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PREPARATION

1. Note the three-fold division of this chapter into:
 - a. Corrective discipline in relation to the keys
 - b. General discipline that forms a part of normal church life
 - c. The discipline of the clergy, with a particular examination of enforced clerical celibacy.

EXPLORATORY

1. On what two things does ecclesiastical discipline depend? (1229, 17ff)
 - a. *...the power of the keys*
 - b. *...spiritual jurisdiction*

For the purposes of this discussion, into what two divisions does Calvin divide the church? (1229, 19f)

- a. *...clergy and people*

Why is this division necessary? (1229, 21ff)

- a. *We shall first speak of common discipline, to which all ought to submit*
- b. *...then we shall come to the clergy, who, besides the common discipline, have their own.*

Why is the proper exercise of discipline even more appropriate within the church than in society as a whole or even in the family? (1230, 1)

- a. The Church's condition, *should be as ordered as possible.*

Using the imagery suggested by analogy of the body for the church, what part of the body pictures the role played by discipline in the life of the church? (1230, 3)

- a. The *sinews*

What role in the body do the sinews play? (1230, 3f)

- a. *...the sinews, through which the members of the body hold together, each in its own place.*

What does this imply about the neglect or the deliberate avoidance of discipline? (1230, 5ff)

- a. *...all who desire to remove discipline or to hinder its restoration...are surely contributing to the ultimate dissolution of the church.*

With what three pictures does Calvin describe the roles played by discipline in the life of the church? (1230, 11ff)

- a. *...a bridle to restrain and tame those who rage against the doctrine of Christ.*
- b. *...a spur to arouse those of little inclination*
- c. *...a father's rod to chastise mildly and with the gentleness of Christ's Spirit those who have more seriously lapsed.*

What threatens the church wherein there is no concern and no means of restraining the people? (1230, 16f)

- a. *...frightful devastation*

What is the sole remedy in such a situation? (1230, 19ff)

- a. Appropriate discipline

2. What are the three stages of church discipline set out in this section? (1230, 22ff)

- a. Private admonition;
- b. Admonition in the presence of witnesses;
- c. Admonition by the Church.

Who should be prepared to administer private admonition? (1230, 26ff)

- a. *...when the situation demands it, every man should endeavour to admonish his brother. But let pastors and presbyters be especially watchful to do this, for their duty is not only to preach to the people, but to warn and exhort in every house, wherever they are not effective enough in general instruction.*

How does Paul's example teach us that this is the duty particularly of presbyters and that they will be accountable for their faithfulness in carrying it out? (1230, 31ff)

- a. *Paul teaches this when he relates that he taught privately and from house to house [Acts 20:20]*
- b. *Paul...declares himself, innocent of the blood of all, [v26], because he, ceased not to admonish everyone night and day with tears [Acts 20:31].*

What is the two-stage process that gives doctrine its force and authority among us? (1230, 34ff)

- a. *...the minister explains to all together what they owe to Christ*
- b. *...the minister...also has the right and means to require that it be kept by those whom he has observed are either disrespectful or languid toward his teaching.*

What marks the occasion for moving from the first to the second stage in discipline? (1231, 1f)

- a. *If anyone either stubbornly rejects such admonitions or shows that he scorns them by persisting in his own vices...*

When the disciplinary process moves to the third stage who, specifically, adjudicates? (1231, 4f)

- a. *...the tribunal of the church, that is the assembly of the elders*

How many possible outcomes are there to this process, carried to the point where the complaint is laid before the church? (1231, 6ff)

- a. Two

What are they? (1231, 6ff)

- a. The offender, *reverences the church*
- b. He/She, *is not even subdued by this but perseveres in his wickedness*

What happens if the offender, *reverences the church*? (1231, 7)

- a. *...he may submit and obey*

What happens if he, *is not even subdued by this but perseveres in his wickedness*? (1231, 8ff)

- a. *...as a despiser of the church, he be removed from the believer's fellowship*

On whose authority is he thus removed? (1231, 8)

- a. *Christ commands...*

3. 1231, 11 Up to this point Christ has spoken, *only of secret faults*. How can Calvin be so sure of this? (1231, 16ff)

- a. *Christ had previously said, If your brother has sinned against you. This phrase [against you] (unless you wish to be contentious) you cannot otherwise understand than as, with your knowledge alone, no others being aware.*

On this basis, what does Calvin postulate? (1231, 11ff)

- a. *...this division: some sins are private; others, public or openly manifest.*

Following this division, what type of sin should be dealt with by following Christ's instruction, *Reprove him, between you and him alone?* (1231, 13)

- a. *...the former, ie, private sins.*

How should public or openly manifest sins be responded to? (1231, 15f)

- a. *Rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear [1 Tim 5:20]*

4. In this section Calvin uses another division for sins, which is - what? (1231, 30f)

- a. *...some are faults; others crimes or shameful acts.*

How may we follow Paul's example, when dealing with the latter sort? (1231, 31f)

- a. *...we must not only use admonition or rebuke, but a severer remedy; as Paul shows when he not only chastises the incestuous Corinthian with words but punishes him with excommunication, as soon as he has been apprised of the crime [1 Cor 5:3ff].*

What three benefits will be enjoyed by the church that exercises its spiritual jurisdiction and, *punishes sins according to the Lord's Word?* (1232, 2)

- a. *...health*
- b. *...order*
- c. *...unity*

If a church excludes from its fellowship manifest adulterers etc it is doing - what? (1232, 7)

- a. *...nothing unreasonable*

Why is the censure of the church such a solemn thing? (1232, 9ff)

- a. *...that no one may despise such a judgment of the church or regard condemnation by vote of the believers as a trivial thing, the Lord has testified that this is nothing but the publication of his own sentence, and what they have done on earth is ratified in heaven.*

How can we be sure that our judgments are also his? (1232, 13f)

- a. *...they have the Word of the Lord to condemn the perverse; they have the Word to receive the repentant unto grace [Matt 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23].*

5. How many purposes for church discipline does Calvin see in scripture? (1232, 21)

- a. Three

What are they? (1232, 21ff; 1233, 15f & 26f)

- a. *...that they who lead a filthy and infamous life may not be called Christians, to the dishonour of God, as if his holy church [cf Eph 5:25-26] were a conspiracy of wicked and abandoned men.*
- b. *...that the good may not be corrupted by the constant company of the wicked, as commonly happens.*
- c. *...that those overcome by shame for their baseness begin to repent.*

What are the implications for Christ's reputation if a church is undisciplined? (1232, 24ff)

- a. *...since the church itself is the body of Christ [Col 1:24], it cannot be corrupted by such foul and decaying members without some disgrace falling upon its Head.*

What activity must we safeguard in particular? (1232, 30f)

- a. *...the order of the Lord's Supper, that it may not be profaned by being administered indiscriminately.*

Of what is someone to whom the distribution of the Lord's Supper has been committed guilty, *if he knowingly and willingly admits an unworthy person whom he could rightfully turn away?* (1233, 3f)

- a. *He, is as guilty of sacrilege as if he had cast the Lord's body to dogs.*

What must the church be given, in order to exercise appropriate discipline at the Lord's Supper? (1233, 13)

- a. Jurisdiction

Turning to the second purpose, why is the toleration of those who live wrongly likely to influence others who ought to know better? (1233, 17ff)

- a. *...there is nothing easier than for us to be led away by bad examples from right living.*

How does 1 Corinthians 5:6 express this tendency? (1233, 20f)

- a. *...a little leaven ferments the whole lump*

To what extent were the Corinthians told by the apostle to break off their association with the incestuous man? (1233, 22f)

- a. *...he prohibited all association with him.*

Turning to the third purpose, Paul's intention in disciplining severely the Corinthian guilty of incest is an example of this purpose in action. How do we know this? (1233, 35ff)

- a. *...he writes that he has delivered the Corinthian man to Satan: that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord. Paul gave him over to temporary condemnatio. That he might have eternal salvation.*

In what sense did the discipline Paul imposed amount to delivering this man over to Satan? (1233, 37f)

- a. *...the devil is outside the church, as Christ is in the church.*

6. In dealing with how discipline should be handled, Calvin repeats firstly the distinction between public and private sins and then, once sins have come before the church (line 20) reminds us of the division between, *crimes and faults*.

How are public sins defined? (1234, 7ff)

- a. *...those not witnessed by one or two persons, but committed openly and to the offense of the entire church.*

How are private sins defined? (1234, 11ff)

- a. *...those of an intermediate sort, which are not unwitnessed, yet not public.*

What sins do not fall under the judgment of the church? (1234, 10)

- a. *...those completely hidden from men, as are those of hypocrites*

What difference applies to the way public and secret sins are dealt with? (1234, 14ff)

- a. *The first kind does not require the steps which Christ lists [Matt 18:15-17]; but when any such sin appears, the church ought to do its duty in summoning the sinner and correcting him according to his fault.*
- b. *In the second kind, according to that rule of Christ, the case does not come before the church until the sinner becomes obstinate.*

What flows from the observance of the division between crimes and faults? (1234, 21f)

- a. *...great severity is not to be used in lighter sins...verbal chastisement is enough.*

What should characterise the verbal chastisement? (1234, 23)

- a. Mildness and fatherliness

With what objective? (1234, 23ff)

- a. The sinner should not be hardened or confused but brought back to himself, *that he may rejoice rather than be sad that he has been corrected.*

What did actions did Paul take (thereby setting us an example) when confronted with the, *shameful act*, of incest in the Corinthian church? (1234, 30ff)

- a. *Paul not only rebuked the Corinthian in words but banished him from the church, and chided the Corinthians for bearing with him so long [1 Cor 5:1-7].*

How do we follow this example of Paul? (1234, 26ff)

- a. When confronted with someone, *who by setting a bad example through his misdeed has gravely injured the church*, it is not enough that he be, *chastised only with words; but he ought for a time to be deprived of the communion of the Supper until he gives assurance of his repentance.*

7. What condition must the elders observe when disciplining, in order for the discipline to correctly administered and to be acting with the authority of Christ? (1235, 28ff)

- a. They must not act, *by themselves alone, but with the knowledge and approval of the church.*
- b. *...the whole sequence of the action, besides the calling on God's name, ought to have that gravity which bespeaks the presence of Christ in order that there may be no doubt that he himself presides at his own tribunal.*

8. What danger does Calvin wish to guard against in secs 8-13 (1236, 3f)

- a. The danger that in punishing with excessive severity, the person disciplined becomes discouraged (*overwhelmed with sorrow*, 2 Cor 2:7)

What should be our guide when deciding what discipline suits a particular case? (1236, 7ff)

- a. *...in excommunication the intent is to lead the sinner to repentance and to remove bad examples from the midst, lest either Christ's name be maligned or others be provoked to imitate them. If, then, we look to these things, it will be easy for us to judge how far severity ought to go and where it ought to stop.*

What ought to be sought and required for a member under discipline to be restored? (1236, 12ff)

- a. *...when a sinner gives testimony of his repentance to the church, and by this testimony wipes out the offence as far as he can, he is not to be urged any further.*

What will be the case if anything more than such testimony is required? (1236, 14f)

- a. *...the rigour will now exceed due measure.*

What criticism does Calvin express of the disciplinary severity employed by some of the church fathers, such as Cyprian, Chrysostom and Augustine? (1236, 21f)

- a. *What could be the result but either great hypocrisy or utter despair?*

9. In what way can human rashness come to the fore when discipline is called for. (1237, 37ff)

- a. *...unless it is checked, [it] ventures to assume for itself a greater right of judgment than it deserves.*

What instruction drawn from scripture does Calvin cite in support of this position? (1237, 14ff)

- a. *...the whole body of the church...should deal mildly with the lapsed and should not punish with extreme rigour, but rather, according to Paul's injunction, confirm its love toward them [2 Cor 2:8].*

How do we carry out our responsibilities towards those who are under discipline? (1237, 18ff)

- a. *It is not our task to erase from the number of the elect those who have been expelled from the church, or to despair as if they were already lost.*
- b. *It is lawful to regard them as estranged from the church, and thus from Christ - but only for such time as they remain separated.*

What if they display more stubbornness than gentleness? (1237, 24ff)

- a. *...we should still commend them to the Lord's judgment, **hoping for better things of them in the future than we see at present.*** (emphasis IJ)
- b. *Nor should we...cease to call on God on their behalf.*

How can we take care to, *take our stand on the divine judgment than put forward our own?* (1237, 29f)

- a. *...let us only judge of the character of each man's works by the law of the Lord.*

What are we overlooking if we are prepared to think of people under discipline as having put themselves beyond the reach of God's mercy (which is what Calvin means by claiming for ourselves, *more licence in judgment*)? (1237, 34ff)

- a. *God, whenever it pleases him, changes the worst men into the best, engrafts the alien, and adopts the stranger into the church.*
- b. *...the Lord does this to frustrate men's opinion and restrain their rashness*

10. The thrust and conclusion of this section depends on the distinction between - what? (1238, 8f)

- a. Excommunication and anathema

Anathema does what? (1238, 8ff)

- a. *Excommunication differs from anathema in that the latter, taking away all pardon, condemns and consigns a man to eternal destruction*

Excommunication does what? (1238, 11f)

- a. *...avenges and chastens his moral conduct*
- b. *...excommunication punishes the man...in such a way that, by forewarning him of his future condemnation, it may call him back to salvation.*

If that be obtained, what then? (1238, 15)

- a. *...reconciliation and restoration to communion await him.*

How often is anathema used? (1238, 16)

- a. *...very rarely or never*

How do these considerations teach us to interpret Matt 18:18? (1238, 3ff)

- a. *...when Christ promises that what his people, bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, he limits the force of binding to ecclesiastical censure.*

What constraints does the imposition of discipline put on relationships with the object of it? (1238, 17f)

- a. *...ecclesiastical discipline does not permit us to live familiarly or have intimate contact with excommunicated persons*

To what end should we direct our relationships with people under discipline? (1238, 19ff)

- a. *...we ought nevertheless to strive by whatever means we can in order that they may turn to a more virtuous life and may return to the society and unity of the church.*

What statement of Paul does Calvin produce in support of this position? (1238, 22f)

- a. Do not look upon them as enemies, but warn them as brothers [1 Thess 3:15].

What can discipline soon degenerate into unless this gentleness is maintained? (1238, 25)

- a. *...butchery*

11. What statement of Augustine expresses an appropriate balance of ideals, as far as discipline is concerned? (1239, 3ff)

- a. He who diligently ponders these things neither neglects severe discipline in the maintenance of unity, nor by intemperate correction breaks the bond of fellowship.

What two dangers does Augustine identify in the statement quoted above?

- a. The neglect of severe discipline;
- b. Breaking the bond of fellowship by intemperate correction.

What response on the part of church members who feel themselves to be confronted with a situation in which the elders are not correcting vices diligently enough? (1238, 29f)

- a. Departing from the Church

What responses on the part of pastors who, *cannot cleanse all that needs correcting according to their hearts' desire*, are similarly inappropriate? (1238, 31ff)

- a. *Pastors should not...:*
 - i. *...resign their ministry*
 - ii. *...disturb the entire church with unaccustomed rigour.*

By what standard do we judge whether discipline is excessively rigorous? (1248, 34ff)

- a. Whoever either corrects what he can by reproof, or excludes, **without breaking the bond of peace**, (emphasis IJ) what he cannot correct - disapproving with fairness, bearing with firmness - this man is free and loosed from the curse.
- b. Augustine: All pious method and **measure** (emphasis IJ) of ecclesiastical discipline ought ever to look to, *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*.

In Augustine's view, what are the consequences of failing to take church unity into account when exercising discipline? (1239, 2f)

- a. *...the medicine of punishment begins to be not only superfluous but also harmful, and ceases to be medicine.*

Who, according to Augustine, *should exert themselves to the end that no fault may remain in the church?* (1239, 7ff)

- a. *...not only...pastors but...every man (ie, every member - IJ)...according to his strength.*

In what way do elders bear an additional responsibility for sins that they tolerate? (1239, 10ff)

- a. *....he who neglects to warn, reprove, and correct evil men, evn though he does not favour them or sin with them, is guilty before the Lord.*
- b. *...if he plays such a part that he is able to cut the evil men off from partaking of the sacraments, and does not do so, he sins not in another's misdeed, but in his own.*

What is Augustine's conclusion on the whole matter? (1239, 18ff)

- a. *Let a man mercifully correct what he can; let him patiently bear what he cannot correct, and groan and sorrow over it with love.*

12. In what way were the Donatists overscrupulous in Augustine's (& Calvin's) view? (1239, 22ff)

- a. *...when they observed faults in the church which the bishops reprov'd in words but did not punish with excommunication...inveighed fiercely against the bishops as betrayers of discipline and in an impious schism separated themselves from Christ's flock.*

Who, in Calvin's day embodied the same tendency? (1239, 27)

- a. *The anabaptists act in the same way today*

How do the anabaptists act in the same way as the Donatists? (1239, 27ff)

- a. *...they recognise no assembly of Christ to exist except one conspicuous in every respect for its angelic perfection.*

What danger lies in a zeal that is carried to the point that it fractures the unity of the fellowship? (1239, 29f)

- a. *...under the pretence of their zeal they subvert whatever edification there is.*
- b. Quoting Augustine: *Those things which scripture enjoins to be done to correct the vices of the brethren with a modest remedy while sincere love is kept and unity of peace preserved, they seize upon and turn to the sacrilege of schism and the occasion of cutting off.*

13. What is the problem with encouraging people to separate? (1240, 14f)

- a. *...it disturbs weak good men more than it corrects bold bad ones.*

If a particular sin is widespread, how is it to be dealt with, in distinction from the way that the sins of a few are to be dealt with? (1240, 19ff)

- a. Augustine: *These things, in my judgment, are removed not roughly or harshly, or in any imperious manner; and more by teaching than by commanding, more by monishing than by menacing. **For so we must deal with a great number of sinners. But we are to use severity toward the sins of a few.*** (emphasis IJ)

Why does Augustine counsel that the method of correction should be tempered in the way he advises? (1240, 27ff)

- a. *...he wishes the method of correction to be so tempered that, as far as possible, it may bring health rather than death to the body.*

What is in danger if discipline is not applied in the measured way recommended by Calvin? (1240, 29 & 32)

- a. *...the body*
- b. *...peace*

14. In addition to the discipline that is an exercise of the power of the keys, what other instances of discipline, that pastors exhort church members to engage in, exist and are listed by Calvin in this section? (1241, 4ff)

- a. Fasting
- b. Solemn supplications
- c. Other acts of humility, repentance and faith.

Where do we first read of such exercises being carried out and by whom? (1241, 9ff)

- a. *...the apostles...took their example from the Law and the Prophets.*

What were the occasions of such exercises? (1241, 11)

- a. The occurrence of, *anything grave*

On such occasions, what was resorted to? (1241, 12)

- a. *...supplications and a fast*

With what objectives are the other disciplinary practices mentioned resorted to? (1241, 16f)

- a. *...by them the people can either be aroused to duty or kept within duty and obedience.*

What are the occasions that call for one or more of these remedies? (1241, 19ff)

- a. *...whenever a controversy over religion arises*
- b. *...whenever there is a question about choosing a minister*
- c. *...whenever...any difficult matter of great importance is to be discussed*
- d. *...when there appear the judgments of the Lord's anger (as pestilence, war and famine)*

How does Calvin respond to those who criticise what he urges in this section, on the ground that these are Old Testament practices? (1241, 29)

- a. *...the apostles followed the same practice.*

Of the two practices - fasting and prayer - which tends to arouse the most controversy? (1241, 29ff)

- a. *Concerning prayers, however, I think scarcely anyone will be found who would raise a question. Let us, therefore, say something about fasting, since very many, while they do not understand how useful it is, regard it as not very necessary; others also, considering it superfluous, completely reject it.*

What danger arises from this lack of understanding? (1241, 35)

- a. *...it can easily lapse into superstition.*

15. What are the three objectives of, *holy and lawful fasting*? (1242, 2ff)

- a. *...to weaken and subdue the flesh that it may not act wantonly.*
- b. *...that we may be better prepared for prayers and holy meditation.*
- c. *...that it may be a testimony to our self-abasement before God when we wish to confess our guilt before him.*

What two types of fasting are introduced in lines 6 to 9?

- a. *...public fasting*
- b. *...private fasting*

How essential is fasting in relation to the second objective? (1242, 10ff)

- a. *...both the whole church and every individual believer have need of such preparation for prayers.*

16. When should fasting be used in connection with prayer? (1242, 28ff)

- a. *...whenever men are to pray to God concerning any great matter, it would be expedient to appoint fasting along with prayer.*

What scriptural examples are given, of fasting joined to prayer? (1242, 30ff)

- a. *...when the Antiochenes placed their hands on Paul and Barnabas*
- b. *...when they appointed ministers to churches*
- c. *Anna...served the Lord in fasting and prayers.*
- d. *Nehemiah...when, with earnest zeal, he prayed God for the liberation of his people.*
- e. *...believers act rightly if they abstain for a time from the marriage bed, that they may be left freer for prayer and fasting.*

Is fasting an act of worship, in and of itself? (1243, 2)

- a. *Luke does not set the worship of God in fasting.*

In what ways does fasting serve prayer? (1242, 36ff)

- a. *Surely we experience this: with a full stomach our mind is not so lifted up to God that it can be drawn to prayer with serious and ardent affection and persevere in it.*
- b. *...the holy woman has in this way trained herself to sustained prayer*
- c. *...believers act rightly if they abstain for a time from the marriage bed, that they may be left freer for prayer and fasting. There he joins fasting with prayer as an aid to it...fasting, is of no importance of itself except as it is applied to this end [1 Cor 7:5].*
- d. *...when, in the same passage he instructs married couples to give one another mutual consideration [1 Cor 7:3], it is clear that he is not speaking of daily prayers, but of something demanding more serious attention..*

17. What should we conclude from the appearance of danger? (1243, 18ff)

- a. *...where he causes danger to appear he warns that he is ready and, so to speak, armed for vengeance.*

Who sets us an example of fasting, in token of sorrow? (1244, 3ff)

- a. *...not only the Israelite church...but also the Ninevites*

How does Calvin respond to the suggestion that, *this is an external ceremony which, together with others, ended in Christ?* (1244, 9ff)

- a. *No, it is an excellent aid for believers today (as it always was) and a profitable admonition to arouse them in order that they may not provoke God more and more by their excessive confidence and negligence, when they are chastised by his lashes.*

To what Biblical teaching does Calvin appeal in support of this view? (1244, 13ff)

- a. *Christ, when he excuses his apostles for not fasting, does not say that fasting is abolished, but appoints it for times of calamity and joins it with mourning. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them. [Matt 9:15; Luke 5:34-35.]*

18. Why does Calvin not understand fasting, *simply as restraint and abstemiousness in food, but as something else?*

- a. *Throughout its course, the life of the godly indeed ought to be tempered with frugality and sobriety, so that as far as possible it bears some resemblance to a fast.*

When, in addition to this constant abstemiousness, we engage in the kind of fasting that is temporary in character, what are its characteristics? (1244, 24ff)

- a. *...we withdraw something from the normal regimen of daily living...and pledge ourselves to a tighter and more severe restraint in diet than ordinarily.*

What are the three constituent parts of such a fast? (1244, 27f)

- a. *...time*
- b. *...quality of foods*
- c. *...smallness of quantity*

What does Calvin mean by, *time?* (1244, 29f)

- a. *...we should carry out those acts of fasting for the sake of which that fast is appointed.*

In what does quality consist, in connection with fasting? (1244, 32ff)

- a. *...all elegance should be absent...we should not whet our palate with delicacies.*

What is the rule of quantity? (1244, 36f)

- a. ...we should eat more sparingly and lightly than is our custom; only for need, not also for pleasure.

19. How many, false and pernicious opinions about fasting does Calvin list in this section?

- a. Three

What are they? (1245, 8ff, 24ff & 36ff)

- a. The outward practice of fasting is all that matters.
- b. Regarding, *fasting as a work of merit or form of divine worship*.
- c. *...to require it to be kept too strictly and rigidly as if it were one of the chief duties.*

What should those who are tempted to think of fasting merely as an outward act remember? (1245, 8ff)

- a. *...they are to, rend their hearts, not their garments*
- b. *God does not greatly esteem fasting of itself, unless an inner emotion of the heart is present, and true displeasure at one's sin, true humility, and true sorrowing arising from the fear of God...fasting is not otherwise useful than when it is joined as a lesser help to these.*
- c. *God abominates nothing more than when men try to disguise themselves by displaying signs and outward appearances in place of innocence of heart.*
- d. *Isaiah very severely inveighs against the Jews' hypocrisy in thinking they were satisfying God when they had only fasted, whatever impiety and impure thoughts they harboured in their hearts. Is this the fast that the Lord has chosen? [Is 58:5-6].*

If we are tempted to think of mere fasting as a duty required by God, what do we need to bear in mind? (1245, 26ff)

- a. *...since fasting is in itself a thing indifferent, and should have no importance except for the sake of those ends to which it ought to be directed, a most dangerous superstition is involved in confusing it with works commended by God and necessary of themselves without any other consideration.*

20. What precisely is Calvin's target in this section? (1246, 7)

- a. *...the superstitious observance of Lent*

On what bases was this superstitious observance built? (1246, 8ff)

- a. *...the common people thought that in it they were doing some exceptional service to God*
- b. *...the pastors commended it as a holy imitation of Christ.*

How many people in the Bible fasted for forty days & nights and who were they? (1246, 11, 23 & 32)

- a. Three, viz:
 - i. Christ
 - ii. Moses
 - iii. Elijah

What was the fasting of each of these three associated with? (1246, 12f, 25f & 32ff)

- a. That their message was, *no human doctrine but actually one sent from heaven.*

What status does Calvin ascribe to forty-day fasts? (1246, 25)

- a. ...miracle

What was the purpose of Christ's forty-day fast? (1246, 11ff)

- a. *...it is plain that Christ did not fast to set an example for others, but to prove, in so beginning to proclaim the gospel, that it was no human doctrine but actually one sent from heaven [Matt 4:2]*

Apart from its miraculous nature, how do we know that Christ did not fast to set us an example? (1246, 16ff)

- a. *For Christ does not fast often - as he would have had to do if he had willed to lay down a law of yearly fasting - but only once, when he girded himself for the proclamation of the gospel.*

21. No comment is required from me on this section.

22. Why does Calvin describe the discipline of the clergy as, *the second part of discipline*? (1229, 19ff)

- a. *...let us divide the church into two chief orders: clergy and people...We shall first speak of common discipline...then we shall come to the clergy*

Why has Calvin followed this order? (1229, 21ff)

- a. *We shall first speak of common discipline, to which all ought to submit; then we shall come to the clergy, who, besides the common discipline, have their own.*

A brief word of explanation:

'Canon' is an ecclesiastical rule.

'Synod' is used by Calvin in this section to refer a periodic gathering of bishops. It is obvious from the things Calvin says that this gathering had authority over local churches and that both bishops and local church clergy were accountable to it. One can see how initially such a gathering could be no more than an expression of genuine and biblical christian unity and an efficient means to the ends of maintaining orthodoxy and discipline. Obviously as time went on structures became more hierarchical and authoritarian.

How was the discipline of which Calvin speaks in this section administered? (1248, 15ff)

- a. *The government of his own clergy was committed to each bishop, that he should rule them according to the canons and keep them to their duty.*
- b. *...annual visitations and synods were established to admonish...and...to punish*
- c. *...bishops...had yearly provincial synods - in the early period twice yearly - by which they were judged as to whether they had acted at variance from their duty.*
- d. *...if any bishop was too harsh or violent towards his clergy, the latter could appeal to a synod, even though only one cleric complained.*
- e. *...this was a permanent system, they never used to dismiss one synod without setting the place and time of the next.*

Under this former strict regime what was the relationship between the behaviour of the clergy and the behaviour of the people (1246, 32ff)

- a. *...the clergy expected from the people no more by word than they themselves showed by example and act...they were...stricter with themselves than with the people.*

What is Calvin's opinion of this? (1246, 35)

- a. *...it is truly fitting that the common people be ruled, so to speak, by a gentler and laxer discipline; that the clergy practice harsher censures among themselves and be far less indulgent towards themselves than toward others.*

What is Calvin's picture for the behaviour of those who maintain the outward appearance of engaging in demanding and costly practices, when no true commitment from the heart remains? (1249, 6ff)

- a. *I admit that, lest all antiquity should with them seem utterly buried, they deceive the eyes of the simple with certain shadows, but these come no nearer to the ancient customs than **the ape's mimicry** to that which men do by reason and planning.*

What is our tendency, when we know that we are no longer being faithful from our hearts to the practices of our forebears? (1247, 13f)

- a. To attentively keep the former rites.

23. Turning now to the subject of priestly celibacy, This is an unbiblical requirement and, as is therefore to be expected, has given rise to all sorts of problems. What unhealthy consequences, both for individuals and for churches, does Calvin mention? (1249, 35ff)

- a. *...fornication*
- b. *...relying upon their foul celibacy, they have become callous to all crimes.*
- c. *...it has not only deprived the church of good and fit pastors, but has also brought in a sink of iniquities*
- d. *...it has...cast many souls into the abyss of despair.*

In what ways does scripture. Anticipate and condemn the tyrannical imposition of celibacy by those in ecclesiastical authority? (1250, 7ff)

- a. *Paul in many passages wishes a bishop to be a man of one wife [1 Tim 5:2; Titus 1:6]*
- b. *...he declares by the Holy Spirit that in the last days there will be impious men who forbid marriage, and calls them not only imposters. But demons [1 Tim 4:1,3]*

24. In what way has Christ honoured marriage? (1251, 6f)

- a. *...he wills it to be an image of his sacred union with the church [Eph 5:23-24, 32].*

What conclusion does Calvin draw from this about the sort of things that those who forbid marriage to priests say about it? (1251, 9ff)

- a. *With what shamelessness will that be called unclean or defiled in which a likeness of Christ's spiritual grace shines forth.*

25. What argument used in support of priestly celibacy does Calvin set out to refute in this section? (1251, 14ff)

- a. *The Levitical priests, whenever their turn to minister came, had to sleep apart from their wives in order to be pure and unspotted to handle sacred things [cf 1 Sam 21:5ff]. Therefore, it would be very unseemly for our sacred rites - which are much nobler and occur daily - to be administered by married men.*

Whence did this prohibition of conjugal relations to the Levitical priests arise? (1251, 20ff)

- a. *...the Levitical priests as antitypes represented Christ, who, mediator of God and men [1 Tim 2:5], by his perfect purity was to reconcile the Father to us.*

- b. *...though sinners cannot in every respect express the pattern of his holiness, in order to make at least a sketch of it, they were ordered to purify themselves beyond the custom of men when they approached the sanctuary.*
- c. *...then they properly represented Christ, because they appeared at the Tabernacle (the image of the heavenly judgment seat) as peacemakers to reconcile the people to God.*

How much of this typical role carries over to the role of pastors today? (1251, 29)

- a. *...pastors of the church do not play this part today*

What importance does this observation have when it comes to assessing the validity of the argument for priestly celibacy taken from the Levitical priesthood? (1251, 29f)

- a. *...it is pointless to compare them with the priests*

Because these things are as they are, what does Paul declare and what example do the apostles set? (1251, 30ff)

- a. *...the apostle boldly proclaims, without exception, that marriage is honourable among all men*
- b. *Paul is witness that they not only kept their wives but took them about with them.*

26. What was the position of the earliest churches on the question of marriage of ministers? (1252, 16ff)

- a. *...marriage remained sacred among them; and it caused them no shame, nor was it thought to cast any spot upon the ministry.*

27. What were the stages in the development of celibacy? (1252, 19ff)

- a. *...too superstitious admiration of celibacy*
- b. *...frequent and unrestrained rhapsodic praises of virginity, so that scarcely any other virtue was believed to compare with it.*
- c. *...canons by which first, men who had come to the rank of priests were forbidden to contract marriage*
- d. *...next, it was forbidden for any but celibates or those who, along with their wives, had renounced the marriage bed to be taken into that order*

What was the general reaction to these developments? (1252, 30ff)

- a. *...these regulations, because they seemed to bring reverence to the priesthood, were also received with great approbation in antiquity.*

Does this fact give to Calvin's adversaries the right to cite long-standing tradition in support of their position? (1252, 33ff)

- a. *...first answer...this freedom of bishops so to be married existed both under the apostles and for some centuries afterward [1 Tim 5:2]*
- b. *Secondly, that age which with immoderate affection for virginity began to discriminate against marriage did not impose the law of celibacy upon priests as a thing necessary of itself, but because a celibate was preferred to a married man.*
- c. *...lastly... They did not require it in such a way that by necessity and force they compelled celibacy of those who were not fitted to keep continence. ...while they punished fornications with very severe laws, in the case of those who contracted marriage they decreed only that they give up their office.*

28. By what standard should matters of conscience and individual freedom be judged? (1253, 26)

a. *...its usefulness to the church*

How did Chrysostom describe marriage, in relation to virginity? (1254, 4f)

a. *...the second sort of virginity is the chaste love of matrimony*

FOR REFLECTION

1. 1231, 4f Calvin understands that the church, acting as a tribunal must refer to the elders. Is this the case?
2. 1234, 10f. The sins of hypocrites do not fall under the judgment of the church. Does this mean they are not judged and punished?
3. 1234, 39f. What were the, *solemn rites customarily enjoined as marks of repentance*? Are they still in use? If not, should they be reinstated? Should we replace them with more contemporary equivalents - such as what?
4. 1239, 15ff. Were Augustine, Calvin and others correct to appeal to Matt 13:29 in relation to church discipline?
5. 1239, 27ff. How would you expect an evangelical (ana)baptist to respond to Calvin's charge that he recognises no assembly of Christ to exist except one conspicuous in every respect for its angelic perfection.
6. 1241, 31ff: *Let us, therefore, say something about fasting, since very many, while they do not understand how useful it is, regard it as not very necessary*. It appears from these words that Calvin thinks of fasting as something, *necessary*. Is he right to do this? What part does it play in my life? In the life of my church? What part should it play?
7. 1246f. This teaching creates a sphere of discipline in addition to, and separate to, the local church. The clergy discipline each other. Is this biblical?