

Dedication

Close reading:

Ludi Schulze and Calvin research

How should we paint a picture of a scholar who in the course of a life-long career has become well known to the South-African academic community? In some universities their professor emeritus was honoured by a painting of his torso and learned head, hung on the wall of their own “hall of fame”. In the modern era of snapshots and budget cuts a photo is often the only remaining tribute. It might be worthwhile to draw a picture of Prof. Dr. L.F. Schulze, so that also the younger generations have a chance to become acquainted with him. Maybe the eyes of someone from far-away Europe are fit to draw such a portrait. What impression does professor Schulze make through the few books and many articles which he published over the years? I concentrate on his contribution to Calvin and Reformation research and use only the works of Schulze found in the library of a Dutch minister with a shared interest in the history and theology of John Calvin.

1. History of dogma

Schulze’s mastery of the historical theology is attested by his ‘History of dogma’, written for his students. An intriguing line in the introduction of *Geloof deur die eeue* reads:

in treating the Reformation much more attention is given to Luther and the Lutheran confessions than to Calvin and the Reformed confessions. The reason for this accent is: the Lutheran tradition is less-known, while the Reformed confessions are treated in dogmatic and in the history of the confessions.

One wonders, whether Schulze would write this today, twenty five years later, in the same way. But it is his fairness to the rich and broad history of dogma that prompted him to delve in the Lutheran tradition. As it was his fairness to black students — having taught for many

years in Hammanskraal — that made him provide the quotations from the history of dogma in English in an otherwise Afrikaans book.¹

The few pages dealing with Calvin and the Reformed Church describe the relation between Martin Luther and John Calvin and their respective place in the early and later history of the Reformation. From Schulze's other works, born from his teaching, it is clear that he himself devoted much attention to Calvin's works and influence.

2. Calvin and Pighius

In 1968 Ludi Schulze defended his dissertation *Calvin's Reply to Pighius* at the Faculty of Protestant Theology of the University of Strasbourg, France. His promotor was the famous scholar François Wendel. The book, published in 1971,² offers an extensive analysis of the dispute between Albert Pighius and John Calvin — according to the latter's treatises. Although both of Calvin's treatises against Pighius first appeared in Latin editions, Schulze works on the basis of the French translations as found in the *Recueil des Opuscules* of 1566. Did he have a copy of the second edition of 1611 at his disposal? This preference for the French language is not due to a defective knowledge of Latin, because the whole book testifies that Schulze could handle original Latin works — Pighius! — with ease. It seems that Schulze was one of the first Calvin scholars who drew attention to the particularities of the French editions. Working in a French speaking academic environment gave him the chance to perfect his mastery of the languages.

In a contribution to the International Congress on Calvin Research, held in Geneva in 1982, Schulze returned to the theme of his dissertation. 'Calvin's Reply to Pighius — a Micro and a Macro View' is a beautiful example of what he calls 'Kleinforschung'.³ On the macro level he analyses Calvin's line of reasoning regarding the grounds of reprobation. On the micro level Schulze traces a quotation of the clas-

1 L.F. Schulze, *Geloof deur die eene* (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1978).

2 L.F. Schulze, *Calvin's reply to Pighius* [HSRC publication series no. 9] (Potchefstroom: Pro Rege-Press, 1971).

3 'Calvin's reply to Pighius — a micro and a macro view', in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Genevensis Custos. Die Referate des Internationalen Kongresses für Calvinforschung*, ed. W.H. Neuser (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1984), 171-185.

sical play *Medea* by Ennius in *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione*. What could have been Calvin's source and what is the drift of this quote? If the wood, from which Medea's ship had been built, would never have been cut from the trees, she would never have betrayed her country. Which, of course, is nonsense, since her betrayal can hardly be attributed to the initial phase of the building of the ship. The quote is a classical example of false reasoning, 'exactly because it argues to too remote causes',⁴ as Pighius did in relation to the grounds of reprobation. "According to his exposition of Mt. 25, good deeds are the reason for election and bad deeds the reason for reprobation."⁵ Again Schulze refers to the text of the French edition of Calvin's second reply to Pighius, where the conclusion from the Medea example is spelled out: "This is to seek a too remote cause". Schulze's essay ends with a "little excursion into history" of dogma, in fact a clear overview of the history of the doctrine of predestination.

The passage on the Medea quotation ends as follows:

It would be useless to try to determine from which classical author Calvin took this reference to the Medea. He was well known to the works of Cicero and Quintilian.⁶

Still, Schulze lists all possible classical sources in which the quotation can be found. Such style of scholarship made him highly capable to provide a critical apparatus to Calvin's works.

3. Translation of Calvin's *Institutes*

Was Schulze studying the doctrine of predestination in Calvin's works in order to compose the critical apparatus for *Inst.* III xxi-xxiv in the African translation of Prof. H.W. Simpson? In 1980 a draft translation of the 1536 edition of Calvin's *Institutes*, prepared by Simpson, had appeared.⁷ One year later the translation of Calvin's Catechism was published.⁸ It was in the following project that Schulze became in-

4 O.c., 174.

5 O.c., 182.

6 O.c., 175.

7 Johannes Calvyn, *Onderwysing in die Christelike Godsdiens 1536*, translated by H.W. Simpson (Potchefstroom: Calvyn Jubileum Boekefonds, 1980).

8 *Calvyn se Katechismus. In Afrikaans vertaal deur prof. dr. H.W. Simpson* (Potchefstroom: Potchefstroomse Teologiese Publikasies, 1981).

volved. In quick succession between 1984 and 1991 the four volumes of the *Institusie van die Christelike Godsdiens 1559* appeared.

As is the fate of much South African works of scholarship, these volumes are not well known in the rest of the world. The international boycott during the era of apartheid and economic depression made it hard for (white) South African scholars to participate in the international academic community. To the edition of the translation from the Latin, a master piece by H. W. Simpson, Prof. Schulze made an important contribution. Together with Dr. Rina Brink he was involved in the process of translation and documentation.⁹ Such a project must have contributed to his own knowledge of Calvin's works. These four volumes are a monument of Calvin research and of passing on the heritage of the Reformation. While the translation is as such confined to Afrikaans-speaking people, the annotations make it of great value for the international edition of Calvin's works — now undertaken in the series *Ioannis Calvini opera omnia denuo recognita*, published by Librairie Droz in Geneva.

4. The South African Calvin Congress

Schulze, while doing research in Amsterdam at that stage, also attended some papers delivered during the first International Congress on Calvin Research in Amsterdam, 1978.¹⁰ At the first South African Congress on Calvin Research, which took place at the University of Pretoria in 1980, Prof. Schulze introduced the discussion on the papers dealing with "Calvin and art", a subject close to his heart.¹¹ A series of succinct theses was presented. Since Calvin's world view was pneumatological, open and dynamic, he had room for an appreciation of art as a gift of the Spirit for the wellbeing and pleasure of man and to the glory of God the Creator. Had not Calvin said in the *Institutes*:

9 Johannes Calvyn, *Institusie van die Christelike Godsdiens 1559*, (Potchefstroom: Calvyn Jubileum Boekefonds), vol. 1 (1984), vol. 2 (1986), vol. 3 (1988), vol. 4 (1991).

10 The Calvin Congress of 1974 — also in Amsterdam — was limited to Europe.

11 'Calvin and art. Introduction to the discussion', in: *Calvinus reformator. His Contribution to Theology, Church and society* [Wetenskaplike bydraes of the PU for CHE Series F, Number 17] (Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for Higher Education, 1982), 314-316.

Next come manual and liberal arts in learning which, as all have some degree of aptitude, the full force of human acuteness is displayed ... And this capacity extends not only to the learning of the art, but *to the devising of something new*, or the improvement of which has been previously learned (II ii 4, italics by Schulze).

As an example Schulze pointed to the growth of the Genevan Psalter as a new type of liturgical music, “far removed from the polyphonic and *melismata* of the late medieval Church music.” With such thoughts he stimulated the discussion.

At the second South African Congress prof. Schulze returned once again to one of the themes of his dissertation, the bondage of the will. Was the 1543 edition of the *Institutes* expanded after Calvin’s *defensio* against Pighius? Schulze pointed out that in the 1536 edition there was only a rudimentary exposition of the human will. In the second edition, however, a chapter 2 was devoted to the knowledge of man and free will (1539). This was probably inspired by Bucer’s treatment of predestination and his own work on Romans. Schulze points to arguments that Calvin perhaps read the exchange of Erasmus and Luther during his early years. Regarding the next edition of 1543 Schulze noticed no change in the section on free will, even though John Calvin’s controversy with Pighius had recently taken place.

It is clear that in his *Defensio* Calvin, having stated his position clearly already in the *Institutes* (1539), defended his position taken up in 1539 and simply expanded his argument without altering his position.¹²

In the final edition of 1559 only one paragraph is added (II ii 17). Otherwise the material is *verbatim* the same, apart from a few added clarifying sentences. The place in the *Institutes* where the human will is discussed, however, had changed in an important way. The human will is in 1559 no longer treated as part of the knowledge of man (in the context of God the Creator), but as part of the knowledge of God the Redeemer (II ii-v). Following Luther some 22 years after the German

12 ‘Calvin’s defense of the will in bondage according to the *Institutes* with reference to a few of his contemporaries’ in: B.J. van der Walt (ed.), 1986. *John Calvin’s Institutes — his opus magnum. Proceedings of the Second South African Congress for Calvin Research*, July 31-August 3, 1984. [Wetenskaplike Bydraes of the PU for CHE, Series F: Institute for reformational Studies, Number 28] (Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1986), 167 (164-173).

reformer's case against Erasmus, Calvin placed the discussion of the human will in the context of the severity of original sin.

One of the last paragraphs of Schulze's paper expresses a systematic theological sensitivity in lines, close to his heart. Calvin

was restating the message of Romans, not as a mere theory, but as the message of the powerful Word of God which brings us upon our knees to confess the veracity of his Word: that He alone is great and that we are sinners. From this point it follows naturally that the exposition of the corrupted will should stand in the wider context of the second article of the Creed: I believe in Jesus Christ.

5. Symbolics and dogmatics

At the South African Congress on Calvin Research of 1992 in Bloemfontein, where I had the privilege to be present and meet prof. Schulze once again, he spoke on "Calvyn en die Heidelbergse Kategismus".¹³ Although Calvin's influence of this Catechism is hard to establish, Schulze (following W.H. Neuser) pointed to "the typical Calvinian accent on the three-fold office of Christ" as King, High Priest and Prophet as the clearest example of the reformer's influence. The *trimplex munus* of the Catechism of Geneva is condensed in Sunday 12 of Heidelberg. Also in the study of the confessions of the Church Schulze went into great historical and literary detail.

Another example of Schulze's remarkable systematic theological sensitivity is his article on "Calvin and biblical inspiration", written for the *Festschrift* dedicated to Peter De Klerk.¹⁴ It is a specimen of what he himself calls "Kleinforschung", a discussion of Calvin's exposition of Jeremiah 11:19, that is the Vulgate and the masoretic text. This leads to the conclusion that Calvin did not develop a theory about the way inspiration took place. His flexible handling of certain texts from Scripture, as the textual problem of Jer. 11:19, indicates that Calvin does not approach the text as verbally inspired in detail.

13 'Calvyn en die Heidelbergse Kategismus', in: *In die Skriflig* 27 (1993), 487-499.

14 'Calvin and biblical inspiration — a case study', in: *Calvin's Books. Festschrift for Peter De Klerk*, ed. W. H. Neuser, H. J. Selderhuis, W. van 't Spijker (Heerenveen: J.J. Groen en zoon, 1997), 189-195.

Schulze concludes:

According to Calvin the authority of Scripture depends on the fact that God has spoken – but *not* on the way we perceive this to have happened. Scripture is *autopistos*; its authority does not and cannot depend on human theories about its inspiration.

Is Schulze forcing a wedge between God’s Word and Scripture? Is he attacking the doctrine of inspiration? Not at all. He sides with article five of the French Confession:

We believe that the Word contained in these books has proceeded from God, and receives its authority from him alone, and not from men.

This line is applied to our theories about inspiration, not to the belief that the Spirit inspired men to become authors of Holy Scripture.

The Reformed confessions follow Calvin in this regard by saying: we believe *that* God has given his Word to us in spoken and written form, but without trying to confess *how* this happened.

It is Schulze’s sensitivity to theological fairness and confessional plainness that inspired such distinctions.

6. Socio-economical insight

In the paper “Calvin and art” Schulze maintained — *contra* J.J. Snyman — that John Calvin did not belong to the late Middle Ages and proved this thesis by touching on his “outright rejection of the Aristotelian doctrine of the unfruitfulness of money (‘money cannot beget money’).” At that point in time — in 1980 — Schulze had already written a book on Calvin’s views on property, interest and usury.¹⁵ Calvin’s influence on the development of Christian thinking about economy and finance is described in, again, close reading of some key texts from the commentaries and correspondence. This book appeared at last in 1985 (the writing being finalised early 1979).

The beauty of this work is that Prof. Schulze has an open eye for both capitalist and marxist economical theories on property and resources and for their influence on society. The call for egalitarianism

15 Ludi Schulze, *Calvin and “Social Ethics”. His views on property, interest and usury* (Pretoria: Kital, 1985).

by the so-called social ethics is rejected. Schulze makes his readers students of John Calvin who came to see property as a gift of God, meant to serve our needs and to incite us to serve those who are in need. Regarding money Calvin was the first to break essentially with the Aristotelian theory of the unfruitfulness of money. Aristotle had taught as an axiom of natural law that money (coins) can only be exchanged between people. Money itself cannot multiply into new money. This theory was transmitted by the Church Fathers and developed by Thomas Aquinas. On these grounds the Church forbade to ask interest on loans, which was considered usury. According to Schulze, John Calvin broke new ground on this point in his exposition of certain biblical passages. A line which sums up Calvin's thought on usury is the following: "I reply that the question is only as to the poor, and consequently, if we have to do with the rich, that usury is freely permitted."¹⁶ When a rich man or a merchant lends money for productive purposes, it is lawful to ask a certain amount of interest, since there is profit in the productivity to which the loan is yielded.

Far from being a theoretical essay, this book is a jewel of theological thinking on economy and finance in a country suffering from depression and isolation. What Schulze stressed in the case of John Calvin also applies to himself: he tried

to shed the light of the Word of God on the new developments of the economy. But, and this we must never forget, he did so, not as a lawyer or an economist, but as a theologian.¹⁷

It is clear that Prof. Schulze serves the church and promotes Christian thinking on property and money, economy and finance.

What has been written is the balance of what can be found of Schulze's works in the library of a European minister who shares his interest in the life and theology of John Calvin and who visited South Africa long enough to learn to love that country, so rich and so poor, and also to respect the international academic level of Schulze's work and his commitment to Africa and the Church.

Erik A. de Boer

The Netherlands

¹⁶ O.c., 64.

¹⁷ O.c., 54.