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PREPARATION

OUR REGENERATION BY FAITH: REPENTANCE		
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2	Their First Objection. Answer. In what sense the origin of Repentance ascribed to Faith. Cause of the erroneous idea that faith is produced by repentance. Refutation of it. The hypocrisy of Monks and Anabaptists in assigning limits to repentance exposed.	Repentance has its foundation in the gospel, which faith embraces
3	A second opinion concerning repentance considered.	Mortification and vivication
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EXPLORATORY

1	Connection of this chapter with the previous one and the subsequent chapters. Repentance follows faith, and is produced by it. Reason. Error of those who take a contrary view.	Repentance as a consequence of faith
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Why do we need to understand repentance in order to understand faith? (592,17ff)

- a. *Even though we have taught in part how faith possesses Christ, and how through it we enjoy his benefits, this would still remain obscure if we did not add an explanation of the effects we feel.*

Calvin mentions two scriptures in which ...*the sum of the gospel is held to consist in repentance and forgiveness of sins*. What is their context and what do they say? (592, 21)

- a. When the disciples were gathered in Jerusalem, listening to the report of the two who had been on the road to Emmaus. Jesus appeared to them all and summed up their task going forward – which was to proclaim the whole gospel – thus: *...and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*
- b. The apostles before the Sanhedrin: ²⁹*But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. ³¹Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins..."*

How does Calvin define repentance in 592, 24?

- a. *...newness of life*

How does Calvin define forgiveness of sins in 592, 24f?

- a. *...free reconciliation*

How does the sentence that begins, *Now, both repentance and forgiveness of sins...* (592,23ff) link the subject of repentance with the two preceding chapters?

- a. *Now both repentance and forgiveness of sins:*
 - a. *...are conferred on us by Christ* (this points to the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, which is the subject of III.1)
 - b. *...both are attained through faith.* (the subject of III.2)

(IJ: The opening paragraph of this chapter is important because it links the subject of repentance with those that have preceded it and with what comes after.

We are meant to think of the subjects covered in the first three chapters of book three as interlinked and essential to each other. But they are also interlinked with the chapters that follow, viz:

Going forward from this point, Chapters 4 and 5 are a polemical digression. Calvin returns to repentance in chapters 6-10, which spell out what repentance looks like in three specific areas [684, 21ff *...it will be profitable to assemble from various passages of Scripture a pattern for the conduct of life in order that those who heartily repent may not err in their zeal*]. So, really, chapters 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 all deal with repentance.

Thus (according to the plan set out in 593, 1ff *...when this topic is rightly understood it will better appear how man is justified by faith alone, and simple pardon*) Calvin lays a foundation for his treatment of justification by his thorough treatment of repentance.)

...pardon and forgiveness are offered in the preaching of the gospel in order that the sinner, may be freed from three things. What are those three things? (593, 8f)

- a. *...the tyranny of Satan*
- b. *...the yoke of sin*
- c. *...the miserable bondage of vices*

What does this teach us about the place of repentance in the life of the Christian? (593, 6ff)

- a. *For since pardon and forgiveness are offered through the preaching of the gospel, in order that the sinner, freed from the tyranny of Satan, the yoke of sin, and the miserable bondage of vices, may cross over into the Kingdom of God, **surely no one can embrace the grace of the gospel without betaking himself from the errors of his past life into the right way, and applying his whole effort to the practice of repentance.***

What two errors does Calvin identify in this section? (593, 14f)

- a. *...repentance precedes faith.*
- b. *...repentance...is produced by it (ie, by faith) as fruit from a tree.*

What is not taking place in the lives of those who hold either of the above errors? (593, 15ff)

- a. *Such persons have never known the power of repentance, and are moved to feel this way by an unduly slight argument.*

(IJ: Calvin seems to be defining his terms very carefully here. Repentance is an *effect we feel ...is not separated from the free imputation of righteousness ...not only constantly follows faith, but is also born of faith*. However, it is not *...produced by (faith) as fruit from a tree*.)

2	Their First Objection. Answer. In what sense the origin of Repentance ascribed to Faith. Cause of the erroneous idea that faith is produced by repentance. Refutation of it. The hypocrisy of Monks and Anabaptists in assigning limits to repentance exposed.	Repentance has its foundation in the gospel, which faith embraces
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Continuing directly on from the previous section, Calvin explores the thinking of those who *...moved to feel this way by an unduly slight argument...suppose that repentance precedes faith.* (593, 16f & 13f)

What, *unduly slight argument*, persuades them that repentance precedes faith? (593, 18ff)

- a. Christ...and John...first urge the people to repentance, then add that the Kingdom of Heaven has come near. Such was the command the apostles received...such was the order Paul followed...

What is their error? (593, 22ff)

- a. *...while they superstitiously cling to the joining together of syllables, they **disregard the meaning** that binds these words together.*

What meaning do they disregard? (593, 24ff)

- a. *Christ the Lord and John preach in this manner: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" [Matt 3:2], **do they not derive the reason for repenting from grace itself and the promise of salvation?** Accordingly, therefore, their words mean the same thing as if they said, "Since the Kingdom of Heaven has come near, repent."*

How does Calvin know this to be the case? (594, 5ff, 26ff, 31ff)

- a. *Matthew, when he has related that John so preached, teaches that the prophecy of Isaiah had been fulfilled in him: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God" [Matt 3:3; Isa 40:3]. **But in the prophet that voice is bidden to begin with comfort and glad tidings [Isa. 40:1-2].***
- b. *Secondly, I say that, according to the statement of the Psalm: "There is propitiation with thee...that thou mayest be feared" [Ps. 130:4, Comm], no-one will ever reverence God but him that trusts that God is propitious to him.*
- c. *This tenderness in overlooking and tolerating vices is a sign of God's fatherly favour. Hosea's exhortation also shows this: "Come, let us return to Jehovah; for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has stricken and he will cure us" [Hos 6:1, cf. Vg.]. For the hope of pardon is added like a goad, that men may not sluggishly lie in their sins.*

What four conclusions does Calvin draw from these scriptures? (594, 12ff, 24f, 28f, 29ff)

- a. *...a man cannot apply himself seriously to repentance without knowing himself to belong to God.*
- b. *...no uprightness can be found except where that Spirit reigns that Christ received to communicate to his members.*
- c. *...no-one will ever reverence God but him who trusts that God is propitious to him.*
- d. *No one will gird himself willingly to observe the law but him who will be persuaded that God is pleased by his obedience.*

Does Calvin's view that the origin of repentance is faith imply that repentance plays no part in our coming to Christ? (594, 10ff)

- a. *...when we refer the origin of repentance to faith we do not imagine some space of time during which it (ie. faith) brings it to birth.*

What unhelpful practice, based on a misunderstanding of the relationship between repentance and faith, does Calvin refer to disapprovingly? (594, 38ff)

- a. *...the madness of those who, that they may begin from repentance, prescribe to their new converts certain days during which they must practice penance, and when these at length are over, admit them into communion of the grace of the gospel.*

Apart from the reason already given (ie the misunderstanding concerning the relationship between repentance and faith) what other serious objection does Calvin have to this practice? (595, 3fff)

- a. *...that giddy spirit brings forth such fruits that it limits to a paltry few days a repentance that for the Christian man ought to extend throughout his life.*

3	A second opinion concerning repentance considered.	Mortification and vivication
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Having used terms such as *madness* and *dregs* for those limit *... to a paltry few days a repentance that for the Christian man ought to extend throughout his life*, Calvin now turns to the teaching of others with whom he also disagrees, but not so vehemently. This is because these men, although mistaken, mean *...to speak simply and sincerely according to the rule of scripture*.

What are the two elements of penance? (595, 8f)

- a. *...mortification and vivication.*

Mortification is...? (595, 9ff)

- a. *...sorrow of soul and dread conceived from the recognition of sin and the awareness of divine judgment.*

Vivication is...? (595, 20)

- a. *...the consolation that arises out of faith.*

What, in Calvin's view, is not a part of vivication? (595, 27f)

- a. *...the happiness that the mind receives after its perturbation and fear have been quieted.*

What does vivication consist of? (595, 29f)

- a. ...the desire to live in a holy and devoted manner, a desire arising from rebirth.

4	A third opinion, assigning two forms to repentance, a legal and an Evangelical. Examples of each.	Penance under law and under gospel
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What two concepts (not original to him) does Calvin introduce in this section? (596, 3 & 7)

- a. *Repentance of the law.*
- b. *Repentance of the gospel.*

What examples are given of repentance under the law? (596, 11)

- a. Cain, Saul and Judas.

What was their repentance characterised by? (596, 13ff)

- a. They acknowledged, *the gravity of their sin.*
- b. They were, *afraid of God's wrath.*
- c. *...since they conceived of God only as Avenger and Judge, that very thought overwhelmed them.*

What did their repentance amount to? (596, 16ff)

- a. *...their repentance was nothing but a sort of entryway to hell, which they had already entered in this life, and had begun to undergo punishment before the wrath of God's majesty.*

What examples are given of gospel repentance? (596, 21ff)

- a. Hezekiah, the Ninevites, David, Peter's hearers on the day of Pentecost and Peter himself.

What does gospel repentance consist of? (596, 19ff)

- a. Being, *made sore by the sting of sin;*
- b. Being, *aroused and refreshed by trust in God's mercy;*
- c. Turning, *to the Lord.*

Does Calvin approve of this two-fold understanding of repentance (law repentance and gospel repentance)? (597, 3ff)

- a. Not entirely: *Although all these things are true, yet the word, repentance...is to be understood otherwise,*

5	The orthodox doctrine of Repentance. 1. Faith and Repentance to be distinguished, not confounded or separated. 2. A consideration of the name. 3. A definition of the thing, or what repentance is. Doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles.	Definition
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Why does Calvin disagree with the definition given of gospel repentance? What is his main issue with it? (597, 5f)

- a. *...their inclusion of faith under repentance disagrees with what Paul says in Acts: Testifying both to Jews and gentiles of repentance to God, and of faith...in Jesus Christ.*

In what respect does repentance resemble hope? (597, 11ff)

- a. *As faith is not without hope, yet faith and hope are different things, so repentance and faith, although they are held together by a permanent bond, require to be joined rather than confused.*

How does Calvin, in this section, sum up the relationship between repentance and faith? (597, 10f)

- a. *...even though they cannot be separated, they ought to be distinguished.*

What is Calvin's definition of repentance? (597, 25ff)

- a. *It is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit.*

This definition consists of three principal assertions, which are...? (598, 15; 599, 3f & 600, 4f)

- a. Repentance is a, *turning of life to God;*
- b. *...repentance proceeds from an earnest fear of God;*

[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

- c. *...repentance consists of two parts: namely mortification of the flesh and vivication of the spirit.*

6	Explanation of the definition. This consists of three parts. 1. Repentance is a turning of our life unto God. This described and enlarged upon.	Repentance as turning to God
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Which of the three assertions is dealt with in this section? (598, 15)

- a. Repentance is a, *turning of life to God*;

What, for Calvin, is the important point about this turning of life? (598, 15f)

- a. *...we require a transformation, not only in outward works, but in the soul itself. Only when it puts off its old nature does it bring forth the fruits of works in harmony with its renewal.*

How is this same point made by Ezekiel? (598, 19)

- a. *He, bids whom he calls to repentance to get themselves a new heart.*

...and by Moses? (598, 21f)

- a. *He, often teaches that it be done with, all the heart, and, all the soul.*

...and by the prophets?

- a. *This expression we see frequently repeated by the prophets.*

What phrase does scripture use that is particularly searching in this regard? (598, 24ff)

- a. *...circumcision of heart.*

7	2. Repentance produced by fear of God. Hence the mention of divine judgment by	Repentance as induced by the fear of God
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[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

the Prophets and Apostles. Example. Exposition of the second branch of the definition from a passage in Paul. Why the fear of God is the first part of Repentance.	
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Which of the three assertions is dealt with in this section? (599, 3f)

- a. *...repentance proceeds from an earnest fear of God;*

What is it that we fear about God in such a way as to incline us to repent? (599, 6ff)

- a. *...divine judgment...God will someday mount his judgment seat to demand a reckoning of all words and deeds.*

To bring about change in us, what needs to happen to this thought? (599, 6f)

- a. *It needs to be, deeply and thoroughly fixed in mind.*

What reactions, negative and positive, will it then produce in us? (599, 10ff)

- a. *It will not permit...[us] to rest nor to breath freely even for a moment...*
- b. *It will stir us to continually, reflect upon another mode of life whereby [we] may be able to stand firm in that judgment.*

What phrase, used by Paul, does Calvin cite as one way of describing the cause of repentance? (599, 26)

- a. *...sorrow...according to God.*

How do we know if our repentance arises from this particular sorrow? (599, 28f)

- a. *...we not only abhor punishment but hate and abhor sin itself, because we know that it displeases God.*

What two aspects of our nature compel God to, *use severity in threatening us?* (599, 30ff)

- a. *...the slothfulness of our flesh;*
- b. *...obstinacy.*

What is Calvin's final reason for tracing repentance to the fear of divine judgment? (599, 42ff)

[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

- a. *...the chief part of righteousness is to render to God his right and honour, of which he is impiously defrauded when we do not intend to subject ourselves to his control.*

If this intention is absent, how will our lives be regarded by God - however highly we are esteemed by other people? (599, 41f)

- a. *...sheer abomination.*

8	3. Repentance consists in the mortification of the flesh and the quickening of the Spirit. These required by the Prophets. They are explained separately.	Mortification and vivication as component parts of repentance
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Which of the three assertions is dealt with in this section? (600, 4f)

- a. *...repentance consists of two parts: namely mortification of the flesh and vivication of the spirit.*

The prophets express it clearly - although simply and rudely, in accordance with the capacity of the carnal folk - when they say: Cease to do evil, and do good. How else is this same exhortation expressed, less simply and rudely? (600, 28ff)

- a. *...put off the old man;*
- b. *...renounce the world and the flesh;*
- c. *...bid our evil desires farewell;*
- d. *...be renewed in the spirit of our mind.*

What does the term, mortification, signify? (600, 33f)

- a. *...we are not conformed to the fear of God, and do not learn the rudiments of piety, unless we are violently slain by the sword of the Spirit, and brought to nought.*

What are the two steps in repentance, considered as mortification and vivication? (600, 18ff)

- a. *...to deny our own nature;*

[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

- b. To experience renewal, usually designated, *from the fruits that flow from it.*

What sort of thoughts and feelings do we need in order to produce these fruits? (600, 25)

- a. *...new thoughts and feelings, that...can be rightly considered new.*

Such thoughts and feelings can have one source only, which is...? (600, 23f)

- a. *...the Spirit of God.*

9	How this mortification and quickening are produced. Repentance just a renewal of the divine image in us. Not completed in a moment, but extends to the last moment of life.	Rebirth in Christ!
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Both things - mortification and vivication - happen to us by participation in...whom? (600, 38)

- a. *...Christ.*

Participation in which deed of Christ's brings about mortification? (600, 39f)

- a. *...in his death, our old man is crucified by his power, and the body of sin perishes (Rom 6:8)*

Participation in which deed of Christ brings about vivication? (601, 2f)

- a. *If we share in his resurrection, through it we are raised up into newness of life.*

What word does Calvin offer in this section in place of, repentance? (601, 5)

- a. Regeneration

What is God doing in and to us through the outworking of Christ's death and resurrection? (601, 16ff)

- a. *...we are restored by this regeneration through the benefit of Christ into the righteousness of God...**In this way** (ie through repentance, defined as mortification and vivication) it pleases the Lord to fully restore whomsoever he adopts into the inheritance of life.*

For how long does God carry out this restoration process? (601, 25f)

[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

- a. *...throughout [our] lives...this warfare will end only at death.*

What do you think Staphylus accused Calvin of teaching? (601, 27ff)

- a. Calvin identified the change produced by the process of repentance with the formation in us of the image of God. In this Calvin claims to be following Paul.
- b. But the image of God will only be fully seen in us in heaven.
- c. It appears therefore that Staphylus accused Calvin of getting it wrong because Calvin identified something that occurs on earth as the image of God.

How does Calvin respond to this accusation? (601, 30ff)

- a. *As if when anything is defined we should not seek its very integrity and perfection.* Calvin makes the point that identifying something that is far from perfect as God's image does not stop us building on the beginning of its expression in us and seeking its perfect expression in glory.

What point does Staphylus's accusation give Calvin the opportunity to make? (601, 31ff)

- a. *In order that believers may reach this goal, God assigns to them a race of repentance, which they are to run throughout their lives.*

10	Reasons why repentance must so extend. Augustine's opinion as to concupiscence in the regenerate examined. A passage of Paul which seems to confirm that opinion.	Believers are still sinners
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What two purposes does Calvin give for our not obtaining, *full possession of freedom so as to feel no more annoyance from [our] flesh.* (602, 7ff)

- a. That we may, *be exercised;*
- a. That we may, *better learn [our] own weakness.*

How has Augustine performed a useful service to his fellow Christians? (602, 17f)

- a. *...he faithfully and diligently collected the opinions of all.*

[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

Opinions about what?

- a. Indwelling sin.

Calvin does not entirely agree with Augustine's conclusions about indwelling sin. Wherein do they differ? (602, 21ff)

- a. *...while he (Augustine) concedes that believers, as long as they dwell in mortal bodies, are so bound...that they are unable not to desire inordinately, yet he dare not call this disease, sin...it becomes sin only when act or consent follows.*
- b. *We (ie Calvin)...deem it sin when man is tickled by any desire at all against the law of God. Indeed, we label, sin, that very depravity that begets in us desires of this sort.*

11	Answer. Confirmation of the answer by the Apostle himself. Another confirmation from a precept of the law. Conclusion.	In believers sin has lost its dominion; but it still dwells in them
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What is Calvin's subject in this section?

- a. The loss of the dominion of sin in the lives of believers.

What action of God produces this loss of sin's dominion? (603, 18f)

- a. *God truly carries this out by regenerating his own people...*

What effect does regeneration have on sin's dominion? (603, 19f & 21f)

- a. *...the sway of sin is abolished in them...But sin ceases only to reign; it does not cease to dwell in them.*

Why does God allow, *some vestiges*, to remain? (603, 25f)

- a. *...not to rule over them, but to humble them by the consciousness of their own weakness.*

What significance do, *these traces*, have for our relationship with God? (603, 27ff)

- a. *...these traces are not imputed, as if they did not exist...the saints - otherwise deservedly sinners and guilty before God - are freed from this guilt.*

[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

How do we know this assertion is true? (603, 31f)

- a. *...there are clear testimonies to this fact in scripture.*

12	Exception, that those desires only are condemned which are repugnant to the order of God. Desires not condemned in so far as natural, but in so far as inordinate. This held by Augustine.	What does “natural corruption” mean?
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13	Passages from Augustine to show that this was his opinion. Objection from a passage in James.	Augustine as witness to the sinfulness of believers
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14	Another objection of the Anabaptists and Libertines to the continuance of repentance throughout the present life. An answer disclosing its impiety. Another answer, founded on the absurdities to which it leads. A third answer, contrasting sincere Christian repentance with the erroneous view of the objectors. Conformation from the example and declaration of an Apostle.	Against the illusion of perfection
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15	Of the fruits of repentance. Carefulness. Excuse. Indignation. Fear. Desire. Zeal. Revenge. Moderation to be observed, as most sagely counseled by Bernard. 509	Repentance according to 2 Cor. 7:11
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<i>The fruits of repentance: holiness of life, confession and remission of sins; repentance is lifelong, 16-20</i>		
16	Internal fruits of Repentance. 1. Piety towards God. 2. Charity towards man. 3. Purity of life. How carefully these fruits are	Outward and inward repentance

[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

	commended by the Prophets. External fruits of repentance. Bodily exercises too much commended by ancient writers. Twofold excess in regard to them.	
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17	Delusion of some who consider these external exercises as the chief part of Repentance. Why received in the Jewish Church. The legitimate use of these exercises in the Christian Church.	The outward practice of penance must not become the chief thing
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18	The principal part of repentance consists in turning to God. Confession and acknowledgment of sins. What their nature should be. Distinction between ordinary and special repentance. Use of this distinction.	Confession of sin before God, and before men
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19	End of Repentance. Its nature shown by the preaching of John Baptist, our Savior, and his Apostles. The sum of this preaching.	Repentance and forgiveness are interrelated
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20	Christian repentance terminates with our life.	In what sense is repentance the prior condition of forgiveness
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Sins for which there is no repentance or pardon, 21-25

21	Repentance has its origin in the grace of God, as communicated to the elect, whom God is pleased to save from death. The hardening and final impenitence of the reprobate. A passage of an Apostle as to voluntary reprobates, gives no countenance to the Novatians.	Repentance as God's free gift
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[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivication of the Spirit. (597,25ff)

22	Of the sin against the Holy Ghost. The true definition of this sin as proved and explained by Scripture. Who they are that sin against the Holy Spirit. Examples:—1. The Jews resisting Stephen. 2. The Pharisees. Definition confirmed by the example of Paul.	Unpardonable sin
23	Why that sin unpardonable. The paralogism of the Novatians in wresting the words of the Apostle examined. Two passages from the same Apostle.	How the impossibility of “second repentance” is to be understood
24	First objection to the above doctrine. Answer. Solution of a difficulty founded on the example of Esau and the threatening of a Prophet. Second objection.	Those who cannot be forgiven cannot repent
25	Third objection, founded on the seeming approval of the feigned repentance of the ungodly, as Ahab. Answer. Confirmation from the example of Esau. Why God bears for a time with the ungodly, pretending repentance. Exception.	Sham repentance and honest repentance

FOR REFLECTION

1. In section 8, would you say Calvin gives more emphasis to mortification or vivication? Why do you think this is?
2. In this chapter and in various ways, Calvin repeatedly returns to the statement that repentance is lifelong, that it is the Christian's way of life. Is this something that is realised enough?