

Ordo recte docendi postulat ...

A report on F.H. Breukelman's study of Calvin

I. The Issue

I.1. The problem of the *ordo docendi*

When in 1539 Calvin publishes a second, fully revised and extended, version of his *Institutes*, in a 'letter to the reader' he gives the following description of his intention in publishing this work:

Porro hoc mihi in isto labore propositum fuit, sacrae Theologicae candidatos ad divini verbi lectionem ita praeparare et instruere, ut et facilem ad eam aditum habere, et in-offense in ea gradu pergere queant; siquidem religionis summam omnibus partibus sic mihi complexus esse videor, et *eo quoque ordine digessisse*, ut siquis eam *recte* tenuerit, ei non sit difficile statuere et quid potissimum quaerere in Scriptura, et quam in *scopum* quicquid in ea continetur referre debeat.¹

So Calvin wants to provide students of theology with an easy access to the reading of Holy Scripture, so that it will not be difficult for them to grasp the *scopus* toward which everything in Scripture is directed. Like Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*, this instruction in Christian doctrine is to be in itself a *hermeneutic*, a help for the church when they learn the words that are written. But then the arrangement of the contents matters. The project will only succeed if all parts are attuned to one another and are discussed in their mutual coherence in such a way that the inner unity of the biblical words comes to light. As a systematic theologian Calvin regards the form of this *summa religionis* as important, because the Word can be heard when the contents is given form in the right way (*recte*).

In the winter of 1558/59 Calvin, once more, starts to revise the book (*his* book, for he is mainly the man of this one book). In a passage which he inserts in the 'letter to the reader' from 1539 he explains his motivation for this. The words *ordo* and *digerere* return here:

¹ *Opera Selecta* III, published by P. Barth and W. Niesel, Munich 1928, 6, ll. 18-25 (Italics are mine, here and elsewhere, rrb). See also the *Argument du present livre* in the French, more popular edition, which Calvin himself prepared in 1541. This version was re-published in 1911 and by one of the editors of that edition, Jacques Pannier, once more in 1936-1939 (Paris, Société Les Belles-lettres), I, 3-5). English translation from *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T. McNeill and Ford Lewis Battles, Philadelphia 1960, 4: 'Moreover, it has been my purpose in this labor to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling. For I believe I have so embraced the sum of religion in all its parts, and have arranged it in such order, that if anyone rightly grasps it, it will not be difficult for him to determine what he ought especially to seek in Scripture, and to what end he ought to relate its contents.'

Etsi laboris tunc impensi me non poenitebat: nunquam tamen mihi satisfeci, donec *in hunc ordinem* qui nunc proponitur *digestum* fuit. Nunc me dedisse confido quod vestro omnium iudicio probetur.²

He does not regret all the work he did for previous editions. But only now, with the form which will appear to be the definitive one, he is really satisfied. He expects us to agree with him. Or at least, he asks us for our judgment, and hopes that it will be positive.

Calvin deserves that we pronounce the judgment he asks for. Is his *ordo docendi* indeed the right one, measured by the goal he has set himself?³

I.2. Several moments from the research on Calvin (1868-1964)

In the second half of the nineteenth century the complete works of Calvin were published by three Strasbourg theologians.⁴ Although this edition does not satisfy present-day standards it was a big step forward when it appeared. It offered in the sixties four different versions of the *Institutes*, three Latin and one French.⁵ As a result it was possible for scholars for the first time to write a history of the genesis of Calvin's main work, and to study how the reformer wrestled with the dogmatic contents, edition after edition, in order to achieve a justifiable arrangement.

I.2.1. Köstlin

This challenge was almost immediately taken up by the Lutheran Julius Köstlin. As early as 1868, he wrote two articles in which he reaped the harvest.⁶ In the first article he analyzes the genesis of Calvin's main dogmatic work, in the second he discusses the central points of his doctrine. Especially the first article

² OS III, 5, II. 13-15. English translation from *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3: 'Although I did not regret the labor spent, I was never satisfied until the work had been arranged in the order now set forth. Now I trust that I have provided something that all of you will approve.'

³ At the end of the introduction with which he starts the first chapter in 1539 Calvin speaks of the *ordo recte dicendi* (CO I, column 281, bottom line). In 1550 he replaces *dicendi* by *docendi* (*Ibid.*, *Inst.* 1550: I.3 = *Inst.* 1559: I.1.3, OS III, 34, I. 2), here too in relation to the *disserere*, the right order of the exposition. See below, section II.2.2.

⁴ Wilhelm Baum, Eduard Cunitz and Eduard Reuss, *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, in 59 volumes, Strasbourg 1863-1900. Also the volumes XXIX-LXXXVII of the *Corpus Reformatorum*. Cited, in accordance with common practice, as CO. For K. Barth's assessment of this edition see *KD* I/2, 683.

⁵ Volume I (1863): version 1536 in columns 1-252 and version 1539(-1543-1550-1554) in columns 253-1152. Volume II (1864): Latin version 1559. Volumes III (1865) and IV (1866): the definitive French text of 1560, probably only partly by Calvin himself. It is a matter for debate whether it would have been wiser to include Calvin's own first French translation of 1541 (see note 1). At the end of the *Prolegomena* of the first volume a synopsis was offered of the consecutive versions of the *Institutes* in five columns I.LI-LVIII, which in itself is an invitation to further research!

⁶ J. Köstlin, 'Calvins Institutio nach Form und Inhalt, in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung,' in: *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 41, 7-62 and 410-486. The second article is arranged as if the *Institutes* is built up according to the method of *loci*, (not only in the version of 1539), but also in its last form. This already shows that it is Köstlin's opinion that Calvin has not succeeded in his intention to find a more comprehensive ordering principle, although he claimed he had.

would become a classic. It has found much appreciation and is cited over and over again. Perhaps *too* often, as if Köstlin's first impression of the material was necessarily the best one.

Of particular importance is Köstlin's assessment of the definitive form which Calvin thought he had found in 1558/59. It was the division into four books, in accordance with the arrangement of the Apostles' Creed, in which, as Calvin had pointed out previously, there are to be distinguished four parts (Father, Son, Spirit, Church). Now Köstlin is of the opinion that Calvin has *not* succeeded in implementing this division lucidly and consistently.⁷

In fact, one can summarize the course that Calvin really took, instead of identifying it with the Creed, rather, in the following way:

1. The doctrine of God the Father, Son, Spirit, and his creation and world government in general, apart from sin and the redemptive revelation and redemptive activity that sin makes necessary – and similarly of mankind, apart from sin and the necessity for salvation (Book I).

2. The historical revelation and activity of God for the salvation of the sinner, as follows:

a. The establishing of salvation through the incarnate Son, for which preparation had already been made under the Old Covenant (Book II).

b. The application through the Holy Spirit of the salvation given in Christ, as follows:

(1) The process of salvation which is realized inwardly by the Spirit in individuals, extending until the perfection of these persons in the resurrection (Book III).

(2) The outer means which God uses in this activity of the Spirit (Book IV).

We are here presenting an ordering, clear in itself, of which Calvin's own four-part division and its expressed relation to the Creed is a less clear and sharp presentation than the praise of it by many would seem to indicate⁸.

So, Köstlin complied with Calvin's request of his readers to assess the form of the *Institutes*. And with respect to the question whether Calvin has actually done what he says he does, his judgment is negative.

I.2.2. Wernle

As part of his trilogy *Der evangelische Glaube nach den Hauptschriften der Reformatoren*, the Basle New Testament theologian and church historian Paul Wernle (in the circle of people familiar with Barth, he is probably known in particular as Thurneysen's teacher and as a reviewer of the first *Römerbrief*) discus-

⁷ *O.c.*, 57-58. I quote the English translation by Edward A. Dowey, Jr., in: *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, Expanded Edition, Grand Rapids 1994, 42. Although he does not mention Köstlin at all, the same assessment can be found almost verbatim in F. Wendel's book *Calvin, sources et évolution de sa pensée religieuse*, Paris 1950, 87.

⁸ Is it possible that Köstlin had F. Schleiermacher's *Der christliche Glaube* in mind when he suggested his division in two parts? The assessment of Book I as, phrased negatively, a discussion of God and man *apart from* (*abgesehen von*) sin and grace makes one think of the positively phrased name of Schleiermacher's first part: "Entwicklung des frommen Selbstbewußtsein, wie es in jeder christlich frommen Gemütsregung immer schon vorausgesetzt wird, aber auch immer mit enthalten ist" (second edition, reprint by M. Redeker, Berlin 1960, §§ 32-61). In this part Schleiermacher, too, treats of creation, maintenance and the general relationship between man and God (but not the Trinity).

ses it in his third book *Calvin* – according to the heading in the table of contents it is called: *Calvins Unterricht in der christlichen Religion*.⁹ He, too, paints the development through the consecutive editions and he does so in a lively and exciting way. As he remarks in his preface, his intention is to distill the reformer's living religious core from his flow of words. For, unfortunately, the real reformational element, pure faith, has been overgrown more and more by polemics and has been incapsulated 'in einem immer vollständigeren System der biblischen Theologie.' Wernle wants to get to Calvin's primordial intuition again by peeling the system. Apparently, he is of the opinion that the form of the system is not at all able to serve the elucidation of the religious core. The structure of the book is as follows: I. 1536: 'Die christliche Elementarwahrheiten' (165 pp.); II. 'Die paulinische Zentraldogmen von 1539' (189 pp.); III. 1543: 'Das biblische und altkatholische Kirchenrecht' (36 pp.); IV. 1559 (this part has no title, but is called elsewhere:) 'Das fertige theologische System' (... 17 pp.!). For every edition Wernle discusses the material which is specific for that edition and he then looks ahead to the additions Calvin makes later for every locus. The closer he gets to the end, there is less and less news to be discovered. The 'fertige System der biblischen Theologie' is hardly worth discussing. Therefore, his judgment on the *ordo docendi* in the last version has to be negative.

1.2.3. The debate in the thirties

In the fierce debate that was held on the status and the (im)possibility of 'natural theology' during the days of the Barmen decision, an appeal to Calvin played a certain, albeit a secondary, role. Emil Brunner thought he had the reformer on his side for his opinion that the responsibility of man as bearer of the image of God (which was not fully destroyed by the fall) continued to be a presupposition as a formal point of contact in Christian preaching. In opposition to this, Karl Barth stated that Calvin had only purely hypothetically taken into account a possibility which *would* have been valid *si integer stetisset Adam*,¹⁰ a hypothesis which only served to take away man's every excuse.¹¹ However, during the first phase of the whole process the issue was dealt with more or less as an isolated problem, despite Barth's insistence that the whole significance of the German church struggle was at stake here. At any rate, the link with the arrangement of the *Institutes* was not laid, and if so, inaccurately.¹² And when the aides in the

⁹ Tübingen 1919.

¹⁰ 1536: *OS* I, 38, II. 5-6; 1559: I.2.1, *OS* III, 34, I. 14.

¹¹ E. Brunner, *Natur und Gnade. Zum Gespräch mit Karl Barth*, Zurich 1934, 22-36; Günter Gloede, *Theologia naturalis bei Calvin*, Stuttgart-Berlin 1935; K. Barth, *Nein! Antwort an Emil Brunner*, ThEh 14, Munich 1934, 32-45; Peter Barth, *Das Problem der natürlichen Theologie bei Calvin*, ThEh 18, Munich 1935; also: Wilhelm Niesel, *Die Theologie Calvins*, Munich 1938.

¹² For example, Barth, *o.c.*, 43, calls the transition from *Institutes* 1559, I.5 to I.6 'entscheidend', while the *generalis scripturae doctrina* in the whole of I.6-I.9 should be regarded as a continuation of rather than as a break with the previous considerations of the subjective God-consciousness in the soul and the objective testimony of God in the cosmos (and the failure of both).

struggle either went over to the other side¹³ or were called back by their generals,¹⁴ the whole episode could have remained without any consequences for Calvin research, had not a new round followed.

I.2.4. Dowey versus Parker, Parker versus Dowey

In one and the same year (1952) two researchers, the American Edward Dowey and the Briton T.H.L. Parker, one a student of Brunner's, the other a follower of Barth's, published, independently from one another, thorough studies on the same subject: the *cognitio Dei* in Calvin's theology.¹⁵ Both studies were based on an analysis of the *Institutes* in its definitive form of 1559.

In its first version, Dowey's book contains five chapters. After the introductory first chapter he discloses in the short but decisive second chapter his program. In it he links his argumentation for the presence of a Christian natural theology in Calvin's works (in the form as encountered in Brunner's writings¹⁶) with Köstlin's observation about the proper ordering principle of the *Institutes*, which allegedly does not correspond with the principle Calvin himself calls decisive:

I wish to maintain with Köstlin, although in greater detail and with more emphasis upon its importance, what was clear to me before consulting Köstlin: that the really significant ordering principle of the *Institutes* in the 1559 edition is the *duplex cognitio Domini*, not the Apostles' Creed (*o.c.*, 42).

Then he gives a full and convincing overview of all those passages which Calvin inserted into his earlier text in 1559 to express lucidly his doctrine of the twofold knowledge of God (see below, II.3.2) and rightly adds that although in previous versions of the *Institutes* the principle was not present *expressis verbis*, the idea of it was. Finally, he accounts for the structure of his study: chapter III deals with the knowledge of God the Creator (the title of Book I from 1559),

¹³ Gloede's book, which was written at the instigation of Brunner, was powerfully refuted by Werner Krusche in the third chapter of his marvelous study *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin*, Göttingen 1957 (finished at the beginning of 1953), e.g. 60, 67-85. However, in the second edition of his book *Die Theologie Calvins* (Munich 1957) W. Niesel writes, 'Heute weiß der Verfasser (sc. Gloede), daß diese seine Erstlingsschrift sich so nicht halten läßt. S. inzwischen sein schönes Buch: Calvin, Weg und Werk, Leipzig 1953.'

¹⁴ Barth was of the opinion that some of his disciples, like W. Niesel (but also T.F. Torrance, see *KD* IV/1, 406), tried too hard to make of Calvin a sixteenth-century copy of himself. See *KD* II/2, 92 and 369 and III/3, 34 ('es wäre schön, wenn es wahr wäre, was W. Niesel versichert...'). Since then we also have the orally transmitted judgment, 'Das Nieselsche Calvinbuch? Dessen Inhalt ist eigentlich: So würde Calvin geredet haben, wenn er das hohe Glück gehabt hätte, die Kirchliche Dogmatik schon gelesen zu haben. Ich habe das Buch auch mit Erstaunen gelesen, weil ich es ganz ohne Widerspruch lesen konnte. Alle Ecken, die ich bei Calvin fand, waren dort schön abgeschliffen (...). Es ist ein schönes Buch. Aber ob das der Calvin ist, das glaube ich ihm nicht so recht,' in: *Gespräche 1964-1968*, GA IV, hrsg. von E. Busch, Zurich 1997, 489f.

¹⁵ The first edition of Dowey's book (see note 7) appeared in New York. The title of Parker's study was *Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, Edinburgh 1952.

¹⁶ See, e.g., 81-86 on 'a definite eristic function' (84) of the revelation in creation, in which note 196, 'Emil Brunner's conception of responsibility as the essence of man agrees well with Calvin.'

chapter IV with the knowledge of God the Redeemer (the title of Book II, but in fact the heading for Books II through IV), and finally, chapter V with the relation between these two kinds of knowledge as a 'dialectical' relationship: that which a human being can do as a mere creature is indeed an independent pole, but nevertheless, it really only can assert itself when this human being, as a sinner, is liberated by the Redeemer.

Parker's book first deals with the knowledge of God the Creator, then that of God the Redeemer. His argumentation, which keeps Calvin closer to Barth, misses sharpness of analysis. Passages that create problems for his reading, he evades.

Several years later on, both researchers have their books published anew. Dowey, 'with some minor corrections', in 1965,¹⁷ Parker in the United States in 1959 (and once more in 1969). Parker revises the first part of his book and adds an appendix (and an introduction, respectively), in which he discusses Dowey's thesis. His reproach is that Dowey imposes a theme on the *Institutes* as an ordering principle which is arbitrarily chosen by himself, while he fails to take notice of the principle the author himself says he wants to follow. May one do this? Is this *re-arrangement* methodologically acceptable? Is it wonder that Dowey as an interpreter is compelled to 'link' dialectically afterwards what he himself has separated artificially to begin with? May one assume that Calvin, who after all was a 'master of method', has not succeeded in arranging, of all his works, his main work in the way he wanted to? One would have to assume this, if the theory of the twofold knowledge of God were indeed the heart of Calvin's theology. But it is not. *The duplex cognitio Dei is not the theme of his work.*

Dowey, from his side, lets Parker have it. 'He misses the mark.' His insinuation as to 'my *rearranging* is made so irresponsibly as to cast doubts on Parker's desire to be taken seriously' (3xvi). This slanging-match may be successful as polemics, it is not very fruitful for research. For Parker's *question*, which is really to the point, whether it is indeed possible that the systematician Calvin does not do what he says he wants to do (viz. take the Apostles' Creed as his starting point), Dowey omits to tackle. While conversely, Parker, also in the second edition of his work, completely fails to account for the series of crucial passages mentioned by Dowey, in which Calvin formulates his theory of the twofold knowledge of God.

It is obvious that both scholars do not communicate. Both fail to tackle seriously the question that the other rightly asks. And thus the research into the element which structures the *Institutes* has entered into an impasse. The question we face is how it is possible that one can say of one and the same text *both* that (according to Parker's view, who is an admirer of Barth's theology) the Apostles' Creed is the guiding principle and that Christian natural knowledge of God is

¹⁷ The more recent third edition mentioned in note 8 contains considerable expansions: a completely new sixth chapter and some appendices (e.g., one on Bouwsma's remarkable study). Although they update his study, they are not really important for our theme.

only spoken of on the basis of the work of the Holy Spirit (and that therefore it is in itself placed under the sign of failure), *and* that the twofold knowledge of God is its real theme (as Reformed theology has done through the centuries, up to Brunner and his student Dowey)? How can the one be right and the other not wrong?

I.3. F.H. Breukelman's study

I am entrusted with the posthumous publication of a study by the Dutch theologian F.H. Breukelman (1916-1993) on *De structuur van de heilige leer in de theologie van Calvijn (The Structure of Sacred Doctrine in Calvin's Theology)*.¹⁸ Hopefully, when it appears, this study can shed some light on the unclear situation painted above.

Dowey and Parker started with the last version of the *Institutes* and this road did not lead to a solution. Köstlin and Wernle investigated the genesis of the work, which preceded this last version, but in the end they did not take the 'Letztgestalt' seriously in its self-presentation: one because he applied a different ordering principle to it than it showed itself, the other because he despised 'biblical theology'.

In contrast, Breukelman *is* a biblical theologian, who looks to texts as an exegete.¹⁹ When he takes up again the work on the reconstruction of the *Institutes'* genesis, he starts from the question, 'Why is it structured as it is, and not in a different way?' So, it is a typical *exegete* who is at work here: versed in synoptic research, redaction history, and the 'structuralistic' way of reading (which he does not deliberately support). In printing texts from Calvin he follows the method of Buber and Rosenzweig in their *Verdeutschung der Schrift*: he takes notice of breathing units, renders the rhythmic of the Latin language colometrically, and pays special attention to stylistic devices and 'sound'.²⁰ Such a method asks much space and analysis of details. It is impossible to do them right in

¹⁸ It was K.H. Miskotte, who induced Breukelman to write a contribution for the Barth Festschrift of 1956 (*Antwort*). This article never materialized, because the study went far beyond the size of an article. A book was needed, but never finished.

¹⁹ Until now the following volumes of his *Bijbelse Theologie* have appeared: I.1. *Schrift-lezing*, Kampen 1980 (an essay on the colometric representation of biblical texts as an aid in reading Scripture and as a basis for exegesis); from volume I, The theology of the book of Genesis: I.2. *Toledot. Het eerstelijnschap van Israël*, Kampen 1992 (as theme of 'the book of the generations of Adam, man'); volume II: The structure of biblical witness: II.1. *Debharim. Der biblische Wirklichkeitsbegriff des Seins in der Tat*, Kampen 1998; volume III: The theology of the evangelist Matthew: III.1. *De ouverture van het evangelie*, Kampen 1984 (the story of the genesis of Jesus Christ); III.2. *De Koning als Richter*, Kampen 1996 (the Gospel of Matthew as 'Heilsbotschaft vom Königtum'); Volume IV.2. *Theologische Opstellen*, Kampen 1999. Six more volumes may still be published.

²⁰ Cf. *Debharim, o.c.*, 305: 'Alles vom biblischen Wort Gesagte gilt auch vom "Wort" in Allgemeinen: daß es nämlich *gerufen* werden und uns laut in Ohren tönen will. Es gibt z.B. nichts, was den Geist so bildet als die wiederholte *laute* "lectio" eines klassischen Textes inmitten einer hörenden Schar (die laute "lectio" etwa ganzer Partien der Barthschen Dogmatik!).' This is also how Breukelman taught.

this presentation. Therefore, I must confine myself, contrary to the spirit of the author, to several striking elements of his analysis.

II. Elaboration

II.1. The *Institutio* of 1536 (the first main form: a catechism)

It was for edification and also as an apology for the threatened French Protestants that the young Calvin started to write his *Institutes* in 1534-35. He wanted to get the simple truth, discovered by the Reformation, into the limelight, also for the French (educated) public.

This becomes quite clear from a passage at the end of the first chapter (on the Law), in which he makes the transition from a reflection on the (multiple) use of the Law to the great question that was at stake in the discussions with the theologians from Rome: the question of good works.²¹ We are all in agreement that Christ is the foundation of the whole building of the *doctrina christiana*, he states. But *in what way* is Christ the foundation? In such a way that, now that the foundation has been laid in Him, we can build on it ourselves – as current scholastic teaching has it? No, it can only mean that in all areas we are only saved *in Him* (six times 'quod...', culminating in a seventh:), that we *participate only in Him*, and in such a way that we ourselves are indeed foolish, sinful, unclean, weak (and dead), but that at the same time *He Himself* is for us 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (and life)' (1 Cor. 1:30 – five times *ut...*). That He is the foundation of doctrine can only be understood in *this* sense that we should not look for our salvation in ourselves, but only in Him. That is the *ordo* of the Christian message of salvation. But unfortunately, this is no longer the *ordo* of Christian education, as a result of the degeneration of doctrine. Restoration of this *ordo*, the *right ordo*, is therefore what should be expected of reformed religious education. *Haec si quo oportuerat ordine essent...*: if only these things had been treated in the proper order in the previous centuries... Calvin wants to restore this order with his *ordo docendi*, in which only Christ dominates sacred doctrine.²²

From this passage light is thrown backwards on the famous opening sentence:²³

Summa fere sacrae doctrinae duabus his partibus constat: cognitione Dei ac nostri.

²¹ OS I, 63, ll. 15-44. Colometric representation in the Appendix. This representation makes it possible to see, that in the English translation, ed. Ford Lewis Battles, the seventh *quod* is neglected.

²² As Karl Barth asserts about 'die von der heiligen Schrift geforderten theologischen Methode': '*Eine ganz bestimmte Seinsordnung... erzwingt eine ihr entsprechende Erkenntnisordnung*', *KD* V/2, 6. Calvin, too, was aware of this.

²³ OS I, 37.

Cognitione Dei, that is: we learn to lift our heads upwards: where does our help come from? *Cognitione nostri*, that is: if we were thrown back only onto ourselves it would be impossible for us to remain standing! Therefore, in this first design the dialectics of knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves is clearly stamped by a *Christological concentration*, to use the term that Karl Barth applied as a characterization of his own thought in 1938.²⁴ This is what constitutes the epitome of the whole *sacra doctrina*.

Now, the *form* in which Calvin teaches this all-encompassing testimony to Christ is that of the 'large catechism'. Just as in Luther's case somewhat earlier (1529), it consists of the parts that were handed down to them: 1. law (the Decalogue); 2. faith (the Apostles' Creed); 3. prayer (the Lord's Prayer); [and 4. the sacraments].²⁵

This triad is explained clearly and succinctly by Calvin, the able teacher, in an introduction at the beginning of his book.²⁶ After he has characterized knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves in a few powerful sentences he gives a brief description of the first three chapters that will follow. When characterizing prayer he links it closely with the two other parts. For when we pray we pray 1. for the right knowledge of ourselves as knowledge of our misery (a knowledge we gain through the Law), and 2. for the right knowledge of God as knowledge of divine mercy in Christ (a knowledge we gain through faith). This sentence on prayer, which closes the introduction to the textbook, reads:²⁷

²⁴ In the *parergon*, 'How my mind has changed 1928-1938.' Barth's Göttingen lectures from 1922 on *Die Theologie Calvins* (GA, Hrsg. Hans Scholl) appeared in the spring of 1993, shortly before Breukelman's death. It is remarkable how unmistakably Barth, who during that semester dealt only with the *young* Calvin, heard the dominance of this testimony to Christ in the first *Institutes* (influenced by his own theology of the second *Römerbrief*- and contrary to interpreters like R. Seeberg!). See 217-219.

²⁵ The last two chapters (*De falsis sacramentis* and *De libertate christiana*) go beyond the framework of a catechism and their character is more that of an apology. For in the meantime it had appeared to Calvin that in the course of 1535 Francis I thought that he should persecute the Reformed as if they were anabaptist revolutionaries.

²⁶ *OS* I, 37-41, l. 23. Also for this introduction there is a model of Luther, viz. his *Vorrede* to his *Betbuchlein* from 1522 (WA 10/2, 377, l. 11 - 378, l. 13). This booklet was reprinted many times and appeared in 1529 together with the Small Catechism in Latin under the title *Enchiridion piarum precationum* (not in the WA). It must be this edition which Calvin will have had in mind. Luther uses the following image. If we are ill the case must first be diagnosed (the Law). Then we must know how we can be healed (by Faith). And finally, we must learn how the medicine is to be brought to us (Prayer). 'Das sind die drei Ding in der ganzen Schrift.'

²⁷ *OS* I, 41, 12-23. The English translation from *Calvin: Institution of the Christian Religion*, ed. Ford Lewis Battles: 'This knowledge of ourselves and of our poverty and ruin teaches us to humble ourselves and cast ourselves before God and seek his mercy [Jer. 31:18-20]. Not from ourselves is the faith that furnishes us a taste of divine goodness and mercy, wherein God in his Christ has to do with us. Rather, it is God who is to be asked to lead us, unfeignedly repentant, to the knowledge of ourselves; to lead us, by sure faith, to the knowledge of his gentleness and of his sweetness, which he shows forth in his Christ in order that Christ as our leader, who is the only way to reach the Father, may bring us into eternal blessedness [Phil. 1:6; Jn. 14:6; Rom. 5:1-11].'

Et quando

- De Lege** 1. haec nostri, nostraeque inopiae et calamitatis cognitio,
(for nostri cognitio = nostrae inopiae et calamitatis cognitio!)
qua nosmetipsos humiliare ac deiicere coram Deo
eiusque *misericiordiam quaerere* docemur (Ier. 31)
(for it has just been said that the law makes us 'quaerere aliam salutis
viam,' and all our 'salus' is contained in the 'misericiordia Dei')
- De Fide** 2. simul fides ista
quae nobis gustum praebet divinae bonitatis ac misericordiae (!),
qua nobiscum in Christo suo agit,
non ex nobis sunt, aut in facultate nostra positae:
- De Oratione** 3. ROGANDUS DEUS, ut
1) non simulata poenitentia in illum nostri,
(so, this is the humiliation before God by the law)
2) et *certa fide* in hanc suae mansuetudinis notitiam nos adducat,
et suavitatis, quam exhibit *in Christo suo*
(for faith directs us fully towards the Christ!),
ut ipso duce in aeternam beatitudinem perducamur,
qui *unica est via*, qua ad patrem pervenitur (Phil.1. Ioan.14. Rom. 5).

The description of the contents of prayer in this closing sentence of the introduction forms a chiasmus with the opening sentence, in which only the order is reversed (there, knowledge of God → knowledge of ourselves, here, knowledge of ourselves → knowledge of God). This reversal will be the starting-point for the rest of the book. For Calvin here still sticks to Luther's *ordo docendi*: through the knowledge of ourselves in our misery we come to the knowledge of God's mercy, or rather, more accurately: it is through Christ himself (through *the Christ, Christo suo* – two times –, regarded in his office!), under his guidance (*ipso duce*), that we are led through knowledge of the law to knowledge of Himself in the perspective of eternal bliss.

So, the relationship between man and God, Law and 'Gospel' (but Calvin does not use this word here), is dialectical, full of tension. There is really only one moment in the Introduction where a somewhat different perspective can be found. And that is when, in the passage on knowledge of ourselves, the *status integritatis* of Adam before the Fall is mentioned as an auxiliary line: in the beginning our position was not so miserable.²⁸ This introduces a non-synthetical, historicizing element. In order that we seek all the guilt within ourselves a distinction is made between man before and after the Fall. At first, there is little to it. But later it will become the starting-point for a view which will distribute things over the course of time. When the Lutheran order from-Law-to-Gospel

²⁸ OS I, 38, 1-6.

loses its dialectical paradoxality and is regarded in a narrative way, this is easily one of the consequences.²⁹ But let us first follow Calvin on his journey.

II.2. The second main form (1537) 1539-1554 (Loci)

II.2.1. The catechism of 1537

In order to carry through the reformation in Geneva and to provide the citizens with a wishedfor confession of faith and the youth with religious education, Calvin composed a 'small catechism' in 1537, largely a summary of the 'large' catechism, which his *Institutes* had originally been.³⁰ Pedagogically, this textbook is a disaster, but theologically it is very interesting! The Strasbourg publishers, who in the Latin text printed in italics those sentences which Calvin had taken verbatim from his *Institutes*, could do so almost exclusively in the second part of the text.³¹ The first part (which corresponds to the chapters *De Lege* and *De Fide*) is remarkable because of its original and new exposition of the theme. As a result of this, on further analysis the catechism points not only backwards to the first, but also and even more so forward to the second version of the *Institutes*.

For our purpose we limit ourselves to the following observations:

1. In 1536, one single explanatory sentence was dedicated to both the *Cognitio Dei* and the *Cognitio hominis*. Now, three articles are written on each of them. As for the knowledge of God, we are treated with a treatise on religion which was still absent in 1536. We hear about (a) an initial God-consciousness which was implanted in people's souls (*Que tous hommes sont nez pour cognoistre Dieu*); (b) the distinction between true and false religion (*Quelle difference il y a entre vraye et faulse religion*); and (c) the Word of God, which enables our corrupted mind to know God and his works (*Que cest quil nous fault cognoistre de Dieu*). This triad will be unfolded ever broader, in 1539 in the first chapter, in 1559 in book I.1-10. As for the knowledge of ourselves, a treatise on sin is added. Here we hear about (a) man's glory, but even more about man's pride (*de lhomme*); (b) free will, or rather the loss of it (*du liberal arbitre*); (c) the consequences of the Fall (*du peche et de la mort*). All of this is reworked in 1539 into the second chapter, in 1559 into the first five chapters of the second book of the *Institutes*.

²⁹ In the *Praefatio* of the third *Aetas* (1543-1559) of his *Loci*, Melancthon will introduce the term *historica series* for this: Law and Gospel are then placed according to the course of the biblical story (read in a naïve way!) on a horizontal line between paradise and consummation.

³⁰ The French text of this *Institution et confession de foy, dont on use en leglise de Geneve*, long thought to be lost, was found again in 1877 and included in *OS XXII*, 33-75; also in *OS I*, 378-417. Since then also (with a German translation) in the *Calvin-Studienausgabe* I.1, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1994, 138-207 (with an interesting preface by Ernst Saxer).

³¹ In *CO V*, 323-354, where we find the Latin text, italics are only used in columns 338-354. In the first part we only find seven lines in column 328, in the exposition of the second commandment.

Systematically, it is important that in this way the dialectic of knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves, of divine majesty and human humiliation, becomes more or less autonomous from that other dialectic, that of Law and Gospel. In 1536 these two areas of tension overlapped one another to a large extent, now they are separating.

2. After the first six articles there is no change in the order *from* the law to faith, from the anguish in man's conscience to the embrace of God's mercy. Even clearer than in 1536 it is expressed also in the form how man is driven along this way from all hiding-places toward Christ. The five articles on the law (in which the Decalogue and the summary of the law form the center) are surrounded by articles in which is spoken of *gradus*, of *degres* (*Comment nous sommes restituez a salut et vie* and *Que la Loy est un degre pour venir a Christ*, respectively): the joy of the law is formed by a 'song of steps', along which lost man climbs up to Christ. In the same way the ten articles on faith (which issue into an exposition of the symbol) start by stressing that Christ is the real content of faith (*Que nous apprehendons Christ par foy*). However, because the various stages are separated, now to a higher degree than in 1536, the question may arise on what basis Calvin regards it possible to move *toward* Christ without expressing at the same time that from the beginning he has started to move *from* Christ.

II.2.2. The *Institutio* of 1539

In the second edition of the *Institutes*, which he prepared in Strasbourg, Calvin abandons the concept of the 'large catechism' (without, however, giving up the catechetical element) and replaces it by that of the 'Loci'. So, now it is more Melancthon than Luther who is his model. And similarly the audience shifts to students of theology and preachers (see above, I.1).

In comparison with 1536, the opening sentence has changed slightly, but significantly:

Tota fere sapientiae nostrae summa, quae vera demum ac solida sapientia censi debeat, duabus partibus constat: cognitio Dei, et nostri.³²

The *summa sacrae doctrinae* has become a *summa sapientiae nostrae*. First question: why does Calvin do this? Second question: what has happened with the *sacra doctrina* (for Calvin's method is such that in a newer version he rarely drops even a crumb from a previous edition to the ground!)?

As to the first question, 'sacred doctrine' consisted in 1536 of the triad commandment – faith – prayer. Now however, in 1539, Calvin continues the line he has drawn in the catechism of 1537 and he first deals with knowledge of God

³² CO I, 279. The English translation from *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 35: 'Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.'

and knowledge of ourselves, before he moves onto the discussion of the law and faith. Therefore, the first sentence, being an introduction to the first two chapters, can only touch on *a theme or an aspect* of the doctrine of faith (viz. the encounter between the majestic God and humble man), not discuss its whole *contents*.

As for the second question, the phrase *summa doctrina* is indeed not lost but returns at the beginning of the seventh chapter:

*Summam doctrinae, qua ex vera Dei nostrique notitia, in salutis communionem pervenimus, supra, ut potui, exequutus sum.*³³

'Supra', that was in the first six chapters, where first knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves were discussed, and then, more or less separately, *De Lege – De Fide*. This whole complex is the summary of the doctrine. And that which follows (in chapters 7 through 17) is no more than an elaboration of certain aspects of this doctrine. This makes the following arrangement understandable:

SUMMA DOCTRINA:

(De lege:) 1. De cognitione Dei; 2. De cognitione hominis → 3. *De lege*

(De fide:) 4. *De fide* → 5. De poenitentia; 6. De iustificatione

ASPECTS: 7 through 17

To account for this new arrangement, Calvin replaces the introduction of 1536 (which had been an introduction to catechetical material) by a new introduction, in which first knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves are characterized in a single sentence and then the question is tackled which of these two should be dealt with first and which should follow.³⁴ He states: both orderings can be defended. If we start with knowledge of ourselves then we are prepared in humility to appear before God, that is, to listen to his mercy in Christ. This train of thought, which has been followed so far, is not incorrect. But we should remember that there is also, even first of all, a movement in the opposite direction. Only he who has beheld God's face can judge his own misery seriously. For only the Lord himself *unica est regula ad quam exigendum sit* (1559: *est*) *istud iudicium*.³⁵ God measures himself by himself, being the measure of all things! Therefore, the order *from* knowledge of God *to* knowledge of ourselves is to be preferred - Calvin now says, debating with himself. And by this he corrects Luther's arrangement, which had also been his own arrangement in 1536!

³³ 'Above, I have unfolded, as far as I could, the summary of the doctrine through which, based on the knowledge of God and of ourselves, we may come to the fellowship of salvation' (own translation).

³⁴ *Institutes* 1539-54: I.1-3, *CO I*, 279-82. Later revised in 1559: I.1.1-3. In 1550 Calvin started to divide the capita into numbered sections. We refer to the version of 1539 using this numbering which was added later.

³⁵ *OS III*, 32, II. 17-18.

At the same time, he leaves the order Law → Gospel in the chapters 3 and 4 unchanged. Thus, the argument runs first (as the *ordo recte docendi postulat!*) from knowledge of God to knowledge of ourselves, but after that *from* knowledge of ourselves (being knowledge of our misery through the Law) *to* knowledge of God (being knowledge of faith, viz. knowledge of God's mercy in Christ). So:

Cap. 1: DEUS – Cap. 2: HOMO – Cap. 3: HOMO – Cap. 4: DEUS

The question raised by this double ordering can be formulated as follows: does the knowledge of God with which the *Institutes* starts refer to the same knowledge of the same God as that with which the argument ends? Or is there, if not ontically, at least noetically a difference between the knowledge of God in chapter 1 and that in chapter 4?

After the Introduction the *Institutes* of 1539, I.4-10, speaks (in line with the commentary on Romans *and* the arrangement which was developed in 1537) of the subjective faculty to know God which is placed in the soul (in 1559 this is recast into I.3). It issues into a prophetic-critical reflection: people use this faculty in a totally wrong way, they make up their own gods and live with an enormous misunderstanding as to the 'fear of God' (1559: I.4). All empirical religion is false religion through and through. And yet, the true religion is not un-known. Therefore, the whole failure of natural theology is confronted in the end with a description of this *pura germanaque religio (nempe fides, cum serio Dei timore coniuncta)*.³⁶ This description is (both stylistically and theologically) a beautiful variation of the one with which the introduction of 1536 had started. Whoever reads this will hardly be able to imagine that this existential and practical knowledge of God would not refer to knowledge of God-*in-Christ*.

1539, I.11-18, deals with the objective revelation in the cosmos (see 1559: I.5). For someone who contemplates well, it teaches the virtues of God.³⁷ But our faculty of contemplation is seriously corrupted. Therefore, as is elaborated in the complex I.19-38 (1559: I.6-10), the Word of God has to be added in order to show us how we should really contemplate the *opera Dei*.³⁸ This part on the

³⁶ 1539: I.9, CO I, 285. In 1559 Calvin puts three passages which all describe the true knowledge of God - the opening sentences of 1539:I.1 and I.6 as well as I.9 - together and places them at the beginning of the first book (I.2.2), after the introduction of 1539 (1559: I.1) and a second introduction, added in 1559: we must know what knowledge of God is before its perversion is spoken of!

³⁷ It concerns *argumenta, documenta* and *testimonia* for the *virtutes Dei*. So, nature (I.12) makes known to us God's *aeternitas, potentia et bonitas*, among other things, and history (I.13) his providential *sapientia, misericordia et iustitia*.

³⁸ Breukelman raises a number of serious biblical-theological objections against this: 1. an *opus* is a product, the finished result of an act. The Scriptures, however, speak of the *debarim*, that is, the words which in themselves are acts, the acts that are told themselves; 2. by separating an unknowable essence of God *behind* his 'works' from those works, it cannot be expressed how God's being is a being-in-act (sc. KD II/1, cap. VI); 3. works are primarily spatial, while acts are primarily temporal; 4. works can be seen, acts however are told (Psalm 118). Thus, the proclamation is threatened to be replaced by a 'world-view'.

Dei notitia in mundi fabrica, too, issues into a description of the true knowledge of God, parallel to the end of the part on the *Dei notitia hominum mentibus inditam*³⁹. And this passage, too, can be read as a more or less adequate summary of the whole biblical witness, as a testimony of faith concerning the God who chooses to be none else than the God of the Covenant with his people, a merciful God who at the same time and as such is just. But, strangely enough, it appears that this is not what Calvin means. For the passage ends with the following conclusion:

Hactenus pulchre convenit ista Dei effigies (viz. that of the Scriptures, as is described in I.19-36) cum illa quam in mundi universitate apparere nuper (viz. in I.11-18) ostendimus (CO I, 303).⁴⁰

Strangely enough, the testimony that the cosmos offers is the norm whether the 'general witness' of Scripture is right (and not the other way around). However, thanks to a 'happy coincidence' this 'general' and the 'proper' testimony (of faith) are with Calvin remarkably similar as to their contents.⁴¹ But even so, there is already a duality in his speaking about God. Therefore he adds the final sentence of the first chapter of 1539 (which has become redundant in 1559):

Verum, quia se Dominus propinquiore intuitu contemplandum *non* exhibet, *quam in facie Christi sui*, quae ipsa fidei tantum oculis conspicitur: quod de notitia Dei dicendum *restat*, in eum locum melius differetur (again this 'differere'!, see above, I.1), quo tractatur *fidei* intelligentia (CO I, 304)⁴².

Apparently, when God is mentioned in the first part, Deus → homo, not everything has been said yet. Only when in the second part, homo → Deus, the Christ is spoken of, that is, God's face as it shows up in his Christ, the whole story has been told.⁴³ Dowey is right in saying that the later doctrine of the twofold know-

³⁹ 1539: I.37. Latin in: CO I, 303 and OS III, 85, l. 29-43 (note in 1559: I.10.1). The French text in Panrier I, 1936 (see above, note 2), 76f.

⁴⁰ 'This image of God [which comes to us from the Scriptures] beautifully corresponds to that of which we have shown above that it appears in all the world' (own translation).

⁴¹ As to the Scriptural passages that are traditionally used to support the doctrine of revelation in creation, like Hebr. 11:3, Ps. 19:1, Rom. 1:19, they are all mentioned at the beginning of the complex I.11-18 (1539, I.11 = 1559, I.5.1; in I.5.3 Acts 17:27 is added). But it appears in I.17 (= I.5.14) that the contemplation Hebr. 11 speaks of is purely *through faith*; that Ps. 19 which speaks of the heavens who declare God's glory is a hymn of praise to the *tora*; that Romans 1 is written in order that the Gentiles have no excuse; and that, according to Acts, God let them walk in their (erroneous) ways. So, what is left is hardly positive!

⁴² Dowey, *o.c.*, 48, translates: 'Nevertheless, since God does not show himself rightly and to intimate contemplation except in the face of his Christ, which can be regarded only with the eyes of faith, that which remains to be said of the knowledge of God can best be deferred to the place where we have to speak of the knowledge of faith.'

⁴³ The term 'the face of Christ' stems from 2 Cor. 4:6. But listen to this verse: 'For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.' When one hears this, then the knowledge of the Creator (who said,

ledge of God is potentially assumed here. At the same time, both forms of knowing are still so intertwined here that it is hardly possible to elucidate what Christ can really add, that is, to what extent the knowledge of God which was the starting-point was in fact secretly *already* knowledge of God-in-Christ.

II.2.3. The catechism of 1542

In Strasbourg Calvin learnt a lot. When he is back in Geneva, his first job is to revise his 'small catechism' of 1537 and make it into a textbook which is didactically more useful.⁴⁴ For our purpose, we should especially give attention to one characteristic matter in this text.

In 1536 Calvin spoke at the end of the chapter *De lege* of sanctification and good works: the Law is, among other things, a stimulus to struggle against the flesh and to put off the old self.⁴⁵ In 1537 the same subject matter does not appear at the end of the reflection on the Law, but as an introduction to that on faith. Conversion is a gift, in which the turn to Christ is already realized!⁴⁶ Yet one can say that it fulfils the classical-Lutheran function: putting off the flesh drives us towards Christ. In 1539, however, the theme is pushed forward even further: chapter 4 deals with faith, chapter 5, surprisingly enough, with *penitence*. Of those who participate in faith one must say first of all that they put off the old self.⁴⁷ This shift seems to concern only a sub-theme, which for what follows is interesting only in relation to the arrangement of soteriology. But in 1542 Calvin draws a conclusion which affects the whole of the *ordo* of his teaching. For he decides to reverse Luther's order, 'knowledge of sin through the law - knowledge of our redemption through faith alone.' Now the Gospel precedes the Law.⁴⁸ Now doing the commandments follows from a well-understood confession of faith.⁴⁹ Thus, the dialectic of knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves and that of Law and Gospel are not separated here (as was increasingly the case in 1537 and 1539), but they flow together into one movement. No longer, as in 1536, a movement *from* knowledge of ourselves *to* knowledge of

'Let there be light') and the knowledge of Christ through the illumination by the Holy Spirit are quite close to one another!!

⁴⁴ *CO* 6, 1-134. The first edition in French is not extant, but its contents must be the same as that of the Latin text of 1545 (besides *CO* 6, it is also to be found in *OS* II, 72-144).

⁴⁵ *OS* I, 60-68. The word 'penitence' is not mentioned yet. That is dealt with only in the fifth chapter, on the false sacraments.

⁴⁶ *OS* I, 391-396: a definition of faith, justification, sanctification, *penitence et regeneration*, good works, Simbole. So, the theme of 'penitence' is integrated in 'sanctification' here. See M. den Dulk, *Als twee die spreken*, The Hague 1987, 31 (Barth's doctrine of sanctification in dialogue with Calvin).

⁴⁷ In Pannier's edition 2, 171f. According to Calvin (he says so to his friend Bucer, among others), in Mc. 1:15 par. conversion does not precede faith. 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near' means that the nearness of the kingdom is the condition and the presupposition of conversion! In 1559 this can be found in III.3.2, *OS* IV, 56.

⁴⁸ *OS* II, 75-96, *De Fide*; 96-112, *De Lege*. We are reminded, of course, of Barth's essay, 'Evangelium und Gesetz,' *ThEh* 32 (1935), and of the structure of *KD* II/2.

⁴⁹ As early as 1539 Calvin had called the *tertius usus legis* the *praecipuus usus*. Pannier 1, 293; 1559: *OS* III, 337, l. 23 (*Institutes* II.7.12).

God in faith, but rather the other way around: *from* knowledge of God as knowledge of faith *to* a life of turning which involves killing the old self. This ordering of 1542 is 'really Calvin'. But it is not the only Calvin. It appears to be rather difficult to track down '*the real Calvin*'.

II.2.4. The *Institutio* of 1543 – 1550 – 1554

Meanwhile, the size of the *Institutes* continued to grow from one edition to the next. Each time Calvin assimilated both the fruits of his exegetical and those of his polemical work into the relevant passages of his main writing. Besides, his work as a reformer demanded more and more reflection on the church as it actually existed. As a result, especially the material of what he regarded to be the fourth part of the symbol, the *credo ecclesiam*, grew to such a degree that he decided to divide the *explicatio symboli* into four capita (1539: 4 became 1543: 5-8⁵⁰). But this meant that the balanced composition of 1539 (we remember: two times three capita *summa doctrinae*, supplemented by a series of aspects of the doctrine) was abandoned. In fact, it was hardly possible to recognize an ordering principle in the succession of loci. No wonder that Calvin looked forward to the moment at which he could write, '*Then* I was not wholly dissatisfied, to be sure, but only *now* I can be really content' (see above, I.1, note 2).

II.3. The *Institutio* of 1559 (the third main form; Four Books)

II.3.1. The *explicatio symboli* as the new *ordo docendi*

We have seen that originally the scheme Law-and-Gospel provided the framework within which (besides 'commandment' and 'prayer' also) 'faith' was discussed. Gradually, however, the framework became less and less recognizable. It no longer had the power to uphold the whole *doctrina*. The *discovery* that Calvin made during his illness in the winter of 1558/59 was to make that which initially had been part of his teaching, the *explicatio symboli*, into the framework for the whole of it.⁵¹

Now that we have seen the wrestling of more than twenty years that preceded the final redaction and which called for a new *ordo docendi*, we must take this discovery seriously (with Parker, and so against Köstlin and Dowey).

⁵⁰ Besides, the newly written chapter 'De votis ubi de monachatu agitur' (following Melanchthon's example?) was placed as cap. 4 after *De Lege*.

⁵¹ And therefore also the other way around: to make that which initially was the framework, Law-and-Gospel, into a part. See the composition of the Second Book of 1559: II.1-5, *De cognitione hominis* (man's misery); II.7-8, *De lege* (explication of the Decalogue); II.10-11, *De similitudine ac differentia veteris et novi testamenti* (= the 7th chapter of 1539, the 11th of 1543); II.12-16, *Explicatio secundae partis symboli* (= Gospel; 1543, 7). The capita 6, 9 and 17 are links and elucidations. The title of the Second Book is: *De cognitione Dei redemptoris in Christo*. Thus, he is not just speaking about Christ from chapter 9 on. The part on the law and on the knowledge of man's misery through the law, too, contains a testimony to Christ! In this sense, one looks from *De fide* toward *De lege*, in line with the *ordo* of 1542 (in spite of the fact that the order continues to be reversed).

The form to be given should stem from the unity of religious education, form the one *pura germanaque religio*, the one *fides cum Dei timore coniuncta*.

This intention is also clear from the introductory words that Calvin repeatedly placed before the exposition of the Apostles' Creed.⁵² Let us listen to them from, e.g., the French edition of 1541:

Combien que c'est chose veritable que la propriété de Foy lors est clairement demonstrée, quand elle est dirigée à l'Evangile comme à son but (Lat. scopus), neantmoins si fault-il chercher que c'est la Foy doit principalement regarder en iceluy evangile: ce que nous avons brièvement touché, en demonstrent comment la somme de l'Evangile est contenue en Jesus Christ. Car par cela nous avons voulu signifier, que 'toutes les promesses' non seulement sont 'comprinses en luy' (2 Cor. 1), mais aussi représentées. [Then follows a reflection on Christ as the face of the Father and the radiance of His glory and why, therefore, no one can come to the Father but through the Son, who is the Way. And Calvin concludes:] Comme l'Evangile est le but de nostre Foy, et Christ, par l'Evangile, est assigné comme le but particulier d'icelle, aussi en Christ elle ha pour son object et regard ce qu'il a fait en souffert pour nostre salut. Pour avoir donc une parfaite explication de la Foy, il fault avoir devant les yeulz ce qui est en Christ, appartenant à la confirmation d'icelle. Car après avoir congneu la matière et la substance d'icelle, il sera aisé d'entendre toute sa nature et propriété, comme en une peinture. Or le Symbole des Apostres nous sera au lieu d'une telle peinture, auquel toute la dispensation de nostre salut est tellement exposée en toutes ses parties, qu'il n'y a point un seul point obmis.⁵³

Faith is aimed at the Gospel. This good news tells us about Christ. In Him all our salvation is contained. If one wants to know what are all the aspects of salvation, one should go to the Apostles' Creed. Well, this can hardly mean anything else than that Calvin, in his program to let the Apostles' Creed determine the form of the *ordo recte docendi*, planned to effect a Christological concentration throughout this work.

But it is quite remarkable that while Calvin takes the Apostles' Creed to be the starting-point for his new arrangement of the subject matter, he does not know where to place his earlier introduction to the symbol... Precisely at this relevant point, he, the great teacher, omits to make explicit the order of his teaching. Neither his hermeneutics of the symbol (viz. that it exclusively testifies to Christ) nor its Trinitarian division (as is clear from the distribution of

⁵² Catechism 1537, OS I, 396: 'Or cela est explique au Symbole: cest a scavoir comment Christ nous a este fait du Pere sapience, redemption, vie, iustice, sanctification.' Catechism 1542, OS II, 76: q. 14. 'Fiducia ergo in Deo fundamentum ac principium est, eum in Christo novisse? – Omnino. q. 15. Nunc, quanam sit huius cognitionis summa? – In fidei confessione, vel potius in formula confessionis, quam inter se communem habent Christiani omnes, continetur. Eam vulgo symbolum Apostolorum vocant...'

⁵³ Pannier, 2, 43-45. In 1539 it appeared in cap. 4, in 1543-54 in 6.1-5, CO 1, 477f. In the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* in OS, sections 1-2 can be found in III.2.1 and 6 (OS IV, 9 and 13f, faith) and the sections 3-5 in II.16.18 (OS III, 507, Christ). In both cases not fully.

the subject matter over the first three books in 1559) are discussed as such.⁵⁴ This omission made it possible for Köstlin and Dowey to think that the Trinitarian-Christological dogma apparently was not that important to Calvin as an ordering principle. However, it is not enough to simply conclude that they were wrong. One must ask what might have been the reason for Calvin's omission.

II.3.2. The *duplex cognitio Dei*

In the winter of 1558/59 Calvin must have been busy cutting and pasting (one would have heartily offered him a modern word processor!). One may assume that at the beginning of his labor he knew rather precisely how he would distribute the 21 capita of his 1554 book among the four books of his new *Institutes*. And yet, he did not start with this. Knowing where he wanted to end up, his first step must have been to recast the three initial chapters of the previous version: 1. *De cognitione Dei* into the first 10 chapters of the first book; 2. *De cognitione hominis* into the first 5 chapters of the second book; and 3. *De Lege* (together with the doctrine of the old and the new covenant) into the complex II.6-11 ('Law-and-Gospel as witness to Christ'). Only when he arrived at the chapter *De Fide* from the earlier version, he started to cut in the exposition of the Symbol and he distributed the various articles from the four chapters on the Creed as well as the several aspects of the following chapters among the four planned books.⁵⁵

Now, through this door the famous *duplex cognitio* entered. Although Calvin's starting-point was the *simplex ordo* of faith → Gospel → Christ → salvation → symbol (see above), he only worked towards this in the revision of the first three capita. But to end up there, anyway, he needed a second ordering principle. Dowey is right: such a principle was already available in the earlier version in embryonic form. We remember from 1539:

⁵⁴ In all versions of his 'large' and 'small' catechisms between 1536 and 1554, Calvin had unfolded his doctrine of the Trinity after the introduction to the Creed and before the explication of each of the four articles (1536: *OS* I, 70-75; 1537: *OS* I, 396; 1539-54: cap. 6.6-25, *CO* I, 480ff.; 1541: Pannier 2, 48-76; 1542: c. 3, *OS* II, 76-77), i.e. as *regula loquendi*. While this unfolding was greatly extended in 1559, in *Institutes* I.13 (29 sections), it lost its structuring position (it now merely elucidates one aspect of Book I: the distinction between the God of Israel and the gods). Has Barth finally honored Calvin's intention by discussing the Trinity in *KD* I/1? Also Th. Beza may have honored this intention in his *Compendium doctrinae christianae* (Ungarisches Bekenntnis von 1562, in: E.F.K. Müller, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche*, Leipzig 1903, 376-449): Cap. I (!) De Trinitate, Cap. II De Deo Patre, Cap. III De Jesu Christo unico Filio, Cap. IV De Sancto Spiritu, Cap. V De Ecclesia, Cap. VI (!) De Ultimo Iudicio.

⁵⁵ As a result, the first book was, e.g., completed by the explication of the first and second commandments – God against the gods – from 1554, 3.20-39 (I.11-12); the doctrine of the Trinity from 6.6-25 (I.13); the exposition of the first article on the Creator from 6.28-48 (I.14); the short passage on the *status integretatis* from 2.6-7, 18-19 (I.16); and the parts on providence from the exposition of the first article in 6.49-51 and from the chapter on predestination in 14.38-54 (I.16-17, with a newly written I.18 added to it).

1. Deus (in operibus suis) – 2. homo – 3. homo (peccator) – 4. Deus (in Christi facie)

It is this line that Calvin now starts to elaborate, and this time, as a good teacher, he does make it very clear. Repeatedly, at turning-points in his argument, he adds elucidating remarks to the revision of the old text, from which the reader learns where he is en route from God the Creator to God the Redeemer.⁵⁶ First he adds to the introduction of 1539 (on the right order, knowledge of God - knowledge of ourselves) an extra introduction in which the methodology of the twofoldness is presented: the argument will follow the course of God's self-manifestation, first (*primum*) in creation (to which Scripture, too, testifies) and then (*deinde*) in the face of Christ (I.2.1). Subsequently, he remarks in the passage from the old first chapter, in which the knowledge of the *opera Dei* from Scripture was correlated to the same knowledge *in mundi fabrica*, both at the beginning (I.6.1) and at the end (I.10.1), that this knowledge does not yet (3x *nondum!*) contain the whole doctrine of the Scriptures (for the most important part is still to come, namely, in the reflection on the old and the new covenant, II.9-11).

At the beginning of the earlier second chapter, too, Calvin puts an addition (II.1): just as the knowledge of God, so is our knowledge of ourselves characterized by a double movement, in which we first (*primum*) must realize how wonderful our nature would be if it had remained incorrupt (*irrealis*), and then (*deinde*) how totally broken and miserable we are after the Fall.⁵⁷ Schematically:

Primum: Deus Creator - primum: homo in statu integritatis -
BOOK I

deinde: homo lapsus - deinde: Deus Redemptor
BOOK II-IV

All this issues into a newly written chapter in Book II, in which Calvin evaluates retroactively all the 'knowledge of God the Creator' (II.6), after the treatise on man's misery and before the beginning of the main theme of this book - Law and Gospel as witness to Christ.⁵⁸ For a proper assessment of these data it is surely necessary to include this latter insertion. For just as in the first book the *sen-sus divinitatis* in the soul (I.3-4) and human observation of revelation in the cosmos (I.5 ff.) issued into a great fiasco, this appears to be even more so after the

⁵⁶ An excellent overview is given by Dowey, *o.c.*, 42-47.

⁵⁷ *Institutes* 1559: II.1.1 (*OS* III, 228, ll. 20-28).

⁵⁸ II.7-8: Law; II.9-11: the relationship between Law and Gospel; II.12-17: Gospel. The title of the second book (not accidentally related to the title of the linking chapter II.9) is: 'De cognitione Dei Redemptoris in Christo, quae Patribus sub Lege *primum*, *deinde* et nobis in Evangelio patefacta est.' Thus, the *primum-deinde* of II.1 - man before and after the Fall - is now followed by a second *primum-deinde*: man before and after the coming of the only-begotten Son. This sequence becomes an entrance to later historicizing reflections, in which the history of humankind (as a history of calamity and salvation) is divided into consecutive eras.

reflection on the Fall and the enslaved will. As an illustration Calvin puts forward a thought from the preface to his commentary on Genesis from 1554. The world has not known God through its wisdom (read: through His *apparentia in mundi fabrica*), but through the foolishness of preaching, the apostle says (1 Cor. 1:21). So it is true for us, too, that we do not know of any access to our Creator if we do not humble ourselves before the cross.⁵⁹ The Father is only known by us at the cross of Christ.⁶⁰

It cannot be said any clearer that the whole 'knowledge of God the Creator', of which Calvin has spoken all through the first book, is of no value, unless it comes in the train of the Christological concentration. Even Dowey's formula of a 'dialectical relationship' between the two ways of knowing seems too weak, since Calvin speaks very rudely of the worthlessness of our corrupted faculty of knowing outside of Christ. This is not to conceal the fact, like Parker does, that Calvin does make use of the figure of the *duplex cognitio* all through a whole book. But we do assert that he worked toward establishing its fiasco and that, therefore, he did not lose sight of the perspective of the Christological concentration along the way.⁶¹ In this direction the answer might be found to the question raised above (see the end of I.2.4), how it is possible that one interpreter (viz. Parker) can be right, while the other (viz. Dowey) is not at all fully wrong. For with Calvin one tendency can be observed, but also a secondary tendency. And he leaves it to his audience how to deal with these two tendencies.

⁵⁹ *Institutes* II.6.1 (*OS* III, 320, l. 26 - 321, l. 4). The *Argumentum ad Genesim*: *CO* 23, 8. K. Barth cites this passage in the commentary on Genesis several times in his doctrine of creation, as support (one of very few instances of such support in the history of theology) for his own doctrine of 'the covenant as the internal basis of creation': *KD* III/1, 33-34 and III/3, 35. However, Barth's appeal to Calvin is contested in our country by the historian of dogma, E.P. Meijering, in his *Von den Kirchenvätern zu Karl Barth. Das altkirchliche Dogma in der 'Kirchlichen Dogmatik'*, Amsterdam 1993, 404-406, 412. He rightly observes that there is a difference between the infralapsarian approach of Calvin and Barth's perspective, who wants to base the creation on Christ, even apart from the Fall. But Meijering is mistaken when he, therefore, regards Calvin's reference to Paul as an occasional argument, which would not interrupt his thinking from the general to the special. For he has not seen that the same argument returns at a crucial place in the *Institutes* of 1559.

⁶⁰ Here we find a deep kinship between Calvin and the Dutch dialectical theologian Oepke Noordmans (who indeed was an infralapsarian as well). See Dr. A. van der Kooi's presentation.

⁶¹ Breukelman uses for Calvin's *duplex cognitio* the term *vorhäreitische Abweichung*, coined by Barth (*KD* I/2, 902-908): not a conscious heresy, but a tendency which comes along secretly and which, when it grows, may become a heresy.

II.4. After-effects

II.4.1. Reformed orthodoxy

In what we call 'Reformed orthodoxy' the secondary tendency of twofoldness has been elaborated much more than the main tendency of the Christological concentration.⁶²

To begin with, the Lutheran *ordo* of Law-and-Gospel has been more influential in liturgy and catechism than Calvin's *ordo* of Gospel-and-Law. And besides, Luther was stripped of his paradoxical-dialectical features, so that his order could be understood as a historicizing sequence. We have seen that this historicizing moment is not absent in Calvin, for he *teaches*, first, a before-and-after-the-Fall, and then a before-and-after-the-Incarnation. However, this is broken up again when, having arrived at Christ, he appears to think retrospectively from Christ. Those who came after him have not been able to join him in this movement. The same applies to the division in his speaking about God: first, the *Deus Creator* starting with whom is necessary for understanding ourselves, then the *Deus Redemptor* in whom our faith can find rest. Calvin divides, he consciously wants to divide (also in his exegesis), but the biblical character of his theology is so strong that he hardly succeeds in speaking about the Creator different than as a Redeemer. Soon after him, it appeared to be difficult to sustain this, too.

The thinking in terms of natural law comes in through Melancthon and soon attains its own status in the (pre-modern) thinking about man in paradise, the mythical origin. Ursinus forges the category of the 'covenant of nature', which becomes autonomous from the 'covenant of grace' and in the course of the seventeenth century increasingly becomes the norm for the covenant of grace. With *Föderaltheologie* historical thinking enters theology and the elements already present (before and after the Fall, before and after Christ) are made dynamic, first as *Heilsgeschichte*, later as *Religionsgeschichte*. And during the early Enlightenment, the line which was originally an ancillary line becomes the main line, the general revelation in creation (with the *generalis Scripturae doctrina*) becomes the norm for the special revelation in Christ (with the *propria fidei doctrina*). The end of this development can be heard in Jean Alfonse (i.e. the 'younger', liberal) Turretini, theologian in Geneva, like Calvin, but one and a half centuries later (1631-1737). In his 'Theses de Theologia naturali in genere' he states:

⁶² This can be seen to happen already during Calvin's life, when the Parisian church meeting of 1559 wished to adopt the doctrine of the twofold knowledge of God from the then brand-new *Institutes* into the *Confessio Gallicana* - in opposition to Calvin's own design whose arrangement was Trinitarian. (Unfortunately, in 1561 this doctrine thus entered our own *Belgica* as well). See *OS* II, 310-12 (+ App.). Cf. also Barth, *KD* II/1, 141.

- I. Theologia ea Disciplina dicitur, quae de Deo et rebus Divinis agit.
- II. Cum vero *duplici via* sese Deus Hominibus notum faciat, *primum* quidem Naturali lumine, Mortalibus omnibus communi, *deinde* Virorum divinitus adflatorum documentis, *hinc duplex* Theologia, Naturalis et Revelata.⁶³

Compare with this, once more, Calvin, *Institutes* 1559, I.2.1:

Quia ergo Dominus *primum* simpliciter Creator tam in mundi opificio, quam in generali Scripturae doctrina, *deinde* in Christi facie Redemptor apparet: *hinc duplex* emergit cognitio: quarum nunc prior tractanda est, altera deinde suo ordine sequetur.⁶⁴

Obviously, Turretini had Calvin in mind when he wrote his second thesis. He probably thought to walk in his paths. A twofold revelation, a *first* and a *then*, a twofold order of knowing that follows a twofold order of being. But note well: one could imagine Calvin to have stated that God had made himself known *primum simpliciter, deinde... dupliciter*, namely, in the twofoldness of God the Creator and God the Redeemer, with which corresponds a twofoldness in theology. But that is precisely what Calvin did not say. Instead of *dupliciter* he wrote, *in Christi facie*, thinking of 2 Cor. 4:6. This is precisely where he remained a reformer (even if he was a reformer 'of the second generation'): he knew a *solus Christus* with a radicality which was soon no longer known in the same way.

II.4.2. Karl Barth

What about Karl Barth? His theology is not Calvin's theology. We have heard enough to thoroughly underline this once more. But with his theology he has dug up something from the Genevese reformer in the way of a subversive recollection - he has dug up precisely that which had not been known in the same way for a long time.

Rinse Reeling Brouwer

Translation: Hans van Loon

⁶³ Cited from the *Opera Omnia*, Leeuwarden 1774, Tomus Primus. Own translation: 'I. Theology is called that discipline that treats of God and divine matters. II. Because God makes himself known to people in a *twofold way*, *first* through the natural light which all mortals have in common, *then* through documents of men who were divinely inspired, *therefore* there is a *twofold* theology, a natural and a revealed one.' Remember Barth's word: 'Brunner hat... aus Calvin so etwas wie einen Jean Alphonse Turretini gemacht,' in: *Nein!*, ThEh 14, 41.

⁶⁴ Dowey, *o.c.*, 43, translates: 'Therefore, since the Lord first appears, both in the formation of the world and in the general doctrine of Scripture simply as Creator, and afterwards as the Redeemer in the person of Christ - from this arises a twofold knowledge of him, of which the former is first to be considered, and the other will follow in its proper order.'

Appendix

CHRISTIANAE RELIGIONIS INSTITUTIO 1536, I. DE LEGE (OS I, 63,1.. 15-44)

Haec *si quo oportuerat ordine, tractata digestaque essent* anteactis saeculis,
nunquam tantum turbaram ac dissentionum ortum esset.

Paulus ait (1 Cor 3),
in architectura christianae doctrinae
retinendum *fundamentum* quod posuit,
et praeter quod nullum aliud poni potest,
quod est *Jesus Christus*.

QUALE AUTEM ISTUD EST FUNDAMENTUM ?

An QUOD Jesus Christus initium fuit nostrae salutis
et QUOD viam nobis aperuit, cum nobis meruit occasionem merendi?

MINIME.

Sed

- (1) QUOD in eo electi ab aeterno sumus ante mundi constitutionem,
nullo nostro merito,
sed secundum propositum beneplaciti Dei,
- (2) QUOD eius morte ipsi a mortis damnatione redempti ac liberati a perditione sumus,
- (3) QUOD in ipso adoptati a patre sumus, in filios et haeredes,
- (4) QUOD per ipsius sanguinem patri reconciliati,
- (5) QUOD illi a patre in custodiam dati sumus ne unquam pereamus aut excidamus,
- (6) QUOD ita illi inserti iam vitae aeternae quodammodo sumus participes,
in regnum Dei per spem ingressi
(Eph.1. Rom.9. 1Tim.1. Ioan.1. Eph.1.3. Rom.5.8. 2Cor.5. Ioan. 10 et 17).

HOC PARUM EST:

- (7) QUOD *talem eius participationem adepti*,
ut simus adhuc in nobis stulti,
IPSE nobis coram Deo sapientia est;
ut peccatores simus,
IPSE est nobis *iustitia*;
ut immundi simus,
IPSE est nobis *sanctificatio*;
ut infirmi simus, ut inermes et satanae expositi,
IPSI tamen data est potestas in coelo et in terra,
ut pro nobis satanam conterat et inferorum portas confringat;
ut corpus mortis adhuc nobiscum circumferamus,
IPSE tamen nobis vita est (1Cor.1. Matth.ult. Co.1.3. Rom. 8., Eph. 2.4.)

BREVITER

QUOD omnia illius nostra sunt et nos in eo omnia, in nobis nihil.

SUPER HOC FUNDAMENTUM AEDIFICARI NOS CONVENIT,
SI VOLUMUS CRESCERE IN TEMPLUM SANCTUM DOMINO.