⁵³ Korean Presbyterian Christians, on the other hand, remember him as ‘the Theologian’ because he established the identity of the theology of Korean Church and provided the foundation of orthodox theology against theological modernism.

Hyung-Nong Park has been called a fundamentalist by many liberal theologians and sometimes he named himself a fundamentalist, but to him fundamentalism was not negative or separatist,¹³⁵⁴ but theologically orthodox and Calvinist.¹³⁵⁵

1351 Cha-Nam, Jang, *The true teacher and Great teacher: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 220-21.

1352 Eui-Hwan, Kim, *The Theology of Hyung-Nong Park: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 233.

1353 Chul-Won, Seo, *The Systematic Theology of Dr. Hyung-Nong Park: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 450.

1354 Until now in conservative Presbyterian theological seminaries the theologies of G. C. Berkouwer and Karl Barth have not been taught because they are classified as liberal theologians but Dr. Hyung-Nong Park introduced the books of G.C. Berkouwer and used his book ‘Faith and Justification’ as a text book of soteriology. It shows that he is not an extreme exclusivist, but rather a theologian only concerned with truth. Actually to the extent, that it is correct he is not afraid of using the writings of Karl Barth to support his position. Cf. Jong Suk, Kim, *Dr. Hyung-Nong Park who liked bamboo: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 218; Cha Nam, Jang, op. cit., 228.

In fact, in Korea preachers cannot preach liberal sermons such as refusal of the infallibility of the Bible, of Virgin Birth and of physical resurrection of the body because the Korean Church already stands constitutionally on the Calvinistic position. The influences of the Korean Church have their origins not only in the work of the early missionaries, but also, first of all, in the contribution of Hyung-Nong Park who introduced Calvinism and conservatism into the Korean language.¹³⁵⁶

But Jong-Sung, Lee, an opponent of Hyung-Nong Park, criticised Hyung-Nong Park's theology, saying that it was an imitation of the theology of the missionaries and that his theological attitude was a 'freezing of theology' or the 'death of theology.'¹³⁵⁷

However, this belief came from a misunderstanding of Hyung-Nong Park's theology. Hyung-Nong Park's basic idea is that 'context cannot change text.' The theology of Hyung-Nong Park did not disturb the development of theology.

The theology of Hyung-Nong Park is a "theology which united with traditional-orthodox-Reformed theology and biblical exegesis,"¹³⁵⁸ and a "method of faith and reason."¹³⁵⁹ In terms of external principles, he followed the theology of H. Bavinck

1355 Yong-Kyu, Park, *The Fundamentalism of Dr. Hyung-Nong Park: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 396-403.

1356 Ibid., 400.

1357 Eui-Hwan, Kim, op. cit., 248.

1358 Aaron, Park, *The Life and Thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 141. The systematic theology of Hyung-Nong Park is based on his ability for biblical exegesis. By his exegetic ability he was appointed as a chair man of Standard Bible Exegesis Committee in the view of conservatism against Abingdon Commentary in the view of liberal theology.

1359 Young-Bae, Cha, "The theological principle of Hyung-Nong Park" *PTQ* (51, 3. 1984), 89.

and L. Berkhof, but in terms of internal principles he followed the way of Hodge-Warfield,¹³⁶⁰ because Bavinck and Berkhof regarded faith as the only means of understanding truth whereas Hyung-Nong Park treated reason as one important means for understanding truth, following the idea of C. Hodge and B. B. Warfield.¹³⁶¹ Hyung-Nong Park placed faith next to reason in order to understand truth.¹³⁶² This shows that his theology is not an imitation of Berkhof, but is rather based on Calvinistic hermeneutics and the application of Reformed theology with his own idea because, although he based his central idea on faith, he did not neglect the value of reason.

While Hyung-Nong Park argued for the inseparability of faith and reason in the understanding of truth, he did not refer to general human reason, but to the regenerated reason of the Christian.¹³⁶³ Therefore ‘reason’ does not have its normal meaning or its common sense as a standard of judgment, but is a regenerated reason that can be used with the same meaning as faith in a strict sense.

Another characteristic of Hyung-Nong Park’s theology is that he was “an uncompromising conservative theologian rooted in the infallibility of the Bible.”¹³⁶⁴ In other words, his theological foundation and starting point is faith that believes in the infallibility of the Bible as the supernatural revelation of God. He believed in the

1360 Ibid., 89-109.

1361 Aaron, Park, op. cit., 140. His son Prof. Aaron, Park explained well his relationship with C. Hodge and B. B. Warfield and his theological background that “while studying in Princeton theological seminary and graduate school Hyung-Nong Park studied deeply the Orthodox Presbyterian theology of C. Hodge and B.B Warfield, especially he was taught from Gresham Machen in his class and was influenced by him thoughtfully and personally.”

1362 Eui-Hwan, Kim. op. cit., 237.

1363 Young-Bae, Cha, op. cit., 107.

1364 Aaron, Park, op. cit., 148.

literal infallibility of the Bible. Through his influence, many Korean ministers have believed and followed the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible, especially in terms of believing in the historical pre-millennialism. This became a tradition of Hyung-Nong Park's Hap-Dong denomination.

5. 2. The Necessity of Repentance in Soteriology

5. 2. 1. Repentance and Sin

In reference to the universality of sin, sin is the fact that is admitted sufficiently in the experience of man and it proves the imputation of sin from Adam to mankind. Therefore sin is an undeniable fact. Hyung-Nong Park does not prove or solve this problem with an exceedingly speculative approach, but rather by means of the Bible, human experience, biblical exegesis and confession of faith.¹³⁶⁵ Since universality and recognition of sin are connected with the necessity of the Cross of Christ, these cannot be compromised. The reason that Jesus came to this world is for the discontinuation of the history of sin that began with the first Adam; He is the second Adam, who is the representative of all man, and does not show salvation without faith and repentance because of the universality of sin.¹³⁶⁶

Hyung-Nong Park treats sin within the sphere of concreteness. Sin is not a deficiency of good (*privatio boni*), as St. Augustine mentioned, but rather sin breaks the law of God and it is life discordant to the will of God, accompanied by the ethical

1365 This is similar to the method of G. C. Berkouwer.

1366 Collections. Vol. III, Anthropology and Hamartiology, 143-188.

pollution of man in concrete life. In order to clarify this view, he synthesised the views of the Reformers.

Sin is “a more special evil than other evil, the relation between sin and the law of God is so intimate that there can be no sin without the law of God; the law which is related to sin is not mere reason, desire or expediency, but the law of God. And essentially sin is composed of the discord of rational creatures against the attitudes of God or His Law, and sin includes the guilt and ethical pollution of rational creatures.”¹³⁶⁷

So, in general the articulate and formal definition of sin is that it is disobedience against the law of God.¹³⁶⁸ Hyung-Nong Park followed the idea of Campegius Vitringa, who said that the nature of sin is “a disharmony of action, disposition and condition with the divine Law” and followed the definition of sin of Louis Berkhof, who said that sin is “disobedience against the ethical law of God in action, condition and disposition.”¹³⁶⁹

Sin is any action which breaks the holy law of God. It is “a resistance to God, who requires us to live our whole lives in holiness, (Lev. 11:44) and evasion of His justice, which is based on His throne (Ps. 97:2)”.¹³⁷⁰ Therefore, true repentance is necessary to restore the Holiness of God and the holiness in our lives. As William Childs Robinson, Park argued that God requires the repentance of man for His holiness, and this conforms to the attributes of a God who condemns sinners who do not repent, but this does not make God an evil being.¹³⁷¹

1367 Ibid., 236.

1368 Ibid., 239.

1369 Ibid., 246.

1370 Ibid., 285.

1371 Hyung-Nong Park, “The Trials and Wrath” *PTQ* (37. 3 F. 1970), 17-18.

Sin does not occur in human life naturally, but is a choice made by man and the intentional doings of man. Therefore sin is “not a passive thing, but active resistance and positive transgression.”¹³⁷² Accordingly, sin is transgression by the free will of man, and so man has total responsibility for it.

Sin is accompanied by guilt and sinful habits which remain in man in spite of regeneration. Sin is a transgression committed not only by the unregenerated, but by all man. It has nothing to do with regeneration. Repentance is necessary for the forgiveness of sins and must be practiced everyday and every moment of every day by all of man, regardless of whether or not regeneration has occurred.¹³⁷³ But Sin corrupted the whole of man and through it “all organisms and all of parts of us are defiled.”¹³⁷⁴ And man is spiritually impotent and unable to do good works; therefore, alone man cannot have “repentance, faith and regeneration.” In other words, man “cannot do anything which is proper to be received to God.”¹³⁷⁵ Man has sinned against God but man has no solution in himself. This shows that repentance is not a spontaneous action of man, but an action of God, God’s active work, which idea has been justly supported by Reformed theology.

Concerning the sin of Hebrews 6:4-6, Hyung-Nong Park did not consider it in relation to unforgivable sin, but rather he regarded it as the condition of the unregenerated and their corruption. In other words, this is not a sin committed by

1372 Collections. Vol. III, Anthropology and Hamartiology, 237.

1373 Ibid., 261-69.

1374 Ibid., 265.

1375 Ibid., 267.

regenerated Christians, but by the unregenerated.¹³⁷⁶ Hyung-Nong Park's position on this point differs from that of Calvin and other Reformed theologians because his soteriology began with regeneration and he wanted to hold to the perseverance of saints.

From the above portion of Scripture (Heb. 6:4-6), Park argued that in the phrase: "who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if *they* fall away" (italics added), the term 'they' does not refer to the regenerated because, for him, unforgivable sin is "opposition to the witness and assurance of the Holy Spirit concerning the grace of God in Christ Jesus, rejection of it with intention, demonic mind and consciousness, unfavourable criticism of it, and the attributing of the grace of God to Satan with anger and hostility."¹³⁷⁷ Park also thought that the fact that the regenerated can commit the unforgivable sin is a contradiction in the biblical teachings.

The reason that this sin cannot be forgiven is that he who is guilty of this sin is beyond the merit of Christ and rejects the chance for repentance that God offers him, "finally expelling the power of the Holy Spirit and the merit of Jesus Christ."¹³⁷⁸ Therefore, on the basis of impenitence, Hyung-Nong Park says that the man who commits this sin will not admit his sin and he will never be afraid of God until his deathbed. For this reason, Hyung-Nong Park opposes the views of the Novatians and the Montanists, who refuse to receive the corrupted Christian back into the Church

1376 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 77.

1377 Collections. Vol. III, Anthropology and Hamartiology, 282.

1378 Ibid., 282.

because of the misunderstanding of this scriptural text.¹³⁷⁹ So for Park, the sin of Hebrews 6:4-6 is regarded rather as the unbelief of the unregenerated than as an unforgivable sin because God has not given chance to the reprobated and the unregenerated and it does not contradict the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit and perseverance of the saints.

Hyung-Nong Park regards this sin as being of a “special style which could have occurred during the apostolic era when the Spirit revealed Himself through extraordinary power and grace,”¹³⁸⁰ and because it happened only in the era of the apostles we shall not see the same case later on and the elected will not perish forever from the love of God (Jn. 10:28).¹³⁸¹ Here, Hyung-Nong Park’s position once again differs from that of Calvin, who considered it as stressing the urgency of repentance, and from K. Barth and G. C. Berkouwer, who both regarded it as an admonition against apostasy.¹³⁸²

In relation to these sins, repentance is the important touchstone that defines whether they are unforgivable or not. In other words, the question of whether man repents or not is intimately related to this sin. That is, penitent sin is not unforgivable sin, but impenitent sin has the possibility to slide into unforgivable sin. Thus, the

1379 Korea has a similar history as the early Christian Church in relation with repentance of unforgivable sin. In connection with many pastors worshipped Japanese Shinto (ShinSaChamBae) Koshin was separated from the original Presbyterian Church but he argued that this is a great sin but not an unforgivable sin. For him unforgivable sin is temporary sin that happened only at the time of the Apostles. The reason that he required repentance for ShinSaChamBae in the Korean War is that he believed that this sin is a great sin and the cause of the Korean War.

1380 Collections. Vol. III, Anthropology and Hamartiology, 283.

1381 Ibid., 283-84.

1382 Comm. on Heb.6:4-6; CD 4/2, 569; FP, 120.

regenerated man has a chance for repentance, whereas the unregenerated man cannot have an opportunity for repentance.

The regenerated cannot commit an unforgivable sin,¹³⁸³ and this is not a contradiction to the perseverance of saints, for the man who commits this sin has not really experienced regeneration in Christ. As a result, Hyung-Nong Park admitted the existence of unforgivable sin and connected it with unbelievers and the unregenerated. Therefore, because Christians consistently have the opportunity for repentance, true Christians do not commit apostasy or the unforgivable sin.

The unforgivable sins in Hyung-Nong Park's theology does not start from what the blasphemy against the Spirit is, but from the question of whether or not the sinner repents, because the penitent can never commit the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. Regret and contrition are the keys for the solution of these sins, which shows Hyung-Nong Park's prudent attitude towards this sin. His concern is not with the type of the sin itself, but rather with the attitudes of the sinners. Therefore, some blasphemies against the Spirit can be forgiven because the Bible says 'do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Eph 4:30)'. And Hyung-Nong Park gives the opportunity for repentance to seemingly unforgivable sinners because he believes that the only one who can give the opportunity for repentance is God, and man has no right to decide whether or not to give it. The Bible says that 'those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will

1383 Hyung-Nong Park presented 2Peter 2:20, 21; Luke 11: 24-26; Hebrews 6:4-6; Hebrews 10:26ff in connection with this sin. For him the principle that looks at this text, first of all, is whether they have faith or not. Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 414.

grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth' (2 Tim 2:25).¹³⁸⁴

5. 3. The Roles of Repentance in Soteriology

5. 3. 1. Repentance and Faith

Two of the central concepts of soteriology in Hyung-Nong Park's theology are grace and the judgment of God, and mercy and justice. Both of these concepts simultaneously show attributes of God. Since the Reformation in the sixteenth century, Reformed theology has emphasised only the grace and mercy of God, but Hyung-Nong Park understood the tension of both sides. Thus, for him, the doctrine of repentance is understood in the judgment and justice of God as well as in the grace and mercy of God.¹³⁸⁵ In a strict sense, the direct cause of repentance is the final judgment of Christ: the man who thinks of the final judgment of Christ has to confess his sins. What *faith* is to *grace* and *mercy*, *repentance* is to *judgment* and *justice*.

Conversion is composed of faith and repentance and, as a result, repentance is to sanctification what faith is to forensic justification. The reason that we have difficulty understanding the terms of conversion in Hyung-Nong Park's theology is that sometimes he uses the terms 'conversion' and 'repentance' interchangeably and

1384 Collections. Vol. XVI, Pastoral Epistle and Ecclesiastics, 65.

1385 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 196. Through his soteriology Hyung-Nong Park used conversion as a one term of wide concept which includes the conversion, proselyte and repentance. He follows the terms of Louis Berkhof. Through this definition of terms he put the weight to 'turn to or turn away' rather than confession of sin in the various aspects of conversion. It shows well his hidden theological concerning in which he divided conversion into faith and repentance.

sometimes distinguishes between them.¹³⁸⁶ He followed a colligated concept of Louis Berkhof.

According to Hyung-Nong Park, conversion requires faith that is acquainted with the word of God. This obviously shows the relationship between the two aspects of conversion: how repentance as a passive aspect is connected with faith as a positive aspect through the word of God. God makes sinners repent through the word of God. Through emphasising the insufficiency of common grace, Hyung-Nong Park argues that the word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit are signs of true repentance. The result of conversion must show proof of the word of God and proof of the Holy Spirit because the cause of conversion is always the word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Like Berkouwer, Hyung-Nong Park distinguishes between “legalistic conversion” and “evangelical conversion.” He knows the importance of the law of God as well as the Gospel in the doctrine of repentance, and realises that for some people, the law is superior and for others, the Gospel is superior as a means of repentance. Therefore “there is no room for the forgiveness of sin without the idea of law, the law of God, and responsibility, because without these it is nothing but a mistake and a necessity of teaching.”¹³⁸⁷ Through the law of God, sinners can know their sin and its seriousness.

Hyung-Nong Park classified true repentance into four categories. In all four categories, faith is the requisite element. Repentance without true faith is not true repentance and it cannot result in the forgiveness of sins. Therefore faith is a *sine qua*

1386 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 84.

1387 Collections. Vol. III, Anthropology and Hamartiology, 241.

non of repentance. According to Hyung-Nong Park, the first category of true repentance is a completely internal action. There must be a difference between the repentance and its fruits. Secondly, true repentance is the duty of sinners in salvation as a passive condition, but it cannot remove sin. In fact, one can repent through faith alone, and in this faith, which is a gift of God, one feels sorrow over sin. “Repentance without faith in Christ cannot result in the forgiveness of sins and eternal life to sinners.”¹³⁸⁸ Thirdly, true repentance is closely connected with faith. The starting point of man’s repentance is the Cross of Christ and the true evangelism of repentance, and “evangelism of faith and true repentance for God includes faith that believes Christ.”¹³⁸⁹ Fourthly, true repentance and faith are inseparably related to each other. Therefore, “where true faith is, there is repentance. Repentance and faith are different aspects of the same transposition; therefore faith cannot be separated from repentance in the same way that repentance cannot be separated from faith.”¹³⁹⁰

Repentance and faith are connected indissolubly with each other because they are the two factors of conversion itself. In disputes about the relationship between repentance and faith, Hyung-Nong Park distinguished between two types of faith: the simple recognition of the truth of the revelation concerning the redemption offered by God and about God as a Being who affects our life and death; and the saving faith that allows for the recognition and reception of redemption submitted in Christ Jesus. The first type of faith is related to conversion, but Hyung-Nong Park does not define the relationship between the two types and does not say whether the second type of faith

1388 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 212.

1389 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 213.

1390 Ibid.

includes the first type or not.

In order to differentiate between faith and conversion, Hyung-Nong Park agreed with John Murray, rather than with Calvin and C. Hodge, that even though repentance always presupposes faith, logically, conversion precedes faith because it is difficult for men who have had their guilt removed through faith to repent on account of worrying about that guilt.

When conversion includes faith, this is the first type of faith and, logically, repentance must precede this faith. “There is no doubt that repentance and knowledge of sin precedes faith, which obeys, trusts and worships Christ. In many biblical phrases repentance is placed ahead of faith (Mk. 1:15; Acts 2:38, 5:31, 20:21; 2Tim 2:25).”¹³⁹¹ The position of Hyung-Nong Park in terms of the doctrine of repentance is similar to Calvin’s position, which distinguishes between two types of faith and regards faith as a pre-condition of conversion.¹³⁹² According to Calvin, faith is the only pre-condition of conversion, and only by means of this faith does repentance become true repentance rather than a meaningless confession. Like Calvin, Hyung-Nong Park criticised the fact that in Roman Catholicism *poenitentia* and *μετάνοια* were changed to *Poenitentia agite*, or the meritoriousness of man, by the medieval Catholic Church. Therefore, in Hyung-Nong Park’s view, the fact that repentance precedes faith does not relate to human merit in salvation.

Hyung-Nong Park presents faith as a pre-condition of repentance. Although, in

1391 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 220.

1392 Calvin placed doctrine of repentance before of faith because he thinks that sanctification precedes justification in logical order.

Ordo Salutis, Calvin placed conversion before faith, it was nothing but a logical order. True repentance and faith are simultaneous events. In other words, only believers can have repentance unto salvation. Hence faith without repentance is useless, and “true repentance is filled with faith.” But Hyung-Nong Park says that even though the Bible emphasises salvation by faith alone, it “never neglects the necessity of repentance.”¹³⁹³ He believes that conversion must be accompanied by salvific faith otherwise it cannot be a conversion unto salvation.¹³⁹⁴ Hyung-Nong Park wrote that “true faith is filled with repentance,” and “a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart are signs of believers.”¹³⁹⁵ To him faith and repentance are inseparably related to each other and to emphasise one over the other creates the problem of contradiction in soteriology.

Hyung-Nong Park considered unbelief and impenitence as signs of reprobation. Throughout his soteriology he consistently connects faith and repentance because a man cannot be a Christian without one of the two. He presents them as signs of the assurance of salvation because both faith and repentance are gifts of God to the elected.¹³⁹⁶ God does not forgive sinners unconditionally, but He gives forgiveness of sin and eternal life through repentance and faith. And the one who has faith and repentance reaches salvation through God and, at the same time, God gives repentance and faith to the one who will have salvation.

And God does not present forgiveness of sin and pardon to sinners unconditionally, but requires sinners to receive them only through the ways of repentance and faith. And the righteousness of Christ, even though it doesn't plan for all, is enough for all. In other

1393 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 222.

1394 Ibid.,198.

1395 Ibid., 222.

1396 Ibid., 83.

words the faithfulness of God isn't contradicted by the fact that the word of God presents for all, because it implies that only the one who repents and has faith will be saved and the righteousness of Christ, which is given to those who repent and believe, is enough.¹³⁹⁷

Hyung-Nong Park uses the term 'ἐπιστροφή' with 'μετάνοια' to define repentance. He especially argued that ἐπιστροφή is the proper definition of repentance because it includes the factor of faith. When one interprets: "Repent, then, and turn to God" (Acts 3:19),¹³⁹⁸ it calls attention to the differentiation of 'Repent (μετάνοια)' and 'turn to God (ἐπιστροφή).' Sometimes μετανοῶ only includes the idea of repentance, but ἐπιστροφή always includes the factor of faith because 'turn to' indicates the moving to another direction in faith. And μετανοῶ (μετανοέω) and πίστις coexist, but the relationship between ἐπιστροφή and πίστις is implication rather than coexistence.

Hyung-Nong Park, following Louis Berkhof,¹³⁹⁹ divides conversion into two factors: repentance (turning from sin) and faith (turning to Christ); the former being 'retrospective' and latter being 'prospective.' He also connects repentance with sanctification, for he believes that repentance will continue for a whole life and sanctification is an extension of repentance. And through the connection between faith and justification, Hyung-Nong Park showed that the subject of redemption is always Christ and that a proclamation of salvation is always based on righteousness through faith.¹⁴⁰⁰

This is a different classification than that of Calvin, Barth and Berkouwer.

1397 Ibid., 127.

1398 μετανοήσατε οὖν καὶ ἐπιστρέψατε εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας,

1399 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 207.

1400 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 207.

Calvin in particular used the term ‘repentance’ in a wider sense to indicate the change of a whole life, but Hyung-Nong Park placed repentance between regeneration and justification. Through this he wanted to solve the basic issue of the Bible, namely, that justification as the work of God has to be associated with repentance and forgiveness of sins. However, this placement makes faith, which is achieved by means of grace and is the central idea of reformation, flow to the volitional feature of man, this is because Hyung-Nong Park tried to place the wider idea of faith within the narrower idea of conversion.

To Hyung-Nong Park, true repentance is first of all a change of heart and an internal change in faith. So he criticised the sacrament of penance, saying that this is not true repentance. As it was for Calvin, for Hyung-Nong Park the essence of the change of repentance is internal change. The difference is that, for him, true repentance is associated with “inward, passivity and faith.”¹⁴⁰¹ This shows that Hyung-Nong Park agrees with Louis Berkhof that repentance is wholly an “internal act, an act of contrition or sorrow on account of sin.”¹⁴⁰²

And conversion is an absolute condition of salvation because conversion is a result of regeneration. The conversion that is a result of regeneration calls our attention and précised distinction. The reason that Hyung-Nong Park regards repentance as an absolute condition of salvation is that “the one who has matured enough to answer intellectually to the word of God, when he answers correctly, will

1401 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 211.

1402 Louis, Berkhof. op. cit., 245.

be saved.”¹⁴⁰³ And “without sorrow on account of their sin and without faithfully believing in Jesus as saviour, they cannot enter the kingdom of God.”¹⁴⁰⁴ Beyond being a simple warning, this declares that the man who commits sin intentionally and consistently cannot enter the Kingdom of God.¹⁴⁰⁵ And the impenitent cannot enter the Kingdom of God because repentance is an important requirement for entrance into the Kingdom of God. Repentance is not merely an admonition to go the Kingdom of God but a real warning for the Kingdom of heaven, and therefore Hyung-Nong Park says that adult Christians must experience conversion.¹⁴⁰⁶ For this reason evangelists must preach the gospel of repentance because conversion as a fruit of regeneration is absolutely necessary to salvation.

However, both faith and repentance require belief in Christ as Lord. “If any one chooses Christ to be his everything, regardless of the ways or means of salvation by the Holy Spirit for him, he has converted truly.”¹⁴⁰⁷ God punishes those who neglect His call and do not repent. This shows us that repentance is not only a dependent event of faith, but is also the duty of sinners in the presence of God; it is a necessary factor in salvation. Throughout his writings, Hyung-Nong Park asserts that the Gospel is concerned not only with salvation through faith, but also with the proclamation of

1403 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 222.

1404 Ibid.

1405 For Understanding the position of Hyung-Nong Park concerning this topic, Cf. Han-Soo, Lee, “Re-illumination of Theology of Hyung-Nong Park” *PTQ* (69/1 Spr, 2002), 120-177. As a New Testament theologian he described well the relationship between faith and good works in dogmatics of Hyung-Nong Park with the position of New Testament theology Cf. Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 371.

1406 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 223.

1407 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 205.

repentance, because after Christ's resurrection He, Himself, preached the gospel of repentance (Lk 24:47), and the Apostles preached that man must repent, be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, and receive the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:37, 38).

Hyung-Nong Park argues that he does not oppose the gospel of justification by faith alone which was emphasised by Reformed theologians. According to him, "if the faith that we confess allows us to follow the 'cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does,' by the ways of this world our faith is nothing but the target of ridicule and deception."¹⁴⁰⁸

5. 3. 2. Repentance, Christ and the Holy Spirit

On the basis of 1Cor 2:4, 12:11; 1Thes 1:6; 2Thes 1:11; Phil 2:13, Hyung-Nong Park writes that "the Holy Spirit is a direct creator of regeneration, repentance, faith and Holy discipline."¹⁴⁰⁹ Hyung-Nong Park also agreed with John R. W. Stott, arguing that the way to recover the fullness of the Spirit of God is to cease sinning,¹⁴¹⁰ but through repentance we receive the fullness of the Spirit. Therefore, repentance is the concrete content and direction of sanctification, not mere forgiveness of sin but a means for the restoration the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And repentance goes beyond the dimensions of a mere confession of sin: it is a means of restoring sanctification through the fullness of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴¹¹ Repentance and faith are both means to

1408 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 222.

1409 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 94.

1410 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 57.

1411 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 57.

communicate with the Holy Spirit and through it the Church experiences its revival.¹⁴¹²

Hyung-Nong Park agreed with R. A. Torrey's *The Baptism with the Holy Spirit*, and maintained that repentance is one of the proofs of the baptism of the Holy Spirit,¹⁴¹³ as well as being the way to receive the power of God.¹⁴¹⁴ His idea of repentance is broader than that of other Reformed theologians because he believes that repentance is not a narrow linguistic definition,¹⁴¹⁵ but the very turning of our hearts to God.

Hyung-Nong Park believes that repentance is an essential and inescapable action in the soteriology of Christians. And it is not merely a confession of sin, it is making a move in the world and completing God's plans.¹⁴¹⁶ According to Hyung-Nong Park, conversion that is only a change of heart and mind cannot lead to salvation specifically because conversion is a ministry of God for individuals that have salvific faith in Christ. Therefore, true repentance is a sign of the salvation of God, but false repentance, which does not admit to sin and is mere spiritual influence,

1412 Collections. Vol. XIX, Sermon, 119.

1413 Hyung-Nong Park divided the terms, inhabitation of Holy Spirit, Baptism of Holy Spirit and fullness of Holy Spirit. He connected with inhabitation of Holy Spirit with regeneration but with Baptism of Holy Spirit and fullness of Holy Spirit with repentance. Cf. Acts 2:38. Collections. Vol. XIX, Sermon, 121.

1414 Collections. Vol. XIX, Sermon, 65.

1415 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 26-34. His *Ordo Salutis* has the order of calling, regeneration, conversion, faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance of saints and glorification. To put the doctrine of repentance before the doctrine of faith presents his special emphasis; although the doctrine of faith follows the doctrine of repentance the importance of faith will not be weaker.

1416 Sung-Gu, Jung, op. cit., 268

is not a sign of salvation. Accordingly, repentance is not an easy understanding of sin, but a spiritual awakening and hatred for sin through the word of God and the Holy Spirit.¹⁴¹⁷ Confession of sin or spiritual conversion that is not accompanied by the work of God is not a true conversion. Therefore “there is no salvation except conversion that is brought about by the grace of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴¹⁸

Hyung-Nong Park admitted to human experience in conversion, saying that conversion is a conscious experience for the Christian. To an extent, man co-operates in the ministry of God that converts man to Him. But in spite of his admission to human experience, in conversion God is always the subject and man is dependent and passive. Therefore, a decision to convert by man, without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is a meaningless conversion. According to Hyung-Nong Park, our conversion must not depend upon our experiences, but upon the definition of conversion in the word of God, and in the view of the word of God, human experience is treated as nothing but experiences.

Hyung-Nong Park believes that natural conscience cannot lead man to salvation, because without the work of God man cannot fundamentally understand the problem of sin. Hyung-Nong Park rejected conversion as part of the process of natural growth, which is what religious psychologists have argued. Conversion cannot be a process of natural growth, but must be the work of God¹⁴¹⁹ because it is impossible to recognise

1417 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 85.

1418 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 198.

1419 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 206.

sin without the direct interference of God.¹⁴²⁰

For Hyung-Nong Park, conversion has both passive¹⁴²¹ and active¹⁴²² aspects; the former being the conscious march of man by the work of God, and the latter being a change in the direction of changed people to God. Passive conversion by the Holy Spirit is a cause of active conversion because conversion is the very work of God and God is the origin of conversion.

Through the operation of the Holy Spirit, God frees man from his old inclination. When the Holy Spirit makes man feel His effectual existence and the new purpose that was brought, man is free inwardly, is inspired by God and devotes his whole life to the service of God. But this final action can only happen when man himself experiences God and gives himself to God with sufficient intention. So the grace of divine inspiration gives the ability to live a new life, but this new life is realised in soul alone. Therefore passive conversion (*conversio transitiva*) is a cause of active conversion (*conversio intransitiva*).¹⁴²³

Repentance shows the change in the conscious life of sinners by the Spirit of God and is the change of thought, opinion, desire and decision that will change the whole process of life with the assurance that the direction of the past was ignorance and misunderstanding.¹⁴²⁴ At the same time, on the basis of the Westminster shorter Catechism, chapter 87, Hyung-Nong Park wrote that this is a change which hates the sin and turns man's direction of life to God. "Repentance unto life is grace by which

1420 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 208.

1421 According to Hyung-Nong Park, conversion as passive aspect is God's work that God turns the regenerated to God with repentance and faith in conscious life. Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 201.

1422 Conversion as active aspect is conscious action of the regenerated to turn to God with repentance and faith through grace of God. Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 201-04.

1423 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 201-202.

1424 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 199.

to be saved, through which sinners know their sins truly and are contrite about their sins and hate them by recognition for the mercy of God in Christ, and decide to turn to God firmly and obey newly with their heart.”¹⁴²⁵

Through the work of God in repentance, the opinion of sinners is changed and man recognises his guilt, pollution and disability. And even though man sorrows for his sin, which is against God, this is also the work of God. Man decides in his heart that he needs purity and forgiveness from his sin. Hyung-Nong Park calls this the heart of repentance.¹⁴²⁶ Firstly, one can intellectually recognise what is a sin; secondly, emotionally one sorrows on account of sin; and finally, volitionally one’s attitude towards sin changes and one pursues “the internal change, forgiveness of sin and purification.” Among these three elements, intellect, emotion and volition, Hyung-Nong Park regards volitional conversion as true and as the most important part of conversion.¹⁴²⁷ He emphasised the volitional decision more than any other Reformed theologian because he wanted to place it in the concrete sphere and emphasise the responsibility inherent in it.

But repentance is not merely a means to an end or a duty to maintain the holy life which ought to be done by the saved and it is not a Christian’s right that is caused from his salvation. Repentance is a means of maintaining the holy life through works of God because God gives knowledge, intention, and makes the sinner move to repentance. Throughout his doctrine of repentance, Hyung-Nong Park maintains that repentance is the work of God. It is the product of the strong and irresistible work of

1425 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology. 207.

1426 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 207-09.

1427 Louis Berkhof called it as “the crowning element of repentance.” Louis, Berkhof, op. cit., 244.

God that connects the human soul to God.

The work of the Holy Spirit is classified into ethical and supernatural work. Ethical work is the work of God, which creates repentance through the law of God and creates faith through the Gospel. But it is inseparable from supernatural work. And at the same time ethical work *is* a supernatural work of God because the life planted in the regenerated is not accomplished through the inherent ability of man, but only by the illumination and inspiration of God.

In Hyung-Nong Park's doctrine of repentance, he never neglects the role of man because even though the event of repentance is the work of God, it takes place in man through the work of God. "God turns man to Him (Ps. 85:4; Jer. 31:18; Lam. 5:21) and at the same time he invites man to come to Him (Prov. 1:23; Isa. 31:6, 55:7, 59:20; Ezek 14:6, 18:32, 33:9, 11; Joel 2:12-14). God is presented as the creator of a new heart and a new soul (Ps. 51:10; Ezek. 11:19, 36:26), and simultaneously man is ordered to have a new heart and a new soul by God (Ezek 18:31; 2Cor 7:1; Phil. 2:12, 13; Eph. 5:10)."¹⁴²⁸ He clarifies the position of man in repentance. Reformed theology emphasises repentance and faith as works of God alone, and the main topic is faith by the grace of God. So even though they refer to repentance, it is a dependent factor of faith and it is not considered to be a necessary condition of salvation. But Hyung-Nong Park, with Calvin's *practicus syllogismus*, manifests that repentance is a fruit of regeneration and man must relate to repentance intimately. This presents his position to set the theology, and not merely theology, but the theology of the Church, because he knows well the necessity of repentance in the Church and in the Christian

1428 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 200.

Community, and he had experienced a revival through conversion during the Great Awakening of Korea.¹⁴²⁹

Repentance cannot become a merit of forgiveness of sin. Repentance alone is insufficient to receive the forgiveness of sins because Christ alone is the cause of forgiveness of sins. But even though repentance is not a merit of forgiveness of sin, it is a pre-requisite for forgiveness as gift of God. Thus “the gift of forgiveness does not come to the man who does not repent.”¹⁴³⁰

Hyung-Nong Park identified man’s work in repentance as co-operative. It is easy to misunderstand this as being a form of synergism. To support his position, he took the view of A. Kuyper that “in the Old Testament **שוב** was used 74 times for actions of man and 15 times for the graceful action of God, and in the New Testament conversion was used 26 times for actions of man and 2 to 3 times for the work of God.”¹⁴³¹ Therefore, for Hyung-Nong Park God still works in human history and man can turn to Him by reason of the fact that ‘He turns man into Him’. Actually ‘co-operation’ in terms of Hyung-Nong Park means that conversion is a change that occurs in the consciousness of man, where God is the subject and man is the dependent, but it is evident that man and God work together. Of course, the dependent

1429 Actually in his youth period he is related with dominant revivalists who are Ik-Doo, Kim and Bong-Suk, Choi directly or indirectly. Dong-Min, Jang, op. cit., 28-32 and he presented Bong Suk, Choi as one of the models of true faith. Collections. Vol. XIX. 220-226.

1430 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 223-24. By the Westminster confession 15, 3. He presented dogmatic adequateness of his position. “Although repentance be not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.

1431 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 217.

work of man is also the work of God because “human work does not exclude divine work.”¹⁴³²

And for Hyung-Nong Park repentance is not only the regenerated’s confession of sin, but also the proclamation of their love of God that delays the judgment for sinners. Therefore, repentance is a direct expression of the love of God. For man, repentance is an understanding of the love of God and gratitude for the postponement of judgment, and for God it is His own love that postpones judgment for sinners. God delays judgment for sinners in His grace. As a sign of this postponement of judgment God gives an opportunity for repentance. Thus, repentance is a sign of the love of God and a symbol of His patience towards sinners.¹⁴³³

5. 4. The Characteristics of Repentance in Soteriology

5. 4. 1. Repentance and Justification

Conversion, which includes faith, is connected to forensic justification, so by conversion the sinner in faith recognises that “I am worthy to be condemned,” and at the same time he trusts confidently in Jesus as his saviour. The most important point of conversion is not man’s confession of sin, but the Cross of Christ and faith that all sins are forgiven through the merit of Christ.¹⁴³⁴

Hyung-Nong Park agrees with Louis Berkhof’s assertion that conversion, when

1432 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 216-217.

1433 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 83.

1434 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 203.

compared with justification, is not a ‘legal act’ but a ‘moral or re-creative act’, and it does not alter ‘the state’ of man, but ‘the condition of man’.¹⁴³⁵ Hyung-Nong Park argued that even though ἐπιστρεφειν has religious features and μετάνοια is used to show the change of moral disposition, both terms indicate not the change of state, but the condition of man.¹⁴³⁶ Therefore, by justification the sinner’s state is changed, but by repentance or conversion his condition is changed.

And, as opposed to justification, repentance is associated with conscious life. Justification is a forensic event that we are right in Christ and it happens where we cannot feel it, whereas conversion does “not happen in the subconscious aspect of sinners, but happens within the range of the conscious life.” However, it bears fruit from the sub-conscious and the conscious because conversion is a product of regeneration and it is different to justification. Although our sins are forgiven by justification through Christ and this gives us comfort, it does not make repentance, the confession of sin in an attempt to be forgiven, useless.¹⁴³⁷ For Hyung-Nong Park, the fact that both justification and repentance obtain the forgiveness of sin is not a contradiction in salvation.

Hyung-Nong Park believes that sanctification and justification have an intimate relationship with each other. Both sides are distinguishable, but inseparable. And in the covenant of grace “justification precedes sanctification and becomes the cause of sanctification,” but in the covenant of works “righteousness and holiness have the

1435 Louis Berkhof, op. cit., 245.

1436 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 202.

1437 Collections. Vol. XX, Sermon, 151.

opposite order.”¹⁴³⁸ And both justification and sanctification have the same root and are inseparable and interdependent each other. But he does not neglect the role of subjectivity in sanctification.

Protestant Christians reject the doctrine of subjective justification of the Roman Church, while at the same time arguing that the man who is not saved from the subjective power of sin will not be saved from the guilt of sin. Sanctification cannot be separated from justification, for they are, at the root, the same.¹⁴³⁹

Therefore, Christians recognise the fact that justification and forgiveness of sins through repentance are confessions of sin, and through them man can experience the joy and the certainty of salvation.¹⁴⁴⁰ Repentance is an important means for recognising justification and regeneration externally.

5. 4. 2. Repentance and Regeneration

In Hyung-Nong Park’s doctrine of repentance the role of regeneration cannot be overlooked because conversion is the privilege of the regenerated and an external sign of this regeneration. As previously discussed, regeneration is a change on the sub-conscious level, whereas repentance is a change of the conscious life of sinners. Regeneration occurs in the sub-conscious, but conversion is the conscious changing of direction and includes psychological awakening.¹⁴⁴¹ Repentance “is based on the

1438 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 356.

1439 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 371

1440 Collections. Vol. XX, Sermon, 150.

1441 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 136.

works of regeneration”¹⁴⁴² and it begins with regeneration. And conversion involves the putting off of the old self and the putting on of the new self.¹⁴⁴³ In other words, “it begins consciously with the decision to make a holy life out of sin.”¹⁴⁴⁴ The internal change of regeneration is externalised by conversion and is turned to wherever God wants. This is a restoration of the image of God that has been lost, and it is a re-creation of this image.

Conversion involves the new disposition generated by regeneration freely turning to God.¹⁴⁴⁵ According to Hyung-Nong Park, true conversion (*conversio actualis prima*) in the strictest sense, is change which starts because “godly sorrow brings repentance” and leads to a devotional life for God. For Hyung-Nong Park repentance is “change that separate sinners from their sin and takes place in the conscious life of sinners through the operation of God.”¹⁴⁴⁶

Naturally, repentance and faith are consequences and fruits of regeneration because regeneration is a leading work of the Holy Spirit and the work of God alone.¹⁴⁴⁷ At the same time, repentance and faith are the fruits of sermons that are preached in the heart of the regenerated through the word of God.¹⁴⁴⁸ Although repentance and faith are important in soteriology and man recognises the grace of God and sin through them, nevertheless it is proper that regeneration precede repentance,

1442 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 199.

1443 Ephesians 4:24.

1444 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 203.

1445 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 193.

1446 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 193.

1447 Collections. Vol. XX, Sermon, 299.

1448 Collections. Vol. XX, Sermon, 299.

and by regeneration sinners repent to God. Regeneration is not a result of faith and repentance, but rather faith and repentance are results of regeneration. Therefore repentance and faith are proof of regeneration. In Hyung-Nong Park's doctrine of regeneration, the operator is God, Himself, and there is no room for any other. In his soteriology, regeneration is the heart of salvation.

We are not regenerated by faith and repentance, but we believe and repent on account of regeneration. No one can repent and believe without regeneration by the Holy Spirit. This is the only way of glorifying Christ. Only by repentance and faith can it be recognised that we are regenerated because repentance and faith are the first proofs of regeneration..... The regenerated converts and practices repentance and faith.¹⁴⁴⁹

A. H. Strong refers to repentance as the “human aspect” of regeneration.¹⁴⁵⁰ Hyung-Nong Park classified features of regeneration and conversion such that regeneration is passive, but conversion has both passive and active aspects,¹⁴⁵¹ and regeneration is a once-and-for-all event, but conversion (essentially conversion unto salvation is a once-and-for-all event) can sometimes be a repetition. But the passivity of man precedes his activity in the work of God. Regeneration precedes, and causes, conversion, but in general regeneration cannot be separated from conversion; they follow a logical order. But, except in the case of the man who was regenerated as an infant, regeneration and conversion occur simultaneously. Hyung-Nong Park's doctrine of regeneration has room for dispute, since Calvin only spoke of the salvation of the chosen infant, but he presupposed the regeneration of the human who

1449 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 187.

1450 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 203.

1451 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 195.

died as infants.¹⁴⁵² Regeneration is a change of disposition, but conversion is a change of life, thus conversion follows on from regeneration.

Repentance and faith are signs of the regenerated who possesses the kingdom of God. In other words, “the regenerated cannot live in sin and unconverted.”¹⁴⁵³ But to be regenerated does not mean to be changed perfectly, but rather to have the direction of one’s life is changed. Therefore, in spite of regeneration, one continues to sin. However, the change of internal disposition in regeneration is not ‘perfect purification’ together with sanctification; in other words, sinners cannot be perfect men in the presence of God through regeneration alone, therefore repeated repentance is required for the converted Christian. This obviously shows the principle of soteriology. Nonetheless, if man does not repent of his sins, his direction of life is not yet changed. Therefore he is not yet a regenerated man.¹⁴⁵⁴

5. 4. 3. Moment and Progression

Conversion is momentary¹⁴⁵⁵ and, at the same time, repeated because conversion includes two aspects: man turns to God like a proselyte, and he confesses his sins consistently whenever he commits sin. Hyung-Nong Park, without analysis of terms, classifies repentance and conversion in a broader sense into soteriological and

1452 Chul Won Seo, op. cit., 446-447.

1453 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 188, 193.

1454 Collections. Vol. XX, Sermon, 300.

1455 Collections. Vol. 8, 140-143. The conversion of Paul, according to Hyung-Nong Park, is momentary and miraculous. In opposition to Baur and Strauss he argues that conversion is a miracle and impossible without the work of God.

confessional dimensions in order to distinguish between conversion as the turning away from unbelief and repentance as the daily confession of sin.

Hyung-Nong Park calls the first form the conversion of salvation and the second repeated conversion. Principally, Hyung-Nong Park, following the position of A. Kuyper, only admitted momentary conversion.¹⁴⁵⁶ In his soteriology conversion is once-off, like regeneration, even though it is repeated. This is conversion in Hyung-Nong Park's soteriological meaning.

Nevertheless, Hyung-Nong Park argued that conversion to salvation is not always momentary, but may sometimes be gradual. Repentance is connected with sanctification and the sanctification of life is the end of repentance, so in terms of the perfection of sanctification, repentance must be both continuous and ceaseless. In this position Hyung-Nong Park criticises the revival movement of Charles Finney, who always regards conversion in the same light as regeneration,¹⁴⁵⁷ because he believes

1456 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 201; According to A. Kuyper, "conversion unto salvation is once in a whole life and it cannot be repeated. If one gets out of death he is alive and will not go back to death. Eternal death does not mean a river which passes under many bridges, nor can a Christian cross a bridge and go back to the seashore of death because of endless hope and fears. There is only one bridge to cross a river once. The one who crosses the bridge is protected by the power of God. Even though all of the powers want to turn him back, no one can turn him back because God is stronger than all creatures. According to the Bible, conversion can be applied to backsliding children of God. But it is not connected with the action of salvation, nor turning back from death but turning back from way of the temporal lost." (this is translated from Korean and edited by me)

1457 Charles G. Finney, *True and False Repentance*, tr. Sung-Ok, Eum (Seoul: Eun Sung Press, 1999) For C. Finney repentance is very conversion and conversion is very repentance. Throughout his book he wrote that conversion from unbelief and confession for sin are treated in same sense because true conversion coincides with true repentance and the one who converted from sin perfectly is sanctified. Even though the one can corrupt again one does not go back before conversion and

that God gives a different appearance of conversion to each individual person.¹⁴⁵⁸

And although the conversion that turns from the way of death to the way of salvation is once-off, the “converted person can repent and turn to the first love from cooling, tenderness and weakness of faith.”¹⁴⁵⁹ So, after the first conversion, it is possible for subordinating conversion to occur repeatedly. And repeated conversion is necessary because “regeneration does not accomplish sanctification, the change of subjective disposition is not the same as perfect purification. For the one who converted by regeneration the sequence and proof of the first conversion is continuously necessary.”¹⁴⁶⁰

Hyung-Nong Park presented the conversion of Mannesseh (2Chron. 33:11-13) and Paul (Acts 9:1-19, 22:3-16 26:9-20) as examples of momentary conversion and distinguished it from the gradual conversion of children of Christians. And he argued that while we can notice the moment of momentary conversion, we cannot know the moment and time of gradual conversion.¹⁴⁶¹

Consistently, he distinguished the first conversion from repeated conversion or repentance. He always included repentance and faith in his doctrine of conversion, so

repentance (134). C. Finney identifies repentance with regeneration (120).

1458 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 193.

1459 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 200; Hyung-Nong Park argues that “there is no repeats in soteriological conversion of restrict meaning.” The one who experienced the true conversion temporally can be attracted by evils and be wandered about far distance but finally they come back to God with contrite heart. Therefore it is proper to call ‘*gradualness*’ following conversion after first conversion to distinguish it from former.”

1460 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 200.

1461 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 204-5.

they should be treated as one event. But it is very difficult to find an articulate distinction in his doctrine of repentance.

It is obvious in Hyung-Nong Park's brief definition of the *Ordo Salutis* that "the soul that is regenerated and has repented and believes in the Holy Spirit will win in the fight against sin passively through the guidance of the Spirit, which inhabits him. Positively, he will be sanctified gradually in thought, word and action."¹⁴⁶²

Hyung-Nong Park describes *mortificatio* and *vivificatio*¹⁴⁶³ as the re-creation and process of the recovery of the image of God, holiness, knowledge and righteousness. Like Calvin, he says that the struggle between the old and the new life have to continue for a man's whole life.¹⁴⁶⁴ So, his doctrine of repentance is placed within his doctrine of sanctification, but he regards the doctrine of repentance as an event consecutive to the doctrine of sanctification. In his doctrine of repentance *mortificatio*, which is concerned with the action of repentance and hatred of sin, is comparatively weak because repentance in sanctification must inevitably stress on the *vivificatio* aspect of the doctrine of repentance.

1462 Collections. Vol. XX, Sermon, 300.

1463 As a matter of fact, Calvin used the term *mortificatio* and *vivificatio* in the doctrine of repentance but Hyung-Nong Park used them in sanctification. "This (*mortificatio*) is a biblical expression to indicate the passive work of sanctification that removes the pollution and depravity of the character of human being as a result of sin. It is connected with the Cross of Christ as crucifying the old man..... (But) the new man is created for good works in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10). Concerning the effect of sanctification as I stated above is passive but this is a positive aspect. The positive aspect of sanctification is that we have been raised with Christ. (Rom 6:4, 5; Col 2:12, 3:1, 2)." Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 344-45.

1464 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 204

Repentance cannot be completed by a momentary endeavour, but must be continued throughout man's entire life.¹⁴⁶⁵ This is connected with the views of Luther and Calvin, who stated that God wants our whole lives to be repentance. On this point, his beliefs are similar to those of Luther and Calvin, but different to those of K. Barth, who attempts to treat repentance in terms of a forensic declaration.

5. 4. 4. Repentance, Fruits and Evidence

For Hyung-Nong Park, conversion is defined first as a work for a new inclination and then as the complex internal changes of the Christian and his subsequent actions. Conversion includes not only one stage of the *Ordo Salutis*, but the whole process in which God changes and turns His people to Him. As one of the processes of the *Ordo Salutis* conversion is closely related to other steps in the *Ordo Salutis*.¹⁴⁶⁶ Hyung-Nong Park believes that the doctrine of repentance is not only a single step included in the *Ordo Salutis*, but also the actions of man that escape the judgment of God.¹⁴⁶⁷ Thus, in his doctrine of repentance, conversion includes both the works of God and the works of man that are caused by God's work. Although the first cause of repentance is always the Cross of Christ and the grace of God, repentance involves the concrete and volitional action of man.

Concerning the definition of repentance, Hyung-Nong Park preferred the term *μετάνοια* in the New Testament as the proper description of the use of the

1465 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 204.

1466 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 202.

1467 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 310.

resipiscentia and *poenitentia* of Lactantius. He agreed with Walden's book, *The Great Meaning of μετάνοια*, and argued that in repentance a change of heart means not only a change of mind, but also a change of direction in life and ethical disposition. Hyung-Nong Park's definition of repentance shows the change of man's whole life;

To explain in detail, the change that this term (conversion) presents is connected with intellectual life (2 Tim. 2:25), superior knowledge and salvific sanction concerning God and His truth (the same as the action of faith), conscious- volitional life (Acts 8:22), turning to God from the self (including the action of faith), emotional change that is accompanied by pious sorrow for sin (2 Cor. 7:10), and the opening of a new horizon of rejoicing to sinners. All of the elements of μετάνοια include the conscious resistance against the past condition. This needs to be investigated in detail because it is a basic factor of μετάνοια. To convert is not only to change from one conscious direction to another, but also to turn away from the past with clear hatred. This is to say that μετάνοια has both passive and active aspects.¹⁴⁶⁸

Repentance is not a partial change, but a change of the whole man because all kinds of sins violate the Holiness of God. Therefore, repentance is not only a change of essence of the internal man, but also a change of the external fruits of repentance.

The one who repents truly is opposed to all evils in the sight of God, not opposed to some evils. True repentance has a thoroughgoing attitude, not a partial change. Some of the unregenerated may not commit the sin of being a drunkard, or that of prodigality, but may rather be dishonest and haughty. The fruit of true repentance escapes from all types of sin because it knows that all sin violates the Holiness of God.¹⁴⁶⁹

For this reason, Hyung-Nong Park never neglects the role of the fruits of repentance as a means of proof of true repentance. "True repentance should be proved by confession of sin to God (Lk. 18:13) or by indemnification to neighbours for

1468 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 195.

1469 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 225.

damage (Lk. 19:8).”¹⁴⁷⁰ He criticises repentance in Korean Christians, using the example of Zaccheus, because Korean Christians merely confess their sins without exhibiting the fruits of repentance. In Hyung-Nong Park’s view, true repentance must bear the fruits externally and repentance is not only confession to God, but also paying the proper costs, even if this means losing a lot of things.¹⁴⁷¹ In fact, he believed that the cause of the Korean War was the sins of pastors of the Korean Church who did not repent or pay the costs of the sins of ShinSaChamBae.¹⁴⁷²

Even though Charles Finney argued in his book *True and false Repentance* that if repentance has a sense of duty and an intentional cause, it is a false repentance,¹⁴⁷³ Hyung-Nong Park rejects the idealistic or perfect repentance, saying that repentance must be connected with concreteness of life and human repentance cannot be perfect on earth.

Hyung-Nong Park also considered good works as an important factor of soteriology because they are the result of repentance and the production of faith. That is, because Christians are saved from the wrath of God by putting on the

1470 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 212.

1471 Collections. Vol. XIX, Sermon, 66-72.

1472 Collections. Vol. XIX, Sermon, 66-72.

1473 Dong-Min, Jang argued that in a lecture in the presbytery of October of 1932 Hyung-Nong Park criticised revival movement of modern British-America, especially the unbiblical method of Charles Finney, but in conclusion he said that the theology of Hyung-Nong Park is not a Reformed theology but revival movement of modern British-America and evangelicalism of the 19th century. Dong-Min, Jang, op. cit., 235-237. Even though it seems that Hyung-Nong Park admitted the mystical dimension in repentance, this does not imply that his doctrine of repentance is based on the mystical movement and perfectionism, but rather his doctrine of repentance is based on the teachings of Bible. He points out the problem of enthusiasm, anarchical principles and irregular irruptions in repentance.

righteousness of God, God calls his people to perform tasks and works (Matt 12: 36; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:10).¹⁴⁷⁴ Therefore, repentance is thankfulness to God, obedience and a product of true faith.

Those justified by faith thank the God who saves them by doing His good works. The Holy Spirit, who performs the new creation, helps us to do good works that are the result and expression of faith. Good works performed through the power of the grace of God will be tested by the judgment of the future (1 Cor. 3:15).¹⁴⁷⁵

It is true that the internal change that is the cause of the fruits of repentance precedes these fruits.¹⁴⁷⁶ However, repentance is called true repentance only when it results in the proper fruits. Through repentance believers should be changed into men obedient to God and a change of action should occur immediately.

Hyung-Nong Park clearly distinguishes the fruits of repentance from repentance itself.¹⁴⁷⁷ He presents the “faithful confession of sins, the improvement of volition, the waking up and turning against sin, the surrender to Jesus, correct ethical action, the declaration of Christian faith and the living of a life of love based on the love of God”¹⁴⁷⁸ as fruits of repentance, but maintains that these are not repentance itself.

Hyung-Nong Park used the *Syllogismus Practicus* to explain the relationship between repentance and good works; the fact that we are saved by faith is confirmed by repentance, and true repentance is confirmed by good works. For him, the fruits of

1474 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology. 310.

1475 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology. 310.

1476 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 212

1477 Louis, Berkhof, op. cit., 245. “It does not confound this (inward change) with the change of life in which it results, but regards confession of sin and reparation of wrongs as *fruits* of repentance.”

1478 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 224-225.

true repentance are not abstract fruits, but fruits of concrete life, and these works verify the truth of repentance (Lk 3:10-14).¹⁴⁷⁹

This is a kind of series in which true faith precedes true repentance and true repentance is accompanied by good works. “It is an important declaration by Peter that after the Christian’s calling and election is verified by his holy life, he will be received into the eternal kingdom of Christ.”¹⁴⁸⁰ Even though Hyung-Nong Park used this for the verification of the doctrine of election and the doctrine of perseverance of the saints it is also used as a means for verifying true faith and true repentance, because true faith and true repentance are the very signs of redemption.

Since this is the case, the one who repents of his sins must first of all confess faithfully; if the sin occurred before the public, he must confess before the public; if it was before the Church, he must confess in front of the Church; and if it is connected with an individual, he must confess his sin before the individual. By taking this position, Hyung-Nong Park connects a man’s repentance with a relationship with God, the Church and his neighbours. Sometimes true repentance requires an external confession before the public and the Church.

In Korea, liberal theologians have criticised conservative theologians for thinking that conservative theologians are indifferent to social issues, but this is, in fact, incorrect. He connects with between social reformation and social repentance. For Hyung-Nong Park, as for Louis Berkhof, repentance does not simply mean the penitence for the specific sin or forgiveness of the individual sin, but rather he

1479 Collections. Vol. XIX, Sermon, 270-274.

1480 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 412.

considers national conversion to be one kind of conversion¹⁴⁸¹ and he believes that the repentance of a few people can save a nation.¹⁴⁸²

Hyung-Nong Park emphasises the necessity of repentance for social sins in his sermons, as well as in his theological writings. He regards the encroachment of Japanese imperialism and the Korean War as a call for the repentance of people¹⁴⁸³ because, for him, the Korean War was an affliction of the grace of God in order to make the Koreans repent. God allowed His people to suffer in order to make them repent, and repentance is God's wonderful action and the means of His grace to save His people. This implies that Hyung-Nong Park considers the Korean nation as a covenantal people who were punished and will be forgiven by God if they repent.¹⁴⁸⁴

According to Hyung-Nong Park, the encroachment of Japanese imperialism and the Korean War were caused by the sins of man,¹⁴⁸⁵ and he believes that if we and our nation repent and turn to God, He will forgive us and deliver us from national

1481 Louis, Berkhof, op. cit., 242.

1482 Collections. Vol. V, Soteriology, 197.

1483 One of sermon in 1951 of the Korean War (1950-1953) he rejected to neglect the repentance at all case, especially he pointed out the problem of repentance of who are worshipping to Japanese Shinto (ShinSaChamBae). Collections. Vol. XIX, Sermon, 62-72. His stance is almost same with Cyprian that readmission of the lapsed to Church without repentance "would outrage God and provoke a further intensification of the persecution." Cf. J. P. Burns, *Confessing the Church: Cyprian on penance*. Maurice F. Wiles, et al., ed. *Studia Patristica. XXXVI*, Critica et philologica, Nachleben, First two centuries, Tertullian to Arnobius, Egypt before Nicaea, Athanasius and his opponents. International Conference on Patristic Studies, 13th, Oxford, 1999. Louvain: Peeters, 2001, 33-348.

1484 Dong-Min, Jang, op. cit., 54-55.

1485 Sung-Gu, Jung, *Hyung-Nong Park as a pastor and his Sermons: The Life and thought of Juk San Hyung-Nong Park*, ed. Yong- Kyu, Park, (Seoul: ChongShin University Press, 1996), 262-264.

disasters. In regards to the individual, repentance is a means to dissolve the wrath of God against the individual, but for a nation, repentance is a means to remove the anger of God against the nation.¹⁴⁸⁶

Hyung-Nong Park also recognises that repentance is not only the means of restoration from punishment, but also the means of blessings. And repentance does not only mean religious activity, but also social reform, restoration of ethics and moral improvement. Therefore, contrary to the view of liberal theologians, Hyung-Nong Park connected repentance with personal and social ethics in his doctrine of repentance.¹⁴⁸⁷

For this reason Christians have a responsibility for political issues and War, and they must feel keenly that the cause of problem is ours, and repent in order to solve the problems created by sin.

SUMMARY

For Hyung-Nong Park, sin is composed of action and the condition of the heart of men who break away from the law of God. The one who commits the sin provokes the wrath of God and therefore cannot enter the kingdom of God. One can only enter the kingdom of God through repentance and faith as the works of God in Christ. Fundamentally, repentance is the work of God, but sometimes it is called a work of man because God does it through man. Hyung-Nong Park called it a co-operative

1486 Collections. Vol. XIX, Sermon, 101-210, 215-222.

1487 Ibid.

work between God and man. In the light of salvation, conversion is occurred once-and-for-all, but in the light of confession it is repeated.

Conversion presents its truth through the fruits of repentance. This is not the compensation and sacramental cults of Roman Catholicism, but is rather an external expression of the works of God who works in the internal man. Through conversion sinners become the children of God and complete the sanctification that restores the image of God. But this conversion is given to the regenerated and to the Christian who has the sign of God's children in regeneration. Therefore repentance itself becomes a sign of redemption.

In order to simplify his explanation, Hyung-Nong Park distinguished repentance from sanctification. And he dealt with both repentance and faith in his doctrine of conversion. It is shown in his *Ordo Salutis* that the doctrine of conversion is connected with regeneration, faith, justification and adoption, but sanctification is closely connected with the ethical life of the Christian rather than hatred for sin and hope for the forgiveness of sins.

On the whole, Hyung-Nong Park intends to escape from the ethical category of man in his doctrine of repentance, but, contrary to this desire, his doctrine of repentance is rather ethical because he wants to present the way for the concrete life of the Christian.

And Hyung-Nong Park's doctrine of repentance is weakened by his overemphasis on regeneration. For him, the most important thing is that regeneration is God's ministry alone and that this, together with the presence of the Holy Spirit,

lays the foundation for salvation. Thus, Korean Presbyterian Christians do not have the urgency of repentance even though they have repented in public, especially in the prayer meetings held every Friday, and they understand the mechanics of repentance and the necessity of prayer, because by the overemphasis on regeneration they have no necessity in relationship with salvation. It is problematic that their repentance cannot change their lives or themselves because they want to explain it through the doctrine of regeneration in the view of repentance of Hyung-Nong Park.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the words of Berkouwer: “no one can slough off the questions that have grown up in theological history and confessional development.”¹⁴⁸⁸ And it is impossible for one to isolate himself from the times in which he lives. Therefore, the starting point for this thesis was the urgent need of the Korean Church, which has a unique theological history, background and characteristics, concerning the doctrine of repentance.

It is necessary to formulate the correct doctrine of repentance for modern Christians, especially Korean Christians, because the doctrine of repentance can facilitate freedom from sins and the certainty of salvation as well as faith.

From the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, Christ and His disciples to the modern Church, a repentance, which turns away from sin and turns to God, has been preached as their main message. Nevertheless, in the Korean Church the definition of repentance was not obvious because of the influence of the idea of penance of the Roman Catholic Church and Arminianism, and because of an overemphasis on the ‘justification by faith alone’ of Reformed theology. When the Korean Church has a correct definition and understanding of repentance, Korean Christians will experience a great awakening similar to that of the early twentieth century and they will be able to turn to God and turn both church and society to God, and the Korean Church will have freedom from sins, the certainty of salvation, and through it she will experience the reinforcement of faith.

1488 FJ, 19.

The messages of Jesus Christ about repentance are indissolubly bound up with the kingdom of God (Mk. 1:15; Mt. 3:8), and repentance is the “one and only imperative in Jesus’ message of the kingdom of God.”¹⁴⁸⁹ The coming of the kingdom of God requires the repentance of sinners, and this is why the Bible says ‘repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’ (Mt. 4:17). Repentance is necessary for salvation and for the coming of the kingdom of God. Therefore, repentance is a main issue and major theme of biblical soteriology.

In soteriology, both faith and repentance are important, even though people are saved through ‘justification by faith alone.’ And repentance and conversion occur through faith and include faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 11:21). Ἐπιστρεφω always includes faith, and μετανοῶ and πιστεύω can stand together and complement each other. In Jesus’ message, μετάνοια comes out from faith¹⁴⁹⁰ and the effect of μετάνοια is the forgiveness of all sins once-and-for-all.¹⁴⁹¹ Without faith there is no conversion and no repentance. Sanctification, which includes repentance, “is inseparable from justification, and the one is just as essential as the other.”¹⁴⁹²

In spite of the importance of the doctrine of repentance in soteriology, its position and role were treated lightly in Reformed theology because the only concern of Reformed theologians was the objectivity of salvation in Christ and ‘justification

1489 Gerhard, Kittel, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Vol. IV, tr. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 1002. Hereafter, TDNT.

1490 TDNT, Vol. IV, 1002-3.

1491 F. Laubach, *Conversion: The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Collin Brown (Grand Rapids: The Paternoster Press, 1975), 355; Hereafter, NIDNTT; TDNT, Vol. IV, 1001.

1492 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. III*, op. cit., 238.

by faith alone.’ Therefore, Reformed theology could not give its proper position to the doctrine of repentance. For the purpose of understanding of true repentance this thesis focused on four Reformed theologians and, for comparison, includes Roman Catholic theology as well. The purpose of this study was to identify true repentance in the Bible and to suggest a correct doctrine of repentance to modern Reformed Christians.

The reason that I dealt with those Reformed theologians in this thesis was, first of all, that all of them greatly contributed to Protestant theology, especially to Reformed theology. And I dealt with Calvin’s doctrine of repentance in order to investigate traditional Reformed theology, I dealt with Karl Barth’s doctrine of repentance in order to show the problem of forensic repentance, I treated G. C. Berkouwer’s doctrine of repentance in order to examine the reaction of Reformed theology in a modern context, I dealt with the doctrine of penance in official Roman Catholicism in order to point out the problem of penance and to show that Reformed theology is biblical, and I dealt with Hyung–Nong Park in order to know the doctrine of repentance of the Korean Presbyterian Christian where I stand and suggest correct repentance to the Korean Church.

Calvin’s doctrine of repentance is balanced between subjectivity and objectivity even though he argues that repentance is a work of God and God always has the initiative. And he regards repentance as a requisite element of salvation. In general I agree with Calvin’s doctrine of repentance. But his connection between repentance and *Practicus Syllogismus* to emphasise the necessity of good work in salvation needs our careful attention because it can slip into legalism easily.

Karl Barth’s doctrine of repentance is only the work of God. This doctrine of

Karl Barth can be defined forensic repentance; genuine repentance takes place in Christ only. Christians can participate in the repentance of Christ and repentance in Christ becomes their repentance. Therefore there is no human role in it. His repentance is faith itself because only through faith can Christians receive repentance from Christ.

But in the strictest sense, Karl Barth does not present a real repentance and his doctrine of repentance does not require human activity in this world because his doctrine of repentance is concentrated on the objectivity of salvation in order to escape the subjectivity of the nineteenth century. I understand his contribution in Reformed theology, but I do not agree with his forensic repentance because surely in the Bible God requires a human role in repentance.

Berkouwer's doctrine of repentance is understood by his term 'correlation'. He uses this term in order to explain the balance between faith and repentance and to overcome the problem between subjectivity and objectivity in repentance. It is a very valid and adequate term; Faith and repentance are not interdependent, but are closely connected in the grace of God in Christ. By faith the sinner knows that he is a sinner and understands the necessity of repentance. Repentance is a means of strengthening faith.

He retains the traditional Reformed position but he is different to his antecedent Reformed theologians because he gives answer to Reformed theology in a modern context. He tries to overcome the limit offset by Barth's in the relationship between God and man in the doctrine of repentance with a great wealth of knowledge of the Bible. But he does not present sufficient specific guidelines with regard to the manner

in which repentance should be dealt with in pastoral ministry.

In the Roman Catholic Church penance, theoretically and practically, is a requisite element in soteriology. There is no salvation without penance, and forgiveness of sins and salvation cannot be accomplished without a priest. Even though recently she has argued that satisfaction by priest is no more than a fruit of repentance, she still considers satisfaction by priest as a necessary element of salvation.¹⁴⁹³

The penance is not based totally on the merit of being Christo-centric but, partially on the merit of the Church and the Priest. It is not based on the Bible. And her penance converts repentance by the righteousness of Christ into penance by co-operation of humans.

Since the second Vatican Council the Roman Catholic Church has tried to have discussions with the Protestant Church. The problem of penance is one of the major issues.¹⁴⁹⁴ But she still does not abandon the stem of the Council of Trent regarding penance. Her penance is a legalistic-penance.

The term 'penance' which is used by the Roman Catholic Church in inter-church discussions with the Protestant Church is not adequate because it is not a biblical term but a term invented by the Roman Catholic Church. And it shows that she has no mind to abandon her own position in the inter-church discussion.

1493 M. E. Brinkman, *Sacraments of Freedom. Ecumenical Essays on Creation and Sacrament, Justification and Freedom*, 111.

1494 Anthony N.S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic Protestant Dialogue: An Evangelical Assessment*, 87-126.

Hyung-Nong Park called repentance a co-operative work between God and man. But he does not want synergism because he assumes that repentance is only given to the regenerated and to the Christian who has the sign of God's children in regeneration. Therefore repentance itself becomes a sign of redemption. But it is difficult to change one's life because Hyung-Nong Park's doctrine of repentance is weakened by his overemphasis on regeneration.

Four Reformed theologians regard repentance as a work of God and they admit the initiative of God in repentance. Except for Barth, Reformed theologians tried to pursue the balance between subjectivity and objectivity in repentance. Calvin and Berkouwer and Hyung Nong Park try to overcome the problems of Barth's forensic penance, the legalistic-penance of the Roman Catholic Church, Arminianism, and synergism with '*Duplex acceptio hominis*' or '*Operum Justitia*,' 'Correlation' and Park's own term 'Co-operative'.

In general I agree with the doctrine of Reformed theologians but I feel something is wanting because, excepting Calvin, three of them still neglect the role of man in repentance and do not emphasise the importance of repentance in salvation.

Repentance retains the balance between objectivity and subjectivity in biblical soteriology, but it is seen only as a ministry of God. The heart of the doctrine of repentance in Reformed theology is that repentance is the work of God, God alone causes it and it is a result of the ministry God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt.3:11¹⁴⁹⁵; Lk. 5:32¹⁴⁹⁶; Acts 5:31¹⁴⁹⁷; 2 Tim. 2:25¹⁴⁹⁸; Heb. 6:6¹⁴⁹⁹,

1495 Ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν, ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν, οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι· αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ

Heb.12:17¹⁵⁰⁰; Rev. 2:21¹⁵⁰¹).

The mere power of truth, argument, motive, persuasion, or eloquence cannot produce repentance...they (effects) are the gift of God, the fruit of the Spirit... but it is God who gives the increase. In this latter sense of the word supernatural, the cooperation of second causes is not excluded....but in conversion, repentance, faith and growth in grace.¹⁵⁰²

The origin of repentance is the mercy of God in Christ,¹⁵⁰³ and, even though repentance occurs in the regenerated, its cause is still in God and from God. And repentance cannot occur without the word of God and the power of Holy Spirit. Contrary to *Article III of The Remonstrant*,¹⁵⁰⁴ *Articles III and IV of the Canons of Dort* states that “without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation.” The *Canons*, first of all, emphasises God as being an initiator of repentance, in contrast to the *Remonstrant* because “he who works in

πυρί·

1496 οὐκ ἐλήλυθα καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁματωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν.

1497 τοῦτον ὁ θεὸς ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα ὑψώσεν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ [τοῦ] δοῦναι μετάνοιαν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

1498 ἐν πρᾶυτῃ παιδεύοντα τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους, μήποτε δώῃ αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς μετάνοιαν εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας

1499 καὶ παραπεσόντας, πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν, ἀνασταυροῦντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας.

1500 ἵστε γὰρ ὅτι καὶ μετέπειτα θέλων κληρονομησαὶ τὴν εὐλογίαν ἀπεδοκιμάσθη, μετανοίας γὰρ τόπον οὐχ εὔρεν καίπερ μετὰ δακρύων ἐκζητήσας αὐτήν.

1501 καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

1502 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. III* (London and Edinburgh: Thomas and Sons, 1873), 215.

1503 A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, first printed 1860; reprinted 1991), 488.

1504 Article 3. Man in his fallen state is unable to accomplish anything really and truly good, and therefore also unable to attain to saving faith, unless he be regenerated and renewed by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. This article has condition “unless.”

man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe and the act of believing also.”¹⁵⁰⁵

God is taking the initiative to bring about his people’s return to Him (Jer. 3:22) and gives new heart and new spirit to them. Its cause is the love of God and the mercy of God (Exo. 34:6-7; Jer. 3:12) as a physician. Throughout Scripture, God, through his prophets and apostles, calls Israel to return to him (2Kgs. 17:13; 2Chron. 30:6; Isa. 44:22).

The ends of repentance are the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of the image of God,¹⁵⁰⁶ and for these ends sinners must repent of their sins to God every day, but repentance, and thus forgiveness of sins and restoration of the image of God, is caused by the grace of God, which turns man to him. Even though sinners’ repentance and good works are required as the fruits of repentance, they are the result of divine influences.¹⁵⁰⁷ God is the only agent of repentance in Scripture because He alone has a right to us and “he is merciful and willing to forgive, together with a determination to live, by the help of his grace, in obedience to his commandments.”¹⁵⁰⁸

Repentance is a blessing of God because to repent of sin presupposes the possibility of the forgiveness of sins; not to repent presupposes the possibility of eternal punishment. Therefore, the unforgivable sins in Hebrews 6:4-6 cannot be

1505 Philip Schaff, ed. *The Canons of Dort: The Creed of Christendom, Vol. I*, Reprinted (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 521-523.

1506 Charles Hodge, op. cit., 217. According to C. Hodge, sanctification is “the process by which the sinner is transformed into the image of Christ.”

1507 Charles Hodge, op. cit., 218.

1508 A. A. Hodge, op. cit., 489.

understood in the sense of Jewish and Old Testament practice, rather this passage can be understood as an admonition and a warning for perfection of repentance. It has a special pastoral warning, in which repentance is a “totality” and consequently a “total surrender.”¹⁵⁰⁹ Thus there is no unforgivable sin in those regenerated in the atonement of Christ because God is the cause of repentance and Christ accomplished the ministry of forgiveness of sins, and true repentance presupposes that one was regenerated and elected.

Repentance is God’s approach to sinners for forgiveness of sins.¹⁵¹⁰ In the Scriptures, faith, repentance and good works are never considered to be merits of man, rather they are considered to be the obedience and duty of children of God because both faith and repentance depend only on the grace of God and the merit of Christ. For this reason *The Westminster Confession of Faith* denies the classification of mortal, venial and unforgivable sin, and it adds that all sins are mortal; the only cause of forgiveness of sins is the merit of the Cross of Christ.¹⁵¹¹ Repentance is connected with man’s union with Christ because repentance that flows from faith is only possible in communion with Christ, therefore it is not regarded “as conditions to be fulfilled by man, either wholly or in part, in his own strength.”¹⁵¹²

The subject of נחם as well as שוב in the Old Testament is God.¹⁵¹³ And

1509 TDNT, 1006.

1510 Inst., 3.21. However, “not that repentance, properly speaking, is the cause of salvation, but because it is already seen to be inseparable from faith and from God’s mercy.”

1511 The Westminster Confession of Faith, PCUS XVII/ PCUSA XV, 4.

1512 Louis, Berkhof, *Reformed Dogmatics* (WM. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1937), 224-5.

1513 Mike Butterworth, נחם : *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis Vol. III*, ed. William A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 81-

ἐπιστρεφω in the New Testament is the work of God who leads His people to Him. God is the subject and He “promises to turn to the one seeking forgiveness and reconciliation” with Him. His response to sinners’ plea for restoration is “to turn away his anger.”¹⁵¹⁴ In this way, God listens to the repentance of His chosen children. And μετάνοια shows that repentance is “not just a human act but that God must give a change to repent (Heb. 12:17).”¹⁵¹⁵

Regeneration is the “ineffable act of God implanting a new nature.”¹⁵¹⁶ But regeneration does not remove all sin.¹⁵¹⁷ Through conversion (*conversio actualis*), which is a result of regeneration and solely the work of the Holy Spirit, God calls man to the action of repentance.¹⁵¹⁸ Even though Christians are regenerated by Christ, “the original corruption of nature is not entirely removed by regeneration; that although the believer is made a new creature and who is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, he is but partially sanctified.”¹⁵¹⁹ Therefore a sinner is “daily called upon to confess, repent, and pray for forgiveness.”¹⁵²⁰

And even though God is a subject and has the initiative in repentance, He requires sinners’ repentance (Jer. 3:21-4:4).¹⁵²¹ Repentance cannot be divided into

83. Hereafter, NIDOTT.

1514 J. A. Thompson, Elmer A. Martens, NIDOTT. Vol. 2, 57.

1515 J. Goetzmann, *Conversion*: NIDNTT, 1000.

1516 A. A. Hodge, op. cit., 489.

1517 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. III*, 220.

1518 John E. Meeter, ed. op. cit., 323.

1519 Charles Hodge, op. cit., 223-4. cf. Col. 1:13-14.

1520 Ibid.

1521 Robin Wakely, NIDOTT. Vol. II, 1122.

subjective or objective in Scripture because it has aspects of both sides and because, in spite of the perfection of Christ's atonement, Christ requires our persistent repentance. Scripture never neglects the responsibility of man in repentance (Ezek. 18:30; Mt. 3:2, 11:20; Mk. 1:15; Lk.13:3, 5; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 8:22; 2Cor. 7:9; Rev. 2:5, 2:16, 21, 22, 3:19); God calls men to repent and turn to Him. The responsibility of the community as well as that of individuals is important for the body of Christ, because in Christ Christians are one and become brothers (Rom. 12:5; 1Cor. 8:11). As Holladay says, repentance deals with "the covenant community's return to God."¹⁵²² Descriptions concerning man's responsibility in the process of repentance are numerous in the Bible. And in many portions of Scripture the subject of שׁוּב can be either God or man, but most often the subject of שׁוּב is a human person.

The Westminster Confession of Faith emphasises the responsibility of the Church community in relation to sin, and it differs from the reconciliation of the Roman Catholic Church. Sin is not only a problem of individuals, but also of the Church community. Therefore, the Church has a responsibility concerning sin.¹⁵²³ *The Westminster Confession of Faith* also speaks of the important position of the Church in terms of the doctrine of repentance.¹⁵²⁴ This is very important to Korean Christians who have adopted it as a standard confession, because for the Korean Christian, repentance is recognised only as a matter for the individual. Thus Korean Christians have been disinterested in social sins. For this reason, the Korean Church did not

1522 R. Laird Harris et al., ed. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament Vol. 2* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 909. Hereafter, TWOT.

1523 Philip. Schaff, *Westminster Confession of Faith*. 1647. Ch. XV, 6 (The Evangelical Protestant Creeds):The Creeds of Christendom Vol. III (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 631-633

1524 Ibid.

become a responsible community. It is necessary for the Korean church to treat repentance not only in relation to God, but also in relation to society. Reformed theology is lacking in this communal-consciousness of repentance.

Genuine repentance has a practical phase different to Barth's forensic repentance which does not involve making a decision against sin.¹⁵²⁵ Repentance is intimately related not only with the will of God, but also with the will of man (Rom. 2:4).¹⁵²⁶ This rejects the biased idea of Barth. God uses repentance as a tool to turn man to him.

The reason that Peter said "repent" and "turn away (Acts 3:19)" is that He requires obedience and the confession of sins, even though He saved us without our cooperation. But this does not mean that the atonement of Jesus Christ was insufficient, nor is it a synergistic idea like that of Melancthon.¹⁵²⁷ And principally repentance is "not the ground of our salvation" but a part and necessary condition of redemption.¹⁵²⁸

Repentance is an element of sanctification for which Christ requires the action of man. Other elements are very passive; only repentance has very positive and, at the same time, active character in the *Ordo Salutis* of soteriology. Therefore, the doctrine of repentance must be treated in a special position because, even though repentance is

1525 A. A. Hodge, op. cit., 489.

1526 Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on Romans* (Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 46-48.

1527 John E. Meeter, ed. op. cit., 323. Melancthon did not devalue the man's action in good action as a consequent fruit of regeneration that "there concur three causes of a good action – the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the human will assenting, not resisting the Word of God." Loc. Com., 90.

1528 Charles Hodge, *A Commentary 1&2 Corinthians* (Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 559.

part of sanctification, it is different to static sanctification. And *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), which is the most important confession of Presbyterians, makes a distinction between sanctification, which is a new heart and a new spirit in the whole man, and repentance unto life, which is the action and event of repentance. And *The Westminster Confession of Faith* distinguished between progress and event with the former referring to sanctification, and the latter referring to repentance.

True repentance consists of “a wholehearted inner repudiation of past disloyalty, a sincere turning back to God in humble penitence, and a firm resolve to remain steadfast and loyal in the future.”¹⁵²⁹ True repentance involves a change of the whole personality of sinners. For this reason, temporary repentance in a crisis cannot be called repentance in the strict sense of Scripture because it has no transvaluation of values and significant alteration of lifestyle.

Repentance and regeneration are intimately connected with each other in soteriology. It is obvious that regeneration is a cause and a presupposition of repentance. But repentance can never precede regeneration because the very heart of man’s repentance is “not only to do better but to be better.”¹⁵³⁰ Only the regenerated can repent to God because the regenerated who have really repented can perceive and feel the filthiness and odiousness of their depraved natures and will turn from them and work to be “more conformed to his image as revealed in the face of Jesus

1529 Robin Wakely, משיבה : NIDOTT. Vol. II, 1122.

1530 John E. Meeter, ed. *Selected shorter writings of Benjamin B. Warfield-I* (Nutley: Presbyterian and reformed publishing company, 1970), 280.

Christ.”¹⁵³¹

Reformed theology recognises both the intimate relationship and the distinction between repentance and faith. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* presents faith and repentance as the two main axes of the Gospel, and thus repentance is not merely an auxiliary means of faith, but a requisite element in the soteriology of Reformed theology.

A. A. Hodge classifies saving faith into “a sense of personal guilt,” “an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ” and “a persistent endeavour after a new life of holy obedience.”¹⁵³² In other words, saving faith is genuine repentance because the elements of saving faith are the very elements of true repentance as well.

The Westminster Confession of Faith acknowledges both the doctrine of repentance and the doctrine of faith, saying that “repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.”¹⁵³³ Forgiveness of sins and salvation spring from faith in the grace of God, but the importance of repentance cannot be neglected because “yet is it (repentance) of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it (repentance)”¹⁵³⁴ and because “it is a constant bearing of the cross which is one main characteristic of the believer’s life on earth (Ps. 19:12, 13; Lk. 9:23; Gal. 6; 14;

1531 Ibid.

1532 A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, op. cit., 487.

1533 Philip Schaff, ed. *The Westminster Confession of Faith* in *The Creed of Christendom*, Vol. III Reprinted, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 629-633. Chapter XVII and XV.

1534 Philip. Schaff, Ibid., 631-633.

5:24).¹⁵³⁵

Repentance is the restoration of a broken relationship with God both internally and externally. The central concepts of repentance in the Old Testament are שׁוּב¹⁵³⁶ and נָחַם and their main idea is “turn back, return (*zurück-kehren*).”¹⁵³⁷ שׁוּב and נָחַם represent a change of mind (Job 6:29) or a re-establishing of a broken relationship (Jer. 3:1). They are acts of turning and changing one’s loyalty.¹⁵³⁸ שׁוּב means changing position or attitude (Ps 86:16), and turning decisively to God or turning away from him.¹⁵³⁹ And it always includes “an again and clings to it tenaciously”¹⁵⁴⁰ in the prophetic books. Therefore repentance in the Old Testament means ‘turning to God again,’ and restoration of the covenant and man’s relationship with God,¹⁵⁴¹ and it can be defined as turning away from evil ways and turning to God. It is the restoration of man’s relationship with God through a change of mind and a change of attitude by sinners.

In the New Testament, ἐπιστρέφω and μετανοῶ are representative expressions for repentance. And ἐπιστρέφω and μετανοῶ corresponds to שׁוּב of the Old Testament. This means “the liberation from sins as the decisive act of redemption”¹⁵⁴² and

1535 A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, op. cit 489.

1536 J. A. Thompson, Elmer A. Martens, שׁוּב : NIDOTT Vol.4, 57.

1537 Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, eds. *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: J. Brill, 1958), 951-954.

1538 Robin Wakely, מְשׁוּבָה : NIDOTT Vol.4, 1121. מְשׁוּבָה is derived from שׁוּב.

1539 J. A. Thompson, Elmer A. Martens, שׁוּב : NIDOTT Vol.4, 57.

1540 Würthwein, *Μετάνοια*: TDNT. Vol. IV, 984.

1541 William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: W.B Eerdmans Publishing Company; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 362-364.

1542 Luke 17:4

“outward and inward turning.”¹⁵⁴³ They are often synonymous, but, as in Paul’s apology to King Agrippa in Acts 26:20, they are not simple synonyms. Ἐπιστρεφω involves complete transformation whereas μετανοῶ expresses the conscious change of mind from sin to God and “the whole inner attitude to life.” Repentance precedes ‘turning to God,’ but both are confirmed by corresponding works. Conversion is thus a change in the conscious mind of sinners in which the “main concern is turning to God.”¹⁵⁴⁴ Μετάνοια places more emphasis on the changing of thought, will and *nous* than other terms, especially שׁוּב in the Old Testament.

Repentance changes man into a new man with a new life, but repentance is more than a simple verbal confession to either God or the Church. Rather, it is an internal change of man. As Luther wrote in his *Ninety-Five theses*, repentance is not a “mechanical act but an *inner attitude reflecting a life of repentance.*”¹⁵⁴⁵ And repentance is not merely sorrow for and hatred of sin, but also the inward turning away from sin to God with the full purpose of new obedience. Therefore, the heart of repentance is an inward change to God in Christ.¹⁵⁴⁶ Repentance is not merely a change of purpose, but a change of heart¹⁵⁴⁷ and an “entire change in the inward life.”¹⁵⁴⁸ That change of inward life appears by obedience to God, thus genuine repentance includes obedience to the word of God.

1543 TDNT. Vol. VII, 726.

1544 TDNT. Vol. VII, 728.

1545 Frank Senn, *The Confession of Sin in the Reformation Churches: The Fate of Confession*, ed. Mary Collins and David Power (English Language Editor Marcus Lefébure. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987), 105.

1546 John E. Meeter, ed., op. cit., 279.

1547 Charles Hodge, *A commentary 1&2 Corinthians*, op. cit., 558.

1548 Ibid., 559.

Aside from this, repentance has an external appearance that acts as an external proof of essence. In other words, repentance is simultaneously accompanied by external change in the form of a life of obedience. Repentance is a turning away from sin to holiness, from a state of sin to a holy state. It is a change of life.¹⁵⁴⁹ Holiness is not merely a separation from sin, but conformity to Christ. So a mere separation from sin is not enough in repentance; we must become holy in all manners of living.¹⁵⁵⁰ God commands us: “Ye shall be holy; for I am holy (Lev. 11:45).” This results from exhibitions of God’s holiness to His children.¹⁵⁵¹ Sin is serious, therefore repentance must also be serious. For this reason repentance must be both an internal and external change because the actual presence of sin in its completeness is requisite for the performance of the act of repentance in its completeness. True repentance makes man tremble at the holiness of God and, by that holiness, sinners look up to the Christ, and by the commandment of God and the word of God, man can change his works, his thoughts and his life to God. God calls us to perform our duty and task in repentance with wholehearted mind and action.

The Bible presents good work as a fruit of repentance. Nonetheless, this is just the fruit, not the essence of it. As Melanchthon mentions, the form of repentance consists of good works and sanctification, and they are the ‘*causa sine qua non*’ of repentance. Good works are the necessary fruits of faith and part of obedience to Christ, therefore, as Calvin says,¹⁵⁵² no one can be saved without good works¹⁵⁵³ and

1549 Ibid., 558-9.

1550 B. B. Warfield, *Faith and Life* (Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 442.

1551 Ibid., 443.

1552 Inst., III, 17, 3.

1553 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Vol. III*, op. cit., 238-39.

good works are a sign of the saved (Jam.2:14-15, 18, 22, 24-26, 3:13). Therefore, Korean Christians must have their true repentance and changed life as fruits suitable for repentance (Mt. 3:8; Lk. 3:8).

Repentance is the action of man, but is provoked by the action of God, and by the power of God, man turns to God. This is a product of the grace of God, so by His grace man has the opportunity to repent. Repentance requires good works, but it is neither man's righteousness nor merit that saves him from death, but his obedience and gratitude. But it is not an event that takes place in a single moment; rather it is a continuous process and it is man's duty to continue this process for his whole life.

Korean Christians are disposed to regard repentance as only one step of the *Ordo Salutis*. So they feel no urgency to repentance because, for them, it is simply one part of the process and they believe that they have already been saved by faith alone. Repentance is a process that can only be accomplished over a whole lifetime. For this reason, repentance, for Korean Christians, is an auxiliary and ancillary means and not *causa sine qua non* of salvation. Therefore, in the Korean Church it is necessary to regard repentance as an independent step even though it is indissoluble with faith.

Unfortunately, because Reformed theologians overemphasised 'justification by faith alone', the doctrine of repentance in Reformed theology is weakened, while, through the emphasis of the subjective aspect of repentance in the Roman Catholic Church, the righteousness of Christ and faith are weakened. The Korean Church has both of these problems because nowadays many Korean Christians are influenced by Barthianism and antinomianism while at the same time practising the legalistic repentance of Roman Catholicism and Arminianism.

In Scripture, especially in Ps. 51, the two sides of repentance are shown: the act of God's mercy and man's conscious decision to turn to God.¹⁵⁵⁴ And it is both 'God's gift' and 'man's task.'¹⁵⁵⁵ A correct doctrine of repentance which maintains a balance between the inwardness and externality of repentance is necessary and could prevent the antinomianism and legalistic and synergistic view of salvation that is spreading in Korea. Obviously repentance is a ministry of God in the regenerated, but if we treat it merely in the doctrine of sanctification, it is degraded into Christian ethics and it cannot be an element of salvation. Neither repentance nor faith should fall within the dimension of ethics, but should be in the dimension of salvation, and they must be regarded as the most important elements of salvation.

The Korean Church is influenced by Reformed theology and has developed the doctrine of repentance of Reformed theology. The Korean Church has an enthusiastic faith, as evidenced by the praying and frequently gathering together in the Church. But, like the biblical view, the Korean Church must maintain the balance between subjectivity and objectivity, between the works of God and those of man, and between inward change and external change in the doctrine of repentance.

1554 TWOT. Vol. 2, 909.

1555 TDNT. Vol. 2, 1001.

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SUMMARY

Repentance is the first message of Jesus Christ, but the doctrine of repentance has been corrupted by the legalistic-penance doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, Arminianism, and synergism. The desire for the restoration of true repentance was the cause of the Reformation and Reformed theology has tried to build true repentance in soteriology.

Calvin's doctrine of repentance is balanced between subjectivity and objectivity, and repentance is a requisite element of salvation. Calvin made a connection between repentance and *Practicus Syllogismus* to emphasise the necessity of good works in salvation.

K. Barth's doctrine of repentance, which sees repentance as being the work of God alone, can be defined as forensic repentance. Genuine repentance only takes place in Christ. Christians can participate in the repentance of Christ, which then becomes their repentance.

G. C. Berkouwer used the term 'correlation' to explain the balance between faith and repentance and to overcome the problem of subjectivity and objectivity in his doctrine of repentance. Faith and repentance are not interdependent, but are closely connected in the grace of God in Christ. By faith the sinner knows that he is a sinner and understands the necessity of repentance. Repentance is a means of strengthening faith.

In the Roman Catholic Church penance is a requisite element in soteriology. There is no salvation without penance, and forgiveness of sins and salvation cannot be accomplished without a priest. This is a legalistic-penance theory which converts repentance through the righteousness of Christ into penance by man's co-operation, changing the Christo-centric focus to include, partially, the merit of the Church and the Priest.

Hyung-Nong Park called repentance a 'co-operative' work between God and man, but this does not imply synergism. He assumes that repentance is only given to the regenerated and to the Christian who has the sign of God's children in regeneration.

Repentance itself becomes a sign of redemption.

With the exception of Barth, Reformed theologians tried to pursue the balance between subjectivity and objectivity in the doctrine of repentance. Calvin, Berkouwer and Park each tried to overcome the problems of the doctrine of repentance, Calvin with ‘*Duplex acceptio hominis*’ or ‘*Operum Justitia*,’ Berkouwer with ‘Correlation’ and Park with his own term, ‘Co-operative’.

True repentance is not declarative, forensic or human speculation. It is neither purely subjective nor purely objective, nor is it legalism or the result of synergism. Repentance is the action of man, but is provoked by the action of God, and by the power of God, man turns to God. This is a product of the grace of God; by His grace man has the opportunity to repent. Repentance requires good works, but neither man’s righteousness nor his merit save him from death; rather, it is man’s obedience and gratitude to God.

True repentance, as well as true faith, is a sign of salvation and must be regarded as the heart of the Gospel, along with ‘justification by faith.’ When repentance has a proper role and position in Reformed soteriology, ‘justification by faith’ will not be human speculation or antinomianism, but will have the position of the heart of the true gospel in Reformed theology.

Key words

Repentance, Conversion, Penitence, Penance, Metanoia, Good Works, Faith, Sin, Sanctification, Obedience.