

CALVIN IN THE LIGHT OF THE EARLY LETTERS

Cornelis Augustijn / Christoph Burger / Frans P. van Stam

The three authors are all involved in preparing an edition of Calvin's correspondence. Our aim in the following is to give the reader a first impression of what is to be expected from part I of this edition. One possibility would have been for us to formulate the rules which we follow in editing the letters; in our view this would not have resulted in a very interesting article. We have chosen a different method. In the first section we discuss various aspects which the letters reveal of Calvin's life in France during his university years. In the second and third sections we take a similar approach to the first period of Calvin's life in Geneva.

We do not aim, thus, to describe Calvin's life up to the summer of 1538. We have worked on one of the most important sources for such a biography. On the basis of this source and other data, Calvin's life in these years can be described.

Sometimes we ourselves were surprised how much new information came to light in a close scrutiny of the letters. We hope that the reader will share our surprise when he or she works through the approximately eighty letters in part I of the edition.

The first section of the article will give a brief overview of Calvin's correspondence during his period in France. There are seventeen or nineteen letters in total, written between 1530 and 1534¹. They are all published in the *Corpus Reformatorum* and in Herminjard's edition of letters. Three of the letters were written to Calvin, the remaining fourteen or sixteen are by him. Of these fourteen, three² are prefaces, i.e. of a general nature, and eleven are of a personal nature. Even this merely quantitative survey shows that we cannot expect to gain a coherent picture of the young Calvin on the basis of the correspondence. Nevertheless, the letters do give us some impression of his thoughts and aspirations in the most important years of his development. At the beginning of this period he was twenty-one years old, a student of law with philological leanings; by the end, a twenty-five-year-old supporter of the Reformation, fleeing from the resolute enemies of that movement. In the following sections I will treat three aspects which were decisive for these years in which Calvin matured:

¹ CO 10/2, Epp. 2.3.4.5.6.8.9.10.11.12.13.14.15.18.19.20. 21; perhaps Epp.16,17.

² CO 10/2, Epp. 3(= CO 9, 785-786).12(= CO 5, 5-8).21(= CO 5, 169-172).

1. Calvin as a student of *bonae litterae*; 2. Calvin's network of friends and patrons; 3. Calvin's development into an supporter of the Reformation.

1. CALVIN AS A STUDENT OF BONAE LITTERAE

In April 1532, Calvin's edition of Seneca's *De clementia*, with commentary, 157 pages in octavo, was published by an unknown Parisian printer of Flemish origin³. The commentary is typical of a beginner: the work of a know-all, a little excessive. The earliest surviving letter by Calvin probably dates from September 1530, so it is about two years earlier than the commentary⁴. There is no doubt that it bears the characteristics of a letter, not least from the point of view that Calvin has something to tell. Nevertheless the letter does clearly have many traits in common with the commentary: it contains hidden references to Cicero, Juvenal, and particularly to Seneca's *De beneficiis*, and some pedantic remarks about different words one could use to refer to a cloak. When in 1531 Calvin had something published for the first time – an introductory letter to a work by a somewhat older fellow student by the name of Nicolas Duchemin⁵ – one finds the same traits. We can conclude that in Calvin at this age we find a young, learned, ambitious lawyer and philologist. He was a student of law, and the publication to which he contributed was of a legal nature. Calvin's contribution shows that he also wanted to present himself as a philologist: in sixty lines I found two quotations from Cicero, one each from Pliny, Aulus Gellius and Seneca, and finally one from Erasmus' *Adagia*; in addition, Calvin's Latin shows careful eloquence. And we should bear in mind that in Calvin's day the two disciplines of law and philology were not far removed from one another. On the contrary, the reform of the law curriculum at this time, with which Calvin became acquainted through Andrea Alciati, whom he heard lecture in Bourges, was based on the study of classical legal texts. Is there any special significance in the fact that Calvin chose to edit precisely a work that Erasmus had published for the second time in 1529, i.e. just a few years previously? In their edition of Calvin's work, Battles and Hugo suggest that Calvin chose this text particularly because he could correct Erasmus on a number of points, and they indicate that in his foreword Calvin expresses criticism of Erasmus' edition⁶. The latter is simply not true: Battles and Hugo interpreted Calvin's statement incorrectly⁷. On the contrary, Calvin bestows the highest possible praise on

³ CO 10/2, Ep. 12; see F.L. BATTLES/A.M. HUGO, *Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De clementia*, Leiden 1969.

⁴ CO 10/2, Ep. 2.

⁵ CO 10/2, Ep. 3 (= CO 9, 785-786).

⁶ BATTLES/HUGO, 35*-36*, 6 n.3.

⁷ BATTLES/HUGO, 6 n.3. They interpret Calvin's mention of Erasmus as "literarum alterum decus" as: "Erasmus has to be content with the second place".

Erasmus. It is true that in his edition he corrects Erasmus in three places⁸; this does not imply that he did not respect Erasmus' edition.

A final question concerns the nature of Calvin's work. Battles and Hugo assume that Calvin was deeply disappointed that his edition did not provoke a general discussion about Ciceronianism, Neo-Stoicism or Aristotelianism, and that this led him to turn his back on a planned academic career⁹. This conjecture is false. No beginner with even a modicum of common sense really believes that his first publication will make such a deep impact. In 1533, moreover, we find Calvin at the Collège Fortet in Paris, giving lectures on Seneca on the basis of his edition¹⁰.

2. CALVIN'S NETWORK OF FRIENDS AND PATRONS

The letters mention numerous names, for the main part fellow students to whom Calvin sends his greetings. This gives us some impression of the student circles in which he lived. Unfortunately little or nothing is known of most of the people he mentions. The fact that the archives in Orléans were destroyed in 1940 is certainly partly to blame for this lacuna. Nevertheless, the inner circle of Calvin's friends is known: it comprised François Daniel, Nicolas Duchemin and François de Connan, all, like Calvin himself, students of law. Daniel and Duchemin were probably of an age with Calvin, De Connan was older. They came from well-known families in Orléans. Calvin was particularly close to Daniel. He knew his parents and siblings, and in 1533 he made the tiring journey from Orléans to Paris at the request of the Daniel family, so that he and Canon Jean Cop could hold discussions with the Abbess of the Augustinian abbey of La Saussaye, not far from Paris, to determine the date on which one of the Daniel sisters would make her vows¹¹. Jean Cop, a canon in Clery near Orléans, was a son of the physician Wilhelm Cop. In the same year his brother Nicolas, then Rector of the University of Paris, would stir up great commotion with his address on the feast of All Saints. Other well-known university friends of Calvin's included Karel Sucket, a fellow law-student from the Southern Netherlands and a protégé of Erasmus, and Louis Roussard, future Professor of Law in Bourges. All the friends mentioned thus far remained true to the Church, and several of them would later be rebuked by Calvin for this. Others, such as Antoine du Pinet, became supporters of the Reformation and pastors in Switzerland. All in all, this group represents a cross-section of the young French intellectual elite with a middle-class social background. Calvin himself also belonged to this class. His grandfather had been an artisan; his father had

⁸ BATTLES/HUGO, 35*-36*.

⁹ BATTLES/HUGO, 30*-31*.

¹⁰ See J. DUPÈBE, 'Un document sur les persécutions de l'hiver 1533-1534 à Paris', in: BHR 48(1986), 406.

¹¹ CO 10/2, Ep. 5.

worked his way up in the service of the Church and had married a woman from a wealthy family; the youngest generation had received benefices from the Church which had enabled them to enjoy good schooling, and in some cases even a university education.

Did Calvin also have patrons who could help him to attain a fitting social position? There is one notable fact: the Seneca-edition is dedicated to Claude de Hangest, Abbot of Saint-Eloi in Noyon, who belonged to a very influential Picardian family to which Calvin's family and Calvin himself owed a great deal. A comparison with the publication by Duchemin mentioned above shows that he too dedicated his work to the same De Hangest, but also to the Count of Hoogstraten, a well-known general and politician¹². The obvious conclusion must be that the social standing of Calvin's family was lower than that of Duchemin. One may assume that Calvin's friend François Daniel assessed the family's standing correctly when in 1533 he wrote to Calvin that he should apply for a position as Vicar General to a bishop¹³. A position of this kind would have continued the family tradition on a higher level.

3. CALVIN'S DEVELOPMENT INTO A SUPPORTER OF THE REFORMATION

This heading promises more than I can actually deliver: one cannot depict a development process. I can merely try to show what Calvin thought in 1533 and then what he thought in 1534, and attempt in this way to determine the changes that had occurred in him. Two remarks before I begin: first, my endeavour can never be more than an experiment, which leaves many questions unanswered; and secondly, the letters in themselves provide too little material, so that it will be necessary also to adduce the other sparse data of various kinds which do exist.

Until 1533 we have no data relating to Calvin's religious convictions. The commentary on Seneca is an academic work, and reveals not the slightest trace of personal involvement. Even where Seneca treats of the difference between *religio* and *superstitio*, Calvin passes over the opportunity to make use of this passage in any way¹⁴; yet it is well known how important precisely this distinction would be to him later on. In June 1533 Calvin wrote François Daniel an account of his conversation with Daniel's sister Claudine about the vows she would take in the Abbey of La Saussaye. Cautiously Calvin hints that he has doubts about the maturity of her decision. But the letter does not reveal any rejection of the perpetual vows as such, but rather a feeling of intellectual – or

¹² See on him P.G. BIETENHOLZ/TH.B. DEUTSCHER, *Contemporaries of Erasmus. A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation* 2, Toronto/Buffalo/London 1986, 280-282.

¹³ CO 10/2, Ep.6.

¹⁴ See BATTLES/HUGO, 362,364.

masculine? – superiority¹⁵. Cop's address on All Saints' day 1533, of which research has established that in all likelihood it stems from Calvin's pen¹⁶, makes clear for the first time the sort of world Calvin was living in at this time. The mixture of Erasmian and Lutheran ideas and the emphasis on the love of God and the general theme of the Sermon on the Mount are a clear indication that the speaker is a supporter of the French *Evangélisme*. Calvin's detailed circular letter from the same period, with its account of the events in Paris that autumn, adds a little colour to the otherwise rather bland picture provided by the address. The foolishness of the theologians, their fear of the king, Cop's decisive stance, all paraded before us in a lightly ironic tone, give a colourful impression of the mood of the supporters of the *Evangélisme* at this time of high expectations¹⁷. I would like to emphasize two points. On the one hand, this account is evidence that Calvin is particularly well informed about matters which he has not experienced in person. There can be no doubt that he belonged to the circle of the initiated. On the other hand, in his judgement he remains an outsider, not a participant. Daniel would translate the circular letter for his sisters so that they too could enjoy the joke¹⁸.

An undated letter, probably written early in 1534, informs us that Calvin is no longer in Paris, that he is a student, and that he has a patron. This is the first time a document written by Calvin reveals personal commitment. Contrary to expectations, he writes, he cannot live and study peacefully; he is in God's hands¹⁹. It would be wrong to read more into these words than a general feeling of reliance on God, as is proper to all Christian convictions. We have next to nothing else in the way of data for this year. There is a preface to *Psychopanychia*, dated "Orléans, 1534" but not published until 1542, which is completely timeless²⁰. Calvin had given up all his benefices by 4th May 1534²¹. Otherwise there are only the stories told in the old *vitae*, but these are undatable and unverifiable. Even Calvin's flight from France, probably at the end of that year, cannot be dated precisely.

Two letters have not yet been mentioned. The first is the well-known letter to Bucer, in which Calvin requests his assistance for the French protestant who carries the letter. The letter was written one 4th September in "Noviod."²². It is clear from the letter that Calvin expects Bucer to know who he is, and expects Bucer to accept the validity of his judgement that the carrier of the letter is not

¹⁵ CO 10/2, Ep. 5.

¹⁶ See J. ROTT, *Investigationes historicae. Eglises et société au XVI^e siècle. Articles rassemblés et réédités par M. DE KROON/M. LIENHARD* [Société savante d'Alsace et des Régions de l'Est, Collection >Grandes Publications< 32] 2, Strasbourg 1986, 266-287.

¹⁷ CO 10/2, Ep. 19.

¹⁸ CO 10/2, Ep. 18.

¹⁹ CO 10/2, Ep. 20.

²⁰ CO 10/2, Ep. 21 (= CO 5, 169-172).

²¹ See A. LEFRANC, *La jeunesse de Calvin*, Paris 1888, 201.

²² CO 10/2, Ep. 16.

an Anabaptist. The letter could have been written in 1536 in Nyon, or in 1534 in Noyon. In the latter scenario one would have to conclude that already by September 1534 Calvin had attained considerable renown in Strasbourg, and certainly also among the members of the reformed churches in France. The second, very short and unclear letter, undated, is from 'Passelius', i.e. Calvin, to an unknown recipient²³. The pseudonym could point to Angoulême, where Calvin certainly spent part of 1534. This letter mentions a 'Baptista noster'. This name does not occur elsewhere in the letters of the young Calvin. Two letters do survive, however, by a certain 'Nepius Baptista', otherwise known as Jean Lenfant, who wrote to both Bucer and Capito on one day, 1st September 1535 or 1536. He was an – otherwise unknown – leader of the protestants of Paris, who was in constant danger of his life. One of Lenfant's letters refers to a certain 'Georgius', who had come from Strasbourg to Paris, but did not wish to remain because of the dangers threatening there and intended to journey further to "Passelius noster"²⁴. From this one can conclude that in 1535 or 1536, in any case, Calvin was known in Paris, by a name which pointed to Angoulême, as an important protestant, and that he was perhaps known as such already in 1534.

Conclusion: all the indications are that in the course of 1534 Calvin determined on a decidedly protestant stance and that he very quickly gained a predominant position in this group.

I will here briefly outline the contents of a few of the letters which have survived from the period of Calvin's life in Geneva up until his and Farel's banishment from there in 1538. At this point Calvin was living in exile. He thought, felt and behaved, now as before, as a Frenchman.²⁵ The letters show that very clearly. It is apparent even from the formulation "Gallis nostris" at the beginning of the letter in which Calvin dedicated the first version of his 'Institutio' to the French king, François I,²⁶ and from the words "nostra Gallia" in an early letter to Bucer.²⁷ In his new home, Geneva, he was also surrounded by French

²³ CO 10/2, Ep. 17.

²⁴ See for these letters O. MILLET, *Correspondance de Wolfgang Capiton (1478-1541). Analyse et index (D'après le Thesaurus Baumianus et autres sources)* [Publications de la Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg 8], Strasbourg 1982, 620. Both letters have as date 1 Sept., without a year. Millet assigns them to 1536, but 1535 is equally possible. In the letter to Capito we read: "Verum ubi parum tutam pietatem hic [in Paris] fore animadvertisset [un unknown 'Georgius'], maluit ad Passelium nostrum proficisci quam sine spe iucundissimi fructus sese in gravissimum discrimen coniicere".

²⁵ GOTTFRIED W. LOCHER even said: "Genf war für ihn Etappe, seine Front verlief in Frankreich." Bullinger und Calvin. in: ULRICH GÄBLER/ ERLAND HERKENRATH (edd.), *Heinrich Bullinger 1504-1575. Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 400. Todestag, 2. Band: Beziehungen und Wirkungen*, Zürich 1975, 1-33; 4, note 15.

²⁶ CALVIN, Dedicatory Letter to the first edition of the 'Institutio', 10 September 1536 (Ioannis Calvini opera selecta 1, 21): "hunc laborem Gallis nostris potissime desudabam ..."

²⁷ CALVIN, Letter to Bucer, 4 September [1536?] (CO 10/2, 22-24; ep. 16): "Noveram hominis ingenium et mores, cum adhuc ageret in nostra Gallia."

people. His French friend Louis du Tillet was part of his entourage for a while, but then distanced himself from Calvin and from the protestant movement as a whole and returned via Strasbourg to France and the bosom of the Church of Rome.²⁸ Guillaume Farel, Calvin's considerably older and more experienced colleague in the ministry in Geneva, was also French. And he in turn already had a previous history of tensions with another Frenchman, Pierre Caroli, doctor of the Sorbonne.²⁹ Calvin here landed in the thick of a well-developed enmity between two of his compatriots. Other Frenchmen who played a role in this first period in Geneva were Nicolas Duchemin, Claude de Hangest, Morelet de Museau, François Daniel, Gérard Roussel, Jean Sturm, Godefroi Lopin, Charles de Sainte-Marthe and the further unknown De Thoury. In the proceedings of the city council of Geneva, the newly appointed minister Calvin is called "ille Gallus".

As an exile, Calvin was, of course, uprooted. It was necessary for him to build up a new circle of friends and colleagues in his new domicile. In addition, his new life brought new connections, which enlarged his group of correspondents. There were apparently considerable tensions in the group.

I will examine two aspects in more detail: 4. His relationship with Grynaeus, initially free of tensions, later at times somewhat strained. 5. His relationship with Bullinger.

4. CALVIN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GRYNÆUS

The majority of the surviving letters from the first months of Calvin's activities in Geneva – one in six – are directed to (or received from) Simon Grynaeus in Basle. Grynaeus was sixteen years older than Calvin, only a little younger than Melancthon. He was an important man. Grynaeus had been the ambassador of the English king Henry VIII to the German princes in order to persuade them to approve his divorce from the sister of Emperor Charles V. More

²⁸ Cf. OLIVIA CARPI-MAILLY, Jean Calvin et Louis du Tillet: entre foi et amitié, un échange révélateur, in: OLIVIER MILLET (ed.): Calvin et ses contemporains. Actes du colloque de Paris, octobre 1995 (Cahiers d'Humanisme et Renaissance 53), Genève 1998, 7-19. Calvin tried in vain to make plausible to Du Tillet that he felt himself called to the ministry by God, and that God had used the City Council of Geneva, not the hierarchically governed church, to call him.

²⁹ Cf. JAMES FARGE, Biographical Register of Paris Doctors of Theology, 1500-1536 (Subsidia Mediaevalia 10), Toronto 1980, 65-71, FRANS P. VAN STAM, Le livre de Pierre Caroli de 1545 et son conflit avec Calvin, in: Calvin et ses contemporains (see note 28), 21-41, 22-32 and CHRISTOPH BURGER, Werben um Bullingers Beistand: Calvins Briefe von 1537/38, in: ALFRED SCHINDLER/HANS STICKELBERGER (edd.), Die Zürcher Reformation: Ausstrahlungen und Rückwirkungen (Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte 18), Bern etc. 2001, 101-120, 101-109, CHRISTOPH BURGER, Calvins Beziehungen zu Weggefährten in der Schweiz 1536-1538, in: PETER OPITZ (ed.), Calvin im Kontext der Schweizer Reformation. Historische und theologische Beiträge zur Calvinforschung, Zürich 2003, 41-55, 47-50. In the same volume, see CORNELIS AUGUSTIJN, Farel und Calvin in Bern 1537-1538, 9-23.

important for the friends of the 'bonae litterae' was that he had discovered an unknown manuscript of Livy and that he corresponded with Erasmus. Grynaeus and Calvin knew each other from the time Calvin had finished his *Institutio* at Basle. The first surviving letter is that of Grynaeus to Calvin on 15th March 1537. In it he requests Calvin to join him in furthering the marriage plans of the thirty-two-year-old Greek scholar and physician Johannes Sinapius.³⁰ Probably in the summer of 1537 a second letter by Grynaeus follows, relating to the same matter.³¹ Sinapius was a co-religionist at the court of the Duke of Ferrara, and the duke was taking severe action against protestant subversion. Because of his protestant convictions he was in danger. This point alone would have been enough to ensure him Calvin's and Grynaeus' support. But in addition, Sinapius was a man after Grynaeus' and Calvin's own heart because he was a connoisseur and lover of the Greek language, a correspondent of Erasmus; he too belonged to the 'res publica litteraria'. So there were at least two reasons to take up his cause.

Their common involvement in promoting Sinapius's marriage plans naturally strengthened the connection between Grynaeus and Calvin. Calvin could quite legitimately consider Grynaeus as an ally. On this basis, he ventured to complain bitterly about Pierre Caroli in a letter to Grynaeus in June 1537.³² Caroli had accused Farel, Calvin and Viret of denying the Trinity. True, the synod of Lausanne had acknowledged the orthodoxy of the accused parties and Caroli had been banished. But Calvin still felt it necessary to ask Grynaeus to assist them to the best of his ability in combating Caroli's continuing slander. Grynaeus responded immediately that for him the 'Confessio de trinitate' allayed all doubt about Calvin's and Farel's orthodoxy. On 12th February 1538 Grynaeus apologized to Calvin for the attitude of Johannes Gast, a deacon in Basle who had criticized precisely this confession. He assured Calvin that both Gast and he himself viewed Calvin as a credit to the Church.³³ On the same day, Grynaeus received letters from Farel and Calvin, and in reaction tried the following day to console them with a further letter: they could not rely on the city councils of Berne or Geneva, perhaps, but Jesus Christ himself would fight their battles for them.³⁴

The tone in the next letter from Grynaeus, of 4th March 1538, is completely different. This letter, where Grynaeus no longer expresses agreement, but rather voices criticism, is also considerably longer than the others.³⁵ Grynaeus

³⁰ GRYNAEUS, letter to Calvin of 15 March 1537 (CO 10/2, nr. 53, 89-90).

³¹ GRYNAEUS, letter to Calvin of early summer [?]1537 (CO 10/2, nr. 57, 95-96).

³² CALVIN, letter to Grynaeus on or shortly after 7 June 1537 (CO 10/2, nr. 64, 106-109).

³³ CALVIN, letter to Calvin of 12 February 1538 (CO 10/2, nr. 91, 151).

³⁴ CALVIN, letter to Farel and Calvin of 13 February 1538 (CO 10/2, nr. 92, 152-153).

³⁵ GRYNAEUS, letter to Farel and Calvin of 4 March 1538 (CO 10/2, nr. 97, 158-161). The letter is addressed to both Farel and Calvin. However, Grynaeus turns his mind almost exclusively to Calvin and speaks about Farel in the third person. I am grateful to my collega proximus F. P. van Stam for reminding me that in a letter of 20 February [1538] Pierre Toussain had tried

calls upon Calvin to set aside his dispute with the Bernese pastors Peter Kuntz and Sebastian Meyer. Whereas letters from the two men from Berne had been favourable about Farel and Calvin, Calvin had been very hostile in his reports about Kuntz. What is he to think, Grynaeus asks: "I will say what I think. I [too] dislike Kuntz's manners; he has the manners of a peasant. But when I consider his intentions, the man's faith, however uneducated he may be, his zeal for the Church, then I cannot reject this brother. Should we not take account of the man's nature, the area in which he has his origins, his tribe, his birth-place in the middle of the Alps? Certainly, if you compare him with yourself, with your upbringing in the middle of France, surrounded from your earliest youth by highly educated people, you will quickly realize why he offends you in the mere encounter."³⁶ What is important, Grynaeus writes, is not polished manners: Kuntz is a devout man who is committed to God's Church. Calvin should try to view Kuntz as a brother and should value his good points.

Here one educated man, Grynaeus, reads the Riot Act to another, Calvin, because the latter is not prepared, for the sake of the common protestant cause, to accept the rough and ready way in which a colleague conducts an argument. Grynaeus obviously felt that his acquaintance with Calvin could take the strain, otherwise he would not have allowed himself the liberty of correcting the younger man in this way.

Eight days later, on 12th March 1538, Grynaeus sent a short message in the wake of this letter. This too was addressed to both Farel and Calvin.³⁷ Such a quick succession of letters is not really an everyday occurrence. The impression is unavoidable that Grynaeus regretted having rebuked Calvin so publicly. But in this second letter he did not withdraw the substance of his rebuke.

To summarize: In the course of about one-and-a-half years the relationship between Calvin and Grynaeus went through three phases. The first was characterized by Grynaeus' request that Calvin should become involved in furthering the marriage of their co-religionist, the Greek scholar Sinapius. On the strength of this, in the second phase Calvin ventured to enlist Grynaeus as an ally against Caroli's accusations. This time it was Calvin who had need of Grynaeus. In the third phase, Grynaeus took the liberty of rebuking Calvin because he had complained so sharply about the Bernese churchman Kuntz.

5. CALVIN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH BULLINGER

Between Calvin and Bullinger relations were decidedly different from those between Calvin and Grynaeus. Considerably fewer letters were exchanged

in vain to engage Grynaeus against Kuntz on behalf of "our Farel". Grynaeus (like Bucer) thought evidently that Farel and Calvin should not collaborate any longer. The letter of Toussain will be printed as appendix 1 to the first volume of the forthcoming new edition of the correspondence of Calvin.

³⁶ GRYNÆUS, letter to Calvin of 4 March 1538 (CO 10/2, nr. 97, 159).

³⁷ GRYNÆUS, letter to Calvin of 12 March 1538 (CO 10/2, nr. 116, 196-197).

between the two at this time of Calvin's first period of activity in Geneva.³⁸ Since December 1531 Bullinger, only five years older than Calvin, had been the pastor of the Great Minster in Zürich and the leading pastor of the Church in Zürich. His position was assured; his correspondents generally asked him for advice, requested his consent, informed him of various matters. He needed no support. Calvin, on the other hand, would have liked to enlist Bullinger's support in the dispute in which he and Farel had taken sides. But the Antistes from Zürich eluded this attempt. To the end of his days he never set foot in Geneva.³⁹

First Calvin tried to get Bullinger on his side by asking Grynaeus to forward a letter and his confession of faith to Bullinger, to defend himself and Farel against Caroli's accusation that they had denied the Trinity. Grynaeus carried out this request. But Bullinger was not only being wooed by the Genevan side. He also received several letters from Oswald Myconius in Basle, who informed him of his own judgement of the dispute about the doctrine of the Trinity between Caroli on the one hand, and Farel and Calvin on the other. Myconius, for his part, had his information from Kuntz, who naturally judged the dispute with Calvin and Farel from his own, opposing, viewpoint and could consider himself a friend of Bullinger.⁴⁰ In a letter to Bullinger on 9th July 1537, Myco-

³⁸ That would change considerably later. As FRITZ BÜSSER has calculated, there are 277 letters preserved between Calvin and Bullinger: Calvin und Bullinger, in: WILHELM H. NEUSER (ed.), *Calvinus Servus Christi*, Budapest 1988, 107-126, 109. Some important quotations are presented by ALASDAIR I. C. HERON, *Calvin an Bullinger 1536-1549*, in: MATTHIAS FREUDENBERG (ed.), *Profile des reformierten Protestantismus aus vier Jahrhunderten*. Wuppertal 1999, 49-69. They stem from the German translation of Calvin's letters by RUDOLF SCHWARZ, *Johannes Calvins Lebenswerk in seinen Briefen. Eine Auswahl ...*, 3 vols., Neukirchen 1961/1962.

³⁹ Cf. LOCHER, *Bullinger und Calvin* (see note 25), p. 2, note 3; HANS ULRICH BÄCHTOLD, *Heinrich Bullinger vor dem Rat. Zur Gestaltung und Verwaltung des Zürcher Staatswesens in den Jahren 1531 bis 1575*, Bern/ Frankfurt 1982, 45: "Die Predigtfreiheit war seit dem Amtsantritt Bullingers eine relative geblieben, eine Freiheit, die immer wieder errungen werden musste."; BURGER, *Werben um Bullingers Beistand* (see note 129); FRANS P. VAN STAM, *Das Verhältnis zwischen Bullinger und Calvin während Calvins erstem Aufenthalt in Genf*, in: PETER OPI TZ (ed.), *Calvin* (see note 129), 25-40. At the end of this article, Van Stam emphasizes that (already in 1536) Bullinger's colleague Leo Jud was much more enthusiastic about Calvin than Bullinger.

⁴⁰ KUNTZ, letter to Myconius, 22 June 1538 (CO 10/2, nr. 124: 213-214, 214): "De Farelli tragoedia cicatrices subinde putrescunt pessimae. Idque inter Allobrogos quibus via illius tantopere arridebat. Sunt qui hoc saxum adhuc volvent quotidie, veteres subinde alentes contentiones. Non interquiescent capita ista unquam, donec illis aures denegemus. Porro Bullingeri amicitiam non potero non canere tibi ovanter et gratante plurimum. Scribit ad me epistolas haud quidem fucato pectore confictas, sed amicas sinceras et optatissimas, simul etiam mittens librum de sanctae scripturae auctoritate a se editum, in argumentum iniqui perpetuae inter nos amicitiae. ... Faxit Deus optimus maximus ut foedere perpetuo ita stent pectora nostra." - As VAN STAM has shown in his article (see note 39), Kuntz could rightly consider himself a friend of Bullinger, see especially note 35 with the quotation from a book Bullinger gave to Kuntz: "D[omino] Petro Contzeno ... H. Bullinger in argumentum perpetuae amicitiae d[e]d[it]." It would be too simple to expect that Bullinger as the successor of Zwingli would automatically be an enemy of the Lutheran theologian Kuntz and an ally of the supporters of the Zwinglian Kaspar Megander, Farel and Calvin.

nus assessed the situation as follows: “[A] dispute about petty words!... There’s true Christian gentleness for you! [It smacks more of] the spirit of discord!”⁴¹ Bullinger wrote back to Myconius that he had received and read Calvin’s letter to Grynaeus, but did not wish to give judgement. He told him he did not wish to be a party to raising renewed conflict about the Trinity. As was so often the case, Bullinger exercised the greatest of restraint when it came to discussing delicate theological questions.⁴²

On 30th August 1537 Calvin wrote a letter on behalf of the pastors of Geneva to the pastors of Zürich. Even the forms of address and conclusion could be considered as revealing, since they make clear that Calvin was wooing the men of Zürich (and among them primarily Bullinger) from a weaker position: Calvin addresses his colleagues from Zürich as “most venerable”, “most highly esteemed brothers in Christ”, and signs off “with the highest esteem”.⁴³ I consider these formulations more than mere marks of politeness.

Bullinger took his time about replying, responding two months later. This shows immediately that he did not accord a very high priority to the difficulties in which his Genevan colleagues were embroiled. And his letter is only a fifth of the length of Calvin’s. For he did not need to appeal for support, he had merely to react.

In February 1538, Calvin wrote to Bullinger in his own name and requested his support in a new dispute which had arisen because Calvin and Farel wished to be able to deny people access to the Lord’s Supper.⁴⁴ In May 1538, a further letter from Calvin followed, a short cry of distress. At the beginning of June 1538, Farel and Calvin together wrote to Bullinger from Basle. In this letter they criticized the Bernese pastor Peter Kuntz and their own followers in Geneva.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Myconius, letter to Bullinger, 9. Juli 1537 (CO 10/2, nr. 69, 119-123, 113-114). Cf. BURGER, *Werben um Bullingers Beistand* (see note 29), 110.

⁴² Vgl. FRITZ BLANKE, *400 Jahre Zweites Helvetisches Bekenntnis*, Zürich 1966, zitiert bei Fritz Büsser, *Calvin und Bullinger*, in: WILHELM H. NEUSER (ed.), *Calvinus Servus Christi*, Budapest 1988, 107-126, 109. – LOCHER, *Bullinger und Calvin* (see note 25), 33 concludes: “Er ist Ordner, Hüter, Wahrer und Seelsorger einer auf Reformation drängenden Kirche, die sich bescheiden und verteidigen muss.”

⁴³ Calvin, letter to the ministers of Zurich, 30 August 1537 (CO 10/2, 119-123, nr. 74, 119.123). Cf. BURGER, “*Werben um Bullingers Beistand*” [see note 29], 105, note 10.

⁴⁴ Calvin, letter to Bullinger of 21 February 1538 (CO 10/2, 153-154, nr. 93). CO. – Cf., for the position of Berne, G.W. LOCHER, *Bullinger und Calvin* (see note 25), 4: “Besonders entschieden verhielten sich die staatsbewussten Herren der Republik Bern in dieser Sache: bei den weitreichenden bürgerlichen Konsequenzen, die der Ausschluss vom Abendmahl mit sich brachte, und in der Erinnerung an die korrumpierenden Missbräuche der Exkommunikationsgewalt durch die Bischöfe waren sie nicht gewillt, diese gefährliche Waffe aus der Hand zu geben.” In order to strengthen his argument, Locher points to KURT GUGGISBERG, *Bernische Kirchengeschichte*, Bern 1958, 215-221.

⁴⁵ FAREL and CALVIN, *Letter to Bullinger* ca. 6 - 10 June 1538 (CO 10/2, nr. 121, 203-209). An excellent summary is provided in: HEINRICH BULLINGER, *Briefwechsel: Band 8: Briefe des Jahres 1538*, bearbeitet von HANS ULRICH BÄCHTOLD, RAINER HENRICH, Zürich 2000 (*Heinrich Bullinger, Werke, Abt. 2, vol. 8*), 146-147.

In the same period, May 1538, Bullinger wrote to Von Wattenwyl of Farel and Calvin: "Their zeal is perhaps too great. And yet they are pious, learned men, and in my opinion one should forgive them a great deal."⁴⁶ He did not unambiguously take a stand for Farel and Calvin. He was above the conflicting parties.

In the first one-and-a-half years of his first period in Geneva, Calvin got on well with Grynaeus, his cultivated colleague in Basle, and helped him, at his request, to support Sinapius. On the other hand, Calvin had difficulties dealing with somebody like Peter Kuntz in Berne, whom he considered as a practical old warhorse who wielded a club rather than a fencing foil. Grynaeus testified that Kuntz was indeed a true "man of the Church", even if he was a bit coarse, and had objections to the manner in which Calvin and Farel fought. Bullinger did not allow himself to be won over by Farel and Calvin into becoming involved in their disputes as an ally against Berne. In the years up to 1538 Calvin still was as clumsy in his behaviour as most young intellectuals tend to be. He put his foot in it; he overplayed his hand; he overrated himself. At the time of Calvin's first period of activity in Geneva he was not sufficiently aware of the limits set to his activities by the political situation in Geneva. He was as yet still far too categorical in his actions.

6. FAREL-CALVIN IN GENEVA UNTIL THE SUMMER 1538

With Farel and Calvin's banishment still fresh in his mind, Martin Bucer wrote Calvin an urgent letter saying that any continuation of Calvin's close collaboration with Guillaume Farel would be in the interests neither of the church, nor of Calvin himself⁴⁷. In a letter to Farel a few days later, Calvin passed on this message as follows: Bucer "*warns us to be careful to avoid further collaboration, because he suspects that we may then incite one another to things to which each of us is already more than enough inclined*"⁴⁸. Bucer here indicates that the influence which Farel and Calvin exercise on one another is not a positive one. One wonders that Calvin did not protest against Bucer's impression, because at the same time he and Farel reacted very sensitively to any suggestion that they themselves were in any way to blame for their banishment⁴⁹. This leads to the ques-

⁴⁶ BULLINGER, Letter to Von Wattenwyl of 4 May 1538 (CO 10/2, 195, nr. 114). See BURGER, Werben um Bullingers Beistand (see note 5), 120 with note 77.

⁴⁷ About 1 Aug. 1538 Bucer [Capito and maybe also John Sturm] wrote to Calvin: «Quod ad Farellum attinet, nos libere ei scriberemus nobis videri nec ecclesiae nec tibi utile te eo loci nunc agere ubi acceptum vulnus cottidie novis incisionibus exacerbaretur»; CO 10/2, ep. 126. Evidently Bucer knew of plans to appoint Calvin in Neuchâtel, where Farel had already been working since the end of July. On the question see my article 'Farels und Calvins Ausweisung aus Genf am 23. April 1538' in: ZKG 110 (1999), 209–228.

⁴⁸ Calvin to Farel on 4 Aug. 1538 about Bucer's letter to Grynaeus, in which «diligenter cavendum monet, ne simul jungamur, quia futurum suspicatur ut mutue alter alterum impellat quo uterque inclinatus»; CO 10/2, Ep. 132.

⁴⁹ Cf. CO 10/2, Ep. 140.

tion of the relations between Farel and Calvin during their 21 months of collaboration in Geneva, and what exactly Bucer meant by his warning. In attempting to clarify these matters, I shall look in detail at four texts: 1. the articles of January 1537, 2. two Genevan confessions which appeared about the end of 1536, 3. Calvin's *Epistolae duae*, and 4. the clash between Calvin and Bucer in January 1538 and its repercussions. I will then conclude with a final evaluation.

In the articles of January 1537, the ministers of Geneva present their Council with some rules governing church life⁵⁰. The articles open with the well-known sentence: "*Il est certain que une esglise ne peut estre dicte bien ordonnee et reiglee ...*". In this opening sentence, the Genevan ministers underscore the need for the frequent administration of the Lord's Supper, which appears to be closely connected with the introduction of excommunication. The ministers further propose the division of the inhabitants of Geneva into small groups for pastoral care, and they emphasize the need for a Genevan confession; they also propose the introduction of psalm-singing during worship, religious instruction of children and the abolition of papal marriage laws. The articles provide no indication about their composer. However, due to a widespread opinion that he took the lead over Farel almost from the very start of his work in Geneva, Calvin has been presented as the author of the articles, or at least the individual who had the most decisive influence on their composition. Many a scholar has expressed admiration, that Calvin should have shown himself able, within six months of his arrival in Geneva⁵¹, of venturing on such a far-reaching project. In contrast, Farel, the street-preacher, has been described as incapable of such ambitious plans⁵². Our work on volume one of Calvin's correspondence, however, has given rise to several questions, which we have not been able to answer on the basis of Calvin's previous writings. To mention but a few: had Calvin hitherto shown any interest in congregational singing during worship? The articles emphasize the requirement for children to lead the singing "*à ault voyx et distincte*", i.e. soprano, to familiarize the congregation with the melodies; they even drastically anticipate the possible reluctance of some church-goers, who might then try to make a mess of the singing on purpose.⁵³ Another of our questions was: had Calvin in his writings thus far shown any interest in problems regarding the religious instruction of children, for example parents who did not attach any importance to it?⁵⁴ We found no evidence of such interests on Calvin's part at this time. Both these preoccupations, however, can be linked with Farel. Through his connections with Johannes

⁵⁰ For the text of these articles, see: CO 10/1, 5–14 = HERMINJARD 4, Ep. 602 = OS 1, 369–377.

⁵¹ Most probably at the end of July 1536.

⁵² Cf. my article 'Die Genfer Artikel vom Januar 1537: aus Calvins oder Farel's Feder' in: *Zwingliana* 27 (2000), 88.

⁵³ "Mays, affin de eviter toute confusion, il seroyt besoing que vous [= members of the Conseil] ne permettes que aulcung par son insolence, pour avoyr en irrision la sainte congregation, vienne à trouble[r] l'ordre qui y sera mis".

⁵⁴ "la negligence des parents à instruire leurs enfans en la voye de Dieu, dont on voyt une merueilleuse rudesse et ignorance en beaucoup".

Oecolampadius in Basle, Farel had experienced the efforts in that town to introduce not only excommunication, but also congregational singing; even deliberate attempts in Basle to thwart this new method of singing are recorded⁵⁵. Furthermore, Farel had himself worked as a teacher, and one of his writings contains a whole chapter about religious instruction⁵⁶.

And there are yet more problems with attributing the articles to Calvin. Some scholars have praised the clarity of the style. Calvin was indeed a masterful crafter of texts, giving them lucidity by providing clear definitions and by completing paragraphs neatly so that it was unnecessary to return to the same issues again. Precisely this clear style, however, is lacking in these articles; they show too many repetitions and also some ambiguity due to fluid definitions. And what is more, they exhibit many of the words which Farel uses to such an extent in his other writings that they can be seen as his fingerprints, words such as: *ordre*, *ordonnance*, *ordonner*, *reigle*, *pureté*, *pur*, *profit*, and so on. Farel's writings also provide examples of his tendency to write the name «*Jesuchrist*» as one word, which occurs six times in the articles under discussion.

The problem with the attribution of the articles in the secondary literature seems to me to lie in the fact that until now only Calvin's writings have been adduced to prove the authorship question, and not Farel's. Another point which deserves attention is a quotation in the articles from Calvin's 1536 Institution. Scholars have considered this too as a proof of Calvin's authorship. However, it is equally possible that it is Farel who here quotes Calvin's Institution. This is all the more likely since in the quotation Calvin's original order has been changed in a way that is characteristic for Farel⁵⁷. All in all, there are many indications that Farel, rather than Calvin, had a decisive hand in the composition of the articles of January 1537. The articles cannot therefore be taken as proof that almost from the moment of his arrival in Geneva Calvin took the lead over Farel.

Another important indication of the 'pecking order' between Farel and Calvin is that the Acts of the Council of Geneva consistently put Farel first, and this practice continues until two days before the Council's decision to banish the two men⁵⁸. On 16 January 1537, the same Acts record the presentation of the articles as follows: "*Icy est esté parlé et sont estes leuz les articles donnez par Maistre G[uillaume] Farel et les aultres predicans*".⁵⁹ Moreover, only a few months earlier Farel had led the successful disputation in Lausanne.

⁵⁵ Cf. the above-mentioned article 'Die Genfer Artikel', 99–100.

⁵⁶ Cf. in his *Sommaire*, chapter 39: 'De l'instruction des enfantz'.

⁵⁷ Farel gave priority to the effect of excommunication on the believers themselves: admitting their sins will mend their way of life (cf. FAREL, *Sommaire*, ch. 32), whereas Calvin gave priority to the eradication of the contagious power of sins (he advocates the same priority in his *Instruction*, cf. CO 22, 72–73).

⁵⁸ See CO 21, 224 and cf. already CO 10/2, Epp. 106.107.

⁵⁹ CO 21, 206.

Taking all this into consideration, it seems appropriate to suppose that Farel, twenty years Calvin's senior and with an impressive record of service, was in no hurry to hand over his prime position in Geneva to the young newcomer.

Within six months, at most, two booklets appeared in which Geneva's religious belief was expressed⁶⁰, the first headed Instruction and the other Confession. The Instruction is four times as long as the Confession. Although neither of the two booklets bears the name of the author, we know for certain that Calvin is the composer of the Instruction, which he had most probably already completed in October 1536, and Farel of the Confession, which appeared in March or April 1537⁶¹. The short interval between the publication of these writings provides grounds for comparing them. Such a comparison is the more attractive because, although Farel's booklet presents itself as an excerpt from the Instruction⁶², it is in fact a rather fundamental adaptation. Given the reduction to a quarter of the original length, it is not surprising that Farel omitted the first two chapters on religion. In the revised edition of his Institutes of 1539 Calvin would himself return to the original opening sentences, namely on the idea that holy doctrine consists of knowledge of God and of ourselves⁶³. What is of greater significance is Farel's alteration in the order of the chapters. Interventions of this kind generally also change the contents. Whereas, for example, Calvin had located his chapter on excommunication between chapters on human traditions and the competence of the magistrate, Farel discussed it between chapters on the church and its ministers, thereby making excommunication more an ordinary tool of the church and its ministers⁶⁴. But what is most striking is Farel's sharply anti-Roman-Catholic tendency, which is almost entirely absent in Calvin's Instruction⁶⁵. Farel explicitly added this anti-Roman-Catholic tendency in eleven of his twenty-one chapters. Two examples may demonstrate this. Calvin gives a catalogue of twelve types of evil-doers who need to be confronted with excommunication. His list refers closely to Bible texts⁶⁶,

⁶⁰ Six months at the most, cf. Calvin's letter to François Daniel of 13 Oct. 1536 in: CO 10/2, Ep. 34; whereas in April 1537 the Council of Geneva ordered the printing of 1,500 copies of the Confession by the printer Wigand Koeln, see CO 21, 210–211.

⁶¹ Cf. BC 1, 44–46; no. 37/2. For the texts, see: CO 22, 25–96 = OS 1, 378–426. C.'s letter to François Daniel from 13 Oct. 1536 already presupposes C.'s Instruction. Farel's Sommaire and his Confession have in common the extra -n- in words as "congnoistre", and the frequent use of "Iesuchrist".

⁶² "extraicte de l'instruction dont on use en l'eglise de la dicte ville".

⁶³ "Summa fere sacrae doctrinae duabus his partibus constat: Cognitione Dei ac nostri"; CO 1, 27 = OS 1, 37.

⁶⁴ Calvin would tend in the same direction in the later editions of his Institutio, cf. Inst. (1559) 4.12.5,10.

⁶⁵ Calvin's *Instruction* gives only two implicit references to Roman-Catholic practice, namely in the chapter on good works, where C. speaks about "vaine confiance dicelles bonnes oeuvres", and in the chapter on human traditions, where spiritual laws are considered as binding on the conscience; CO 22, 51.72 = OS 1, 395.415.

⁶⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 6.10, Eph. 5.9–11, Eph. 5.5, 1 Tim. 1.9–10, Hebr. 13.4.

and opens with: *manifest lechers, adulterers, thieves, murderers* and so on⁶⁷. Calvin even seems specifically to exclude any direct link with Roman-Catholic practice. Farel, however, opens his list of twelve evil-doers as follows: “*all manifest idolators, blasphemers*”⁶⁸. Shortly before, Farel had denounced “*the mass of the pope*” as “*idolatry condemned by God*”, which contains “*other blasphemies and horrible superstitions*”⁶⁹. A second example is provided by Farel’s chapter on human traditions. From the point of view of content and vocabulary, no other chapter shows such similarity with Calvin’s treatment of it. However, right at the end Farel adds, in an aside which has no parallel in Calvin’s chapter, that the following should be borne in mind as human traditions: *pilgrimages, the monastic life, prohibitions concerning marriages, the eating of meat, and auricular confession*⁷⁰.

All this indicates, first, that Farel’s Confession has all the elements of, as Rilliet expressed it, “*une machine de guerre contre l’église romaine*”⁷¹; and second, that Farel is critical of the lack of anti-Roman polemic in Calvin’s Instruction. Because of the sentence in the articles of January 1537, that division of faith is the most serious division of all⁷², Farel’s criticism of Calvin’s lack of anti-Roman tendency seems to be a serious reprimand.

The third issue concerns Calvin’s *Epistolae duae*, which appeared in Basle in March 1537⁷³. It is Calvin’s first published polemical book⁷⁴, containing his criticism on hiding one’s evangelical convictions when among Roman Catholics (so-called anti-Nicodemism), and especially a sharp attack on Roman Catholic practice. A few quotations will suffice to give a flavour of its fierce anti-Roman tendencies. Calvin asks if his addressee indeed means to rank the Lord’s Supper with “*the diabolical mass*”⁷⁵. With reference to the money the pope earns from

⁶⁷ “Excommunication est par laquelle les manifestes paillars, adulteres, larrons, homicides, avaricieulx, ravisseurs, iniques, noyseux, gormans, yvrognnes, seditieux et prodigues ...”; CO 22, 72 = OS 1, 415.

⁶⁸ “tous manifestes idolatres, blasphemateurs, meurtriers, larrons, paillars, faulx tesmoings, seditieux, noiseulx, detraicteurs, bateurs, yvrongnes, dissipateurs de biens ...”; CO 22, 93 = OS 1, 424–425.

⁶⁹ “la messe du pape ... nous ... est en execration comme une idolatrie condemnee de Dieu ... outre les aultres blasphemies et superstitions, qui y sont contenues”; CO 22, 92 = OS 1, 423.

⁷⁰ “Et en telle estime avons nous les pellerinages, moyneries, differences de viandes, deffences de mariages, confesses, et autres semblables”; CO 22, 92 = OS 1, 424.

⁷¹ Albert Rilliet, Théophile Dufour, *Le catéchisme français de Calvin ...* (Genève, 1878), lv.

⁷² “il est certain, qu’il n’y a nulle plus grande division que de la foy”, cf. above n. 4.

⁷³ Cf. BC 1, 40–43; no. 37/1.

⁷⁴ Drafts of CALVIN, *Psycopannychia* already existed, but it did not appear in print until 1542, cf. BC 1, 113–116; no. 42/5. In its first preface, which dates from the end of 1534, Calvin professes to have an aversion to all kinds of contention; in the second preface, from the beginning of 1536, he declares that Anabaptists deserve a harsher treatment than he had given them in the draft of his book.

⁷⁵ “Tu denique sub diabolicae missae imagine Domini mensam repraesentabis?”; CO 1, 261 = OS 1, 311.

the distribution of benefices, Calvin dubs him with the name of the ancient deity of the underworld, “*the Roman Pluto*”, and elsewhere describes him as “*the archpirate*”⁷⁶. According to Calvin, the Roman Catholic church wants to sell and crucify Christ again in the mass⁷⁷. As Farel had done during the disputation in Lausanne in October 1536, Calvin explains the letters which spell the city R-O-M-A as representing the words: *Radix Omnium Malorum Avaritia*, i.e.: Avarice is the root of all evil⁷⁸. The final sentence is a declaration of war on a former defender of evangelical belief in France who had been newly appointed as a bishop, probably the well known Gerard Roussel: “*For me you are neither a good man, nor a christian*”⁷⁹.

An explanation has to be found for this change, within a few months, from the almost complete absence of any anti-Roman tendency to an abundant preoccupation with Rome. Farel’s Confession criticizes Calvin’s lack of anti-Roman polemic, and in his *Epistolae duae* Calvin has evidently taken this criticism to heart. Calvin, however, does things his own way. Whereas Farel’s tactic was to launch fiercely into a sermon, Calvin wrote a theological reasoning. It is the difference between standing on the barricades among the people and addressing a distant audience from the seclusion of the study. For the rest of his life Calvin would continue this anti Roman-Catholic tendency in his writings. He evidently learned it from Farel.

The fourth issue takes us back to Bucer and Calvin. Bucer’s warning to Calvin not to continue his collaboration with Farel has a previous history. On 12 January 1538 Calvin had written Bucer a militant letter.⁸⁰ On account of the dismissal of the Zwinglian minister Gaspar Megander in Berne (which both Calvin and Farel considered a great loss for Swiss reformed churches and for which Calvin held Bucer responsible⁸¹), Calvin accuses Bucer of pursuing the wrong course: Bucer has made too many concessions to Luther, and also seems to be looking for a middle way between Christ and the pope. On first reading, one might wonder whether Calvin in fact ever sent this letter, since it sounds like a deliberate attempt to affront an authority such as Bucer indeed was. Since

⁷⁶ CO 1, 260.281 = OS 1, 311.331.

⁷⁷ “Hoc enim maius omni probro flagitium est, quod Christum ipsum ... rursum vendis, rursum crucifigis”; CO 1, 290–291 = OS 1, 341.

⁷⁸ Cf. 1 Tim. 6.10: “Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas”. Farel had used this phrase before Calvin during the disputation in Lausanne, see A. PIAGET (ed.), *Les actes de la dispute de Lausanne 1536*, publiés intégralement d’après le manuscrit de Berne (Neuchâtel, 1928), 365–366: “Et quand est de l’avarice de l’église papale pour faire valoir leurs viviers et cliviers pour lesquelz ilz ont fait que les viandes sont defendues, il est clair que l’avarice en l’église du pape a esté la racine de tous maux, ainsi que l’apostre escript: *Radix Omnium Malorum Avarici[a]*”.

⁷⁹ “mihi certe nec vir bonus eris, nec christianus. Vale”; CO 5, 312 = OS 1, 362.

⁸⁰ For the text, see: CO 10/2; Ep. 87.

⁸¹ Cf. CORNELIS AUGUSTIJN, ‘Bern and France. The background to Calvin’s letter to Bucer dated 12 January 1538’, in: WILHELM H. NEUSER, HERMAN J. SELDERHUIS (eds.), *Ordenlich und fruchtbar*. Festschrift für Willem van ‘t Spijker (Leiden, 1997), 155–169.

the main document for establishing the text of the letter is a draft by Calvin, housed in the Archives in Geneva, it might be possible that Calvin did not actually send it. But another important source for establishing the text is a copy of a fragment of this letter which Bucer himself most probably sent to Heinrich Bullinger in Zürich, where this second manuscript is housed⁸²; Calvin's letter therefore must have reached Bucer. However, coarse as Calvin's letter may have been, Bucer did answer him. We know only a small part of this answer and of Calvin's response to it from polemical books that appeared some twenty years later.⁸³ Bucer answered Calvin very politely, but nevertheless severely: "*our judgement depends on our love or our hate*". In his response, Calvin recalls, that when he first received Bucer's answer, during dinner, he felt overwhelmed with joy. But after reading it more carefully, he felt as though he had been whipped; he could not sleep all night, and was out of sorts for three whole days. Calvin further reveals that the battle against his own irascibility ("*impatientia*") was a hard one, which he had still not won. But Calvin's answer also reveals that the differences between him and Bucer about the course to be followed still remained. Calvin could not accept Bucer's assurance that he, Bucer, did not plan to establish a new papacy. Calvin here most probably had in mind Bucer's middle way concerning the Lord's Supper, because precisely the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was at stake in the Megander affair. On this matter, Calvin announced to Bucer that he was in no way willing to abandon his own understanding of this doctrine, and Calvin here surprisingly used the word "Calvinism". Bucer would not stamp out «*Calvinism*», he wrote. He even repeats it in the following sentence, leaving no doubt about his own conviction: "*If Scripture ought to be the basis, I do not know if Buceranism is more tolerable than Calvinism*".⁸⁴

Two months later Calvin and Farel were banished from Geneva. Initially Bucer did his best to get the two men reinstated in Geneva. Shortly after 25 July

⁸² In this fragment, housed in the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich as Ms. F. 80, 342, Bucer had withheld those parts of the original letter in which Calvin had attacked him personally. The fragment as it exists will have urged Bullinger to exert his influence in Bern to prevent further harm there!

⁸³ See especially FRANÇOIS BAUDUIN, *Ad leges de famosis libellis* (1562), 52; F. BAUDUIN, *Responsio altera ad Ioan. Calvinum* (1562), 22.56–57.

⁸⁴ "Cum literae tuae mihi sub coenam oblatae essent, tanto gaudio perfusus fui, ut non meminerim tribus totis mensibus laetiolem mihi horam affulsisse. At cum eas super coenam utcunque percurrissem, lectione ipsa sic fui flagellatus, ut proxima nocte irrequietus continenter estuarim, nec toto post triduo plane fuerim apud meipsum. ... Iudicare me scribis prout amo, amare prout libet. Ergo ne sic me despere censes, ut nullum habeam in amando delectum vel ordinem. ... Frustra mihi excusas novo papismo erigendo te non studere. Sed vellem aliis omnibus sic exploratam esse puritatem tuam, ut ne suspicionis quidem locum relinqueres. Frustra etiam id te dare operam, ne quid calvinismi admisceatur. Si a scriptura semel deflectendum sit, non ignoro quam sit tolerabilior buceranismus quam calvinismus. ... Ut verum fatear, nulla mihi cum maximis et plurimis meis vitiis difficilior est lucta quam cum ista impatientia. Neque certe nihil proficio, sed nondum id sum consecutus, ut talem belluam plane domuerim."; BAUDUIN, *Responsio altera ad Ioan. Calvinum*, 57 and 22.

Farel was appointed in Neuchâtel, and soon there was talk of plans of inviting Calvin there. But at the beginning of August Bucer wrote Calvin the letter mentioned above, in which he announced that the continuation of the collaboration between Farel and Calvin would be in the interest neither of the church, nor of Calvin himself.⁸⁵ Soon Calvin was invited to work in Strasbourg, and after some deliberation, he accepted the appointment. It would be the happiest time in Calvin's life, and he and Bucer became firm friends.⁸⁶

The final evaluation can be summarized in the following short theses:

1. Contrary to a widely held opinion, Farel maintained the lead in Geneva until about April 1538.
2. Farel should not to be underestimated as a theologian; he was far from being a lightweight.
3. Farel represents an original branch within the reformed churches, which is characterized by spirituality, the use of biblical language and popularism.
4. The collaboration between Farel and Calvin included forms of mutual criticism.
5. Farel seems to have influenced Calvin to his sharp polemical writings.
6. In his warning that continuation of Calvin and Farel's collaboration would strengthen their less positive traits, Bucer had in mind a combination of their touchiness and tenacity.
7. Perhaps Calvin, mindful of his vain battle against his own irascibility, already endorsed Bucer's fears about further collaboration between Farel and himself.
8. By forwarding part of Calvin's militant letter to Bullinger in Zürich, and again some months later by inviting Calvin to come to Strasbourg, Bucer demonstrated his specific ability to put the benefit of the church before his own personal sensitivities.
9. At the middle of 1538 Calvin revealed his self-confidence by considering "Calvinism" more acceptable than "Buceranism".

⁸⁵ In vain both Capito and Bucer had tried to convince both Farel and Calvin of their own faults, see CO 10/2, Epp. 126.131.132.140 and HERMINJARD 5, Ep. 730.

⁸⁶ Cf. CORNELIS AUGUSTIJN, 'Calvin in Strasbourg', in: WILHELM H. NEUSER (ed.), *Calvinus sacrae scripturae professor. Calvin as confessor of Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids, 1994), 166-177. Notwithstanding their close relationship, Bucer would some years later express his criticism of Calvin's *Epistolae duae*, see Francis Higman, 'Bucer et les nicodemites', in: CHRISTIAN KRIEGER, MARC LIENHARD (EDS.), *Martin Bucer and sixteenth century Europe. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (28-31 août 1991)* (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1993), 645-658.