



Calvin between *facilis brevitatis, confessio*, and *institutio*: instruction of faith in Geneva¹

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Abstract

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This article focuses on catechetical instruction in Geneva under Calvin, taking the 1537 “Instruction” and the 1545 “Catechism” as objects of study. The relationship among three key notions – Calvin’s own ideal of striving for brevity and simplicity on the one hand, the notions of “confessio” and “institutio” on the other hand – serves as catalyst to approach the nature of this catechetical instruction. After a historical overview of the circumstances amidst which the above-mentioned writings were produced, a comparative study of their internal organisation leads to the assessment of Calvin’s method of theological exposition when dealing with the law and the Apostle’s Creed.

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Opsomming

Calvyn tussen *facilis brevitās*, *confessio*, en *institutio*: geloofsonderrig in Genève

Die fokus van hierdie artikel val op kategetiese onderrig in Genève onder Calvyn en neem die 1537-“Instruksie” asook die 1545-“Kategismus” as studieobjekte. Die verband tussen drie sleutelbegrippe – Calvyn se eie ideaal van beknoptheid en eenvoud aan die een kant, die begrippe “confessio” en “institutio” aan die ander kant – dien as katalisators om die aard van hierdie kategetiese onderrig te benader. Na ’n historiese oorsig oor die omstandighede waarin bogenoemde geskrifte die lig gesien het, lei ’n vergelykende studie van die interne struktuur tot ’n evaluering van Calvyn se metode van teologiese uitleg ten opsigte van die wet en die Twaalf artikels.

1. Striving for simplicity

About a month before his death, on 28 April 1564, John Calvin met with the pastors of the church of Geneva to speak to them for the last time. His first words, written down at this occasion by Pastor Jean Pinaut, were:

When I first came to this Church, there was almost nothing going on. One preached, and that was all. Yes, people were after idols and they burnt them, but there was no reformation whatsoever. Everything was in great confusion. There was this good man, master Guillaume (Farel – EK) ... Here I went through amazing fights; I was greeted by mockeries the evening in front of my house door, with thirty or sixty harquebus shots. You can think how much bewildered I was, as a poor shy scholar – which I am and have always been – as I readily admit it ...³

After recounting the many hardships he had endured in Geneva, and also acknowledging that everything he had achieved was worth

3 OS, II,401-402. My translation here as well as infra. Unless otherwise specified, English translations are provided by me. The same account can be found in Calvin (1854:573): “Du vendredi 28me jour d’avril 1546, recueilli par (Pinaut), et escript au naïf autant qu’il se l’est peu remettre en mémoire, et de mot à mot, selon qu’il avoit esté prononcé, quoyque par quelqu’autre ordre en quelques mots et propos. Cf. also Vie de Calvin par Nicolas Colladon (CO 21,102): A ce propos il adiousta un recit de son entrée en ceste Eglise, et de sa conversation en icelle: disant que quand il y vint, l’évangile se preschoit, mais que les choses y estoient fort desbordees et que l’Evangile estoit à la pluspart d’avoir abbatu les idoles (...)”

nothing, even that he was a miserable creature, Calvin paradoxically insisted on his faithfulness to Scripture as an expositor:

As for my teaching, I did it faithfully, and God gave me the gracious gift of writing, which I did as faithfully as I could. I did not corrupt or distort willfully a single portion of Scripture; and whereas I could have brought forward many subtleties, I suppressed this inclination and always strove for simplicity.⁴

At the very end of his life, Calvin had not changed his views on the ideal method of exposition of Scripture, *striving for simplicity*, as delineated in the very first of his Bible commentaries, which was on Paul's epistle to the Romans, written in 1539 and dedicated to his friend Simon Grynaeus. In the beginning of the preface, he writes the following:

I remember that when three years ago we had a friendly conversation as to the best mode of expounding Scripture, the way to achieve it which you most approved was also the one I liked above all others: for we were both in agreement that the main quality of an expositor consists in simple brevity, without obscurities.⁵

Twenty-five years later, speaking of the simplicity of his style in his works (whether exegetical or not), Calvin indirectly commends this *facilis brevitatis* which he had intended to apply throughout his life. It was, however, also for other reasons that he had to use brevity upon his return to Geneva, as he recounts in his farewell speech to the ministers:

When I came back from Strasburg, I hastily drew the catechism, for I never wanted to accept the ministry lest they solemnly grant me these two points, namely upholding the catechism and

4 Calvin (1854:576-577). In French: “[Je] me suis toujours étudié à simplicité. In his testament, drawn three days earlier in the presence of the Genevan lawyer Pierre Chenelat, Calvin made the same declaration: le proteste aussi que j’ay tasché, selon la mesure de grace qu’il m’avoyt donnee, d’enseigner purement sa Parole, tant en sermons que par escrit, et d’exposer fidelement l’Escriture sainte.” (Cf. also CO 20,299.)

5 In French: “Il me souvient qu’il y a trois ans, comme nous devisions privément entre nous quelle estoit la meilleure façon d’interpréter l’Escriture, que le moyen d’y procéder lequel vous approuviez le plus, fut aussi celui qui me pleut plus que tous autres. Car nous estions tous deux de cest avis, que la principale vertu d’un expositeur consiste en une briefveté facile, et qui n’emporte point d’obscurité.” (*In Calvin*, 1854-1855,III:1.)

the Church discipline; and while I was writing it, people came to fetch the small pieces of paper, hardly bigger than a hand, and they carried them to the printer.⁶

Still, this self attributed quality should not be seen as being only applicable to his exegetical works (the commentaries), to the exclusion of his catechetical writings. In the preface addressed to Grynaeus Calvin takes Melancthon, Bullinger and Bucer as models for various qualities in their exposition of the epistle to the Romans. The lengthy Bucer, although praised for the remarkable fecundity of his mind, is obviously not catering for all publics. If – this time on the catechetical level – one would for instance take Pierre Viret’s *Instruction Chrestienne en la doctrine de la loy et de l’evangile* published in three volumes in 1564,⁷ he would easily understand that Calvin’s ideal of brevity has to be assessed against the background of other catechetical works published during his lifetime by fellow reformers.

6 This hastily drawn catechism in French dates from 1542. It was revised in 1545. The Latin version also dates from the same year and is the one which has been used in most translations. For both of them, cf. CO 6,1f. Regarding the lost text of 1542, the editors of the OS write the following: “Argentorato reversus anno 1542 Genavae Calvinus catchismum Gallica lingua composuit, quem deperditum investigare nullo modo potuimus. Qui tanta cum festinatione raris schedulis exscriptus ad tyothetas raptus sit, ipse Calvinus narrat in oratione quam domi suae apud parochos Genavenses habuit anno 1564; unde conicitur ipsius autographum diutius permanere vix potuisse.” (OS II,61,7-13.)

7 Pierre Viret, *Instruction Chrétienne, tome premier*, édition établie, présentée et annotée par Arthur-Louis Hofer, éd. L’Age d’Homme, Lausanne 2004. In the preface of what can be considered to be his *opus magnum*, Viret states his methods and justifies them: his purpose is to expose and organise the topics chosen in the clearest, most familiar and popular way possible, so as to instruct uneducated people in the same way children are being taught the basics of Christian faith during catechism. (“Et pourautant que j’ay proposé en moy-mesme, quand j’ay entrepris cest oeuvre, de traiter & deduire les matieres exposées en iceluy le plus clairement, familièrement & populairement qu’il me serait possible, comme si j’auoye delibéré d’enseigner le simple peuple, en la maniere que nous enseignons les ieunes enfans au Catechisme, quand nous les instruisons aux fondemens & rudimens de la religion Chrestienne.”) The method chosen, a series of dialogues, is most appropriate for this purpose, he adds. He admits, though, that this way of teaching is a bit lengthy, since some sentences are – so to say – lost inasmuch as they do not concern directly the core of the matter dealt with. However, he adds the following: “Et quand il est question d’enseigner les plus simples, il vaut mieux estre un peu plus lôg & plus clair, que trop brief & estre obscure.” (“When is it a question of teaching the simplest ones, it is better to be slightly longer but clearer, than too short and obscure.”) (The French excerpts are taken and translated from the facsimile edition of 1564). Hofer (*in* Viret, 2004:33) stresses the same passage at the end of his introduction.

2. Attempting to discipline the church via *confessio*

From the beginning of his first stay in Geneva, September 1536, it had been Calvin's ideal (and also the ideal of his fellow preacher and reformer Guillaume Farel) not only to draw a confession of faith and have it adopted by the city council, but to have each and every inhabitant of the city accept it in public, starting with the magistrates. Access to the Holy Supper would be reserved for those who had performed the required act.⁸ The city council had agreed in principle and, indeed, started requesting from everyone this public confession. It had been published and widely distributed in the city; city officers were sent to every district, and every house, to proceed with the plan.⁹ After all, it was on a memorable day in May 1536 – thus a few months before Calvin's arrival in that city – that the General Council of Geneva, consisting of all its citizens, had unanimously decided to live according to the principles of the gospel, and to reform the life of the city under the sway of God's Word.¹⁰ The campaign launched by the council did not yield the desired results, however, as many inhabitants of Geneva resisted this attempt to force them into a personal and public statement of faith. A second attempt, this time to gather inhabitants of the city according to their respective districts (*dizaines*, as they were called) and bring them to Saint-Pierre cathedral for a collective confession, proved to be no

8 It was originally thought that Calvin was the writer of this confession in 21 articles, the full title of which is: *Confession de la foy laquelle tous bourgeois et habitans de Geneve et subiectz du pays doyvent iurer de garder et tenir extraicte de linstruction dont on use en leglise de la dicte ville.* ("Confession of faith which all citizens and inhabitants of Geneva as well as subjects of the country must swear to keep and uphold, extracted from the Instruction used in the church of the aforesaid city"; CO 22,85-96; OS 1,418-426.) It seems now an established fact that Farel was the author of it (cf. Calvin & Farel, 1986:42-43). To a certain extent, this was already the opinion of the editors of the Calvin Opera (cf. CO 22,9-17).

9 Janton (2008:122-123) stresses the fact that such was also the Bernese practice; anyone who would not subject himself to this requirement incurred the penalty of banishment: "A Berne aussi magistrats et citoyens juraient fidélité à leur confession sous peine de bannissement. A Genève, le secrétaire du gouvernement, du haut de la chaire de Saint-Pierre, pressa les fidèles de souscrire, puis dans chaque quartier les dizainiers collectèrent les engagements jusqu'au 27 décembre, où le Conseil de Berne enleva aux récalcitrants tout prétexte à se dérober, en déclarant la Confession de foi 'selon Dieu et la Sainte Écriture et par ainsi conforme à notre religion'. Désormais elle avait force de loi et quiconque s'opposait à l'un ou l'autre des articles attentait à l'ordre de la cité et relevait de la justice civile." Cf. Speelman (1994:51 ff..).

10 Cottret (1995:127-128).

more successful. At the same time, Calvin wrote a small Christian *Instruction*¹¹ in French. It was based on the first version of his *Institutes of the Christian religion*, which had been published a few months earlier in Basel.¹² As opposition grew against the reformers, tensions with the civil authorities of Geneva also arose: early in 1538 they tried to force the ministers to accept every one at the Table of the Lord, regardless of whether the public confession of faith had been made or not. In February, four new Syndics – that is, the highest executives of Geneva’s government – were elected, who were opposed to Calvin and Farel. Meanwhile, another matter of contention had arisen, namely the insistence of the city of Bern’s authorities on imposing their liturgical practices on the cities of Geneva and Lausanne, especially with regard to the celebration of the Holy Supper. For political reasons, the magistrates of Geneva wished to comply with the Bernese requirements. When the ministers refused to administer communion to those who had not expressed their faith publicly, and also vehemently objected to the imposition by civil authorities of given liturgical uses, they were forbidden to preach. Since they did not submit to this injunction, they were given notice on 23 April 1538 to leave the city within three days.

As Calvin recalled at the eve of his departing from earth, his return to Geneva in 1541 – earnestly requested by this city’s new autho-

11 *Instruction et Confession de foy dont on use en leglise de Geneve* (CO 22,33-74; OS I,378-426). Excerpts *infra* will be quoted from the *Calvini Opera*. An English translation by P.T. Fuhrmann was first published in 1949 by Westminster Press, and republished in 1992 by Westminster/John Knox Press with a foreword by J.H. Leith. The question of the first redaction of the *Instruction* – in Latin or in French – is discussed by Millet (1995:216-217). Following the editors of the *Opera Selecta* as well as Rodolphe Peter, Millet agrees that a Latin version first existed, which was only published in 1538: “Rien ne permet d’établir de façon absolument sûre l’antériorité du latin, mais tout la suggère.” Millet offers a textual comparison between the Latin and the French and convincingly argues that the French text of 1537, being heavily marked by Latinisms, supports the idea of the anteriority of a Latin version. W. de Greef condones this opinion: “The original text of the catechism must have been in Latin, but the first published edition was written in French” (1993:132). Cf. also Zillenbeller (COR III/II,XIV): “Wir können ... die *Instruction* als eine Anfangsetappe auf dem Weg Calvins zu einem in seiner Muttersprache schreibenden Autor lateinischer theologischer Werke ansehen, auf dem er bei Erscheinen der ersten französischen Ausgabe der *Inst.* (1541) schon weiter fortgeschritten war.”

12 This *Instruction* will be more closely scrutinised in the second part of the present article. Millet (1995:210) sees it as a link between the first Latin version of the *Institutes* and the second Latin version (1539) as well as the French one (1541).

rities – was linked to the acceptance of a confession of faith, which alone could guarantee access to the Table of the Lord. Church discipline and confession of faith were to go hand in hand, while catechetical instruction was to lead to a personal confession of faith by the children. This, for Calvin, was not negotiable if true church reformation was to take place. His words to the pastors on his deathbed made it plain: preaching alone did not constitute any solid reformation. As such it did not dispel the chaos and confusion prevailing in Geneva. The last point, concerning catechetical instruction, had been explicitly stated in the Articles prepared by the reformers and presented to the council of Geneva by Calvin himself four years earlier, halfway through January 1537:¹³

Thirdly, in order to keep the purity of doctrine among the people, it is most necessary that children should be so instructed from their youngest age, that they may give an account of their faith and that in such a way the evangelical teaching would not diminish; on the contrary it should be carefully remembered and transmitted from father to son.

3. *Institutio* versus anabaptism

We certainly find in the Articles of 1537 a strong antidote against any possible anabaptist drift in the church, which would make mystical, subjective and individualistic movements the actual object of faith, thus undermining any strong and articulate communal expression of it. From the beginning – that is, after his *subita conversio ad docilitatem*, somewhere around 1533 – Calvin had been extremely wary of anabaptism in all its forms, as the first of his theological treatises, the *Psychopannychia*,¹⁴ testifies. A sentence from the epistle to king Francis I, preceding the text of his first

13 McNeill (1967:138) gives the following account: “On January 1537, the Little Council received from the ministers and adopted a document entitled: ‘Articles concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva’. This set of articles was designed as a constitution for the Church, securing to it existence and status apart from the temporary measures taken by the government. Articles now lost, written by Farel and approved the previous 10 November, may have contributed to the January constitution; but it is likely that Calvin was its principal author.” Cf. also Calvin and Farel (1986:42): “En date du 10 novembre 1536, le Registre du Conseil de Genève fait état d’articles concernant le gouvernement de l’Église que Farel a présentés au Conseil des Deux-Cents”; and Anon. (1971:1).

14 *Psychopannychia; vivere apud Christum non dormire animis sanctos qui in fide Christi decedunt*, composed in 1534, but only published in 1542 (CO 5).

Institutes, speaks volumes in this respect. Calvin justifies his own enterprise by stressing the fact that before him the matter of evangelical faith had been treated by its proponents in a rather poor and disorderly way:

For this reason, most invincible King, I not unjustly ask you to undertake a full inquiry into this case, which until now has been handled – we may even say, tossed about – with no order of law and with violent heat rather than judicial gravity.¹⁵

For a man like Calvin, strongly educated in the classical rhetorical tradition of Cicero and Quintilian, and also trained to apply methods of critical philology to juridical texts¹⁶ a *confessio* had to be articulate, synthetic and apt to be taught and transmitted, as is the case with the catechism. It is nevertheless significant that the title *Institutio*, which embodies some of these characteristics, is also applied to the Latin translation of the *Christian Instruction*¹⁷ published a year later in Basel, thus in 1538. Conversely, Calvin refers

15 Quoted from F.L. Battles' translation, cf. Calvin (1960:11). In the French edition of 1541, the sentence reads as follows: “Pourtant ie ne demande point sans raison, Très illustre Roy, que tu vueilles prendre la congnoissance entiere de ceste cause laquelle, jusques icy, a esté demenée confusement, sans nul ordre de droit, et par un ardeur impetueux, plutost que par une moderation et gravité judiciaire” (cf. Calvin, 2008:142). Even though anabaptists may not be singled out here (after all, Antoine Marcourt, the pastor from Neuchâtel, author of the inflammatory *Placards* against the Roman mass affixed throughout the kingdom of France during the night of 17-18 October 1534, was not one of them) they are most certainly included in this remark.

16 Cf. Millet (2008:28), where he explains and contrasts the scholastic study of law with the new approach initiated by humanists such as Guillaume Budé, who favoured a linguistic and historical study of the Latin corpus of civil law: “Comme les autres branches de la culture scolastique, cette discipline reposait sur l'harmonisation entre eux de textes d'origine antique, dont le corpus était accompagné de diverses couches de commentaires, de manière à rendre compte de la législation et des procédures en vigueur, fort éloignées de celles de l'Antiquité classique. Comme pour la théologie, les humanistes critiquaient l'enseignement académique dans le domaine du droit. Le renouveau s'exerçait dans deux directions. D'une part, avec Guillaume Budé (1468-1540), apparaît une étude linguistique et historique du corpus latin du droit civil. Elle essaie de dépister, d'un point de vue pour ainsi dire archéologique, les réalités antiques, sociales, économiques. etc. sous-jacentes à ces textes. D'autre part, des humanistes essayaient de conférer à l'enseignement du droit (comme des autres disciplines) une élégance et une méthode capables de le constituer en discipline vraiment 'libérale', notamment en en organisant la matière selon des principes philosophiques et pédagogiques plus simples et plus rationnels.”

17 *Catechismus sive Christianae Religionis Institutio* ... (CO 5,317f.; cf. also COR III/II). For a full commentary on the 1538 Catechism, cf. Hesselink (1997).

to his *Institutes* as a “catechismus” in various Latin letters to his friends.¹⁸ In the introduction to his 2008 edition of Calvin’s *Institutes* of 1541,¹⁹ Millet points out that from the *Institutes* to these two catechetical works, there is an adaptation to different functions, but in the same spirit and so to speak within the same genre. Millet also reminds us that the word *Institutio* had at least one precedent in patristic literature: Lactantius’ *Divine Institutes* during the early fourth century, a work of apologetics against pagan religion and philosophy.²⁰ Erasmus had mentioned it in 1519 under the title *De institutione religionis christianae* which might have suggested to Calvin the title of his own project. Along with the character of a didactic *summa*, meaning a comprehensive survey, this *Institutio* had sought to establish anew the foundation of Christian doctrine; not so much as a systematic set of *Loci* (like Melancthon’s *Loci Communes*, however much Calvin benefited from this work for his own project and reflection) than as a Christian philosophy of faith and life, and an introductory key to Scripture, intended for all: first the learned ones (those who read, wrote and spoke Latin) and then the not so learned ones (for whom was intended the 1541 French edition of the *Institutes*, the famous French literary masterpiece).²¹ However, this comprehensive character of *Institutio* does not conflict with that of *facilis brevitatis* (at least at this stage of Calvin’s theological reflection and expression) and the *Christian Instruction* of 1537 bears ample testimony to this.²² Comprehensiveness would

18 Cf. Millet (1995:214): “Rappelons aussi que Calvin et ses correspondants emploient presque systématiquement dans leurs lettres, à propos de sa première *Institutio*, le terme latin de *Catechismus*.” Cf. for instance the letter of J. Oporin to Calvin dated 25 March 1537 (CO 10,91).

19 Calvin (2008:25).

20 Calvin (2008:18). Cf. also Williams (1974:575) and Simpson (1979).

21 About the notion of *doctrina* in Calvin, cf. d’Assonville (2001).

22 Millet (1995:211-212) does not see the *Instruction* as either “brève” or “facile” inasmuch as it has little to do with a manual for children (*livret scolaire*). He rather thinks that the *Instruction* was conceived as a book intended for the school teachers who could be retrained in the new doctrine in a more accessible way than through the Latin *Institutes*. That is the reason why a new catechism, this time properly adapted to the needs of the children, had to be drawn. However, a little further Millet (1995:214) concedes that the *Instruction*, compared to the *Institutes* of 1536, presents a character of concision due to its practical purpose: “Une différence entre l’*Institutio* de 1536 et l’*Instruction* de 1537 réside cependant dans le fait que celle-ci se présente comme un simple ‘formulaire’ (cf. la requête des ministres), sans les développements argumentés et détaillés qui distinguent la première. Ce terme signale notamment

grow through the subsequent versions of his *Institutes*, until the final French edition of 1560. Actually, the shorter confession of faith as Calvin and Farel presented it to the Council of Geneva, was considered to be a part of the *Instruction*, or catechism. The exact title of the confession was *Confession of faith which all citizens and inhabitants of Geneva as well as subjects of the country must swear to keep and uphold; extracted from the instruction used in the church of the aforesaid city*.²³ One could perhaps say that the *Instruction* displays more the character of an *institutio*, while the appended confession (even if stemming from Farel's pen) reflects the above-mentioned *facilis brevitās*; in the eyes of the reformers, it should have made it easy for Geneva's population to adhere to this creedal statement. However, as we have seen, things turned out quite differently, culminating in Farel and Calvin being expelled from Geneva in April 1538.

4. Pedagogy, confession and discipline in the 1542-1545 catechism and the 1541 ordinances

With the catechism of 1542-1545, we have a different kind of *Institutio*, and children are required to have a remarkable ability to handle a complex dialogue with the minister, even though the whole

l'orientation plus pratique (le terme est emprunté à la procédure judiciaire) de l'Instruction, et un caractère de modèle didactique, voire une allure de concision sentencieuse systématique, étrangers à l'Institutio." A revised text of this *Instruction*, adapted in contemporary French by P. Courthial, was published under the adapted title *Brève Instruction Chrétienne* in 1957 in *La Revue Réformée* (no 30 – 1957/2, tome VIII), preceded by a preface by P. Marcel, who stated the following: "It seems to us that the fame of the Catechism (of 1545) has unjustly relegated in the shadow the Brève Instruction Chrétienne. Its concision, the loftiness of its style, the remarkable penetration of its thought, the elevation of practical recommendations in each paragraph, make of it today as yesterday – in our view – a remarkable opusculum for evangelizing and strengthening the faith."

23 *Confession de la Foy, laquelle tous bourgeois et habitans de Geneve et subiects du pays doibvent iurer de garder et tenir, extraicte de l'instruction dont on use en leglise de la dicte ville.* (CO 22,85-96.) Cf. Calvin and Farel (1986:43): "Le titre de la Confession de la foi la présente comme un extrait du catéchisme (l'Instruction) en usage à Genève. Si l'on compare le plan des deux ouvrages, on remarque quelques différences dans la disposition, et la Confession est beaucoup plus brève, ne contenant pas les développements théologiques de l'Instruction. Toutefois, les principaux grands thèmes de la Réforme y ont leur place (...)"

dialogue has been written for them.²⁴ What strikes the reader of the 1545 catechism in terms of its method of teaching is precisely this: a complex dialogue, at times not devoid of dialectical reasoning, most apt to sharpen the ability of the child to reason, argue and defend a point of doctrine. No doubt, what is required of the child in terms of understanding is of a very high standard, especially if one takes into consideration that children coming to the ministers to give an account of their faith could be as young as twelve. It remains to be seen whether, during their examination, children had to repeat word for word what the catechism puts into their mouth, as a way of conducting the dialogue.²⁵ At times the minister himself provides the answers, which the child just has to approve. These sections must have come as a relief to many of them and it is actually difficult to think that such was not, at least in part, Calvin's intention in distributing the material of the catechism thus: at regular intervals the minister could provide the child with a platform to give him direction for the subsequent section of the argument. Must we see here the influence of Mathurin Cordier, the celebrated educator under whom Calvin perfected his Latin as a young student of the Collège de la Marche in Paris, whom he called to come and teach at the Academy of Geneva many years later? It is difficult to say, as Cordier is mostly remembered for his method of teaching Latin consisting in starting from the pupil's mistakes and guiding him

24 Cf. Millet (1995: 227, endnote 10) who focuses attention on the question-answer method in the judicial procedures of the time. A good jurist had to be acquainted with these methods of argumentation.

25 Cottret (1995:178-179) speaks of *parrottry* (*psittacisme*) following J.J. Rousseau, and of a *ventriloquial* relationship between master and pupil, leading to some deceptive pedagogy (*duplicité pédagogique*), since the text of the answers is put in the mouth of the children by someone else. They have neither the possibility of giving another orientation to the dialogue, nor of initiating the questions themselves. As quoted more extensively *infra*, the intention already expressed in the 1537 Articles was that the catechism *should be carefully remembered and transmitted from father to son*. Evidently, with such a goal in mind memorising would play a major role. It should be remembered, though, that as a method of teaching memorising had come a long way, not only in the Christian church, but also in the rabbinical tradition. Generally speaking, to contend that theological development or personal reflection is blocked because a process of memorising (whether by means of questions and answers or otherwise) is requested from children who are led to confess their faith, would go plainly against historical as well as individual experience: it is much safer to say that the kind of interaction, or correlation, between the method and the contents of the material will eventually influence the development of personal and communal reflection on spiritual and theological subjects.

progressively to the classical and proper use of the language.²⁶ Whatever the case may be, it looks almost as if in his catechism Calvin seeks to train his younger brother or sister²⁷ to develop theological skills by memorising this complex dialogue. So can we really speak of *facilis brevitās* here? Probably not if we take as criterion our contemporary standards of synthesising a matter in the most compact manner in order to appear concise and efficient, if not pragmatic. But that would be an anachronistic way of assessing Calvin’s educational goals in the instruction of faith. The ideal expressed in the 1537 Articles presented to the Council of Geneva a few years earlier is still the same: *that they may give an account of their faith and that in such a way the evangelical doctrine would not diminish; on the contrary it should be carefully remembered and transmitted from father to son.* In the text of the Church Ordinances presented to the General Council by Calvin on 20 November 1541 upon his return to Geneva two months earlier,²⁸ all inhabitants were required to send their children to the catechism on Sunday at twelve o’clock:

Let a certain formulary be set up by which they will be instructed, and with the doctrine given to them, let them be examined about what has been said, in order to see whether they have understood and remembered it properly. When a child has been sufficiently instructed for him to be able to do without the catechism, let him recite solemnly the summary of its content; and let him thus make a profession of his Christian faith in the presence of the Church. Before having done that, let no child be admitted to the Holy Supper and let the parents be warned not to bring their children before the proper time. For it is quite a dangerous thing, both for the children and the fathers, to present them before good and sufficient instruction has been

26 For an appraisal of Cordier’s method, see Cottret (1995:26-29). Calvin’s admiration for this man who was 30 years older than himself is evident not only from his appointment to the Academy of Geneva (where Cordier taught until a few weeks before his death, a few months after Calvin himself, he was then 84 or 85 years old), but also from the dedication of his commentary to the first letter to the Thessalonians, dated 17 February 1550. Cf. Calvin (1854-1855,IV:129).

27 All children were required to attend catechism, not only boys, regardless of the phrase in the Articles: “it should be carefully remembered and transmitted from father to son”. (Cf. CO 10,28.) The title of the paragraph reads: *Ordre quon debvra tenir envers les petis enfans.*

28 CO 10,28. The text of the CO is Calvin’s proposal. Very few modifications were made to this section in the text finally adopted by the Council.

provided. Therefore, in order to obtain it, it is necessary to follow this prescribed order.²⁹

The link between the 1537 Articles and the Church Ordinances of 1541 on that point can be summarised as follows: the careful transmission from father to son of the evangelical doctrine forbids premature participation in the Lord's Supper without proper instruction and maturity of faith. The latter implies not just remembering properly (learning by heart) but also understanding properly. This is a condition for the evangelical doctrine not to diminish. One must also pay particular attention to the following clear stipulation in the Ordinances: it was the responsibility of the parents (specifically the fathers) to assess when their children were ready to be presented to the ministers for an examination. It implied that parents had to monitor the progress of their children in understanding and remembering the content of the Christian instruction. Obviously they could not do it without studying it carefully and understanding it themselves. Through this prescribed order, the catechism was also intended for them. After the failure of Farel and Calvin to enforce a confession of faith upon the inhabitants of Geneva, a new strategy was thus elaborated, which would in time bear remarkable fruit, as the religious and political panorama of the city after 1555 shows. In the Ordinances, for parents to bring their children too early to the ministers in order to have them partaking in the Holy Supper, is called a *dangerous thing*. Besides the contravention of Paul's injunction in 1 Corinthians 11:29 (crucial to the whole Calvinian notion of church discipline centered around the access to the Table of the Lord) another danger awaited such parents: the inadequate preparation of the child would reflect on the parents' own inadequate understanding of the contents of the catechism. This transmission at home from *father to son* (from parents to children) with the parental responsibilities it implied, was therefore crucial for the evangelical doctrine not to diminish. We find an interesting parallel of this interaction between parents and children (or young ones and older

29 In French: "Quil y ait ung certain formulaire compose sur lequel on les instruyse, et que avec la doctrine quon leur donnera quon les interroge de ce qui aura este dict, pour veoir silz lauront bien entendu et retenu. Quant ung enfant sera suffisamment instruit pour se passer du cathechisme, quil recite solennellement la somme de ce qui y sera contenu: et aussi quil face comme une profession de sa chrestiente en presence de lesglise. Devant que avoir fait cela, que nul enfant ne soit admis a recevoir la cene, et quon advertisse les parens de ne les amener devant le temps. Car cest chose fort perilleuse, tant pour les enfans que pour les peres, de les ingerer sans bonne et suffisante instruction, pour laquelle il est besoing de user de cest ordre." (CO 10,28.)

ones) both in the 1537 Articles and the 1541 Ordinances, this time with regard to the congregational singing of the Psalms in church. Here, edification in faith of the assembly occurs the other way around. By their singing, the younger ones instruct the older ones:

It seemed to us that a good way to implement it would be to first teach some children to sing in a decent style, appropriate for the church, and then let them sing it with a good a clear voice so that the people, after listening very carefully and following with their minds what is sung with the mouth, would little by little get used to singing along. However, in order to avoid any confusion, it is necessary for you not to allow anyone to trouble this order by his insolence and make fun of the holy congregation.³⁰

To come back to the catechism, making sure that understanding will take place implies an order and a method, both of them characteristic of the notion of *Institutio*. Shortly after the beginning of the catechism, the minister invites the child to expound in an orderly way the matters dealt with: *Now, for these things to be gathered and expounded in an orderly manner, and in more detail, what is the first point?*³¹

5. The way to Christ in the 1537 *Instruction* and the 1545 Catechism: two different routes to the same destination?

A comparison between the beginning of the *Instruction* of 1537 and the 1545 Catechism will illustrate the nature of this order and method, but also points towards the fact that the order can differ.³²

30 CO 10,12: “La maniere de y proceder nous a semble aduis bonne si aulcungs enfans, aux quelz on ayt aparauant recorde vng chant modeste et ecclesiastique, chantent a aulte voyx et distincte, le peuple escoutant en toute attention et suyvant de cueur ce qui est chante de bouche jusque a ce que petit a petit vng chascun se accoustumera a chanter communement. Mays affin de euiter toute confusion jl seroyt besoing que vous ne permettes que aulcun par son insolence, pour auoyr en jrrision la sainte congregation, vienne a trouble lordre qui y sera mis.”

31 CO 6,11: “Or afin que ces choses soyent deduites par ordre, et exposées plus au long, quel est le premier poinct?”

32 The appended *Confession de la foy* follows the order of the *Instruction*, also presenting the law first. (Cf. CO 22,86-87.)

The beginning of the *Instruction* leads to the law, just as in the 1536 edition of the *Institutes*³³, whereas the beginning of the catechism leads to the Apostle's Creed. This fact did not escape the attention of Calvin scholars already more than 70 years ago, as the editors of the *Opera Selecta* point out in their introduction to the 1545 Latin catechism.³⁴ Luther's influence (his *Kleiner Katechismus* of 1529) and possibly too the influence of Zwingli (his 1523 *Eine christliche Anleitung an die Seelsorger*)³⁵ had in the meantime given way to the influence of Bucer and Capito's own catechism,³⁶ which first

33 OS I,37-68. Chapter one is entitled: *De lege, quod decalogi explicationem continet*. The initial paragraphs are a mere introduction to the Decalogue.

34 OS II,59,2f: "A primo Catechismo Calviniano anno 1537/38 confecto eximium illum Catechismum Genavensem annis 1542 et 1545 editum aliquantum differe constat non modo disserendi genere – nam in Genavensi minister verbi cum discipulo inducitur colloquens – sed etiam doctrinae quasi progressu. Recte enim J. Courvoisier videtur monuisse Calvinum, cum antea ratione magis Lutherana de lege primum, tum de fide, denique de oratione disputasset, in Genavensi Catechismo propria quadam et ad suam sententiam apta dispositione fidem ante legem et orationem posuisse, quem eundem theologiae progressum in Institutionis recensione posterioribus inter se differentibus apparere (...) Intellegit enim Courvoisier, quatum ad Calvini doctrinam conformandam valuerint Argentoratenses theologi et maxime Bucerus, cum demonstrat dispositionem Catechismi Genavensis multum consentire cum catechismo Buceri a Capito oriundo (...)." Cf. also De Greef (1993:132-133): "Compared with what Calvin had written earlier, the material in his later catechism was handled in a new way. He now employed the question-and-answer form (373 questions and answers) and, strikingly, treated the Apostles' Creed before the Ten Commandments. No original copy of this catechism (the one hastily drawn in 1541 and published in 1542 – EK) has survived, but the content is the same as the Latin edition of 1545."

35 Compare for instance Calvin's words in the introductory paragraph to the law in the 1537 *Instruction*, and Zwingli's own formulation. Calvin: "In the Law of God we are given a perfect rule of justice, which we can appropriately call the eternal will of the Lord." (CO 22,38.) Zwingli: "The Law is nothing else than the revelation of God's will. The will of God being eternal, so is the Law." (Zwingli, 1953:14.) Zwingli develops first the theme of mankind's fall in Adam before coming directly to the law, seen as God's way to teach us to distinguish between what is right (just) and wrong (unjust), since our natural intelligence understands neither what is right nor what is divine (based on Rom. 7:7). An influence of this writing of Zwingli on Calvin would, however, be only possible to ascertain via the availability of a Latin translation.

36 OS II,59,27f.: "Brevis explicatio scripta in usum puerorum et adolescentulorum (Kurtze schriftliche erklärung für die Kinder und angehenden)', anno 1534 edito et iterum anno 1537 divulgato cum hac inscriptione: "Brevis catechismus et explicatio XII articulorum fidei Christianae, Orationis Dominicae nec non Decalogi, in usum discipulorum aliorumque puerorum Argentoratensium composita per praedicatores eiusdem civitatis (...)."

introduces the twelve articles. While in Strasburg, Calvin had himself written a short *Institution puerile de l’adoctrine chrestienne faicte par maniere de dialogue*,³⁷ introducing the question-and-answer method and treating the main points of the Christian teaching in the following order: The Apostle’s Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.

Taking note of these new influences does not exempt the reader of Calvin to examine afresh possible internal factors that would bring about such a development in his own theological thought and choice of order. Why such a shift, may we ask, since both *Instruction* and catechism start with the same initial premise. The order, in the sense of *institution*, seems to differ, while at the onset of both documents the *summum bonum* of mankind and its main goal consist in knowing God. The *Instruction* begins thus:

Since one cannot find any human being – however barbarian and uncivilized he may be – who does not have some religious opinion, it is clear that we all are created to this end, i.e. to know the majesty of our Creator; having known it, we should esteem and honor him with all due fear, love and respect. ³⁸

To which the Catechism echoes:

The minister
What is the main goal of human life?

The child
It is to know God.

The minister
Why do you say so?

The child
Because he created us and placed us in the world to be glorified in us. This is enough reason for us to relate our life to his glory, since he is the origin of it.

37 OS II,152-157. Cf. De Greef (1993:132).

38 CO 22,33: “Comme aynsi quon ne trouve nul des hommes, comment quil soyt barbare et plainement savaige, qui ne soit touche de quelque opinion de religion il appert que nous sommes tous creez a ceste fin que nous cognoissions la maieste de nostre Createur: layant cogneue, que layons sur tout en estime et que lhonorions de toute crainte amour et reverence.”

From this premise, we are in both cases led to Scripture as a guide. But the branching off appears precisely when Scripture as instrument of knowledge is mentioned. In the *Instruction*, Scripture as a teacher first serves to separate true religion (or true knowledge of God) from false religion (or false knowledge of God). God's works in creation are ample testimonies of his divine power and virtues, but man's perversity does not consider God's works properly. Only in Scripture are they exposed in the proper perspective:

Thereby we certainly ought to be adequately and sufficiently taught that he is God, if it were not for the fact that such a bright light blinds our own dullness. However, here we do not only sin by our blindness, but our perversity is such that there is nothing which it does not consider wrongly and perversely when considering God's works; it overthrows all the celestial wisdom which otherwise shines forth very clearly. We must therefore come to the Word where God is perfectly described in his works, inasmuch as these are considered not by the perversity of our judgement but by the rule of eternal truth. ³⁹

After this section, the *Instruction* proceeds with mankind (creation and fall); free will (denied to mankind due to his total corruption); sin – defined by Scripture – and death. Afterwards a section entitled *How we are restored to salvation and life* introduces the law, which is then presented in a short paragraph before the exposition of the decalogue itself. The emphasis is on the law as a perfect rule of justice. ⁴⁰ The law is an instrument of God's mercy towards those He has decided to let inherit eternal life, inasmuch as it serves to bring them to repentance (by showing them the extent of their sins and have them turn to God for forgiveness). The law is actually the first instrument by which God calls sinners back to Him:

39 CO 22,35: "Certes nous devons par cecy abondamment autant quil nous estoit besoing estre enseignez quil est Dieu, si a une si grande lumiere nostre rudesse nestoit aveuglee. Toutesfois mesmes nous ne pechons pas en cecy par seul aveuglement, mais nostre perversite est telle quil ny a rien quelle ne prene mauvasement et perversement en estimant les oeuvres de Dieu et renverse entierement toute la sapience celeste laquelle autrement clairement y reluist. Il faut doncq venir a la parolle ou Dieu nous est tres bien descript par ses oeuvres, pourtant que icelles oeuvres y sont estimees non pas selon la perversite de nostre iugement mais par la reigle de leternelle verite."

40 CO 22,38: "En la Loy de Dieu nous est donnee une tresparfaccite reigle de toute iustice, laquelle par bonne rayson on peult appeller leternelle volonte du Seigneur: car la il a pleinement et clairement comprins en deux tables tout ce quil requiert de nous."

Although our iniquity deserved something much different, this merciful Father, according to his unspeakable kindness, voluntarily shows himself to us who are so afflicted and stunned; by such means as he knows appropriate to our weakness, he calls us back from error to righteous paths, from death to life, from ruin to salvation, from the kingdom of the devil to his kingdom. Therefore the Lord first establishes this step to all those it pleases him to restore in the inheritance of heavenly life: namely that being saddened by their conscience and burdened by the weight of their sins, they should be aroused and stirred up to fear him. He therefore puts his Law before us in the beginning, in order to sharpen in us this knowledge. ⁴¹

In the *Instruction*, the law as Scripture is nothing else than a first degree to the gospel, a pedagogue that points one to Christ. The section following immediately the summary of the law by Jesus Christ, thus after the exposition of the Ten Commandments, states it plainly: *The Law is a first degree to come to Christ.*⁴² So far Scripture has been a guide to understand God’s works properly, to speak adequately about mankind’s sinful condition, and to expose the perfect law of righteousness as a first degree to the gospel. However, until the end of the exposition of the decalogue, Jesus Christ has hardly been mentioned. The turning point occurs in the above mentioned section and is articulated around the quotation of Romans 11:32:

The apostle indeed testifies (Rom. 3) that we are all damned by the judgement of the Law, so that any mouth should be shut and everyone would be found guilty before God. However, he himself teaches somewhere else (Rom. 11) that God has con-

41 CO 22,38: “Et aussi dautre part ce Pere de misericorde, combien que nostre iniquite meritoit bien autre chose, toutefois selon sa benignite inenarrable il se monstre volontairement a nous ainsi affligez et estonnez et par telz moyens quil cognoist estre expedient a nostre imbecillite, nous rappelle derreur a droicte voye, de mort a vie, de ruine a salut, du regne du diable a son regne. Puy doncq que le Seigneur establist premierement de degre a tous ceulx quil luy plaist de remettre en lheritage de la vie celeste, cest que estans navrez par la conscience et charge du poix de leurs pechez, [ilz] soient pointcz et picques a avoir crainte de luy, il nous propose au commencement sa Loy laquelle nous exerce en ceste cognoissance.”

42 “Que la Loy est un degre pour venir a Christ, ...” (CO 22,45). We see here the difference of accent between Calvin and Zwingli’s introduction to the law in his *Eine christliche Anleitung an die Seelsorger* (cf. *supra*, footnote 35). Must Calvin’s stress on the law as first step to the gospel be ascribed to the influence of Bucer and Capito’s *Brevis explicatio* (first published in 1534 and then in 1537), the very year of the publication of the *Instruction*?

signed all to unbelief, not though to lose them or let them perish, but in order to show his mercy to all. Therefore, after having convinced us by the Law of our own weakness and uncleanness, he comforts us by the assurance of his power and mercy: in Christ his son he shows himself to be benevolent and favourable. ⁴³

Therefore, the law as first degree to Christ is presented to the reader of the *Instruction* in terms of a measure of divine grace to help distinguish good from evil, and righteous from unrighteous. But after the exposition of the Ten Commandments, it is evident that the law dooms mankind, so that one would necessarily be led to the second degree, namely the gospel.

If we now look at the beginning of the catechism (Sunday two), true knowledge brought forth by Scripture is there to assure us that God loves us and wants to be a Father and Saviour to us. The emphasis lies obviously on a different point, leading immediately to the Person of Jesus Christ in whom true confidence in God's grace and mercy is to be found:

The minister
How do we know this?

The child
By his Word, where He declares his mercy in Jesus Christ and assures us of his affection towards us.

The minister
The foundation of our true confidence in God is therefore to know Him in Jesus Christ (John 17:3).

The child
Yes.

The minister
But what is, in short, the essence of this knowledge?

43 CO 22,45: "Certes l'apostre (Rom.3) tesmoigne que nous sommes tous damnez par le iugement de la Loy, affin que toute bouche soit close et que tout le monde soit trouve coupable devant Dieu. Toutesfois luy mesme enseigne aultre part (Rom. 11) que Dieu a encloz tous soubz incredulite, non pas pour les perdre ou pour les laisser perir, mais affin qu'il fasse misericorde a tous. Le Seigneur doncques, apres nous avoir par la Loy admonestez de nostre imbecillite et impurite, il nous console par la confiance de sa vertu et misericorde, et ce en Christ son filz par lequel il se demonstre a nous bienveillant et propice."

The child

It is contained in the confession of Faith made by all Christians, which is commonly called the Apostle's Creed, for it is a summary of the true faith which was always upheld in Christendom; it is also derived from the pure apostolic doctrine.

In the *Instruction*, a similar section (entitled *What true faith is*)⁴⁴ appears only after the passage about election and predestination, which follows the section about the law. There Christ is presented as the foundation of God's promises:

It is a firm and solid confidence of the heart by which we surely entrust ourselves to God's mercy promised to us in the Gospel. Thus the definition of faith must be taken from the substance of the promise; this faith leans so much on such a foundation that if the latter was taken away, faith would be ruined or would completely vanish (...) Now, as all of God's promises are confirmed in Christ and are so to speak kept and accomplished, it appears clearly that Christ is without any doubt the perpetual object of faith. In him faith contemplates all the riches of divine mercy.

This is basically what Calvin will say (with much more *facilitate brevitatis*!) already in Sunday two of his 1545 Catechism. How then does he come to the law in the Catechism? Via the sections following the Apostle's Creed: a section on justification by faith and not by works; a section on works produced by true faith; a section on penitence and repentance leading to the true and legitimate service of God, which consists in obeying his will.⁴⁵ Then follows the exposition of the law: the law as an expression of life after regeneration and justification; the law as a rule of thankfulness and sanctification.

Now, how does Calvin come to the Apostle's Creed in the *Instruction*? After the paragraph concerning justification by faith in Christ, comes a paragraph on faith by which one is sanctified to obey the law; for, Calvin writes, Scripture teaches that Christ was made not only our justice but also our sanctification.⁴⁶ Where the Lord has

44 *Que cest que la vraye foy* (CO 22,47).

45 CO 6,51: “Voyre: et avons dict que le vray et legitime service de Dieu consiste en ce que nous obeissions à sa volonté / Pourquoi? / D'autant qu'il ne veut pas estre servy selon nostre fantasie, mais à son plaisir. / Quelle reigle nous a-il donnée pour nous gouverner? / Sa Loy.”

46 CO 22,50: “Car l'Escripture enseigne Christ nous estre fait non seulement iustice, mais aussi sanctification.”

engraved the love of his justice in the hearts, the law is a lamp to guide the feet of sanctified people.⁴⁷ We are already here close to the order of the catechism, save for the fact that penitence and regeneration as well as the correct relationship between good works and faith within the scope of God's justice must still be expounded before the Apostle's Creed comes to the fore. The introductory sentence for the latter articulates the position of the Creed in the whole presentation as follows:

We have said above what it is that we obtain in Christ through faith. Now let us hear what our faith must look at and consider in Christ to be confirmed.

6. Provisional conclusions

To summarise the issue at stake, namely the difference of order between the *Instruction* and the *Catechism*, and the precedence given to the Apostle's Creed over the decalogue in the latter, we may arrive at the following provisional conclusions, on the basis of the internal movement of Calvin's thought:

- True knowledge of God – seen as *summum bonum* for mankind in both cases – is only knowledge through faith in Him.
- The specific purpose of the *Catechism*, as covenantal instruction (*it should be carefully remembered and transmitted from father to son*) is to lead the child to confess his/her faith, the content of which should therefore be presented first, before being *deductively* expounded point by point. Once the contents of true faith have been elucidated, the fruit of it comes next: true faith leads to good works – distinguished from works done out of wrong motives and therefore in vain. Good works are measured by God's standard: his law.
- The *Instruction*, being a summary of Calvin's first version of the *Institutes*, displays, in its mode of being an *institutio*, an apologetic character for the Christian faith: knowledge of God which can be attained by the contemplation of his works has a uni-

47 CO 22,50: "Car ou le Seigneur a engrave en noz cueurs lamour de sa iustice, la doctrin exterieure de la Loy (laquelle seulement auparavant nous accusoit dimbecillite et de transgression), est maintenant une lampe pour guider noz pieds affin que ne desvoions du droict chemin, nostre sagesse par laquelle nous soions formez instituez et encouragez a totue integrite, nostre discipline laquelle ne nous souffre estre dissoluz par licence mauvaise."

versal character, but can only be properly understood through the lens of Scripture. The law reduces further the scope of those to whom Scripture is addressed in a redemptive way: ⁴⁸ they are not only endowed with some kind of distinction between good and evil, but they are enabled to realise their own inadequacy, the law being to them a step further towards the true knowledge of God. Christ is provisionally maintained outside the range of Calvin’s argument in order to make Him appear even more central and necessary once the revealed law has made it clear that mankind is doomed: He then appears as the only recourse. We are, so to speak, led *inductively* to Him. Once Christ has been presented as the only means for the redemption of mankind, the Creed, expressing the full confidence of the Christian, is introduced, preceded by several sections on the nature of true faith.

- The *Catechism* presents twice as much material as the *Instruction*. As such this justifies applying the notion of *brevitas* to the *Instruction*, at least comparatively. On the other hand, the notion of *facilitas* finds a better application in the *Catechism*, with its method of exposition based on questions and answers intended to elicit the expected answers from the children catechised.

The existence of two different orders for the presentation of the contents of Christian faith in the two documents briefly examined certainly deserves further careful consideration. It should nevertheless be stressed that the material as such does not differ in essence. We find the same themes throughout. The law as pedagogue pointing to Christ distinguished from the law as rule for a sanctified life has become a well-known distinction in reformed theology. Of course, to speak here of a *deductive* method as against an *inductive* one should never be understood as if the second derives from some kind of natural theology. We have seen that, from the outset, the role of Scripture as guide is stressed by Calvin. What perhaps is the most interesting element regarding Calvin’s ways of dealing with this matter is that one cannot really speak of a progress from the one version to the other: both have their own internal cohesion in terms of *institutio*, both have a *confessio* as primary goal, both read with equal facility, taking into account the different layout of the material presented. The differences noted are more a tribute to Calvin’s ability to render his material with great flexibility, and a proof that the

48 Cf. *supra*: “Therefore the Lord first establishes this step to all those it pleases him to restore in the inheritance of heavenly life (...).”

accusation of doctrinal rigidity sometimes directed against him does not resist the test of a confrontation with the sources of his teachings.

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Key concepts:

Calvin
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Institution

Kernbegrippe:

Calvyn
Institusie
kategismus
konfessie/belydenis