

**AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOTERIOLOGY
IN THE KOREAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES
IN RELATION TO FAITH AND WORKS**

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Division of Religion
of Drew Theological School in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree,**

Doctor of Philosophy

**In Hwan Kim
Drew University
Madison, New Jersey
August, 2019**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
INTRODUCTION: An understanding of the Soteriology in the Korean Protestant Churches in Relation to Faith and Works	1
CHAPTER 1 The Salvation Sect: A Theology that Bears Bad Fruit	20
CHAPTER 2 Salvation without Works? Biblical Explorations	67
CHAPTER 3 The Doctrine of Justification by Faith- -Luther's Perspectives	103
CHAPTER 4 Once Saved Always Saved?-- Calvin's Teachings	139
CHAPTER 5 Doctrine of Salvation according to John Wesley	181
CONCLUSION	228
BIBLIOGRAPHY	241

ABSTRACT

AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOTERIOLOGY IN THE KOREAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN RELATION TO FAITH AND WORKS

by

In Hwan Kim

Even as Korean Protestant churches commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and claimed to be successors of the Reformation movement, the Korean Protestant Churches today face serious ethical and moral failures by both their pastors and church members. The recent Sewol Ferry disaster in 2014 highlighted this problem. Though the Sewol Ferry was owned and operated by a cult group named the Salvation Sect, a close examination reveals that the Salvation Sect's soteriology is not much different from the soteriology of the Korean Protestant Churches. Just as many ethical problems and abuses of the 16th Century Church could be traced back to its soteriology, much of the moral failures of today's Korean Protestant Churches also stem from the soteriology they hold. The failure to teach the inseparable and responsible relationship between faith and works, in particular, has resulted in today's predicament that calls for another reformation, another renewal.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine John Wesley's soteriology, his teachings on the relationship between faith and works, and his "both and" theological methodology as providing possible directions in which the Korean Protestant Churches might move forward in remedying the situation.

To understand the Korean context, the Salvation Sect and its soteriology are examined. To accomplish this task, a historical-theological exploration of two of the Reformers, Martin Luther and John Calvin, are employed to understand the Reformation teachings on Justification and Sanctification as well as the relationship between faith and

works. Relevant Biblical texts as well as the work of Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon, in particular, are examined, followed by an examination of the Wesleyan doctrine of salvation. By rediscovering Wesley and his theological methodology, the Korean Protestant Churches can realize a much needed correction by emphasizing the ethical dimension of faith and the necessity of sanctification without deemphasizing the need of God's justifying grace.

Introduction

An Understanding of the Soteriology in the Korean Protestant Churches in Relation to Faith and Works

The Sewol Ferry disaster that occurred in 2014 was the second worst disaster in the seventy- year history of Korea, the first being the Korean War. In that incident, 304 passengers perished. Most of the victims were young high school students. During the past fifty years, rapid industrialization and democracy generated great pride in the Republic of Korea that we know today. However, behind this success is an attitude of mediocrity regarding work, compromised by the attitude of “hurry, hurry,” (known in Korean as *pali, pali*) abuse of school and personal connections, bribery, and corruption together with a blatant disregard for safety. All of those factors have worked together to produce many ills in Korean society. Suddenly, the Sewol Ferry disaster brutally exposed the accumulated corruption of Korean society all at once.

What is serious is that behind the scenes of this accident is the presence of the Korean Protestant churches. The de facto owner of the ferry is Rev. Byung-eun Yoo, the head of a cult known as the Salvation Sect. That sect has been managing the Chonghaejin Trade Company, that also had been operating the Sewol Ferry. Therefore, in the eyes of the wider community, Korean Protestant Churches are implicated in this accident whether they would admit it or not. Some critics say that it is far-fetched to say that the Korean Protestant Churches are involved in this accident since the Salvation Sect of Rev. Byung-eun Yoo has been condemned as a cult by Korean Church Council. The problem, however, is that this

sect's understanding of soteriology is very similar to the soteriology of the Korean Protestant churches. Regarding that soteriology, it is not far-fetched or extreme to say that more than half of the Korean Protestant churches are semi-salvation sects. Therefore, this dissertation that is focused on Korean Protestant understanding of soteriology is very timely. In short, the soteriological understanding of this salvation sect is one of Faith without Works.

The current situation of the Korean Protestant churches is much like that of European churches before the Reformation. The corruption within the Korean Protestant Churches may be even worse than the corruption of the European churches of the Middle Ages. Many believe that another reformation is much needed in Korea. According to the Sisain Live poll, the people surveyed trusted the Korean Protestant Churches far less than they trusted the Roman Catholic Church in Korea.¹ Only 26.4% of the people surveyed trusted the Korean Protestant Churches, while 57.6% trusted the Catholic Church.² This does not reflect well on the Korean Protestant churches as the heirs of the Reformation movement. Media reports that the trust level of Korean Protestant Churches is also below that of Buddhism in Korea. Thus, conscious Korean Protestant Church leaders are calling for a second Reformation in Korea.

In 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was commemorated throughout the Christian world. It has been five hundred years since Martin Luther nailed the ninety-five theses against the sale of indulgence on the door of the Wittenberg Basilica in 1517, which sparked the Reformation movement. The core message of the Reformation was that the earthly Church must continue to be reformed repeatedly to fulfill the mission of Christ. The sale of indulgences rightfully angered Luther. Erasmus was also angered by it. Luther

¹ September 24, 2010 <https://www.sisain.co.kr/>

² September 24, 2010 <https://www.sisain.co.kr/>

focused on the theological understanding of the Roman Catholic Church which permitted the sale of indulgences. What was the theology of the Church that justified the sale of indulgences? Was it Scriptural? Asking these questions was the approach taken by Luther. In a similar fashion, I intend to raise specific theological problems and issues of the Korean Protestant churches in this dissertation.

When I became the 11th bishop of South Seoul Annual Conference ten years ago, colleagues both young and old had asked me to undertake one particular task: to recover the lost property of the Korean Methodist Church. Much of the heritage land received from the missionaries had been lost, and I was shocked and dismayed to discover that the lands were sold in secret for personal profit by past leadership. I was asked to recover such lands. It was on December 2, 1930, when the Korean Methodist Church became independent from its US counterpart, then the Methodist Episcopal Church. Bishop Herbert Welch (1862. 11. 17 - 1969. 4. 4) presided over the proceeding. It is unlikely that Korean Methodist Church would have accumulated its own wealth in the forty-five years, prior to 1930. Large churches came into existence only after 1960. It is true that many documents had been lost during the Korean War (1950. 6. 25 - 1953. 7. 27) If the Korean Methodist Church leadership showed a willingness to protect and keep the church property, however, I believe it would have been possible. The leadership I refer to here includes pastors, elders, and bishops. The Korean Methodist Church, through the efforts of missionaries and pastors, had built many mission schools, with an emphasis on Christian faith as well as academics. Naturally, the Korean Methodist Church sent board members to run these mission schools. Whether through incompetence or corruption on the part of these board members, I am not certain, but of this I am certain: At the present time, these mission schools have certainly become schools that have nothing to do with the current Korean Methodist Church. Having discovered the

shocking and immoral behaviors of the church leadership, I increasingly realized the growing distance between the theology and ethics of the Korean Protestant churches. I found that both the properties and a holistic theology we inherited as a Church was being eaten away bit by bit. I was, therefore personally motivated to write on the topic of soteriology of the Korean Protestant Church. I believe that soteriology is at the heart of theology, and theology ultimately leads to ethics.

Theological issues are the main cause for the ethical problems of the Korean Protestant churches. Of the twenty largest Protestant churches in the world, ten are located in Korea. Yet, Korean pastors and the Korean Protestant churches are causing scandal after scandal. What is the problem? I believe it is their theology, and more specifically, their soteriology. The Korean Protestant churches have taught salvation in terms that are too simplistic. That is, congregants believe that anyone who believes in Jesus is saved by God's grace, forgiven and justified, and will receive the completion of salvation on the Last Day. If you bear the fruit of righteousness after receiving justification by faith, that would be wonderful, but in the understanding of many, one's salvation is not adversely affected by a lack of righteous living. That has been a popular misunderstanding within the Korean Protestant Church community.

Salvation must be understood not only as being forgiven, but also as living 'under the reign of God.' It must be understood in terms of relationship with God. As one becomes justified, he/she must receive the reign of God. The one who is justified is now living under the reign of God. Therefore, the justified must obey God. Jesus summarized the entire commandments into two: "Love the Lord God and love your neighbors" (Matthew 22:37). "The justified must live according to Christ's law" (1Corinthians 9:21) and "bear the fruits

of righteousness” (Philippians 1:11).

It is ironic that Paul’s understanding of “justification,” which was pivotal to the Reformation, is now one of the root causes of the Korean Church’s corruption. That is, it has occurred because the Korean Protestant churches have misconstrued and distorted Paul’s doctrine of justification. They teach that anyone who believes in Jesus will be saved unconditionally, and this has led many to believe that this salvation is unrelated to works. As a result, many Christians do not feel guilty, even though they give and receive bribes, defraud others, oppress the powerless and weak, and harm the community in pursuit of their own interests. Even in the midst of such immorality, they believe they will be saved as long as they believe in Jesus.

Korean Protestant churches boast of being the heirs of the Reformation and teach that the core of the Gospel is “the doctrine of justification by faith.” In reality, it turns out that they teach a doctrine of justification which does not require a righteous life. Even worse, their teaching on justification brings about deep distortions into the understanding of a righteous life and produce many who call themselves ‘righteous’ though they live in unrighteousness.

The Korean Protestant churches have reduced the doctrine of salvation to a mere “Four Spiritual Laws”³ and demand only three things: 1. Keeping the Lord’s Day holy; 2. Offering tithes; 3. Engaging in evangelistic witness. They teach a doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” no matter what sins may be committed, and even promise rewards in heaven.

³ “Four Spiritual Laws” published by the Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc.

What is the difference then between the Korean Protestant Churches and the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages that sold indulgence certificates?

The Scope of the Method and Structure of this dissertation

The method employed in this dissertation is to undertake a historical-theological exploration of the teachings of the Reformers, primarily Martin Luther and John Calvin, to understand their teachings on the issues of Justification, Sanctification, and Salvation, particularly in the immediate context in which they struggled with these issues. The purpose is to examine how far the Protestant Churches in Korea have moved away from their original intentions when embracing Christianity. The worst example of the distortion of the original intentions can be seen in the teachings of the Salvation sect. Therefore, the first task of this study is to examine the teachings of this sect. The second dimension of the research of this project is to examine the Biblical teachings on these issues. Finally, the Wesleyan Theology that developed much later that attempted to deal with the question of the relationship between Faith and Works is examined. In conclusion, a proposal for a theological method for doing theology in Korea is presented.

Chapter 1

The focus of chapter one is to disclose the true identity of the Salvation Sect which is responsible for the Sewol Ferry disaster. The Salvation sect was brought into Korea by two foreign missionaries, Kays Glass from the Netherlands and Dick York from the United States in 1961. Their belief was introduced to Rev. Shin-Chan Kwon, who reinforced their belief and had a multitude of followers. The Salvation Sect has been broken into three major factions: (1) the Christian Evangelical Baptists of Korea (led by Byung-Eun Yoo, the son in-law of Rev. Shin-Chan Kwon); (2) the Korean Jesus Baptists of Korea (led by Yohan

Lee); and (3) the Joyful News Mission (led by Ok-Soo Park). The doctrines of the Salvation Sect are threefold, as follows: (1) It emphasizes being “born again.” (2) It claims that the “awakening” of the soul is what constitutes salvation. (3) Since sins do not affect the “awakened soul,” repentance is not required for salvation.

The traditional evangelical Christian churches emphasize “repentance,” which is required for salvation and justification. Repentance is important to restore one’s relationship with God through faith and to imitate Jesus through a life of repentance and sanctification. The Salvation sect, however, claims that people are saved through “awakening.” This is in contrast to the traditional Christian teaching that salvation occurs through faith in Jesus Christ, and that salvation indicates restored relationship with God. The Salvation sect also preaches that since salvation is completed with the “awakening,” prayers for sanctification are no longer necessary. It understands sin as material and teaches that the sins committed in the flesh do not affect salvation.

The Salvation sect also claims that since we are already saved, sin no longer affects us. Followers of this sect also believe that all of their future sins are also already forgiven; so they there is no effort extended to be free from sin. This practice is called ‘antinomianism.’ The Scriptures teach that repentance relates directly to our relationship to God. When Jesus began his public ministry, His first message was focused on “repentance.” (Matthew 4:17) We become God’s people through repentance. True repentance is more than mere realization of sin but rather, it is a transfer of ‘country’ (entering the Kingdom or the Reign of God). Repentance is receiving redemption in Christ Jesus, through the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:14) It is a transfer from the power of darkness to God’s kingdom. (Colossians 1:13) Traditional Christianity has taught its believers that after salvation, we

must stand as soldiers fighting against sin. It is in this sense that the Church is called “The Army of God.” The Kingdom of God has already come to us but is not yet realized in the fullness of its expression. Therefore, in the life of true Christians, the struggle to honor and maintain ethics of God’s kingdom must be fiercely fought.

Chapter 2

The focus of chapter 2 is the dialectical tension between justification in the present and in the future, in contrast to the focus on the justification of today. What is the dialectical tension? Simply put, it puts tension between concepts, that is, between faith and works, justification and sanctification, history and the end time, certainty and uncertainty, and ‘already, and the not yet.’

The Salvation sect only emphasizes the concept that “we are already saved.” The followers of the sect claim that since they are already saved and that their future sins have already been forgiven, they do not need to make efforts not to sin. Yet, as seen in the parables regarding the end times, the Scriptures never teach such things. At the end, God will say to the faithful servant, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” and will accept him/her with approval. (Matthew 5:23, 34-35, Luke 12:42-44, 19:17, 19) Christian believers are familiar with the concept of justification and the phrase, ‘we have been justified,’ from Paul’s letter to the Romans. Yet, we are unfamiliar with the concept of future justification. This is because systematic theology defines justification primarily in terms of the present. In Paul’s circumstances, however, it is the present concept of justification that was unfamiliar and unclear. Justification in the time of Paul was understood by people inside and outside the Church as an eschatological event in the context of the Last Judgment Day.

Unlike today's popular atmosphere where the focus of justification is only on the present, the concept of justification, in the Epistle to the Romans, often fluctuates between the present and the future. There are declarations that "we have been justified" (Romans 3:24, 5:1, 9, 6:7, 9:30). Yet, there are also future tense statements of "we will be justified." (Romans 2:13, 4:24, 5:19, 10:9-10) Thus justification is connected not only to the cross but also to the resurrection of Jesus. (Romans 4:25) The declaration of forensic justification, "you have already been justified" does not cover all aspects of justification in the Biblical message. Therefore, this chapter engages in an exploration of the teachings on Justification and sanctification in the Pauline letters, especially in Galatians and Romans.

For this purpose, I will especially examine Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon's work. He is a pastor who belongs to the most conservative Presbyterian denomination. Yet, he has fiercely criticized the Korean Protestant churches for having faith without good works, and for following the "once saved, always saved" doctrine of perseverance of saints, in error, while disregarding the importance of works.

Professor Kwon explains that Matthew, James, and Paul's letter to the Romans do not contradict each other and that salvation does not always exclude works. As an apostle to the gentiles, Paul taught that each Christian is a living sacrifice offered to God as a holy and blameless sacrifice and, as such, needs to live a sanctified life. While our salvation is given not as a result of our good works but entirely as a gift of God's grace, the life after our salvation must be a living sacrifice offered up to God and must be filled with the desire to live a righteous life. Our salvation is thus ultimately determined on the day we stand before God.

When the Korean Protestant churches hear the word, “works,” they have a tendency to immediately suspect a cult. Yet, after one becomes a Christian by God’s grace, he/she must do their very best to stand in righteousness, before God and humankind, even if those efforts fail due to our sinful nature. The Scriptural teaching on works will serve as one’s guide, so that all will be motivated to become the salt and light of the world. From the perspective of Professor Kwon, strictly speaking, the assurance of salvation by Paul is not that ‘we are already saved,’ but that ‘we will be saved.’ We cannot turn the future tense into the present tense. When we do attempt to engage such a practice, it is because of the human selfish need to rid ourselves of our anxieties, not as a result of our faith conviction. The assurance of salvation we find in Paul is not rational, doctrinal assurance but a fruit of personal trust in God who comes to us in love.

Chapter 3

In chapter 3, the doctrine of justification within the Korean Churches will be examined in the light of the teachings of Martin Luther. As mentioned earlier, the year 2017 marked the 500 years that had passed since the Reformation. Luther’s Reformation began with the conviction of justification by faith. Luther’s best known contribution to theology is his doctrine of righteousness, or “justification by grace through faith alone.” Luther considered this doctrine to be the heart of soteriology and held soteriology as the essence of all theology. For him, “The doctrine of justification” is not simply one doctrine among many others but the basic and chief article of faith by which the church stands or falls, and on which its entire doctrines depend.”⁴

⁴ Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Shultz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 225.

Therefore, the chief theological principle of Protestant Churches is the “doctrine of justification.” We are justified by faith. The Reformation theology confronted the errors of salvation by works and the sale of indulgences which permeated the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. The doctrine of justification by faith in the Korean Protestant Churches today, however, became the main cause of “cheap grace,” that is, salvation without works. The core of Pauline theology is that the righteous shall live by faith (Rom. 1:17). Paul, however, never taught that salvation has no relationship to works. Therefore, there is a marked difference between Paul’s doctrine of justification and that of the Korean Protestant Churches. This sharp difference is the area is where a further reformation is needed. A true spirit of being part of the Reformation tradition would be to make the radical adjustment on this difference between what Luther taught and what Korean Christians believe. Just as the Reformers shouted, “*ad fontes*” (“back to the basics”), the Korean Protestant Churches must return to the source, the Scriptures.

What the Korean Protestant churches urgently need is to confess the doctrine of justification, and also to listen to the words of Jesus and obey them. For the believers of the early Church, faith was not the understanding or agreement on certain doctrines, but faith was the basic and fundamental confession that “Jesus is Lord.” For them, faith was not an intelligent understanding and agreement, but it was the confession that Jesus is the Lord, not Caesar. And this was a matter of life and death to them.

The Korean Protestant Churches misunderstand Luther’s statements that the Letter to the Galatians is “my wife” and the book of James is “a letter of straw.” In my view, the Korean Protestant Churches are wanting in their understanding of justification by faith. The Salvation sect’s understanding of justification by faith completely moves away from the true meaning of justification. Regrettably, the understanding of the Korean Protestant churches

of justification by faith is not much different from that of the Salvation sect. Therefore, the Korean Church's misunderstanding of justification by faith is the main cause leading the Church into a spiritual and unethical downfall. Therefore, an authentic scriptural understanding of justification by faith is urgently needed.

The Korean Protestant churches have numerically grown by leaps and bounds since 1970. During this period of incredible growth, many mega-churches have been established. In contrast to the growth of Korean Protestant churches, the theology needed to steer them in the right direction has been absent. In particular, they lack a solid grasp of the Reformation theology to guide them. To make matters worse, Korean seminaries have had only a few theologians who studied Reformation theology. As a result, the Korean Protestant churches did not firmly establish the Protestant doctrine of salvation and failed to teach congregations about the relationship between justification and sanctification.

This has resulted in the absence of a theological understanding on the relationship between the doctrines of justification and sanctification. As a consequence, cults such as the Salvation sect were established and have encroached into the Korean Protestant churches. In fact, the Korean Protestant Churches have taught a similar kind of doctrine of salvation without realizing its danger. They have over emphasized justification at the expense of sanctification. As a result, the pulpits of Korean Protestant Churches ended up preaching the message of cheap grace.

Chapter 4

In chapter 4, I will deal with the theology of "Once saved, always saved" with focus on the teachings of John Calvin. The head of the Salvation sect, Rev. Shin-Chan Kwon, was

a conservative Presbyterian minister. Thus, he was a firm believer in “predestination.” He ignored the importance of repentance and sanctification and taught that “Once saved, always saved.” He promoted the flawed doctrine of salvation based on his particular understanding and interpretation of Calvinism. In this chapter, I will examine the Canons of Dort (the Dordrecht Confession of Faith) that are related to the issues of the doctrine of predestination among the vast number of followers of Calvinism. The Calvinistic doctrine of salvation, according to Dordrecht Confession of Faith proclaimed at Dordrecht, the Netherlands, in 1619, consists of five points as follows:

1. Total depravity: Humans are dead in trespasses and sins before God’s sovereignty regenerates and gives them the gift of salvation (This usually implies a denial of free will).
2. Unconditional election: God chooses some humans to be saved before and apart from anything they do on their own.
3. Limited atonement: Christ died only to save the elect, and his atoning death is not universal for all of humanity.
4. Irresistible grace: God’s grace cannot be resisted. The elect will receive it and be saved by it. The damned never receive it.
5. Perseverance: The elect will inevitably preserve unto final salvation (eternal security).⁵

The problem with these five doctrines, including the doctrine of the perseverance of saints, is that it creates the logic that the sins one commits, however grave, do not affect one’s salvation. Especially the doctrine of perseverance of saints gives one great comfort

⁵ Joel R. Beeke, *Living for God’s Glory*, (Orlando: Reformation Trust Publishing), 50-51.

and stability, but it leads to the logic that one will still be saved, even if one were to commit adultery and murder. No matter how great the human sin, it is never greater than the gift of Jesus Christ's redemption. In the face of the infinite grace of God, the degree of the sin --be it great or small-- does not matter. The doctrine of perseverance then has the danger of becoming a license to sin. In this sense, it is not different from the doctrines of the Salvation sect.

Of course, Calvin did not teach such things. Calvin belongs to the second generation of Reformers. His circumstances were different than those of Luther who opposed the Roman Catholic Church that weakened justification to emphasize good works and merit. Luther, on the other hand, is criticized for weakening sanctification and ethics by overly emphasizing justification. In Calvin's theology, in order to avoid weakening sanctification and ethics, sanctification is mentioned before election or justification.⁶ Concerning the order of salvation, (*ordo salutis*, *Heilsneignung*) Calvin mentions sanctification first, and then follows with justification, election and glorification.⁷

The order of salvation describes how the objective works of salvation in Christ are subjectively applied to a sinner's heart and life by the Holy Spirit. Strictly speaking, the order of salvation in Protestantism is not understood in terms of timing but in the order of the theological and logical steps in which the Holy Spirit makes the salvation offered in Christ into a reality in the believer's life. Calvin states that justification and sanctification are distinguishable but inseparable and mutually connected. When one holds the

⁶ Wilhelm Niesel, *Die Theologie Calvins* [The Theology of Calvin] trans. Jongsung Lee, (Munich: Chr.Kaiser Verlag, 1957) 128-129.

⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), III, iii.

righteousness of Christ, one cannot but hold holiness as well, for Christ became our righteousness, holiness, and salvation. (1 Corinthians 1:30) Therefore, when Christ makes a person righteous, at the same time, he makes that person holy as well. To become righteous in Christ, one must belong to Christ. One cannot belong to Christ without participating in his holiness, for Christ the two cannot be separated (1 Corinthians 1:13).

Calvin calls this ‘double grace’ (*duplex gratia*). Calvin’s theological distinction is in his teachings on ‘predestination.’ In his thinking, ‘predestination’ is God’s eternal decree. For Calvin, the doctrine of predestination shows God’s grace, mercy, and glory, humbles the believer, and rids the believer’s heart of anxiety and fear. However, such understanding prevents one from understanding the relationship between grace and sin.⁸ When I consider these points, it seems that the Korean Protestantism does not understand Calvin and Calvinism well. The problem is that it has failed to understand Calvin’s theology and failed to apply it properly. What we see is only a shell of Calvinism.

Chapter 5

In chapter 5, I examine the doctrine of salvation by John Wesley. The core of Wesleyan theology is the doctrine of salvation. It is true that Wesley’s doctrine of salvation is built on the traditions of Luther and Calvin. Luther’s doctrine of salvation is based on imputed justification, while Calvin’s doctrine of salvation is related to the doctrine of sanctification but it is still passive sanctification. Wesley developed his doctrine into imparted sanctification. Thus, coming long after Luther and Calvin, and drawing also from other traditions of Christianity, Wesley attempted to present a doctrine of salvation that is

⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), III, xxi, 4

balanced between faith and works.

Having grown up in a fourth generation Wesleyan Christian family, my encounter with Wesley through Wesleyan theology was diverse. Many theologians who study Wesley also have a variety of perceptions. It is easy to talk about Wesley much like the story of a group of blind persons, having touched an elephant, attempt to describe what an elephant is. My interest in this dissertation is to probe the doctrine of salvation that combines faith and works. From my perspective, Wesley successfully integrated faith and sanctification along with Christian perfection. That is, Wesley built his theology on the unshakeable assurance of justification by faith. Thus, he stood in the tradition of Reformed faith; yet, he tried to develop remedies for the weaknesses of Reformed theology. He wisely overcame the fatal weakness of Protestant theology, which is its tendency toward antinomianism. He found points of contact and boldly accepted the strengths of the Roman Catholic tradition in order to resolve the conflicts. He successfully resolved the tensions between the law and the gospel, faith and holy living, grace and works-- grace as both favor and empowerment, justification and sanctification, instantaneousness and process, the universality of prevenient grace and its limited saving actualization, and divine initiative and human response. He applied “faith working through love” from Galatians 5:6 to resolve the difficult relationship between faith and works.

Wesley was a skilled theologian who applied a dialectical tension to resolve such tensions. Thus, in understanding Wesley’s theology, the “both/and” logic must be applied in place of “either/or” argument. The either/or argument emphasizes discontinuity while the both/and argument has the characteristic of discontinuous continuity. It is this approach that helped Wesley to hold together what first appears to be contradictory.

The 'both/and' and 'either/or' approaches to theology

On the basis of the discussions in the previous chapters, in conclusion, I will present my perspective through discussion of the dialectical tensions prevalent in the discussion on salvation. For this purpose I will examine the "both/and" dialectical argument of the Korean theologian, Jung Young Lee, together with Jacques Ellul's Biblical dialectical methods which will be examined in the biblical discussions. Professor Jung Young Lee explains the "both/and" argument stating, "The both/and way of thinking must serve as the background of an either/or way of thinking, because it is not only an inclusive but also a holistic approach."⁹ In the "both/and" way of thinking the opposites are not in conflict but are complementary for the whole. The "both/and" method stresses the whole rather than the parts. Just as the whole is the background of the parts, the "both/and" way of thinking should become the background of the "either/or" way of thinking. In other words, the "either/or" thinking presupposes the "both/and" thinking. That is,

The both/and way of thinking, therefore, delimits the absolutizing tendency of either/or. The either/or way of thinking becomes relative to the both/and way of thinking. On the other hand, the both/and way of thinking always entails the either/or way of thinking, which performs a critical and analytical task in theology. In this respect, the both/and (or *yin-yang*) way of thinking stresses the priority of the whole, while limiting the function of the either/or way of thinking. In our theological task, the ultimate reality, which deals with the whole, is approached by the both/and, and penultimate matters are approached by an either/or. Since penultimate matters belong to the ultimate reality, the either/or way belong to the both/and way of thinking.¹⁰

The tradition and theology of Christianity focuses among events in Jesus' life, especially on the cross and the resurrection. In general, Christianity approaches the cross and

⁹ Jung Young Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 34-35.

¹⁰ Jung Young Lee, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 34-35.

the resurrection in a balanced way. The cross without the resurrection can end as failure for Jesus, and the resurrection without the cross can end up being Docetism. The question is which is decisive for one's faith-- the Cross or resurrection? The proper theological answer is not just the Cross nor only the resurrection, but the Cross with resurrection and the resurrection with the Cross. Rather than applying the either/or argument, the both/and argument needs to be applied.

Furthermore, in early Christianity, when the debate about the humanity and divinity of Jesus arose, the resolution came through the both/and argument, rather than through the either/or argument. Christ is God who became man and a man who was God. The conclusion was 'the two natures in the one person of Christ.' The early Church Fathers claimed, and the early Christians saw Jesus Christ as the object of worship and believed in His divinity, and through *Logos* Christology, they presented the concept of the pre-existence of Christ. And yet, they also firmly held on to the humanity of Christ. They refused to resolve the theological tension but held it in balance.

On the basis of this Christian tradition, the 21st century Christians can understand the Trinity as the Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity through both/and logic. When we apply the both/and argument rather than the either/or argument to the Christian tradition and theology, especially to the theology of God, Christology, and the doctrine of the Trinity, we can get closer to the truth and the essence of the Christian faith.

The Theology of Wesley which I examine in Chapter Five has an eclectic theological style that integrates the two extremes well. Wesleyan theology is not a theology of either/or but a *connectional* theology that creatively unites two opposing concepts. Wesley actually

devoted his energies to reconciling different subjects such as head and heart, nature and grace, the righteous and sanctification, faith and works, theology and church, text and context, with the constant theme of the grace of God which redeems humanity through Jesus Christ.

To be sure, for Wesley, his thinking was most often a matter of "both/and" and not "either/or." I, therefore, propose a "conjunctive paradigm" that reflects both holiness and grace, *sola fide* and the process of sanctification, free and co-operant grace, divine- human cooperation and the work of God alone and so on. So to those who have claimed that Methodism is finished and that Wesleyan theology is over, I am reminded of Mark Twain who, in a letter drafted in 1897, wrote in response to the reports of his demise: "the report of my death was an exaggeration."¹¹

What we learn from Prof. Jung Young Lee and Wesleyan theology is that the Korean Protestant churches need to move towards a theological methodology that would hold together the precious dimensions of the Christian tradition through the application of a "both/and" method. Wesley was ahead of his time, and my hope is that we will rediscover Wesley's theological approach for our times in order to bring new theological progress and a new paradigm of understanding the doctrine of salvation within the Korean Protestant churches.

¹¹ Accessed on <http://www.twainquote.com/Death.html> November, 10, 2017

Chapter 1

The Salvation Sect: A Theology that Yields Bad Fruit

I. The Salvation Sect and Korean Christianity

In this chapter, the theology and the doctrine of the Salvation Sect will be carefully examined. This is essential, because the theology, especially soteriology, and ethics of the Korean Protestant churches are very similar to those of the Salvation sect. When Koreans hear of the Salvation sect, they think of the heart-wrenching “Sewol Ferry Disaster” on April 16, 2014. Some will even remember the “Odaeyang (Five Oceans) Mass Suicide” which shocked the whole nation in 1987. The media focused on how the tragedy occurred and the investigation that followed, but the most important question is, “What element in the Salvation sect caused such a social catastrophe?” Or, in other words, are there teachings and practices of the Salvation sect that contributed to the church being implicated with such a disaster as the Sewol Ferry disaster?

One must begin by admitting that it is difficult for any person or a church to sit in judgment over another church and its teachings. Such judgment has to be based on some criteria which may not be acceptable to all. In any case, one has to select some criteria, and the best way forward would be to indicate the criteria that have been selected and the basis on which judgments are being made on the theology and practices of the Salvation sect.

It would be important to begin by asking why the Salvation sect is called a “sect” as distinct from the churches. A Christian ‘sect’ is recognized as separate from the ‘church’ when it moves away from certain fundamental beliefs and practices of the church and begins

to build a faith community on certain selected beliefs, which are also distorted to serve the interest of the founder. The terms, “sect” and “cult,” are often used interchangeably. However the term, cult, is normally used to refer to small, extreme groups that are often associated with corrupt leaders who mislead their followers by manipulating them, and by distorting the teachings of the main religious tradition to which they claim to belong. While the Salvation sect is generally considered as a “sect,” some scholars have indicated that they have many of the traits of a “cult.” The term, "Salvation sect," needs no detailed explanation in Korea, but when it is translated into English, it uses the word 'sect,' which is more neutral and understood differently by non-Korean Christians. Therefore, additional historical and theological explanations may be helpful here.

Perhaps a very well-known theory is that of Ernst Troeltsch's 'church type' and 'sect type' in his book, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. Troeltsch also introduced a third type, 'the mysticism type.' He cautiously differentiates the 'church type' from 'sect type.' In his view, the 'church type' embraces the world, but the 'sect type' rejects the world. Troeltsch explains the distinction in this way:

The Church is that type of organization which is overwhelmingly conservative, which to a certain extent accepts the secular order, and dominates the masses, in principle, therefore, it is universal, i.e., it desires to cover the whole life of humanity. The sects, on the other hand, are comparatively small group; they aspire after personal inward perfection, and they aim at a direct fellowship between the members of each group. From the very beginning, therefore, they are forced to organize themselves in small groups, and to renounce the idea of dominating the world. Their attitude towards the world, the State, and Society may be indifferent, tolerant, or hostile, since they have no desire to control and incorporate, these forms of social life; on the contrary, they tend to avoid them; their aim is usually either to tolerate their presence alongside of their own body, or even to replace these social institutions by their own society.¹²

Troeltsch goes on to explain that the Western world always had sects, from the early

¹² Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931), 331.

Christian movements of the Roman Empire to the Jehovah's Witnesses in the twentieth century. Sectarian groups sprang up and flourished despite persecution, such as the Anabaptists, the Separatists, the Levelers, the Diggers, the Quakers, and the Baptists of England. Troeltsch comments that "many of their ideals as well as their adherents made voyages across the Atlantic to America to exert great influence on American thought and values."¹³

Some scholars use Troeltsch's types to explain the church. It is limited, however, because Troeltsch's model presupposes a European national church as a context. The greatest shift after Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the state, according to Sidney Mead, was the separation of church and state in the United States.¹⁴ After the Civil War, the U.S. Constitution separated religion from politics. This meant that the nation will no longer interfere in the matters of religion and support no particular religion. This liberated religion from the government's influence. This in the eyes of the Europeans was very dangerous. Many Americans, however, believed that religion could flourish without the government's interference. Religion was now free to develop on its own and become more religious. This in part explains why American Christianity is attracted to transcendent revelation, belief in miracles, and the emphasis on the absolute truth of Christianity.¹⁵

The new structure that emerged in this new situation was the denomination. The distinction between the church and sect disappeared. Prior to this, the church was the national church and the sect was the non-national church. In America, all religious groups

¹³ John A. Hutchison, *The Two Cities: A Study of Gog and Human Politics*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957) 65.

¹⁴ Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1976) 60.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

became American churches. From this perspective, American churches are not called sects, but denominations. While sects turned their backs on their culture, denominations embraced their culture. Denominations believed that they had a role in establishing the spiritual foundation for their nation. Although not a national organization, denominational churches were in the forefront of education, prohibition, and abolitionist movements. Therefore, the separation of church and state was a legal separation, not a total separation. Churches still played a crucial role in shaping America's soul.¹⁶

During this period, the denominations considered themselves as mission organizations. In western Europe, the established church was concerned with its self-preservation and not with missions. Denominations, however, inherited the spirit of mission organizations. Such cases include the Methodists and the Baptists. The Methodists, in particular, organized their church structure for the purpose of mission efforts. For effective missions, evangelism carried out by circuit riders, ministries developed by districts, and class meetings were implemented. For effective administration, the structure of the General Conference, Annual Conference, and District Conferences were established and held.¹⁷

As we have examined, the 'church type' and the 'sect type' and the 'denomination type' all have pros and cons. So why is the Salvation Sect in Korea problematic? The Salvation Sect is radically different from the traditional church in faith and works. The Salvation Sect has been declared a heresy and is considered a cult by the National Council of Churches in Korea.

In this study, the teachings of the Salvation Sect will be examined on the basis of

¹⁶ Sidney E. Mead, *The Nation with the Soul of a Church*, (New York : Harper & Row, 1975).

¹⁷ Robert Bruce Mullin and Russell E. Richey, *Reimagining Denominationalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 74-98.

some of the long-held teachings within the Christian tradition on such teachings as justification, sanctification, salvation, the purpose of worship and so on. It is common knowledge that not all churches hold the same views. There is also a variety of opinions on how to interpret the Bible and to establish what the biblical teaching is on any particular issue. I would be using an interpretation of biblical teachings on which others may have other views.

For the purpose of this dissertation, I use as my criteria the teachings of the Reformed traditions of the church and especially the teachings of the Methodist tradition as spelled out by John Wesley. I would also use Jesus' teaching, "You shall know them by their fruits" and examine the kind of fruits that the teachings set forth on ethical and moral issues.

Toward the end of this chapter, I also look at the Korean Protestant churches which, in my view, are no different from the Salvation Sect. This study will thus provide valuable insight towards soul-searching especially in relation to the recent unethical and immoral behaviors of both clergy and laity.

In order to understand the theology and the doctrine of the Salvation Sect, two works by Professor Dong-Sup Jung will be extensively referenced and cited. These two books are *Wae Guwonpa-rul Yidan-yira Hanunga? [Why Is the Salvation Sect Called a Cult?]* published by Joy Missions, in 2014 and *Guwon Gaenyum Baro Japgi [Understanding the Correct Concept of Salvation]*, published by New Wave Plus, in 2015.

As is widely known, Professor Dong-Sup Jung has been a member of the Salvation Sect since his college days, and he worked for eight years as a personal translator for the sect's leader, Byung-Un Yu. Professor Jung eventually left the Salvation Sect over doctrinal issues. He continued his spiritual wandering and searching, which took him to a Mormon

church, *Jibang Church*, (a local church founded by Watchman Nee), and to the Brethren Church. In 1980, he experienced conversion through Sarang Church in Seoul and returned to the traditional evangelical church. He has studied Christian education, counseling, psychology, and family life education, and he now works in family ministry and counseling. He also devotes his time raising awareness about the cult because many families are broken as a direct result of being involved in the Salvation Sect. Consequently, there are increasing numbers of teenagers running away from home and divorces occurring among middle-aged couples.

What Professor Dong-Sup Jung personally experienced by being close to Byung-Un Yu and inside the Salvation Sect church has become a valuable resource for the Korean Protestant Church in understanding the cult and helping to formulate a response. For this reason, Professor Jung's knowledge and insights will be cited on several occasions in this chapter in introducing the theology and doctrine of the Salvation Sect.

II. The Theology and Doctrine of the Salvation Sect

1. The Salvation Sect Overview

The Salvation Sect was established in Korea during the early 1960s, a period of great social and cultural confusion and upheaval. The Salvation Sect is not a cult that started in Korea. It is a foreign cult that was passed on by an American missionary, Dick York, and a Dutch missionary, Kays Glass. The reason the Korean Protestant churches refer to that organization as the Salvation Sect is because the concept of salvation is most important to the sect.¹⁸ It is also impossible to understand them without being familiar with their view of salvation. I will take a closer look later, but York and Glass held the theology and doctrine

¹⁸ The Salvation Sect is a name given by the Protestant Christians; the proper name is the Christian Gospel Baptist Association. The Sect has three factions.

with an extreme dispensationalist tendency that was once popular in the U.S. and in the Netherlands. Their slogan is “Salvation through Enlightenment,” a modern version of Gnosticism. They also see grace and the law as diametrically opposed to each other, resulting in an anti-nomian faith.

Actually, Dick York grew up in the Exclusive Brethren church in the U.S. The Exclusive Brethren Church denies church hierarchy and ecclesiastical authority just as the Brethren Church does. It also does not have ministers and it emphasizes eschatology, based on dispensationalism. It is known for its exclusive stand: Its eschatology emphasizes being spiritually awake, waiting for the second return of Christ, and the imminent end of all things. It is also known for “attacking other denominations and their theology with its exclusivity.”¹⁹

Dick York was a “self-proclaimed missionary” who did not receive theological education himself but taught that those who go to seminary corrupt themselves. His disciples, Shin-Chan Kwan, Byung-Un Yu, and Oksu Park also did not receive theological education and, as a result, they interpreted the Bible to their own tastes, often in the form of metaphorical or allegorical interpretations.²⁰

2. Factions within the Salvation Sect

Today, the Salvation Sect has three major factions: the Christian Gospel Baptists under the leadership of Byung-Un Yu and Shin-Chan Kwon, the Daehan Jesus Baptists of Yohan Lee, and the Joyful News Missions of Oksu Park.²¹ The Christian Gospel Baptists

¹⁹ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, (Seoul: New Wave Plus, 2015) 44.

²⁰ Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?* (Seoul: Joy Mission Society, 2014) 114.

²¹ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept* (Seoul: New Wave Plus, 2015) 47-67.

group is the most well-known. It has received much attention by the media and the masses in 2014, as the group ultimately responsible for the Sewol Ferry disaster. The other two factions are relatively less well-known, but all three share the same ideological and theological roots.

A. **Byung-Un Yu and Shin-Chan Kwon Faction**

First, the Christian Gospel Baptists by Byung-Un Yu and Shin-Chan Kwon is most widely known by the world. It is the mother church of the Salvation Sect and came to be known through the Sewol Ferry disaster, Odaeyang (Five Oceans) Mass Suicide, Saemo (Inc.), and *Nok-Saek-Hwae* (the Green Club). Presently, their main bases of operation are *Keum Soo Won* in Anseung, Gyeongido Province and Seoul Church located at Samgakji, Yongsan -Gu in the City of Seoul.²²

The founder of “Christian Gospel Baptist,” Shin-Chan Kwon, was originally a Presbyterian minister. But in November of 1961, under the influence of the Dutch missionary, Kays Glass, Kwon had his enlightenment about the forgiveness of sins and subsequently, received baptism. As a result, Kwon was defrocked and expelled from the Presbyterian Church of Korea. the denomination to which he had belonged.²³ Another founder of the Christian Gospel Baptist church was Byung-Un Yu (1941-2014). In 1962, Yu was converted while listening to the preaching of the American missionary, Dick York. Yu then joined York in propagating the message. Later, the two had the relationship of father-in-law and son-in-law. Beginning in the early 1970s, Shin-Chan Kwon solidified Yu’s

²² Ibid.

²³ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, (Seoul: New Wave Plus, 2015) 47-67

spiritual authority within their community. Kwon introduced Yu as the “mouth of the meeting” and “the anointed one” and began to deify Yu.²⁴

From 1969 to 1974, Shin-Chan Kwon was on the Far-East Broadcast’s radio program called “Morning of Grace.” The Far-East Broadcast was operated by the US-based, International Gospel Alliance Missions (Tim Missions). On this program, Kwon publicly criticized traditional Presbyterian worship, the practice of tithing, the elder and deacon system, the practice of early morning prayer, and pastoral benediction as “legalism” and “religion.” Kwon preached “salvation is being liberated from legalism and religion.” Those listeners who were seduced and misled by this broadcast became the first church members. Kwon also installed Byung-Un Yu as the deputy director of the Far-East Broadcasting System. Tim Missions belatedly realized the seriousness of the situation and, in 1974, fired all eleven employees who were related to the Salvation Sect, including Kwon and Yu.²⁵

After his dismissal from the broadcasting organization, Byung-Un Yu used the offering money from his sect to take over the Samwoo Trading Company that was on the brink of bankruptcy. Yu then appointed himself as the new CEO of that enterprise. His intention of acquiring the company was to make it the “the center of fellowship” for the Sect members. It was during this time that Yu established the core doctrines of the Salvation Sect, which states that there is no need for perfunctory prayer and worship. Rather, doing God’s work, such as discussing business, represents true prayer and worship. Yu induced his followers to live a life centered on the sect, which was both a communal gathering and a

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

business enterprise. For the followers of Byung-Un Yu, the Samwoo Trading and Saemo (Inc.) become synonymous with God's work and the church.²⁶

Later, Byung-Un Yu went around saying "We are Heavenly spies," telling members not to reveal their true identity. Yu focused on spreading his doctrines and especially worked hard to show himself off as a generous philanthropist. He introduced the "Green Village Project" through the Korean Green Club. He held the "Bazaar for Environmental Protection Fund" at major department stores, raising tens of thousands of dollars and donating it to Environment Protection Society. By engaging in such activities, Yu presented himself to the world as a successful businessman and philanthropist.²⁷

B. Yohan Lee Faction

The second faction is the Daehan Jesus Baptists that is under the leadership of Yohan Lee. Yohan Lee can be considered the best disciple of Shin-Chan Kwon. Lee was ordained as a pastor by Kwon and worked together in Kwon's ministry. But Lee was repulsed by what he witnessed in 1974 when Byung-Un Yu purchased a company in danger of bankruptcy with the offering money from his Sect, and began to amass more funds to expand his business enterprises. Lee advocated "Defending the Gospel" and insisted that "the church and the business must be separated." In doing so, Lee blatantly criticized

²⁶ During the Sewol Ferry disaster investigation by the Prosecutor's office, it has been revealed the family of Byung-Un Yu owned about twenty businesses, including Chung Haejin Shipping, I. One. I. Holdings, and Chun Hae-Ji. Some speculate that the family may own up to one hundred businesses under different names.

²⁷ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, (Seoul: New Wave Plus, 2015) 47-67.

Byung-Un Yu. Eventually Lee broke away from Yu and established the Daehan Jesus Baptist Church located in Bangbae-dong, Seocho-gu, Seoul.²⁸

In addition to the Salvation Sect's core doctrine of "salvation by enlightenment," the Yohan Lee faction emphasized the imminent end of the world, based on extreme dispensationalist theology. It also focused all its energy on evangelism. It is well-known for changing the worldview of the participants, step by step, through Bible Lecture Conferences that lasted six to seven days, each time that they were held. It also pursued aggressive construction with the logic that one need not pay off the original principal of a bank loan. From their perspective, one only needed to pay the interests with church offerings until the second coming of Christ. This sect presently operates out of Seoul Central Church in the City of Anyang.

C. Oksu Park Faction

Lastly, the Oksu Park faction is the third faction of the Salvation Sect. Oksu Park claimed that he received enlightenment at an early morning meeting with Kays Glass on October 7, 1962. He was nineteen years old at that time. Park was ordained a pastor by Dick York in 1971. Soon he began the 'Central Church' in front of Gaemyung University in Daegu.²⁹

In 1960, the missionary, Dick York started the Daegu Mission School at a Japanese restaurant in Daegu. Eleven students, including Byung-Un Yu and Oksu Park, enrolled as the very first students. Shin-Chan Kwon also participated in it as an auditing student. Six years later, when Dick York left Korea, Oksu Park took charge and ran the mission school. In 1983, Oksu Park organized the Joyful News Mission Society and began to use the slogan, "Forgiveness of Sin, the Secret of Rebirth." He began his proselytizing efforts throughout

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 47-67.

the country by launching large-scale Bible seminars. He built the Joyful News Gangnam Church in 2005 at Yangjae-dong, Seocho-gu, Seoul. Park continues his active ministry to this day through the IYF and the Joyful News Mission Society.³⁰

3. The Worldview of the Salvation Sect, the Fundamental Problem

Professor Byung-Sup Jung states, “[The Salvation Sect] has serious social and ethical problems that are apparent. Yet, the biggest problem is their twisted worldview.”³¹ According to James Sire, their world view is “a hypothesis or series of presuppositions we consciously or unconsciously hold about the fundamental structure of the world.” It is a system of belief and a system of thought constructed based on a series of presuppositions that guide our behavior.

According to their world view, basically, a Christian must have a Christian worldview based upon the Scriptures. The Bible must be the source of power to move one’s life and the lens through which one understands the world. The Biblical value system helps the Christian to judge what is right and wrong. A Christian can settle down in the present or plan for the future based on the teachings of the Bible. This is the relationship between the Word of Truth and the real life of a Christian.

The four elements that are most important in the formation of a Christian worldview are creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration. The theology and doctrine of these four Biblical truths help Christians to have a right kind of faith, correct emotional and thought process, healthy experiences, and ethical behavior. This is what Jesus described in Matthew 7:17 when he spoke of good trees bearing good fruit.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 28.

The Salvation Sect uses the same vocabulary of faith and theology used in the Korean Protestant Churches. But, it uses them to teach a different truth, a different Gospel, and a different salvation from the one taught in the Bible. The end result is that the followers' worldview is entirely distorted and they are unable to live the life the Bible teaches. On the contrary, the follower is encouraged to deviate from society and to commit crimes. Herein lies the basic problem.

An examination of the Sect's flyers reveals topics most Christians and seekers would be curious about. They include the following: (1) Definitive proof of God's existence; (2) The historicity and scientific accuracy of the Bible; (3) Prophecy and fulfillment regarding Israel as recorded in the Bible; (4) Prophecy and fulfillment of human history revealed in the Bible; (5) How God views life and sin; and (6) Salvation and faith life through Jesus Christ.³²

In other words, the Salvation Sect throws interesting topics regarding God and man, sin and salvation, Bible and faith, as if they will answer them satisfactorily. The problem is, the theology and doctrine they present are full of Gnosticism and Antinomianism. The worldview of the followers is heavily influenced by these elements, and, in the end, followers bear bad fruits in many areas of their lives.³³

4. The Theology and Doctrine of the Salvation Sect

What is taught in the Salvation Sect, judging from the perspective of the major traditions of the church, is a heresy. A heresy refers to a "different Gospel" that has been distorted and corrupted from the Biblical doctrines that traditional Christianity has taught

³² Ibid., 30.

³³ Yong-Gyu Park, "The Salvation Sect and Other Cult's Socially Dysfunction from Church Historical Perspective," Korean Church Cult Critique Symposium, 2014, p. 46.

historically. A heresy is considered to have deviated from the correct Biblical doctrinal standards. Though the Salvation Sect has an appearance of Christianity, an inside examination reveals a fraudulent organization that teaches a different Gospel.

On the one hand, it is not enough to label the doctrine of the Salvation Sect simply as a heresy. The Sect revolves around a specific leader and is exclusive, resistant, and secretive. The Sect often causes social and ethical problems as well. The Sect destroys families, and it is unethical and greedy. So it is necessary to label it as a “cult,” which includes a concept of a false religion from the social science perspective.

After the Sewol Ferry disaster, it has actually been revealed by the Busan Christian United Association which “[the Salvation Sect] teaches something different than the traditional Christian doctrine, disguises itself as Christianity, and runs a business in order to satisfy the selfish interests of its leader. The Christian Gospel Baptist Church is not a Christian church and has no connection whatsoever to the Korea Baptist Convention or to orthodox Baptists.”³⁴ There are a number of elements of a cult in the Salvation Sect. The theology and doctrine of the Salvation Sect will be examined closely in what follows.

A. Regarding View of Scripture

There is a serious problem with the way the Salvation Sect interprets the Bible. They are not interested at all in doing the work of exposition or exegesis to discover the Biblical author’s intentions. Rather, they are proficient at eisegesis, putting their preconceived notions into the text.³⁵ Their approach is faulty, for they expand and exaggerate a very minor part of the Bible or interpret the text metaphorically and allegorically. They start out with the

³⁴ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 40.

³⁵ Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?* 136.

conclusion already drawn and use the Bible only as a supporting text.

Shin-Chan Kwon uses the text, Malachi 3:16, to ‘deny the necessity of prayer and worship’ and to ‘emphasize the fellowship.’ Without any regard to the context or the historical background, he interprets “Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard” as “the fellowship of believers who discuss and consult the Lord’s work and as such a very important prayer.”

Byung-Un Yu takes “No one comes to the Father except through me” from John 14:6 to explain the “me” in the text as not referring to Jesus but to the church, the Salvation Sect. He does the same with “I am the vine; you are the branches” in John 15:5. Yu says Jesus is not the vine but the Salvation Sect church in Korea is the vine. Yu goes further to state, “You must remain in the Salvation Sect in order to be raptured at the Second Coming of Jesus.” The followers of the Sect actually feel comforted and secure when they hear this type of Bible interpretation. They believe they belong to a church where salvation is guaranteed as the world is facing an imminent end.³⁶

Despite such erroneous Bible interpretations, followers of the Salvation Sect believe that only they have the truth of the Gospel exclusively. While they force a flawed Bible interpretation, they turn around to criticize the existing traditional Korean Protestant Churches for their doctrine, culture, and systems. So while they use the common vocabulary of the traditional church, including God, salvation, forgiveness of sins, the law, prayer, worship, and Second Coming, they are used with a very different meaning and understanding

B. Regarding Ecclesiology

³⁶ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 76.

The Salvation Sect teaches that the Holy Spirit works only in the Salvation Sect churches. Shin-Chan Kwon asserts, “After ministering in one place for a period of time, the Holy Spirit moves to another place. The work of the Holy Spirit began in Jerusalem and now remains in Korea. The Holy Spirit works only in the Salvation Sect. Now is the period of Korea.”³⁷ By stating such an understanding, Kwon limits the omnipresence of God. The Salvation Sect has a very exclusive ecclesiology. It claims that only the Salvation Sect is the true church that God approves, and it denies the validity of all the other churches.³⁸

Their exclusivist ecclesiology places their existence above the nation or apart from the nation. The prime illustration of this view is the Sewol Ferry disaster. When the nation’s investigative authorities approached them for questioning, they acted as if their residence ‘Geumsoowon’ had the privilege of extraterritorial jurisdiction. Without any sense of guilt or sting of conscience, the Sect that had helped Byung-Un Yu to hide, helped him escape. This shows the Sect’s propensity for antisocial, anti-state activities. With no regard for social justice; the Sect showed that its ultimate loyalty was to its leader and its church.³⁹

Shin-Chan Kwon stated “While an individual receives salvation, the life of faith must be lived as a church. It is impossible to understand the Bible on your own but only through the fellowship of believers.”⁴⁰ Byung-Un Yu also made the church meetings the center of followers’ religious life by teaching, “An individual experiences forgiveness of sin,

³⁷ Quoted in: Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, .

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Myung-Soo Ju, *The Salvation Sect Syndrome: What is the Problem?* Korean Church Cult Critique Symposium, 2014, unpublished article, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 6.

but the Holy Spirit resides at the church.” As examined in their interpretation of John 15:5, this is in line with their assertion that “You will be raptured at the Second Coming of Jesus only if you remain with the Salvation Sect. Apart from the Salvation Sect, you can do nothing.”⁴¹

C. Regarding Worship

The followers of the Salvation Sect do not worship the same way as the regular traditional or Evangelical Korean Protestant Churches do. It would be more accurate to say that they do not worship. They themselves say, “We go to a meeting.” In these meetings, there is no praising of God’s Name or worship expressing love. According to Professor Dong-Sup Jung, they do use the hymnal published inter-denominationally by the Korean Protestant Churches. However, they selectively sing hymns related to the Bible, salvation, assurance, fellowship, Church, and Second Coming. They do not sing hymns related to praise and worship, prayer, devotion, and benediction.⁴²

According to Professor Jung, “they sing about their salvation and their forgiveness of sins but not the Lord who saved them. They sing about salvation and they are deceived into believing they have received salvation as members of the sect.. They only meet to listen to false religious leaders’ sermons, proselytizing, and fellowship. There is no essence of worship in their meeting.”⁴³ At their 11 o’clock meeting on Sundays, the ‘singing of hymns occurs in random order ‘ and the ‘sermons of Shin-Chan Kwon, Byung-Un Yu, and Hyuk-Gi Yu’ are considered the most important. Prayers, offerings, and the benediction, important elements of the traditional Korean Protestant Churches, are missing.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?* 185-186.

According to Professor Jung, during the early days of the Sect in 1969, Byung-Un Yu called the meeting place a “place of worship” and tried to maintain the appearance of a regular church.⁴⁴ But soon after, he had a new “enlightenment” and stopped prayers and worship. The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4 is interpreted to discard time, place, and ritual of worship. Going to church is no longer necessary. There is no need for a denominational or church signs. Worship is fellowship among believers, and prayer is not necessary for those who are saved.⁴⁵

The Salvation Sect made a doctrine that states that its focus is “discussing business, and the work of the meeting is fellowship and prayer.” For Byung-Un Yu, building the business enterprise was the essence of the church, and the church was a business enterprise. Since running the business was equated with the life of faith, economic exploitation within the company was presented as a form of religious devotion.⁴⁶

D. Regarding the Life of Faith

Examining the life of faith of the Salvation Sect, one can see the traces of efforts made to dismantle the existing order. As mentioned earlier, during his Far East Broadcasting days, Shin-Chan Kwon publicly criticized traditional worship, tithing offerings, the elder and deacon system, morning prayer, and pastoral benediction as “legalism” and “religion.”⁴⁷ Kwon preached that “salvation is being liberated from legalism and religion.”⁴⁸ Thus, the Salvation Sect rejects many systems of the traditional Korean Protestant Churches. They

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

insist that they “do not need to be bound by a church system since they are saved by faith.”⁴⁹

Especially, concerning prayer, Shin-Chan Kwon taught, “Whether morning prayer or all-night prayer, fasting prayer, praying out-loud or any type of prayer are simply expressions of human religious instinct and have nothing to do with God. Once saved, there is no need for prayer. In his view, prayer was necessary in the times of Jesus, but there is no need for it at the present time. Prayer is not for anyone, but only for the leader tasked with work.”⁵⁰ Using the prayer of Moses and Samuel as examples, Kwon made a doctrine that states, “One representative’s prayer is enough.”

Kwon ridiculed the practice of praying all together and praying out-loud in Korean Protestant Churches, describing it as a “frog croaking sound.”⁵¹ He pulled God down to human level by saying “Because God is only one person, God cannot hear the prayers of tens of thousands of people all at once.”⁵² Also his statement, “God does not hear the prayer of an unsaved person” contradicts the Biblical accounts of the centurion, Cornelius, and the thief on the cross.⁵³

All three factions of the Salvation Sect shun the Lord’s Prayer, because of the phrase “forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.” I will deal with it again when I examine their soteriology. They emphasize that “salvation is already received,” and their soteriology denies any need for further repentance. The followers of the Salvation Sect have already received the forgiveness of sins and have

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

become perfectly righteous. Therefore, “if you are truly saved, there is no need to pray for forgiveness of sins anymore.”

All three factions practice baptism, and two factions even use the word, “Baptist,” in the names of their denominations. Yet, they deny almost all other existing church practices. They teach that keeping the Lord’s Day holy, tithing, morning prayer, Friday all-night prayer, fasting, various church meetings and church calendar days are all old laws and religion that enslave the saved believers.⁵⁴ The followers are instructed to “courageously throw it off.” The Salvation Sect teaches such abandonment of legalistic and religious practices provides a wonderful liberating experience, and subsequently it is called the “joyful news.”⁵⁵

E. Regarding Their View of God

The Salvation Sect leaders teach about God not as a ‘person’ but as ‘spirit.’ Shin-Chan Kwon teaches, “It is impossible to connect with God who is spirit through will or emotions. God loves people, but people cannot love God. The Holy Spirit comes into our spirit, and sin comes into our flesh. People have spirit, soul, and flesh. Presently the part that is saved is the spirit not the flesh. There is a separate salvation of our flesh.”⁵⁶

The part that says “God is spirit” is correct, of course. But the problem occurs when one understands God as a passive and static being. The three factions of the Salvation Sect emphasize God’s divine nature and transcendence but disregard God’s

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 79-81.

character and imminent presence. Jesus Christ is also understood with emphasis on His divinity and transcendence, but His character is minimized. On the other hand, they stress it is God the Holy Spirit who is active, dynamic and alive.

Professor Dong-Sup Jung asserts the sect's leaders intentionally position God in a place that is transcendent and far-removed from the ordinary in order to boost the special privilege the leaders have.⁵⁷ They insist that the Holy Spirit remains in Korea, but only within the Salvation Sect.

F. Regarding Anthropology

Traditionally the Christian Church has taught that a human being is 'one unified being,' whether understood in terms of dichotomy or trichotomy. A human being is a single unified being with both physical and spiritual aspects that are coexisting and interconnected. The Bible teaches us that the body and spirit are not opposed to each other but are in a compatible relationship. God treats us as a whole person.

But the Salvation Sect's anthropology is Gnostic. Yohan Lee taught that God resides in the spirit but Satan and sin reside in the flesh.⁵⁸ Shin-Chan Kwon also teaches that the Holy Spirit comes into the spirit but sin comes into the flesh. In this dichotomy (spirit and flesh), the Salvation Sect teaches that "since the spirit is saved, even if you sin in the flesh, it does not affect your salvation."⁵⁹ From their perspective, "any sin you commit in daily life is not sin. Once saved, if you commit a sin in the flesh, only the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 83-85.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

flesh is responsible.”⁶⁰

G. Regarding Their View of Sin

The traditional church defined sin in two distinctive ways. The first is the ‘original sin’ mentioned in Romans 5:12. In Paul’s view, sin entered the world through one man. All who were born after Adam have this fallen nature regardless of one’s will. Second is the actual sin resulting from one’s own will. Original sin is the cause for actual sin, and all who sin, suffer from guilt afterwards.

The Salvation Sect distorts the meaning of sin. They teach sin as if it is an object that exists within human beings.⁶¹ A human being is sinful to the core and cannot help but to sin. David’s confession in Psalm 51:5, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” is quoted to support their view that human beings have become vessels of sin.⁶²

This is a very different view from the traditional Christian teaching which understands sin in terms of a broken relationship between God and man, resulting in all kinds of unbelief, rebellion, and disobedience. Sin also deeply hurts God the Father’s heart.⁶³

Rather than distinguishing ‘original sin’ from ‘actual sin,’ Oksu Park distinguishes ‘sin’ from ‘offense.’⁶⁴ The first refers to both original sin and actual sin,

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 87-92.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?*, 131.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

and the latter refers to ‘symptoms of sin.’ Oksu Park preaches about sin as follows:

What is sin? Is it stealing, lying, murdering, and committing adultery? No, that is not sin. What is leprosy? Is it falling off of your fingers and eye lashes? Is it deformation of your nose? No, they are merely symptoms and results of leprosy. They are not the leprosy itself. In the same way sin and offense are fundamentally different. The Bible clearly divides sin from offense. ‘If we confess our sins’ (1 John 1:9a) means to confess your sin, not your offense, i.e. “I have stolen.”⁶⁵

If one follows Oksu Park’s logic, the problem of an offense is resolved when you resolve the problem of sin, just as your high temperatures go down when your cold is cured.⁶⁶

As mentioned earlier, the Salvation Sect teaches that sin resides in the flesh. They separate the soul (or spirit) from the flesh, where sin resides. In other words, it is possible for the flesh to sin, totally separate from the spirit. But the traditional Christianity teaches otherwise. When God calls us sinners, God is referring to our whole being, not just the flesh, as being sinful. When our flesh sins, our spirit also sins. This theological difference is too great to ignore.

The three factions of the Salvation Sect teach that “our original sin disappeared when Jesus bore the cross.”⁶⁷ So “when we realize that fact through specific Word, we are born again as ‘sinless righteous person.’”⁶⁸ Because Jesus redeemed humankind of Adam’s original sin through his death on the cross, we no longer need to repent but simply realize that forgiveness of our sins has been accomplished.⁶⁹ From the traditional

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 141.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 141.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

view of Christianity, this underestimates our actual sin, while focusing only on the solution of original sin.

There is a significant difference in that the Salvation Sect places the responsibility for sin on Adam, while traditional Christianity places the responsibility on the individual sinners themselves. The Salvation Sect insists that there is no need to repent 'at the time of receiving salvation' nor 'after being saved,' since Jesus as the Second Adam took care of Adam's sin, that is, original sin. Those who are saved no longer need to repent because the cross of Christ took care of all our past, present, and future sins. Even after committing actual sins of lying, quarreling, immorality, and murder, followers of the Sect do not feel guilt or shame, for those things are mere 'symptoms of sin.' Furthermore, the Salvation Sect teaches that an individual is saved only if he/she has no sense of guilt. Those who still have guilty consciences are not saved.

Oksu Park states, "When Jesus was crucified on the cross and said 'It is finished,' all our sins were forgiven at that moment.⁷⁰ God sees that the blood of the cross washed away our sins. God then says to us, 'now you are righteous. I will no longer judge you.' God promises us, 'I will no longer remember your sins.' Park adds, 'there is no Bible verse that says 'your sins are washed away through repentance.'"⁷¹

H. Regarding Soteriology

The teaching of Byung-Un Yu regarding salvation is as follows: "A man must realize that he is a sinner before God and doomed to perish because of Adam's original sin. He must also realize that through the Bible's specific verses, his sins can be forgiven

⁷⁰ Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?*, 144.

⁷¹ Ibid.

forever in an instant by the blood of Jesus. The Jews are saved by receiving Jesus, but the Gentiles are saved by the enlightenment of the Gospel.”⁷²

For example, Professor Dong-Sup Jung recounts the Billy Graham Crusade that was held at Yeouido Public Square in 1973 in his book, *Guwon Gaenyum Baro Japgi [Understanding the Correct Concept of Salvation]*.⁷³ When Billy Graham preached “Repent of your sins and accept Jesus” rather than “Realize that your sins are forgiven,” Shin-Chan Kwon stated that even Billy Graham was not saved. Traditional Christianity defines salvation as the result of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and therefore preaches, “Come to Jesus” (Matthew 11:28), “Repent and believe in Jesus” (Acts 2:38), and “Receive Jesus.” (John 1:12) But the Salvation Sect insists that “you are saved when you realize the forgiveness of sins.” This enlightenment is at the heart of the Salvation Sect’s soteriology.⁷⁴

The Salvation Sect’s soteriology can be summed up with the phrase, “Once saved, always saved.” Once one is saved through enlightenment, his/her salvation is never revoked no matter what. Subsequently the question, “then how must a believer live from now on?” is ignored. What is considered important is “living with the assurance of salvation.” Shin-Chan Kwon states, “When we are saved, our spirit receives salvation. After the salvation of our spirit, sin does not affect our salvation. Since it is the spirit that is saved, what is done in the flesh does not matter. Once you are enlightened, there is no

⁷² Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 93-98.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 14.

more offense. Even if you sin, it no longer counts against you.”⁷⁵

By stating that since God saves human spirit (soul), it does not matter how you live in the flesh once your sins are forgiven, the Salvation Sect makes a serious mistake of antinomianism and denies the need for sanctification. Professor Jung testifies that Byung-Un Yu and the Sect followers, indeed, use any ways and means to accomplish their business goals. Besides the unethical mode of the running of their businesses, they have shown a very irresponsible attitude and contempt toward governmental authority in relation to the Sewol Ferry disaster in April, 2014. Their attitude and actions were underlined by their theology.

For the Salvation Sect, ‘the moment you realize you are saved’ is very significant as it represents ‘the exact time of your salvation.’ The Sect is famous for saying only those who know the date of salvation are saved. If you can’t say what date you were saved, then you are not saved. Oksu Park, himself, revealed that he was saved on October 7th, 1962, and repeatedly preached how important it is to know the date that one received salvation through enlightenment.

In quoting “since the day you heard it and understood God's grace” from Colossians 1:6, they state that when you realize the secret of the forgiveness of sins and of being born again, which is realizing the truth that Jesus effected atonement for our sins, one is immediately saved. The question then, “When were you saved?” is, therefore, a very important question. Sect followers often discuss how many were saved at a particular meeting and who was saved when.

The following are the ten important questions of the Salvation Sect:

⁷⁵ Chang-Sup Shim, *What is the Salvation Sect?*, (Seoul: Cult Victim Response Investigative Research Committee, 2014), 10.

- (1) Do you know for certain that your name is written in the Book of Life?
- (2) Are you born again?
- (3) Do you believe the Holy Spirit is in your heart?
- (4) Are you sure that you have moved from death to life?
- (5) Are you a righteous person or a sinner?
- (6) Are all your sins forgiven?
- (7) Do you live a life of fear of God?
- (8) Do you have the assurance of salvation?
- (9) Are you ready for the Second Coming of Christ?
- (10) What is the evidence of your salvation?

The questions themselves are not problematic. But Christians who do not examine them seriously might fall prey for the Salvation Sect. For Christians, how and when we were saved is not the most important question. For Peter, Andrew, Zacchaeus, and Paul, the day that they first met Jesus and experienced salvation is clear. But for Rev. Han-Hum Oak and numerous Christians who grew up in Christians homes, they may neither know nor remember ‘the exact time, day, and place’ of salvation. But the truly important question is “are you now a believer in Christ?”

I. Regarding the view of the Mosaic Law

Using Romans 7:4 as the basis, the Salvation Sect teaches that it is no longer necessary to obey the law, since the saved believer “died to the law.” The Sect teaches that salvation is liberation from the law. Shin-Chan Kwon states, “The law is religion.

The Mosaic law God given in the Old Testament refers to religion. The law is about the outward, but the Gospel is about the inward. All must tremble before the law, therefore the law is religion.”⁷⁶ Kwon emphasized one cannot be saved through good works, tithing, morning prayer, and other forms of religious zeal. This type of forced antinomian interpretation does not fit well with the Biblical witness and leads to serious doctrinal flaws. This antinomianism seems to have stemmed from dispensationalism which explains Biblical history by dividing it into seven periods: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace, and the Millennial Kingdom.⁷⁷ Dispensationalists claim that God reveals a new administration of salvation in each of these periods. Especially, in the period of the law, one could be saved through obedience to the law. But people could not keep the law and failed. So God opened the door of salvation through grace. In this way, the law and grace are juxtaposed as opposites, and from it, they established an equation that says if you follow the law, then you are an enemy of those who received grace.⁷⁸

This kind of logic ultimately leads to antinomianism that says “there is no longer a need for the law.” Although the Bible opposes ‘legalism,’ it also teaches that ‘antinomianism’ is a problem. Antinomianism, under the guise of “enjoying grace,” disregards the law, and becomes the cause for the Church and believers to be less moral and less ethical.

J. Regarding Eschatology

In the ‘Salvation Sect Overview,’ the great influence that Dick York had on

⁷⁶ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 135-145.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

the Sect and the Dispensationalist eschatology is mentioned. The Salvation Sect eschatology is “distorted extreme Dispensationalist eschatology,” based on a flawed arbitrary Bible interpretation. Byung-Un Yu argues as follows about the end times. “In the end times, there will be a 7-Year Great Tribulation, and before the Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ will occur in the air. Believers who have fallen asleep will resurrect with a glorified body as did the body of Christ. Then believers who are alive will also be transformed and raptured into the air where they will be received by the Lord.”⁷⁹ Yu taught that the body of Christ (the Salvation Sect) will be lifted up into the air before the 7-Year Great Tribulation. Furthermore, those outside of the Salvation Sect cannot be lifted up during the Second Coming of Christ but will be doomed to suffer through the 7-Year Great Tribulation. Afterwards, the tribulation will come to an end by Christ’s earthly reign (Zechariah 14:4-5), with which the Thousand-Year kingdom will be built. Shin-Chan Kwon further explains, “The Thousand Year Kingdom of the Promised Land will be a thousand year reign by the community, not by individuals.”⁸⁰

Yohan Lee, on the other hand, focused on the “Restoration of the nation Israel.” Lee interpreted the words “when the fig tree leaves come out” to refer to the Israeli independence in 1948, and commented, “the end is near.” Lee taught that “Israelites scattered all over the world are gathering in the land of Israel. The long trial of two thousand years is over, and the time has come for the restoration of Israel.”⁸¹ For him, there is a compulsive interest and focus on the imminent Great Tribulation and the Second Coming.

⁷⁹ Quoted in: Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?*, 191-199.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

According to Professor Dong-Sup Jung, Shin-Chan Kwon warned about the 3rd World War and prophesied about the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem as a prelude to the end of the world. Kwon further stated, “I am certain that different religions will build their own temples in Jerusalem. When the Jews rebuild the Temple, then their time has come.” In other words, the New Testament period, the time of the Gentiles, would come to an end.⁸²

Shin-Chan Kwon and Yohan Lee have used extreme Dispensationalist eschatology to warn about the imminent end of the world to create an atmosphere of fear to attract many followers. They said 666 was a bank card, then a computer, a barcode printed on your forehead and hand, and again changed it to the very-chip.⁸³

The Salvation Sect uses such provocative eschatology to promote their message: “The time is running out, so invest in the development fund. The end is near. Heavenly business must do well for you to be saved. You cannot go to heaven with money, so you must harvest (give an offering). If you want to be self-sufficient without the help of the antichrist, then you must collect wealth and begin the community life.” Using fear tactics and pressure, the Sect misleads its followers and collects enormous amounts of money. Their ultimate purpose continues to be that of building their own kingdom.⁸⁴

5. Things that are non-existent in the Salvation Sect

A. Turning Around and Commitment

⁸² Quoted in: Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?* 191-199.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 157-169.

As Jesus began His public ministry, he preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 4:17), and “Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15) As such, repentance is a necessary process in becoming a true citizen of God’s kingdom. It is more than just realizing our sins but an essential process to receive the forgiveness of our sins, redemption in Jesus Christ. It is a critical event in transferring our citizenship from Satan’s kingdom to God’s kingdom. (Colossians 1:13-14)

Even after a person is saved and has become a believer, the believer needs daily moments to look back and repent for the numerous wrongdoings and mistakes, as a result of one’s weakness and foolishness. In other words, even after salvation, the believer needs to repeatedly repent.

In this sense, the Salvation Sect’s understanding of repentance is totally different from that of the Christian tradition. The Salvation Sect teaches that repentance is necessary only once in one’s lifetime, and that one only need to admit it afterwards. Repentance is a singular event for them because “sin no longer exists” after they receive salvation through enlightenment. They teach “we no longer need to repent” and tell those who feel guilty and try to repent that they do so because “they are not saved yet.”

But the Bible in both the Old and the New Testaments clearly teaches that saved believers should confess their sins and repent, as well as compensate for their wrongdoing. In the Old Testament, Daniel and the people of Israel confessed and repented for their own sins as well as the sins of the people. (Daniel 9:20) The Israelites in the Book of Nehemiah also confessed and repented for their sins and the sins of their ancestors. David, ‘a man after God’s own heart,’ confessed his sins of murder and adultery, and lamented and repented. David resolved not to repeat the same sins and kept his resolve.

In the New Testament, Jesus taught, “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.” Jesus taught the need to repeatedly repent of our daily sins. (Luke 17:3-4) After repentance, Zacchaeus made compensations, four times the amount, for those whom he had cheated. Lastly, in the Book of Revelation 2-3, the Holy Spirit repeatedly tells the seven churches to “repent.” These seven churches were made up of people who believed in Jesus and were already saved. The Holy Spirit demanded repentance in daily life that was distinct from repentance when one first believed.

In contrast to the Salvation Sect, traditional Christianity has taught that repentance includes our turning away from sin and our commitment to truth and obedience. This is an important distinction. For the Salvation Sect, both the ‘enlightenment itself’ and ‘the life after the enlightenment’ are very passive. But, for the Christian, the essence of repentance is ‘leaving a life of sin and turning to the direction that God wants.’ It presupposes a turn-around from a life once lived, including attitude, lifestyle, and ways of thinking, to a new direction of life that is in line with the citizens of God’s kingdom. (Luke 1:16-17, 2 Corinthians 3:16-17) This change of direction includes our whole being and what follows is a change in thinking, emotions, and will.

It is the same way with the commitment of faith that follows repentance. Repentance and faith are connected personal responses to the Gospel. Like repentance, faith has elements of the intellect, emotions, and volitional will. A believer first acknowledges and accepts the work of God done for us in the intellectual realm. Then the essence of the Gospel is experienced in the emotional realm, which leads to a confession of the heart, “I believe Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead to make me righteous.” Finally, in the realm of the volitional will, one surrenders to the Gospel and entrusts one’s life to God.

In this process, the experience of being born again is especially important. This is a spiritual new birth by the Holy Spirit through which sinners who believe are given new character by God. After this new birth, the believer progressively transforms him/herself from the worldly thinking and attitude to the newness of life in Christ. God's Word becomes a mirror for reflection and correction. The inward person is thus transformed, according to the Holy Spirit's leading, resulting in changed behaviors.

B. Sanctification Process

There are three tenses in salvation. First, "I have received salvation" belongs to the past tense. "[God] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:5)

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24)

"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13-14)

Second, "I am working out my salvation" belongs to the present tense.

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12)

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18)

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your

salvation” (1 Peter 2:2).

Finally, with the Third, “I will experience the completion of my salvation on that Final Day” belongs to the future tense.

“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.” (Romans 14:10)

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

As examined earlier, the Salvation Sect emphasizes ‘only the past tense.’ It considers sin as an object that disappears once you receive salvation by realizing your forgiveness of sins. The believer is instantly liberated from all the liability of sin. The believer, without the need to connect to his intellect, emotion, and will, unilaterally becomes a ‘perfectly righteous person.’

The Salvation Sect’s doctrine of justification leads to the conclusion, “Once saved, always saved.” This, in turn, leads to such thinking as, “I am already saved, therefore, it doesn’t matter how I live from now on.” And “My future sins are already forgiven, so I do not need to make an effort not to sin.” This, in effect, gives an exemption to any moral and ethical responsibilities. After experiencing justification in the Salvation Sect, there is no need for obedience, sanctification, discipleship, or transformed life. The only requirement is loyalty to the Sect through which one shows the evidence of being saved is demanded. This makes it possible for the Sect’s followers to commit whatever is asked for the sake of the Sect’s business, which is equated with church, whether it is lying or stealing.

Salvation in the Bible and in tradition, in contrast, exists in the past, present, and future tenses. In the center of the Christian doctrine of justification is the “imputation of righteousness.” This is a concept of “being covered with someone else’s as if it was mine.” Though I have no merit at all, God unilaterally declares us legally righteous on the basis of perfect redemption by Jesus Christ on the cross. And the believer is saved on the basis of that perfect righteousness.

Here I need to emphasize the significance of “imputation” and “declaration.” What is meant here is not that “our sins have disappeared,” but that “God will not hold us responsible for our sins.” A different way of saying this is that we are ‘sinners who have been justified.’⁸⁵ Because we are now in Christ Jesus, there is no more ‘condemnation.’

Our new ‘status’ is that we are righteous persons, but our ‘character’ remains sinful, which is why we need the sanctification process. We have already become beloved children of God, yet, there remain battles for us to fight. These battles are against ‘sin, Satan, and our self.’ In other words, ‘the Kingdom of God has already come in us but not yet completed.’ Therefore, God’s kingdom ethics must fiercely be realized in the lives of true Christians. But the doctrine of sanctification is nonexistent in the Salvation Sect.

C. Fulfillment of the Law

Keeping the Lord’s Day holy, engaging in tithes, offerings, fasting, morning prayer, all night prayer, worship, and numerous acts of community service and sacrifice are a precious spiritual heritage of Korean Christianity, and have been especially emphasized for a long time. Essentially, these practices flowed out of deep gratitude for being saved

⁸⁵ Chang-Sup Shim, *What is the Salvation Sect?* 14.

by God's grace. They also flowed out of strong faith in God and desire for God. These faith elements are inherited principles from the Old and New Testaments that serve to strengthen Korean believers and lead them to spiritual maturity.

When the Salvation Sect criticizes and prohibits these acts of service and devotion within the Korean Church as religion and legalism, they are misunderstanding and distorting the essence of Christianity. The Salvation Sect, influenced by the Dispensationalist view, calls the present age, a "period of grace," and denies and rejects everything about 'the law.' But Jesus, whom they claim to follow, in reality came not to abolish but to "fulfill the law." Jesus said "not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law (until everything is accomplished." (Matthew 5:17-18)

The law was given by God to His people as rules for life to be obeyed and kept. In the widest sense, the law is the entire Bible. In the narrower sense, it is the Pentateuch, the Five Books of Moses. In the narrowest sense, it is the Ten Commandments, which is God's covenant with the people of Israel. The Ten Commandments deal with God's relationship with people' and 'people's relationship with each other. It is a guide that helps human beings to have right relationship with God, neighbors, and all creation. The Old Testament law was renewed in the New Testament by Jesus as the Golden Rule, 'love God; love your neighbors.' The spirit and the principle of the law were preserved intact, since the law was not abolished but rather, it was reinterpreted.

The Salvation Sect's antinomian behavior refuses to accept the law's inherent benefits and function. The law was given to us so that we can realize for ourselves that we are, indeed, sinners. As we reflect on ourselves through the law, we experience the

state of condemnation and curse. Through despair of falling short of the law's demands, we realize the need for Jesus Christ. The sinners who despair through the law are led to Jesus Christ. Those who experience the grace of God through Jesus, even after tasting the grace of salvation, see the law as a standard for living and discipleship. After new birth, a Christian becomes more like Christ by following the law through the Holy Spirit's leading and power. As mentioned in the discussion of the 'Sanctification Process,' the sinful nature remains even after believing in Jesus. The law helps us to fight against this sinful nature, to overcome sin, and to live a holy life. The Salvation Sect distorts the fundamental value of the law and forfeits the true benefits of the law.

D. Prayer, Intimate and Personal

While Christian faith teaches that God is spirit who is transcendent, it also teaches that God is personal and immanent. That is why we, as believers, after encountering Jesus Christ as our personal savior and experiencing a new birth, can have a living relationship with God the Father with our whole being that is dynamic and often deeply moving. In this process, prayer is a main channel of fellowship with God. Prayer can build intimacy with God through on-going conversations. Prayer also spurs spiritual growth and sanctification.

Professor Dong-sup Jung writes in his book, *Wae Guwonpa-rul Yidan-yira Hanunga*" [*Why Is the Salvation Sect Called a Cult?*], that he did not experience prayer while he was in the Salvation Sect. But after his conversion to the Christian faith, he tells of the time when the Holy Spirit "rebuked him for the sin of not loving his wife and being unkind." And "because I was a sinner, I had to repent." Jung also wrote, "God's love was poured into my heart. I realized the truth that salvation is personally

encountering God through Jesus, having a personal relationship with God.”⁸⁶

Jung confessed, “When I was going through difficult times [because of the Salvation Sect], I wondered why people believed in Jesus, who did not seem to be of any help. Jesus who atoned for our sins once-and-for-all, 2,000 years ago, did not solve my problems and worries today, nor could I consider Him to be my counselor. [But now] after believing in Jesus who answers me personally, not only do I thank Him for the forgiveness of my sins, but I serve and follow Him as the guide of my life, counselor, comforter, and One who gives me strength.”⁸⁷

Through its doctrines, the Salvation Sect obscured God’s personhood and immanence, prohibited its followers from prayer, and prevented them from having a personal fellowship with God. In Jesus’ life and ministry, as recorded in the bible, prayer is preeminent. Jesus prayed when He was baptized, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove. While He was in the desert for forty days, Jesus overcame all temptations through prayer. Even on the cross, Jesus prayed to the Father and thus was able to finish His mission. The Salvation Sect only selectively chooses few passages about Jesus that they need and ignores the rest in order to promote their own teachings and themselves.

Lastly, from the pastoral point of view, many cult members start out as Protestant Church members. Then they are seduced by the cult. Many of them had attended their churches for a very long period of time and had served their churches in different ministries. However, by not having had a true encounter with God, they began to lose their motivation for faith. When one’s faith is based only on knowledge, and not

⁸⁶ Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?* 171-178.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 236-237.

on experience, and when one fails to live up to what one knows, then one is easily exposed to trials and temptations.

While it is important for the Korean Protestant Churches to make a systematic response to cults, it is just as important, if not more, to provide pastoral care for each member of the church to ensure that he or she is having a vibrant and dynamic fellowship with God. Ultimately, it is Jesus, Himself, not the church or the pastor, who must lead each believer.

E. Holistic and Whole Anthropology

There are many theological opinions as to the makeup of a human being. In traditional Christianity, there is a tripartite understanding which divides a person into spirit, soul, and body. There is also a dichotomy of seeing a person as body and spirit. Some also see the person as a single unit. Though there are these different interpretations, there is one common view in Christian theology, which is that “a human being must be dealt with as one whole being.”⁸⁸

The Bible does not treat human spiritual condition as irrelevant to body or soul. While the biblical authors specifically mention spirit, soul, and body (or body and soul), it is not difficult to find verses that illustrate that biblical authors have a holistic view.

“For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.” (2 Corinthians 4:11)

“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1)

⁸⁸ Chang-Sup Shim, *What is the Salvation Sect?* 15.

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23) When one person commits a sin, it is not only the body that sins but also his soul and spirit. “I said, "O LORD, have mercy on me; heal me, for I have sinned against you." (Psalm 41:4)

Also, there are biblical verses that see body not as evil and dirty but see the body worship and praise God along with the spirit (soul).

“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.“ (Psalm 63:1)

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1)

On the contrary, there are Bible verses that point to the heart committing sins.

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, the false testimony, slander.” (Matthew 15:19)

Like the Gnosticism of the past, the Salvation Sect's theology separates the 'spirit' from the 'body.' Its theology teaches that it is 'God who resides in the spirit, while sin and Satan reside in the body,' or “our salvation means salvation of our spirit. Satan works through the human body.” This is not biblical.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Dong-Sup Jung, *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, 84.

F. Life Grounded in Present Reality

Those who are obsessed with extreme Dispensationalist eschatology, including the Salvation Sect, have the tendency to focus on the future, the Second Coming of Christ, and neglect the present life. They treat the entire Bible as the book of prophecy and become obsessed with prophetic Bible verses. They try to connect the present day events with prophecy. The Salvation Sect, in particular, scraps and uses various newspaper articles for proselytizing purposes. Some of these newspaper articles are about the Middle-East and the crisis that followed after the establishment of the state of Israel on May 14th, 1948.⁹⁰

It is true that a large portion of the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation deals with the end times. Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21, and Second Thessalonians have many verses that mention the Second Coming of Christ. But a substantial portion of these texts are filled with symbols and take the form of Apocalyptic Literature. One needs to remember that there are various theological viewpoints regarding the mystery and the signs of the Apocalyptic end of the world.

There was a time in Korean Christianity when Dispensational eschatology and Premillennialism were popular. But today there are many that follow Amillennialism that understands the thousand year kingdom reign as symbolic of church history. Amillennialism interprets 1,000 as the perfect number 10 multiplied 3 times. It is interpreted as symbolic of “enough time for God to save all of His chosen people.”

What is important is the fact that Christ will return. Rather than neglecting one’s present life, uninterested in the lives of others, and obsessed with Dispensationalist

⁹⁰ Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?* 195.

eschatology like the Salvation Sect does, we must be faithful to the present task and the social responsibilities God has given to us ‘here and now.’ We must be aware that the Salvation Sect emphasizes the Dispensationalist eschatology in order to build their own kingdom, not the Kingdom of God. Their ultimate goal is to extract as much property and wealth as possible from the followers to raise business funds.

III. The doctrine of the Salvation Sect within Korean Protestant Church

1. How to respond to heresy or cults at the church level

Professor Dong-Sup Jung in his book’s final pages suggests how Korean Christianity can respond to the heresy and the cult dimensions of the Salvation Sect:

- (1) We must be faithful to the calling of spreading the Gospel.
- (2) We must understand the Bible correctly, read it diligently, and stand on the Word firmly.
- (3) We must keep the unity of the Church, the Body of Jesus Christ
- (4) We must collect correct and objective information about the cult and be knowledgeable about them and their activities.
- (5) We must teach believers to obey and follow their church leaders.
- (6) We must make family a community of love full of conversations, for people who are hungry for love and fall easily for the cult.
- (7) We must practice piety as we wait and long for the Day of the Lord.⁹¹

The Korean Church must seriously and humbly accept the above seven suggestions.

⁹¹ Dong-Sup Jung, *Why is the Salvation Sect a Cult?*, 263-269.

Not only because Professor Dong-Sup Jung made these conclusions after observing much as a core member of the Salvation Sect, but because the Korean Church failed much in the above-mentioned areas, allowing the cult to freely recruit among church members.

These things are true. Many church members serve the church only out of a sense of duty. Some are only culturally Christians, attending church without having had a personal encounter with Christ. They are Christians in name only. Without having experienced the life and power of the Gospel, they go through many worship meetings and service opportunities, ending up tired and exhausted. Others are hurt, disappointed, disillusioned, and angered by the various church scandals related to sex, money, power, and fights over honor, involving both clergy and lay members. Many do not have a good knowledge of the contents of their own faith, and chase the emotional highs of worship or the charismatic movements that emphasize spiritual gifts. Then there are those who act piously and holy in the church but fail to live as godly husbands, wives, and parents at home.

When we look around, there are many who appear to be good church members but in reality are exposed and are vulnerable spiritually and mentally. It is the duty and responsibility of the Christian Church to care for these persons, to comfort them, to encourage them with God's Word, and to lead them to the true Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

2. The Enemy Hidden within Ourselves

I have just mentioned types of Christians who are easily exposed and vulnerable to cults as well as what Korean Protestant Churches need to do in response. But what we really need is a more fundamental response. As I have mentioned earlier, it is the world view that we hold that is the fundamental problem. There are pastors among us who

hold theology that is similar to that of the Salvation Sect, as well as elements in our worship that are very close to those in the Salvation Sect. We must identify them so that we can respond to them. For example, pastors often preach a message about “once saved, always saved.” Below is an excerpt from a sermon of a pastor of a mega church in Seoul.

“According to John 10:28-29, (once you’re saved) you shall never perish; no one can snatch you out of hand of our mighty Lord. As much as Satan might try with all his might, he cannot take you out of God’s hand. Once you’re saved, you’re eternally saved. Once you’re saved and receive eternal life, even if you sin due to your weak flesh, your soul’s salvation never disappears.”⁹²

“Even if you murder 100 times, even if you commit murder after being born again and receive death penalty, you may lose your reward in heaven but never lose your salvation. It is certainly a greater sin to bow before another god or worship an idol than to commit murder, adultery or stealing. But if that person is a saved person, that person does not go to hell because of that sin.”⁹³

In the latter part of the same sermon, Veri-chip, one of favorite topics of those who believe in Dispensational eschatology, is also mentioned.

“Veri is a shortened form of verification. When the antichrist appears, the number 666 you receive after you bow before the idol might be the very-chip. It’s not yet 666, but I pray you will not receive the very-chip. Hallelujah!”⁹⁴

The above- mentioned pastor is probably not the only one who preaches such a sermon. But it is alarming for us who have just examined the theology and doctrines of the Salvation Sect and who have seen the kind of life the Sect’s followers live in

⁹² Hong Do Kim, *Pillar of Fire*, Volume 40, (Seoul: Jungam Publishers), 419.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 421.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 423.

society. To hear a respected elder pastor of mainline denomination preach such a message can be worrisome. We are prompted to ask this question: “What kind of life will his listeners live after this message. When the preacher proclaims “once saved, always saved” and suggests extreme cases of “even if you commit murder after being born again” and “even if you bow before another god or worship an idol” you are “still saved,” one begins to wonder what kind of life the preacher had lived before.

What is most worrisome is about the congregation who just listened to this message, or who may have been listening to such messages for a very long time. The worldview in the message would have influence the listeners’ own worldview and thinking which, in turn, would influence their daily behavior, their words and actions. One worries about the fruits of their lives in our society.

Besides such sermons, many Korean Protestant Churches these days omit ‘prayers of repentance’ in their public worship. It is alarming that there is no time for us as worshippers to examine our sinfulness and to confess our sins before God in public worship. In the early days of missions, Korean Protestant Churches had holy communion about once a year. This was largely influenced by the Confucian culture in Korean society. In the Confucian tradition, ancestral worship is held once a year on the anniversary of an ancestor's death. Perhaps influenced by this, Korean Protestant Churches held holy communion once a year during the Passion week to commemorate the death of Christ. Even though John Wesley emphasized holy communion as a means of grace, it seems not to have taken root in our churches. There have been efforts since the 1970s by some churches to have holy communion once a month. The theology and practice of holy communion may bring greater awareness of our sinfulness and as a result, a greater experience of repentance and forgiveness.

The lack of repentance need not be totally unrelated to the ‘praise and worship’ style of the worship format that became the trend in Korean Protestant Churches since the 1990’s. Of course, there is no problem with the ‘praise and worship’ style itself. But as Korean church worship services were filled with bright and upbeat congregational singing, traditional worship elements such as the confession of sin, commitment, and devotion have lost their place. It is worrisome that in the absence of solemnity and sincerity, God’s grace might be cheapened and accepted as one of the elements of the popular culture.

The Korean Protestant Churches need to examine the current reality of our ministry. While this is necessary to prevent the Salvation Sect from taking away our church members, eliminating the impurities is the first step toward church reformation in order to develop true worshippers, true disciples, and true workers.

A special concern is that the prosperity gospel and theology from the past still exists in many Korean Protestant Churches. As pastors, we must not just say good things that church members want to hear, ignore their sins, and be too ready to issue blessings. If we just preach, “once saved, always saved,” without calling believers to a sanctified, committed life to Christ, we will not be spurring them to a life of maturity and transformation before God, but rather a defeated life bearing bad fruits. The end result will be disdain from society, making it tougher to evangelize and to engage in mission work.

On the contrary, even now, if the theology of the Korean Church is reexamined and the crucial question, “is this Biblical?” is asked about all of the ministry practices one by one, then Korean Christianity can shine brighter and bear valuable fruits, one church at a time, as well as one believer at a time. And it has to begin “today, where we

are in our ministry.” The question “Is it biblical?” leads us to the next chapter where we will explore what the scriptures have to say about faith and works.

Chapter 2

Salvation without Works? – Biblical Explorations

Most Korean Protestant Churches are of the reformed Presbyterian tradition and the Methodist tradition. I will therefore discuss in the next two chapters the foundational teachings of Martin Luther and John Calvin to clarify their teachings on Justification, Sanctification, and Salvation to show the primary theological weakness of the Korean Protestant Churches in their interpretation of the relationship between faith and works. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the theology of John Wesley to examine whether the Korean Protestant Churches in the Methodist tradition are being faithful to Wesley's teachings.

However, the other source that is most abused in the Korean Protestant Churches is the Bible, particularly the teachings of Paul, on the question of the relationship between faith and works. It is, therefore, important for this dissertation to do a detailed study of Paul's teachings on this question; thus, this chapter is devoted to this study. Although Paul's letters have been widely studied, and many New Testament scholars have contributed to the interpretation of Paul and his epistles, I have chosen to deal with only the works of Prof. Yon-Gyong Kwon, primarily because his interpretation of Paul's letters are done mainly to address the problem the Korean Protestant Churches are facing.

Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon is a scholar who must be heard on the crucial topic of the relationship between 'our salvation' and 'our lives.' As the title of his best-known book, *Salvation without Works?* suggests, the majority of Korean Protestant Christians believe that they are saved 'not by works but by faith.' In other words, our salvation has nothing to do with 'works' or the ethical dimension of our lives. And that is why the Korean Protestant Christians consider the Christian message, a 'blessed' message. Professor Kwon puts a

question mark, however, after ‘salvation without works.’ He is asking, “Is it really true? Is there really no relationship between our lives, our works, and our salvation?” Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon suggests that we listen to the voice of Matthew and James in order to examine this question.

Matthew and James

Professor Kwon first introduces the parable of ‘salt and light’ in Matthew’s Gospel. (Matthew 5:13-16) Through this parable, Jesus told His disciples that they are like the ‘salt of the earth’ and the ‘light of the world.’ What did Jesus want to convey with these images? First, once the salt loses its saltiness, it cannot recover its taste and is thrown away. So will be the fate of the disciples if they lose their ‘saltiness.’ Second, the light has meaning only if it shines in front of people. In other words, people must be able to ‘see’ disciples’ good works. What is significant is that if we fail to show our good works in the world, Jesus does not simply rebuke us for being bad disciples. Jesus warned that we will lose our identity, our qualification to be disciples, and the calling itself. As we ponder these words of Jesus, can we really say that our lives and our salvation are unrelated? Should we not see the discipleship taught by Jesus as fundamentally and intimately connected to our works?⁹⁵

Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon also points out that in Matthew 7, the terms, ‘false prophet’ and ‘true prophet’ are discerned by ‘their fruit.’ Two builders, depending on whether they put into practice the words of Jesus or not, will see their house either stand or fall. Also in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus tells the parable of ‘the sheep and the goats.’ ‘Love in action’ or its lack is what divides the sheep and the goats. In the parable of the ‘wedding banquet’ (Matthew 22:1-14), the king throws out the guest without wedding clothes. In the teaching of the Lord’s Prayer and the parable of the talents, we learn that our act of forgiving

⁹⁵ Yon-Gyong Kwon, *Salvation without Works?* (Seoul: SCF Press, 2015), 26-30.

others is closely related to God's act of forgiving us. Matthew is clearly showing us that our works are not totally unrelated to our salvation.⁹⁶

James echoes Matthew's message. James is even more direct and says, "Faith without action is dead." In other words, faith without works is meaningless. All the more, 'you need faith and works in order to be justified.' (James 2:14) Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon explains why James deals with the issues of justification as well as faith and works. "Within the church community, there are those who claim to have been justified by 'faith.' Yet, they are not able to show specific 'works' to support that claim. The situation was probably not all that different from the situation of today. If James were with us today, he might ask the same question, "What good is it, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?" Then or now, 'faith' that is mere words or 'vain faith' cannot save oneself."⁹⁷ Professor Kwon continues to assert that both Matthew and James explicitly teach that our lives and our salvation are inseparably linked to each other. If so, are Matthew and James saying something different from Paul? Do the Scriptures contain two opposing views on salvation? Or are we misinterpreting Paul's teaching? If you love the Scriptures and consider it God's holy Word, these questions raised by Professor Kwon are worth pondering.

Paul's calling

Paul referred to himself as 'an apostle to the Gentiles.' What was the goal for Paul as 'an apostle to the Gentiles?' Professor Kwon suggests that we can find the answers in "Paul's apostolic sense of identity." All the Pauline epistles are products of Paul's sense of calling as an 'apostle to the Gentiles.' In order to understand Paul's apostolic sense of identity, naturally one needs to pay attention to Paul's statements in his writings.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 30-39.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 40-51.

“I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:15-16) Professor Kwon suggests that Romans 15:15-16 is where Paul’s apostolic sense of identity is most clearly revealed. As one can read, Paul calls himself ‘a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles.’ Here the word ‘minister’ generally means a ‘servant,’ that is, someone who serves. This word, however, in the Septuagint is used in connection with priestly duties within the temple.⁹⁸ Professor Kwon points out the fact that the remaining sentence that mentions ‘the priestly duty’ may indicate that the meaning of ‘servant’ was related to priestly duty. If Paul understood himself as ‘the one who offers sacrifice,’ he needed to have an offering like that of the priests of the Old Testament. As mentioned in the above text, Paul says the ‘Gentiles’ are the offering to God.⁹⁹ The success or failure of the offering depends on whether God accepts it or not. Here, one can say the offering ‘acceptable’ to God is a proper sacrifice that pays attention to God’s specific instructions and regulations. As we know from the Old Testament, what was important was not the act of sacrifice itself but that the sacrifice to God that was offered in an ‘acceptable’ way. Hence, Paul also says he wants to ‘offer the Gentiles as an offering’ that is ‘acceptable’ to God.¹⁰⁰

The sacrifice according to the law meant ‘blameless sacrifice.’ It was important, therefore, to follow the regulations concerning the sacrifice. It was especially important to set apart an ‘offering without blemish’ and to maintain holiness. The sacrifice of Paul,

⁹⁸ Yon-Gyong Kwon, 60.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 57-64.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 64-66.

however, is a new sacrifice according to the Gospel. Does he need to find Gentiles ‘without physical defects’ to set them apart in order to offer them to God? Surely it does not mean that. Then one can ask the following question: How can the sacrifice given, not according to the law but according to the Gospel, be ‘acceptable’ to God? More specifically, how can ‘an offering of Gentiles’ become an offering ‘acceptable’ to God? To find an answer, Professor Kwon turns to the passage in Romans 12:1-2.¹⁰¹

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

The sacrifice according to the law offered animals, but the spiritual worship of believers requires the offering of their own ‘bodies’ as an offering to God. To offer a ‘living sacrifice’ in the above text means that we give to God the entire life we live in the body. An important element in this point is that we become a ‘holy sacrifice that is pleasing to God.’ To express ‘living sacrifice’ in a positive way is to ‘discern God’s good and perfect will’ in the everyday life of the believer. To express it in a negative way is ‘not to conform to the pattern of this world.’¹⁰² Essentially the believers need to live before God as ‘holy and blameless.’ This command to live a ‘blameless’ life appears frequently in the Pauline epistles. (Ephesians 1:4, 5:26-27, Philippians 2:14-27, Colossians 1:22, 1 Corinthians 1:8, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 5:23) In other words, an obedient life is demanded. The fact that the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 70-77.

¹⁰² Yon-Gyong Kwon, 76. Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon explains, as expressed in the phrase, “be transformed by the renewing of your mind,” living a life of living sacrifice premises the ‘renewal of the mind,’ a fundamental transformation of the root.

request to live a ‘holy and blameless’ life is frequent and recurrent in the Pauline epistles that confirms that it was important in Paul’s ministry that Gentiles live a ‘holy and blameless’ life.

Paul’s Teachings in the 1 Thessalonians

To clearly demonstrate this point concerning Paul’s desire to see the Gentiles live a ‘holy and blameless’ life, Professor Kwon looks to 1 Thessalonians. He explains: “First, the first epistle to the Thessalonians is known to have been Paul’s first letter written during the early years of his ministry. Kwon focuses not so much on the fact that it was Paul’s first letter but rather on the period of the letter, that it was during the peaceful period when there were no controversies about ‘circumcision’ or ‘the law,’ or subjects of intense interest for both Jews and Judaizers. Therefore, this letter is important evidence of how Paul approached Gentile believers with the Gospel.¹⁰³

Kwon examines the background in which the 1 Thessalonians was written by looking at Acts 17.¹⁰⁴ Even though Paul reaped some fruits in Thessalonica, he did not spend enough time with the believers there, for Paul had to escape persecution from the Jews and leave in a hurry for Berea. Hence, Paul writes as follows in 1 Thessalonians:

“But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing, we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you-- certainly I, Paul, did, again and again, but Satan stopped us” (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18).

Even though Paul’s time spent with believers in Thessalonica was brief, Paul spends

¹⁰³Ibid., 101-106.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 107-109.

quite a bit of space in the letter reminiscing on his ministry there. Through his reminiscence, we can see the kind of ministry Paul was practicing. Paul was gentle ‘like a mother caring for her little children’ (2:7). While he himself acted in a holy, proper, and blameless manner, ‘as a father deals with his own children,’ (2:11) he also encouraged, comforted, and warned them (2:10, 11). Paul’s goal was for the Thessalonian believers to “live lives worthy of God” (2:12). All these things can be summarized as “Paul preached the Gospel of God.” As expressed in the above verses, Paul longed to go back to the Thessalonian believers, for he wanted to “see [them] again and supply what is lacking in [their] faith.” (3:10).

Since Paul could not visit them, however, he sent ‘Timothy’ instead. His reasons are as follows. He wanted to find out about the Thessalonian believers’ ‘faith.’ In addition, Paul wanted to see them strengthened and comforted, so they would not be shaken in the midst of trials. (3:2-3) Here, one can see Paul’s efforts to help Thessalonian believers maintain a life of faith. Should they forsake the life of faith, his labor would have been in vain. (3:5) After visiting Thessalonica, Timothy sends Paul the news about the Thessalonian believers’ ‘faith and love.’ Receiving this news, Paul is greatly comforted by the Thessalonians believers’ ‘faith.’ As Paul heaved a sigh of relief, he says, “For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.” (3:8)

Here, through Timothy, Paul speaks of ‘seeing their faith.’ Is not Paul testing whether the Thessalonian believers’ faith in doctrine or theology was pure? As one can see in 1 Thessalonians 4, most of Paul’s teaching comprised of morals.(4:1) What Timothy confirmed was that Thessalonian believers, even in Paul’s absence, were living a ‘life worthy of God.’ Upon hearing this news, Paul greatly rejoiced and encouraged them ‘to keep doing more.’¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Yon-Gyong Kwon, *Salvation without Works?* 110-116.

Paul gives thanks to God on behalf of the Thessalonian believers who maintained a life worthy of God, for through their lives, the ‘Gospel of God’ that Paul preached was revealed. The word of God was working in a mighty way in the lives of the Thessalonian believers. (2:13) In other words, the Gospel of God, from the beginning, contained an ethical and moral element that transforms lives in a specific way. One can know the following from reading 1 Thessalonians: ‘First, ‘the Gospel of God’ that Paul preached in Thessalonica for rather a short period of his ministry, had for its goal, ‘lives worthy of God.’ Second, the ‘faith’ Paul and Timothy saw and confirmed in the Thessalonian believers was the ethical life that Paul taught. Third, the lives worthy of God were the end result of the working of God’s Word and the Gospel of God. In other words, the purpose and goal of Paul’s ministry was to establish a community of believers who would live a life worthy of God.¹⁰⁶

It is important to clarify here that the goal of ‘the life worthy of God’ or the moral maturity that Paul sought from the Gentile believers was the absolute purpose of his ministry, not a subsidiary purpose. The purpose of God’s calling, itself, is to make us holy. (I Thessalonians 4:3, 7)

And all these things will be evaluated ‘when the Lord Jesus comes.’ Hence, Paul’s only goal was to present the Thessalonian believers before God as holy and blameless ‘when our Lord Jesus comes with all his saints.’ (3:13, 5:23, 1:10) Therefore, the Thessalonian believers who were living a life worthy of God were Paul’s hope, joy, boast, crown, and glory. Put a different way, those who reject the demand of God’s calling ‘to become holy’ do not reject men but God. If people reject God’s call to be holy, then Paul’s fear that his efforts would have been useless would come true. (3:5)

Until now I have examined Paul’s apostolic self-identity, his calling to ‘offer

¹⁰⁶ Yon-Gyong Kwon, 117-123.

Gentiles as an acceptable sacrifice to God.’ It has also been confirmed through 1 Thessalonians that Paul’s ‘Gospel of God’ contained moral teaching to live a life worthy of God. Paul’s Gospel stays within the Old Testament frame and is compatible with God’s covenantal command to ‘be holy for I am holy’ or the proposition that ‘without holiness no one can see the Lord.’ In other words, Paul agrees with Matthew and James that our lives and our salvation are intimately and inseparably related. One needs to ask the following question at this point: Because of the doctrine of ‘justification by faith,’ articulated by Paul in Galatians and Romans, one can understand our salvation was by ‘faith alone’ and by ‘grace alone.’ This being the case, was Paul’s teaching on our salvation different in different churches?

Paul’s Criticism in Galatians

If it is true that Paul’s goal for the Gentiles was to ‘live a life worthy of God,’ then one must reevaluate our understanding of Galatians, as Professor Yon Kwon suggests. It was a misinterpretation of Galatians then, that gave birth to the concepts, ‘not by works but grace’ (grace alone) and ‘not by works but by faith’ (faith alone). Usually Paul’s teaching in Galatians has been understood in the following way: Those who demanded the ‘works of the law’ were legalists and moralists who believed in obedience to the entire law. Paul believed that salvation was through faith in the ‘Gospel’ and not by the ‘law’ (morality). In order to be saved eschatologically, one needs ‘faith,’ not ‘works.’ The ‘works’ was merely a secondary result that followed faith. If ‘works’ was not a secondary result but has an absolute purpose, however, there is little difference between the demands by the agitators of Galatia and Paul’s request for the Gentile believers to live a holy and blameless life until the ‘day of the Lord’s coming.’

At this point, one needs to examine what the real crisis in the Galatian Church was,

as well as the criticism of Paul and the solution he offered. Hence, we need now take a look at 'Galatians.' The mood of Galatians is quite different from that of the believers referred to in 1 Thessalonians. The mood found in 1 Thessalonians constituted the following:

1) Paul's longing for the Thessalonian believers especially because of his sudden departure;

2) Timothy's report that Thessalonian believers were living a life worthy of God and Paul's subsequent joy and relief;

3) a mutual longing to see each other again.

From these one can discern that the mood that characterized the relationship between Paul and the Thessalonians is one of love. The mood in Galatians, however, is rather cold. Even the elaborate 'greeting of thanksgiving,' always present in Paul's letters, is omitted, and only a short greeting of peace is given. And right away, Paul begins with, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel." (Galatians 1:6) This shows that Paul is of a negative disposition. And it is clear why. It is because Galatians believers so quickly left the 'One who called them by the grace of Christ,' in other words, God, to follow a 'different gospel.' What, then, is this 'different gospel?' It is well-known that due to the agitators in the Galatian Church, that the question surrounding 'circumcision' was the serious issue, presenting what Paul considered a 'different gospel'.

The Identity of Galatian Agitators

The agitators of Galatia have been usually thought of as 'legalists,' the moralists who were zealous regarding keeping the law. The reasons are as follows: First, the agitators demanded 'circumcision' of the Galatian believers. This gives the impression that the

agitators were demanding ‘conformity to the law.’ The struggle between Paul and those who argued for circumcision leads the reader to interpret Paul’s emphasis on faith as rejecting the need to keep the law, replacing it with a passive faith in Christ.

Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon proposes that we reevaluate such a notion by asking the following questions: Who are these agitators who ‘infiltrated’ into the Galatian Church (2:4) and ‘instigated’ the Galatian believers (1:7, 5:10), to ‘pervert the Gospel of Christ’ preached by Paul, (1:7) thus causing crisis within the church?” More specifically, “Did the Galatian agitators not only ask for circumcision and observance of holy feasts but keeping the entire law, especially the moral aspects?”¹⁰⁷ This question is necessary in order to discover what Paul really opposed. If Galatian agitators were not ‘moralists zealous for the observance of the law,’ and if Paul was not criticizing the ‘observance of the law’ itself, then one might misunderstand Paul’s true intentions.

The crisis at Galatia is usually thought to have been related to the observance of the entire law. The agitators were zealous for obeying the law and demanded Galatian believers to obey the entire law. The premise for this interpretation is to read Galatians from the perspective of the context of 1st Century Judaism. As a result, the agitators at Galatia naturally become the 1st Century zealous Jews. Professor Kwon points out, however, that this is an ‘error of hasty generalization.’ If the crisis at Galatia is to be compared with that of early Judaism debating issues of the law, there must first be evidence supporting that Galatian agitators were the same group as typical Jews of the time with the same theology. It is difficult, however, to find evidence to support that claim in the statements of Paul.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Yon-Gyong Kwon, “Did the Galatian agitators demand strict adherence to the law?” in: *Hankook gidokgyeo shinbak nonchong* [Collected Works of Korean Christian Theology 56] (2008): 59-61.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

Professor Kwon presents Galatians 6:12 as the compelling evidence. According to the following verse, Paul criticizes the Galatian agitators for not obeying the law themselves while they demand that Galatians be circumcised. “Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.” (Galatians 6:12)

If the agitators were actually keeping the law faithfully, they would not have received such criticism from Paul. Professor Kwon explains that this text suggests that the agitators were only obsessed over the believers’ desire for circumcision.¹⁰⁹ Paul warns the believers who receive circumcision that they must obey the entire law: “Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.” (Galatians 5:3)

The fact that Paul was emphasizing the duty to keep the whole law to the Galatian believers suggests that at a minimum the believers presently did not have any intention to keep the entire law.¹¹⁰ In other words, neither the Galatian agitators nor the believers who were swayed into their thinking intended to keep the ‘entire law.’ In other words, the agitators were not ‘moralists with zeal to keep the law.’ This goes against our usual understanding.

As the evidence against the claim that Galatian agitators were demanding obedience to the entire law and moral living, Professor Kwon suggests the fact that ‘Paul himself emphasizes the absolute necessity of obedience.’ Paul teaches that only those who bear fruit through the Holy Spirit, who plant the seed in the Holy Spirit can inherit the eternal life (6:7-

¹⁰⁹ Yon-Gyong Kwon, 69.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 73.

9), and he warns that those who live according to the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Professor Kwon points out that it is unlikely that Paul who strongly emphasized obedience like this would have opposed obedience to the moral law.¹¹¹ If Galatian agitators were not ‘moralists zealous for the obedience of the law,’ then Paul’s criticism is not toward their ‘moralistic attitude,’ but most likely towards their hypocrisy ‘that does not obey the law.’

According to Paul’s statements, Galatian agitators demanded that Galatian believers receive circumcision. In fact, they were teaching the theology that “there is salvation only for the Jews.” To acquire the ‘status of being a Jew,’ the most important thing was for the Gentiles to be circumcised. For Paul, however, the most important thing for salvation is for believers who began with the Holy Spirit to finish with the Holy Spirit. (3:3, 5:7) In other words, “you must live by the Spirit.” (5:16, 25) Of course, the life by the Spirit is a moral life, evidenced by the ‘fruit of the Spirit.’ What Paul diagnosed as the crisis for the Galatian Church is the following: The believers in Galatia were giving up on what they knew they should not give up - -“faith expressing itself through love,” in order to gain acts of the flesh like ‘circumcision,’ which had no effect or power to save.

The Fear of “Uselessness”

I have examined Paul’s apostolic self-identity. His clear purpose was to have Gentiles live a ‘holy and blameless life’ before God. This was the meaning of offering ‘Gentiles’ as a sacrifice to God. Paul’s purpose was very clear. Professor Kwon explains that this clear purpose is revealed in Paul’s fear of ‘uselessness’ in Pauline epistles, which is ‘the fear that any purpose would not be accomplished.’ This fear of ‘uselessness’ reveals two important facts about Paul’s theological and pastoral perspective. First, as the apostle to the

¹¹¹ Yon-Gyong Kwon, 64.

Gentiles, Paul saw the believer's faith in the Gospel from the perspective of apostolic service, in other words, from a 'purposeful' perspective. Second, this purpose could have turned out to be 'useless.'¹¹²

“Have you suffered so much for nothing- -if it really was for nothing?” (Galatians 3:4).

Paul asks the Galatian believers the following question. “Have you suffered so much for nothing?” He criticizes them indicating that they ‘began with the Holy Spirit but now are trying to finish by human efforts.’ (Galatians 3:3) By saying, “You (Galatians) began by the Spirit,’ Paul means that they believed in Jesus because of Paul’s Gospel, received the gift of the Holy Spirit, and began to live the believer’s life. They ‘began’ with the Holy Spirit and ran the race of faith well. Now, however, their actions are making their sufferings ‘useless’ and meaningless. The reason for that is because the Galatian believers were receiving circumcision to be justified by the law (Galatians 5:2-4) and were following the Jewish feasts to follow the Jewish life styles. (Galatians 4:10)¹¹³

Up to this point, one can consider that the ‘flesh’ Paul mentions as problematic is circumcision. If so, then the solution must be not to be circumcised. Paul does say that if you receive circumcision, then Christ has no value to you. (Galatians 5:2) He, however, says neither circumcision nor no circumcision means anything. (Galatians 6:15) This indicates that not being circumcised itself was not the solution. Professor Kwon explains that what Paul was emphasizing was neither circumcision nor lack of circumcision, but “faith that expresses itself through love” (Galatians 5:6) and “new creation” (Galatians 6:15). Hence, the crisis at Galatia was not the fact that Galatian believers tried to be circumcised but

¹¹² Yon-Gyong Kwon, “Fear of Uselessness“ in *New Testament Study 6/2*” (Seoul: Korea Evangelism New Testament Study Association, 2007), 351.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 355-356.

through their obsession with circumcision, they were losing “the image of Christ” and going away from the life of “faith that expresses itself through love” (Galatians 5:15).

As Paul saw it, if you fall into the non-essential question of circumcision or no circumcision and lose the essential matter of ‘life in the Spirit,’ you make ‘useless’ of the life of faith that ‘began with the Spirit.’ In other words, you end up missing out on your purpose and goal.¹¹⁴ Interestingly, Paul verifies whether Galatian believers received the Holy Spirit ‘by works of the law’ or by ‘hearing and believing.’ (Galatians 3:2, 5) As one can discern from Paul’s expressions, he contrasts the ‘works of the law’ and ‘faith.’ When the Galatian believers received the Holy Spirit, it had nothing to do with ‘works of the law.’ If circumcision was the real problem, then why would they have not just stated, “Don’t be circumcised? Why ask how you received the Holy Spirit?” Why is Paul mentioning the Holy Spirit?

Professor Kwon explains that the premise of Paul’s pneumatology is that “our lives are in the midst of a spiritual and moral battle.” In Galatians and Romans, Paul says we belong either to the flesh or to the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:17, Romans 8:1-14) Those who follow the flesh only think of fleshly desires, and those who follow the Spirit think about spiritual things. (Romans 8:5) The mind controlled by the sinful flesh leads to death, but the mind led by the Spirit leads to life and peace. (Romans 8:6) The mind of the flesh opposes God’s will, is an enemy of God, and cannot submit to God’s will. (Romans 8:7-8) But if the Spirit of God dwells within us, then we escape the flesh and belong to the Spirit. (Romans 8:9) Here, “to belong to the Spirit” or “led by the Spirit” means “to mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit. (Romans 8:13-14) If we are under the influence of the flesh, we do the work of the flesh. If we are under the influence of the Spirit, however, we bear the fruit of

¹¹⁴ Yon-Gyong Kwon, *Salvation without Works?* 359-362.

the Spirit. In other words, we can choose one or the other, either follow the flesh or the Spirit. And this choice inevitably brings an eschatological consequence. The sinful mind leads to death, but the Spirit-led mind leads to life and peace. (Romans 8:6) As such, the flesh and the Spirit in the language of Paul are understood as two conflicting and competing forces or principles.¹¹⁵

I have established that Paul's apostolic purpose was to 'offer the Gentile's obedient life as holy, blameless, and living sacrifice' that was acceptable to God. The goal was nothing less than the "image of Christ" in our lives. What this means for the believers of Christ is to imitate the example of Christ. Such a life "follows the Spirit" exhibits "faith that expresses itself through love," and is "created anew." The result of that life is the future righteousness that Paul presented to Galatian believers, or "the hope of righteousness." (Galatians 5:5)

This "hope of righteousness" has the same meaning as inheriting the 'kingdom of God' or 'harvesting eternal life.' They all point to future events and ultimately point to the eschatological salvation in the future. If one does not "follow the Spirit by faith," one cannot reach this hope. Without the Holy Spirit, one cannot escape the mind of the flesh, the deeds of the flesh, and the subsequent death. The present crisis, therefore, not only makes the faith of Galatian believers useless, but it also makes Paul's ministry useless. The present Galatian believers went astray and went off course from 'the life of following the Spirit' and imitating the image of Christ because of the misplaced obsession with 'works of the law.' Paul's fear of 'uselessness,' from a completely future eschatological point of view, stems

¹¹⁵ Yon-Gyong Kwon, "Assurance of Salvation in Pauline Epistles," in [*Shinbakjipyong*] 23/23 (Anyang: University Institute of Theology, 2010), 263- 264.

from the anxiety of reaching the goal or the failure to do so.¹¹⁶ And this is why Paul mentioned the ‘Holy Spirit.’

‘Works of the Law’ and ‘Obedience to the Law’

Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon proposes that misunderstanding arises from equating ‘works of the law’ with ‘obedience of the law’ and that the two must be distinguished, for the ‘works of the law’ does not include a ‘moral meaning.’ First, Paul does not abandon the Old Testament framework of judgment according to works (Romans 2:6-11) and makes clear that the eschatological salvation demands human works. It becomes clearer when one examines his ‘concept of faith.’ Faith and works merge to become ‘works of faith’ (I Thessalonians 1:3, II Thessalonians 1:11), and the faith that leads Galatian believers to the hope of righteousness is none other than ‘faith that expresses itself through love.’ (Galatians 5:6) Hence, Professor Kwon explains, if ‘works of the law’ include moral deeds, then Paul, on the one hand is criticizing the attitude of those trying to keep the law while, on the other hand, teaching that righteous deeds are essential. This would be paradoxical. If so, Paul is excluding from salvation that which he teaches as the very thing that is essential and required.¹¹⁷ Because of this contradiction, we need to reconsider whether ‘works of the law’

¹¹⁶ Yon-Gyong Kwon, “Fear of Uselessness“, 362-369

¹¹⁷ Yon-Gyong Kwon, “Does the ‘Works of the Law’ mean ‘Obedience to the Law?’” in *Journal of the New Testament* 14/3 (2007): 683 – 685. One of the solutions to the above contradiction is to separate the ‘works of the law’ with ‘works of faith.’ In other words, what Paul saw as problematic, ‘the ethics of the law,’ was different from what Paul asked of the believers, ‘ethics of faith’ and ‘ethics of the Holy Spirit.’ Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon, however, points these problems to such a solution. First, Paul nowhere in his letters distinguishes two types of obedience. The love strived for by the ethics of the Holy Spirit is also the fulfillment of the ‘entire law’ as well as a command in the law. (Galatians 5:1-14) Second, this type of distinction is possible theoretically but meaningless in reality. The interest of Paul the minister was to change disobedience into obedience, not dividing obedience into works of the law or the works of faith. (Galatians 5:14-15)

really means the same as the ‘obedience of the law.’ Professor Kwon suggests as evidence for his argument, Paul’s statements of principles that seem to contradict each other:

“It is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.” (Romans 2:13)

“No one will be declared righteous by observing the law.” (Romans 3:20)

For the first statement about justification, Paul says obedience of the law is necessary for justification. Yet, Paul also says no one can be justified by the works of the law. According to these two statements, Paul clearly teaches that in order for us to be righteous before God, we must obey the law. The ‘works of the law,’ however, cannot be the basis for justification. If so, the ‘works of the law’ that cannot be the basis for justification must be distinguished from ‘obedience of the law’ that is the basis for justification.¹¹⁸ There is a logical contradiction when ‘works of the law’ is interpreted with moral meaning and is considered as the same as ‘obedience of the law.’ There is no logical contradiction, however, if ‘works of the law’ that cannot become the basis for justification is different from ‘obedience of the law’ that does become the basis for justification.¹¹⁹

Professor Kwon connects ‘works of the law’ that Paul talks about with ‘outward identity’ of Romans 2. Then Paul’s argument over Romans 2 through 4 becomes an “outward Jewish status symbolized by circumcision [that] is not a basis for justification.” If

¹¹⁸ Yon-kyong Kwon, “Does the ‘Works of the Law’ mean ‘Obedience to the Law?’” in *Journal of the New Testament* 14/3 (2007): 685 – 686. If we follow the traditional interpretation and understand ‘works of the law’ as the ‘obedience to the law,’ then Paul is contradicting himself about justification in the very same sentence. One way to avoid this contradiction is to see 2:13 as his principle statement and 3:20 as discernment in a real life situation. The statement of 2:13, is a criticism of those who believed that they could be justified simply by listening to the law and not obeying it. Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon therefore points out that if Paul had said justification is impossible through the ‘works of the law,’ which is ‘obedience to the law,’ then Paul would be criticizing the Jews for failing to do something that was impossible to begin with.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 687-688.

‘works of the law’ means ‘obedience of the law’ and cannot bring people to justification, then the subjects of Romans 2 must be people who are seeking to be justified through ‘obedience of the law.’

Yet, Romans 2 is not about people who are trying to be justified through obedience of the law. Paul’s consistent criticism has been toward those who boasted having the law and the knowledge of the law yet, did not obey the law themselves. Paul did not criticize those who earnestly attempted to obey the law, yet failed short of perfect obedience. His criticism was for the ‘hypocrites’ who only bragged about the law, without obeying the law. Hence, what Paul is exposing in Romans 2 is not the difference between ‘efforts to obey the law’ and the actual ‘obedience that cannot be perfect,’ but the ‘hypocrisy’ between boasting about the law and circumcision and an absence of obedience.¹²⁰

The opponents that appear in Romans 2 believed that circumcision, rooted in the law was the basis for justification. In other words, they considered the outward appearance of Jewish status as verified by circumcision to be the basis for justification. The Jewish identity is encapsulated in circumcision, and therefore, the ultimate question was whether one received circumcision or not. Paul, however, did not recognize the independent value of being a Jew or of circumcision. For him, what was important was obeying the law (Romans 2:13), for the ‘works of the law’ including circumcision, cannot justify anyone. To truly obey the law, one needs circumcision of the heart, not circumcision of the flesh, but the circumcision of the heart is not possible with the law. Hence, Professor Kwon states ‘works of the law’ must be interpreted as ‘means of establishing outward identity without obedience

¹²⁰ Ibid. 689-690. If this passage is still interpreted as trying to be justified by the law, or the works of the law, the attack on 3:20 can be viewed as being directed toward a new hypothetical enemy that has not been dealt with in the long argument until verse 19. Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon asserts that if there is no one who is trying to keep the law, there is no point to the argument that it is useless to keep the law.

of the law' (circumcision, knowledge of the law, etc.)¹²¹

The Powerlessness of the Law that Paul Criticized

The conclusion of Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon causes us to ask one fundamental question. Paul's criticism has been misunderstood as not only criticizing the 'agitators' and believers who did not obey the law but also the law itself. Therefore, we have an image of Paul criticizing the 'attitude of trying to obey the law.' Professor Kwon explains, however, Paul was criticizing 'law' itself but not 'obedience toward the law.' Paul is criticizing the law because it cannot generate the Holy Spirit. Hence, 'works of the law' such as circumcision may give the person 'Jewish status,' but it is not likely that that person can live 'life in the Spirit.' In other words, the 'life directed toward God,' 'life of following the Spirit', and 'life harvesting eternal life' are not possible. They are committing a foolish act of trying to 'finish by flesh' what should be finished by the Spirit. (3:3) Professor Kwon comments that Paul's urgent plea to return to the "life in the Spirit" reflects a sense of crisis.¹²²

When I examine Paul's 'criticism of the law' in Galatians, what Paul really criticized was not the 'attitude of trying to obey the law,' but a 'powerlessness of the law that cannot give the Holy Spirit.' In order to live a life worthy of God, focusing on the powerless works of the law will not be fruitful.. One cannot overcome 'temptations of the flesh.' Galatian believers started well, but by focusing on works of the law such as 'circumcision' and trying to obtain 'Jewish status,' it was as if they were being cut off from the grace of Christ. He points out that to claim Galatian agitators demanded obedience of the law from the fact

¹²¹ Ibid., 690-692.

¹²² Yon-Gyong Kwon, "The Gospel that gives life, the Law that kills," *Canon & Culture*, Vol. 5 No. 2 (2011): 46 – 48.

that Paul criticized the law is to ignore the Galatian situation and to make a logical jump.¹²³ Paul's intention was to criticize the 'powerlessness of the law' that could not be a channel of the Holy Spirit and to proclaim the truth that faith in the cross of Christ is the only way to receive the Holy Spirit.¹²⁴

As I examined earlier, Professor Kwon explains that 'works of the law' that Paul mentioned were limited to 'outward' deeds such as circumcision and keeping holy feasts. It is distinctively different than obedience of the law on a moral level. In other words, Paul never talked about 'obedience of the law,' *per se*, in a negative light. Consider the following statements by Paul: "I have died to the law in order to live for God" (Galatians 2:19). "If righteousness can be gained through the law, then Christ died for nothing" (Galatians 2:21). "Those who submit themselves to the 'works of the law' are under the curse" (Galatians 3:10). "The law is not based on faith" (Galatians 3:12). "We are not justified by the works of the law"(Galatians 2:16). Also Paul described Christ as the one who redeems us not from the "curse of works of the law," but from the more inclusive "curse of the law" (Galatians 3:1). Considering these statements, Paul's negative statements in Galatians are not limited to specific "works of the law," but the entire law itself. (Galatians 3:15-25)¹²⁵

Professor Kwon without missing the above context, asserts that one must examine from what perspective Paul is negatively describing the law.¹²⁶ Paul states it directly and bluntly, "If a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly

¹²³ Yon-Gyong Kwon, "Did Galatian Agitators Demand Obedience of the Law?" 82.

¹²⁴ Yon-Gyong Kwon, "The Gospel that gives life, the Law that kills," 59 – 60.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 62

have come by the law” (Galatians 3:21).¹²⁷ To state it negatively, “If the law does not have the power to give life, then righteousness cannot come through the law.” It is evident that ‘justification’ according to Paul has the power to impart life. In other words, the power to raise you to life from death. As stated, the law does not have such power to give life (1:1). Thus, the efforts to gain justification through the law that cannot give life are, in effect, the same as giving up on the hope of gaining life. If justification could be gained through the law, Christ’s death was unnecessary (Galatians 2:21). If the Cross of Christ is the solution, however, then it is clear that the law is not the answer (Galatians 3:1). Even though the true answer and the errors are clear, Galatian believers were missing this truth (3:1, 3). Therefore Paul rebukes the ‘foolishness’ of the Galatian believers. Paul asks them again, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit because of the works of the law, or because you heard (Christ) preached and believed?” Of course, the believers in Galatia heard Paul preach about Christ and believed, and began life in the Spirit. Therefore, there can be no other answer. Hence Professor Kwon explains that ‘foolishness’ Paul points out is not their theological ignorance but foolishness that forgot even their own experiences.¹²⁸

Paul discerns what the Galatian believers were presently attempting by being circumcised and keeping holy feasts, in other words, “to live under the law,” was in reality attempt to be “justified through the law.” (Galatians 4:21, 5:4) “How did you receive the Holy Spirit?” One can find in this question of Paul a certain premise: Only that which can give the Holy Spirit has the power to justify. Certainly Galatian believers received the Holy Spirit not through the ‘works of the law,’ but by hearing and believing Christ. Consequently the works of the law are neither the channel of the Holy Spirit nor the basis for justification.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 63.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 61-68.

On the other hand, God gave the Holy Spirit through faith, and therefore, faith is the answer to justification. By highlighting the fatal flaw within the law, the fact that the law ‘cannot give the Holy Spirit,’ Paul attacks the thinking itself by the agitators and believers at Galatia who were attempting to be justified “through the law.”¹²⁹

Paul contrasts “acts of the sinful nature” with the “fruit of the Holy Spirit” in Galatians 5. “Acts of the sinful nature” easily reminds us of “works of the law,” and in fact the two are the same in that they both stem from life outside the Holy Spirit. The situation at Galatian community where they had a crisis over circumcision brings this to light. Galatian believers abandoned faith that expresses itself through love and the pursuit of Christlikeness and were thrust into serious conflicts and arguments. (Galatians 4:18-19, 5:15, 26) As one can discern from the juxtaposition of desires of the flesh and the law, that from Paul’s perspective, “to submit to the works of the law” or to live “under the law” is actually the same as saying one plans to go back to the life seeking desires of a sinful nature. (Galatians 5:16, 18) The problem is that according to God’s principle, whatever you sow, you reap. (Galatians 6:7). We can plant seeds “in the (field of) flesh” or “in the (field of) the Holy Spirit.” The end results are total opposites. Those who have sown “in the flesh” will reap “destruction,” but those who have sown “in the Spirit” will reap “eternal life.” Therefore, Paul warns the Galatian believers to “not deceive” themselves, for God “causes a man to reap whatever he sows,” as illustrated by the metaphors of farming. Paul emphasizes God’s justice also in Romans: God will judge each person according to what he has done. (Romans 2:6-11) Therefore, the one God will acknowledge as righteous is not the “one who merely listens to the law” but the one who “obeys” the law. (Romans 2:13)¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Ibid., 69.

¹³⁰ Yon-Gyong Kwon, 69-70.

At this point one may raise a question. The law clearly demands moral living. If we listen well to the law, the law can help our obedience and ultimately fulfill its function of leading us to life. (Romans 7:10) Then, is it possible for the law to become a power ‘that gives life’ and furthermore, a ‘basis for justification?’ The problem is that the end result would be the total opposite of what we would expect. Paul explains that the law, instead of leading us to obedience, increases our sins even more (Romans 5:20). This is not because the law itself is evil. Paul clearly proclaims that the law is “holy, righteous, and good” (Romans 7:12) The problem lies in us. We are “sold under sin.” If the ‘law’ was our true solution, then it must solve the problem of ‘sin’ that reigns over our flesh. Yet, regrettably, the law is powerless to do so.¹³¹

The law is not only powerless regarding the problem of sin but it is also used by sin. First, the law makes “sin exceedingly sin.” (Romans 7:12) Sin uses the law to provoke all kinds of desires and greed within us. (Romans 7:8) Second, on the basis of “fruit that leads to death” that we bear, the law hands out a death sentence. “For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death (Romans 7:5). “For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death” (Romans 7:11). The law works together with sin. Instead of solving the problem of sin, the law increases the problem. What Paul describes as the limitation of the law, then is the powerlessness of the law to deliver us from sin.¹³²

The Power of the Gospel

At this point let us consider the following. As mentioned in the beginning, typically,

¹³¹ Ibid., 70.

¹³² Yon-Gyong Kwon, *Salvation without Works?*, 83-96.

the majority of Christians believe that we are saved “not by works but by faith.” We do not have to be anxious, for we do not have to depend on our own moral performance, on the ups and downs of our lives for salvation. This was considered ‘good’ news. And it is. The problem is the erroneous application of that good news. Many have believed that once we are saved, we are always saved regardless of our moral life. In other words, the majority of Christians have considered the ‘absolute safety’ of salvation, itself, as the reason for the Gospel to be the ‘blessed news.’ And for the basis for this ‘absolute safety,’ they have held on tightly to the ‘Apostle Paul’s teachings.’

As a result of examining Paul’s apostolic self-identity, however, we have found that the ‘holiness of believers’ was not a mere ‘accessory result’ of Paul’s ministry but an ‘absolute goal’ of Paul’s priestly duty. And Paul had a fear of his own ministry ‘being useless,’ should he fail to accomplish this purpose. If so, then for Paul, the ‘absolute safety’ of salvation, itself, is not the blessed news. Nevertheless, Paul confidently proclaims the cross of Christ and the resurrection as ‘the Gospel.’¹³³ One might ask the reason why Paul is calling the cross of Christ and the resurrection ‘the Gospel?’ In other words, what is the ‘power of the Gospel’ that Paul preached?

Up until now, I have examined why the law is not the means of justification. Now I must examine why the Gospel is the means of justification. According to Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon, the ‘life of obedience to the law’ and the ‘life in the Spirit’ from a moral perspective share the same dimension in that they both strive for a life worthy of God. If ‘faith that expresses itself through love’ is important and the status of having circumcision or no circumcision is irrelevant, then is there a significant difference regarding whether one lives a morally- based life focused upon the law or the Gospel? At this point, Paul declares

¹³³ Yon-Gyong Kwon, *The Gospel that gives life, the Law that kills,*” 64.

the law and the Gospel divide over possessing the power to live ‘an obedient life to God.’ Although the law and the Gospel strive for the same goal, whether each has a power to reach its goal makes the difference. As I have examined previously, works of the law cannot give the Holy Spirit. Only through hearing and faith can one receive the Holy Spirit. In other words, faith in Christ is the channel and the basis for the Holy Spirit, but the law is not. This separates the true solution from a false solution.¹³⁴

Since Paul asserts that we receive the Holy Spirit through ‘hearing and believing,’ what does he mean by “believe in Christ?” What is the content of our faith that connects us to the “Holy Spirit?” Paul talks about “faith and not law” and “promise and not law” concerning the “seed of Abraham.” He holds that the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, were born “according to the flesh” and “according to the promise,” respectively. Ishmael who was born “according to the flesh” was born as a natural result of Abraham’s physical union with Hagar. Isaac, on the other hand, was born as a result of “God’s promise.” Since Abraham and Sarah were old and beyond the years of childbearing, their reproductive functions were, in fact, dead. This suggests the impossibility of childbearing through natural means. Therefore, for the promise of the “birth of a son” to be fulfilled in this couple, supernatural intervention “that imparts life” to the body of this couple, as good as dead, was necessary. In that sense, Isaac who was born “according to the promise” is much like a child “born according to the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit, therefore, is God’s power of life that raises one from the dead.¹³⁵

God appears to Abraham in Genesis 15. “He took him outside and said, ‘Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them.’ Then He said to him, ‘So

¹³⁴ Ibid., 66.

¹³⁵ Yon-Gyong Kwon, *Salvation without Works?* 268 – 274.

shall your offspring be'" (Genesis 15:5). Abraham "believed the Lord;" so God considered "Abraham's faith as his righteousness." In other words, Abraham's faith was faith that believed God as the Creator of life. Our faith is not much different. Paul says the following regarding our faith: "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Ultimately, our faith, much like Abraham's faith, is a faith that believes in God as the Creator of life. Hence, we can say that Abraham who possessed the same faith, became the ancestor of our faith and that we are his descendants.¹³⁶

In Galatians 3:14, Paul explains that the cross of Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. Paul does not stop there, however. He goes on to explain the two purposes of the cross. The first purpose is to extend Abraham's blessing, the blessing of justification by faith, to the Gentiles (Galatians 3:14a). The second purpose is "that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Galatians 3:14b). In other words, the cross of Christ, itself, was the groundwork for the Gentiles to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit.

As I have noted, the heart of the problem is that we are "sold as a slave to sin." Sin entered the world through the first man, Adam, and through his sin, death came into the world. As a result, sin reigned over us. The law was introduced before the coming of Christ, but rather than solving the problem of sin, the law was used by sin to make things worse. The reign of sin and death was made worse by the law and was overcome by Christ who, as the second Adam through His obedience, made it possible for us to be "ruled by grace." Professor Kwon asserts that this concept of "reign of grace" means much more than a simple legal declaration. It means that those who were ruled by sin are ruled by grace "through

¹³⁶ Yon-Gyong Kwon, *The Gospel that gives life, the Law that kills,* 71.

righteousness.” It also implies practical and moral transformation (Romans 5:17, 21).¹³⁷

Paul uses the concept of “Union with Christ” to explain these transformations. Christ’s death destroyed the body of sin and set us free from the power of sin (Romans 6:6). As a result, “we no longer follow the flesh but the Spirit of God, and the requirements of the law are fulfilled” (Romans 8:4). We are no longer “under the law” but “under grace.” It means that we are no longer under the reign of sin, but we are led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:14). Unlike Adam’s sin, Christ’s obedience brought about the “reign of grace,” and it is the Spirit of life, instead of sin and death, that now leads us. Put in a different way, through the Holy Spirit, God gave the believers “circumcision of the heart” so that they can become obedient to God. This ‘power’ is the only solution to sin. Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon explains that Paul contrasts the powerlessness of the law with the ‘power’ of the Gospel, because the ‘circumcision of the heart,’ and by the Holy Spirit, was made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ.¹³⁸

The Assurance of Salvation testified by the Scriptures

Following is the summary of what I have examined thus far. First, Paul specifically described his apostolic ministry as fulfilling the duty as ‘priest’ for the Gospel. Second, the offering Paul brings is ‘the Gentiles,’ and the one who receives this offering of sacrifice is God. The success or failure, therefore, of Paul’s priestly duty depends on whether God accepts the sacrifice or not. Third, God’s standard is the life worthy of God’s calling, or holy life. In other words, Paul has never criticized the obedience of the law or opposed it from a moral point of view. Fourth, in order to live a life worthy of God, ‘faith’ that believes in Christ is necessary, not the ‘works of the law.’ Such a life is possible because we receive the

¹³⁷ Ibid., 72-75.

¹³⁸ Yon-Gyong Kwon, "Assurance of Salvation in Pauline Epistles," 243 – 244.

Holy Spirit by faith. Thus, it is only through the Spirit it is possible to live a life worthy of God's calling. Fifth, Paul criticized the Galatian agitators and believers for the 'works of the law,' not because of the 'attitude of obeying the law morally' but because of a desire to obtain outward Jewish status. What Paul really considered important was to live as a true Jew from the inside. Sixth, Paul warns that if we disregard God's calling and purpose, which is a life of obedience, then that amounts to disrespecting God and that we will not inherit the kingdom of God.

A typical assurance of salvation that many of us hold is as follows. "Once saved, always saved, in other words, we are presently saved, and this salvation will not be revoked." Unlike those of us who are certain of our salvation, Paul warned that the believer's faith may become useless, as well as his own ministry, if we are not careful. Paul had a clear fear of all his efforts in ministry being rendered "useless." Yet, at the same time, we can also find in Paul's statements, 'the certainty of salvation.' Between Paul's fear of 'uselessness' and the 'assurance of salvation,' we need to discover what Paul's message is regarding 'the assurance of salvation' for us. Professor Kwon explains that, for Paul, assurance of salvation was not a doctrinal assurance of what has already happened to us but a practical assurance of our future participation in the promise. This promise of the future, the Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing the coming inheritance is very significant. Also, the 'assurance of salvation' that Paul had was not a 'doctrinal assurance' but an assurance toward God's character.¹³⁹

Let us examine the above-mentioned in greater detail. Professor Kwon contends that the clearest characteristic of Paul's soteriology is that salvation is not through human efforts

¹³⁹ Ibid., 245.

or will but through God's grace.¹⁴⁰ Salvation for Paul is a transcendent grace "outside us" (*extra nos*), totally separate and unrelated from human means. The Jews had a pride of "being different," based on an outward distinction (Galatians 2:15, Romans 2, 3:1). The basis of that pride was the 'works of the law,' which gave the Jews the status of being circumcised. Paul, however, nullifies 'outward differences' by proclaiming the truth that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). He declares that the righteousness of God is given through "faith," not through the "works of the law" which accentuates the outward differences. The 'outward identity' is no longer important before God. In other words, 'justification' is a divine event determined by God's sovereign choice alone, without any human contribution. Considering the context of Romans 3, the reason Paul emphasizes justification given "by grace freely" is so that believers, after being "called," can conclude that they have "nothing to boast about," as "works are not necessary."¹⁴¹

Indeed, because salvation is a gift, 'freely given,' without any human conditions, no one can boast. Therefore, we call it grace. If salvation belongs to God's authority, then what is important in the process of salvation is God's will that leads to our calling. Paul called an attitude that disregards this and tries to make salvation "mine," as 'righteousness of the law' or 'self-righteousness.' Just as Paul criticized the Jews who were proud on the basis of outward difference, Paul also warns the Gentile Christians that Israel was "cut off" because of their unbelief. Though Gentile believers claim to "stand by faith," they must not become arrogant. For God dealt with the original branch (Israel), and therefore He has no reason to spare a branch that had been grafted in. Therefore, Gentile Christians "must not be proud, but be afraid" (Romans 11:20). Considering all that Paul has said, we can say that salvation

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 246.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 248-253.

belongs to God's sovereignty. As unworthy recipients of His calling, we focus on His calling into His Kingdom and glory, and we learn to obey His will revealed in this calling. If the assurances one has disregards God's will and is nothing more than narcissistic assurances, then this is not the salvation to which Paul referred.¹⁴²

Here we must reconsider the problem of faith and assurances. Certainly salvation is given by faith, but it is not just a matter of "being assured." What is important is not the act of assurance but the will of God who demands faith. To put it the other way, our faith may not reflect God's will and may reject the purpose of God's calling. In 1 Corinthians, Paul places a condition: "By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain" (I Thessalonians 15:2). "The vain faith" in 1 Thessalonians refers to a faith that says there is no resurrection and, based on that erroneous belief, giving up good works. In Second Corinthians, Paul warns, "do not receive God's grace in vain" (II Corinthians 6:1). Receiving God's grace means to walk with other believers in the will of God. To disregard this would be to receive this grace "in vain." These people God will not accept. This means that even among those who regard themselves as Christians, there can be those without proper faith; in other words, they can be forsaken (II Corinthians 12:20-21). For Paul, to receive grace in vain was a definite possibility. Therefore, Paul exhorts the believers to test and confirm if they are "in the faith" (II Corinthians 13:5). On the basis of his statements, what is important in our salvation is not how strongly I am assured of it but how much is my faith worthy of God's calling?¹⁴³

Typically we do not think of salvation as being divided into the present and the future but more in an inclusive way. Many believe that the assurance of salvation is being

¹⁴² Ibid., 249-251.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 255.

sure of the fact, “I am already saved.” Paul, however, taught salvation as a future eschatological concept and stated that God, with the Second Coming of Christ, or on the Final Judgment Day, will give it to the believers as a gift.

In 1 Thessalonians, God’s election was not wrath but salvation (I Thessalonians 5:9). This hope will be realized on the Day of Christ Jesus and, in that sense, the life of believers will become a life of “waiting,” for “Jesus who will rescue us from future wrath” (I Thessalonians 1:10). Paul called this “hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thessalonians 1:3).

How then are we to receive Paul’s statement that we have “received salvation?” Paul clearly states in Ephesians that those of us who have died by sin have “received salvation” by grace (Ephesians 2:5). Again in Ephesians 2:8, “you have been saved by grace through faith.” Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon explains the salvation here specifically refers to “salvation” from one’s past disobedient life and does not mean that the salvation to be given at the Second Coming of Christ is already given. In other words, the present salvation is an expression of our situation that is delivered from the past sins. Therefore, this cannot be taken to mean future inheritance.¹⁴⁴ Considering this, even when we say, “we have already been saved,” the intention is not to declare that the future salvation has been completed, but to look forward to the future salvation to be given (Galatians 3:29, 4:7, Romans 8:17). For Paul, he could not think of present salvation apart from the future salvation because of the very nature of salvation.¹⁴⁵

Saving Gentile Christians from past disobedient lives was the sole action of the sovereign God (Ephesians 2:1, 11). The mercy of God that justifies us is clearly not the result of human efforts but the gift of divine mercy. The purpose of that forgiveness,

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 257.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 266-269.

however, is clear. As “God’s workmanship,” we have been saved from the past sinful life, to live doing good works (Ephesians 2:10). To reject this life would be to reject the purpose of God’s calling, and Paul warns of God’s wrath on the disobedient (Ephesians 5:6). They will not inherit the kingdom of God (Ephesians 5:5).

We have become sons and daughters of God through the grace of the forgiveness of sins. The status of ‘being a son,’ or daughter, tells us that we are “co-heirs” with Christ. And as Christ’s co-heirs we bear the present sufferings with joy in order to enjoy glory together with Christ. And the One who guarantees the certainty of this inheritance is none other than the Holy Spirit. If so, how can the Holy Spirit be a guarantee of the certainty of salvation? Does this mean to those who have received the Holy Spirit, salvation is entirely guaranteed, and the future hope is merely a matter of time? (Romans 8:15-17) If salvation is a matter of God’s sovereignty and a gift to wait for, how do we understand the assurance of salvation? What is the evidence and basis for being certain of our future salvation? Paul answers these questions as follows: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39). There is no other passage about assurance of salvation that is bolder and more confident than these statements by Paul. This assurance, however, is not an assurance of “I have received salvation,” but an assurance of God’s faithful love which has called us and will help us arrive at His glory. Professor Yon-Gyong Kwon emphasizes that whenever Paul wanted to tell believers about the assurance of salvation, he always appealed to God’s faithfulness:¹⁴⁶

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 267-268.

whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it” (I Thessalonians 5:23-24).

“Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

“He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.” (I Corinthians 1:8-9)

“Here is a trustworthy saying: If we die with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him. If we disown Him, He will also disown us; if we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself. (II Timothy 2:11-13)

Salvation is a gift of God, based entirely on God’s grace, and the assurance of salvation cannot be separated from God who gives it. Paul explains that the point of salvation is in the future. But since we cannot foresee the future, our future is still uncertain. In the midst of this uncertainty, what helps us to stand firmly in the hope is God’s faithful and unfailing love and our absolute trust in that love. The logical assurance of my salvation is not a doctrinal assurance that says “I am saved (I already possess salvation),” but a personal assurance toward God’s faithful love that promised to save me. “Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!” (Romans 5:9-10). Professor Kwon explains that the love of cross is the last stronghold that made Paul see the future hope clearly.¹⁴⁷ He continues to explain that God’s faithfulness

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 266.

that Paul was certain of was based on the work of the Holy Spirit. “Be God’s own people that do good works” (Ephesians 2:10, Titus 2:14) does not apply to those who do not respect God’s will contained in salvation’s calling, those who reject the gifts of the Spirit to accomplish God’s will, and those who live in the flesh. The assurance of salvation is given only for those who follow the Spirit. Therefore, this is different from the logic that God unconditionally guarantees our salvation, regardless of how we live. It is clear why the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of eschatological salvation. It is because the Holy Spirit is the source of life that helps us to overcome the work of the flesh and to live a new life that focuses on God’s will (Romans 8:1-4, Romans 12:1-2). The basis for our assurance is the love of God. And we learn this love from the cross of Christ. Through Christ on the cross, we have received God’s love, and this love makes firm our promised hope.¹⁴⁸

This does not mean that receiving the Holy Spirit itself unconditionally guarantees our salvation, but it means that the Holy Spirit leads us to arrive at life. The believer has received not the spirit of slavery, but the Spirit of sonship and lives as God’s child, calling God our Father (Romans 8:15). The Holy Spirit confirms that we are the children of God (Romans 8:16), and as children, we become God’s heirs along with Christ, and we can bear present suffering by looking forward to the “glory” of this inheritance (Romans 8:17). In this life of waiting, the Holy Spirit is given to us as the One who helps us in our weaknesses (Romans 8:26). We have no more condemnation because the Spirit of life has rescued us from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2), and consequently the law’s requirements are just and are fulfilled for those who forsake the way of the flesh and follow the way of the Spirit. (Romans 8:4) The Holy Spirit is the power in the believer’s life and makes possible to bear the fruit of the Spirit and the life of “faith expressing itself through love” (Galatians

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 265.

5:6). In other words, the Holy Spirit gives us assurance by the power that specifically works in our lives. Paul read this “guarantee” through the gift of the Holy Spirit that is given to us by faith and the working of this Holy Spirit. This is why Paul staked everything in his ministry on the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 2:1-5)¹⁴⁹

This detailed biblical study of Paul’s own struggles on the relationship between faith and works or between justification and sanctification are also reflected in the theological struggles of both Luther and Calvin, and very much influenced by their own contexts. The following two chapters reflect the consideration of how the teachings of Luther and Calvin deal with these questions, as well as how John Wesley sought to further develop and integrate the relationship between justification and sanctification in his understanding of salvation.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 266.

Chapter 3

The Doctrine of Justification by Faith

Martin Luther's Perspectives

The year 2017 marked the 500 years since the beginning of the Protestant Reformation sparked by Martin Luther. The Korean Protestant Churches are proud to be the self-appointed heirs of the Protestant Reformation. But the question remains whether they indeed follow the spirit and theology of the Protestant Reformation. The Korean Protestant Churches today are perhaps even more corrupt than the Church of the Middle-Ages and are in urgent need to be reformed. While talking about Reformation theology, they foster various cults; they claim succession to Reformation theology while not living up to its spirit. But how can one separate the spirit from its theology? Therefore, the problem is not that they do not embrace the Reformed theology, but they fail to apply it. It can be safely said that the root of the problems of the Korean Protestant Churches has to do with their theology. They do not really understand Reformation theology and how and why it is different from the theology of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, they see everything in black and white, and are quick to make judgments.

The Korean Protestant Churches have failed to teach clearly the doctrine of justification, the central doctrine of the Reformation. They have embraced a form of antinomianism and propagate a cheap gospel that says, if you believe, then you are saved, no matter how you live. What exactly the Reformers rejected in the interest of reforming the church is what is most prevalent in the Korean Protestant Churches, all under the guise of the doctrine of justification. It is ironic and regrettable that it is, in fact, the interpretations being given to the Reformer's doctrine of justification which are causing their spiritual and

moral crises. The doctrine of justification that reformed the church over 500 years ago is now accused of corrupting the Korean Protestant Churches. Perhaps, it is because of this situation that in the past twenty years, there has been an increased interest in having some ‘new perspectives’ on Paul.

Only a few Korean Protestant Churches are proclaiming the full meaning and blessing of the doctrine of justification. Too many others misunderstand the doctrine of justification as the same doctrine being propagated by the Salvation Sect. Others misuse it or disdain it. I have, therefore, chosen to examine Martin Luther’s doctrine of justification in this chapter, and in the next chapter, will examine John Calvin’s theology.

The Tower Experience of Luther

The doctrine of justification by faith is considered to be of prime importance within Reformation thought. If soteriology describes a series of Christian experiences of redemption through Christ, then justification is a key concept within this experience. Justification became a major focus during the Reformation because of the renewed interest in the Pauline letters, especially his letters to the Romans and Galatians. And justification came to be understood to mean one’s status of ‘being right with God.’ Thus, the question of how sinners are justified, lay at the heart of Luther’s Reformation.

People refer to Luther’s discovery of the righteousness of God as the “Tower experience,” or *Turmerlebuis* in German. But no one knows for sure when it happened or exactly what had happened. Many scholars say that it took place in a tower in the Augustinian monastery. What we do know is that it absolutely changed Luther’s view on life and it ultimately led him to lead the Reformation efforts.

For Luther, the doctrine of justification is not just one doctrine among many others.

For him, justification is the central foundation on which the church will stand or fall, and all the other doctrines depend on it. Thus, it is imperative to first understand the teaching of the medieval Christian Church, the Church Luther fought against, in order to grasp his understanding of justification.

The Catholic Church, dating back to the days of Augustine of Hippo in the 4th century, has taught that justification is a gradual process by which a sinner becomes increasingly righteous by participating in baptism, faith, works of love, and a life-long penitential life. By participating in such activities, God's own righteousness is infused through grace. Only when the sinner is completely transformed, and is no longer a sinner, does God justify him or her in the fullest sense. Baptismal grace that washes away the guilt of original sin must become a daily and habitual grace that grows and increases through sacraments and penance, leading one to live in sinless perfection. In this understanding, justification is accumulated gradually throughout the salvation process and only perfected and completed at the end of one's life journey. For the medieval Church, this process extended into purgatory.

This understanding of justification thrust Luther into despair. Luther had been baptized and had become the "perfect penitent" by entering a monastery. He then became the "perfect monk" by going to confession several times a day. In the spirit of true contrition, he whipped himself, starved himself, and slept on the cold stone floor of his monastery. Yet, all these efforts did not quiet his troubled conscience. God still seemed angry, and Luther remained imperfect. He despaired over how he could ever fully please God. Luther's own study of the Bible made things even worse, as he became aware of even deeper human sinfulness than he had been taught.

Luther's understanding of justification evolved over the years. In the early days,

Luther's view on justification was that of 'via moderna.' Today, 'via moderna' refers to the movement once known as the 'nominalism' of the 14th and 15th centuries, which included thinkers such as William Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly, and Gabriel Biel. The doctrine of salvation by *via moderna* centered on a covenant between God and humanity.

The doctrine of salvation according to the *via moderna* states that the covenant between God and human beings paved the way for the necessary conditions for justification. God has established that God will accept an individual who fulfills certain requirements. These requirements stated in Latin, "*facere quod in se est*," represents doing what lies within you or doing your best. When individuals fulfill this requirement by doing their best, God is obligated by the terms of the covenant to accept them. A Latin maxim was often used to articulate this point: "*facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*." "God will not deny grace to anyone who does what lies within them." Gabriel Biel, a famous medieval theologian who influenced Luther through his writings explained that "doing your best" meant rejecting evil and trying to do good.¹⁵⁰

When Luther studied at the University of Erfurt from 1501 to 1505, *via moderna* was the dominant thought. In 1511, Luther was appointed as the Chair of Biblical Studies at Wittenberg. As demanded by his job description, he lectured on the books of the Bible, including the Psalms (1513-15), Romans (1515-16), Galatians (1516-17) and Hebrews (1517-18), before returning to the Psalms for a second time (1519-21). During this time, Luther followed the views of *via moderna* faithfully.¹⁵¹

God has made a covenant with humanity which cannot be broken. If anyone fulfills

¹⁵⁰ Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1988) 75.

¹⁵¹ See Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1985), 72-92.

the minimum requirement set by the covenant, then God is obligated to justify that person. Luther taught that God gives His grace to the humble, so that all who humble themselves before God can fully expect to be justified, as God promised in His covenant. Here the sinner takes the initiative by calling upon God. The sinner is not totally helpless. The sinner can do something. By doing one's best, the sinner fulfills the minimum requirement set by the covenant which, in turn, obligates God to respond by justifying the sinner.

At this stage of his understanding of justification, Luther understood the 'righteousness of God' as an impartial divine attribute. That is, God judges each person with complete impartiality. If the individual has met the basic requirement set by the covenant for justification, then the individual is justified. If not, the individual is condemned. In the words of Alister E. McGrath, "God shows neither leniency nor favoritism. He judges solely on the basis of merit. God is both equitable and just, and in that He gives each individual exactly what he or she merits, nothing more and nothing less."¹⁵²

But, as for Luther, it seemed that he simply could not meet the requirements set for justification. He felt that he did not have what it took to be saved. Therefore, the idea of the 'righteousness of God' became a threat to Luther. For him, it meant condemnation and punishment. The promise of justification remained unreachable for Luther because the requirement set for justification was impossible to fulfill. "It was as if God had promised a blind man a million dollars, promising that he could see, or as if someone who could not speak aloud the works of Shakespeare."¹⁵³

The promise of justification was real enough, but the requirements set to reach it made it impossible. Luther became increasingly convinced that an individual needed God's

¹⁵² Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 107.

¹⁵³ Alister E. McGrath, *Justification by Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 51.

help. God's grace was needed if an individual was to ever receive justification. He meditated constantly on Romans 1:17, "In the gospel a righteousness of God is revealed." But he could not see how the revelation of the 'righteousness of God' was the gospel, the good news. Then, at some point, Luther had a breakthrough. Fortunately for us, we have Luther's own account of what happened.

The year before Luther passed away in 1545, he wrote a preface to the first volume of the complete edition of his Latin writings in which Luther described how he came to break with the Church. "I had certainly wanted to understand Paul in his letter to the Romans. But what prevented me from doing so was not so much cold feet as that one phrase in the first chapter, 'the righteousness of God is revealed in it' (Roman1:17). For I hated that phrase, 'the righteousness of God,' which I had been taught to understand as the righteousness by which God is righteous, and punishes unrighteous sinners.

Although I lived a blameless life as a monk, I felt that I was a sinner with an uneasy conscience before God. I also could not believe that I had pleased Him with my works. Far from loving that righteous God who punished sinners, I actually hated Him... I was in desperation to know what Paul meant in this passage. At last, as I meditated day and night on the relation of the words, 'the righteousness of God is revealed in it, as it is written, the righteous person shall live by faith', I began to understand that 'righteousness of God' as that by which the righteous person lives by the gift of God (faith); and this sentence, 'the righteousness of God is revealed', to refer to a passive righteousness, by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, 'the righteous person lives by faith', This immediately made me feel as though I had been born again, and as though I had entered through open gates into paradise itself. From that moment I saw the whole face of Scripture in a new light...And now, where I had once hated the phrase, 'the righteousness of God', I

began to love and extol it as the sweetest of phrases, so that this passage in Paul became the very gate of paradise to me."¹⁵⁴

In this understanding of God's righteousness, God, not man, takes the initiative in achieving justification. So it is not surprising to find that Luther's theology of salvation has no need for human efforts in achieving justification. No one ever earns or merits justification by one's own efforts. God Himself meets the requirement and graciously gives sinners what they need to be justified.

Righteousness as a Free Gift

If we read Luther's writings with today's understanding of justification and sanctification, it can lead us to misread Luther. That is, Luther uses the phrase, "made righteous" often, but uses the phrase "made holy" relatively few times. For this reason, some criticize Luther for emphasizing justification and not teaching enough on sanctification.

How did Luther understand the 'righteousness of God?' Through series of messages, Luther paints a picture of a righteousness given to us by God that remains outside of us. Just as a mother hen covers her chicks with her wings, God clothes us with a righteousness that is given from outside (sometimes referred to as 'alien righteousness.') 'Alien' or "given as a gift from the outside", in the sense that this is something that is given to us; something that we could never obtain on our own. We stand as justified sinners before God, clothed with a righteousness that is not our own but is given to us by God Himself.

Luther's great theme of 'justification by faith alone' highlights the grace and generosity of God, as well as the helplessness of sinners to justify themselves. God takes the initiative and is the active one. We receive and are passive. God gives by grace, and we

¹⁵⁴Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 95-98.

receive by faith with gratitude. Even the faith we have is given to us. It is a gracious gift from God. God provides everything. We simply receive everything by grace.

Luther came to believe that “Man...sins even when he does the best he can, even in his best works.”¹⁵⁵ “Where then could there be any hope for justification?” His alternative doctrine began with his insights that “I am not good and righteous, but Christ is” and that there is a “sweet and joyful exchange” between Christ's goodness and righteousness and the human person's own sinfulness and unrighteousness on the cross, that is of full benefit the moment one has faith and believes in it. “As bride and bridegroom exchange possessions in a marriage, so the sinner receives justification from Christ, and Christ takes over the Christian's sins.”¹⁵⁶

This joyful exchange happens in two ways. First, it happens on the cross through Christ's death. Second, it happens in the Christian's life. There is nothing that penitential acts add. The merit of Christ is imputed to the sinner by God and therefore cannot be increased. The righteousness that we receive is Christ's. This righteousness therefore is external and imputed. “Through faith in Christ...Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that He has become ours. He Himself becomes ours.”¹⁵⁷

Luther made it clear that this justifying righteousness never becomes a receiver's own possession. It remains forever completely Christ's. The justifying righteousness does not change the person receiving it into an actually righteous person. Rather, the person receiving Christ's righteousness through imputation remains a sinner through and through.

¹⁵⁵ Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 149.

¹⁵⁶ Heiko Oberman, *Luther — Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel [Luther: Man Between God and the Devil]*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Scharzbart (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 184

¹⁵⁷ Martin Luther, “Two Kinds of Righteousness in Christ,” in *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1980), 156.

Such situation regarding our own righteousness does not change until the day we enter into Heaven on the Last Day.

Such a person is in a constant state in this life of being “*simul justus et peccator*,” simultaneously righteous and sinner.¹⁵⁸ Because Christ’s righteousness is received by faith, God sees the sinner as righteous while the sinner is still just that, a sinner: “...thus a Christian man is both righteous and a sinner, holy and profane, an enemy of God and yet a child of God.”¹⁵⁹ He is righteous and his sins are forgiven on the basis of God’s judgment who accepts him as righteous for Christ’s sake. He is a sinner in himself, as far as he exists as a human being. But he is righteous in Christ. He is both, a righteous man and a sinner. Each of these is valid in different dimensions.¹⁶⁰

If a person says, “I am a sinner,” this is true in terms of God’s stern judgment. If a person becomes a believer in Christ and says, “I am a righteous person,” this is also true in terms of God’s mercy. As Luther would say, I am a sinner “in terms of myself without Christ.” I am righteous “in terms of Christ who intercedes for me.”¹⁶¹ “In myself outside of Christ, I am a sinner; In Christ outside of myself, I am not a sinner.”¹⁶²

“This double character remains throughout life. Both are always true of me at one and the same time. This is the great paradox of Christian existence. Neither reason nor legalistic thinking can understand the contradiction involved in the fact that the same person

¹⁵⁸ Martin Luther, "A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," in: *Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings*, 130.

¹⁵⁹ WA 391,492, 521, 564. I quote from Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 242.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

is at once both a righteous person and a sinner; he or she is both completely; it is not as though he/[she] were partially righteous and partially a sinner but rather [the person] is completely a sinner and completely righteous. Such is the wonderful way that God deals with His people. This contradiction does not cease in this life but continues until death."¹⁶³ The important point of Luther's doctrine of justification is that it leads to his so-called "whole man anthropology."

Augustine and Luther

Luther's doctrine of justification separates itself from the Augustinian doctrine of justification in that in Luther's doctrine the righteousness of the believer is an extrinsic, imputed righteousness whereas the Augustinian doctrine's righteousness is an imparted one. This imparted righteousness made the believer actually righteous, and it was this actual righteousness which was the formal cause of justification."¹⁶⁴ "This is not to deny that there is a proleptic or anticipatory dimension to Luther's doctrine, whereby the believer is accounted righteous now through faith on the basis that he will be righteous in the after-life, but the stress in Luther is always on the extrinsic righteousness of Christ as opposed to the eschatological righteousness of the believer."¹⁶⁵

The point of the argument is the placement of justification. Augustine and Luther both agree that God graciously gives justification to sinful humanity. They are the same in

¹⁶³ For a discussion of the medieval development of justification, see A. E. McGrath, *Justitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹⁶⁴ The German scholar, Karl Holl, emphasized the proleptic or anticipatory dimension of justification, but his views have been shown to be an overstatement of the case by, among others, P. Althaus and E. C. Rupp: see P. Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 241-242; E. G. Rupp, *The Righteousness of God* (London: 1953), 30-31.

¹⁶⁵ Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 127.

insisting that it is an act of God's grace. On this point, they differ from Pelagius who asserted that human beings can fulfill the divine law unaided. God created humanity with the capacity for perfection and, therefore, human beings are capable of achieving it, under obligation to achieve perfection. But Augustine argued that God's grace is essential at every stage toward justification and sanctification. Humanity is fallen, damaged and wounded by sin, and needs healing and restoration, which humanity cannot achieve on its own. God's gracious assistance is essential from the first moments of faith to its fulfillment.

Mainline Protestantism has sided with Augustine in this dispute, regarding him as a generally trustworthy interpreter of the Bible and defender of divine grace. But where is that righteousness located? Augustine argued that it was to be found within the believers; Luther insisted that it remained outside of believers. For Augustine, the righteousness in question is internal; for Luther, it is external.

According to Augustine, God imparts justifying righteousness upon the sinner in such a way that the righteousness infuses with the receiver, becoming part of the person. As a result of this process, the receiver of God's righteousness actually becomes righteous from within. Though originating from the outside the sinner, God's righteousness becomes part of the person. According to Luther, the righteousness of God remains outside of the sinner. It is an 'external' or 'alien righteousness,' '*iustitia aliena*' in Latin. God only treats or 'reckons' this righteousness as if it were part of the sinner's person.

From 1515 to 1519, Luther seemed to understand justification as the process of 'becoming.' Here, the sinner becomes gradually like Jesus Christ by an internal renewal process. The famous declaration "*fieri est instificatio*," ("justification is a matter of becoming,") in Luther's lectures on Romans between 1515 and 1516 point to this view.

In later writings, however, estimated to be written after 1530, and perhaps influenced

by Melancthon, Luther approaches justification as if it would be dealt with in a court of law. Rather than seeing justification as the process of ‘becoming,’ Luther seems to view justification as a declaration of being just. This concept was further developed by Philip Melancthon and became today the doctrine of Forensic Justification.

While Augustine taught that sinners are made righteous by justification, Melancthon taught that sinners are considered to be righteous or declared to be righteous. In Augustine’s view, the ‘righteousness that justifies’ is imparted; in Melancthon’s view, the righteousness is imputed by declaration of being righteous. Thus, Melancthon sharply differentiated being declared righteous and the process of becoming righteous. He called the first event “justification” and the latter “sanctification.” But for Augustine, these were different aspects of the same. According to Melancthon, God declares in His divine court, “*in fore divino,*” the sinner to be righteous. It is this new legal approach toward justification that led to the coining of the term, “forensic justification.”

This development is significant, for it confirmed a departure from what the Church had taught until that point. Ever since Augustine, justification had always meant both the declaration of being righteous and the process of becoming righteous. Melancthon’s legal justification concept presented a fundamental departure from this position. This view was accepted by all the major Reformers. Today it is used to illustrate the difference between the Protestant and Roman Catholic understandings of justification. Now there was a different interpretation to the same word, ‘justification.’ In response to the Protestant challenge, the Catholic Church, through the Council of Trent reaffirmed the Augustinian position on justification and condemned Melancthon’s doctrine of justification as a heresy. As implied before, Melancthon’s forensic justification represents a natural development of Luther’s concept of justification. This also helps us to discern other developments and differentiations

within the Reformation movement.

"In brief, then, [the Council of] Trent maintained the medieval tradition, stretching back to Augustine, which saw justification as comprising both an event and a process-- the event of being declared to be righteous through the work of Christ and the process of being made righteous, the internal work of the Holy Spirit. Reformers such as Melancthon distinguished between these two matters, treating the word, 'justification,' as referring only to the event of being declared to be righteous; they regarded the accompanying process of internal renewal, which they termed, 'sanctification' or 'regeneration', as theologically distinct.

Serious confusion thus resulted: Roman Catholics and Protestants used the same word 'justification' to convey very different understandings. Trent used it to mean what, according to Protestants, was both justification and sanctification. More significantly, Trent declared justification by "faith alone" was unacceptable because it failed to acknowledge the New Testament emphasis of love in Christian life.

Opposition to forensic justification occurred within Lutheran circles as well. Among Melancthon's contemporary critics was Andreas Osiander, leader of the evangelical faction in Nuremberg from 1522 to 1537. For Osiander, Melancthon's concept of justification as merely 'declaring righteous' was totally unacceptable: saving righteousness was none other than the essential indwelling righteousness of Christ, arising from His divinity rather than His humanity. Justification must therefore be understood to be the infusion of the essential righteousness of Christ. We see here an unequivocal reassertion of a fundamentally Augustinian understanding of the nature of justification, especially in relation to the real

inward transformation of an individual through the indwelling of God.¹⁶⁶ The fact that for Luther justification involved not merely forgiveness of sins or acquittal but also renewal has not been sufficiently appreciated for a long time. Melanchthon restricted the doctrine entirely to the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Following Melanchthon, Lutheran theology long advocated the forensic view of justification. It was Karl Holl who first insisted that for Luther, justification ultimately embraces the person's total renewal up to the consummation. Actually, as Holl had indicated, Luther developed this comprehensive idea as early as in his 1515/1516 lecture on Romans. He expressed this indissoluble connection between justification as acquittal and renewal in several variations.¹⁶⁷

Alister E. McGrath explains it this way. Karl Holl interprets Luther's understanding of justification as a progressive "*reale Gerechtmachung*." For Holl, the solution to 'the riddle of Luther's doctrine of justification' lay not in a doctrine of double justification, nor in a juxtaposition of "*Rechtfertigung*" (justification) and "*Gerechtmachung*," but in a proleptic or anticipatory understanding of the basis of the analytic divine judgment implicit in the process of justification. Holl illustrated this concept with reference to the analogy of a sculptor and his vision of the final product which motivates and guide him as he begins work on a block of crude marble. Similarly, God's present justification of sinners is based upon his anticipation of their final sanctification, in that the present justification of humans takes place on the basis of their foreseen future righteousness.¹⁶⁸

Karl Holl called Luther's doctrine of justification "analytic." Influenced by Albrecht

¹⁶⁶ Alister E. McGrath, *IUSTITIA DEI :A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 241-242.

¹⁶⁷ Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 251-262.

¹⁶⁸ Alister E. McGrath, *IUSTITIA DEI*, 224-225

B. Ritschl, Holl uses what Ritschl learned from Immanuel Kant to differentiate analytic justification and synthetic justification. Simply put, synthetic justification is declaration of righteousness. Karl Holl contends Luther's doctrine of justification was far from synthetic justification. He argues that Luther originally understood justification not as synthetic but as analytic, which includes the actual process of transformation from sinfulness to righteousness. Holl asserts it was Melancthon who made Luther's justification into forensic justification, and the Lutheran tradition followed Melancthon to define justification as both forensic and synthetic. In other words, Luther's doctrine of justification has been distorted by Lutheranism. Whether Luther's understanding of justification should be seen as synthetic or analytic has been debated at the Lutheran World Federation in Helsinki in 1963. The debate ended without resolution, and the same debate still continues today.

To resolve this debate, many compare early Luther with later Luther. Luther's thoughts lacked consistency. Over time, Luther's emphases varied. Those who desire to read Luther's justification as synthetic and forensic insist on the early writings of Luther in order to limit Luther's analytic dimension. In the early days, Luther did understand justification as actual process of being made righteous rather than the declaration of being righteous. But toward the later years, Luther emphasized the forensic and objective dimension. In the early days, Luther did not have to consider separation from the Catholic Church. In the later years, separation from the Catholic Church was a *fait accompli*, and therefore he focused on his fight against dangers of extremist Reform movements.

But Paul Althaus does not agree that one should divide Luther's theology into early and later periods. Althaus states,

Luther uses the terms 'to justify' (*justificare*) and 'justification' (*justificatio*) in more than one sense. From the beginning, justification most often means the judgment of God with which he declares man to be

righteous. In other places, however, this word stands for the entire event through which a man is essentially made righteous (a usage which Luther also finds in Paul, in Romans 5), that is, for both the imputation of righteousness to man as well as man's actually becoming righteous. Justification in this sense remains incomplete on earth and is first completed on the Last Day. Complete righteousness in this sense is an eschatological reality. This twofold use of the word cannot be correlated with Luther's early and later theology; he uses 'justification' in both senses at the same time, sometimes even shortly after each other in the same text. Theoretically, then, justification in the sense of a judgment could be interpreted in either of two ways. One possible interpretation is that a man is declared righteous by God on the basis of his having fulfilled the law. The other possible interpretation is that God would declare the sinner righteous in spite of the fact he did not fulfill the law. Both possibilities are "forensic."¹⁶⁹

According to Althaus, it is inappropriate to divide Luther's doctrine of justification along synthetic and analytic elements. As mentioned above, Althaus points out that in Luther's writings, he uses the word '*justificare*' to mean both. On this, Althaus partially accepts Holl's argument. Yet, Althaus opposes Holl in reading Luther as analytic. Justification is never a justification of already righteous but a justification of a sinner. Bernhard Lohse also sides with Althaus in that justification is fundamentally forensic, even as Lohse agrees with Karl Holl's assertion that for Luther justification includes both declaration of being righteous and the process of becoming righteous.¹⁷⁰ One must not misunderstand that Luther mixed justification with sanctification. Justification and sanctification must be distinguished, but they cannot be separated, as Calvin emphasized. For Luther, although justification and sanctification may be distinguished, they cannot be separated.

Thus it is clear that Luther struggled to bring about a balance between God's sovereignty and human agency. However in the context of his confrontation with the Roman Catholic Church of his time which emphasized human agency to gather "merits"

¹⁶⁹ Paul Althaus, 226-227.

¹⁷⁰ Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* trans. Roy A. Harris, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999) 264-265

Luther fell on the side of emphasizing God's sovereignty over everything else. Contemporary research on Luther is attempting to bring out Luther's struggle to deal with the question.

Luther and Faith

Luther stresses faith in his doctrine of justification. What Luther meant by faith must be closely examined. Three points regarding Luther's understanding of faith need to be highlighted as having significance to his doctrine of justification.

First, for Luther, faith is not simply historical knowledge. The faith that justifies is not simply an intellectual acknowledgement to dogma but a deeper understanding with a strong personal application. Faith then, is not just believing in your head the fact that Christ died and rose again. Rather, faith is believing that Christ died and rose again personally for me. "Saving faith concerns believing and trusting that Christ was born "pro nobis," for us personally, and has accomplished for us the work of salvation."¹⁷¹ Thus, faith involves the believer's personal relationship to the truth.

Second, Luther considered faith as trust. The concept of faith as trust is prominent in the Reformation. Luther uses the analogy of sailing out to sea. 'Everything depends upon faith. The person who does not have faith is like someone who has to cross the sea, but is so frightened that he does not trust the ship. And so he stays where he is, and is never saved, because he will not get on board and cross over.' Faith is not merely believing that something is true; it is being prepared to act on that belief and rely on it. To use Luther's analogy, faith is not merely believing that a ship exists. It is about stepping into it and

¹⁷¹ Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 111.

entrusting our lives to it.

But what are we to trust? Are we being asked simply to have faith in faith? The better and more accurate question might be, who are we being asked to trust? "For Luther, the answer was unequivocally in God and in the integrity and faithfulness of God who made those promises. Faith is only as strong as the One in whom we believe and trust. The effectual faith is about being prepared to put one's trust in God, for the promise of faith does not rest upon the intensity with which we believe, but in the reliability of the one in whom we believe. It is not the greatness of our faith, but the greatness of God, which counts."¹⁷²

Third, Luther believed faith unites the believer with Christ. Faith in the gospel is not meritorious in and of itself. Faith is effective and results in justification only because of its relationship to Christ. Through faith, the believer is united to Christ, and this union becomes the basis of justification. Faith is only an instrument through which the believer unites to Christ. It is on account of Christ, united by faith, that God declares the believing sinner to be righteous.

In 'The Freedom of a Christian Man,' Luther describes this union by comparing Christ and believer to a bride and groom: "Faith joins the soul with Christ as a bride is joined to her bridegroom... Thus the soul which believes can boast of any glory in whatever Christ possesses as though it were its own.... and whatever the soul possesses Christ claims as His own.... Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation. The soul is full of sins, death, and damnation. Let faith come between them and Christ will have the sins, death and damnation, while the soul will have grace, life, and salvation."¹⁷³

¹⁷² Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, 112.

¹⁷³ For Latin, see WA 40, 482. 22-483, I quoted from Carl R. Trueman, *Luther's Legacy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 62.

Faith does not save in and of itself, but it unites the believer to Christ, which leads to the 'joyful exchange' of sins for righteousness. It is on account of this exchange that God is able to declare the believer as righteous and thus able to save the sinner. This is the heart of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith.

Faith and Good Works

Even though there has been great emphasis in Luther's theology that justification is by faith alone through imputation, and not by works, this should not be understood to mean that Luther saw no role for good works within the believer's life. Just because Luther excluded works from justification, it does not mean that he excluded them from salvation as a whole. This is what Luther had to say about works. "When a man is justified, he possesses the Spirit which drives him to do good works. Like a good tree producing good fruit, the works flow as a natural consequence of the believer's justification. However, if he were not justified, his works would be evil in the same way that the fruit of a sick tree would inevitably be bad."¹⁷⁴

Luther acknowledged that it is a difficult task to argue for justification by faith and, at the same time, emphasizes that works are vital. Luther was not ready to allow an un-Scriptural resolution of the problem which stresses one at the expense of the other. Faith and works are the two aspects of the one and the same Christian life. Yet, in Luther's theology, works are always subordinated to faith. Faith has both logical and chronological priority over works. Faith is the cause of works, not the other way around.

However, once made righteous and being certain of salvation, the believer is led, with inner necessity, to 'works,' to new obedience, and to joyfully serving God by serving

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 64.

the neighbor. These works are born out of faith.¹⁷⁵ It does not, however, exhaust their relationship.

This new obedience is significant for faith, as the new obedience serves as evidence for the authenticity of faith. If faith is the actual motivation for works, then the works become the evidence pointing to true faith. Such proof is needed because not everything that claims to be faith is indeed genuine faith. There is imagined and counterfeit faith. In this counterfeit faith, a human being has not really encountered God's love and has not seriously grasped Christ. Nor has Christ therefore entered into the person's heart. The hallmark of good fruits in the form of new obedience can distinguish authentic faith from counterfeit faith, living faith from dead faith. It is the work of new obedience, then, is the evidence of authentic faith and the battle against sin.¹⁷⁶

Luther explains that God's justifying forgiveness is partially dependent upon man having taken up the battle of the Spirit against the flesh.¹⁷⁷ If this battle is missing and an individual remains in gross sins, then he/she is not a Christian and does not stand under God's forgiveness.¹⁷⁸ As such, Luther declares positively that new obedience, the battle against sin, good works, and love are those that make us and others confident that our faith

¹⁷⁵ We must therefore most certainly maintain that where there is no faith nor can there be good works; and conversely, that there is no faith where there are no good works. Therefore, faith and good works should be so closely joined together that the essence Christian life consists in both. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 246

¹⁷⁶ "True faith is not idle. We can, therefore, ascertain and recognize those who have true faith from the effect or from what follows." LW 34. 183. Paul Althaus, 246

¹⁷⁷ LW. 32, 28. Paul Althaus, 247

¹⁷⁸ LW. 34, 161. Paul Althaus, 247

is authentic, and therefore we can be certain that we are saved.¹⁷⁹

Opponents of Luther accused him of opening the door to the old heresy, antinomianism, which rejects all law and obedience. They complained that Luther's teaching on justification would take away all motivation for sanctification and holy Christian living. People would be encouraged to "sin more than grace may abound" and end up going to hell for neglecting spiritual progress toward perfection through the penitential system. Luther took this criticism seriously, in fact with fear and trembling, for he realized that there was some truth to their concerns. Some people might, indeed, misunderstand the gospel and abuse their newfound liberty, turning it into a license to sin as they please, just as people had done in Paul's time.

Luther did not dismiss the importance of good works in the life of a Christian. Good works, such as acts of love for God and neighbor, would flow naturally from the new heart that a believer receives from being forgiven and justified freely by grace. The same faith that receives grace and the same grace that justifies will inevitably begin to transform the person from within and produce fruits of righteousness. Luther was certain of this truth. But he did not focus too much on good works for fear that it might lead us back into works of righteousness, which he fought against all his life. For Luther, the amount of good works and the degree to which a person is righteous and actually conformed to Christ have nothing to do with his or her justification at all. In the final analysis, all the good works are but "filthy rags" compared with Christ's perfect righteousness and therefore in no way support

¹⁷⁹ "Works are a certain sign, like a seal on a letter, which make certain that my faith is genuine. As a result if I examine my heart and find that my works are done in love, then I am certain that my faith is genuine. If I forgive, then my forgiving makes me certain that my faith is genuine and assures me and demonstrates my faith to me." "Works assure us and bear witness before men and the brethren and even before our own selves that we truly believe and that we are sons of God in hope and heirs of eternal life." WA. 391, 292, Paul Althaus, 247

or merit justification.

Thus far, I have covered a brief summary of Luther's doctrine of justification. Luther's Reformation efforts opposed justification by works taught by the Roman Catholic Church and advocated justification by faith. He emphasized that a man is not saved by his good works but by faith alone and by grace alone. The most good a man can do before God is to have faith. There is no such thing as good works before God. The ethical activity or good works of a human being cannot save him/her. It is only through faith that we are given eternal life. Good works are simply fruits of faith. If faith is the actual basis of good works, then good works, though it has no effect on justification, can become the basis for knowing that indeed we have faith, authentic faith. As noted earlier, good works have a place in affirming genuine faith, not as a means to justification, but as a result of justification. Good works, then, are useful tools when distinguishing genuine faith and counterfeit faith.

Luther asserted that those who have been made righteous through faith bear good fruits, just as grapevines bear grapes. But the question is, during the last 500 years, did the believers bear good fruits? Especially in the case of the Korean Protestant Churches that have their roots in the Reformation theology, I ask why has there been a mismatch between faith and works? From a theological perspective, in the Protestant theological tradition, more importance has been given to God than to humankind, and to faith and grace rather than ethics and morality. Perhaps because of this tendency, the Korean Protestant Churches, with their deep roots in the Protestant theological tradition, have at least unconsciously neglected ethics and morality and treated good works and behavior as low priority items in Christian living.

Luther, in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church that taught justification by works, insisted that Paul's doctrine of justification by faith was definitive for Christianity.

And to make sure that there were no misunderstandings about this, he added the word ‘alone,’ lest anyone see faith as one among many causes of justification, including works. Interestingly, this addition of the word, ‘alone,’ caused an uproar. The Roman Catholics pointed out that the New Testament nowhere taught ‘justification by faith alone’; indeed, the Letter of James explicitly condemned this idea. Faith is always accompanied by works, according to James. Luther responded by saying that his phrase ‘justification by faith alone’ captures the core essence of the Gospel and the New Testament, even if the Bible did not use his exact words. And as for the Letter of James, was it not ‘an epistle of straw’ that ought not to be there in the New Testament anyway? This second argument by Luther caused considerable unease, even within Protestant circles and was not maintained by Luther's own successors.

Luther had much to explain and also had to calm fears. In his ‘Sermon on Good Works’ (*Von den guten Werken*), Luther argues that good works are important as the natural outcome of having been justified, not as the cause of justification.¹⁸⁰ Luther was not out to destroy morality. He was simply putting it in its proper order and context. Good works are necessary after justification, not before. Believers perform good works as an expression of gratitude to God for forgiving them, rather than in an attempt to persuade or entice God to forgive them in the first place.¹⁸¹

From the time of Luther until today, however, Luther’s famous phrase “by faith alone,” has been misunderstood or misinterpreted to mean “Christians do not need good works.” Luther’s explanation reached only a few, and most people took the phrase to mean

¹⁸⁰ Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, (Malden: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2012), 122.

¹⁸¹ Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 2008), 264.

only faith is needed and absolutely nothing else. The theology that overemphasized faith, fueled by ‘by faith alone,’ caused increased harm over time. The problem continues today, five centuries later. Strictly speaking, the responsibility lies with those who misunderstood Luther’s intentions. However, Luther is not without his share of the blame. The fundamental responsibility lies with Luther who made statements that could be misunderstood. The phrase, ‘by faith alone,’ itself is problematic. Paul wrote, ‘a man is justified by faith’ (Romans 3:28), but he never said ‘by faith alone.’ (sola)

In order to maximize his Reformation efforts, Luther added the word ‘sola’ to Paul’s doctrine of justification, thus changing “justified by faith” to “justified by faith alone.” The word indeed proved effective and successful in differentiating Luther’s doctrine of justification from that of the Roman Catholic Church and became a tremendous help to Luther’s campaign. But this move brought adverse effects as well, for by over emphasizing the point, it went beyond the scope of Paul’s teaching on justification. It is now time to return to Paul’s original statement of ‘justified by faith’ by removing the word ‘sola.’ Otherwise, the error of the Protestant tradition that disregards and excludes good works will not be corrected but will continue to persist. For sure, Luther cannot take all the blame for the lack of good works or the moral failures of most of today’s Protestant believers. Yet, I hold Luther responsible, for his phrase is the greatest culprit and cause of the problem we face. The Bible currently used by the Korean Protestant Churches, the New Korean Revised Version, was published in 2007, and it employs the word, ‘only.’ The joint Bible translation published in 1968 by Korean Protestants and Korean Roman Catholics also contains the word, ‘only.’ Only the New Korean Standard Version Bible, published in 1993, does not include the word, ‘only.’

As I examine the background of Luther’s medieval Catholic Church that stressed

works and achievements, I can begin to understand why Luther had to over-emphasize faith. Luther's unilateral decision to emphasize faith, however, generated a negative impact along with what was positive. We can no longer passively overlook the matter. Five hundred years after the Reformation, because there is increasingly greater negative fallout than the positive, the necessity to correct this issue is even greater. Calvin attempted to amend what Luther neglected to do by connecting sanctification and justification and making them inseparable. Calvin made efforts to strengthen the practical life of Christians. What received attention and what was remembered, however, was the phrase, "by faith alone." Its impact was so powerful that what Luther or Calvin said about good works and sanctification did not receive enough attention and were soon forgotten after the Reformation. The negative adverse result has been that the majority of Christians love the notion of 'cheap grace' and do not follow the way of Christ.

Even though Luther proclaimed '*Sola Scriptura*,' the fact that he called the Letter of James 'an epistle of straw,' is a self-contradiction and admits to the fact that there is 'the canon within the canon.'¹⁸² We can see Luther's prejudice against the Letter of James in the following words: "He (James) does violence to Scripture, and so contradicts Paul and all of the Scriptures. He tries to accomplish by emphasizing the law what the apostles bring about by attracting men to love. I therefore refuse him a place among the writers of the true canon of my Bible."¹⁸³

Andrew Chester also points out this problem of Luther. "First of all, Luther is

¹⁸² Gerhard Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 15. "With these distinctions Luther has cast a long shadow reaching into our time in the form of the questions concerning the unity of the Bible (and the NT) as well as the issue of "the canon within the canon."

¹⁸³ John Dillenberger, *Martin Luther, Selections from His Writings*, (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1958) 36.

theologically evaluating the Letter of James with the standard of Paul. Secondly, Luther is judging the Letter of James for what it does not have, not for what it has.”¹⁸⁴ Among the New Testament Canon, one can find that the letters of Paul were written mostly for the Gentile readers. But we also have letters written mostly for Jewish readers like the Gospel of Matthew or the Letter of James. Luther overlooked this fact and as a result minimized the importance of ethics and works.

A New Testament scholar in Korea, Deukjoong Kim, has raised this issue.¹⁸⁵ He explains the issue by taking the Letter of James and the Gospel of Matthew as examples. In his view, it is a well-known that among the New Testament letters there are Pauline epistles which emphasize ‘justification by faith’ and also the Letter of James that emphasize ‘justification by works.’ In his view, James clearly stresses ‘work’ more than ‘faith.’ Some see this as competing claims or a contradiction while others see it as a supplemental or complementary view. Brevard S. Childs states, “Paul’s teaching on the function of works applies to life before conversion while James’ teaching applies to life after conversion.”¹⁸⁶

Yet, we must acknowledge that between James and Paul, there is a clear difference and conflict. James wrote with a very different theological perspective than did Paul. If we accept that Pauline letters were the earlier letters among New Testament letters, then the Letter of James was written after the letters to the Romans or Galatians. Werner Georg

¹⁸⁴ Andrew Chester, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* (Cambridge: University Press, 1994), 54.

¹⁸⁵ Deukjoong Kim, "Biblical Theological Criticism on Christian Faith that emphasize 'Faith Alone'" in: *The Korean Church Needs the Second Reformation* (Seoul: Kigokkyeomoon, 2015), 274-303.

¹⁸⁶ Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 441-442.

Kummel says, "A pre-Pauline writing of James cannot be assumed."¹⁸⁷ Andrew Chester also says, "James' main message is an attack on Paul's statement that God justifies only by faith."¹⁸⁸ This point is revealed in James 2:24, "A person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone." "Not by faith alone" by James can be best understood only in response to Paul's position of "by faith alone." Gerhard Barth contends as follows, "the reason James uses the example of Abraham is precisely because Paul or opponents of James brought forward Abraham in their arguments."¹⁸⁹ We must concede here that behind the opponents that James is attacking the stand of the Apostle Paul. Who else is there historically among the readers and interpreters of the Letter of James that defended faith without works but Paul? Not a single person qualifies for that position in the first or second centuries.

Among the Gospel writers, the author of the Gospel of Matthew takes a very different position than that of Paul. "If Paul is the advocate of theology of pure grace, then Matthew is the advocate of theology of deeds or righteousness, a theology of works."¹⁹⁰ Ulrich Luz points out the theological differences between Paul and Matthew. "In sum, I sense a profound tension between Matthew and Paul, perhaps even an abyss."¹⁹¹

While Paul says in Galatians 3:24, "the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ," Matthew states a different view in Matthew 5:17-18: "Do not think that I have come to

¹⁸⁷ Werner Georg Kummel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (SCM Press, 1978), 414.

¹⁸⁸ Andrew Chester, "The Theology of James," in: *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, by A. Chester and Ralph P. Martin, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 49-50.

¹⁸⁹ Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," in the *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, Gunther Bornkamm and Heinz Joachim Held, eds. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 162.

¹⁹⁰ Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 146.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 149.

abolish the Law or the Prophets: I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” And also in Matthew 5:19, Matthew continues, “Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven....” These statements have been interpreted as attacking Paul.

Paul was considered in the early Church as the one who had a passive attitude concerning the law. Some suggested that the phrase ‘the least of these’ referred to Paul. Rudolph Bultmann agrees: “That is said with regard to the Hellenists, perhaps to Paul himself.”¹⁹² On this point, the Gospel of Matthew and the Letter of James are closely related. As mentioned in James 2:10, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it,” James takes the position that one must obey the entire law. Again in James 2:12, James emphasizes the seriousness of keeping the law with the warning, “Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.” Ulrich Luz asserts, “Matthew, in turn, is even further removed from Paul than James. This leads me to think that Matthew and Paul, had they known one another, would certainly not have struck up a strong friendship.”¹⁹³

The fact that Matthew stressed good works can be seen in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7. “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) Only in Matthew are warnings like “every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” repeated in John the Baptist’s sermon (Matthew 3:10) and also in Jesus’ sermon (Matthew 7:17). This

¹⁹² Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 54.

¹⁹³ Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, 147-148.

might reflect Matthew's own interest in good works. The "fruit" in Matthew refers to good works.

Jesus' last sermon in Matthew 25:31-46 concerning the Judgment Day is an important key in understanding Matthew. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats only appear in the Gospel of Matthew. We must focus on the fact that this parable makes 'works' the absolute condition of salvation. All the more, the Judge mentions nothing about the sins of commission committed by those who are damned but judges and condemns them for the sins of omission. This thinking shares the thought found in James 4:17, "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." In this regard, both Matthew and James consider 'the sin of omission' more significant than 'the sin of commission.' This can be seen as a reaction to Paul's teachings that stress 'faith.' Both Matthew and James stressed 'works' in response.

We can also understand the Parable of the Wedding Garment in Matthew 22:11-13 from the same perspective. Matthew took an independent parable that was circulating and added to the Parable of the Wedding Banquet (Matthew 22:1-10) as a sort of conclusion. Why was Matthew alone in adding the parable of the Wedding Garment?

According to Joachim Jeremias, "The Early Church in its mission to the Gentiles had indiscriminately accepted all believers, even those who showed no moral transformation and no ethical responsibilities. In opposition to this, Matthew was making a point that only those who have been properly dressed with the "wedding garment" will remain in the banquet of the Church. Matthew was emphasizing the need for a sort of merit and good works, as well as the need for repentance."¹⁹⁴ In other words, it's not enough to have faith that responds to the invitation and calling, but you need proper garments for the occasion, or

¹⁹⁴ Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (Norwich: SCM Press, 1969), 65-66.

good works. This is the difference between Matthew and Paul. And on this point, Luther's error is revealed. He acknowledged 'the canon within canon.' Hence he failed to teach a holistic and well-balanced Christian faith from the New Testament Canon.

The Korean Protestant Churches that have their roots in Luther's Reformation tradition also taught faith without works. On that point, we need to remember what Kuemmel said in his *Introduction to the New Testament* about A. Schlatter. "Schlatter was undoubtedly right in saying that the churches have done serious injury to themselves in that they have given James only a superficial hearing."¹⁹⁵

"Luther's doctrine of justification won wide acceptance within early Protestantism. Zwingli and other eastern Swiss reformers of the late 1500s clearly entertained a vision of reformation that did not entail this idea and may even have contradicted it. Many Swiss and Rhineland reformers of the 1520s were nervous about the idea, believing that it suggested that Christians were relieved of any obligation to do good works. Bucer, perhaps showing his ethical sympathies with Erasmus of Rotterdam, set out a doctrine of double justification, which ensured a robust link between God's act of gracious acceptance and the human response of grateful moral action."¹⁹⁶

All of Protestant reformers and their followers in the sixteenth century may be divided into two major categories: the Magisterial Reformation and the Radical Reformation. 'Radical' simply means 'going back to roots,' and of course, all of the Protestants intended to recover the true New Testament Gospel from the layers of medieval tradition that they saw burying it and suffocating it. Yet, one diverse group of Protestant Reformers was more radical than the rest and they have come to be lumped together as "radical Protestants"

¹⁹⁵ Werner Georg Kummel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 411.

¹⁹⁶ Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 248.

because of the common characteristics they share.¹⁹⁷

Needless to say, the radical Protestants were the 'Protestants of Protestantism.' They protected what they saw as the halfway measures taken by Luther and the other magisterial Reformers in purifying the Church of the Roman Catholic elements. Their ideal was to restore the New Testament Church as a persecuted remnant as it was in the era of the Roman Empire before Constantine.

The largest and most influential group of Radical Reformers was the Anabaptists, and they left the most significant mark on Christian theology through its leaders. Beginning under Zwingli in Zurich in 1525, they called themselves 'Swiss Brethren' and later spread throughout Europe.¹⁹⁸ One group of Anabaptists were known as the Mennonites after their founder, Menno Simons, and another group formed communistic colonies known as Hutterites, after their leader, Jacob Hutter. The main groups of Anabaptists in the modern world are the various Mennonites, Amish and Hutterites colonies, and the Church of the Brethren. In varying degrees, they continue to live out the unique theological and practical distinctiveness of their sixteenth-century founders. Two Anabaptist thinkers of the Reformation period stand out as particularly creative and influential: Balthasar Hubmaier and Menno Simons.

Against Luther's and Zwingli's monergistic views of salvation, Hubmaier sided with Erasmus in affirming free will and synergism. Against their views on baptism, Hubmaier sided with the Zurich radicals, Grebel and Manz. At the heart of Hubmaier's theology lies

¹⁹⁷ See George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), xxiii-xxxi.

¹⁹⁸ Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960), 703. Williams R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1963)

one overriding concern that governs everything else: individual conversion. Throughout his writings, especially about baptism, Hubmaier presupposed that faith is a free decision to believe the Gospel and trust in Jesus Christ and His grace alone for salvation. It involves hearing God's Word, becoming convicted of sin, believing the Gospel of Christ, confessing sinfulness and repenting, trusting in Christ alone for salvation, committing to live according to Christ's commands, being baptized in water, and participating in the life of the church, including the Lord's Supper.

According to Hubmaier, the New Testament order of salvation requires that faith must precede baptism in order for things to proceed correctly. In his view, "Infant baptism is a trick which is invented and introduced by human beings."¹⁹⁹ Of course, Luther and Zwingli both defended infant baptism on the ground that faith is a gift of God and not a free decision by the receiver. Their monergistic views of salvation form at least part of their rationale for the practice of infant baptism. Hubmaier eventually came to reject Augustinian monergism, including predestination, in favor of Erasmian synergism, including free will. Not only was Hubmaier the first Anabaptist theologian; he was also the first evangelical synergist. That is, he was the first Protestant thinker to openly espouse belief in free will on the basis of a work of God in Christ and the Spirit of God working through the word of God. Only because they have free will are people rightly held responsible by God and by the Church for their decisions and actions. But whatever they do, they cannot boast because any right decision they make or any good action they take is enabled only by God's grace and is not a product of some innate goodness or character. This is basically the same theology of salvation that the Dutch Remonstrants, a follower of Jacobus Arminius, later developed in

¹⁹⁹ Balthasar Hubmaier, "On the Christian Baptism of Believers," in: *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, edited by H. Wayne Pipkin and John Yoder (Scottsdale, Penn: Herald Press, 1989), 146

the early seventeenth century. Hubmaier, then, was an 'Arminian before Arminius,' just as Augustine was a 'Calvinist before Calvin.'²⁰⁰

In his doctrine of salvation, Menno Simons tended to neglect Luther's strong emphasis on justification as imputed righteousness, and he never affirmed the Lutheran doctrine of "simul justus et peccator," simultaneously righteous and a sinner. Like Hubmaier, Menno also rejected predestination, and for the same reasons. Neither of these Anabaptist theologians ever denied that salvation is by grace through faith alone, but they did not accept Luther's forensic doctrine of justification by faith alone because they saw it as an impediment to the true doctrine of a 'lively' faith which issues in holy living.²⁰¹

The problematic key word for them was 'forensic.' That is, the Anabaptists did not like the doctrine that righteousness is only imputed to sinners who repent. They wished to emphasize regeneration, which includes the impartation of the Holy Spirit and union with Christ so that the "born-again" sinner actually begins to become righteous from within. Genuine, heart-felt faith, Menno argued, always results in righteous living, even though there is no perfection before death.

Catholic critics condemned the Anabaptists because they rejected the penitential system and the sacraments. Like Menno, all the leading Anabaptists focused their attention on an inward conversion and outward testimony. Magisterial Protestant critics condemned the Anabaptists because they rejected monergism (predestination), infant baptism and forensic justification. Like Menno, all the leading Anabaptists focused their attention more on personal decision and holy living than on passive reception of salvation. To the

²⁰⁰ Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition Reform*, Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1999, 422.

²⁰¹ Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman, 1988), 269

Magisterial Protestant followers of Luther and Zwingli, Menno and other Anabaptists seemed to be more Catholic than truly Protestant in their soteriology. The Anabaptists like Menno were clearly frustrated in their attempts to free theology of what they saw as the chains of traditional categories and recover the simple New Testament Christianity they sought. Overall, however, it must be said that Anabaptists like Hubmaier and Menno Simons were more Protestant than Catholic in spite of the harsh attacks of men like Luther, Zwingli and Calvin.

Because Anabaptists held that humankind had perfect free will, rejected predestination and the bondage of the will, major Reformers condemned them and accused them of having a sort of perfectionist heresy. But as Robert Friedman pointed out, "They generally accepted main tenets of Protestantism, such as opposition to the Roman Church, the principle of '*Sola Scriptura*,' the Apostle's Creed, salvation by faith, and not by two sacraments. They seem to be just a radical extension of Protestantism, living a puritanical-ascetic life following the Reformed pattern but not the Lutheran one."²⁰²

Anabaptists, on the other hand, criticized the Reformers for emphasizing only grace and neglecting the life worthy of receiving such grace. They taught that faith and works, as well as theology and ethics cannot be separated. In other words, Luther stressed the sinful human reality that needs God's grace but not the ethical life of a disciple.

Hans Georg Fischer, a Lutheran minister in Vienna, wrote a stimulating essay on "Lutheranism and the Vindication of the Anabaptist Way." In it, he laments, among other things, that Lutheranism with its overemphasis on justification completely neglects a stress on its counterpart, sanctification, although justification without sanctification is really an

²⁰² Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism* (Scottsdale, PA: The Herald Press, 1973), 17

incomplete theological doctrine."²⁰³

Justification in sin is important. But justification from sin or out of sin is even more important. Declaring a sinner to be righteous is God's work, but making the effort to become righteous is human work and responsibility. Sanctification is more important in the life of a Christian. Anabaptists took Jesus' commands seriously and emphasized living morally and ethically. This point is repeated and magnified in the life of John Wesley.

Wesley's pursuit of 'Scriptural Holiness' and practical theology formed as he began criticizing Luther's "Sola fideism" and quietism. There was a strong connection with Martin Luther in Wesley's Aldersgate experience. Wesley went to a Moravian society meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. Moravians were followers of pietistic movement in the Lutheran tradition. Wesley heard Luther's "Preface to the Epistle to the Romans" when he felt his "heart strangely warmed." Wesley's conversion experience can be interpreted in many ways, but he was definitely influenced by Luther's theology of justification by faith. John's younger brother, Charles, was also influenced by a Moravian pastor, Peter Bohler, and Charles converted before John. John received frequent counseling from Peter Bohler, and after his conversion, John worked with Bohler to organize the Fetter Lane Society.

However, in his sermon "On God's Vineyard," John Wesley criticizes Luther's doctrine of salvation. Wesley faults Luther in his lectures on Galatians that Luther was unconcerned about sanctification. Wesley points out that Luther focused so much on justification that he neglected sanctification, while the Catholic Church focused so much on sanctification that it neglected justification. Especially after visiting Herrnhut, the religious

²⁰³ Hans Georg Fischer, "Lutheranism and the Vindication of the Anabaptist Way" in: *The Theology of Anabaptism*, by Robert Friedmann, (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999) 90.

center for the Moravians, John Wesley began criticizing solafideism, quietism, imputed justification, and antinomianism. For Luther, good works was an automatic result of Christians who have been made righteous. As good trees naturally bear good fruits, Luther taught that those who have been justified by faith will naturally bear fruit of good works. But for Wesley, good works and love are not fruits that bear automatically. It required the action of a human's voluntary free will and God's help. While Luther valued "Letter to the Romans" and called the "Letter of James" 'an epistle of straw,' John Wesley valued both, the faith in Romans and the works in James. As Wesley explains, Abraham's faith in Romans reflects his faith at age 75 when Abraham left Ur, but Abraham's works in James refers to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac whom Abraham received twenty-five years later. In other words, the works in the "Letter of James" presupposes the faith described in the "Letter to the Romans." It is not works before faith. Wesley also explains that justification in James is different from justification in Romans. In Romans, justification is being declared righteous by imputation which is done objectively, passively, and legally. But James' justification is impartation that transforms a believer into a righteous person actually, fundamentally, and subjectively.

The other Reformer who had much to say on these issues is John Calvin, who introduced further dimensions into these discussions. It is to his contributions that we turn in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Once Saved, Always Saved?

John Calvin's Teachings

In the previous chapter, I examined Luther's soteriology with a focus on his doctrine of justification. In this chapter, I will examine Calvin's doctrine of salvation with a focus on the debate centered on predestination. Calvinism refers to the theological system originated from Calvin and includes not only Calvin's theology but also various theologies of many scholars who follow him.²⁰⁴ Until now, most of the Korean Protestant Churches have been influenced not so much by Calvin's theology, but by the theology of the Calvinists.

From the beginning, Protestantism has found itself divided by certain issues. One of the most contentious debates has been centered on the topic of 'predestination.' The burning question at hand involves choice and free will, how is God and humanity involved in the process of salvation? Is salvation something that humanity freely chooses? Or is it something that is chosen for humanity by God? Predestination was propelled to the forefront of debate because it became the litmus test to distinguish Lutheranism from Calvinism.

So what were these two differing positions? In general terms, the best way of understanding the difference that separated the Lutherans from Calvinists is to consider the doctrines of predestination as falling into two broad categories:

1. Single predestination holds that since all people have sinned on account of the Fall, they are unable to save themselves. In a single act of divine election, God chooses to save some people and to pass over others. Predestination is thus "single" in that there is no deliberate act of rejection, only a single decision to save certain individuals.

²⁰⁴ Henry Meeter, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), 21.

2. Double predestination holds that God elects, from all eternity, to save certain individuals and condemns others. Predestination thus involves a double act of election in which God actively chooses to save certain individuals and actively chooses to condemn others. Although Luther was inclined toward the second of these options, as seen in his famous debate over free will with Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1525, his successors endorsed the first.

For Lutheranism, God chooses to save the elect and foresees, but does not cause, the condemnation of those who are not of the elect. Predestination is single in that there is no negative dimension to God's election. Those who reject the Gospel are held to be responsible for their own fate.

Reformed theologians followed the lead of John Calvin, who argued that predestination involves a double decision, a positive decision of election and a negative decision of reprobation. In his brief discussion of the doctrine, Calvin defines predestination as "the eternal decree of God, by which He determined what He wished to make of every man. For He does not create everyone in the same condition, but ordains eternal life for some and eternal damnation for others."²⁰⁵ God, in a demonstration of His sovereignty and power, determines the eternal destiny of an individual. Calvin is not introducing a hitherto unknown notion into the sphere of Christian theology. "Similar ideas were proposed by some late medieval writers, such as Gregory of Rimini and Hugolino of Orvieto, who also taught a doctrine of absolute double predestination, that God allocates to their merits or demerits."²⁰⁶ People's fate rests totally upon the will of God rather than on individual free will. These viewpoints are radically different and involve significantly divergent readings of core Biblical texts. The force of these disagreements did not diminish over time.

²⁰⁵ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 367.

²⁰⁶ Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, 266.

The predestination debate occurred years later also among Dutch Reformers in the Netherlands. It was known as the ‘Arminius Debate’ after the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). So far I have examined ‘single predestination’ and ‘double predestination.’ I also need to consider another question. Does predestination involve an entire nation of people or each individual? On first glance, both seem to be the case. God has called the entire nation of Israel. And God has called the entire Church. On the other hand, God has also individually called Abraham, Jacob, and Paul. The Calvinists’ position is ‘an individualist approach to predestination,’ while Arminians advocate ‘a corporate approach to predestination.’ That is, God decrees to save believers, all of them. The object of election to salvation is an indefinite group of persons, all believers. The object of reprobation to damnation is also an indefinite group of persons, all unbelievers. This is how Arminius interpreted Paul’s language in Romans 9, as applying to classes or groups and not to individuals.

In this chapter, I will examine Calvin’s doctrine of predestination, with emphasis on the five points of Calvinism as summarized in the Canons of Dort. The scope of our examination therefore will be limited to parts of Calvinism, and not the entire corpus of Calvinism, itself. The Korean Protestant Churches are thoroughly trained on the five points of Calvinism. The Canons of Dort were written one half century after Calvin’s death, and Calvin obviously never read them nor knew about that document. The Canons of Dort contain the five points of Calvinism which were written to condemn the Five Articles of Remonstrance by the followers of Arminius. The five points of Calvinism came to be summarized in English under the acronym, TULIP, highly appropriate, given the long-standing association between the Netherlands and tulips.

The Synod of Dort opened on November 13, 1618, and continued through 154

sessions, ending on May 9, 1619. One hundred Dutch Orthodox Calvinists were official members of the conference together with twenty-eight delegates from foreign countries. Thirteen Arminian representatives were present, but they were prisoners of the state, condemned for treason because of their views about theology and tolerance in every area of church and state; hence they had no voice or vote. As a result, the Five Points of Calvinism were unanimously declared to be the official Calvinistic position, and the Five Articles of Remonstrance were deemed heretical.

Arminius lived and died a 'Calvinist.' Arminius' Arminianism is not Pelagianism in any aspect. There are many streams of theology and political ideology considered to be Arminian that lead far afield from Arminius' teaching. Most of today's Calvinism is 'Arminianized' Calvinism. It is evangelical and evangelistic. But extreme Calvinism is neither evangelical nor evangelistic. But there are many kinds of Calvinism; some are as liberal as Arminian liberalism. Neither 'Calvinism' nor 'Arminianism,' as terms, can be used meaningfully without proper definition."²⁰⁷

Arminianism's Five Articles of Remonstrance are as follows:

1. Conditional election on the basis of foreknowledge;
2. Universal atonement limited by man's individual faith;
3. Universal inability of any man to do good apart from divine grace;
4. Prevenient grace which accounts for all good in mankind. This grace may be resisted and made ineffectual by a sinner's perverse will.
5. Conditional perseverance. Though God provides sufficient grace to meet any possible emergency, men may neglect this position and fall from grace to eternally

²⁰⁷ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1967), 60.

perish.²⁰⁸

At the Synod of Dort, Calvinists responded with TULIP, or the Five Points of Calvinism. They are as follows:

1. Total depravity: humans are dead in trespasses and sins before God sovereignly regenerates them and gives them the gift of salvation. (This usually implies a denial of free will.)
2. Unconditional election: God chooses some humans to save before and apart from anything they do on their own. (This opens the question of whether God actively predestines some to damnation or merely leaves them to their deserved damnation.)
3. Limited atonement: Christ died only to save the elect, and his atoning death is not universal for all of humanity.
4. Irresistible grace: God's grace cannot be resisted. The elect will receive it and be saved by it. The damned never receive it.
5. Perseverance: The elect will inevitably persevere unto final salvation (eternal security).²⁰⁹

"Whether Calvin himself would have agreed with all five is debatable. Reformed theologians and divines (preachers) also generally agreed that part and parcel of the whole system was belief in God's meticulous providence over all-- that everything that happens in nature and history is decreed by God. Any other view such as synergism was equated by most Calvinists with Roman Catholic doctrine. Supralapsarians tolerated infralapsarians but thought that their interpretation of the Calvinist theology was weak at best and dangerously allowed an opening to synergism at worst. Beza tolerated infralapsarianism in Geneva and

²⁰⁸ Joel R. Beeke, *Living for God's Glory*, (Orlando: Reformation Trust Publishing), 50-51.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

even among the faculty of the Genevan Academy."²¹⁰

The five points of Calvinism are not separate points but logically and closely interrelated. From the first point, 'total depravity' to the rest, TULIP forms a coherent logical system. Edwin Palmer observed, "'The Five Points of Calvinism all tie together. He who accepts one of the points will accept the other points."²¹¹ One cannot accept some of the parts without accepting the whole. It was meant to be accepted as a whole or rejected as a whole. This kind of logic makes Calvinism a very authoritarian theological system. Let us examine the five points of Calvinism one at a time.

T: Total Depravity

"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) There are many Scripture verses besides Jeremiah 17:9 that are used to support total depravity. Based on these verses, Calvinists contend that every part of humankind has been corrupted by sin as a result of the fall and remains absolutely powerless as far as the 'salvation is concerned.' Mathematically, humankind's ability to save him/herself is 'zero.' The only possibility therefore for human salvation is God's sovereign grace. This doctrine is naturally closely related to the doctrine of original sin. Calvinism takes Augustine's traducianism, which teaches that Adam's sins are inherited to his descendants, in almost unchanged form. Concerning human depravity and moral inability, Augustinian or Catholic theologians do not deny it. But they believe that human beings can still respond and participate in some form in God's salvation process. Calvinists firmly oppose that idea. For a human being to be able to do something in some form does not reflect total depravity, Calvinists contend. In other words, for the Calvinists, the fall of

²¹⁰ Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 460.

²¹¹ Edwin H. Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1972), 32.

humanity is ‘total’ and humankind is 100% corrupt and depraved in every area of life, incapable of doing any good. Even faith, that is a gift from God, about which Calvinists insist, is a point on which Arminians vigorously disagree. Why do Calvinists stress total depravity so strongly? The original intent is to emphasize the ‘sovereignty of God’ that becomes highlighted when there is nothing humans can do for their salvation. On the other hand, the light around God’s sovereignty seems diminished when there is something humans can do for their salvation.

Is there truly nothing, however, that humans can do for their salvation? One major response involves Revelation 3:20 and its interpretation. “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” Jesus is described as standing outside the door, knocking, and waiting for someone inside to hear and open the door. This image paints Jesus as rather passive, while the humans take much more active role. This picture does not fit well with the doctrine of total depravity. If anything, it seems that the human decision infringes upon the sovereignty of God. To this charge, Calvinists explain that this passage addresses the church members of Laodicea, not unbelievers. However, even if the passage addresses believers and not unbelievers, the question still remains. Is the sovereignty of Christ which is not limited by unbelievers limited by believers? If the believer, for a period of time, has the free will not to accept Christ, then can that believer decide to leave Christ forever? “Whether it is about a believer or an unbeliever, if this image seems to limit Christ’s sovereignty by a human choice, then can this image be accepted by the Calvinist system?”²¹²

²¹² Kwang Eun Shin, *Chonhamujeok Arbangism: [literally, “Almighty Arbangism”]* (Seoul: Poieba, 2014), 129 “Arbangism” takes the word “Calmism” from Michael Scott Horton’s book, *Made in America* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1991) and translated it. Calmism is a combination of Calvinism + Arminianism. Arbangism is a translation of Calvinism and refers to all the weaknesses of Calvinism and Arminianism put together.

Justo L. Gonzales offers his insights as follows: “Calvin is well known for his doctrine of predestination, which many scholars have declared to be the center of his theology. But such an understanding of Calvin's theology is the result of a distortion of perspective produced by later controversies. Nor is this doctrine of predestination, as in the case of Zwingli, a corollary of divine providence. It is significant that Calvin discusses providence in the first book of the *Institutes* and then postpones the question of predestination to the end of the third book, where he is dealing with the Christian life, and just before he moves on to ecclesiology. The reason for this is that predestination is for Calvin above all a practical doctrine, in that it reinforces justification by faith and, at the same time, provides the foundation for ecclesiology.”²¹³ But for many Korean Protestant pastors in the ministry setting, even though they teach total depravity and God’s sovereignty, they do so without conviction , and the whole process ends up being a futile and meaningless exercise.

U: Unconditional Election

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.” (Ephesians 1:4-5)

Christians who share the Gospel always ask this question: Why do some believe while others reject the same Gospel message? Calvinists claim that such matters belong to the sovereignty of God. Believers believe because God enables them to believe, and unbelievers do not and cannot believe because God does not permit them to do so. Then why does God make some to believe? That is because God chose them to be His people before

²¹³ Justo L. Gonzales, *A History of Christian Thought vol. III*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 158.

the creation of the world. Why does God make others not to believe? That is also because God chose them not to be His people before the creation of the world. Here we meet the doctrine of predestination in Calvinism. It upholds that God predestined everyone into those who are to be saved and those who are not, even before we were born. This is called 'double predestination.' The God who predestined some knows who will be saved and who will not be. This is called 'fore knowledge.' Because God predestined, God can foreknow. This is called 'predestination-foreknowledge.'

What is then the reason or the evidence for double predestination? None! That is why it is called an unconditional election. If there is a reason, it can be found in God. Because it is known only to God Himself, for us there is no knowing. It is a mystery to us. Can we still say that God is just and good? In response to such questions, Calvinists, without answering the question, will first say it is not proper to ask such questions. You must not ask such questions. Calvinists will rebuke with quotes from Romans 9:20-21, "But who are you, O man, to talk back to God?" Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?"

Arminians would offer a different interpretation of the text, however. The first principle of Scriptural interpretation, Arminians insist, is 'context.' Romans, chapter 9 through 11, deals with the election of the Gentiles and Israel. Here Paul makes an astonishing claim for his time that Gentiles are included in God's predestination. In response to the Jews who asked, "How can you say that Gentiles are included in God's predestination?" Paul is answering by citing Romans 9:20-21. In other words, Paul was not addressing the non-elect, but to those Jews who insisted that they are the only elect.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Sung Joo Lee, *Arminius Theology* (Seoul: Sungjiwon, 1998), 195-196.

Another question arises. When did God exactly predestinate human beings? Is it before the fall of Adam, or after the fall? ‘Supralapsarianism’ is the view that God predestined humans before the fall, and ‘infralapsarianism’ is the view that God predestined humans after the fall. This matter also relates to the question ‘did God predestinate Adam to fall or not?’ Did God actually cause Adam to sin, or did God leave Adam alone to his free will to sin voluntarily? The question soon leads to the debate of whether God is ever an author of evil or not. In stating God’s sovereignty and human free will simultaneously, an absurd explanation is that God predestined human free will. Laraine Boettner asserts, "The same God who has ordained all events has ordained human liberty in the midst of these events, and this liberty is as surely fixed as is anything else. Man is no mere automation or machine."²¹⁵ This leaves the reader speechless. It is more of a desired belief rather than a logical explanation. When asked how the sovereignty of God and human free will coexist in harmony, Calvinists reply, “It’s a great mystery.”²¹⁶

Arminius presented twenty objections to this supralapsarianism. Some of the objections may apply to different versions of Calvinist belief in predestination, including infralapsarianism. Arminius argued that it is contrary to the nature of the Gospel itself since it treats people as being saved or not saved completely apart from their status of being sinners or believers. They are saved or damned first in God's first decree and only then made believers or sinners. He also argued that this doctrine is a novelty in the history of Christian theology. Furthermore, it is offensive to God's nature of love and to human nature possessing free will. Perhaps Arminius's strongest objection was that supralapsarianism and,

²¹⁵ Loraine Bettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (New Jersey: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1922), 208-209.

²¹⁶ Edwin H. Palmer, 99: Calvinists are fond of using the word, ‘mystery,’ when they find it difficult to answer. It’s their secret weapon. It is used to defend their logical system, and they bring it out when their logic fails. It is one of their power sources to protect Calvinism.

by extension, any doctrine of unconditional election is "injurious to the glory of God" because "from these premises we deduce, as a further conclusion, that God really sins ... that God is the only sinner... that sin is not sin."²¹⁷

Arminius never tired of arguing that the strong Calvinist doctrine of predestination cannot help making God the author of sin, and if God is the author of sin, then sin is not truly sin because whatever God authors is good. Arminius was a metaphysical realist.

When he turned to examining infralapsarianism, Arminius was not much more generous than with supralapsarianism. Even though it does place God's decree of election and reprobation after the creation and the Fall, it nevertheless makes the fall of humanity necessary and God its author.

The Calvinists are loathe to hear God described as an author of sin. Calvin stated, "For even though by God's eternal providence man has been created to undergo that calamity to which he is subject, it still takes its occasion from man himself, not from God, since the only reason for his ruin is that he has degenerated from God's pure creation into vicious and impure perversity."²¹⁸ Calvinism over emphasizes the sovereignty of God even at the cost of damaging human free will. Calvinists are not aware of the dialectic method in the Scriptures that emphasize simultaneously the sovereignty of God and human free will. The Scripture is clear in affirming both the sovereignty of God and human free will.

Jacques Ellul argues that the Scriptures deal with these two matters through a dialectic method. He states,

²¹⁷ Timothy George, *Theology of Reformers*, Nashville: Broadman, 1988, 269.

²¹⁸ John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. tr. by John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), 958.

To define God as omniscient, omnipotent, impassible, imperturbable, eternal, etc., is not to have understood the Biblical revelation. These things might all be said of any kind of God. The God of Biblical revelation, however, enters time and history, bears with the suffering and sin of the race, tolerates its initiates, and limits His own power. He repents, he revokes his judgments, etc. We cannot have the one side of God without the other. Is this a contradiction? Precisely, it is logically insoluble. Yet it creates the Biblical dialectic which means that our relation to God is not a mere repetition, a fixed thing, a ritual, an exact submission, but a permanent invention, a new creation on both sides, a history of love, an adventure whose outcome we cannot know in advance. It is all an incredible revelation of the freedom of God. The one thing does not exclude the other. The whole expresses the dialectical development of the relation in revelation.²¹⁹

If the Biblical dialectic method had been applied in resolving the problem of the sovereignty of God and human free will, the debate between Calvinists and Arminians might have resolved the bulk of their differences.

L: Limited Atonement

“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.” (John 6:37)

For whom did Christ intend to die? Whose sins did Christ actually pay for? Whom did Christ reconcile with God? For whom was Christ a substitute? What was his intent, his purpose, in dying? Was it to save everyone in the world or only those whom God elected? For a long time, orthodox Christians have answered these questions in two different ways. The Arminians said, "Christ died for everyone," whereas the Calvinist would assert, "Christ died for only the elect." The Arminian has taught universal atonement, whereas the Calvinist has taught limited atonement.

Calvinists maintain that limited atonement is a natural extension of the previous two doctrines, total depravity and unconditional election. If Christ shed His precious blood for

²¹⁹ Jacques Ellul, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *What I Believe* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 36-37.

those whom God had not elected to save, then, it is a waste from a purely economic standpoint. Therefore, the natural and logical conclusion is that Christ shed His blood of redemption in a limited way, that is, only for the elect.

The doctrine of limited atonement has historically faced strong oppositions. Can a God of limited atonement also be a God of love and justice? Isn't God just? Did not the Scripture say, "He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous?" (Matthew 5:45). Calvinists respond with a Scripture verse of their own from Romans 9:13. "Just as it is written: Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." God of the Scriptures did choose the Hebrew nation, Abraham, and Jacob. But the Arminians respond with Scripture verses such as, 1 Timothy 2:4, "[God] wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." This verse certainly contradicts the Calvinist's position of limited atonement. Augustine however commented on this particular verse: "Rather, we must understand the Scripture, 'who will have all men to be saved,' as meaning that no man is saved unless God wills His salvation: not that there is no man whose salvation He doth not will, but that no one is saved unless He willeth it."²²⁰ John Calvin also commented on the same verse: "'God will have all men to be saved.' He wrote, 'By this he assuredly means nothing more than that the way salvation was not shut against any order of men; ... Since it clearly appears that he is speaking not of individuals, but of orders of men, let us have done with a longer discussion.'"²²¹

Here I see with the same Scripture text how the Calvinists interpret it, according to their own theological perspective. At times, these efforts seem forced and illogical. The

²²⁰ Augustine, *Confessions and Enchiridion*. Vol. VII of *The Liberty of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), 395. Quoted from Dale M. Yocum, *Creeds in Contrast* (Salem: Schmul Publishing Co., Inc. 1985), 27.

²²¹ *Institutes*, III. xxiv. 16.

limited atonement that states that Jesus did not die for the non-elect means that Jesus is not the Savior of the non-elect. For them, there is no need to believe in Jesus nor do they have the ability to believe in Jesus. The question needs to be asked, is the God of limited atonement truly the God of mercy and God of justice?

As I go deeper into this discussion, I encounter ‘foreknowledge-predestination’ of Arminians. What is it? With the amazing ability to see into long future, God knows who will believe the Gospel and who will not. Calvinists propose ‘predestination-foreknowledge,’ but Arminians support ‘foreknowledge-predestination.’ Arminians reject the notion that God predestined before eternity, with foreknowledge whom God will save and whom God will condemn. Salvation is received by only those who accept God’s grace. Because God is omniscient and omnipotent, God knows through foreknowledge who will accept the Gospel and who will reject the Gospel. God predestined those who will accept the Gospel. This is ‘foreknowledge-predestination.’

Isn’t ‘foreknowledge-predestination’ the same as ‘predestination-foreknowledge?’ No, they are not the same. To answer this question, Arminians use the concept of ‘middle knowledge’ or ‘scientia media.’²²² The middle knowledge is a concept first used by a Spanish Jesuit theologian, Luis Molina (1535-1600). Molina was a Counter- Reformation theologian who opposed the theology of the Reformers. He especially opposed the Reformers’ stance that seemed to deny human free will. He used the middle knowledge concept to support the Council of Trent declarations that affirmed human free will. Molina claimed that Reformers were ultimately making God the creator of evil by weakening the human free will. Molina found a way to sufficiently emphasize the sovereignty of God while simultaneously stressing human free will. This is the concept of the middle knowledge. God

²²² Gook Won Bae, *Prism of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (Daejeon: Daejonggan, 2013), 38

knows not only '*possibilia*' or "what could happen," but also '*futuribilia*,' or "what would happen." Molina called them each 'natural knowledge' and 'free knowledge.' For example, "the shortest distance between two points is a line" is a natural knowledge that has nothing to do with God's intention or will. 'The day of Jesus' return,' however, is a different matter. Only God knows the day of Jesus' return, and that depends on God's will. This is free knowledge. The middle knowledge is the knowledge between the natural and free knowledge. It is not knowledge based on God's nature nor knowledge demanded by God's will. It is knowledge known to God by His outstanding foreknowledge to know what human will choose. It is much like an ability of a chess master to know a novice's next moves. The master chess player knows and can 'foresee' how the novice player will respond to his move. Based on his foreknowledge, the master chess player sets up a trap, which the novice player as if to follow a script falls for. The situation and the condition were set up by the master chess player. But the master chess player never forced the novice player's move. The novice player with his own free will made the mistake that the master chess player had anticipated. The master player only made the situation conducive.

In a similar way, God's ability to foresee the future does not influence human free will at all. Arminians contend that God can foresee how humans will act in a certain way in a certain situation. Even though the human response is under God's providence, the human action is all his own. With such middle knowledge, God creates a certain situation to offer the Gospel, but the decision always depends upon the human free will. And God chooses His children from those who decide to believe in Jesus under such God-made specific situations. In logical sequence, God's choice follows a human decision, but chronologically God's choice precedes the event, so it can be called predestination. Generally, this type of predestination is called 'foreknowledge-predestination.' Arminians insist that 'foreknowledge-predestination' does not infringe upon human free will.

If I follow the logic of the Calvinists, I do not need to evangelize the non-elect nor should I. The problem, however, is that I do not know who the elect and non-elect are. God's predestination is hidden to us as mystery. No one can know of God's choice. But when sinners come to believe in God, God's election is partially revealed. Because of this mystery of election, I must include the non-elect in our evangelism. If limited atonement is true, then it is a truth only to God who alone knows exactly who the elect and non-elect are. For those of us humans who do not know, it is a meaningless truth. Since I do not know who the elect and non-elect are, I must evangelize all. Such a position is taken up by 'practical Arminians.' Even for Calvinists, in order to maintain Calvinism, they must become practical Arminians. In terms of practicality, limited atonement is a meaningless doctrine. It is valid only to God who is omniscient and omnipotent. It is practically irrelevant for humans who live on the earth.

I: Irresistible Grace

"One of those listening was a woman named Lydia who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message"(Acts 16:14)

Previously we have seen Calvinist's claim that the principal agent of faith is not the human but God. In other words, the sinner does not voluntarily believe in the Gospel, but God enables the sinner to believe by sending the Holy Spirit to convict and move the sinner's heart. Calvinists further believe that God has chosen the elect before the creation, before all eternity. This is by God's grace and His absolute sovereign will. By God's sovereignty, God has appointed the sinner to believe the Gospel at the appointed time.

Calvinists point to Paul's conversion event in Damascus in Acts 9:1-9 and the case of Lydia the seller of the purple cloth in Acts 16:11-15 as prime examples of God's sovereignty in the Scriptures. The resurrected Christ seized Saul of Tarsus who was persecuting the

Church and made him an apostle to the Gentiles. It was also God who opened Lydia's heart while she was listening to Paul's preaching. God opens the hearts of sinners who listen to the Word, so that sinners are able to believe the Gospel. This is God's grace. The sinners cannot resist this sovereign grace of God. This grace is given according to God's predestination as well. Those whom God has elected, no matter how much they resist, inevitably believe and are saved. On the other hand, those who are the non-elect, no matter how much they try to believe, end up not being saved. Can any person resist when God gives the saving grace? According to the Calvinists, the answer is 'no'. If so, isn't God using coercion and infringing upon human free will? It would be hard to say that this is not the case. Within Calvinism, humans are no different than a dead corpse. There is no freedom at all to accept or to reject what God has willed.

The Arminian position is different, however. Christ shed His blood of redemption for all humankind. Now it's the human's turn to respond. As depicted in Revelation 3, Jesus stands outside the door and knocks on the door of our hearts. Jesus never breaks the door down and forces Himself in. The painting based on the text shows no door knob on the outside, which implies that Jesus waits for our response, to open the door from the inside. Arminians believe that humans can reject the grace of God. That's why there is an altar call with the invitation, "Will you accept Jesus as your Lord?" after an evangelist's sermon. In Korea, it is not just churches lined with Arminian theology that practice this altar call. Most Calvinistic churches also offer altar calls. Arminians contend that God respects us as persons and therefore gives us room to make personal choices. The fact that God calls Israel in the Old Testament as sons and daughters, and even as the bride, accentuates the very personal nature of the God-human relationship.

The Scripture also records a case contrary to that as well. The primary example is

Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead. How can a dead Lazarus hear Jesus' words, let alone respond voluntarily? The power of Jesus gripped a dead person and irresistibly raised him from the dead. Edwin H. Palmer commented, "When Christ called Lazarus to come out of the grave, Lazarus had no life in him so that he could hear, sit up, and emerge. There is not a flicker of life in him. If he was to be able to hear Jesus calling him and come out of the grave, Jesus would have to make him alive. Jesus resurrected him and then Lazarus could respond."²²³ The God of the Scriptures limits human freedom when God desires. God hardened the Pharaoh's heart. God allowed the temptation to betray Jesus to enter into Judas Iscariot's heart. Both what the Calvinists and Arminians insist on appear in the Scriptures.

P: Perseverance of the Saints

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(Romans 8:38-39)

Perseverance of the saints is a doctrine that states that once you're saved, you're always saved. The salvation accomplished by God's sovereignty cannot be revoked or cancelled suddenly. God is not temperamental or unpredictable. Therefore, a believer's salvation is eternally assured. A saved Christian temporarily may commit a sin. The saved believer is neither perfectly righteous nor incapable of sinning. He or she may even fall away for a time. But the elect always returns to God and is saved because of God's sovereignty and grace. Therefore, the salvation received once lasts for eternity. How should those who abandoned faith be looked upon from the perspective of Christian history? Calvinists answer that those who forsake their faith were hypocrites who pretended to have faith. Their

²²³ Edwin Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1972) 22.

names were not written in the Book of Life before creation. Judas Iscariot falls into this category.²²⁴ The Calvinists claim that apostasy, strictly speaking, is not possible in the light of the doctrine of the perseverance of saints.

This particular doctrine still receives much criticism. The Scriptural evidence seems to collide with this doctrine. There are places in the Scriptures that seem to imply one can lose one's salvation. The primary example is from Hebrews 6:4-6, "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace." This was a stern warning to the Christian community that received the letter about the dangers of falling away. The Calvinists counter that the recipients of the letter were not born again believers, that they only had an outward appearance of being believers. It is not apostasy since they were not saved believers to begin with.

The Calvinists cannot accept apostasy; otherwise their doctrine of the perseverance of the saints would crumble. Calvinists like Lorraine Boettiner contend that the Hebrews text is not a warning against the dangers of apostasy but rather a lesson for the believer to trust deeper in God. "The primary purpose of these passages, however, is to induce men to cooperate willingly with God for the accomplishment of His purpose. They are inducement, which produce constant humility, watchfulness, and diligence. In the same way a parent, in order to obtain the willing cooperation of a child, may tell it to stay out of the way of an approaching automobile, when all the time the parent has no intention of ever letting the child get into a position where it would be injured. When God plies a soul with fears of

²²⁴ Edwin H. Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1972) 22.

falling, it is by no means a proof that God in His secret purpose intends to permit him to fall. These fears may be the very means which God has designed to keep him from falling."²²⁵

Boettiner's argument, however, is not very convincing. Am I to believe that the author of Hebrews mentioned the dangers of apostasy which is not even possible in order to emphasize our need to trust in God? In the history of the Church, there are many evidences that support that apostasy was considered an unpardonable sin. The first three hundred years of the Early Church before the Emperor Constantine, Christians constantly lived under a threat of apostasy, like emperor worship. Since apostasy was a serious sin, the believers were sternly warned against it.

Calvinism denies apostasy and emphasizes eternal security. If anyone falls away from faith, then that proves such a person was not the elect but just a pretender. "Perseverance of saints mean once saved, always saved." Then does the saved person still be saved if he or she commits sin? Of course. What if it's a murder or adultery? It does not matter what kind of sin, the logic follows that a saved person is saved no matter what. Once saved, always saved. Even the greatest human sin is not greater than the righteous merit accomplished by redemption of Jesus Christ. Before the grace of the cross, small and big sins are all treated the same.

Some Arminians accuse Calvinists of giving people moral license to sin by teaching indiscriminately assurance of salvation based on the doctrine of the perseverance of saints. Kwang-Eun Shin points out, "the doctrine of perseverance of saints can turn the Calvinist doctrine of salvation into a license to murder."²²⁶ Then, are the Calvinists in the Korean

²²⁵ Laraine Boettiner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, 195-96.

²²⁶ Kwang Eun Shin, *Chonhamujeok Arbangism, [Almighty Arminianism + Calvinism]* Seoul: Poieba, 2014, 153.

Protestant Churches the only ones who teach assurance of salvation based on the doctrine of the perseverance of saints? Definitely not. When it comes to actual practice of the ministry, there is almost no difference between Calvinists and Arminians in the Korean Protestant Churches. Almost all pastors, regardless of denominations, agree with “Once saved, always saved.” For example, here’s an excerpt from a sermon preached by a former Methodist bishop. The title of the message is “When a saved person sins.” The Scripture text is John 10:28-29. “Salvation is received only by faith, only by grace, only by the merit of the blood of Christ’s redemption on the cross. Salvation is not received by our merits or works. And once you’re saved, you’re always saved. Salvation does not disappear on account of you. John 10:28-29 says, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.” According to this text, the saved believers “shall never perish” and no one can snatch them out of our Mighty Lord.”

The sermon continues, “Even if you committed murder 100 times, there is no sin that cannot be forgiven by the blood of Jesus. If you commit a sin of murder after being saved, then you may die in your body as you receive death penalty by the justice system, you may lose your heavenly reward, but your salvation still remains. David committed adultery with Uriah’s wife Bathsheba. Bathsheba became pregnant, and David tried to conceal this but failed. So David caused his faithful general Uriah to die on the battlefield. David committed the sins of adultery, murder, and abuse of power. But David was still saved at the end.”

“If you bow before another God and worship an idol, those are certain much greater sins than the sins of murder, adultery, and theft. But if you are saved, you do not go to hell because of your sins. King Solomon brought foreign women as wives and concubines and committed idolatry with the foreign gods and idols that they had brought. But because

Solomon was already saved, he did not go to hell. But there is a difference in the reward you receive in heaven, whether big or small, after you die.”²²⁷

The reason why such a large portion of the message has been quoted here is that the preacher is a former bishop in the Methodist denomination, which subscribes to Arminian theology. If a Methodist minister preaches like this, then how would ministers in the Calvinist tradition preach? Why do they preach like this? They do it in order to give their congregation the assurance of their salvation. The assurance of salvation in the Korean Protestant Churches is an assurance based on the doctrine of eternal security. And the doctrine of justification based on the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is misused as a license for self-indulgence and sin, encouraging the believers to sin boldly as their salvation is secured regardless of how they live.

In order to hold the doctrine of the perseverance of saints they choose Calvinism’s doctrine of atonement. And Calvinism, among numerous doctrines on redemption, chooses the doctrine of penal substitution. The one advantage of the penal substitution view is the clarity and conciseness with which it can answer the question, “Why did Jesus have to die?” It can answer, “in order to bear the condemnation (penal) in our place (substitution).” In the latter decades of the twentieth century, both J. I. Packer and John Stott were representatives of the evangelical stance on penal substitution.²²⁸ The books written by Packer and Stott are the most read by Protestant Christians in Korea. In the doctrine of penal substitution, there are two things that satisfy the Korean Protestant Christians. First, there is nothing required for the sinners to do for redemption. Second, the doctrine focuses on the objective facts

²²⁷ Hong Do Kim, *Bulkeidung: A Pillar of Fire* vol. 40 (Seoul: Jungamseowon, 2013), 419-424.

²²⁸ Kelly M. Kapic and Bruce L. McCormack, ed. *Mapping Modern Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 198.

rather than the subjective faith. Such doctrine of redemption combined with the doctrine of the perseverance of saints becomes the best doctrine of redemption for the Korean Protestant Churches. Does the blood of Jesus shed on the cross apply only to our past sins? Or would Jesus' blood forgive our present and future sins as well? Of course, Jesus redeemed us from all our sins of the past, present, and future. This sets up a misapplication as follows: Since Christ forgave all my sins, including my future sins, my salvation is safe and secure regardless of what kind of sins I may commit. Salvation is never revoked or cancelled. Calvinists in support of the doctrine of the perseverance of saints love to quote from Romans 8:37-39. God gave us His one and only Son for us.

Since the doctrines of TULIP are connected as one, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is connected with the doctrine of total depravity. Because humanity is totally depraved and corrupt, man is totally helpless as far as salvation is concerned. If anybody mentions works at all, then there is an immediate criticism and accusation that you are promoting salvation by works, much like the Catholics. There is nothing one can do for salvation, and salvation is offered for free. What is problematic is that the doctrine of total depravity is applied not only before salvation but also after salvation as well. It is used to lessen the burden of sanctification. Even after salvation, phrases like "humans are still sinners" and "to err is human" to justify lack of holy living. The Gospel of Matthew 26:41 is also quoted, "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." They believe that even those who have accepted Christ as Lord, received the Holy Spirit, and experienced the gifts of the Holy Spirit are doomed to moral defeat.

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints naturally connects to the doctrine of unconditional election. Since there is nothing humans can do in regards to salvation, the work of salvation belongs to God alone. This leads Calvinists to monergism. In other words,

predestination is the logical conclusion of doctrine of total depravity. Calvinists love and cherish the words ‘unconditional election.’ They often say “God never forsakes His chosen people.” How does one discern, however, if one self is the elect or the non-elect? There is no room for human participation in predestination. If I understand Calvinism’s unconditional election correctly, I need to wrestle with the question, “Am I God’s elect or not?” The sovereignty over salvation completely belongs to God, hence there is always uncertainty like a fog for the believer. Out of this anguish comes the moral driving force for Calvinism. I will return to this topic later. The reason the Calvinists cherish ‘unconditional election’ is because as humans they are not required to do anything for their salvation. Misunderstood and misapplied, this can lead to unethical and immoral behaviors. This is what happened to Korean Protestant Churches as evidenced by many Korean Protestant Christians in the prison system. Even elders and pastors are in prison. During the military dictatorship years, there were many Christians who oppressed the pro-democracy movements and student protesters. Even today, pastors’ moral standards are not higher than those of church members. The moral and ethical standards of church members, in turn, are often lower than those of non-church goers. At the center of numerous scandals in Korean society, I find Korean Protestant Church members. Today’s Korean Protestant Churches urgently needs reformation, perhaps even more urgently than the corrupted churches of the Middle Ages. Instead of the Korean Protestant Churches worrying about the darkness in their society, the Korean society worries about the corruption in the Korean Protestant Churches.

The universal phenomenon in the Korean Protestant Churches is that ‘justification’ and ‘the doctrine of the perseverance of saints’ are joined together. The reason this thesis uses ‘Calvinism’ and ‘Korean Protestant Churches’ interchangeably is because the understanding of salvation by the Korean Protestant Churches is largely influenced by Calvinism. The number of Korean Protestant Christians in denominations leaning toward

Calvinism is overwhelming, as is also their understanding of salvation in a Calvinistic way. Justification as understood by the Korean Protestant Christians is as follows: It begins with the confession, “I accept Jesus as my Lord.” It is more effective if you make the confession in a public meeting. The logic behind it is that your faith publicly proclaimed is publicly notarized and authenticated. The confession of faith has been witnessed by the crowd in an undeniable objective way and therefore assures its authenticity. The methods may vary. One can simply confess with one’s mouth, raise a hand to indicate acceptance, stand up where one was seated, walk up to the altar to kneel down, and other ways of outward expressions are just as acceptable. The important thing is that the person has made a commitment to accept and follow Christ. The commitment implies salvation, and some call this date a second birthday. This is Korean Protestant Christian’s understanding of justification. If you add anything else, then you are labeled as promoting salvation by righteous works. Salvation is so easy. That’s why it is good news. “And this becomes the Korean Protestant version of ‘indulgence.’”²²⁹

In this process, the place of repentance is very vague. Too much emphasis will lead to ‘salvation by works.’ To do away with repentance, however, contradicts the teachings of the New Testament. Hence, public confession of sin is encouraged. The contents are simple. “Lord, I am a sinner. Please forgive me by the grace of the cross. I believe that I am forgiven.” That’s all it takes to repent. How easy! That’s why it is good news. That is not Scriptural repentance, however.

According to the Church historian, Alan Kreider, until the 3rd Century, the Early Church practiced repentance which included three distinct elements. They are also called the

²²⁹ Kwang Eun Shin, *Chonhamujeok Arbangism*, 39.

3Bs since they all start with the letter ‘B’: Belief, Belonging, and Behavior.²³⁰ In other words, until the 3rd Century, Christians believed that repentance, faith, and behavior were inseparable. It took three years to complete the Catechumenate. It gave enough period of time to test the sincerity of the believer. In early Christianity, repentance meant total transformation of life. This type of repentance became a driving force that changed the Roman Empire.

The Korean Protestant Churches’ understanding and practice of justification are unrelated to such repentance. Justification and salvation are understood as the same. To add works or sanctification to justification would risk being labeled as supporter of salvation by works. Justification is accomplished ‘once and for all.’ It is a declaration and an event which never needs to be repeated. The effect of this one-time legal proclamation is everlasting. It is because justification is God’s absolute declaration which occurs once. It is not a subjective declaration. The singular, immediate efficacy of justification is based upon the redemption of Christ, which was accomplished once and for all. If justification cannot last until the Last Day, then the redemption of Christ, the basis of justification, is not eternal and Christ must continually shed His blood on the cross. It would amount to denying the redemption of Christ as complete. Because Christ’s redemption is eternal, salvation through justification is also eternal. Justification is a verdict declared once and for all based on the righteousness accomplished by the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the justification is neither enhanced by progress toward sanctification nor is it diminished by lack of sanctification. Justification can never be nullified or revoked.

Here I find that there is no place for sanctification in the Korean Protestant Churches’

²³⁰ Alan Kreide, *The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 1.

understanding of salvation. This does not mean that the Korean Protestant Churches do not mention sanctification at all. While the Korea Protestant Churches teach sanctification, it is treated as a separate matter from justification. In other words, justification is essential to salvation, but sanctification is optional. Justification is a definitive, one-time event in the past, but sanctification is a seemingly endless process. It is only justification and not sanctification that is relevant to salvation. One can never tell what level of sanctification one needs to reach before one arrives at salvation. What is the cut line for salvation and how much holiness do I need to achieve before being saved? Anyone who has tried this method quickly realizes that one can never reach the standard of holiness that God demands despite one's best efforts. Luther tried this and was thrust into deep spiritual despair.

The Korean Protestant Churches sadly do not agonize as Luther did, they do not pursue holiness, and they give up being holy, even before starting. If one says "sanctification is relevant to your salvation," that individual is labeled a legalist and as one who supports salvation by works. Most Korean Protestant Christians are quick to respond that sanctification has to do with your heavenly rewards but has nothing to do with your salvation. If you're justified, then you are saved regardless of what kind of sins you may commit, they contend, although it would be a bit shameful salvation. They base this shameful salvation on First Corinthians 3:15, "If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames." The doctrine of salvation that says you can be saved even if it's a shameful salvation is an even better Gospel for Korean Protestant Christians. yet, one can do everything he/she want to do on earth; can enjoy everything, and commit all kinds of sin, yet, without the danger of going to hell following death.. What great news! All you need is Romans 10:10, "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." You only need to believe in your heart the death and resurrection of Christ for your

redemption and confess with your mouth. If you try to accomplish sanctification with your own strength, then that's unbelief. Sanctification is also a gift. Therefore, do not try so hard; that would be pride and unbelief on your part. Do not be grieved over your frequent sins.

If that's the case, then what difference is there between Korean Protestant Christians and the followers of the Salvation Sect? The Salvation Sect is called a cult. The Salvation Sect shrewdly combines the assurance of salvation with the doctrine of the perseverance of saints to nullify sanctification. The Korean Protestant Churches have the same doctrinal system as does the Salvation Sect. Of course, what the Salvation Sect teaches and what the Korean Protestant Churches teach are not exactly the same. However, there are undeniable similarities. Professor Seyoon Kim went as far as to say the Korean Protestant Churches are a 'semi-Salvation Sect.'

Is there then no moral driving force within Calvinism in the Korean Protestant Churches? Yes, there is. Even though the doctrine of the perseverance of saints with "Once saved, always saved" allows moral permissiveness within the Korean Protestant Churches, if the Calvinist doctrinal system is properly understood and followed, there would be no moral corruption. Calvinism, more than any other doctrinal system, makes strong demands for a moral and ethical application. Historically, Calvinism has established very high ethical standards around the world. Max Weber in his book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* stated, "That it (assurance of salvation) was attainable was proved by 2 Corinthians 13:5. Thus, however useless good works might be as a means of attaining salvation, for even the elect remain beings of the flesh, and everything they do falls infinitely short of divine standards, nevertheless, they are indispensable as a sign of election. They are technically, means not of purchasing salvation, but of getting rid of the fear of damnation. In this sense, they are occasionally referred to as directly necessary for salvation

or the *'possessio salutis'* is made conditional on them."²³¹

The ascetic dimension of Christian spirituality is considerably more pronounced in Calvinism than in original Lutheranism. It is especially apparent in this remark of Jonathan Edwards: "Without earnestness there is no getting along in that narrow way that leads to life. ... Without earnest labor, there is no ascending the steep and high hill of Zion.... Slothfulness in the service of God... is as damning as open rebellion."²³²

The British sociologist, Anthony Giddens, summarizes Max Weber's Calvinism by highlighting three points. "Firstly, the doctrine that the universe is created to further the greater glory of God, and only has meaning in relation to God's purposes. God does not exist for men, but men for the sake of God. Secondly, the principle that the motives of the Almighty are beyond human comprehension. Men can know only the small morsels of divine truth which God wishes to reveal to them. Thirdly, the belief in predestination: only a small number of men are chosen to achieve eternal grace. This is something which is irrevocably given from the first moment of creation; it is not affected by human actions, since to suppose that it were, would be to conceive that the actions of men could influence divine judgment."²³³

The consequence of this doctrine for the believer, Weber argues, must have been one of 'unprecedented inner loneliness'. 'In what was for the man of the age of the Reformation the most decisive concern of his life, his eternal salvation, he was forced to follow his path

²³¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2001), 69

²³² Jonathan Edwards, "Treatise Concerning Religious Affections," in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. John E. Smith, Vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 387-388.

²³³ Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism & Modern Social Theory*, Cambridge: University Press, 1971, 128.

alone to meet a destiny which had been decreed for him from eternity.' In this crucial respect, each man was alone; no one, priest or layman, existed who could intercede with God to produce his salvation. This eradication of the possibility of salvation through the church and the sacraments, according to Weber, is the most decisive difference which separated Calvinism from both Lutheranism and Catholicism."²³⁴

The doctrine of predestination brought Calvinists unprecedented inner isolation. This isolation, in turn, further deepened their faith in the assurance of election, resulting in their utmost efforts in their worldly activities as well as confirmation of their faith. Weber's revolutionary suggestion contends that anxiety and lack of assurance of salvation gave birth to ascetic life, and the life of moderation and thrift led to the development of capitalism. And furthermore, Calvinism historically led Christians to higher ethical living rather than moral decay. We know this to be true for 17th century Puritans who practiced a highly ethical life. During the Japanese occupation of Korea in the early 20th Century, the majority of Christians who opposed the idol worship of Shintoism were also Calvinists. Though there can be various historical interpretations, one thing is certain. One cannot say the doctrines of Calvinism always lead to moral corruption.

I have examined the five points of Calvinism so far in this chapter. What was the position of Calvin himself? There can be differences between Calvin's theology and the theology of Calvinism. Calvin belongs to the second generation of the Reformation movement. Calvin was aware that Luther's doctrine of justification was being condemned by the Catholic Church. That partly motivated Calvin to overcome weaknesses in Luther's doctrine of justification and updating the doctrine of salvation by connecting justification

²³⁴ Anthony Giddos, *Capitalism & Modern Social Theology* (Cambridge:Cambridge: University Press, 1971), 128.

with sanctification. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages taught that in order to be saved, one needed to accumulate merit through faith. This type of achievement-based doctrine paved the way to abuses and corruption such as with the selling of indulgences. Hence, Luther fought against works and merits, as represented as the law, and emphasized salvation by faith and the Gospel of grace. But Luther failed to explain the proper relationship between the Gospel and the law as well as faith and good works. Within the Lutheran Church itself, there was an antinomian debate. Luther's doctrine of justification was criticized for treating the law lightly and not explaining sufficiently the relationship between justification and sanctification. In this historical context Calvin suggested the third function of the law and stated that the law was just as important as the Gospel in a Christian's life.

Luther suggested two functions of the law. First is a political function. All human society needs to keep law and order and therefore needs legislation. The law for the Israel nation performed this function by providing rules and regulations. The second function of the law is to make people aware of their sinfulness. This is the role of a tutor that Paul mentions in Galatians 3:23. The function of the law is to help us to realize our sins in order for us to depart from sin and move towards Christ. Luther understood the law and the Gospel in a dialectic way. The deeper we understand our sinfulness through the law, the deeper we can experience the grace of forgiveness of our sins. However this understanding of Luther failed to explain the proper role of the law in the life of a justified believer. Luther explained well that we are liberated from the law through justification. But what exactly is the function of this law in the life of a believer who has been justified? Hence Calvin added the third function of the law. If Luther dealt with the function of the law regarding non-believers, Calvin dealt with the function of the law regarding believers. The law is God's unchanging will and the standard for life of the believer. With the Ten Commandments in the center God's law is the standard for the believers to obey in order to live a sanctified

life.²³⁵

John Calvin understood this third function of the law in connection with Christ and the Holy Spirit. He understood the law from a pneumatological perspective. He believed that when the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, we can understand the law spiritually and be able to obey the law through the power of the Holy Spirit. Calvin taught that after being justified, Christians must obey the law in order to live a sanctified life. The Ten Commandments, for example, speak of God's love and love for neighbors. Calvin believed that the Holy Spirit enters into our lives when we receive Christ and enables us to obey the law. While Luther understood the law and the Gospel in a dialectic way, Calvin had a more unified and holistic understanding of law and the Gospel. Calvin held that it was Christ who gave us the law as well as fulfilled the law. And Christ gave us the Holy Spirit so we can fulfill the law as well. The law is unchanging will of God who not only saves the believers but also leads them to live a sanctified life through obedience to the law.

It is very telling that Calvin, in his work of theological compilation, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, deals with regeneration and the life of sanctification before he deals with justification.²³⁶ He sometimes expresses sanctification with words repentance and regeneration.²³⁷ In his theology, justification or salvation is a product of God's sovereignty and grace. It is not a human accomplishment. Believers must do good works by the help of the Holy Spirit, but those good works are not the cause of justification. As far as justification is concerned, good works have absolutely no value. However, good works are not

²³⁵ *Institute*, II, iiiiv, 4.

²³⁶ Wilhelm Niesel, tran. Harold Knight, *The Theology of Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 130-131.

²³⁷ *Institutes*, III, xiv, xviii.

completely ignored in the doctrine of justification. If good works are disregarded because of grace, does it cause harm to Christ? Calvin gives a very clear answer. “We deny that good works contribute anything to justification, but we demand a life of good works from believers who have been justified.”²³⁸ Calvin in his *Institutes* attacked Osianader who equated justification with regeneration. To say justification is not based upon works is different, however, than to say works are not necessary at all. In other words, although justification and sanctification may be distinguished, they cannot be separated. Justification is by faith alone, but this faith is not bare and empty nor idle and evanescent. As the Apostle James denounced, such faith is no faith at all.²³⁹ True faith always exists with good works. The reason Calvin distinguished faith and works is to prevent people from depending on their own works.²⁴⁰ Calvin was only denying any contribution works had on salvation, he was not denying the value of works themselves. He could not imagine faith without works or justification maintained without works. He stated, “Yet you could not grasp this without at the same time grasping sanctification also. For he "is given unto us for righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30).²⁴¹ Any person who believes to have been justified needs to show by works his justification. In other words, justification based only on faith is not separated from sanctification expressed in good works.

The basis of Calvin’s statements is found in his concept of “union with Christ.” He emphasizes that we are justified by faith. In his view, faith is nothing in itself. It acquires its

²³⁸ John Calvin, “Reply to Sadoleto” in Hans J. Hilderbrand ed. *The Protestant Reformation* (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1968), 153-172

²³⁹ *Institutes*, III. xviii. 8.

²⁴⁰ *Institutes*, III. xvii. 1.

²⁴¹ *Institutes*, III. xvi. I.

value only by its content; that is, Jesus Christ."²⁴² On the basis of a believer's union with Christ by faith, Calvin declares that neither faith and works nor justification and sanctification can be separated.²⁴³ Alister E. McGrath also points out, "Calvin speaks of the believer being 'grafted into Christ', so that the concept of incorporation becomes central to his understanding of justification. Calvin nevertheless preserves an important aspect of Luther's understanding of justification which Melanchthon appeared to have abandoned--the personal union of Christ and believer in justification, which has been retrieved so successfully by the modern Finnish interpreters of Luther. Thus, Calvin speaks of the believers being 'grafted into Christ', so that the concept of incorporation becomes central to Calvin's understanding of justification. The *iustitia Christi*, on the basis of which humanity is justified, is treated as if it were that of humanity within the context of the intimate personal relationship of Christ and the believer. Calvin's polemic against Osiander concerns the fundamental nature, rather than the existence, of the union of Christ and the believer. Where Osiander understands the union to be physical, Calvin considers it to be purely spiritual. The two consequences of the believer's incorporation into Christ are *justificatio* and *sanctificatio*, which are distinct and inseparable."²⁴⁴

"Calvin maintains that salvation is only in Christ, and it is obtained in union with Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit".²⁴⁵ The 'mysterious union with Christ' Calvin

²⁴² *Institutes*, III. xviii, 8.

²⁴³ *Institutes*, III. xiv, 17. See Charles Partee, *The Theology of Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008). Mark A. Gracia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin's Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2008), Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

²⁴⁴ Alister E. McGrath, *IUSTITIAE*, 254-255.

²⁴⁵ Jae Sung Kim, "Unto *Cum Christo*: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Calvin's Theology," (Ph. D. dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998), 43.

mentioned is a spiritual union in Christ through the Holy Spirit. In other words, by the Holy Spirit's sovereign power we can unite mysteriously to Christ. The mysterious union with Christ is spiritual and real union with Christ is through the work of the Holy Spirit. Calvin referred to this as becoming one body and also compared it to marriage. He taught that we receive a double grace of justification and sanctification when we are mysteriously united to Christ. "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."²⁴⁶ Calvin also stated that this double grace can never be separated. Christ came not only for the purpose of justification, but for the two-fold purpose of justification and sanctification. "But another much clearer argument now offers itself. Since faith embraces Christ, as offered to us by the Father- that is, since he is offered not only for righteousness, forgiveness of sins, and peace, but also for sanctification and the fountain of the water of life- without a doubt, no one can duly know him without at the same time apprehending the sanctification of the Spirit."²⁴⁷

To the criticism that the Reformed doctrine of justification disparages works, Calvin responded to Sadoleto in 1540: "Therefore, if you would duly understand how inseparable faith and works are, look to Christ, who, as the Apostle teaches (1Corinthians 1:30) has been given to us for justification and for sanctification. Wherever, therefore, that righteousness of faith, which we maintain to be gratuitous, is, there too Christ is, and where Christ is, there too is the Spirit of holiness, who regenerates the soul to newness of life. On the contrary, where zeal for integrity and holiness is not in vigor, there neither is the Spirit of Christ nor

²⁴⁶ *Institutes*, III, xi, 1.

²⁴⁷ *Institutes*, III, ii, 8.

Christ Himself; and wherever Christ is not, there is no righteousness, nay, there is no faith; for faith cannot apprehend Christ for righteousness without the Spirit of sanctification"²⁴⁸

For Calvin, salvation is absolutely and completely gift of God's sovereign grace. This sovereign grace, however, includes obedience. "It not only enjoins us to refer our life to God, its author, to whom it is bound; but after it has taught that we have degenerated from the true origin and condition of our creation, it also adds that Christ, through whom we return into favor with God, has been set before us as an example, whose pattern we ought to express in our life. What more effective thing can you require than this one thing? Nay, what can you require beyond this one thing? For we have been adopted as sons by the Lord with this one condition: that our life expresses Christ, the bond of our adoption. Accordingly, unless we give and devote ourselves to righteousness, we not only revolt from our Creator with wicked perfidy but we also abjure Our Savior himself."²⁴⁹

Calvin made these arguments in order to give theological basis for overcoming Catholic criticism that emphasis on justification weakens sanctification. He contended when Christ unites with us, the spirit of Christ who is the Holy Spirit indwells us to not only justify us but to sanctify us. The Holy Spirit justifies us through imputation of Christ's righteousness and makes fellowship with Christ possible. If justification is God's legal declaration that treats sinners as righteous, then how can this 'forensic justification' always coexist with 'good works' and 'sanctification' which are very different in nature? Calvin finds the answer in Christ through Christology. God who justifies us in and through Christ simultaneously begins sanctification in and through Christ. The basis for both justification and sanctification is Christ, and the principal agent of justification and sanctification is also

²⁴⁸ Calvin, *Reply to Sadoletto*, 163.

²⁴⁹ *Institutes*, III, vi, 3,

Christ. Calvin's Christological view presents Jesus Christ as our mediator, prophet, the high priest, and king sent to us. While the offices of the prophet, high priest, and king are all significant, it is through the office of the prophet that the other two are validated. There needs to be proclamation of the Gospel through the office of the prophet before the offices of the high priest and king are confirmed through the cross and resurrection. The offices of high priest and king with the help from the office of prophet, therefore, oversee the entire activity of Christ the mediator. Christ our High Priest and King accomplished our 'justification' as our 'High Priest,' and our 'sanctification' is being accomplished by Christ our 'King.'²⁵⁰

“Jesus Christ, the High Priest, first of all makes justification possible. Humans have sinned and cannot appear before God and are under God's righteous curse and wrath. Jesus Christ through His expiation procures for us God's goodwill. This is most essential of Christ the Mediator's redemptive work. Christ has erased our guilt and paid ransom for our sins with His death and sacrifice. Therefore, the true High Priesthood belongs to Christ alone. Jesus Christ's High Priestly duties, reconciling us to God through His death and resurrection, become the basis for our justification. At the same time, Christ appoints as high priests those who have been regenerated and offers their own sacrifices and works to God. Jesus Christ's kingly reign becomes the basis for making humans holy. Christ as King brings through the Holy Spirit what the sinners need the most-- repentance and regeneration. Christ dispenses grace of the Holy Spirit unto us in order for us to transform into the image of Christ. Christ gradually completes the sanctification of those who are regenerated, and Christ thus expands the Kingdom of God. As a result, not only salvation but completion of sanctification falls under the duty of Christ as King. The kingdom of Jesus Christ is a spiritual kingdom and His

²⁵⁰ Alfred Gohler, trans. Jungwoo Yoo, *Calvin's Sanctification* (Seoul: Korea Presbyterian Press, 2001), 104

authority is established by possessing the Spirit of God and having communion with the Holy Spirit.”²⁵¹

Calvin may be called a theologian of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave inspiration to authors of the Scripture, helps readers of the Scripture to understand, and gives grace through the sacraments. Through the work of the Holy Spirit we enjoy Christ and all His benefits. In other words, the Holy Spirit effectively connects us to Christ. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ, and the work of sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, we remain outside of Christ. Calvin defines the Holy Spirit as the Spirit that serves as the channel of God’s dynamic presence.²⁵² The Holy Spirit is a cord that ties us to Christ in a real and effective way. It is the union with Christ through the Holy Spirit that makes possible the righteous life and the sanctified life. “Christ *extra nos*” who works outside of us becomes an objective condition for our salvation. When we are united to Christ through the Holy Spirit, however, Christ’s salvation becomes our subjective event.

There has been almost no acceptance, however, that union with Christ or participation was at the center of Calvin’s doctrine of salvation. But Dennis E. Tamburello in his book, *Union with Christ*, treats Bernard of Clairvaux and Calvin from the perspective of ‘mysterious union.’²⁵³ Tamburello included in his book selected writings from Calvin’s Institutes that share the meaning of “union with Christ.” They are engrafting, communion, fellowship, in the Spirit, spiritual marriage, spiritual union, mystical union, becoming one,

²⁵¹ Ibid., 106.

²⁵² *Institutes*, IV, xvii, 10.

²⁵³ Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism St. Bernard* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 85-101.

union with God, adoption, regeneration, and partakers of Christ, among others.²⁵⁴ He refutes a negative relationship between the traditional Calvin and the mystical Calvin. Tamburello separates mysticism in a wider sense from mysticism in a narrow sense, and he includes Calvin's mysticism in the wider sense. While the narrower mysticism seeks oneness with God directly, the wider mysticism seeks union with God through the Holy Spirit. The union with Christ which Calvin was discussing refers to the union between the head and the body. The union with Christ who indwells in our hearts cannot be explained rationally but must rather be experienced because of its mystical nature. Calvin did not understand this union, however, as the existential union between God and human substance. Calvin did not share the position of Medieval mysticism that believed in the mystical union between God and the holy human substance. Calvin believed in the unity through the Holy Spirit, not direct union. Calvin's mysticism emphasizes personal experience yet at the same time is Christ-centered, ecclesiological, and has a sacramental structure.

Calvin finds the basis of justification and sanctification in the essence of faith, for "faith has essential characteristics of obedience." He explains, 'Faith,' therefore, is always attached to 'sanctification,' which is made up by acts of obedience. He puts in the same category Scriptural ethics, Christ's 'sincere faith,' and Christ's 'obedience' to God the Father. In other words, when a believer through faith unites with Christ, Christ's sincere faith becomes the believer's faith. And together with Christ the believer is enabled to live a life of obedience to God the Father and is transformed into the image of Christ. Although justification and sanctification are inseparable, Calvin distinguished them conceptually probably for the following reason. Justification is God's outward and legal action declaring the sinner righteous and sinless. Sanctification is God's inward and gracious action that

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 112-113.

transforms the sinful nature of Adam's descendants to live a holy life. If justification is a change in status, then sanctification is a change in nature that leads to purification of sin's corruption.

Calvin considered works to be important and explained that God's works are the 'inferior cause' of justification. He explained as follows. "The fact that Scripture shows that the good works of believers are reasons why the Lord benefits them is to be so understood as to allow what we have set forth before to stand unshaken: that the efficient cause of our salvation consists in God the Father's love; the material cause in God the Son's obedience; the instrumental cause in the Spirit's illumination, that is, faith; the final cause in the glory of God's great generosity. These do not prevent the Lord from embracing works as an inferior cause. But how does this come about? Those whom the Lord has destined by his mercy for the inheritance of eternal life He leads into possession of it, according to His ordinary dispensation, by means of good works. What goes before in the order of dispensation He calls the cause of what comes after. In this way He sometimes derives eternal life from works, not intending it to be ascribed to them; but because He justifies those whom He has chosen in order at last to glorify them (Romans 8:30), He makes the prior grace, which is a step to that which follows, as it were the cause. But whenever the true cause is to be assigned, He does not enjoin us to take refuge in works but keeps us solely to the contemplation of His mercy."²⁵⁵

In other words, works are evidence of salvation but not the cause of salvation. Without Christ there can be no true holiness. Works can never be the cause of holiness, but good works can strengthen faith. Therefore, sanctification begins with faith and simultaneously strengthens faith. By emphasizing the simultaneity and inseparable nature of

²⁵⁵ *Institutes*, III, xiv, 21.

justification and sanctification, Calvin attempted to compensate for Luther's failure to connect the two. In order to apply his teachings on justification and sanctification in his ministry, Calvin used the following three methods. First, the grace of justification and sanctification was preached through sermons and guided church members to apply sanctification in their lives. Second, Calvin always educated church members in sanctification on Sundays. To teach justification Calvin used the Apostle's Creed. To teach a life of sanctification Calvin used the Ten Commandments. Thus, Calvin taught both the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of sanctification. Third, Calvin instituted disciplinary punishment in order to encourage the practice of sanctified life. It was also to discourage evil, to punish sin, and to lead a sanctified life.

In the Middle Ages, the word, "calling," (*Beruf*) was applied to only the clergy. However, Luther advocated the priesthood of all believers and saw every occupation as God's calling. This was a huge paradigm shift. While Calvin accepted Luther's teaching on "calling," he gave added emphasis on Christian responsibility toward one's nation, society, and history. Calvin exhorted Christians to live the sacred life in the sphere of the secular life. He also follows Luther's teaching on the relationship between "country and church." Calvin inherited Luther's teaching on the "two kingdoms." He differs on emphasis, however. Luther taught that there are two kingdoms or two worlds, one with Christians under the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, and the other with non-believers under Satan, death, and sin. Perhaps due to this dichotomy, Luther received criticism that the church neglected its responsibility toward the world. Calvin emphasized that the world of nonbelievers was also under the sovereignty of God and taught that Christians have responsibility toward the world and need to live a sanctified life within it. For example, in the case of the city of Geneva, the scene of Calvin's Reformation movement, not only the church community but the entire city-state of Geneva was greatly influenced by sanctified living. Calvin desired Geneva to

become a theocratic city where God's will is realized.²⁵⁶ Vulgar songs, gambling, playing cards, and usury were outlawed; seventy-six people were exiled, and fifty-six people were executed for adultery.

The Korean Protestant Churches are proud to be self-appointed heirs of the Protestant Reformation movement. It is questionable, however, whether the Korean Protestant Churches really possess the essential spirit and theology of the Reformation. The Reformation theology, itself, is not well-established within the Korean Protestant Churches. They have often interpreted Reformation theology in a self-serving way. Hence, there is a significant difference between the Korean Protestant Churches' understanding of Reformation theology and the Reformation theology itself. There is also a considerable difference between 'Calvinism' and 'Calvin's theology' as understood by the Korean Protestant Churches. It is time to correct this error. The Korean Protestant Churches need to correct their understanding of Reformation theology in order to properly apply it to their church life and ministry.

²⁵⁶ Young Sang Ro, "*Union with Christ and Sanctification*", *Korea Presbyterian Journal of Theology* 22(Seoul: Center for Studies of Christian Thought and Culture, 2004), 191-215.

Chapter 5

Doctrine of Salvation according to John Wesley

The last chapter in this thesis focuses on the soteriology of John Wesley. The essential themes of Wesleyan theology centers on the doctrine of salvation. Having grown up in the fourth generation Wesleyan faith, I listened every year to Aldersgate Sunday preachers talk about Wesley as an evangelist who had an assurance of salvation through personal spiritual experience. After I entered the seminary, however, one professor presented Wesley as the origin of liberal theology while another saw Wesley as belonging to the theology of Neo-Orthodoxy, which rose in response to liberal theology. Neo-Orthodoxy lists Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Soren Kierkegaard, and Karl Barth as its theologians. After my graduation from the seminary, the theological atmosphere in the Korean Methodist Church was one of pluralism. Wesley's concept of 'prevenient grace' was especially applied not only in interfaith dialogue with other religions but also in positively affirming the possibility of salvation within other religions. I left Korea and went to North America to study in a seminary in the early 1980's. There Wesley was introduced as a 'Folk Theologian'²⁵⁷ and a master of 'practical theology.' Still others pointed out that European continental Pietism and Puritanism influenced Wesley and tried to see him in a Calvinist light. Many Korean immigrant churches on Aldersgate Sunday would talk about Wesley's mother, Susanna Wesley, her Puritan background, and the Puritan spiritual formation of her children. As a result, many Korean immigrant churches in America understand Wesley as one who has been shaped by Puritan theology. After I returned to Korea after twenty years of Korean church ministry in the U.S., the Korean Church was actively pursuing mission

²⁵⁷ Albert C. Outler, "John Wesley: Folk-Theologian," *Theology Today*, vol. 34, 2 (1977): 150.

outreach to China. The door that was closed for half a century for mission in China had an opening due to an improved relationship between the two countries. As a superintendent in the Korean Methodist Church, I was entrusted with mission outreach to China and had traveled to China on several occasions. Soon I realized that the Church in China saw Wesley as the representative of Arminianism. The problem was that the Chinese Church misunderstood Arminianism as ‘liberal Arminianism’ and ‘Pelagian rationalism’ and as a ‘semi-heresy.’ Most Korean missionaries who went into China were from Calvinistic churches, and when they taught about Arminianism, they taught a distorted version.

Starting in 2006, the World Methodist Council and the Korean Methodist Church began to actively engage in a dialogue with the Catholic Church. In 2008, Professor David Hempton’s book, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*²⁵⁸ was translated into Korean. As a result, some began to see Wesley as the founder of Pentecostal movement. 2015 brought in the no-visa entry agreement between Russia and Korea, opening greater communication with the Eastern Orthodox Churches. These situations are what I have experienced regarding Wesley so far.

As I have described my diverse experience with Wesley, others will see Wesley through their own particular perspectives. This will especially be true when it comes to Wesley’s theology and doctrine of salvation. They can be read in a number of different ways, depending on one’s particular theological persuasion. Wesley is seen as a Protestant, a Pietist, a Catholic, a High Church cleric, and a Low Church evangelist. As the founder of Methodism, John Wesley is already highly respected by Methodists and Wesleyans all over the world. Here I will explore Wesley’s theology and apply it to the Korean Church’s *Sitz im Leben* and deal especially with the problems related to the doctrine of salvation. Wesley

²⁵⁸ David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

never separated theology from the real life of Christians and refused speculative or abstract theological work. "Theology, in his understanding, was to be preached, sung, and lived."²⁵⁹ He was not a theologian's theologian, but a folk theologian. He intentionally avoided speculative approach and worked hard to preach easily understandable sermons. He believed in delivering 'plain truth for plain people' and can be called either a theological pastor or a pastoral theologian. Schleiermacher held that practical theology is the crown jewel in the theological endeavor. Whatever practical theology may have meant for Schleiermacher, for Wesley it was the marrow of divinity: Hence, 'practical divinity' is perhaps the best possible description for Wesley's orientation.

John Wesley established a theology that was firmly based on unshakeable assurance of justification by faith. Even though he stood in the line of the Protestant Reformers, he was a theologian who wisely overcame the weakness of Protestantism, the tendency toward antinomianism. By boldly accepting the strengths of the Catholic Church, Wesley found points of contact between Catholics and Protestants and reconciled some of the conflicts. In Wesley we find that much of the tensions are released between law and Gospel, faith and holy living, grace and works, grace as favor and grace as empowerment, justification and sanctification, instantaneousness and process, the universality of prevenient grace and its limited saving actualization, and divine initiative and human response. Wesley described the difficult relationship between and faith and works as 'faith working through love' (Galatians 5:6) I view John Wesley as an excellent theologian who utilized dialectical tensions to resolve theological difficulties.

Arminianism and Wesley

John Wesley was greatly influenced by Arminianism. I have already discussed in

²⁵⁹ Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 21.

Chapters 3 the ‘Five Points of Calvinism (TULIP)’ and the debate between the Calvinists and the Arminians. Why must I bring Wesley into this debate? Wesley inherited Arminian theology and developed it further. Yet, the Korean Protestant Churches have a serious bias against Arminianism and misunderstand Arminianism. In fact, many Christians are ignorant about Arminianism and consequently misunderstand it; some even consider it a heresy. Even though the National Church of the Netherlands misappropriated national authority and condemned Arminianism at the Synod of Dort, in later years the Netherlands, as a nation, officially permitted Arminianism to continue. Harold O. J. Brown, in his book, *Heresies* wrote, “Because the matter of heresy and orthodoxy regarding a doctrine has been decided by local politics and authorities, the true meaning of heresy and orthodoxy have been lost.”²⁶⁰ This was the case in the condemnation of Arminianism. Justo L. Gonzalez also points out that “The Arminian controversy and the resultant Synod of Dort are another episode in the process by which the theology of the Reformation was schematized into a strict orthodoxy.”²⁶¹ Though politically persecuted and labeled as heresy in the country of its origin, Arminianism took roots and flourished on foreign soil, namely England, in the late 16th Century. During the 18th Century, Arminians became two groups, one leaning toward Deism and natural religion, and the other leaning toward Pietism and revivalism. In short, there were Arminians of the head and Arminians of the heart, which later became liberal Arminians and evangelical Arminians. The liberal Arminians fell into Pelagian rationalism. Thus the teaching of Arminius was perverted and distorted; theological liberalism exalted man but denied the man’s need for a Savior.

There is no evangelism in liberal Arminianism, but for entirely different reasons than

²⁶⁰ Harold O. J. Brown, *HERESIES* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, INC. 1984), 280

²⁶¹ Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought. vol. III.* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975) 286

for high Calvinism or neo-orthodoxy. For liberal Arminians, people are not so mired in sin that they need a Savior. Education and the correction of social inequalities are enough to “redeem” individuals from their situations. Evangelism for them is a shallow and unrealistic attempt to solve human problems and is readily dismissed as outdated and irrelevant. The early Methodist movement that John Wesley and Charles Wesley founded represent the evangelical Arminians, the Arminians of the heart. Liberal Protestant thinkers of the 18th and 19th Centuries, including Deists, represent the liberal Arminians.

The Korean Protestant Churches’ understanding of Arminians refers to liberal Arminians. It is regrettable that John Wesley and the evangelical Arminians are lumped together and criticized as heretical. In a thesis titled “What is an Arminian?” John Wesley defended Arminianism from five accusations that were considered the errors of Arminianism.²⁶² The following were the accusations:

First, they deny original sin.

Second, they deny justification by faith.

Third, they deny absolute predestination.

Fourth, they deny the irresistible grace of God.

Fifth, they deny the perseverance of saints.

Wesley responded that the first two of the five accusations had no basis and that Arminians believed more firmly in original sin and justification by faith than the Calvinists. He acknowledged the other three and actively defended them. He emphasized the priority of prevenient grace over free will. After affirming total depravity of man, Wesley advocated

²⁶² John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. x (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 1984), 359-360. It will be cited from this point on as *The Works*.

the restoration by prevenient grace. He stated: “But I do not carry free-will so far (I mean, not in moral things). Natural free-will, in the present state of mankind, I do not understand. I only assert that there is a measure of free-will supernaturally restored to every man, together with that supernatural light that ‘enlightens every man that cometh into the world’.”²⁶³

Although Wesley objected to Calvinism’s predestination and made the differences with the Arminian position clear, he did not oppose everything about Calvinism. He said that he was on the edge of Calvinism when it came to three aspects.²⁶⁴ First, ascribing everything to God’s grace; second, denying all natural will and power that precedes grace; and third, excluding human merit even for things obtained or accomplished through God’s grace. Wesley’s emphasis was always on God’s grace, including prevenient grace, over human free will. He also clarified the ambiguous aspects of Arminian theology and sought to strengthen the weak areas, improving the Arminian thought overall:

First, Wesley emphasized the restoration of free will through prevenient grace.

Second, he made faith the center of religion. “Arminius had released faith from the prison of the decrees, but it remained for Wesley to take the emancipated faith and put it into the very heart of religion.”²⁶⁵

Third, he made clear that salvation is through God’s grace and the response of faith. Hence, human salvation depended entirely on the grace of God that was given freely and without human merit. Grace is the source and faith is the condition of salvation. Hyper Calvinists claimed that the doctrine of justification by faith is a greater problem than the

²⁶³ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 42.

²⁶⁴ Changkyun Mok, *Heresy Debate* (Seoul: Tyrannus, 2016), 298.

²⁶⁵ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology*, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1967, 66.

doctrine of predestination. However, Arminius too taught salvation by grace alone and by faith alone. The theme of Wesleyan theology that defended evangelical Arminianism was also justification by grace through faith. In this respect, there was not “a hair's breadth difference between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield.”²⁶⁶

Fourth, Wesley harmonized God's grace with human free will. Reformers, including Luther and Calvin, rejected merit-based salvation taught by the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages and emphasized salvation by grace alone and faith alone. We cannot deny, however, that in rejecting one extreme and emphasizing the absolute sovereignty of God, they have turned to another extreme of placing responsibility for salvation entirely on God. Arminius is the one who recognized the problem of these two extremes and tried to balance the two. Wesley continued on the same path with evangelical synergism. While subscribing to God's sovereignty, they did not think it was contradictory to believe in God who allowed freedom to humans to choose or reject. They did not, however, claim that humans can be saved by their own decisions, merit, or certain works. To understand God's sovereignty and human freedom together is difficult, but Wesley was determined to bring the two into a dynamic relationship.²⁶⁷ As Albert Outler has noted, Wesley's sophisticated understanding of a graciously restored free will and the presence of prevenient grace separated his theology in an important respect, even from that of Jacob Arminius. For example, "Arminius held that man hath a will to turn to God before grace prevents him," Outler writes, "Whereas, for Wesley, it is the Spirit's prevenient motion by which 'we ever are moved and inspired to any good thing.'"²⁶⁸ And this consideration gives added credence to Wesley's claim, made at the

²⁶⁶ John Wesley, *The Works* (p) vol. x, 359.

²⁶⁷ Thomas A. Langford, 34.

²⁶⁸ Albert C. Outler, ed. *The Works of John Wesley, Bicentennial ed. Vol. 2. Sermons* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987) 157. From this point, it will be noted as *The Works* (B)

Methodist Conference in 1745, that he and his preachers had come "to the very edge of Calvinism" by ascribing all good to the grace of God and by denying nature free will and merit.²⁶⁹

Fifth, Wesley emphasized sanctification, and the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. Although Arminius believed in sanctification, he did not emphasize that it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Wesley, however, added an essential element to the Arminian thought, the work of the Holy Spirit.²⁷⁰

What ultimately divided the Arminians from the Calvinists was the doctrine of predestination. Wesley opposed the doctrine of predestination for fear that the antinomian tendency in the teachings of Calvinism might lead to disregard sanctification. In his sermon 'Free Grace,' Wesley criticized the doctrine of predestination in five ways:²⁷¹

First, the doctrine of predestination is not a doctrine of God, because it makes void the ordinance of God; and God is not divided against Himself.

Second, the doctrine of predestination tends to directly destroy holiness which is the end of all the ordinances of God.

Third, this doctrine tends to destroy the comfort of religion, the happiness of Christianity.

Fourth, this uncomfortable doctrine tends to directly destroy our zeal for good works.

²⁶⁹ George Crift Cell's work *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* is well- known for having championed the thesis that Wesley's theology was similar in some important respects to that of John Calvin. See George C. Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley* (Lanham , MD. : University Press of America, 1984)

²⁷⁰ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, 69.

²⁷¹ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley. 14 vols.* 3rd ed. ED. Thomas Jackson. vol. x. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 373-386. From this point it will be noted as *The Works* (J).

Fifth, this doctrine not only tends to destroy Christian holiness, happiness, and good works, but has also a direct tendency to overthrow the whole Christian Revelation.

In other words, the teaching of predestination not only destroys our zeal for good works, but also cuts off one of the strongest motives for specific acts of mercy, such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and the like.²⁷² For John Wesley, election is not unconditional but conditional, and that condition is having faith in Jesus Christ.

Wesley further criticized such theological tendencies in his debates with John Gill, a prominent Calvinist theologian of the era. Hyper-Calvinists entirely removed human responsibility through predestination, election, reprobation, irresistible grace, and the doctrine of the perseverance of saints. Wesley equated such hyper-Calvinism with Calvinism. In reality, Calvin emphasized sanctification while teaching predestination and taught that justification and sanctification are inseparable and that there is definite human responsibility in perseverance of saints. Hence, what Wesley criticized was hyper-Calvinism, which indeed is harmful theology and needed to be corrected. The problem is that even today many in the Korean Protestant Churches misunderstand hyper-Calvinism as Calvinism and disregard sanctification. Therefore, we must clearly distinguish Calvinism from hyper-Calvinism and correct the wrong teaching. According to Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, “Most of today's Calvinism is 'Arminianized' Calvinism. It is evangelical and evangelistic.”²⁷³ This phenomenon is also pointed out by Korean Calvinist theologians. Professor Myung-Yong Kim states that Calvinism’s doctrine of predestination “caused serious problems. It incorrectly explained predestination as divine determinism or disregard of the human free

²⁷² Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works (B)*. Vol. 3, *Sermons*, 350-351

²⁷³ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, 60

will. Much of the criticism against the doctrine of predestination is justified.”²⁷⁴ Though the name of Arminius is not mentioned, much of Arminius’ thoughts are reflected.

The Process of Salvation

It has been generally accepted that in Wesley’s theology there is one structure, one reasoned way of thinking concerning the process of salvation. Some scholars, however, deny that there really is an order or a framework in Wesley’s soteriology. Theologians like Albert C. Outler, Colin Williams, and Thomas Oden, however, acknowledge that there is an order in Wesley’s theology. Actually, the terminology of *ordo salutis* goes back to the 17th century Lutherans and Pietists who wanted to give theological expression to "how God works in the process of salvation from sin,"²⁷⁵ which included a number of steps along the way such as "vocation, illumination, conversion, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and renovation."²⁷⁶

The shape and order of Wesley’s soteriological language did take form in a very deliberate way nor was a part of the pastoral process. As a pastor, for example, Wesley arranged his hymns in a way that suggest an order of salvation, with different levels of the realization of the grace of God. He also structured Methodist societies such as class meetings, bands, and select societies in a similar pastoral fashion. He also produced a ‘summary sermon,’ as Outler calls it, which takes account of the process of redemption as well as a distinctly Wesleyan way of salvation.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Myong Ryug Kim, *The Present Challenge and Today’s Systematic Theology* (Seoul: Presbyterian Theology School Publishers, 1997), 62-83

²⁷⁵ Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 116

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 116.

²⁷⁷ Albert C. Outler, *The Works (b), vol. 2. Sermons*, 2:153 ff., "The Scripture Way of Salvation."

I find it helpful to follow the order of salvation identified by Kenneth J. Collin who summarized it as follows: “In my judgment, then, the Wesleyan way of salvation is not some amorphous process, marked by barely distinguishable increments of grace; instead, it highlights several significant points along the way, realization of grace, some of which are, and remain for Wesley- instantaneous. The model I propose, then, in the light of these consideration, tracks the development of sinners as they move from prevenient, to convincing (legal repentance), to justifying, to regenerating, to assuring (initial), to convincing (evangelical repentance), to entirely sanctifying, and ultimately to assuring (full) grace. Furthermore, this journey has two distinct foci: the elements that pertain to justification, and those that pertain to entire sanctification.”²⁷⁸

The reason I prefer Kenneth J. Collins’ “journey of salvation” according to Wesley is that Collins viewed Wesley’s doctrine of salvation with two distinct pillars: justification and entire sanctification. Collins states, “Furthermore, in the absence of any distinctive framework, the element of “responsible grace”²⁷⁹ to which Maddox refers as the principal window on Wesley's doctrine of salvation, is unable, by itself, to give an accurate indication of what changes are in store for believers as they are progressively renewed in the image of God. As such, this element lacks the explanatory as well as the predictive power of an order of salvation. Actually, the element of “responsible grace” is not an order at all, providing a sense of orientation, but a dynamic that represents Wesley's understanding of divine/human cooperation within the context of grace. In short, “responsible grace” is an aspect of Wesley's soteriology, and an important one at that, but it is hardly the whole.”²⁸⁰ Since the

²⁷⁸ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 188.

²⁷⁹ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994).

²⁸⁰ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 187.

Wesleyan journey of salvation has all of the Protestant elements, Catholic elements, and ‘the processive nature of the *via salutis* as well as its instantaneous elements, it shows the conjunctive nature of salvation.

The Image of God

According to Wesley, the great purpose of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God and to restore the true holiness that was lost due to the sins of our ancestors. Theodore Runyon describes Wesley’s theology as the theology of ‘new creation’ and views as the starting point God’s image being renewed. ”The cosmic drama of the renewing of creation begins, therefore, with the renewal of the *imago Dei* in humankind. This is the indispensable key to Wesley's whole soteriology. Despite the importance in his own experience of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith mediated to him by the Moravians, he distanced himself from their identification of salvation with justification alone.”²⁸¹

Salvation is participating in God’s new creation by restoring the image of God that was destroyed through the Fall in the Garden of Eden. This salvation is not accomplished in an instant but completed over a long process. I will examine in this dissertation how Wesley understood God’s image, for God’s image and salvation have deep connection in Wesley’s understanding of salvation. In fact, God’s image is at the heart of Wesley’s anthropology. Most of the sermons that represent Wesleyan theology deal with the doctrine of salvation. And many of those sermons often use the phrase ‘image of God.’²⁸² After considering this, I will continue to examine Wesley’s doctrine of salvation by looking at the long process of

²⁸¹ Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 12

²⁸² The following sermons contain messages on “the image of God.” “The Image of God”; "Awake, Thou that Sleepest"; "Justification by Faith"; "The Righteousness of Faith"; "The Witness of our Own Spirit"; "The Repentance of Believers"; "The Lord Our Righteousness" "Sermon on the Mount, II" ;"Original Sin"; "The New Birth"; "On the Fall of Man" etc.

maturing to perfection in Christ through prevenient grace.

1) The Natural Image

Wesley believed that humans are carriers of God's image in three ways, as the natural image, the political image, and the moral image. The first of these, the natural image, consists of those capacities that allow us to enter into conscious relationship with God. Jesus as God is Spirit, so the image of God is spirit. And as spirit the image is endowed with understanding (or reason), will (or volition), and freedom (or liberty).²⁸³

2) The political Image

The political image is based on Genesis 1:28 and a theological reflection of God as the Ruler of all creation. God not only created everything under heaven and earth but rules over them as well, and Adam who was created in the image of God has been entrusted with the care of the earth as God's representative. The political image is the second way in which humanity reflects its Maker. God endowed humans with faculties for leadership and management, to be "vicegerent on earth, the prince and governor of this world." Humanity, which carries the political image of God, was given the special responsibility of being "the channel of conveyance" between the Creator and the rest of creation, so that "all the blessings of God flowed through him" to the other creatures.²⁸⁴

3) The Moral Image

The moral image is the third characteristic of the image of God. According to Wesley, the moral image is the chief mark of the human relationship to God. Yet it is the image that can most easily be distorted. For him, the moral image means human righteousness and holiness. When God created humans, they were not only made in

²⁸³ Theodore Runyon, 14.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 16-17.

natural image but also as righteous and holy beings. If the natural image highlights the functions “to do” in order for our souls to carry out acts of love, the moral image emphasizes the functions “to be” in order for us to become righteous and holy beings. For Wesley, moral image means much more than a normal relationship between God and man. The moral image is the moral nature or condition of humanity.

Wesley saw the moral image as the defining difference between human beings and other creatures. According to him, the inferior creatures have their own intellect, emotions, and certain freedom. Before the Fall inferior creatures used those faculties according to the order of creation. But the difference is this: “Man is capable of [communion with] God; the inferior creatures are not. We have no ground to believe that they are, in any degree, capable of knowing, loving, or obeying God. This is the specific difference between man and brute; the great gulf which they cannot pass over.”²⁸⁵

Wesley states, “Adam, in whom all mankind were then contained, freely preferred evil to good. He chose to do his own will, rather than the will of his Creator. He “was not deceived,” but knowingly and deliberately rebelled against his Father and his King. In that moment, he lost the moral image of God, and, in part, the natural: He commenced what is unholy, foolish and unhappy. And in Adam all died.”²⁸⁶

When Adam disobeyed God, the natural image was not completely lost, but the moral image was. Theodore Runyon said it this way: “If the natural and political images are indeed distorted and corrupted in humans, it is the moral image that is most totally effaced. With the breakdown in the relationship to the Creator, the characteristics of the

²⁸⁵ *The Works (J)*, vol. vi, 244.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.

image are transformed into their opposite. Instead of reflecting God they reflect the very image of the devil. (cf. Rom 1:25)”²⁸⁷

This is important in understanding Wesley’s doctrine of salvation. When Wesley mentions “restoration of God’s image” in discussing human salvation, he is not referring to the natural image or the political image but rather the moral image. In other words, he means the restoration of human holiness. He believes that Adam’s sins were inherited by humanity morally and spiritually. In the same way, the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Savior is passed on to humanity. Wesley believes, however, that this is done only to declare us ‘righteous’ and to ‘forgive’ us. It does not make us ‘holy’ nor does it ‘sanctify’ us. This position makes Wesley different from other Reformers. Yet he stands on the same ground on natural human total depravity with Augustine, Luther, and Calvin.

Prevenient Grace

What ultimately distinguishes Wesley from other Reformers is the concept of prevenient grace. He said the following: “For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called nature conscience. But this is not natural: It is more properly termed, preventing grace. Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth but for the call of man.”²⁸⁸

Like other Reformers, Wesley believed in total depravity and irresistible grace.

The difference between Calvinists and Wesleyans is at what point in the *via salutis*

²⁸⁷ Theodore Runyon, 21.

²⁸⁸ Thomas Jackson, *The Works()*, vol. 6, 512

irresistible grace occurs. Calvinists believe that irresistible grace is given for sanctification. For Wesley, it is prevenient grace that "waiteth not for the call of man."

The difference is important.²⁸⁹

The initiating work of the Holy Spirit as manifested in prevenient (and other) grace removes "all imagination of merit from man," while at the same time it increases human ability and, consequently, human responsibility as well. Wesley affirms, 'God worketh in you; therefore you can work...God worketh in you; therefore you must work.' This means that Wesley's understanding of grace, different in some respects from that of other Protestant leaders, issues in a thoroughgoing synergism, that is, a vision of divine/human cooperation. Nevertheless, this carefully articulated synergism avoids Pelagianism because the initiative in the process of salvation is clearly from God. Precisely because God has previously acted and continues to do so, humanity must act and improve the considerable grace of the Most High."²⁹⁰

Since Wesley taught a doctrine of original sin similar in many respects to the Protestant Reformers, he obviously denied that human beings possess natural free will. In other words, apart from grace, humanity is mired in sin and incapable of choosing God on its own. Roman Catholicism, however, and in a way similar to Eastern Orthodoxy, contended that although free will had been weakened by the fall, it had not been extinguished or lost. However, what kept Wesley's theology clear of semi-Pelagianism, as he faced Rome on the one hand, and from determinism (the elimination of moral responsibility) on the other, as he faced Luther and Calvin, was the affirmation that a certain measure of free will is supernaturally restored by the Holy Spirit based upon the work of Christ, to all people who,

²⁸⁹ Kenneth J. Collins, 44.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

apart from such a restoration, are not free, in terms of salvation.

It should be apparent by now that although the Reformers and Wesley all agreed on a doctrine of total depravity, the basic configurations of their theologies remain distinct, due to different conceptions of grace. Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace allows him to hold together, without any contradiction, the four elements--total depravity, salvation by grace, human responsibility, and the offer of salvation to all. "The theologies of Calvin and Luther, on the other hand, can only hold the first two motifs together, and their doctrines of predestination and election explain why all will not be saved."²⁹¹

Croft Cell analyzed Wesley from Calvinist perspective and stated that Wesley was closer to Calvin's doctrines of original sin, justification, and sanctification than to the doctrines of England's Anglican Church or Arminian synergism.²⁹² He claims that Wesley's human experience of faith was entirely the work of the Holy Spirit and therefore very Calvinistic.²⁹³ Cell further comments that Wesley also understood all human good works as the work of the Holy Spirit, and he contributed to ecumenical theology by combining Luther and Calvin's justification with the Catholic sanctification. Yet, Cell incorrectly analyzed that Wesley placed the concept of perfection in holiness under the doctrine of predestination.²⁹⁴ Allan Coppedge strongly criticized such interpretation by Cell. Coppedge pointed out that while William Cannon and Herald Lindstrom interpreted Wesley as synergistic, Cell interpreted Wesley as monergistic. Coppedge explains that the interpretation of monergism is possible if you approach the issue from the doctrine of God, but the interpretation of

²⁹¹ Kenneth J. Collins, 45.

²⁹² George Croft Cell, *The Discovery of John Wesley*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1935), 19-21.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 270-271.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 362.

synergism is possible if you approach it from an anthropological perspective. It was incorrect, Coppedge comments that Cell tried to understand Wesley's prevenient grace and the doctrine of perfection only through the perspective of God's sovereignty and predestination. He points out that because God has already given free will as a possibility for choice, it must be seen as God's sovereignty that allows humans to possess such freedom and act responsibly. This comprehensive mutual relationship between God's sovereignty and human freedom must be understood.²⁹⁵

Randy Maddox in his book, *Responsible Grace*, introduces Cell as one who saw Wesley as a monergist and a believer in salvation by God's energy, and Cannon as one who interpreted Wesley as a synergist. Maddox understood Wesley as one who emphasized responsible grace. The reason why God took the initiative to approach man through prevenient grace was to enable man to will and to do God's work. Because God is working, so must we. Because God is working, we, too, are able, Maddox states. Wesley was a believer in evangelical synergism.²⁹⁶ For him, the test of Christianity was the following two things: "Without God's grace we cannot be saved, and without our participation, God's grace cannot save us."²⁹⁷ The Wesleyan concept of grace is a combination of the Protestant concept of grace with a downward perspective, which sees grace as God's supernatural gift given freely under God's sovereignty, and the Catholic concept of grace with an upward perspective that sees grace which demands human responsibility and moral participation. Randy Maddox's interpretation of Wesleyan doctrine of salvation with the key words, "responsible grace" is an insightful attempt. Wesley was emphatic that God was entirely

²⁹⁵ Allan Coppedge, *John Wesley in Theological Debate*, (Wilmore, Kentucky: Wesley Heritage Press, 1987), 266-269.

²⁹⁶ Randy Maddox, 91-92.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

responsible to bestow prevenient grace, and this emphasis overcomes the trappings of Pelagian synergism and Calvinistic determinism. In the work of God's salvation of humans, Pelagius saw God's participation as 50% and human participation as 50%, while Calvin saw God's participation as 100% and human participation as 0%. For Wesley, it was 100% participation by God by the fact that the entire process of salvation is a gift of God, given through God's absolute sovereignty and, at the same time, 100% human in that without responsible human participation, God's grace would be made ineffective. What is important is that while Wesley was completely pessimistic when it came to human nature, he was very optimistic when it came to God's grace.

Repentance

In Wesley's order of salvation there is repentance. He taught two types of repentance, legal repentance and evangelical repentance. While Luther and Calvin included repentance and faith in Christ under justification, Wesley understood repentance as a step before justification. In other words, if justification is a door to religion, then Wesley saw repentance as the front door to justification. Legal repentance is full realization of sin through the law's teaching and commands and coming to repentance by the natural man. Evangelistic repentance is not only realizing the sin but turning the heart from sin to holiness and experiencing transformation through trusting Christ entirely. If legal repentance is related to the believer's first realizations of a sinful self, then the evangelistic repentance includes the transformation of the soul after justification and new birth, with sins having been washed away and being wholly sanctified.

So important was the proper teaching of repentance for Wesley that he referred to it

as one of "our main doctrines."²⁹⁸ However, repentance, valuable as it is, Wesley said, is neither the door of religion nor religion itself, but simply "the porch of religion."²⁹⁹ Wesley reveals that repentance goes far beyond conviction of sin: "First, by repentance you mean only the conviction of sin. But this is a very partial account of it. Every child that has learned his catechism can tell that forsaking of sin is also included in it, ...living on obedience to God's will, when there is opportunity; and even when there is not, a sincere desire and purpose to do so, ... and a faith in God's mercies through Christ Jesus."³⁰⁰ Wesley focused on three aspects of repentance; conviction or self-knowledge, poverty of spirit, and rejection of self-righteousness and self-justification.

For, in the same breath that Wesley spoke of repentance, he also spoke of "works suitable for repentance," which are nothing less than outward expressions of inward contribution and grace: "Forgiving our brother, ceasing evil, doing good, using the ordinances of God, and in general obeying him according to the measures of grace which we have received."³⁰¹

In emphasizing 'works suitable for repentance' before justification, Wesley carefully reasoned theologically to avoid the Catholic performance-based works righteousness. In some sense, Wesley says, 'repentance' and 'works suitable for repentance' are essential for justification but not in the same sense as faith and not in the same degree as faith.³⁰² The fact

²⁹⁸ Rupert E. Davies, ed. *The Works of John Wesley, vol. 9, The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 227

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 227

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 178

³⁰¹ Gerald R. Cragg, ed., *The Works of John Wesley, vol. 11, The appeals to men of reason and religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 106

³⁰² Gerald R. Cragg, 117.

that only faith can make man righteous means that for justification, faith is needed approximately, but ‘repentance’ remotely, and ‘works suitable for repentance’ even more remotely. Through such expressions, Wesley emphasized ‘faith alone’ was essential for justification while simultaneously highlighting human preparation and participation for justification. Standing firm on Reformed theology that we are justified by faith alone, Wesley at the same time tried to overcome the weakness of Reformed theology, namely the antinomian tendency, by emphasizing repentance and works suitable for repentance.³⁰³

Justification

Wesley’s Aldersgate experience in 1738 has a strong connection to Luther. Wesley went to a society meeting of the Moravian Church members, who were Lutheran pietists at Aldersgate Street. While listening to Luther’s preface to the Romans being read, his felt his heart strangely warmed. While many interpretations for his conversion exist, it is most appropriate to view that Wesley’s conversion occurred because of Luther’s theology of justification by faith. John Wesley’s younger brother Charles had a conversion experience earlier by the influence of Moravian pastor Peter Bohler. John also received spiritual counseling from Peter Bohler. Before 1738, John Wesley often confused ‘justification’ with ‘sanctification’. He had thought that life of piety and mercy was a condition of righteousness rather than the result of righteousness. After the Aldersgate conversion experience, however, Wesley began to believe that one cannot bear fruit of righteousness until after justification. In his sermon, ‘New Birth,’ he differentiates ‘justification’ as the work God does for us and ‘sanctification’ as the work God does in us. Justification is ‘forgiveness of sins of the past,’ and for Wesley, this was possible because of righteousness of Christ Jesus. The

³⁰³ Heong Kyu Kim, "The Place of John Wesley in Church History," in: *Korean Systematic Theology Collected Writings, vol. 13*, 139-170.

righteousness of Christ is imputed and makes the believer righteous when he trusts in Christ. Soon after his conversion, Wesley organized the Peter Lane Society with Peter Bohler. Wesley realizes that “Luther neglected sanctification by over emphasizing justification, and Catholics neglected justification by over emphasizing sanctification.” After visiting the Moravians at Herrnhut, who were Lutheran pietists, Wesley began to criticize *sola fideism*, quietism, imputed justification, and antinomianism that he saw in Lutheran Moravians. From that point on, Wesley used less and less of the word ‘imputed.’ It is because Luther-Calvinist antinomians interpreted ‘the imputation of Christ’s righteousness’ as passive slavery. Some Calvinists in 18th Century used ‘the imputation of Christ’s righteousness’ as a cloak to give up sanctification. British Moravians in particular included sanctification in justification by expanding ‘the forgiveness of sins through imputed righteousness’ to ‘freedom from sin through infused righteousness.’ As a result, they fell victim to spiritual elitism by believing that ‘sinless perfection’ was the sign of conversion.

Stephen Gunter wrote the volume, *The Limits of Love Divine*, in which he treats Moravians who disregarded good works as a means of grace and their antinomian debates. In this book Gunter points out that Wesley realized that over emphasizing *sola fide*, *sola fideism*, quietism, and antinomianism were not healthy, and interpreted that ‘sola’ did not mean ‘solely’ but ‘primarily.’ Wesley said, “Faith is the primary reality in Christian experience but not its totality.”³⁰⁴

While Wesley avoided the *sola fideism* of Luther, he was a Protestant theologian through and through who believed ‘faith alone’ was a singular necessity sufficient for justification. For him, faith is the one condition that is required immediately, indispensably, and absolutely. In this sense, he emphasized that justification was not a result of progressive

³⁰⁴ W. Stephen Gunter, *The Limits of 'Love Divine.'* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1989), 69

human efforts but God's supernatural gift. There is no difference in this regard to Calvin who emphasized God's absolute sovereignty. Wesley's doctrine of salvation includes both immediacy and process. The immediacy highlights a Protestant strength, the actualization of grace and God's free gift given by God's absolute sovereignty regardless of human merit. The process emphasizes human preparation and responsible participation to receive God's grace, a Catholic strength.

New Birth

One who repents receives justification by faith, is declared by God to be righteous, and is born again. Wesley says justification according to Scriptures means pardon, or forgiveness of sins. Through the atonement of Christ, God forgives all sin. (Romans 3:25)³⁰⁵ The sole requirement to receive justification is faith that trusts in God who makes sinners righteous. It is trusting and being confident that God forgave our sins and will forgive our sins, and that God brought us into his favor on the basis of death and suffering of Christ and His merits.³⁰⁶ Those who are justified by faith experience new birth, the transformation of the inward person. Wesley explains the relationship between justification and new birth as follows:

"If any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed

³⁰⁵ Thomas Jackson, *The Works(J)*, vol. 5, 57. The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he "showeth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of sins that are past." This is the easy, natural account of it given by St. Paul, throughout this whole epistle. (*Works*, vol.5, 57).

³⁰⁶ Thomas Jackson, 61. But on what terms, then, is he justified who is altogether ungodly, and till that time worketh not? On one alone; which is faith: He "believeth in Him that justifieth the ungodly." (*Works*, vol.5, 60.) ; The only instrument of salvation is faith (whereof justification is one branch); that is, a sure trust and confidence that God both hath and will forgive our sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favour, for the merits of Christ's death and passion.

fundamental, they are doubtless these two, - the doctrine of justification, and that of the new birth: The former relating to that great work which God does for us, in forgiving our sins; the latter, to the great work which God does in us, in renewing our fallen nature. In order of time, neither of these is before the other; in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also "born of the Spirit;" but in order of thinking, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts."³⁰⁷

If justification removes the guilt, then the new birth is an event of being born anew from God. If justification occurred *extra nos* or outside of us, for us, as a relational and legal change in our relationship with God, then the new birth occurs *in nos* or inside of us as an actual change, experiential and inward transformation. Justification changes our relationship from being enemies of God to reconcile children of God. The new birth begins the restoration of God's image in our inward person.

Then what changes occur to justified persons? The immediate result of justification is God-given peace and joy on account of God's glory. God's love drives out the evil within us and at the same time transforms our hearts into the heart of Christ. The sin, however, is not eradicated but temporarily stopped and can come alive again by temptations. As Paul confessed in Romans 7, there exist two opposing forces within the inner person. Wesley said the following regarding this situation:

" They cannot deny, that, although they still feel power to believe in Christ, and to love God; and although his Spirit still witnesses with their spirits, that they are children of God:"

³⁰⁷ Thomas Jackson, *The Works(J)*. vol. 6, 65-66.

yet they feel in themselves sometimes pride or self-will, sometimes anger or unbelief.”³⁰⁸

Despite the presence of such conflict and contradiction within, the inward person who has been justified and born again begins the gradual and progressive work of sanctification. Through the aid of the Holy Spirit, he/she is able to control and overcome behaviors of sinful nature. The more the individual dies to sin, the more the person is able to live unto God. It needs to be noted that Wesley separated the new birth and sanctification as distinctively different. For Luther, good works was a natural fruit of justified Christians, so there was no need to separate the new birth and sanctification. But, for Wesley who emphasized sanctification, the new birth was like a pathway to sanctification.

According to Wesley: “Third inference which we may draw from what has been observed is that the new birth is not the same as sanctification... This is a part of sanctification, not the whole: it is the gate to it, the entrance into it. When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness, begins; and thenceforward we are gradually to ‘grow up in Him who is our Head’.”³⁰⁹

Wesley’s unique contribution is that he not only was interested in ‘justification’ and ‘forgiveness,’ as the 16th Century Reformers were, but that he was also interested in ‘new birth’ and ‘sanctification’ as were the Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox Christians. Justification and new birth must be understood in continuity. Justification means relative change and new birth means real change. The new birth is not a life-long process like sanctification but an instantaneous event that occurs in a moment and only the entrance door into sanctification.

³⁰⁸ Thomas Jackson, 45.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 74.

The Christian Assurance

Kenneth J. Collins stated, "One of the principal contributions of Methodism to the broader Christian community during the eighteenth century was its doctrine of assurance."³¹⁰ The detractors of Wesley in the 18th Century called him 'enthusiast' or 'fanatic' because Wesley talked about inward evidence of assurance of salvation. The assurance Wesley talked about has two emphases: "It pertains not only to a sense of forgiveness, but also to freedom from the law of sin and death, to the assurance that one is a child of God. In other words, assurance encompasses both justification and the new birth, freedom from the guilt and the power of sin."³¹¹

The two witnesses of salvation are the witness of our own spirit and the witness of God's Spirit. If the former is the subjective side of this experience of grace, then the latter is the objective ground of Christian assurance. Thus, Wesley avoided two extreme dangers in assurance of salvation. First, when the believers ignore the fruit of the Spirit or rational evidence in favor of the Spirit's immediate signs, they can fall into an unhealthy state of obsession or fanaticism. Second, excessive fear of the Spirit's immediate signs, however, can cause believers to focus only on the fruit of the Spirit or other indirect evidence, resulting in legalism or superficial religion. The Moravians in England who yielded great influences in the early years of Wesleyan theology misunderstood 'conversion' with 'perfection of Christian.' Wesley distanced himself from such misunderstanding, clearly teaching that early assurance includes freedom from guilt (justification) and freedom from the power of sin (new birth) but not freedom from the presence of sin (entire sanctification

³¹⁰ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 131.

³¹¹ Ibid.

or perfection).³¹² Therefore, Wesley tried to present the doctrine of justification by faith not as ‘complete assurance,’ but as ‘a measure of assurance.’

Sanctification

Sanctification for Wesley was very significant in that it was a process of completely restoring the image of God. Those who are born again through justification are led into sanctification and move toward Christian perfection. Sanctification is a process of recovering the image of God for those who are justified and have experienced the new birth. They are led by the Holy Spirit, and this gradual process takes over a lifetime even though it begins in a moment.

Regarding sanctification Wesley stated, “A child is born of a woman in a moment, or at least in a very short time: Afterward he gradually and slowly grows, till he attains to the stature of a man. In like manner, a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterward grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”³¹³

Sanctification is central to Wesley’s doctrine of salvation. In a letter addressed to Rev. Thomas Church, Wesley compared the Christian faith to a house saying, “Repentance is the porch of religion, faith is the door of religion. And sanctification is the religion itself.”³¹⁴ To call sanctification Christianity itself tells us just how important sanctification was to Wesley and his doctrine of salvation. The duality of Wesleyan synergism applies to

³¹² Heongkyu Kim, 163.

³¹³ Thomas Jackson, *The Works(J)*, vol. 6, 75.

³¹⁴ Our main doctrines, which include all the rest, are three: that of repentance, of faith, and of holiness. The first of these we account, as it were, the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third, religion itself. (*Works*, vol.8, 472).

sanctification as well. “The responsibility to retain the grace of God already gained” is given to humans. The born again Christian does not remain as he is but must work out his salvation “with fear and trembling” as Paul encouraged in Philippians 2. Wesley interprets this “fear and trembling” as follows:

“It is easy to see that these strong expressions of the Apostle clearly imply two things: First, that everything be done with the utmost earnestness of spirit, and with all care and caution.... Secondly, that it be done with the utmost diligence, speed, punctuality, and exactness.... How easily may we transfer this to the business of life, working out our own salvation! With the same temper, and in the same manner, that Christian servants serve their masters that are upon earth, let other Christians labour to serve their Master that is in heaven.”³¹⁵

To accomplish sanctification, continual repentance, self-examination, and training in holiness through the means of grace are necessary. Wesley said, "By "means of grace" I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.”³¹⁶

Wesley divided the means of grace in two areas, instituted means of grace and prudential means of grace. The former are also called the works of piety, and the latter are also called works of mercy. Instituted means of grace include prayer, Bible study, Holy Communion, fasting, and spiritual meetings like band or class. Prudential means of grace include ‘doing no harm,’ doing good, and attending upon all the ordinances of God such as

³¹⁵ Ibid., 510.

³¹⁶ Thomas Jackson, *The Works*, Vol.8, 187.

the public worship of God, the Lord's Supper, Bible study, and fasting.³¹⁷ The believer within the church community can actively participate in these means of grace and grow in faith and maintain a holy life that longs after God. For Wesley, the means of grace by themselves did not hold any powers nor could they be considered as merits before God. The means of grace were only tools for spiritual renewal by receiving righteousness and true holiness and for spiritual growth. They are not and were never meant to be efforts to gain salvation through works.

The doctrine of entire sanctification was the most controversial of Wesley's doctrines, and for good reason, for it carries the doctrine of sanctification to its logical conclusion, to the complete renewal of the human creature, insofar as that renewal is possible under the conditions of finitude. Albert Outler suggests that this doctrine of entire sanctification has been misunderstood not only by Wesley's opponents but also by his friends and followers because they have read it from the Western Latin translation as *perfectio* (perfected perfection), an achieved state of perfection, rather than as *teleiotes* (perfecting perfection) in the Eastern tradition, "a never ending aspiration for all of love's fullness." It is the latter tradition which, according to Outler, informed and undergirded Wesley's position."³¹⁸

As in justification, Wesley says 'evangelical repentance' and 'works suitable for repentance' are also needed before entire sanctification. However, repentance and works themselves are not the agents of sanctification. Evangelical repentance and works suitable for repentance are remotely necessary, whereas faith is proximately needed. If legal repentance and works suitable for repentance were needed for justification, evangelical repentance and the works suitable for repentance are all the more needed for entire

³¹⁷ Lovett H. Weems, Jr., *John Wesley's Message Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 41-43.

³¹⁸ Theodore Runyon, 91.

sanctification. As explained for justification, Wesley again says they are necessary not in the same sense as faith, yet crucial for entire sanctification to take place. Although evangelical repentance and works suitable for repentance are essential, they themselves do not sanctify. Wesley is thoroughly Protestant in insisting that only the grace of God is the sole condition of sanctification. The concepts of immediacy and process are also included in sanctification. Again, the brilliance of Wesley is that he kept the balance between the two, between process and actualization, gradual process and immediacy. Thus, Wesley was able to overcome the weakness of Calvinism that only emphasized irresistible sanctification by God's sovereign grace and the limitation of the Catholic Church that only emphasized the gradual process and underlining human merit.

Christian perfection according to Wesley is perfection in relative nature, perfection in motives and the purity of intention. This state of perfection still allows for all human limitations like human mistakes, ignorance, weakness, and the possibility to be tempted. By no means is this an absolute perfection but a relative perfection and points to a believer's relationship of union with Christ in perfect love. Wesley in his sermon, 'On Perfection,' reveals his own thoughts:

And, first, I do not conceive the perfection here spoken of, to be the perfection of angels... The highest perfection which man can attain, while the soul dwells in the body, does not exclude ignorance, and error, and a thousand other infirmities... What is then the perfection of which man is capable while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is complying with the kind of command, "My son, give me thy heart." It is the "loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind." This is the sum of Christian perfection: It is all comprised in that one word, Love. The first branch of it is the love of God: And as he that loves God loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets:" These contain the whole of Christian perfection.³¹⁹

³¹⁹ Thomas Jackson, *The Works (J)*, vol. 6, 411-413.

Wesley refused static perfection. Just because one has arrived at the state of perfection, he does not passively remain there but must continue to be sanctified. For this reason, Wesley emphasizes 'impartation' over 'imputation' in the doctrine of sanctification. He believed that entire sanctification could be achieved in this world whereas Catholics and Reformers believed that it could be done either in purgatory or only in the afterlife in heaven. While the distinct possibility of entire sanctification is present to all the children of God, from pastoral point of view Wesley saw that it is only achieved at the moment of death. Wesley acknowledged that even those who through entire sanctification have achieved Christian perfection could backslide into sin. For these reasons, even after Christian perfection, the blood of Christ's redemption was still needed.

The Full Assurance of Faith

We have looked at assurances that are given after justification. Let us now examine the assurances given after entire sanctification. Wesley explains in "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection": "I can know it no otherwise than I know that I am justified. Hereby know we that are of God, in either sense, by the Spirit that He hath given us. We know it by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit."³²⁰

The Holy Spirit gives evidence of sanctification just as the Spirit gives evidence of justification. These evidences appear as the direct witness and the indirect witness. For direct witness, Wesley points out, "As, when we were justified, the Spirit bore witness with our spirit that our sins were forgiven; so, when we were sanctified, He bore witness that they were taken away."³²¹ In a similar fashion, Wesley explores these differences in terms of the transition from a babe in Christ, to a young man, to a father: "A natural man has neither fear

³²⁰ Thomas Jackson, *The Works (J)*, vol. 11, 420.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 402.

nor love; one that is awakened, fear without love; a babe in Christ, love and fear; a father in Christ, love without fear.³²²

In the Spirit's indirect witness, justification and sanctification also show an important difference. Wesley describes the fruit of the Spirit that follows the entire sanctification as "love, joy, peace, always abiding; by invariable longsuffering, patience, resignation; by gentleness, triumphing over all provocation."³²³ And to the question, "But what great matter is there in this? Have we not all this when we are justified?" Wesley replies, with some measure of astonishment:

"What, total resignation to the will of God, without any mixture of self-will? gentleness, without any touch of anger, even the moment we are provoked? love to God, without the least love to the creation, but in and for God, excluding all pride? love to man, excluding all envy, all jealousy, and rash judging? meekness, keeping the whole soul inviolably calm and temperance in all things? Deny that any ever came up to this, if you please; but do not say, all who are justified do."³²⁴

It is the completeness, the thoroughness of the work, then, to which Wesley appeals as well as to the constancy of its fruit-bearing that are evidence of the effectiveness of God's entirely sanctifying grace. "If any deny the witness of sanctification and occasion disputing in the select society," Wesley warns, "let him or her meet therein no more."³²⁵

³²² Wesley, NT Notes, 638, quoted from Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 304.

³²³ Thomas Jackson, *The Works (J)*, vol. 8, 393.

³²⁴ Thomas Jackson, *The Works (J)*, vol. 11, 422.

³²⁵ John Telford, ed. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, 8 vols.* (London: Epworth Press, 1931), vol. 5, 112.

Final Justification

Wesley's order of salvation is not an end in itself, but the purpose is to enjoy "life with God throughout all eternity." In his thought, soteriology and eschatology are intimately connected. Indeed, the *via salutis* does not end abruptly at the end of entire sanctification; instead it is the bridge, the way, which will transport the redeemed to eternity, to the life that is to come. With the notion of a final justification in place, and kept theologically separate from initial justification, Wesley took great pains to underscore the necessity of holiness, works, and obedience to the moral law as the conditions of justification at the judgment seat of Christ.

In 1790, Wesley reiterates this theme in a slightly different way in his sermon "On the Wedding Garment," and writes: "The righteousness of Christ is, doubtless, necessary for any soul that enters into glory. But so is personal holiness too, for every child of man."³²⁶

Put another way, as does Wesley in this sermon, the righteousness of Christ "entitles us" to heaven; personal holiness "qualifies us" for it. "Without the righteousness of Christ," Wesley reasons, "we could have no claim to glory; without holiness we could have no fitness for it."

Concerning the necessity of works for final justification, Lindstrom maintains that this conditional element is "already present in the Conference Minutes of 1744." On the one hand, Wesley emphasized the impossibility of good works prior to justification, and on the other, for the necessity of good works for final salvation. By all accounts, Wesley felt confident that this was appropriate. Good works prior to justifying faith is not informed by sanctifying grace and therefore cannot be good. Only good works as the fruit of justifying

³²⁶ Albert C. Outler, *The Works(B), Sermons, vol. 4*, 144

faith is good. Put another way, by means of this distinction, Wesley highlighted no human achievement or merit, as was mistakenly supposed, but the sanctifying grace of God, which informs the fruit of justifying faith.

In other words, Wesley realized that the children of God, as those whose hearts have been renewed through the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, will, given any length of time, do works of charity, mercy and the like. Accordingly, if these works are not present, then one can only conclude that "faith working by love is not present as well and, therefore, neither is salvation."

Sanctification, then, though not the basis of initial justification, is the basis of final justification, not because works form an independent basis for a claim on the goodness of God, but because such works is the evidence of a lively and gracious faith. Given these considerations it really was unfair to read Wesley's soteriological thought through the interpretive lens of Trent. Wesley's theology not only began in grace, but it culminated there as well. It highlighted not human prerogatives but the bountiful grace of God.³²⁷

Distinctions in Wesley's Doctrine of Salvation

Christian Perfection

The ultimate purpose of Christian sanctification is Christian perfection. Wesley reveals that books he read in his 20's had a great influence on him. They are Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, Jeremy Taylor's *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying*, William Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*.³²⁸

Even after his Oxford days and during missions to Georgia, the Aldersgate

³²⁷ Kenneth Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, 204.

³²⁸ Thomas Jackson, *The Works(J)*, vol.11, 366-67.

experience, the beginning and expanding of the Methodist movement, sanctification, and Christian perfection are the features that remained as central interests in Wesley's ministry and theology. For example, Wesley preached eighteen sermons on Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." He preached 50 times on Hebrews 6:1, "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity." This shows just how important the topic of Christian perfection was to Wesley. Among his sermons, 'Christian Perfection' and 'On Perfection', and the 1776 thesis, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" are indispensable resources for understanding Wesley's thoughts on Christian perfection.

I have mentioned in the Introduction Professor Jung Young Lee's "both/and" dialectic method. We need to apply to Wesley's theology the "both/and" logic rather than the "either/or" logic. If we select only one or another as the focus in Wesley's theology and apply "either/or" argument, then Wesley's theology cannot be properly understood and will be distorted. Kenneth J. Collins explained the Wesleyan order of salvation in two distinct foci, justification and entire sanctification. If we set 'justification' or 'Christian perfection' as the only focus, we will be generalizing that which is only a part of Wesleyan thought. When we apply "both/and" argument, however, the full impact of Wesley's theology is revealed. While "either/or" emphasizes the discontinuity, "both/and" emphasizes discontinuous continuity. "Either/or" brings exclusivity, but "both/and" brings inclusivity.

Generally Wesleyan theology is explained with focus on the doctrine of salvation, with the order of salvation as a long journey of prevenient grace, repentance, justification, newbirth, sanctification, and perfection. Wesley's theology, however, possesses three pillars: simplicity of intention, justification experienced at Aldersgate, and Christian perfection. The Aldersgate experience of 1738 formed his concept of justification and decisively influenced

Wesley's theology. Faith for him was no longer intellectual acceptance to certain propositional truths but trust and assurance in Christ as an experiential reality. Wesley realized that when Christ died for humanity, Christ died "for me." He was no longer a 'nominal Christian' but a 'real Christian.' This experience, however, is not the only pillar of Wesley's theology. The 'simplicity of intention' from Oxford experience of 1725 and the Aldersgate experience formed a discontinuous continuity. Furthermore, his concept of 'Christian perfection' must also be read in continuation to simplicity of intention and justification in order to properly understand his theology.

During the Oxford days, Wesley leaned more to the seminary rather than reality, to reason rather than experience, to Catholic emphasis on sanctification rather than the Protestant emphasis on faith alone, to responsible participation through impartation rather than passive reception through imputation, and to a gradual process rather than instantaneous experience. In other words, he believed sanctification was the condition for justification. Wesley's interest in 'simplicity of intention' goes back to 1725. The following is his recollection:

"In the year 1725, being in the twenty-third year of my age, I met with Bishop Taylor's *Rules and Exercises of Holy living and Dying*. In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected: that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God; all my thoughts, words and actions; being thoroughly convinced there was no medium, but that every part of my life (not only some) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself; that is, in effect, to the devil."³²⁹ The simplicity of intention took hold of Wesley's thought from early on and continued after the Aldersgate experience and functioned as an important concept in the doctrine of Christian perfection. A

³²⁹ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London: Epworth Press, 1952), 5.

case could be made that in the doctrine of perfection Wesley's concern was mainly for perfection of intention, for focusing and purifying dedication and commitment.³³⁰ Wesley in his booklet, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, begins his teaching on the doctrine of Christian perfection by explaining 'the simplicity of intention.' 'The simplicity of intention' is the basis for Christian perfection.

Wesley's claim that the state of perfection is not a sinless state is not a contradiction of his concept of justification. To the question, "But still if they live without sin, does not this exclude the necessity of a Mediator? At least, is it not plain that they stand no longer in need of Christ in His priestly office?" Wesley answers, "Far from it. None feel their need of Christ like these; none so entirely depend upon Him. For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with, Himself. Hence His words are equally true of all men, in whatsoever state of grace they are: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. Without (or separate from) Me ye can do nothing."³³¹

The 'either/or' argument of "is it justification or perfection?" can distort Wesley's thoughts. Justification and perfection are in a relationship of discontinuous continuity. To explain Christian perfection, Wesley uses the metaphor of the vine. To the question, "does perfection exclude all weakness, ignorance, and mistakes?" he gives the following answer: "For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap drive from its own root, but, as was said before, like that of a branch, which, united to the vine, bears fruit; but, severed from it, is dried up and withered."³³²

³³⁰ Theodore Runyon, 223.

³³¹ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 44.

³³² Ibid.

In other words, Wesley's perfection is not perfection away from justification but perfection that continually demands justification. Wesley makes this clear. "We understand hereby, one whom God hath 'sanctified throughout, in body, soul, and spirit'; one who 'walketh in the light' as He is in the light; in whom is no darkness at all: the blood of Jesus Christ His Son having cleansed him from all sin."³³³ According to Wesley, even when one reaches Christian perfection, the necessity for Christ's redemption does not end because of human limitations. Wesley clearly acknowledges the original sin. He said, "Sin is entailed upon me, not by immediate generation, but by my first parent."

Wesley does, however, distinguish Christ's grace before and after Christian perfection. Christ is needed, first for reconciliation with God, second for maintaining the grace. "They do not need Him to reconcile them to God afresh; for they are reconciled. They do not need Him to restore the favour of God, but to continue it. He does not procure pardon for them anew, but "ever liveth to make intercession for them"; and "by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified"(Hebrews 10:14).³³⁴

The word 'perfection' used by Wesley can cause misunderstanding to some and indeed was a cause of many questions and debates. One needs to be cautious, for what Wesley meant by 'perfection' is not the same level of perfection with God. Wesley makes clear his meaning and use of the word 'perfection' in his sermon, 'Christian Perfection':

"Christian perfection, therefore, does not imply (as some men seem to have imagined) an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations. Indeed, it is only another term for holiness. They are two names for the same thing. Thus, every one that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect. Yet we may, lastly, observe that neither in this

³³³ Ibid., 29.

³³⁴ Ibid., 74.

respect is there any absolute perfection on earth."³³⁵

To the question, "What is Christian perfection?" Wesley answered, "Loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love."³³⁶

The perfection Wesley sought in this world is not absolute perfection but perfection of intention. Therefore, while intentional sins may be avoided, the possibility for unconscious sins exists. It is a state of perfection that coexists with ignorance, mistakes, temptations, and weaknesses. Wesley saw entire sanctification not as a static state but continually progressing active state. "Wesley rejected the idea of a static perfection that would not admit of a continual increase and advance as one improves the rich grace of God. Thus, there is no place in Wesley's theology for the notion that "one has arrived," spiritually speaking. Those whose hearts have been made pure by the blood of Christ must continue to grow in knowledge, grace, and gifts, but they will not grow into purity since the heart has already been purified. Christian perfection, so understood, is not static but dynamic, and it bespeaks of the richest measures of holy love."³³⁷

Even those in the state of perfection continue to need God's grace and must continue to grow toward perfection. Those who have arrived at Christian perfection must throw away bad dispositions, evil impulses, evil desires, and sinful habits and live the life of perfect love. They overcome sinful desires and selfish life-style in order to live the transformed and holy life. They focus on God's glory and will, with the simplicity of intention they intentionally

³³⁵ John Wesley, Vol. 6, 5.

³³⁶ Ibid., Vol. 11, 394.

³³⁷ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 300.

focus on God, they possess the heart of Jesus Christ to imitate after Him, and they love God and neighbors with all their hearts. Wesley affirmed this in the latter part of his sermon on Christian Perfection.³³⁸

Theodore Runyon pointed out that to expect Christian perfection in this life is a key to Methodist piety and devotion and its distinguishing feature. Because Methodists have ‘perfection’ as the goal for their Christian life, active and mature sanctified life can take shape. If there was no goal of perfection, gradual and progressive sanctification will be impossible.³³⁹ Like Paul’s confession in Philippians 3:12-14, the faith that does not claim to have already obtained sanctification but pressing on toward the prize of God’s calling became the driving force for 18th Century Methodist movement and revival.

More to the point, Christian perfection goes beyond the issue of the power of sin to the presence of sin. Mature Christians are free from evil thoughts. Thus, if the heart is no longer evil, Wesley reasons, then thoughts involving ill will, lust, envy, and the like will no longer be present in the heart. Those perfected in love, in whom dwells the mind that was in Christ, are now free from evil temper. To use Wesley's own words written in 1776, the believer experiences "a total death to sin."³⁴⁰ Notice that the difference between imputation and impartation is evident here, and whenever the leading motif in the discussion is sanctification, whether initial or entire, it is the theme of impartation that characteristically predominates. Entire sanctification, then, is love replacing sin, holy love conquering every

³³⁸ See: Thomas Jackson, *The Works (J)*, vol. 6, 19.

³³⁹ Runyon, *The New Creation*, 97. "The anticipation of Christian perfection in this life was therefore a key element in Methodist piety and lent to it its distinctive character. The goal gave shape to the process. Remove this end and gradual transformation would be undercut as well."

³⁴⁰ Thomas Jackson, *The Works (J)*, vol. 11, 401.

vile passion and temper.³⁴¹

The greatness of the early Methodist movement was its great zeal for sanctification and perfection and the life of love. This is clearly evident from ministries of love by Methodists in the English society of that time. They include helping the poor, orphans, widows, elderly, and the homeless, prison ministry, medical service, abolitionist protests, and providing education. Wherever they were, they were the ‘caring Methodists’ helping the poor and the weak. “Methodists fed, clothed, healed, educated, and preached.” The reason why the Methodist movement did not stay as personal holiness movement or within the church walls, but entered the society in a transformative way, is because of Wesley’s understanding of salvation that those who are justified by faith live sanctified life and move toward perfection.

Holistic Salvation

Wesley’s doctrine of salvation is holistic. He did not separate personal sanctification and societal sanctification but understood them holistically. This theological understanding undergirds the Methodists as they are actively involved in social issues as well as in matters of personal holiness. Wesley also critically accepted and unified different theological views and doctrines. Therefore, Wesley’s soteriology does not lean on one side or the other but keeps the critical balance. His integration is not indiscriminate mixture but based on the Scriptures and tradition. It is harmonization of different church traditions and theologies.

Wesley who lived as a pastor of Church of England his entire life was basically a conservative evangelical that emphasized repentance, conversion, salvation by faith, and sanctified life. He was such a completely Scripture-centered minister that he called himself

³⁴¹ Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley*, 298-302.

homo unius libri, a man of one book. Wesley and his successors were sometimes ridiculed as ‘Bible-bigots’ and ‘Bible-moths.’ While Wesley accepted tradition, reason, experience, and the authority of doctrines of the Church of England, he made the authority of the Scriptures supreme. In 1972, Outler first suggested the ‘quadrilateral,’ which represents Wesleyan theology. It is an indicator that shows Wesleyan theology’s broad appeal and harmony. Within Wesley’s theology, Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience are organically connected to mutually secure and bring checks and balances. In other words, for Wesley the Christian faith is revealed in the Scriptures, confirmed by the tradition, made alive by personal experience, and affirmed by reason. Wesleyan theology is distinct from the Roman Catholic Theology in that it affirms the absolute authority of the Scriptures as well as its superiority. It is also different from the Protestants in that it emphasizes tradition. Wesleyan theology differs from the Church of England steeped in rituals in that it values experience. In emphasizing reason, it also distinguishes itself from Moravian’s quietism or emotional enthusiasm. In summary, Wesleyan theology, by emphasizing the priority of the Scriptures, prevents the abuses in the past like how the Catholic Church made tradition and doctrine absolute. Tradition helps us look back to the inheritance from the past and enriches our faith, something Protestants sorely need. Reason helps us to discern and protects us from indiscriminate mysticism, fanaticism, and superstition. Experience helps us maintain a religion of the heart set on fire and keep a distance from cold rationalism. Wesley, as ‘reasonable enthusiast’, made a great contribution to his successors to protect them from extreme tendencies and to seek theology of balance, harmony, and unity.

It is quite helpful to hear Outler’s words regarding Wesleyan theology: “The old disjunction between "evangelical" and "catholic" is no longer a fruitful polarity and the only conceivable Christian future is for a church truly catholic, truly evangelical and truly reformed. John Wesley- as an evangelical with a catholic spirit, a reformer with a heroic

vision of the Christian life created by faith matured in love, a theologian who lived in and thought out of Scripture and Christian tradition, and who brought all his judgments to the bar of experience and reason- this Wesley offers a treasure to the church of tomorrow that will leave it the poorer if ignored.”³⁴²

Wesleyan theology is not an ‘either or’ theology but connectional theology that creatively integrates two opposing concepts. Thus Wesleyan theology suggests a conjunctive paradigm that combines and reflects the head with the heart, nature and grace, theology and church, text and context, and the individual and society.

For Wesley, the completion of salvation is achieved by faith and works. He firmly believed that the start of salvation is accomplished by faith alone, but that the completion of salvation is accomplished by faith and works. The essential condition for salvation is faith, but the sufficient condition for salvation is faith and works. In this regard, he integrates the faith of the Reformation (justification) with the Catholic good works (sanctification) and opened a door for ecumenical dialogue between Protestants and Catholics. Because of these doctrinal characteristics, Wesleyan soteriology can help facilitate unity between the churches.

The integrity of Wesleyan soteriology arises from Wesley’s wide theological spectrum. He understood Augustine’s doctrine of original sin, prevenient grace, and free will. But he also understood well the Reformed theology’s teaching on God’s absolute sovereignty and grace as well as human powerlessness as sinners. Wesley also heeded the Arminian teaching on free will that emphasized human response, decision and responsibility. Synergism and concept of sanctification toward perfection were learned by Wesley from

³⁴² Kenneth E. Rowe, ed. *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1976), 32-33.

Catholics, Church of England, and Eastern Orthodox Church. Within Wesley's doctrine of salvation, many dimensions of salvation and its elements coexist critically and are integrated. Hence Wesleyan soteriology can be useful in dialogue between Protestants and Catholics, as well as between conservative and liberal theologians. Because of this theological background, it was possible for Lutherans and Catholics to participate in the 'joint declaration on the doctrine of justification' at 2006 World Methodist Conference.

Korean Church and Eastern Orthodox Christianity

While the Western Church, especially the Protestants with the Reformed tradition focuses on 'justification,' the Eastern Orthodox Church emphasizes 'deification.' Wesley shares with the Eastern Orthodox Church's soteriology in that he, while standing firm on the Reformed tradition of justification by faith, advocated for 'Christian perfection' beyond 'justification.' The Western Church emphasizes the moment of salvation through forgiveness of sins, while the Eastern Orthodox Church views salvation as a long process and as participation in the divine through deification. Wesley's soteriology views salvation as justification and the long journey enabled by prevenient grace toward Christian perfection. Professor Hoo-Jung Lee has been studying the theology of Eastern Orthodox Church with deep interest.³⁴³ He claims that Wesley's doctrine of salvation coincides with Eastern Orthodox Church's soteriology that centers on deification. According to him, true religion for Wesley does not stop with forgiveness of sins, but through regeneration by the Holy Spirit, moves toward renewal of the image of God and new creation; in other words, to be filled with divinity by entire sanctification. Here the word 'deification' does not mean humans actually becoming gods but achieving 'true humanization.' In Eastern Orthodox

³⁴³ Hoo-Jung Lee, Hong-Ki Kim, Sung-Ahn Im, Hee-Soon Kwon, ed. *A Historical Interpretation on John Wesley* (Seoul: Methodist Theological Seminary Publishing Company, 1995), 193-223

theology, even after attaining deification, humans do not escape human nature. Deification does not erase the human characteristics. Even after deification, individuals remain individuals. Peter remains Peter, and Paul remains Paul, and so on. Each individual holds onto his or her unique personality and identity. Deification preserves both God and man. Christian perfection too is not absolute perfection but humans ‘participating in God’s nature.’

In his definition of theosis, Anastasius of Sinai (7th Century) insists upon the same distinction: “Theosis is the elevation to what is better, but not the reduction of our nature to something less, nor is it an essential change of our human nature- That which is of God is that which has been lifted up to a greater glory, without its own nature being changed.”³⁴⁴

Among modern Wesleyan theologians, the one with the closest theological position of the Eastern Orthodox Church is probably Randy Maddox. The work of Randy Maddox has been significantly informed by the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Maddox's reading of Wesley does not call for a rejection of key insights gained from the Reformation but incorporates them into an Eastern therapeutic vision which, in his assessment, is far more basic to Wesley's overall theological concerns. That is, Maddox is fully aware of the juridical emphases of Western Christianity surrounding the issues of justification and guilt, especially since the time of the Reformers, but he sees such concerns for Wesley's as having been integrated into a foundational therapeutic emphasis characteristic of Eastern Christianity.

So integral is the Eastern therapeutic approach to Maddox's reading of Wesley's theology that it forms a well-developed paradigm that illuminates the entirety of the Wesleyan *ordo salutis* in the form of responsible grace. Trading on a parental model of God as a Physician and Provider, Maddox maintains that Wesley viewed grace as co-operant,

³⁴⁴ Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 130

even synergistic, although the initiative is always taken by God. In such a view, God never acts alone but always in concert and in cooperation of enabled human response. This synergistic or "Catholic" paradigm is remarkably evident in the judgment of Eastern Orthodox theologians who contend that the Fall of Adam and Eve did not deprive humanity of all grace.³⁴⁵

More importantly, when Maddox argues that, while instantaneous "entire sanctification may have been distinctive of Wesley," sanctification as a "progressive journey" was "most characteristic of Wesley,"³⁴⁶ some may feel he overly de-emphasizes the instantaneous element.

Concerning this point, Kenneth Collins replies stating: "From the observation that God's grace is personal and co-operant Maddox draws the conclusion that salvation is "surely gradual."³⁴⁷ With an eye on the claim of Eastern Orthodoxy that gradual process is essential to the nature of redemption, Maddox contends that human salvation for Wesley is likewise "fundamentally gradual on process."³⁴⁸

In other words, the healing of a sin-sick soul is a life-long process in which "God does not implant holiness in us instantaneously."³⁴⁹ However, it would be far too superficial a reading of Maddox's work to claim that he denied the role of momentary transition in the Christian life. A more accurate interpretation suggests that he relates these transitions to "the

³⁴⁵ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 66.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 190.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁴⁸ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 152.

³⁴⁹ Randy L. Maddox, "John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy: Influence, Convergences and Differences," *The Asbury Theological Journal* 45, np. 2 (Fall 1990), 4-35.

gradual growth in response to God's grace," in such a manner that "the overall dynamics of salvation retain a gradual nature"³⁵⁰ But if justification or regeneration devolves upon the process which follows it, then that process and not justification itself has become the focus of attention. In other words, Wesley's teaching that justification and entire sanctification are the two foci of the *ordo salutis* has been inverted. That is, the focus is now on the process leading up to these soteriological events. Such a view may be characteristic of Eastern Orthodoxy; it is hardly descriptive of the theology of John Wesley. The two foci of the Wesleyan *ordo salutis* remain justification and entire sanctification."³⁵¹

A no-visa agreement has been reached between Russia and Korea, which began on January 1st, 2015. As a result there has been more traffic between the two countries, with more Korean missionaries present in Russia. It is my hope that the Korean Protestant Churches would grow theologically through dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church. The fundamental weakness of soteriology in Korean Protestant Churches is emphasizing instantaneousness of salvation and ignoring the process. They advocate justification without sanctification. In this regard, through dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church, my hope is that the Korean Protestant Churches will be challenged to examine their flawed soteriology and build a new paradigm for understanding salvation.

³⁵⁰ Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 154.

³⁵¹ Kenneth J. Collins, "The state of Wesley studies in North America: a Theological Journey," In: *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 44, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 18-19.

Conclusion

The year 2017 commemorated five hundred years of Protestant Reformation. The Korean Protestant Churches, however, are rather quiet; the mood is not celebratory but heavy and dark. Everywhere Christians are calling out for a Second Reformation of the Korean Protestant Churches. What is behind this call? The overall atmosphere of the Korean Protestant Churches is viewed as similar to the situation of the church 500 years ago when Martin Luther led the Reformation. Today the Korean Protestant Churches have become those in need of reformation rather than the driving forces behind it. Recently, Wolfgang Wippermann's, *Luthers Erbe: Eine Kritik des Deutschen Protestantismus*³⁵² [Luther's Two Faces], has been translated into Korean and brought quite a shock, revealing dark facets of Luther previously unknown or little known. Luther's anti-semitism, prejudice against Muslims and Gypsies, and antifeminism were shocking and are difficult to believe. Soon after, Bruce Delmont's book, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, was translated and published in Korean.³⁵³ And a 90- minute documentary, "Luther's Two Faces," based on the book was made and shown in Korea from December 14 through 16. The documentary caused quite a stir. The words of a Nazi war criminal during the Nuremberg trial is still ringing in my ear: "I have no sin. I only did what Martin Luther told me to do. Did Martin Luther stand trial for it?" As much as the Korean Church was shocked, there will also be much reflection.

The sixteenth century Reformation started with Martin Luther. It definitely opened a new age, and Martin Luther made critical contribution in changing and shaping the Western world history. Along with Luther's contributions, his life, and the limitation of his

³⁵² Wolfgang Wippermann, *Luthers Erbe: Eine Kritik des Deutschen Protestantismus*, [Luther's Two Faces] (Darmstadt, Germany : WBG, 2014).

³⁵³ Bruce Delmont, *On the Jews and Their Lies* (Morrisville, NC :Lulu, 2010).

theology also need to be examined to truly appreciate the great Reformer.

Today's Korean Protestant Churches suffer from *sola fideism* (Hyper-solafideism, easy-believism) and antinomianism. The doctrine of justification is misused and misapplied as a license for lazy and immoral life. Over emphasizing the doctrine of justification has produced nominal Christians without the life of sanctification.

Paul's Gospel is the Gospel of salvation. And this message of salvation must be responded with faith. This faith includes our entire life that is brought into a relationship with God. Then, what kind of life should 'believing' in Jesus Christ bring about? Does it mean 'passive' faith as Luther described that simply accepts passively what God has graciously done through Jesus Christ? Or should it be like Paul's faith, and that of James, which call for actively pursuing good works and thereby maintaining that faith? What is the relationship between faith and works according to Paul? Is faith opposite of works? (cf. Romans 4:2, Ephesians 2:9) Or does faith include works? (cf. I Thessalonians 1:11) Does the belief that we are justified by faith means that God considers us righteous regardless of our moral behavior? We have dealt with this question in the earlier chapters. In stating 'faith *alone*', the main thought communicated is that this faith is 'unrelated to our works.' If 'faith alone' means our moral behavior does not matter for our salvation, it is hard to find a foundation for practical Christian ethics in the Gospel that Paul preached. He himself says that if this be the case, then eloquent nonsense like the ones he quotes in Romans, "Let us do evil that good may result" or "Let us go on sinning so that grace may increase!" become possible.

Such self-indulgent statements have no place in Paul's Gospel message. Paul answers unequivocally, "Certainly not!", "By no means!" Paul also curses those with such distorted thinking, saying that "Their condemnation is deserved." (Romans 3:8) There is

clearly no place for unrighteousness or sin in Paul's message of the Gospel, and the logic of "let us sin more" falls apart. The popular understanding that faith is opposite of works must be eradicated, for Paul's epistles, as shown in our discussions of Paul's letters to the Romans and Galatians, frequently feature views that seem to support 'salvation by works.' The hope of righteousness is something we wait for through the life in the Spirit, and eternal life is understood as eschatological harvest of what was planted in our lives by the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:5-6, 6:7-9) God's judgment always examines our works (Romans 2:6-11), life in the flesh, whether by a believer or non-believer, which inevitably result in eschatological death and destruction. (Romans 6:21-23, 8:13) Paul does not tolerate those who live a life of unrighteousness yet expect to inherit the Kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:21, I Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:5)

Until now, the Korean Protestant Churches have compared and debated whether is it faith emphasized by Romans, or works emphasized by James that is the basis of our salvation. As I have shown, Paul did not separate faith and works. And there is no contradiction between Pauline epistles and the Letter of James. They differ in their emphasis and context. The context of the Pauline epistles that emphasize faith is different from the context of James' epistle which emphasizes that true faith must always be accompanied by works. Paul was dealing with the question of how a person comes to salvation, and therefore stressed the place of faith in the context of salvation. James was dealing with how a believer should live, and underlined the importance of works in the context of moral life. On the one hand, if you emphasize works in the context of salvation, you end up with salvation by works of righteousness or legalism. On the other, if you only emphasize faith in the moral context, then there is no place of Christian ethics; it only gives Christians license to sin as long as they have faith.

If the Pauline epistles are examined closely, Paul was well aware of such danger and emphasized that works was more than simply result or fruit of faith but an essential element of faith. Even in Romans and Galatians that stressed justification by faith, he upheld the importance of works. For example, Paul in his introduction and conclusion of Romans writes that the Gospel brings not simply faith, but obedience of faith. (Romans 1:5, 16:26) The Korean Bible translates this as “believe and obey,” but the Greek text ‘ὕπακοήν πίστεως’ can be translated as “faith, which is obedience.” The NIV Bible translated Romans 1:5 as “the obedience that comes through faith” and Romans 16:26 as “believe and obey.” The fact that Paul used this expression twice in the beginning and end of Romans indicates that the whole message of Romans can be summarized with the words: “faith, which is obedience”.³⁵⁴ If this is true, the central topic of Romans, justification by faith, does not exclude obedience and works but rather include them. It is the same with Galatians. Paul writes in Galatians 5:6, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” Here the “faith expressing itself through love” (πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη) means that true faith that brings righteousness and salvation must always be accompanied by acts of love. If this is true, then “faith alone” by Paul does not exclude obedience and works. In this regard, there is no contradiction between Paul’s letters and the Letter of James.

The Korean Protestant Christians tend to understand ‘faith alone’ as same as ‘grace alone.’ Grace emphasizes God’s sovereign providence while faith points to the response to such God’s grace. These two concepts therefore are distinct and separate. However, when a message that our justification and salvation have nothing to do with our moral behavior is communicated, then ‘faith alone’ and ‘grace alone’ are used interchangeably. When the

³⁵⁴ Kap Jong Choi, *What is Justification?* (Seoul: Saemulgyeol plus, 2016), 235.

Scriptures are examined deeper, however, there may be a tension between grace and works but no opposition. The problem is not works but elevation of human merit. We must not confuse works with merit. Paul's dealing with circumcision clearly reveals the difference. The problem was not circumcision itself, but that circumcision was made into a condition for salvation. When we ascribe value to works, then that becomes a merit. That was the reason why Paul did not circumcise Titus but circumcised Timothy. 'Merit' is basically a language of value given to an action. When we give value to certain action, it becomes a merit. But works is a matter of fact and not a matter of value judgment. Works exists separately from value judgment as human behavior.

To understand this more specifically, the 'parable of the talents' in Matthew 18 might be looked at. The servant who owed ten thousand talents could not pay it all back even if he sold himself, his wife, children, and all he possessed. The master who became aware of this fact had pity on the servant and forgave all his debts. The forgiveness of the debt was done without conditions and entirely by the master's free decision. Yet, the servant whose debt was forgiven had no mercy on his fellow servant who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. The master who hears this is furious and calls the evil servant to cancel his forgiveness. The lesson of this parable is clear. The grace of forgiving debt was entirely by the master's free will, given without any conditions. This grace of forgiveness makes the servant "one who is forgiven," one who has received grace. This new relationship demands of the servant similar behavior. Even if the master gave no conditions for forgiveness, the one who has received grace cannot be free. He was a servant even before the forgiveness of the debt. Now as the one whose debt of ten thousand talents had been forgiven, he owes the master to serve him more. In his status, he is a servant and, at the same time, a servant of grace. This double status demands the servant of "what he must do." Grace demands grace.

Even if the servant forgave his fellow servant who owed him a hundred denarii, his gracious act does not count as his merit. The servant has simply done “what he must do” as demanded by grace. This is the moral basis of grace. And in the ethics of grace, human ethics does not change into human merit.

Today’s Korean Protestant Churches are oversensitive to any emphasis on works and accuses it as “salvation by works”. However, infinite grace is emphasized and the Korean Churches preach that every sin, however evil, will be forgiven. No works are necessary and only grace is important. Cheap grace without works is being preached from the church pulpits in Korea every day.

In the discussion on Wesleyan Theology in chapter 5, I have shown that Wesley differentiated justification into ‘initial justification’ and ‘final justification.’ Initial justification is accomplished by the righteousness of Christ, but the final justification needs faith and works. The righteousness of Christ gives us citizenship of heaven, and personal holiness gives us the qualification to be citizens of heaven.

If justification is 'forgiveness of sins,' what kinds of sin are forgiven for Wesley? If Luther and Calvin were asked, they would unequivocally answer, "all the sins of the past, present, and future once and for all." Luther and Calvin explained the forgiveness of Christ as "wonderful exchange" and "double imputation." Just as a bride and groom share everything together, believers share everything with Christ by being united to Christ through faith. All of Christ's righteousness becomes believers', and all the sins of believers become Christ's. A complete exchange transpires. Even though a justified believer is not yet righteous and repeatedly sins, that believer is considered righteous by imputed righteousness of Christ. From the moment of justification, a believer enjoys the efficacy of 'forgiveness of sins of past, present, and future once and for all.'

Wesley, who lived two hundred years after Luther and Calvin, saw this teaching of 'forgiveness of sins of past, present, and future once and for all' being used as a cloak for negligence and self-indulgence rather than obedience. As a result, Wesley sought to correct this problem. Wesley believed that sin in its pride can reject God's grace and express itself through legalism, attempting to gain salvation through self-righteousness. Wesley also believed that sin can take the opposite approach of antinomianism, bringing in negligence and self-indulgence in the name of faith. Wesley limited the forgiveness of sins at justification to 'past' sins, for false faith or corrupted faith cannot maintain right relationship with God. For Wesley, true faith is always accompanied by 'fruits of repentance.' (Matthew 3:8) Sanctification and good works are not the conditions of salvation, but rather unmistakable result of salvation. True faith is always verified by its fruit of obedience. Assurance of salvation provides sense of security and peace. It must not be a cause, however, for negligence and self-indulgence. For Wesley, true faith arouses love for God, and "faith expressing itself through love" (Galatians 5:6) can neither be negligent nor self-indulgent. He understood God's nature as 'holy love.' While God's love determines how we are to relate, participate and unite, God's holiness sets the boundaries for purity and separation. God's holiness points to the quality of relationship. Through grace, believers experience this holy love. This grace is not 'amorphous grace,' but normed grace.'

Therefore, God's grace does not end with forgiveness of sins but continues to work to transform the sinner. God's grace is not mere goodwill but ushers in the power of the Holy Spirit. God's costly grace causes believers to respond. With this understanding, Wesley emphasized God's salvation not only as deliverance from the penalty of sin but also as deliverance from the power of sin. The grace of forgiveness is not the entirety of God's grace but only a portion. God's grace directs the believer toward holiness and entire sanctification.

Both Luther's doctrine that believers are simultaneously sinful and righteous and Calvin's doctrine of two natures caused many to believe that Christians cannot always overcome sin. This gave a sense of defeatism, and some even gave up the fight against sin altogether. But there is a great difference in teaching one can and must overcome sin and that sin is inevitable even for a believer. Wesley believed sanctification was possible through grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. Though believers can fall into sin, Wesley believed it was impossible for believers to continuously sin. He witnessed in his ministry those who did not seek, though they could, sufficient grace and the power of the Holy Spirit to resist sin but rather misuse grace to excuse their sins. This phenomenon repeatedly occurs among Korean Protestant Christians today. I have experienced similar frustrations as Wesley's in my 40 years of ministry. This was the impetus for this dissertation.

The German Lutheran pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, wrote these words in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, in 1937: "Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our church. We are fighting to-day for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjack's' wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown always at cut prices. Grace is represented as the Church's inexhaustible treasury, from which she showers blessing with generous hands, without asking questions or fixing limits. Grace without price; grace without cost! The essence of grace, we suppose, is that account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be paid for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite. Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before. "All for sin could not atone." The world goes on in the same old way, and we are still sinners "even in the best

life" as Luther said. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."³⁵⁵

Jacques Ellul (1912-1994) a French scholar who studied law is widely known as author, sociologist, theologian, and philosopher. Writing about the Biblical Dialectic, he claims there are two methods. The first method is not 'either/or,' he explains. "One cannot understand this revelation unless one thinks dialectically instead of thinking in terms of either-or as one is tempted to do; Either God is omnipotent and we are slaves, or we are free and God does not exist. Nor is this just a matter of philosophical formulation. At issue is a new understanding of revelation such as there has never been elsewhere, and that implies that we are to attempt an intellectual account of it we have to proceed dialectically."³⁵⁶

Second is 'already, but not yet' method. "Thus the whole deployment of the existence of the people of God (the church) and individual Christians is dialectic in the constant renewal of promise and fulfillment (or, in other words, of the already and the not yet). The kingdom of heaven is among you, in the midst of you, or in you, but it will also come at the end of the age. The God of Abraham is fully revealed but not yet revealed except in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is already the Lord of the world, but not yet, for he will be so at his parousia."³⁵⁷

It is reassuring to hear from a law scholar's point of view, that the message of the Scripture is dialectical. The Old Testament theologian, Professor Tae Soo Im, also says, "Faith and works are not opposites. They are mutually complementary and inseparable.

³⁵⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: SCM Press, 1959), 43-45.

³⁵⁶ Jacques Ellul, *What I Believe*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Pub Co., 1989) 37.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

Faith and works form dialectic union. Faith in Jesus includes works, and works presupposes faith. James also saw faith and works not as opposites but as mutually complementary and inseparable. James considered faith without works to be dead. But, at the same time, works without faith is human boasting and self-righteousness. Humans are created by God's grace, and to not recognize the place of faith in our trust in God is wrong. At the same time, it is a mistake to separate faith and works. Faith and works must always accompany each other, for they are inseparable. Faith and works are two pillars of salvation.

'Righteousness of faith' and 'righteousness of works'³⁵⁸ are righteousness that must be possessed by those who confess Jesus as Lord. Logically speaking, the righteousness of faith precedes the righteousness of works, but practically speaking, they must simultaneously be present from the very beginning of faith until the Day of Final Judgment. That the faith and righteousness in one's life was true faith and true works will be judged on the Final Judgment Day (Matthew 7:21, 24-27, 25:31-46).

In Paul's doctrine of justification, faith and works may appear to be the opposite. In emphasizing faith, works are weakened or excluded. In emphasizing works, faith seems weakened. This is erroneous thinking. The two are not opposites but mutually complementary and inseparable. Rather than one excluding the other, they are meant to create tension. It must be approached dialectically. Just as there can be no salvation without faith, there can also be no salvation without works. Faith and works, both are the conditions of salvation. This is what the Scriptures teach about faith and works in regard to salvation.³⁵⁹

The Korean Protestant Churches have 132 years of history. The pulpits of the early

³⁵⁸ Luther spoke of 'alien righteousness' coming from outside and of 'proper righteousness'.

³⁵⁹ Tae Soo Im, "Dialectical Union of Faith and Works," in: *Korean Church Needs the Second Reformation* (Seoul: Christian Publishers, 2015), 225-250.

Korean Protestant Churches preached messages on sin, repentance, forgiveness, regeneration, prayer, the Holy Spirit, and sanctification. Especially the “The Great Revivalism in Pyeong Yang, Korea” that occurred in 1907 was a movement of God’s Word, a prayer movement, the Holy Spirit movement, an evangelism movement, and a repentance movement. What stood out was the presence of holy God, the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit, public confession of sin and forgiveness. There was radical sanctification in life. Missionaries repented, pastors repented, and lay Christians repented. The religious practice of ‘*Tongsongido*’³⁶⁰ began during this period.

After Luther’s Reformation, the Protestant Churches ended the Catholic practice of penance. The Reformers saw the negative aspects of penance. The confession of sins had been made into another pious act, became ritualized, and was even made into means for the priests to oppress the believers. Yet, James 5:16 says, “Confess your sins to each other.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer dealt seriously with the problem of confession of sin, especially the act of public confession of sin. Bonhoeffer stated, “He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone.”³⁶¹ “In confession the break-through to community takes place.”³⁶² “The expressed, acknowledged sin has lost all its power.”³⁶³ “In confession occurs the break-through to the cross. Confession in the presence of a brother is the profoundest kind of humiliation. It hurts, it cuts a man down, it is a dreadful blow to pride. To stand there before a brother as a sinner is an ignominy that is almost unbearable. In the confession of the correct sins the old man

³⁶⁰ The entire congregation raises voices to pray together out loud.

³⁶¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (San Francisco: Harper & Publishers, Inc. 1954), 110.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 112.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 113.

dies a painful, shameful death before the eyes of a brother.”³⁶⁴

About 110 years ago, the Korean Church was overwhelmed by the presence of God and confessed their sins, repented, and had their lives transformed. The Gospel caused people to change and to live a sanctified life at a personal level as well as in the church and the society. But today’s Korean Christians commit illegal acts in order to achieve success, get drunk, and live immoral lives. While condemning the Salvation Sect as a cult, the majority of the Korean Protestant pastors preach from the pulpit messages which are almost the same as the doctrine of salvation of the Salvation Sect.

Larry W. Hurtado published a volume last year with the title, *Destroyer of the gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World*. He studied the first 300 years of Christianity and stated the following: “The early Christian emphasis on, and teaching about, everyday behavior as central to Christian commitment is yet another distinctive feature that has had a profound subsequent impact. In the ancient Roman period and down through human history, what we call 'religion' tended to focus more on honoring, appeasing, and seeking the good will of deities through such actions as sacrifices and the performance of related rituals. 'Religion' did not typically have much to say about what we call 'ethics,' how to behave toward others, how to conduct family or business, and the formation of character. If we assume today, however, that religion is concerned with such matters, with ordering behavior, this again is likely down to the influence of Christianity in particular. Whether you approve of Christianity's influence in shaping behavior or not is another question. My point is that our unquestioned assumption that religions are all concerned with teaching about

³⁶⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 113-114.

'ethical' behavior almost certainly derives from Christianity."³⁶⁵ If there is any truth to what Larry Hurtado says, where are we as churches in holding up the ethical dimensions of religion in front of our nation, even as we live by the living faith in what God has accomplished in and for us through Jesus Christ?

In this dissertation, I have devoted most of my research to an in-depth study of the teachings of Luther, Calvin, and John Wesley, especially as their teachings relate to faith and works. I have also done an exploration of the biblical teachings, especially by Paul, on the relationship as they relate the question of faith and works. This was necessary because the Korean Protestant Churches are proud of their Reformation and Wesleyan heritages and claim that their teaching and preaching ministries are based on them. Thus, this dissertation has two primary purposes. The first is to help the churches to have a fuller understanding of their true heritage on the meaning of Christian life as it relates to faith and works as taught by the pioneers of the Protestant Reformation. And the second is to show how far they have moved away from this heritage, which has led to the widespread call for a second Reformation. I have done this study not as someone outside the Korean Protestant Churches but as someone who is deeply imbedded in it and cares for the future of life and witness of the churches in Korea. One can only say, to oneself and to others what Jesus said to his followers, "Those who have ears to hear, let them hear."(Mark.4.9)

It is my sincerest hope that the Korean Churches may recover the first love, and become like the Early Church, and the Early Korean Protestant Churches some 130 years ago, when there was a sincere effort to make Christian life correspond more closely to the faith that was confessed.

³⁶⁵ Larry W. Hurtado, *Destroyer of the gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016), 188

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Augustine. *Confession and Enchiridion. Vol. VII of The Liberty of Christian Classics.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955.
- Ahlstrom, Sydney E. *A Religious History of American People.* New Haven: Yale University, 1972.
- Althaus, Paul. *The Theology of Martin Luther.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- _____. *The Ethics of Martin Luther.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972.
- Arminius, J. *The Works of James Arminius,* 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1909.
- Bangs, Carl, *Arminius: A Study in Dutch Reformation.* Michigan: Franc Public Asbury Press of Zondervan Publishing House. 1985.
- Barth, Hans Martin. *Theology of Martin Luther.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.
- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics. vol 1 The Doctrine of God.* Tr, G. W. Bromiley etc, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2009.
- _____, *Church Dogmatic. vol. 11-2; The Doctrine of God.* Tr, G. W. Bromiley etc, Edinburgh:T & T Clark, 1967-78.
- _____, *The Doctrine Of Reconciliation, Church Dogmatics. vol. IV-2.* Tr. G. W. Bromiley. Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1978.
- Beachy, Alvin J. *The Concept of Grace,* Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1977
- Berkhof, Louis, *Systematic Theology.* Edinburgh:The Banner of Truth, 1974.
- _____, *Systematic Theology.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co, 1979.
- Berkhof, Hendrikus. *Christian Faith.* Trans., Sierd Woudstra. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1941.
- Beeke, Joel R. *Living for God' Glory. An Introduction to Calvinism.* Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008.Beiby, James H and Eddy, Paul Phodes. ed. *Justification five views.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.
- Bendix, Reinhard. *Max Weber.* New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1962.
- Berkouwer,G.C., *Studies in Dogmatics; Divine Election. trans,* Hugo Bekker. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co. 1978.
- Bird, Michael F., *A Bird's Eye View of PAUL.* Nottingham: Inter Varsity Press. 2008.
- Billings, J. Todd, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gifts: The Activity of Believers in the Union with Christ.* Oxford: OUP, 2007.
- Bloesch, Donald G. *The Christian Life and Salvation.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans

- Publishing Co, 1967.
- Boettner, Loraine, *Roman Catholicism*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co, 1962.
- _____, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1932
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*, Harper San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1954.
- _____. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1963.
- Bornkamm, Heinrich. *Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- Braaten. C. E. *Justification. The Article by which the Church stands or fall*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- Brandt, Caspar, *The Life of James Arminius*, Tr.. John Guthrie. London: Ward & Co. 1854.
- Brown, Charles Ewing. *The meaning of Sanctification*, Anderson. Indiana: The Warner Press, 1945.
- Brown, Harold O. J., *Heresies*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1984
- Buis, Hary. *Historic Protestantism and Predestination*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994.
- Bultmann, Rudolf, *Theology of the New Testament*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951
- Calvin, John. *Institute of the Christian Religion*. Edited. by John. T. McNeill and Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- _____. Calvin's Commentaries; *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, Tr Ross Mackenzie. Grand Rapids : Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1973.
- _____. *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*, Ed. D. W. B. Torrance and T. F. Torrance Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.
- _____. *Calvin's Old testament Commentaries*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.
- _____. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Tr. J. Anderson. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1963.
- _____. *Concerning Eternal Predestination*, Tr. J. K, S. Reid. London: T.& T Clark 1961.
- _____. *Institutes of the Christian (1559)*, Edited by J. McNeil, trans. F. L. Battles. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965.

- Campbell, Ted A. *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*, Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991.
- Cell, George Croft. *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935.
- Chester, Andrew. *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994
- Childs, Brevard S. *The New Testament as Canon*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Clendenin, Daniel B. *Eastern Orthodox Christianity (A Western Perspective)* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1997.
- Collins, Kenneth J. *John Wesley A Theological Journey*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.
- _____. *The Theology of John Wesley*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.
- _____. *The Scripture Way of Salvation*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- Coppedge, Allan. *John Wesley in Theological Debate*, Wilmore: Wesley Heritage Press, 1987.
- Cragg, Gerald R., *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 11, *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Creation Related Open Letter*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Crow, Earl. *John Wesley's Conflict with Arminianism in relation to the Moravians and Calvinists*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1964.
- Davids, Peter H. *James*. NIBC Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989.
- Davies, Rupert E. ed. *The Works of John Wesley, vol. 9, The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989
- Delmont, Bruce, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, Morrisville, NC : LuLu, 2010.
- Dillenberger, John, *Martin Luther, Selections from His Writings*, Garden City: Anchor Books, 1958.
- Dunn, James D. G. *The New Perspective on Paul*, Revised Edition, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- _____. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- _____. *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatian*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990.
- Edwards, Jonathan. *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections, Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. John E. Smith, Vol. 2, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.
- Eichrodt, Walther. *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vol. London: SCM Press, 1961,
- Erikson, E. H. *Young Man Luther*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company. INC. 1962.

- Evans, Christopher F. *Saint Luke*. London: SCM Press. 1990.
- Ellul, Jacques, tran. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *What I Believe*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989.
- Ferm, R. L. ed. *Readings in the History of Christian Thought*, New York: Holt. Rinehart and Winston Company, 1964.
- Fesko, J. V. *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine*. Phillipsburg: P & R. Pub, 2008.
- Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America 1776-2005*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.
- Friedmann, Robert, *The Theology of Anabaptism*, Scottsdale, PA: The Herald Press, 1973.
- Gathercole, Simon J. *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- George, Timothy. *Theology of the Reformers*. Nashville: Broadman, 1988.
- Giddens, Anthony. *Capitalism & Modern Social Theology*, Cambridge: University Press, 1971
- Gleason, Randall C. *John Calvin and John Owen on Mortification*. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.
- Gracia, Mark A. *Life in Christ ; Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin's Theology*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 2008.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought. vol. III*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975
- Gunter, W. Stephen, *The Limits of 'Love Divine,'* Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1989.
- Hagglund, Bengt, *History of Theology*, trans. Gene J. Lund, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968.
- Hasel, Gerhard, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans: 1978.
- Hays, Richard B., *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11. 2nd Edition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 2002.
- _____. *Jesus, Paul, the People of God : A Theological Dialogue with N.T. Wright*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011.
- _____. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament : A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- _____. *First Corinthians, Interpretation: A Biblical Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997.
- Hempton, David. *Methodism: Empire of The Spirit*, New Haven: Yale University, 2005.

- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology. vol, 111.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1981.
- Hodge, A. A. *Outlines of Theology.* Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1991.
- Horton, Michael Scott. *Made in America,* Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1991.
- Hurtado, Larry W. *LORD JESUS CHRIST . Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity.* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2003.
- _____, *Destroyer of the gods,: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World.* Waco, Texas: 2016.
- Husbands, Mark and Daniel J. Treier. eds. *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Hutchison, John A. *The Two Cities: A Study of Gog and Human Politics,* Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957.
- Jackson, Thomas, ed. *The Works of Rev. John Wesley.* 14 vol. London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1829-31, Reprinted, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978.
- James K. Beily and Paul Rhodes Eddy, ed. *Justification Five Views.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.
- Jeremias, Joachim, *The Parables of Jesus.* Norwich, SCM Press, 1969
- Kim, Seyoon. *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- _____. *Christ and Caesar,* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2008.
- Kreider, Alan, *The Change of Conversion and The Origin of Christendom.* Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1999.
- _____. *The Change of Conversion and The Origin of Christendom. In memory of John S. Oyer(1925-1998), Mentor, Model, Friend.* Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999.
- Kummel, G., *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems,* trans. S. M. Gilmore and H. C. Kee. Nashville: Abingdon, 1972.
- _____. *Introduction to the New Testament,* London: SCM Press LTD, 1973.
- Kung, Hans. *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964.
- _____. *Justification.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981.
- Kwon, Yon-Gyong. *Eschatology in Galatians.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.
- Laato, T. *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Langford, Thomas A. *Practical Divinity Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983.

- Lane, Anthony N. S., *Justification in Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue*. New York : T & T Clark, 2006.
- Lee, Jung Young. *The Trinity In Asian Perspective*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.
- Lee, Young-Ae, Jung and Dong-Sup Jung. *Why is the Salvation Sect Cult?* Seoul: Joy Mission Society, 2014
- Lohse, Bernhard. *Martin Luther's Theology*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011.
- Lindstrom, Harold. *Wesley and Sanctification*. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1980.
- _____. *Wesley and Sanctification*, London: The Epworth Press, 1956.
- Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987.
- _____. "The Freedom of a Christian." Edited by J. M. Porter. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.
- Luz, Ulrich, *The Theology of the Matthew*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995
- Macquarrie, John. *Principles of Christian Theology*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.
- Maddox, Randy, *Responsible Grace. John Wesley's Practical Theology*, Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994.
- _____, *Rethinking Wesley's Theology For Contemporary Methodism*, Nashville: Kingswood Books, Abingdon Book, 1998.
- Martin, Ralph P. *James*, Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 48, Thomas Nelson Inc, 1988.
- McGrath, Alister E., *JUSTITIA DEI : A History of the Christian Doctrine*, Cambridge : University of Cambridge Press, 2005.
- _____. *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
- _____. *JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH*, Nashville: Zondervan Corporation, 1988.
- _____. *Christian Theology*, Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2007.
- _____. *Christianity: An Introduction*, 3rd Edition London: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2015
- _____. *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 2007.
- _____. *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990.
- _____. *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin's Luther's Theology Breakthrough*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
- _____. *Reformation Thought*, Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2012.

- _____. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- _____. *The New Perspective on Paul*. Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 2008.
- McIntye, John. *Models of Soteriology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992.
- Mead, Sidney E. *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America*, New York: Harper & Row, 1976.
- Mead, Sidney E. *The Nation with the soul of a Church*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
- Meeks, M. Douglas. eds. *The Future of the Methodist Theological Tradition*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1985.
- Meeter, H. Henry, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*, Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House Company, 1999.
- Miller, Donald E., *Reinventing American Protestantism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Muller, Recharad A., *God, Creation, and Providence in the Thought of Jacob Arminius*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House. 1991.
- _____. "Christ in the Eschaton: Calvin and Moltmann on the Duration of the Munus Regium", *Harvard Theological Review* Vol 74, no. 1, (January 1981): 31-60.
- Neve, J. L. *A History of Christian Thought*, Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1943.
- Neusner, J., *Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: A Systematic Reply to Professor E. P, Sanders*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Nichols. James. *The Writings of James Arminius*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.
- _____. *The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, Human Nature*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941.
- _____. *The Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, Human Destiny*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943.
- _____. *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers. 1935.
- Niebuhr, Richard. *Christ and Culture*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1949.
- Niesel, Wilhelm. *The Theology of Calvin*. Tr. Harold Knight. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956.
- Noll, Mark A. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Michigan: Zondervan Press, 1994.

- Oden, Thomas C. *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity*. Grand Rapids. Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.
- Olson, Roger E. *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition Reform*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press , 1999.
- Outler, Albert C. ed., *John Wesley*. New York :Oxford University Press, 1964.
- _____. *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*. Nashville: Tidings. 1975.
- _____. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 1-4. Sermons. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-87.
- _____. *Introduction and notes throughout. Works*. vol. 1. 1984.
- _____. *Introductions and notes throughout: Works*, vol. 2.1985
- _____. *Introduction and notes throughout: Works*, vol. 3. 1986.
- _____. *Introduction and notes throughout: Works*, vol. 4. 1987.
- Packer, J. I. and others. *Here We Stand. Justification by Faith Today*. Hodder and Stoughton: Oak Hill College, 1986.
- Palmer, Edwin H. *The Five Points of Calvinism*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1972.
- Pawson, David. *Once Saved, Always Saved?* London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. 1996.
- Partee, Charles. *The Theology of John Calvin*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.
- Pipkin, H. Wayne and John Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1989
- Plass, Ewald M. ed., *What Luther Says: An Anthology Three Volumes*. St, Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959.
- Pomazansky, Protopresbyter Michael. *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2005.
- Reid, W. Stanford, *Justification by Faith According to Calvin*. WTJ 42, 290-307 1980,
- Richy, Russell E. and Robert Bruce Mullin, *Reimagining Denominationalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Rowe, Kenneth E. *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition*, Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1976.
- Runyon, Theodore. ed. *Wesleyan Theology Today*. Nashville: Kingwood Books, 1985.
- _____ _____. *What the Spirit Is Saying to the Churches*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1975.

- _____. *Sanctification and Liberation: Liberation Theologies in the Light of the Wesleyan Tradition*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981.
- _____. *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Rupp, Gordon. *Patterns of Reformation*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969.
- Sanders, E. P., *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977.
- _____. *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- _____. *Jesus and Judaism*. Philadelphia: Fortress, London: SCM Press, 1985.
- _____. *Paul, Oxford: Oxford University Press*. 1991.
- _____. *Judaism: Practice and Belief. 63 BCE-66 CE*. London: SCM, 1992.
- _____. *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. London: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Schmidt, Jean Millar. eds. *Perspective on American Methodist*, Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1993.
- Schreiner, T.R. *Paul Apostle of God's Glory in Christ. A Pauline Theology*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Seifrid, M. A. Christ. *Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Sell, Alan P. F. *The Great Debate: Calvinism, Arminianism and Salvation, Grand Rapids: Baker*, 1983.
- Smith, Timothy L. *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, New York: Abingdon, 1957.
- Stanton, Graham N. *A Gospel for a New People*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/Knox Press, 1992.
- Stott, John. *Decisive Issues Facing Christian Today*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1990.
- Strokes, Anso and Leo Pfeffer. *Church and State in the United States*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964.
- Tamburello, Dennis E., *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.
- Troeltsch, Ernst., *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.
- Torrey, R A., *The person & Work of the Holy Spirit*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1910.
- Tuttle, Robert G., *John Wesley His Life and Theology*. Milton Keynes, The Paternoster Press,

1979.

Vanhoozer Kevin J, *Is There Meaning in This Text?* Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998.

_____, *First Theology*, Downers Grove, Il: IVP, 2002.

Walker, Williston, *A History of the Christian Church*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963.

Walvoord, John F. *The Holy Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958.

Warfield, Benjamin Breckinridge, *Calvin and Augustine*. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1956.

Weems, Lovett H. Jr., *John Wesley's Message Today*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

Wesley, John, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. London: William Bowyer, 1755.
Most recent reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.

_____. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. London: Epworth Press Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.,

_____. *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity*. Library of Methodist Classics. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992.

_____. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. The Works of John Wesley from the year 1725, to the year 1777*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1966.

_____. *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, London: Willam Bowyer, 1755.

_____. *The Works of John Wesley vol, X*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991; Reprinted from London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872.

_____. *The Works of John Wesley. vol , VI*. Third Edition. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1872.

_____. *The Works of John Wesley Vol XVI* Third Edition, Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1872.

_____. *The Works of John Wesley. vol, VI* Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Inc, 1991 : Reprinted from London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872.

Webber, Robert E. *The Younger Evangelicals*. Grand Rapids: Michigan 2002.

Weber, Otto. *Foundations of Dogmatics vol. 2*, Tr, Darrel L. Guder, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*, Tr, Talcott Parsons (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2003). *The Sociology of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.

Wendel, F., *Justification and Predestination in Calvin*. Edited by Donald K. McKim. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1997.

_____, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought* Tr. P. Mariet

- Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd,1950.
- Williams, Colin W. *John Wesley's Theology Today*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960.
- Williams, George H. *The Radical Reformation*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962
- Williams, J. Rodman. *the Pentecostal Reality*. Plainfield: Logos International, 1972.
- Willamson, G. I. *The Heidelberg Catechism; A Study Guide*. Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1993.
- Wippermann, Wolfgang, *Luthers Erbe : Eine Kritik des deutshen Protestantismus. [Two Faces of Luther]*.Darmstadt, Germany: Primus, WBG. 2014.
- Wright, N. T. *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision*. London: SPCK,2009
- _____. *The New Testament and The People of God*. London: SPCK and Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1992.
- _____. *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflection on Discipleship*. London: SPCK. 1994.
- _____. *Jesus and the Victory of God*. London: SPCK and Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1996.
- _____. *What St Paul Really Said Oxford*: Lion and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- _____. *The Way of The Lord*. London: SPCK. 1999.
- _____. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. London: SPCK and Minneapolis. Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2003.
- _____. *Evil and Justice of God*. London: SPCK, 2006.
- _____. *Simply Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, and London: SPCK, 2011.
- Wuthnow, Robert, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology*, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1967.
- Bicentennial Edition of John Wesley's works*. Edited by Frank Baker. Oxford : Clarendon and New York : Oxford University Press, 1975
- Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification: The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church*. Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 2000.
- The Journal of the Rev, John Wesley, A. M. 8 vols. ed.* Nahemaih Curnock. London: Epworth 1909-1916.
- The Works of John Wesley* 14 Vol 3rd. ED. Thomas Jackson. London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room. 1872.

Korean Books

- Bae, Kook Won. *Prism of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, Seoul: Daejangan, 2013.
- Bavink, Herman. *Our Reasonable Faith*, trans. Kwangryun Won, Seoul: Christdigest, 2013
- Choi, Byung-Gyu. *Diagnosis of Cult and Response*, Seoul: Grace Publishers, 2004
- Choi, Gap Jong. *What is Justification?*, Seoul : Samulgyeolplus, 2016.
- Daehan Yesugyo Jangrogyo Yunhapwhae [Korean Jesus Presbyterian United Association],
Cult Response Task Force, Orthodox and Heresy Comprehensive Research Institute,
2004
- Gohler, Alfred. trans. Jungwoo Yoo, *Calvin's Sanctification*, Seoul: Korea Presbyterian
Press, 2001
- Im, Tae Soo, ed. *Korean Church Needs the Second Reformation*, Seoul: Kydokkyeomonsa,
2015.
- Jung, Dong-Sup. *Correcting the Salvation Concept*, Seoul: New Wave Plus, 2015
- Jung, Dong-Sup Jung and Young-Ae Lee. *Why is the Salvation Sect called a Cult?* Seoul:
Joy Mission Society, 2014
- Kim, Deukjoong. "Biblical Theological Criticism on Christian Faith that emphasizes 'Faith
Alone'" in: *Korean Church Needs the Second Reformation*, Seoul: Kigokkyeomonsa,
2015
- Kim, Heongkyu. "John Wesley's Position in Church History," *Korean Systematic Theology*,
vol. 13. p.139-170
- Kim, Hong Do, *Pillar of Fire*, Volume 40, Seoul, Jungam Publishers, 2013.
- Kim, Hong Ki, ed. *A Historical Theological Interpretation on John Wesley*. Seoul:
Methodist Theology Seminary Publishing Company, 1995.
- Kim, Hong Ki, ed. *Wesley and Methodist Theology*. (Seoul: Methodist Theological
Seminary Publishing Company, 1999.
- Kim, Jae Sung. *The Gold Mine of Reformed Theology*, Seoul: Kingdom Books, 2016.
- Kim, Myung Ryung. *Modern Challenge and Today's Systematic Theology*, Seoul: The
Presbyterian Church of Korea Publishing House, 1997.
- Kim, Seyoon. *Justification and Sanctification*, Seoul: Tyrannus, 2013.
- Kwon, Yeon-Gyong. *Salvation without Works?* Seoul: SFC, 2015.
- _____. *Romans Walk*, Seoul: Bokinnyeonsaram, 2010.
- _____. *Galatians*, Seoul: Bible Union, 2015.
- Lee, Chan Suk, eds. *Soteriology*, Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2015.
- Lee, Dae-Bok. *Cult Comprehensive Research*, Seoul: Christianity Cult Research Institute
- Lee, Sung Joo. *Theology of Arminius*, Seoul: Sungjiwon, 1998.

- Mok, Chang Kyun. *Heresies Argument*, Seoul: Tyrannus, 2016.
- Park, Choong Gu. *A History of Christian Ethics*, vol. 3. Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2003.
- Park, Myoung Soo. *Modern Society and Evangelism*, Seoul: Handle Press, 2008.
- Park, Oksu. *Forgiveness of Sins the Secret of Being Born Again 1*, Seoul: Joyful News Publishers, 1988
- _____, *The Secret of Forgiveness of Sins 2*, Seoul: Joyful News Publishers, 1991
- _____, *The Secret of Forgiveness of Sins 3*, Seoul: Joyful News Publishers, 1993
- Ra, Eun-Sung, *Orthodox and Heresy Part 1*, Seoul: Grisim Publishers, 2008
- Shim, Chang-Sup. "What is the Salvation Sect?" Seoul: Cult Victim Response Investigative Research Committee, 2014
- Shin, Kwang Eun. *Chonhamujeok Arbangism*, Seoul: Poieba, 2014.
- Yoo, Tae Joo, ed. *John Calvin*, vol. 1. Seoul: Tirannus, 2009.

Articles, Theses, and Dissertations

- Bae, Myung-Hee, "Soteriology of Calvin and the Salvation Sect.: Comparison Research, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Youngnam Theological University Theological Graduate School, 2006.
- Barth, Gerhard. "Matthew's Understanding of the Law." In *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963.
- Bryant, David J. "Imago Dei Imagination, and Ecological Responsibility." *Theology Today*, vol. 57, April 2000.
- Collins, Kenneth J. "The State of Wesley Studies in North America: a Theological Journey" in *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 44. no. 2(Fall 2009): 7-38.
- Daniel, Curt. "Hyper Calvinism and John Gill," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1983.
- Fischer, Hans Georg. "Lutheranism and the Vindication of the Anabaptist Way" in *The Theology of the Anabaptists*, by Robert Friedmann. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999, 90.
- Ju, Myung-Soo. "The Salvation Sect Syndrome: What is the Problem?" Unpublished Thesis, Korean Church Cult & Heresy Critique Symposium, 2014.
- Kim, Jae Sung. "Unto Cum Christo: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Calvin's Theology", Ph. D. dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998, 43.

- Kim, Hong Do, *Bulkidung: A Pillar of Fire*, Seoul: Jungamseowon, 2013, vol.40. 419-424.
- Kim, Heong Kyu, "The Place of John Wesley in Church History," *Korean Systematic Theology Collected Writings*, vol. 13, 139-170.
- Kwon, Yon-Gyong, "Did the Galatian agitators demand strict adherence to the law?" in *Hankook Gidokgyeo Shinhak Nonchong*, Volume 56, 2008.
- _____. "Fear of Uselessness" in *New Testament Study* 6/2, Seoul: Korea Evangelism New Testament Study Association, 2007.
- _____. "Assurance of Salvation in Pauline Epistles", in *Shinhakjipyong* 23/23 Anyang University: Institute of Theology, 2010.
- _____. "Does the 'Works of the Law' mean 'Obedience to the Law?'" in *Journal of New Testament* 14/3, (Autumn 2007): 679-708.
- _____. "The Gospel that Gives Life, the Law that Kills," *Canon & Culture*, Volume 5 No. 2, (2011): 45-80.
- Lee, Dae-Bok. *Cult Comprehensive Research*, Seoul: Christianity Cult Research Institute.
- Luther, Martin, "Two Kinds of Righteousness in Christ." In *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1980).
- Maddox, Randy L. "John Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy: Influence, Convergences and Differences" *The Asbury Theological Journal* 45. no. 2 (Fall 1990): 29-54.
- Neuser, Wilhelm, ed., "The first outline of Calvin's theology – the preface to the New Testament in the Olivétan Bible of 1535." *Koers : Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*, Book 66, volumes 1 & 2, 2001.
- Park, Yong-Gyu. "The Salvation Sect and Other Cult's Socially Dysfunction from Church Historical Perspective," Unpublished Thesis, Korean Church Cult & Heresy Critique Symposium, 2014.
- Riss, Richard M. *John Wesley's Christology in Recent Literature*, In *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 45. no. 1 (2010): 108-129.
- Yu, Hae-Moo & Choi, Gap-Jong. "What is Wrong with the Korean Church Soteriology?" *Ministry and Theology* 5, (2001): 170-181.