Il n'y a là aucune trace de honte. Calvin aurait-il loué le Passavant si l'ouvrage avait été en dessous de la norme réformée? Peut-être n'est-ce pas par accident que dès les premières lignes du Passavant, Bèze remarque: "Mentiri ad bonam intentionem non est malum" (l. 47s.). L'auteur du présent compte-rendu n'exclut pas qu'en réaction à la qualification des protestants par Lizet comme "Pseudo-évangeliques" dans le titre de son livre de 1551 (dont le Passavant est la réplique), Bèze, avec II Cor. 11 et 12 — à l'opposé de Lizet comme pseudopropheta (II Cor. 11,13), cf. "pseudopropheta" en l. 1642 — se soit affiché comme insipiens ("pas savant") (II Cor. 11,16; cf. 12,6,11 et I Cor. 4,10) écrivant de la part des non multi sapientes (I Cor. 1,16). Pour le lecteur protestant cette identification allait de soi. Tout porte à croire que le pseudonyme de Bèze n'était pas un camouflage de sa honte, mais une forme subtile de polémique religieuse.

En second lieu, l'auteur aurait pu déceler que le Passavant n'avait pas d'abord l'intention "sincère" ("A travers la malice indéniable du Passavant", 70) de répandre les idées principales de la Réforme, à savoir les trois sola's (11: "le motif principal pour lequel Bèze a écrit le Passavant"; cf. 59s., d'ailleurs sans preuves à l'appui). Comme la polémique religieuse a son propre camp pour premier public, elle ne veut pas gagner l'adversaire mais avoir raison.

Enfin on regrettera que certains détails polémiques soient 'aplanis' dans la traduction. Ainsi, la référence intentionnellement fausse faite par le serviteur bête de Lizet au Pape "Anastasius" a été traduite et 'rectifiée' tacitement en "Athanase" (le Père de l'Eglise à qui Bèze pensait en effet) (l. 1347, 1377 et 1429; à l'Index nominum le nom d'Athanase manque).

Cela étant dit, nous nous réjouissons de cette importante édition, qui a le grand mérite de révéler le réformateur Bèze comme un homme de lettres qui pouvait se mesurer à Rabelais.

Wim Janse, Leiden


This is an authorised translation by John Vriend and Lyle D. Bierma of the extended second edition (Leiden 1996) of de Kroon's dissertation on Calvin, which was first published in 1968. The study is essentially a critical reading of the language and theology of the Instititio in its final (1559) form. In this edition it has five chapters following thematically five key elements in Calvin’s systematic presentation: 1. The Knowledge of God and the Knowledge of Ourselves; 2. God’s Honour and Salvation in Christ; 3.

As will be seen, de Kroon's leitmotif, which he argues is also Calvin's, is the honour of God in bipolar relation with human salvation: on this cf. the Introduction, which briefly discusses some of the earlier approaches to systematising Calvin which de Kroon had in critical view when originally undertaking this study. The orientation this conditions and the ways in which throughout the work de Kroon takes up some of these previous studies give his discussion a slightly dated flavour (at least to those who like to know what the latest Forschungsstand is — and there has been an enormous amount of literature on Calvin since the mid-1960s) and the same datedness is very apparent in the bibliography. However, there are plenty of other sources for more recent secondary literature on Calvin and his context, while de Kroon's work largely consists of a close analysis of Calvin's text, which he quotes extensively and in detail, so that the great bulk of the book does not date so easily as these remarks might suggest.

A more serious weakness — but one typical of many dissertations of this kind — is that the author generally focuses so closely on Calvin's text that any questions of interpretation or of wider historical and theological context that are raised along the way tend to be handled rather generally and not very deeply — e.g. on the theme of covenant or on Anselm's theory of satisfaction or on Calvin's understanding of Christ's merits or on Calvin and his medieval precursors or on Calvin and Roman Catholic teaching in general, or indeed on double predestination. The Marijn de Kroon of the 1990s, had he been treating these subjects afresh, would doubtless have handled them differently.

The final chapter does, however, bring a restatement of the thesis and two updates in the form of reactions to Edward Dowey's The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology (pp. 176-190), which had not been taken into account in the original version, and William Bouwsma's John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait (pp. 191-203). These are both useful contributions to the more recent discussion in Calvin research — that on Dowey more appreciative, on Bouwsma more critical — though there is also appreciation for Bouwsma and criticism for Dowey. In addition the English translation has a fresh index of subjects, including a string of Calvin quotations, and another of names, which make it easier to find material in this quite concentrated study.

The book is well presented (though it is unfortunate that the table of contents misses out the definite article in the title of chapter three) and the translation generally runs well. One sentence, however, sticks in the eye on p. 144: "Meanwhile, reprobation is the only point in Calvin's theology where human salvation does not serve the honour of God". What seems to be meant, judging by the run of the discussion, is that reprobation is the one point in Calvin's theology where God's honour is served by something