

# Calvinus clarissimus theologus

Papers of the Tenth International Congress  
on Calvin Research

Edited by  
Herman J. Selderhuis

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht



Herman J. Selderhuis, Calvinus clarissimus theologus

# Reformed Historical Theology

Edited by  
Herman J. Selderhuis

in co-operation with  
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Elsie McKee, Richard Muller

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## Preface

The Tenth International Congress on Calvin Research took place from August 22 – 27, 2010 at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. The presidium of the International Congress had decided that in order to relate scholarly research to present day issues and, in this case, the recent history of South Africa, the overall theme of the plenary papers should be ‘reconciliation’. It is noteworthy that all presenters have managed to deal with this topic in various ways and without doing injustice to academic standards. Even a good number of short papers took notice of the overall theme and all of this results in this volume, in which the latest in Calvin research is presented.

Other than some had expected, the attention for Calvin did not decline after the Calvin Year 2009 in which so many conferences were held and so many books were published. Bloemfontein proved that quite the opposite is true, namely that the 500<sup>th</sup> celebration of Calvin’s birthday gave a boost to research and encouraged many young scholars and – from a growing number of countries – to deal with the Genevans theology, biography and influence. In this respect also the congress reached its goal in stimulating students and younger scholars in their career as well as bringing junior and senior researchers together. The contributions were peer-reviewed to meet the academic standards and requirements of the International Calvin Research Congress as well as the Publisher Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

The title of this volume is, as usual with the Calvin Congress volumes, taken from a letter addressed to Calvin. This time it is the letter Johannes Sturm sent on May 29<sup>th</sup> 1561 and in which he called Calvin a lucid and learned theologian (‘Clarissimo doctissimo optimo viro D. Ioanni Calvino...’, CO 18, 480). The qualification ‘doctissimus’ also applies to the late Wilhelm Neuser, the genius behind the congress, behind the *edition secunda* of Calvin’s works and behind many solid publications. Neuser passed away on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2010 and he was sorely missed but thankfully remembered at Bloemfontein.

I want to thank the University of the Free State (Bloemfontein) as the host of this congress and especially Dolf Britz and Victor D’Assonville as main organizers. Not only have they made us feel at home in their beautiful country, supplied us with great hospitality as well as with the atmosphere in which a congress can function fruitfully, they have also made us experience that reconciliation is not just an academic issue and even less a thing from the past.

This volume is once again the result of excellent cooperation between

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht and Reformation research. I wish to thank Jörg Persch and Christoph Spill for their enthusiasm and expertise, and Martijn de Groot who helped me tirelessly with making a wide variety of papers into a cohesive book.

Apeldoorn, August 2011

Herman Selderhuis

President International Congress on Calvin Research

In-Sub Ahn

# Calvin's Theology of Reconciliation in his Sermons

## I. Introduction

### 1.1 Reconciliation

This article is one in a series devoted to my theological journey to find out the Christian identity in the Protestant Churches in this world.

First, in *Augustine and Calvin about Church and State*,<sup>1</sup> I made a detailed investigation into the theology of Augustine and Calvin on Church and State, using historical, hermeneutical, and dogmatic methods. In that study I proposed that, in the background of Calvin's thinking about Church and State, we can find a soul and body analogy. Calvin distinguished between the spiritual realm of piety, and the political sphere responsible for the duties of humanity and citizenship. In Calvin's thoughts, Church and State have a deep relationship, just like the case of soul and body in a man. But Church and State should not be mixed, just like soul and body.

Second, with those perspectives, in the *Calvin Handbook*, which was published for the celebration of Calvin's 500th anniversary by Calvin scholars from around the world, I suggested the characteristics of the reception of Calvin in Asia. I especially focused on China, Japan and Korea.<sup>2</sup>

Third, in the other study, which was presented during the Calvin 500 celebration in the Netherlands (April, 2009),<sup>3</sup> I presented a study about Calvin in South Korea. It concentrated on the relationship between the theological characteristics of Calvin's reception in Korea and its historical development.

Fourth, I researched the identity of Korean Protestantism. I especially tried to present the formation of the character of the Korean Protestant Churches in

1 In-Sub Ahn, *Augustine and Calvin about Church and State* (Ph.D. Diss.) Kampen Theological University, The Netherlands (2003).

2 In-Sub Ahn, "Calvijn in Azië," in: *Calvijns Handboek* (ed.) H. Selderhuis (Kok: Kampen, 2008), 563 – 570. This handbook was also published in German. See *Calvin Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 505 – 511. For English version, see *The Calvin Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009).

3 In-Sub Ahn, "Calvijn in (Zuid-) Korea," in: *Het Calvinistisch Ongemak* (Kampen: Kok, 2009), 237 – 248.

the South and the North. My point was closely related to the reconciliation issue of the Korean peninsula.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, based on these previous studies, I came to a conclusion that Calvin's reconciliation theology is of crucial importance for the profound understanding of reconciliation theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a key concept for Christian groups in the non-Western world (including Asia) as well as Western Christianity.

## 1.2 Sermon and Reconciliation in Calvin

In his work in Geneva (1536 – 1538, 1541 – 1564), especially during the last period of his life, Calvin did not stop preaching in the Church.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the sermon was a very significant aspect of his work throughout his whole life. For Calvin, therefore, the sermon was “*de ziel van de kerk*” (the soul of the church) and “*de van God gegeven weg ter zaligheid*” (the way to salvation provided by God). In addition, Calvin's struggle for the freedom and reformation of the Church was primarily a matter of the sermon.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, Calvin sharply rebukes the unrighteous preachers in his 25th *Sermon on the Ephesians* (on Ephesians 4:11 – 12). It seems to be so fervent that it is hard to find this tone in his other *Commentaries* or *Institutes*.

Calvin preaches:

When we see now so few good preachers, and there are knaves, good for nothing, and more wretched than the monks in popedom, who are as ready to preach Mahomet's Koran as Christ's Gospel, as long as they can hold on to their livings; and when, besides those, we also see drunkards who have no more zeal than swine, but are like mastiffs that bark, but never open their lips except to confound light and darkness together, that all things might be brought to confusion; – when we see all this, let us understand that God executes just vengeance upon such a despising of his gospel.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, above all, Calvin's criticisms focus on the miserable qualities of the preachers and the misuse of the sermon in those days.

At the end of that sermon, however, Calvin also relates the sermon to the redemptive work and the meaning of the sermon itself.

Calvin continues:

4 In-Sub Ahn, “The Presbyterian Churches of (South) Korea and the reunification issue – a matter of reconciliation,” in: *Reshaping Protestantism in a Global Context*, Contact Zone. Explorations in Intercultural Theology (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009) vol. 1. 85 – 95.

5 D. de Vries, “Calvin's Preaching,” in: *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, (ed.) D.K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 106.

6 W. Balke, *Calvijn en de Bijbel* (Kok: Kampen, 2003), 80 – 81.

7 *John Calvin's Sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, tr. Based on that of Arthur Golding, 1577 (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 367.

Now the fact is that it [the church] cannot be built up, that is to say, it cannot be brought to soundness, or continue in a good state, except by means of the preaching of the Word. [...]; to be short, if we desire our salvation, we must learn to be humble learners in receiving the doctrine of the gospel and in hearkening to the pastors that are sent to us, as if Jesus Christ spoke to us himself in his own person, assuring ourselves that he will acknowledge the obedience and submission of our faith when we listen to the mortal men to whom he has given that charge.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, for Calvin, the sermon provides a significant notion concerning the ecclesiology, soteriology and theology of the Christian life. For this reason, it is also necessary to research Calvin's theology of reconciliation in his sermons, which will be presented in this article.

### 1.3 Methods and Structure

Calvin's Sermons were recorded from 1549 on by Denis Raguénier, who was appointed as stenographer by the French-speaking deacons in Geneva.<sup>9</sup> In a sense, a study of Calvin's sermons complements previous Calvin researches which were exclusively concentrated on Calvin's *Commentaries* and *Institutes*.<sup>10</sup> This article would like to focus on Calvin's theology of reconciliation in Calvin's *Sermons to the Ephesians*.<sup>11</sup> Calvin preached on Ephesians from May of 1558 to March of 1559. Calvin's *Commentary to the Ephesians*,<sup>12</sup> which would be the source of his *Sermons on the Ephesians*, had been published in 1548. When we notice that M. Bucer used Calvin's *Sermons on Ephesians* in his last years at Cambridge till 1551<sup>13</sup>, we can understand the importance of this book. Therefore it would be useful to investigate Calvin's *Sermons on Ephesians*, for Calvin's theology of reconciliation.

This article will also examine Calvin's concept of the "pastors" in Ephesians 4,11 by a comparative study of the *Sermons*, *Commentary* and the *Institutes*. In so doing, we may expect to gain two useful results. First, with the comparative study of the same text (Ephesians 4,11), we can understand the differences between the characteristics of the sermon and the commentary in Calvin. Second, this article attempts a chronological study of Calvin's use of Ephesians

8 Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians*, 374.

9 W. de Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin, Expanded Edition: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 93 - 100.

10 W.H. Neuser, "Calvins Prädestinationslehre: seine Auslegung von Epheser 1 und Römer 9," *Reformed Theology* vol. 15 (2004), 66 - 70.

11 *Calvini Opera* (= CO.) 51. 240 - 862. For English text, see. Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979). Hereafter: *Serm. Ephesians*.

12 CO 51. 136 - 239.

13 W. van 't Spijker, "The Influence of Bucer on Calvin as Becomes Evident From the *Institutes*," in: *John Calvin's Institutes: His Opus Magnum* (Potchefstroom, South Africa: Potchef-stroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1986), 108.

4,11 in his various editions of the *Institutes*. In this way, it may demonstrate the development of Calvin's theology during those years.

## 2. Calvin's Theology of the Sermon

### 2.1 The Trinitarian Work of Salvation

When we study Calvin's theology of the sermon, it is notable that his theory is based on the Trinitarian work of salvation. In Calvin's sermons on Ephesians, the important point is that the sermon is the means of salvation. Calvin emphasized it as follows.

... it is certain that the devil blinds them in that presumption, and one knows that he would have gained all if the means of our salvation were abolished and taken away.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, for Calvin, "the preaching of the Gospel must serve to make the church perfect that we may be brought to the kingdom of heaven."<sup>15</sup> In this sense, according to Calvin, when the ordained pastors in the Church preach the Word, Christians can walk by faith in their pilgrimage through this world.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, if we desire our salvation, we must learn to be humble learners by receiving the doctrine of the gospel, which is preached by the pastors. Thus, Calvin argued that when the people listen to the sermons, they have to know that it is just as if Jesus Christ spoke to them himself in his own person.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Calvin believed that the preaching of the gospel and the appointing of men expressly aim to unite us together and to do away with any dissension among us.<sup>18</sup>

When Calvin understands his theory about the sermon in relation to salvation, he links this idea with Trinitarian theology. In Calvin's view, preachers receive the key which was given to Peter. When the preachers deliver their sermons, the Holy Spirit works with the Word of God among the congregations. During the preaching, the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed by Christ. In the sermon, those who are predestined receive this grace by the work of the Holy Spirit, even though others deny it and remain still in their sin.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it is argued that in Calvin's theory preaching is the work of salvation by the Triune God.

14 *Serm. Ephesians*, 369.

15 *Serm. Ephesians*, 369; *Institute* (1559), 4.1.4; 4.1.5.

16 *Serm. Ephesians*, 378.

17 *Serm. Ephesians*, 374, 375.

18 *Serm. Ephesians*, 373.

19 T.H.L. Parker, *Calvin's Preaching* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 1–34, and 35–55.

## 2.2 The Holy Spirit as the Means Whereby Christ Rules

According to W. Balke, as for Calvin, the mouth of the preachers is that of Christ,<sup>20</sup> since Christ is proclaimed by the preachers. Calvin preached that when Christ was carried up into heaven, he obtained sovereign dominion. Thus, since Christ has sovereign dominion, all creatures should submit to him.

Concerning Christ's rule, Calvin describes it clearly as follows:

... it is not so with Jesus Christ, for he reigns not by force of arms, nor after the manner of worldly princes. How then? He reigns by his Spirit, and by means of his Word. And by that means as it were all things are filled with him, and by the gospel.<sup>21</sup>

In this sense, when Calvin mentions Christ's rule, it means that the Holy Spirit rules by the sermon.<sup>22</sup> According to Calvin, Jesus Christ, who was carried up into heaven and has sovereign dominion over all creatures, rules us by his Word and Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup> Based on Calvin's theory, therefore, the sermon and the work of the Holy Spirit are the means of God's rule.

## 3. Calvin's Theology of Reconciliation in His Sermons

### 3.1 Reconciliation With God

In order to explain reconciliation with God, Calvin uses two words, namely "ransom" or "redemption." For Calvin they mean the same thing. Then he adds the forgiveness of sins. Thus the issue of reconciliation will be as follows. How is God's wrath pacified, and how are we made one with him? How does he accept and acknowledge us as his children?<sup>24</sup> Calvin answered that it is by pardoning of our sins and this pardon necessitates redemption. According to Calvin, through Adam's sin we are utterly lost and have defaced God's image. Thus, we have to be fashioned anew by the working of the Holy Spirit.<sup>25</sup>

20 W. Balke, *Calvijn en de Bijbel* (Kok: Kampen, 2003), 83 – 84. "de mond van Christus"

21 *Serm. Ephesians*, 357.

22 *Serm. Ephesians*, 342, 344.

23 In this point, Calvin was influenced by M. Bucer. See. W. van 't Spijker, "The Influence of Bucer on Calvin as Becomes Evident from the *Institutes*," 122 – 127.

24 *Serm. Ephesians*, 51.

25 *Serm. Ephesians*, 129.



### I) *The Necessity of Reconciliation*

Calvin believed that all our happiness and all our sovereign welfare consist of being reconciled to God. Thus God acknowledges us as his children, and we can lawfully call on him as our Father with full liberty.<sup>26</sup> However, Calvin strongly feared men's separation from God. For example, in his *Commentary* to the Psalms Calvin immediately emphasized the re-birth, just after he mentioned men's corruption.<sup>27</sup>

At the first creation, God looked on all that he had made, and all was exceedingly good.<sup>28</sup> However, after Adam had fallen, he became alienated from the fountain of life. Since then, there is no part of us clean and pure, because sin pervades our lives.<sup>29</sup> Thus, every one of us carries sin with him, even from birth.<sup>30</sup> Calvin emphasizes that we are in a state of dreadful dissipation, till such time as our Lord Jesus Christ restores us.<sup>31</sup>

### II) *God's Priority*

When we research Calvin's theology of reconciliation, we need to note that it is made by God's prior action, and not by men's efforts. For Calvin it is not that we have come to him and it is not that we have sought him.<sup>32</sup> Before the creation of the world, God acted beforehand of his own free grace in electing us.<sup>33</sup> Calvin emphasizes especially that we should content ourselves with God's showing of his "fatherly goodness,"<sup>34</sup> God the Father in this context works for our reconciliation. By employing John 6,44, Calvin argues that no man comes to him except he be drawn by the Father. At this point, God vouchsafes to enlighten us by his Holy Spirit.<sup>35</sup> Thus, it is said that for Calvin, God's prior action is the significant point for reconciliation. Thus, a new man is created by God.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore Calvin argues that we are wholly indebted to God for reconciliation, so that we have "no fear that he owns us for his children,

26 *Serm. Ephesians*, 55.

27 H. Selderhuis, *God in het midden: Calvijns theologie van de Psalmen* (Kampen: Kok, 2000), 69–98.

28 Genesis 1,31

29 *Serm. Ephesians*, 137, 148, 161.

30 *Serm. Ephesians*, 143.

31 *Serm. Ephesians*, 62, 78.

32 *Serm. Ephesians*, 23.

33 *Serm. Ephesians*, 30, 33.

34 *Serm. Ephesians*, 22.

35 *Serm. Ephesians*, 27.

36 *Serm. Ephesians*, 435.

[and] that we are accepted.”<sup>37</sup> In this context it should be noted that Calvin believed that reconciliation is the work of the Trinity.<sup>38</sup>

### *III) Christ, as Mediator*

#### *(a) The Mediating Work of Christ*

In the study of Calvin's theology of reconciliation, it is important to note that the reconciling process is accomplished by Christ. Calvin argues that reconciliation is effected by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, Calvin confirms that out of that foundation we should draw all that belongs to our salvation.<sup>39</sup>

Concerning Christ's work of reconciliation, Calvin clearly maintains as follows:

For if the angels of heaven are not worthy to be taken for God's children except through a head and mediator, what shall become of us who do not cease daily to provoke God's wrath by our iniquities? In fact, we fight against him! God, then, must of necessity look upon us in the person of his only Son, or else he is bound to hate and abhor us.<sup>40</sup>

According to Calvin, God accepts us as righteous and we are reconciled to God by the mediating work of Christ.<sup>41</sup> In this context, it is noteworthy that Calvin emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the “only” mediator, and that all of us must come to him to obtain our petitions.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the work of reconciliation by Christ aims for us to be restored in the image of God.<sup>43</sup> Our salvation depends upon Jesus Christ.<sup>44</sup> Even though we are naturally the children of wrath, grace leads us to God to be reconciled to him,<sup>45</sup> and enables us to call God our Father.<sup>46</sup> Christ was ordained to bring the message of reconciliation to the world. Paul beseeches men in God's name to be reconciled to God.<sup>47</sup>

Until we are restored in the person of Jesus Christ, the whole order of nature is as good as defaced, and all things decayed and disordered by the sin of Adam.<sup>48</sup> Calvin also maintains that we are renewed by the grace of the Lord.<sup>49</sup>

37 *Serm. Ephesians*, 71.

38 *Serm. Ephesians*, 283.

39 *Serm. Ephesians*, 183.

40 *Serm. Ephesians*, 50.

41 *Serm. Ephesians*, 10–11, 95.

42 *Serm. Ephesians*, 688.

43 *Serm. Ephesians*, 427. See also Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians* (Audubon, New Jersey: Old Paths Publications, 1995), 38.

44 *Serm. Ephesians*, 119.

45 *Serm. Ephesians*, 14.

46 *Serm. Ephesians*, 285.

47 *Serm. Ephesians*, 10.

48 *Serm. Ephesians*, 62.

In this sense he also insists that Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church. Therefore, in accordance with Calvin's sermons, we ought to be settled on Christ as the foundation, because God has revealed himself fully to us by his only Son.<sup>50</sup>

*(b) The Method of Reconciliation*

When Calvin preaches about reconciliation, he also explains the method of reconciliation by Christ. According to Calvin, Jesus Christ is the true living and eternal God, who touches both heaven and earth. In addition, in his person, God has joined his own divine essence and the nature of man together.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, Jesus Christ, as God and man, can play the role of reconciler between God and men. How then does Calvin describe the method of reconciliation?

According to Calvin, the atonement, which is freely bestowed on us, costs the Son of God very dearly. Calvin argues:

For he found no other payment than the shedding of his own blood, so that he made himself our surety both in body and soul, and answered for us before God's judgment to win absolution for us.<sup>52</sup>

Christ totally dedicated himself in order to reconcile us to God. Thus, Calvin summarizes that "there is no way for us to be reconciled to our God, but by the blood, death, and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>53</sup> For Calvin, the forgiveness of our sins and all our righteousness was established by the death and passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>54</sup>

In this context, connecting Jesus' death to the law, Calvin argues:

... all things were dedicated in the law with blood, even the book of the law itself. When the covenant was read openly and published solemnly to the people, the book was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice to show that all the doctrine contained in the law, and all the promises by which God adopts those to be his children whom he has admitted into his church, must be ratified by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>55</sup>

For Calvin, the whole life of Jesus Christ has become our ransom on the cross.<sup>56</sup> In so doing, God's wrath towards us is appeased.<sup>57</sup> Thus, Calvin repeatedly emphasizes that Christ has reconciled us to God his Father by his death.<sup>58</sup>

49 *Serm. Ephesians*, 139.

50 *Serm. Ephesians*, 220–221.

51 *Serm. Ephesians*, 63.

52 *Serm. Ephesians*, 51.

53 *Serm. Ephesians*, 154.

54 *Serm. Ephesians*, 52, 167–168.

55 *Serm. Ephesians*, 178–179.

56 *Serm. Ephesians*, 53.

57 *Serm. Ephesians*, 198–199.

58 *Serm. Ephesians*, 186.

In this context, Calvin argues that since our sins are blotted out by the blood that was shed for the washing of them, we ought to give ourselves wholly to his service.<sup>59</sup> As a conclusion, Calvin proposes that our salvation is in Jesus Christ and it should be declared to us by the preaching of the gospel.<sup>60</sup>

#### *IV) The Holy Spirit as Sealer*

As we have seen above, the reconciliation work of Jesus Christ was planned and designed by God the Father. On the other hand, Calvin also preaches that, except God put us in possession of our salvation by his Holy Spirit, we can have no part or lot in our Lord Jesus Christ, nor in the benefits he has purchased for us.<sup>61</sup> Calvin preaches that God shows himself to be merciful to us, when he vouchsafes to enlighten us by his Holy Spirit in order that we might be drawn to faith by his gospel.<sup>62</sup> He maintains that God made us partakers of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>63</sup> Here again we find the Trinitarian work of reconciliation in Calvin's sermons.

According to Calvin, it is by the Holy Spirit that the reconciling grace, which has been purchased so dearly for us with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is sealed in our hearts.<sup>64</sup> For Calvin, the Spirit of God is the earnest of the life of our souls.<sup>65</sup> Thus, Calvin believes that by his Holy Spirit God sealed and marked us until the day of our redemption. Therefore, the Holy Spirit guides and governs us throughout our lives.<sup>66</sup> For Calvin, besides the receiving of faith by the Holy Spirit, and enlightening us by his grace, God also secures us, so that we do not fall away.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, with this background, Calvin argues that God sends preachers who call us to him and offer us the hope of salvation. In short, Calvin believes that there is no belief, if God does not reveal himself to us by his Holy Spirit. By the Holy Spirit God speaks to our hearts.<sup>68</sup>

59 *Serm. Ephesians*, 64–65.

60 *Serm. Ephesians*, 200.

61 *Serm. Ephesians*, 70.

62 *Serm. Ephesians*, 27.

63 *Serm. Ephesians*, 30.

64 *Serm. Ephesians*, 230–231.

65 *Serm. Ephesians*, 469.

66 *Serm. Ephesians*, 473.

67 *Serm. Ephesians*, 72.

68 *Serm. Ephesians*, 27.

### 3.2 Reconciliation With Neighbors

As we have investigated above, Calvin's theology of reconciliation depends on the work of the Triune God. Moreover, Calvin also proposes "double redemption". In his *Sermons on Ephesians*, Calvin preaches:

There is, then, a double redemption – one which was accomplished in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and another which we wait for and which shall be shown to us at his coming again.<sup>69</sup>

For Calvin, men who are reconciled by Christ live in this world between the first and second redemption. This may also be mentioned as the eschatological life between the "already" and the "not yet." Therefore, we also find here the other process of reconciliation: the one with our neighbors in this world.

#### 1) *Love of God and Love For Neighbors*

According to Calvin, God forgave us in Jesus Christ and provided redemption to his children. Because he reconciled us with God, it is necessary for us to cease all our cruelty and bring low all our pride. Thus, Calvin encourages us to contemplate what God has done for us.<sup>70</sup> When we receive God's blessing by Jesus' death and passion, all God's children should not only be peaceable themselves, but should also procure peace to the utmost of their power. Thus, the mark to aim for, which Christ gave us, is to appease strife and discord.<sup>71</sup> In addition, for Calvin, since God is reconciled to us in the person of his Son and has shown his love for our salvation, our hearts can be softened by contemplating our salvation.<sup>72</sup>

When God gave his grace to us, which we have already seen above in terms of reconciliation, as Calvin preaches, God uses a wonderful way to draw us to himself by the need to be helped by neighbors.<sup>73</sup> If God may distribute his grace through the aid of others, it is said that the relief of neighbors is also significant in the context of reconciliation. Calvin also preaches that it is impossible that we should taste God's mercy, and not be touched with compassion. In this sense, we can also find Calvin's emphasis on love for others in his *Commentary on 1 John*. According to Calvin, new life in Christ is expressed by love for our neighbors. It is the new law of love for newly created Christians.<sup>74</sup>

69 *Serm. Ephesians*, 78.

70 *Serm. Ephesians*, 483.

71 *Serm. Ephesians*, 476.

72 *Serm. Ephesians*, 592.

73 *Serm. Ephesians*, 336.

74 *Comm. 1 John* 3,16.

## II) *The Way to Love Our Neighbors*

In his sermon on Ephesians concerning the fruit of light, which consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth, Calvin preaches as follows.

For by these three words, 'goodness, righteousness and holiness,' he means that we should not do wrong to any person, but endeavour to live with our neighbours in uprightness and honour, and also be kind-hearted in having compassion one for another, to bear with one another patiently, and to succour one another as need shall require.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, we may infer that the fruits of the reconciled children of God are closely related to neighborly love in Calvin's thoughts. According to Calvin, if we wish to avoid strife and quarrelling, we must begin at this point of putting away selfishness and we must consider that God has joined us together. Thus, Christians should endeavor to strengthen peace and friendship. Furthermore, it is necessary to esteem those whom God has so honored as to make them his children, and to have created them in his own image.<sup>76</sup>

In his preaching, Calvin argues that we have to help our neighbors and to have pity and compassion on them, since we spring from the same origin, and we have to acknowledge them be "our image."<sup>77</sup> Therefore, in Calvin's thoughts, just as miseries in us move God to be merciful to us, so the miseries of our neighbors should provoke us to feel pity towards them.<sup>78</sup> According to Calvin, no man ought to despise his neighbor. On the contrary, we ought to embrace one another in true unity of faith and love.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, for Calvin, the compassion to which the Lord exhorts us is a holding of ourselves in check, and a tempering of our rigor.<sup>80</sup>

According to Calvin, since God's children are reconciled to God by Christ, they ought to live in peace and concord, and must control all their passions.<sup>81</sup> Thus, it is necessary not to despise their neighbors and prize themselves too much.<sup>82</sup> In addition, Calvin preaches mutual love in relation to all God's children.

To be God's children (I say), we must have mutual love among ourselves and be linked together in strong concord that peace may be nourished among us.<sup>83</sup>

75 *Serm. Ephesians*, 511.

76 *Serm. Ephesians*, 477.

77 *Serm. Ephesians*, 593.

78 *Serm. Ephesians*, 480.

79 *Serm. Ephesians*, 188.

80 *Serm. Ephesians*, 482 – 483.

81 *Serm. Ephesians*, 478.

82 *Serm. Ephesians*, 340.

83 *Serm. Ephesians*, 481 – 482.

In the context of Ephesians 4:15 – 16, Calvin also argues that “when we seek in the truth to be in happy agreement, and none of us is self-seeking, but rather each one of us promotes the welfare and salvation of his neighbours, this is the concord which ought to be among us.”<sup>84</sup> In his sermon, he argues that we must be so united that Jesus Christ may reign over us according to the doctrine of the gospel. Therefore, as we listen to Calvin’s preaching, the heavenly Father has given Jesus Christ to us, with the condition that we should all join together under him and maintain a brotherly unity among us.<sup>85</sup>

### *III) The Neighbor is Also There For Me*

In Calvin’s sermons on Ephesians, it is notable that the neighbors are not only the passive object who just receive help. The neighbors are also necessary for myself. In this context, Calvin preaches as follows:

We cannot live together without mutual assistance. Now surely all mutual assistance means servitude. Therefore we must be of service by necessity.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, it may be argued that Calvin emphasizes mutual love and assistance towards the neighbors and myself. Concerning the mutual relationship of neighbors, Calvin states:

And at the same time we must also live meekly and gently with each other, and not be so proud as to despise other men and to hold aloof from them. Rather must we consider that they can help us, and that there is not so despicable a person in God’s church who has not received something with which he may be able to do service to his neighbours.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, Calvin insists that a member of the Church must allow himself to be helped by his neighbors. A Church member cannot do without the other ones, and seek no more to be other than a member of the body.<sup>88</sup> Against this background, Calvin can maintain that “since every man has need of his neighbours, it is by this very means that God holds them together.”<sup>89</sup> Therefore, he proposes that if our neighbors are enriched with God’s graces, it means that the same redounds partly to us. On the other hand, if we have received a larger measure of grace, it also teaches us that we are the more bound to impart the same to the needy.<sup>90</sup> In this sense, it is necessary for us to

84 *Serm. Ephesians*, 393.

85 *Serm. Ephesians*, 401.

86 *Serm. Ephesians*, 561.

87 *Serm. Ephesians*, 339.

88 *Serm. Ephesians*, 339.

89 *Serm. Ephesians*, 402.

90 *Serm. Ephesians*, 401.

be embraced by the others. Thus, Calvin argues that we should learn to be humble, in order that we may embrace our neighbors as real brothers.<sup>91</sup>

#### IV) *The Poor*

E.A. McKee has argued that in the sixteenth century, Europe was experiencing a radical development in the laws of social welfare.<sup>92</sup> According to J.E. Olson, while both the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches took a greater interest in matters of social welfare during this trend, the Protestant Churches played a more important role. In this context, Calvin especially worked for the poor in Geneva with two sorts of *Deacons*, namely, “procureurs” and “hospitalliers.”<sup>93</sup>

In his Sermons on Ephesians, Calvin also emphasized the diaconal work for the poor. Calvin preached that the stronger man should not “press upon their neighbors who are feeble and weak,”<sup>94</sup> and endeavor to succor the needy.<sup>95</sup> Concerning the relief of the needy, Calvin emphasized that God set the poor people before our eyes in order to test whether we are kind or cruel like beasts. Thus, Calvin maintains that when the “need of the poor is set before our eyes, we should be touched with pity and compassion, and then be inclined to do them good.”<sup>96</sup> The Lord has given us things in order to relieve those that are in need of them.<sup>97</sup>

Calvin provides a summary of his sermon on the relief for the poor with three points. First, we ought to forsake and renounce all means of livelihood that are not agreeable to God's Word. Second, if we are brought to hunger, poverty, and need, we should earn our living lawfully. Third, it is necessary to do good actively, instead of engaging in extortion.<sup>98</sup>

Calvin, furthermore, provides more progressive emphasis on relieving the poor. He preaches as follows:

91 *Serm. Ephesians*, 320.

92 E.A. McKee, *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving* (Geneva: Droz, 1984), 93 – 113.

93 R.M. Kingdon, “Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva,” in: *Articles on Calvin and Calvinism* vol. 4. *Calvin's Work in Geneva* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1992), 22 – 41; E.A. McKee, *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving* (Geneva: Droz, 1984), 101 – 113; J.E. Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1989), 72 – 87. Jeannine E. Olson, *Deacons and Deaconesses through the Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 107 – 149. *Ibid.*, “De Zorg voor de armen en het leven van de vluchtelingen in het Geveve van Calvijn,” in: W. Balke, J.C. Klok, W. van't Spijker, *Johannes Calvijn: Zijn Leven, Zijn Werk* (Kampen: Kok, 2008), 155 – 158.

94 *Serm. Ephesians*, 341.

95 *Serm. Ephesians*, 456.

96 *Serm. Ephesians*, 459.

97 *Serm. Ephesians*, 460.

98 *Serm. Ephesians*, 459.



.... Just as they that have revenues and rents send their men to demand them and gather them up, so our Lord requires of us that we should pay him his tribute, that is to say, the homage money that we owe him, in acknowledgement that the things which we possess come from him, and from his sheer liberality. He does not send us either stewards or iron-fisted men, but the poor, and that ought to suffice us, for they are his true receivers.<sup>99</sup>

According to Calvin's sermon, when we relieve the needy with money, it means that we offer it to the Lord. Thus, if we can argue that to help the poor is to serve the Lord, the diaconal work for the poor has a religious meaning connected to the worship for God. Calvin continues:

And we know that almsdeeds are called sacrifices. Therefore when we do them, we must confess with a sincere and genuine heart that we come to do homage to God for what we hold of him.<sup>100</sup>

If Calvin is right, our almsgiving is a sacrifice to the Lord. Therefore, I may argue that the diaconal work for the poor is a sincere service of worship, which should be provided by those who are reconciled by Christ.

#### V) Calvin and the Jews and the Turks

In the context of Calvin's viewpoint of the neighbors, it would also be interesting to look into his attitudes towards the Jews and the Turks. Basically, Calvin shows no difference between the Jews and the Turks, because they have the same origin in the first creation. We are all children of Adam.<sup>101</sup>

However, in the perspective of the process of redemptive history, according to Calvin, the Jews had some acquaintance with God, because God had adopted the Jews with respect to Abraham's offspring as holy. However, Calvin does not mean that the Jews had more worthiness than the rest of the world. It had just pleased God to count them as his own family. In this sense, he preaches that before Christ came into the world, the Jews were comparatively speaking nearer, and the others were further off from God.<sup>102</sup> Thus, Calvin sees the Jews through the eyes of redemptive history.

Calvin has a theology that all the children of Adam are heirs of God's wrath and cursed by nature, so that there is nothing but sin and iniquity in us. As a matter of fact, Calvin maintains that all people are corrupted in all parts of their soul.<sup>103</sup> Therefore God cannot acknowledge us as his children until his image is restored in us, which is done by the new creation. Because the image

99 *Serm. Ephesians*, 459.

100 *Serm. Ephesians*, 460.

101 *Serm. Ephesians*, 161.

102 *Serm. Ephesians*, 185.

103 *Serm. Ephesians*, 161.

of God was defaced in us by Adam's sin, we must be created anew in Jesus Christ.<sup>104</sup> In this sense, here again there is no difference between the Jews and the Turks.<sup>105</sup>

Therefore, for Calvin, even though the Jews, Turks and Papists, and the others try to appease God's wrath, they are "cut off and estranged from Christ and rot away in their own corruption."<sup>106</sup> Calvin believes that the Jews did not have any means in themselves by which to be reconciled to God except by being members of Jesus Christ, because he maintains that every person "carries sin with him even from his birth."<sup>107</sup> Finally, the Old Testament ceremonies were like a wall to divide the Jews from the Gentiles. This wall was broken down because of Jesus Christ's redemptive work.<sup>108</sup>

As we have seen above, in Calvin's mind there is no difference between Jews and Turks. He sees them within the scope of redemptive history. Therefore, it may be said that Calvin shows no hostility against Jews and Turks.

#### 4. Calvin's Understanding of "Pastors (Ephesians 4,11)": A Comparative Study of Calvin's *Sermons*, *Commentaries* and *Institutes*

Among various descriptions concerning Calvin's work, he can be evaluated as an expositor. Thus, it is important to study Calvin's theology with the aid of his *Commentaries*.<sup>109</sup> Calvin at first published his *Commentary to the Ephesians* in 1548. However, he preached his forty-eight sermons on Ephesians during 1588 and 1559. They were written down at first with stenography. These sermons were published in French (1562) and also in English (1577). Among different editions of Calvin's *Institutes*, the first quote of Ephesians 4:11 appears in his first edition (1536). However, his uses of Ephesians 4:11 were expanded through the 1543 edition and the 1559 edition.

104 *Serm. Ephesians*, 436.

105 *Serm. Ephesians*, 67.

106 *Serm. Ephesians*, 55.

107 *Serm. Ephesians*, 143.

108 *Serm. Ephesians*, 192.

109 J.L. Thompson, "John Calvin on Biblical Interpretation: Tradition and Innovation in Early Reformed Exegesis of 1 Corinthians," in: *Lectures for the Reformation in Korea Institute for Reformed Studies* (Busan: Kosin University, 2007), 2. Cf. J.L. Thompson, "Calvin as a biblical interpreter," in: *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (ed.) D.K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 58–73.

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The contributors in this volume contain the papers of the 10th International Congress on Calvin research that took place in Bloemfontein 2010 and represents the latest in Research on Calvin. The first part of the book consists of the plenary papers presented by leading scholars in Reformation history and theology and focussed on the topic of reconciliation. In the second part a selected number of short papers is presented in which a wide variety of topics is dealt with. Just as with the preceding published papers of Calvincongresses, this volume also will become a source as well as a guideline for future studies.

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