

CHAPTER THREE

ISSUS DE CALVIN: COLLECTIVE MEMORIES OF JOHN CALVIN IN DUTCH NEO-CALVINISM

Herman Paul and Johan de Niet

INTRODUCTION

In July 1909, Protestants from all across Europe and North America gathered in Geneva to celebrate John Calvin's four hundredth birthday.¹ Banquets, music, services in various languages, a foundation stone ceremony for the Wall of the Reformers, and an endless series of speeches marked the occasion. The mood was festive, the atmosphere congenial. For a moment, denominational barriers even seemed to come down, when Protestants of various affiliations rejoiced in shared Calvinist memories: "Give thanks to the Lord of heavens that we are Calvinists!"² In the Netherlands, however, Reformed Protestants known as Neo-Calvinists responded skeptically. They had turned down the Swiss invitation and saw their fears about the commemoration come true. What a "great disappointment," wrote the Neo-Calvinist magazine, *De Spiegel*,

not only for the "Calvinists," but surely not less for other Christians who love Calvin as a reformer. What follies have been delivered there. One speaker announced his sympathy for Servetus, another glorified Calvin as a predecessor of Jean Jacques Rousseau.³

¹ The first author's research was funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton. This chapter can be read as a sequel to Johan de Niet, 'Johannes Calvijn (1509–1564): icoon voor vriend en vijand,' in *Heiligen of helden: opstellen voor Willem Frijhoff*, ed. Joris van Eijnatten, Fred van Lieburg, and Hans de Waardt (Amsterdam, 2007), pp. 102–114. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are ours.

² *Jubilé de Calvin à Genève, juillet 1909: allocutions, adresses, lettres et documents* (Geneva, [1910]); Alex. Claparède, *Les voix magyares au jubilee de Calvin, Genève 1909* (Geneva, 1910), p. 132. On the Reformation monument, see Christoph Strohm, 'Calvinerinnerung am Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts: Beobachtungen am Beispiel des Genfer Reformationsdenkmals,' in *Lutherinszenierung und Reformationserinnerung*, ed. Stefan Laube and Karl-Heinz Fix (Leipzig, 2002), pp. 211–225.

³ 'Het Calvijn-feest te Genève,' *De Spiegel* 3 (1909), 339.

We may be grateful for not having joined this ecumenical exuberance, agreed *De Heraut*. “Certainly, the religious element has not been missing, but this religious element had such a generally Protestant shade that even the Modernists could have approved of it.” This effect, the newspaper judged, “could only have been achieved by dramatically fading the Calvinist colors.”⁴ Whereas Calvin had always sought the glory of God by obeying the Scriptures, explained the Neo-Calvinist daily, *De Standaard*, the celebrations in Geneva gave little evidence of such obedience. Dutch Calvinists had rightly stayed at home.⁵

Their alternative commemoration of Calvin’s birthday was remarkably sober.⁶ Public lectures by Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920), Herman Bavinck (1854–1921), Herman H. Kuyper (1864–1945), Pieter A. Diepenhorst (1879–1953), and other Neo-Calvinist leaders, complemented with commemorative essays in magazines and newspapers, made up most of the celebration—just as would be the case in 1917, at the four-hundredth anniversary of Luther’s *Thesenanschlag*.⁷ Although the papers reported on an occasional Prussian collection for Reformed Christians abroad, Dutch Neo-Calvinists did not follow this example.⁸ Besides, they generally responded negatively to requests for financial contributions to the Wall of the Reformers.⁹ This was not only because, in Abraham Kuyper’s phrase, Calvinism “never burned its incense upon the altar of genius” nor erected monuments for its heroes.¹⁰ Also, Neo-Calvinists had hardly any experience with monuments at

⁴ ‘Lecestafel,’ *De Heraut* (September 19, 1909).

⁵ ‘Calvijn-herdenking,’ *De Standaard* (September 20, 1909). In their refusal of the Swiss invitation, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands had articulated a similar feeling of exclusiveness by stating that “the sons of the Reformation” in their country had been following Calvin’s footsteps only “since the end of the past century” (*Jubilé de Calvin* [see above, n. 2], p. 221). The Walloon pastor Émile Bourlier and the Remonstrant professor Hermanus J. Groenewegen were the only Dutch delegates in Geneva (ibid., pp. 15, 64–67, 91–93).

⁶ G. Doekes, ‘Nalezing,’ *Gereformeerd Tijdschrift* 10 (1909), 164–166; G. K[eizer?], review of *Calvijn en Nederland*, by H. H. Kuyper, ibid., 373.

⁷ Arjan Nobel, “Naar wien wij ons wel niet noemen, maar die toch ook de onze is”: de Reformatie-herdenking van 1917 in de gereformeerde pers,’ in *De Reformatie-herdenking van 1917: historische beeldvorming en religieuze identiteitspolitiek in Nederland*, ed. Herman Paul, Bart Wallet, and George Harinck (Zoetermeer, 2004), pp. 141–161.

⁸ ‘Herdenking van Calvijn in de Pruisische landskerk,’ *De Heraut* (June 13, 1909). Cf. Stephan Laube’s contribution to this volume.

⁹ Cf. Antoine Baumgartner, *Nederland en het internationaal hervormingsmonument*, trans. Jan Reelfs (The Hague, 1910).

¹⁰ Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered in the Theological Seminary at Princeton* (New York; Chicago, [1899]), p. 22.

all: public space in their pillarized country was usually too contested to allow religious statues in the open air.¹¹ Accordingly, if Calvin's memory had to be made visible in stone, they preferred to declare their Free University—founded in 1880, on the basis of “Calvinist” principles, and arguably the most visible manifestation of the Neo-Calvinist movement—a monument to the reformer (“surely not less worthy of him and, in case he still had knowledge of what takes place on this earth, surely not less welcome to him than a monument of stone or a statue of metal”).¹²

Who were these self-confident, self-appointed heirs of Calvin, who so critically responded to how other Protestants commemorated the sixteenth-century Reformer? What made them bear his name and appropriate his memory? Which needs or goals was his memory supposed to serve? The aim of this chapter is less to provide a comprehensive account of Neo-Calvinist Calvin representations than to examine and explain the roles and functions that these memories performed in the decades around 1909. Adopting a terminology developed by Willem Frijhoff, we will distinguish between Calvin as an ‘icon’ and Calvin as a ‘saint.’ Iconic representations are to be understood as representations that valued Calvin not for himself (his character, his deeds), but for the, often less visible, more abstract cause he had sustained (Calvinist theology or a Reformed “life and worldview”). Alternatively, when Calvin's personal life was presented as a model worthy of imitation, the icon, in Frijhoff's typology, was replaced by a saint, that is, by a figure whose biography had exemplary functions.¹³

¹¹ Herman Paul and Bart Wallet, ‘A Sun that Lost its Shine: The Reformation in Dutch Protestant Memory Culture, 1817–1917,’ *Church History and Religious Culture* 88 (2008), 35–62, esp. 53–54; Peter Jan Margry, *Teedere quaesties: religieuze rituelen in conflict: confrontaties tussen katholieken en protestanten rond de processiecultuur in 19e-eeuws Nederland* (Hilversum, 2000).

¹² *De Heraut* (July 11, 1909). This same article compared the Free University to Calvin's Academy.

¹³ Willem Frijhoff, *Heiligen, idolen, iconen* (Nijmegen, 1998). Frijhoff's threefold typology (saints, idols, and icons) was recently amended in Joris van Eijnatten, ‘Slotbeschouwing: heldendom als grondslag van Willem Frijhoffs heiligheidsmodel,’ in Van Eijnatten, Van Lieburg, and De Waardt, *Heiligen of helden* (see above, n. 1), pp. 419–438. Given the nature of the sources available to us, sharp differentiations between different types of Neo-Calvinist memory managers, or between the production and consumption of collective memory, can hardly be made. Persuasive as John Eidson's suggestion “to pluralize the notion of the collectivity” may be, this chapter focuses more on changing repertoires of Calvin representations than on questions of transmission and circulation. Cf. John Eidson's stimulating article, ‘Which Past for Whom? Local Memory in

In this chapter, we will argue that by the time of the 1909 commemoration, iconic representations of Calvin had a more contested and less privileged position among Dutch Neo-Calvinists than their criticism of the Genevan festivities suggested. Partly as a supplement, partly as an alternative, the iconic Calvin gradually took on saint-like qualities as well. In the following pages, we will interpret this emerging tension between icon and saint as reflecting changing attitudes vis-à-vis the acknowledged founding father of Neo-Calvinism: Abraham Kuyper.

NEO-CALVINISM

The label ‘Neo-Calvinist’ conventionally refers to a group of Dutch citizens in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who had followed Abraham Kuyper in his secession from the Dutch Reformed Church (1886) and participated in what, under Kuyper’s personal leadership, increasingly became a Calvinist subculture. It is important to emphasize, however, that Neo-Calvinism *stricto sensu* was not a church denomination, a political movement, or a socio-religious group, but a tradition of thought. As such, Neo-Calvinism must be distinguished from the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) and the Anti-Revolutionary Party (1879), both because its influence reached well beyond these institutions and because its vision was sometimes also challenged from within these churches and party.¹⁴

Like its Roman-Catholic example and rival, the Neo-Scholastic program launched in 1879 by Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903), Neo-Calvinism liked to think of itself as a truly Christian alternative to what it saw as the dangers of the nineteenth century: liberalism, socialism, and other types of ‘modernism’ that had sprung from the French Revolution.¹⁵

a German Community during the Era of Nation Building,’ *Ethos* 28 (2001), 575–607, esp. 578.

¹⁴ The predominance of Kuyperian attitudes within the early *Gereformeerde Bond* (Reformed League, an association founded in 1906 within the Dutch Reformed Church) serves as an example of the former; the latter is illustrated by the struggles between Kampen Theological Seminary and the Free University as well as by critical publications like H. Huisman, *Eenige grondwaarheden van den christelijken godsdienst, in overeenstemming met Gods Woord, de belijdenisschriften, Calvijn en andere onzer geref. vaders, en daarmede vergeleken de beschouwingen van dr. Kuyper*, 2nd ed. (Appingedam, [1906?]).

¹⁵ On Kuyper’s understanding of “modernism,” see Peter S. Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper’s Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge,

Responding to an emerging plurality of voices in the public domain as well as in the world of higher learning, Neo-Thomists and Neo-Calvinists alike hoped to demonstrate that Christian orthodoxy could stand against its rivals if developed into a distinctively Christian “life and worldview.” Fascinated, though, by the architectonic structure of modernist thought, the Neo-Calvinists believed that such a Christian worldview had to be “systematic” and “all-encompassing”:

If the battle is to be fought with honour and with a hope of victory, then *principle* must be arrayed against *principle*; then it must be felt that in Modernism the vast energy of an all-embracing *life-system* assails us, then also it must be understood that we have to take our stand in a life-system of equally comprehensive and far-reaching power.¹⁶

These words flowed from the pen of Abraham Kuyper, the pastor and politician who almost single-handedly designed a first version of the Neo-Calvinist “life-system.” A student of the modernist theologian, Johannes H. Scholten (1811–1885), Kuyper was not only indebted to his teacher’s interpretation of Calvin—both Scholten and Kuyper defined “divine sovereignty” as Calvin’s “central dogma”—but, more importantly, also inherited from Scholten a desire to reformulate classic Christian doctrine into axiomatic principles (*grondbeginselen*), from which concrete directives for Christian living were to be deduced.¹⁷

However, compared to his teacher and his Neo-Scholastic contemporaries, Kuyper was more of a visionary organizer than a systematic thinker. Not philosophy, but history served as the primary source of justification for the positions he adopted. Significantly, Kuyper continued

UK, 1998), pp. 96–111. The French Revolution as wellspring of all evil was an image popularized in Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer’s *Ongeloof en revolutie: eene reeks van historische voorlezingen* (Leiden, 1847). Jeroen Koch, *Abraham Kuyper: een biografie* (Amsterdam, 2006), pp. 54–55, highlights the influence of *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus Errorum* on Kuyper’s conversion to a “militant and orthodox Calvinism,” though without providing any documentary evidence for this assertion. For Kuyper’s nuanced appreciation of “the Romish students,” see his *Calvinism* (see above, n. 10), p. 252. On Neo-Thomism, finally, see Gerald A. McCool’s excellent surveys, *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York, 1989) and *The Neo-Thomists* (Milwaukee, 1994).

¹⁶ Kuyper, *Calvinism*, 4. On the tropes of “system” and “systematic” in post-1848 Europe, see Auke van der Woud, *Een nieuwe wereld: het ontstaan van het moderne Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2007), pp. 11–15.

¹⁷ J. H. Scholten, *De leer der Hervormde Kerk in hare grondbeginselen, uit de bronnen voorgesteld en beoordeeld*, 4th ed. (Leiden, 1870). The relation between Scholten and Kuyper deserves further research. Cf. Gerrit Brillenburg Wurth, *J. H. Scholten als systematisch theoloog* (The Hague, 1927), pp. 193–199.

the passage quoted above by stating that “this powerful life-system is not to be invented nor formulated by ourselves, but is to be taken and applied as it presents itself in history.” A “national mythopoetic Christian-historical imagination” served his purposes, and suited his personality, much better than a metaphysics of being as developed by Neo-Thomist philosophers.¹⁸ As we shall see in a moment, a grandly-conceived narrative about Calvinism as a world-historical power, told in a remarkably confident tone, was most characteristic of Kuyper’s Neo-Calvinist vision in the 1880s and 1890s.

The author’s charismatic personality was not the only factor that accounted for this confidence. Like its Catholic counterpart, the Neo-Calvinist “life-system” aimed at providing “certainty” and “stability” in times of moral and intellectual confusion. Kuyper’s rhetoric abounded with metaphors like “ground under our feet” and “*unity* in your confession, *certainty* in your standpoint, *resolution* in your belief.”¹⁹ Responding to a typically modern fragmentation of life caused by increasing societal differentiation,²⁰ Kuyper sought to construct a “unity of life-conception” by developing an “all-embracing system of principles,” which might help “regain that harmony, which we so often and so painfully lose in the stress of daily duty.”²¹

This attempt to unite Christian orthodoxy with a forthright affirmation of societal differentiation widely appealed to Protestants, both inside and outside Kuyper’s church denomination. Anne Anema (1872–1966) was not the only young man who declared, in 1897, that after many painful searches, he had found a “perfect peace for mind and will (...) in Neo-Calvinism.”²² The great number of associations and periodicals devoted to the study of “Calvinist principles,” founded in the decades around 1900, were both a symptom and a contributing cause of the rousing reception that Neo-Calvinist thought received among groups of

¹⁸ John Bolt, *A Free Church, a Holy Nation: Abraham Kuyper’s American Public Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2001), p. 6. Accordingly, it is misleading to qualify Kuyper’s thought as “unhistorical” (Jan Dirk Snel, ‘Een leven van krachtadig schrijven: over Abraham Kuyper en de opkomst en de ondergang van een voluntaristisch project,’ *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis* 10 [2007], 69).

¹⁹ A. Kuyper, *De gemeene gratie*, 3 vols. (Leiden, 1902), 1: 107.

²⁰ Arie L. Molendijk, ‘Neocalvinistisch cultuurprotestantisme: Abraham Kuypers Stone Lectures,’ *Documentatieblad voor de Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis na 1800* 29 no. 65 (2006), 16, 17.

²¹ Kuyper, *Calvinism* (see above, n. 10), pp. 15, 16, 17.

²² Anne Anema, *Calvinisme en rechtswetenschap: een studie* (Amsterdam, 1897), p. xvi. This is the first documented use of the term “Neo-Calvinism.”

orthodox Protestants. Kuyper himself was not among the last to make huge efforts to communicate his vision to the *kleine luyden*, or lower-class people, whom Kuyper in his more romantic moments believed to have kept Calvin's legacy alive.²³ Paraphrasing Olaf Blaschke, we might say that through this institutional transmission of Kuyper's ideas, Neo-Calvinism became part of a 'confessionalization movement' that aimed to bring Christian practice in various spheres of life in accordance with confessional principles.²⁴

The institutionalization of this confessionalization program reached a climactic stage shortly after World War I. By then, large (though still unquantified) groups of Reformed Protestants attended a Reformed church, sent their children to a Reformed school, voted for a Reformed party, read a Reformed newspaper, held membership in a Reformed professional organization or trade union, and sought diversion in a Reformed sports club or choral society.²⁵ Although this massive scale of religious organization cannot be explained in 'idealist' terms alone, Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism became a *tradition* of thought not least because it was adopted, adapted, and popularized by many such Reformed institutions. In turn, these institutions heavily contributed to what has been called the 'pillarization' of Dutch society: the system of "peaceful though unfriendly co-existence" of socialist, liberal, Catholic, and Reformed Protestant groups of citizens in politics and civil society.²⁶

By the time of Kuyper's death (1920), however, the well-established Neo-Calvinist 'life-system' faced a challenge that turned out to be the first in a series of crises. This challenge came from a "movement of

²³ A. Kuyper, *Confidentie: schrijven aan den weled. heer J. H. van der Linden* (Amsterdam, 1873), p. 47. See also Kuyper's introduction to the 1889 edition of Calvin's *Institutie ofte onderwijzinghe in de christelike religie*, trans. Wilhelmus Corsmannus (Doesburg, 1889), esp. pp. 3–5.

²⁴ Olaf Blaschke, 'Das 19. Jahrhundert: ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?,' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26 (2000), 38–75. This reinterpretation of Blaschke's thesis is suggested in Herman Paul, 'Religious Discourse Communities: Confessional Differentiation in Nineteenth-Century Dutch Protestantism,' *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 101 (2007), 117–119.

²⁵ A "thick description" of ordinary life in the adjacent Catholic pillar is offered in Jos Leenders, *'Zijn dit nu handelwijzen van een herder...?' Hollands katholicisme, 1840–1920* (Nijmegen, 2008). A similar study on the Reformed pillar still needs to be written.

²⁶ Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe, 1789–1989* (Oxford; New York, 1997), p. 19. The most definitive study so far of Dutch pillarization is *De verzuiling voorbij: godsdienst, stand en natie in de lange negentiende eeuw*, ed. J. C. H. Blom and J. Talsma (Amsterdam, 2000).

the young” (*beweging der jongeren*) in Kuyper’s church denomination. Young pastors and professors began to raise critical questions about the adequacy of Kuyper’s grand narrative and Reformed principles. Their heightened awareness of historical change—often ascribed to World War I, but in fact already emerging before 1914 and caused by social, economic, and domestic political change as well—fueled skepticism about the possibility to derive ‘principles’ from the Calvinist past. Exposed to more radical experiences of discontinuity, this younger generation also came to question the organic mode in which Kuyper had believed history developed. In this context, a philosopher like Herman Dooyeweerd (1894–1977) took it as his life work to expel Kuyper’s ‘romantic historicism’ by reformulating the Neo-Calvinist worldview in less historical, more judicial terms.²⁷

This early twentieth-century debate over the Kuyperian legacy marked a critical juncture in the history of Dutch Neo-Calvinism. A growing awareness of historical change and distance contributed to an erosion of the Kuyperian master narrative and, more specifically, to a historicization of *gereformeerde beginselen* and Neo-Calvinist *lieux de mémoire*. The relatively wide-spread rejection of Kuyperian thought and practice in the 1960s—conventionally regarded as a phase of transition, in which many within Kuyper’s church denomination and pillarized organizations abandoned much of the Neo-Calvinist tradition²⁸—was therefore anticipated in the early decades of the century. Many of the debates that contributed to Neo-Calvinism’s decline in the 1960s were prefigured in the challenges that Kuyper’s Neo-Calvinism faced shortly before and after World War I.²⁹ How this debate on Kuyper’s legacy

²⁷ Dooyeweerd’s critical attitude toward Kuyper is best illustrated by ‘Wat de Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee aan Dr Kuyper te danken heeft,’ *De Reformatie* 18 (1937), 63–65 and ‘Kuyper’s wetenschapsleer,’ *Philosophia Reformata* 4 (1939), 193–232. For an overview, see D. Th. Kuiper, ‘Gefnuikte vernieuwing: de “beweging der jongeren” in de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland in de periode 1910–1930,’ *Jaarboek voor de Geschiedenis van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* 1 (1987), 57–87 and George Harinck, ‘Op losse schroeven: gereformeerden en moderniteit,’ in *Moderniteit: modernisme en massacultuur in Nederland, 1914–1940*, ed. Madelon de Keizer and Sophie Tates (Zutphen, 2004), pp. 332–354.

²⁸ James Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw: Nederland in de jaren zestig*, trans. Simone Kennedy-Doornbos (Amsterdam; Meppel, 1995), pp. 82–116; idem, ‘A Bouquet of Nettles: Remembering the Religious Past in the Netherlands, 1960–1965,’ *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 100 (2006), 177–189.

²⁹ Obviously, a wider definition of Neo-Calvinism may result in a different assessment of the tradition’s vitality in the post-1960s era. See, e.g., George Harinck, *Waar komt het VU-kabinet vandaan? Over de traditie van het neocalvinisme* (Amstelveen, 2007).

changed the role of Calvin among Neo-Calvinists will be explained below.

KUYPER ON CALVIN

Unlike Neo-Thomism, which believed that “the golden wisdom of St. Thomas” provided all light of truth,³⁰ Neo-Calvinism did not stand or fall with the teachings of its name-giver. Kuyper revered the Genevan Reformer and defended him against the Borromeo Encyclical for example,³¹ but rarely tried to minimize historical discontinuities between sixteenth-century Geneva and nineteenth-century Amsterdam.³² When critics of various sorts pointed to the differences between the ‘real’ Calvin and Kuyper’s ‘new’ Calvinism,³³ Kuyper responded that the latter was an organic continuation and outgrowth of the former. As he had argued in one of his first manifestos:

Calvinism is not a stark, intractable power which, during Calvin’s lifetime, had discovered its ultimate possible development or attained its full completion. On the contrary, it is a principle which only gradually reveals its inner strength, which has a thought of its own for every age; which is

³⁰ ‘Encyclica “Aeterni Patris,”’ in *Acta Leonis Papae XIII* (Paris, [1879]), p. 18. It is needless to say that, especially from the interwar period onward, Neo-Thomist thinkers (at Louvain’s Higher Institute of Philosophy, for example) struggled with “tradition,” “historical distance,” and “discontinuity” as much as did Neo-Calvinists in the Netherlands.

³¹ [A. Kuyper,] ‘Graaf Carlo Borromeo,’ *De Standaard* (June 8, 1910). Cf. H. H. Kuyper, *Het zedelijk karakter der Reformatie gehandhaafd tegenover Rome: rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit gehouden op 20 oktober 1910* (Kampen, 1912), pp. 28–29. On the Dutch controversy caused by the encyclical, see Paul Luykx, ‘The Netherlands,’ in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918–1965*, ed. Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (Oxford, 1996), pp. 243–244.

³² Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview* (see above, n. 15), p. 242, asserts “that any distance Kuyper did acknowledge between his ideas and those of Calvin was only in terms of the application of Calvin’s theology to questions that had not yet risen in Calvin’s day.” See, however, Kuyper’s criticism of Calvin’s theocratic ideal in *Tractaat van de reformatie der kerken: aan de zonen der Reformatie hier te lande op Luthers eeuwfeest aangeboden* (Amsterdam, 1884), esp. 187.

³³ A. Pierson, *Studiën over Johannes Kalvijn (1527–1536)* (Amsterdam, 1881), pp. 14–15; Huisman, *Eenige grondwaarheden* (see above, n. 14); B. D. Eerdman, ‘De theologie van Dr. A. Kuyper,’ *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 43 (1909), 209–237; and, most famously, C. B. Hylkema, *Oud- en nieuw-calvinisme: een vergelijkende geschiedkundige studie* (Haarlem, 1911). Among Dutch-American immigrants, L. J. Hulst and G. K. Hemkes articulated similar concerns in their *Oud- en nieuw calvinisme: tweeledige inlichting voor ons Hollandsche volk over het oude en nieuwe calvinisme en de kerk* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1913).

able to assume a form convenient for every land, and in these very series of transfigurations continues its progress of development.³⁴

Accordingly, in Kuyper's assessment, Calvin had to be remembered as a key figure in the unfolding of Calvinist principles: not as the inventor or discoverer of these principles, but as someone who, at a critical juncture in world history, had faithfully lived and thought in accordance with these principles—just as Kuyper, the 'new' Calvin, tried to do in his no less critical time.

The issue of what these principles (*beginselen*) were, or how they operated in history, long puzzled Neo-Calvinist thinkers. Kuyper's own answer was entirely circular. In perhaps his clearest exposition, in 1895, he argued that these principles had to be deduced from "the entire complex of phenomena, in church and politics, in home and society, in science and art, in which human life in its Calvinist type has revealed itself, in its origins, historical development, and present state."³⁵ But what counted as a Calvinist type of life could, in turn, only be identified with the standard of *gereformeerde beginselen*. Given the large number of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century organizations that based themselves on such principles, it seems that this circularity was not experienced as a practical problem—instead, it allowed for flexibility in rhetorical strategy.³⁶ What is beyond question, though, is that Kuyper believed these principles to be much older than Calvin's theology and therefore not logically dependent on what Calvin had written or done.³⁷ Accordingly, Calvinism could historically precede Calvin to become identical, in Kuyper's grand narrative, with a host of saints down through the ages:

In its deepest logic Calvinism had already been apprehended by Augustine; had, long before Augustine, been proclaimed to the City of the seven hills by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Romans; and from Paul goes back to Israel and its prophets, yea to the tents of the patriarchs.³⁸

³⁴ Abraham Kuyper, 'Calvinism: The Origin and Safeguard of Our Constitutional Liberties,' *Bibliotheca Sacra* 52 (1895), 398–399.

³⁵ [A. Kuyper,] *Publicatie van den senaat der Vrije Universiteit, in zake het onderzoek ter bepaling van den weg die tot de kennis der gereformeerde beginselen leidt* (Amsterdam, 1895), p. 10.

³⁶ Herman Paul, 'Gereformeerde beginselen,' in *Het gereformeerde geheugen: protestantse herinneringsculturen in Nederland, 1850–2000*, ed. George Harinck, Herman Paul, and Bart Wallet (Amsterdam, 2009), in press.

³⁷ [Kuyper,] *Publicatie* (see above, n. 35), p. 9.

³⁸ Kuyper, *Calvinism* (see above, n. 10), p. 35.

Calvinism therefore had to be understood not in a “confessional,” “denominational,” or “sectarian” sense, but as a world-historical power that shaped cities, cultures, and civilizations, from the Dutch Republic and Puritan England to the United States under the Founding Fathers. For Kuyper, Calvinism was the highest, most consistent form of Christianity, not merely because of its thoroughly elaborated theology, but also, and most importantly, because its ambition to glorify the Creator in all domains of created reality had stimulated science, the economy, politics, and the arts more than any other religion.³⁹ Rather than imitating a sixteenth-century reformer, or believing that Calvin’s *Institutes* contained all wisdom necessary for the nineteenth century, Protestants therefore did well to join this progressive, outward-oriented movement and to raise the Calvinist banner in their own time (one of Kuyper’s favorite metaphors).⁴⁰

Calvin’s modest role in Neo-Calvinism, as compared to Aquinas’ significance for Neo-Scholasticism, was only one consequence of this.⁴¹ Another implication was that a historicization of the Reformer—as exercised, most notably, in the *Studiën over Johannes Kalvijn* (Studies on John Calvin, 1881–1891) published by the modernist theologian, Allard Pierson (1831–1896)—did not necessarily imply a threat to Neo-Calvinist beliefs. Whereas Neo-Scholastic philosophers, at least until Etienne Gilson (1884–1978), often felt uncomfortable with historical research, because of the wedge such research tended to drive between “the historical Thomas” and its nineteenth-century representations, Kuyper, in principle, had no “historical Calvin” whose pedestal had to be defended against a sacrilege committed by historians. His own study of Calvin’s ecclesiology, written at the age of twenty-two, as well as the Calvin

³⁹ Ibid., p. 224.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., A. Kuyper, *Calvinisme en revisie* (Amsterdam, 1891), p. 6; idem, *De verflauwing der grenzen: rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit op 20 oktober 1892 gehouden* (Amsterdam, 1892), p. 46.

⁴¹ This was also acknowledged by Kuyper’s colleague, Herman Bavinck: “We do not have a holy Thomas, whom we can invoke against the storms to which the Christian faith and the Christian church are exposed. And too many are too much convinced of the truth of the saying that [Isaac] Da Costa so approvingly quoted, *Paläologie überwindet die Neologie nicht* [paleology does not overcome neology], to seek salvation from the diseases of the present in a return to a long-gone past.” H. Bavinck, *De katholiciteit van christendom en kerk: rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Theol. School te Kampen* (Kampen, 1888), p. 43.

studies of the Free University's church historian, Frederik L. Rutgers (1836–1917), were remarkably historical in their approach.⁴²

Thirdly, within the context of his developmental narrative, Kuyper thought it essential to criticize, correct, or revise those elements of the Calvinist past that hindered the progressive unfolding of Calvinist principles. Thus, despite severe opposition from another theology faculty member, Philippus J. Hoedemaker (1839–1910), and Protestant congregations throughout the country, he eliminated a “historical” passage from the Belgic Confession (1561).⁴³ Also, in bitter conflict with Alexander F. de Savornin Lohman (1837–1924), he praised late nineteenth-century democracy as a truly Calvinist form of political organization and criticized the lack of church-state separation in Calvin's Geneva.⁴⁴ As far as Kuyper was concerned, Calvin was an icon rather than a saint, that is, a figure whose cause was more important than his biography.⁴⁵

ISSUS DE CALVIN

The conflict with Lohman, which on the surface centered on the use of Calvin's name for advocating a particular version of modern democracy, provides some insight in the ‘politics of memory’ at work in this iconic appropriation of the Reformer. Both Kuyper and Lohman considered themselves *issus de Calvin*: Protestants who proudly bore the name of Calvin. As such, this was unprecedented. Never before had

⁴² Jasper Vree and Johan Zwaan, *Abraham Kuyper's Commentatio (1860): The Young Kuyper About Calvin, A Lasco, and the Church*, 2 vols. (Leiden; Boston, 2005); F. L. Rutgers, *Calvijns invloed op de Reformatie in de Nederlanden, voor zoover die door hemzelven is uitgeoefend*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1901). See G. Puchinger, *Abraham Kuyper: de jonge Kuyper (1837–1867)* (Franeker, 1987), p. 165, for the text of a friendly-ironic song praising Kuyper's work on Calvin and A Lasco.

⁴³ Kuyper, *Tractaat* (see above, n. 32); P. J. Hoedemaker, *Artikel XXXVI onzer Nederduitsche geloofsbelydenis tegenover dr. A. Kuyper gehandhaafd: beoordelingen van de opstellen in de ‘Heraut’ over kerk en staat* (Amsterdam, 1901). For a complete reconstruction of the debate, see Klaas van der Zwaag, *Onverkort of gekortwiekt? Artikel 36 van de Nederlandse Geloofsbelydenis en de spanning tussen overheid en religie: een systematisch-historische interpretatie van een ‘omstreden’ geloofsartikel* (Heerenveen, 1999).

⁴⁴ Kuyper, ‘Origin and Safeguard’ (see above, n. 34), 652.

⁴⁵ In Frijhoff's definition, an icon is a representation; it refers to a thing or an event that may have taken place in the past, but can also be realized in the future (*Heiligen, idolen, iconen* [see above, n. 13], pp. 52–53).

Dutch Protestants explicitly gathered under the Reformer's name.⁴⁶ Characterized as a rise of "little Calvins,"⁴⁷ this development caused concern among others—not least among modernist Protestants, who feared a return to predestination, teaching authority, and the Canons of Dordt. In their (modernist) developmental narrative, appropriation of Calvin was a step back, rather than a step forward.⁴⁸

Theologically, Lohman and Kuyper took sides against these modernists. But politically, they took sides against each other. One of their (numerous) disagreements arose over the Anti-Revolutionary Party's attitude vis-à-vis a pressing political issue in the decades around 1900: democratization. As usual, Lohman remained faithful to the example of his teacher, Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801–1876), who had spent a life-time warning against the dangerous consequences of the French Revolution. Since democracy, for Lohman, was a "fruit" of the "spirit of revolution," he felt he acted in his mentor's spirit when insisting that the Anti-Revolutionary Party should not further the cause of democracy.⁴⁹ Kuyper, by contrast, hailed democracy as a further implication of Calvinism's historic principles:

We are anti-revolutionaries, not because we reject the fruits of the revolution period, but because we think ourselves able, with history in hand, to contest the fatherhood of that which is so precious. Together with great evil, the French Revolution brought Europe some good, but that good was stolen fruit, ripened on the stem of Calvinism...⁵⁰

What irritated Lohman was not only that Kuyper deviated from Groen's example, but also, and more profoundly, that in branding their alternative as "Calvinistic" instead of "anti-revolutionary," Kuyper and his colleagues—including in particular Dammes P. D. Fabius (1851–1931)—preferably identified themselves as "issus de Calvin." Every

⁴⁶ De Niet, 'Johannes Calvijn' (see above, n. 1), pp. 105, 107, 108. Hendrik de Cock, who had led the first nineteenth-century church split (the Secession of 1834), had written a laudatory preface to the *Kort begrip der Institutie, of onderwijzing der christelijke religie, van Joannes Calvinus* (Veendam, 1837), but never branded his followers as Calvinists.

⁴⁷ J. I. Doedes, *1517–1867: onze voortzetting van de Kerkhervorming na drie honderd en vijftig jaren* (Utrecht, 1867), p. 38.

⁴⁸ Cf. C. M. van Driel, *Schermen in de schemering: vijf opstellen over modernisme en orthodoxie* (Hilversum, 2007); Mirjam Fokeline Buitenwerf-van der Molen, *God van vooruitgang: de popularisering van het modern-theologische gedachtegoed in Nederland (1857–1880)* (Hilversum, 2007).

⁴⁹ A. F. de Savornin Lohman, *Calvijn en Rome: historisch-politieke bijdragen*, ed. H. van Malsen (Utrecht, 1927), pp. 18–21.

⁵⁰ Kuyper, 'Origin and Safeguard' (see above, n. 34), 410.

well-educated Neo-Calvinist knew that the formula *je suis issu de Calvin, enfant du Réveil* had been coined by Groen.⁵¹ Kuypers's and Fabius's use of this formula therefore seemed to suggest that Groen had also been a "Calvinist" in the Neo-Calvinist sense of the word and that no real differences between Groen and the Kuypersians existed—whereas Lohman believed that Kuypers, in his enthusiasm for democracy, betrayed the Groenian tradition. Allegedly, Lohman and his friends expressed their annoyance with this disloyalty through parody: *Nous sommes issus de Calvin, enfants de Kuypers*.⁵² In this constellation, the names of both Calvin and Groen were used to justify political decisions and to legitimate subgroup-formation within the Anti-Revolutionary Party.

Similar boundary-marking processes occurred in the context of church and theology. Just as, in the mid-twentieth century, the name of Karl Barth (1886–1968) would develop into a marker of confessional, church political, and cultural-theological identity,⁵³ Calvin's name could serve the purpose of contrastive self-definition. Among the *issus de Calvin*, one contrast in particular recurred. Kuypers's version of Calvinism—characterized, as we saw above, by a firm affirmation of life outside the church—was often set over against Pietism. In 1888, for example, theologian Herman Bavinck warned against this world-eschewing Protestantism that was deaf to Calvin's insight that Christian believers are called to transform the world through faithful practice. "It is a repudiation of the truth that God has loved the world. It is able to resist, to reject, but not to conquer the world in faith."⁵⁴ Significantly, this warning was not primarily leveled against Pietists *outside* Kuypers's church denomination, such as Gerrit Hendrik Kersten (1882–1948) and his followers, but against Pietistic tendencies *within* the Reformed

⁵¹ Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, *Maurice et Barneveldt: étude historique* (Utrecht; Bruxelles; Leipzig, 1875), p. clvi.

⁵² Lohman, *Calvijn en Rome* (see above, n. 49), pp. 12, 44, 47–48, 60–63, 75, 99; J. Th. de Visser, 'Inleidend woord,' *ibid.*, p. viii. For the entire Lohman-Kuypers controversy, see Koch, *Abraham Kuypers* (see above, n. 15), pp. 325–390; and Rienk Janssens, 'Anti-revolutionaire organisatievorming 1871–1879,' in *De Antirevolutionaire Partij, 1829–1930*, ed. George Harinck, Roel Kuiper, and Peter Bak (Hilversum, 2001), pp. 66–68.

⁵³ Kees van der Kooi, 'Barthforschung in den Niederlanden: Rezeption und Kritik' (forthcoming); Martien E. Brinkman, *De theologie van Karl Barth: dynamiet of dynamo voor christelijk handelen: de politieke en theologische kontroverse tussen Nederlandse barthianen en neocalvinisten* (Baarn, 1983).

⁵⁴ Bavinck, *Katholiciteit* (see above, n. 41), p. 45.

Church in the Netherlands.⁵⁵ The need to devise an ‘anti-Pietistic’ Calvin indicates that men and women in the church pews—particularly in some provinces of the country—were perhaps not so consistent in their application of Kuyperian principles as hoped for by their leaders.⁵⁶

Indeed, if such ‘Calvinist’ boundary markers—including Kuyper’s and Bavinck’s contrast between Calvinist and ethical theology—were the product of Neo-Calvinism’s intellectual elite, one wonders what kind of Calvin existed in the hearts and minds of ordinary Reformed church members. Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of sources that address how churchgoers of Kuyper’s generation responded to the Calvin representations produced by the ‘memory managers’ mentioned above. However, a perceived insufficiency of Kuyper’s ‘iconic’ Calvin as well as a gradually increasing tension between this icon and its emerging alternative can be observed from about the 1890s onward—resulting, as we shall argue, in a proliferation of saint-like Calvin images in the interwar period.

THE CASE AGAINST CALVIN

To be sure: in a late nineteenth-century Dutch context, it was not at all surprising that Kuyper and his followers remembered Calvin as a man of principles. All over the Protestant spectrum, groups of like-minded believers had begun to organize themselves in associations or, more frequently, around church-related periodicals that formulated group identities in terms of principles (Reformed, ethical, modern, as the case might be). Whereas prior to this process of confessional differentiation, the sixteenth-century Reformation, interpreted as the common origin of all Protestant believers, had often served the cause of unity, the 1860s and 1870s had witnessed the rise of various principle-based discourses, in which Luther and Calvin were appropriated for group-specific identities. Each group tended to define itself in terms of (timeless or evolutionary) principles for which appropriate patron

⁵⁵ See A. A. van Schelven, *De bewerking van eene piëtistisch-getinte gemeente* (Goes, 1914), ‘Het Zeeuwsche mysticisme,’ *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* 17 (1916), 141–162.

⁵⁶ Cf. Gert van Klinken, ‘Beheerste introspectie: verborgen bevindelijkheid in het neocalvinisme,’ in *Refogeschiedenis in perspectief: opstellen over de bevindelijke traditie*, ed. Fred van Lieburg (Heerenveen, 2007), pp. 31–50.

saints were sought in the past.⁵⁷ Thus, if Calvin was called “a fighter for the anti-revolutionary principles” or championed as a wrestler “for the liberation of the church”⁵⁸—a barely veiled allusion to the church split of 1886—then this language reflected how badly the Neo-Calvinists felt they needed historical support for their positions in the debates of the day.

This same polarized setting, though, caused Neo-Calvinists to increase their repertoire of Calvin images, and to pay closer attention to Calvin’s personal life, when some modernist theologians and a number of atheist freethinkers opened an attack against the Reformer’s character. Admittedly, an interest in Calvin’s character was not entirely new at that time. At the tercentenary of his death, in 1864, Dutch pastors had highly praised Calvin’s faith, obedience, and perseverance. Leonard J. van Rhyn (1812–1887) had assured his congregation that Calvin’s religious life had hardly “suffered” from his doctrine of predestination. Likewise, the (ethical) theologian Daniël Chantepie de la Saussaye (1818–1874) had noticed one-sidedness and error in Calvin, but spent most of his time praising the man’s “great moral qualities.” Not necessarily agreeing with all of Calvin’s theology, these authors had found cause for admiration in the Reformer’s biography.⁵⁹

But when, during the late decades of the century, “character” developed into an increasingly important moral category,⁶⁰ a debate over Calvin’s “religious personality” began to emerge. Biographical accounts found their way into academic studies and popular publications, including children’s literature.⁶¹ Authors began to inquire whether Calvin could serve as a saint, in the technical sense of “an exemplary form of life directed toward other than strictly material or personal

⁵⁷ Paul, ‘Religious Discourse Communities’ (see above, n. 24); Paul and Wallet, ‘Sun that Lost its Shine’ (see above, n. 11), 45–62.

⁵⁸ C. van Proosdij, *Calvijn, een strijder voor de anti-revolutionaire beginselen, toegelicht vooral uit zijne worsteling voor de vrijmaking der kerk* (Leiden, [1899]), esp. p. 5.

⁵⁹ *Ter herinnering aan Calvijn’s driehonderdjarigen sterfdag: toespraken, gehouden door de leeraars Schwartz, Hasebroek, Vinke, Jamieson, Gagnebin en den heer J. W. van Loon* (Amsterdam, 1864); L. J. van Rhijn, *Johannes Calvijn: waarin en hoe door ons na te volgen? Kerkelijke gedachtenisrede op zijnen 300-jarigen sterfdag* (The Hague, 1864), p. 33; D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, “‘Als ziende de onzienlijke’: rede ter nagedachtenis van Calvijn,” in *Al de leerredenen*, ed. P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, 4 vols. (Nijmegen, s.a.), 4: 10.

⁶⁰ Stefan Collini, ‘The Idea of “Character” in Victorian Political Thought,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* V 35 (1985), 29–50.

⁶¹ Een kindervriend [pseudonym], *Enige tafereeltjes uit de geschiedenis van Johannes Calvijn, den vader der gereformeerde kerk* (Utrecht, [1878]). To a lesser extent also A. S. E. Talma, *De anthropologie van Calvijn* (Utrecht, 1882), esp. pp. 21, 69, 87–88, 101, 115.

values.”⁶² The answers varied, but tended toward ambiguity. Calvin’s life was a tragedy, said Pierson:

To reprove, to admonish, to teach; to incite, to comfort, to edify; to attack and to defend, by mouth and pen, everything and always for the sake of what he considered human’s highest destiny—that was his work, every day, every hour. That was the work for which he was ready to sacrifice everything: health, rest, the affection and respect of other people! On that life no ray of sun can abide.⁶³

Although Pierson could appreciate such a dedication to the tasks at hand, he assumed that Calvin had never been able to enjoy Lake Geneva or the Swiss mountains. In the end, Pierson concluded, Calvin must be said to have missed “moral greatness” and “attractive devoutness.”⁶⁴ Following this example, other modernist theologians, such as Willem F. K. Klinkenberg (1838–1921) and Isaäc M. J. Hoog (1858–1928), were critical, too. Both contrasted Calvin’s teachings on predestination and the Ten Commandments with a Schleiermacherian conception of religion, in which inner experiences and a heart-centered spirituality tended to dominate. “O, had Calvin felt these things, how totally different would he have worked with the great spiritual gifts he had received.”⁶⁵

If this offered Neo-Calvinists a reason for coming to terms with Calvin’s personality, then such an undertaking became even more imperative when, in the decades around 1900, freethinkers all across Europe began to venerate Michael Servetus as a martyr in the cause of intellectual freedom.⁶⁶ In the Netherlands, the late nineteenth-century revival of Spinozism, with its anti-clerical impulse, helped transform Servetus into a tragic saint, commemorated by intellectuals who felt beleaguered by the “little Calvins” of their own time.⁶⁷ Antonius van der Linde (1833–1897), a former Pietistic pastor who had written a

⁶² Frijhoff, *Heiligen, idolen, iconen* (see above, n. 13), p. 19.

⁶³ A. Pierson, *Studiën over Johannes Kalvijn*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1881–1891), 1: 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1: 3; and 3: 182.

⁶⁵ W. F. K. Klinkenberg, *Kalvijn en het kalvinisme: rede gehouden voor de protestantsche vereenigingen te Leeuwarden op 1 november 1886* (Leeuwarden, 1886), p. 27; I. M. J. Hoog, *Twee hervormers: Angelus Merula en Johannes Kalvijn* (Amsterdam, 1892).

⁶⁶ Valentine Zuber, *Les conflicts de la tolérance: Michel Servet, entre mémoire et histoire* (Paris, 2004), esp. chapter 2.

⁶⁷ Siebe Thissen, *De spinozisten: wijsgerige beweging in Nederland, 1850–1907* (The Hague, 2000). Cf. Lieuwe Mietus, *Gunning en de theosofie: een onderzoek naar de receptie van de christelijke theosofie in het werk van J. H. Gunning Jr. van 1863–1876* (Gorinchem, 2006), esp. pp. 244–272.

doctoral dissertation on Spinoza, produced a lengthy, heavily annotated biography of the Spanish theologian, which patterned Servetus' execution on Jesus' crucifixion. Calvin appeared in this volume as an "inquisitor," "hothead without grace," "mouth-watering wolf," "Cerberus," "Beelzebub," and "Reformed Antichrist." "In [the lives of] the reformers, one searches in vain for one trait that we would call *noble*."⁶⁸ Another Dutch publication named "the feigned CALVIN, that brood of vipers or whitewashed tomb that played the first fiddle in Geneva," an "arch-hypocrite" and "scoundrel." Our language, the author added, is "too poor in invectives" for this "heresy hunter."⁶⁹ A recommendation of his pamphlet by a leading Dutch freethinker left no doubt as to the target of these invectives: "Dr. Kuyper prides himself on being a Calvinist. May this booklet contribute to letting his followers wonder, at least, whether one can be an admirer of Calvin without hiding a blush of shame."⁷⁰

UN ESPRIT CHAGRIN

How did Neo-Calvinists respond to this case against Calvin (and Kuyper)? As a man of principles, Kuyper's favorite Calvin image had nothing of a saint, whose personal integrity or warm-hearted faith had to be recommended. Yet, other Neo-Calvinists (some of whom were not entirely convinced by Kuyper's insistence on *beginselen*) felt they could not let the stereotype go unchallenged. In Bavinck's eloquent formulation, this was the Calvin image that Neo-Calvinists were bound to correct:

The reformer of Geneva, revered by the Reformed churches as their spiritual father, is still known as a serious, somber figure, hostile, or at least indifferent, to whatever is lovable and of good report. (...) His sharply chiseled face with the pointed nose and the long, thin beard; his lively, piercing, imperious eye; his meager figure, which is all bone and nerves, does not attract, but keeps one at a respectful distance. One accuses him that he had no eye and no heart for all that lay outside his essential vocation. The conviviality of life did not exist for him. In his letters, he never mentioned any family affairs [*huiselijk wel en wee*]. The beauty of

⁶⁸ A. v[an] d[er] Linde, *Michael Servet: een brandoffer der gereformeerde inquisitie* (Groningen, 1891), pp. 222, 318, 188, 160, 208, 195, 139, 214, 161–162.

⁶⁹ J. van den Ende, *Michaël Servet: een der vele slachtoffers van den ketterjager Kalvijn* (Amsterdam, [1891]), pp. 31, 33, 44.

⁷⁰ P. C. F. Frowein, 'Nawoord,' *ibid.*, p. 56.

nature left him cold. He did not show an interest in art, in poetry and music. The most innocent enjoyments were questionable in his eyes. He was, in one word, *un esprit chagrin, un génie triste*.⁷¹

Bavinck's own compensation strategy consisted of rhetorical inversion: he redefined (negative) strictness in terms of (positive) character nobility. While granting that Calvin's character might not always incite "love and affection," he insisted that Calvin deserved "esteem and admiration" for his "total dedication to God" as well as for "the majesty of his character," his "holy earnestness," his "uncompromising will-power," and his "strict discipline."⁷² At the occasion of the 1909 commemoration, this image was popularized in several Protestant periodicals. "The young man with his bleak appearance and pondering face," *De Spiegel* wrote, had lived like a Nazarene and defended the "demands of morality" against the "excesses of his fellow-students" ("in sharp contrast," the author could not resist to add, "to many young men in our time," who "too often have frivolous and idle language on their lips").⁷³ Some years later, Hendrik Kaajan (1879–1940) used the same defense: "Surely, Calvin possessed a character of high majesty."⁷⁴ Calvin's unwearied devotion to the cause of the Reformation let Herman Kuyper, citing Ernest Renan (1823–1892), even describe him as "*l'homme le plus chrétien de la chrétienté*," or "the most Christian man in all of Christendom."⁷⁵

Rather than undermining the older Neo-Calvinist principle discourse, this first compensation strategy matched well with the late nineteenth-century search for Calvinist principles, especially in so far as Calvin's character nobility was explained in terms of demonstrating commitment to the formulation and implementation of Calvinist principles. This use of Calvin appeared to be especially successfully within the Neo-Calvinist youth organizations, which officially aimed at instructing

⁷¹ H. Bavinck, *De algemeene genade: rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Theologische School te Kampen op 6 december 1894* (Kampen, 1894), p. 5. For Bavinck's reservations about Kuyper's *gereformeerde beginselen*, see *Als Bavinck nu maar eens kleur bekende': aantekeningen van H. Bavinck over de zaak-Netelenbos, het Schriftgezag en de situatie van de Gereformeerde Kerken (november 1919)*, ed. G. Harinck, C. van der Kooi, and J. Vree (Amsterdam, 1994), esp. p. 50.

⁷² Bavinck, *Algemeene genade* (see above, n. 71), p. 5.

⁷³ J. T. Tazelaar, 'Johannes Calvijn: de man van Genève (II),' *De Spiegel* 3 (1909), 326.

⁷⁴ H. Kaajan, *Laster en legende omtrent Calvijn* (Zutphen, [1925]), p. 22.

⁷⁵ H. H. Kuyper, 'Calvijn,' in *Zuid-Afrika: reisindrukken* (Amsterdam, 1925), p. 187.

younger generations in Calvinist principles (though offering a lot of other things besides). Whereas, in 1910, only three boys' associations had been named after Groen van Prinsterer, or just a single one after Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676) and Isaac da Costa (1798–1860), ten associations bore the name of Calvin.⁷⁶ Just as in adult study clubs, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* were treated, if not as a “vade-mecum for Calvinist constitutional law,” as someone put it ironically,⁷⁷ then as an example of thorough study and application of Calvinist principles that young Reformed boys would have the responsibility to imitate in their later professional lives. “If one does not use the entire work, then one should at least purchase the beautiful summary made by pastor G[offe] Elzenga [1856–1918],” wrote the Neo-Calvinist weekly, *De Spiegel*, in what was only one glowing review among many.⁷⁸ As the author of this master work (reprinted by Neo-Calvinists in 1889, 1912, and 1934), Calvin primarily served as “an example of extraordinary diligence and extraordinary faithfulness in using his gifts.”⁷⁹ Thus, even if Calvin was not the most amicable person in church history, the Neo-Calvinist youth should take his dedication to Calvinist principles as an example. Although this line of thought, as noted above, did not directly undermine Kuiper's principle-based discourse, it contributed to

⁷⁶ *De Utrechtsche Bondsdag 1910* ([Amsterdam], 1910), pp. 103–111. After the merger (1892) of Kuiper's churches (1886) with the Secession churches (1834), Calvin must have been a less contested identification figure than the nineteenth-century “fathers of the Secession” (Hendrik de Cock, Hendrik P. Scholte, Albertus C. van Raalte). Orthodox Protestants outside the Reformed Churches also named a good number of schools and organizations after the reformer. See, e.g., Henny van Dolder-de Wit, *Zonen van 't zelfde huis: de geschiedenis van de 'Nederlandsche Hervormde Vereniging Calvin' en haar verhouding tot de kerkenraad van de Goudse hervormde gemeente (1899–1960)* (Bleskensgraaf, 2001). For a girls' association named after Calvin, see Lydia Gunnink-Drint, “‘De meisjes van Calvin’: het bestuur van de vrijgemaakte meisjesbond,” in *Vuur en vlam*, ed. R. Kuiper and W. Bouwman, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1999–2004), 3: 266.

⁷⁷ A. J. Hoogenbirk, *Heeft Calvin ooit bestaan? Kritisch onderzoek der Calvin-legende* (Nijkerk, 1907), p. 20.

⁷⁸ J. T. Tazelaar, ‘Johannes Calvin: de man van Genève (III),’ *De Spiegel* 3 (1909), 334, referring to G. Elzenga, *Calvin's Institutie, of onderwijzing in den christelijken godsdienst: een uittreksel* (Kampen, 1903). Cf. Kuiper, *Gemeene gratie* (see above, n. 19), 1: 24; H. Bavinck, *Johannes Calvin: eene lezing ter gelegenheid van den vierhonderdste gedenkdag zijner geboorte* (Kampen, 1909), p. 13; F. van Rijsens and A. J. van der Meulen, *Geschiedenis des vaderlands voor gymnasiaal en middelbaar onderwijs, kweek- en normaalscholen*, ed. N. B. Tenhaeff, 16th ed. (Groningen; The Hague, 1924), p. 70; L. Penning, *Het leven van Johannes Calvin en zijn tijd: aan het Nederlandsche volk verhaald*, 2nd ed. (Rotterdam, 1926), pp. 90–92. In *Hoera voor het leven!* (Amsterdam, 1959), p. 7, Johannes J. Buskes tells that his father read the *Institutes* “at least five times.”

⁷⁹ ‘Johannes Calvin,’ *Timotheüs* 14 (1909), 355.

a certain shift in emphasis. For what counted, in this version of Calvin's greatness, was not merely the content of the *Institutes*, but also Calvin's personal commitment to writing the book. This was a first step from the "iconic" Calvin toward a "saint-like" Calvin.

The second compensation strategy represented another step in that direction. This strategy aimed to counterbalance the "negative" stereotyping of Calvin's personality by adding "positive" qualities of character. Kaajan, for example, spoke about Calvin's great love of music—as illustrated by the Genevan Psalter, with Louis Bourgeois's unforgettable melodies—and about his beautiful style of writing.⁸⁰ A Dutch translation of Emile Doumergue's *L'art et le sentiment dans l'oeuvre de Calvin* (Art and Emotion in Calvin's Work) was produced with the explicit aim of correcting Calvin's dogmatic reputation.⁸¹ Likewise, in response to Stefan Zweig's *Castellio gegen Calvin* (Castellio against Calvin) and a Dutch volume of comparable scope,⁸² the historian Aart A. van Schelven (1880–1954) edited a volume of Calvin letters written to women. Zweig discerns in Calvin a "terrorist," a "dry dogmatician" and a "hard, dogmatic fanatic," Van Schelven explained.

[H]owever: if this Reformer has truly been the man he is considered to be, then corresponding with women must have been even more difficult for him than [correspondence] with men. And if he yet succeeded in what was most difficult—one feels the logical conclusion is drawing near—then the traditional picture must also be a totally incorrect one.⁸³

The letters were translated by Johannes Cornelis van der Does (1877–1956), whose next project was a biography that portrayed Idelette de Bure as excelling in devotion, piety, self-sacrifice, and other Christian virtues. Even more than Louwrens Penning (1854–1927), whose Calvin

⁸⁰ Kaajan, *Laster en legende* (see above, n. 74), pp. 19, 36–44. Cf. later Antoon Veerman, *De stijl van Calvijn in de Institutio christianae religionis* (Utrecht, 1943).

⁸¹ W. F. A. Winckel, 'Een woord vooraf,' in E. Doumergue, *Kunst en gevoel in het werk van Calvijn: drie lezingen*, trans. W. F. A. Winckel (Wageningen, [1904]), p. 5. On Doumergue's reputation in Dutch Neo-Calvinism, cf. *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* (January 31, 1928); and *Het Vaderland* (February 18, 1937).

⁸² Stefan Zweig, *Castellio gegen Calvin oder ein Gewissen gegen die Gewalt* (Vienna, [1936]); C. J. Wijnaendts Francken, *Michael Servet en zijn marteldood: Calvin, Servet, Castellion: een bladzijde uit de geschiedenis der Hervorming* (Haarlem, 1937).

⁸³ A. A. van Schelven, 'Inleidend woord,' in *Kracht en troost voor vrouwenlevens: brieven van Calvijn aan vrouwen* (Amsterdam, 1938), pp. 7, 8. A similar intention was expressed by W. de Zwart, 'Woord vooraf,' in *Calvijn in het licht zijner brieven: honderd brieven van den reformator*, trans. by W. de Zwart (Kampen, 1938), p. 7. Cf. J. T. Tazelaar, 'Johannes Calvijn: de man van Genève (slot),' *De Spiegel* 3 (1909), 339.

biography narrated at length about Renée de France and Marguerite de Valois,⁸⁴ Van der Does depicted Calvin's wife as a saint-like woman—as if he needed a Calvinist counterpart to Katharina von Bora.⁸⁵ By thus accepting the terms of the debate set by Pierson and the freethinkers mentioned above, this second strategy marked a significant departure from Kuyper's iconic Calvin.

This suggests that the transitions in the Neo-Calvinist memory culture should not exclusively be understood as defensive responses to the “character assassination” attributed to Van der Linde and Zweig. Although these contemporary authors were targets of criticism,⁸⁶ both developments outlined in this section should also be read as signs of divergence from Kuyperian orthodoxy. Both shifts reflected an unwillingness to treat Calvin merely as a “man of principles,” if not an uneasiness with Kuyper's entire principle-based discourse as documented for the 1920s as a contributing cause to dissent among the Neo-Calvinists.⁸⁷

CALVIN'S GENEVA

This became even clearer when second generation Neo-Calvinists—including the founding father's oldest son, Herman Kuyper—began to develop a fascination for Calvin's Geneva. We saw above that as late as 1909, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (unlike their Hungarian counterpart) considered a pilgrimage to Geneva incompatible with their Calvinist principles.⁸⁸ Neither, in spite of some expectations to the contrary,⁸⁹ was sixteenth-century Geneva a principal topic of study at the Free University. For what had mattered to Kuyper had been the Calvinist principles: Calvin's own, historic application of these principles had been of secondary importance at best. Yet, in the early decades of the twentieth century, sixteenth-century Geneva became an example of “holiness” and therefore a *lieu de mémoire* in its own right—worth visiting by any Neo-Calvinist who could afford a train ticket to Switzerland.

⁸⁴ Penning, *Leven van Johannes Calvijn* (see above, n. 78).

⁸⁵ J. C. van der Does, *Johannes Calvijn: de groote hervormer* (Franeker, s. a.).

⁸⁶ Cf. H. H. Kuyper, ‘Calvijn’ (see above, n. 75), pp. 178–179; and Rutgers, *Calvijn's invloed* (see above, n. 42), pp. 51–52.

⁸⁷ See note 27.

⁸⁸ For the Hungarian pilgrimage, see Botond Gaál's chapter in this volume.

⁸⁹ A. Pierson, *Nieuwe studiën over Johannes Kalvijn (1536–1541)* (Amsterdam, 1883), pp. ix–x.

Religious tourism to Geneva was not entirely new. Wealthy Protestants had visited the city of Calvin and Rousseau from the early nineteenth century onward, even though few things reminded these visitors of the Reformer: Calvin did not even have a recognizable tomb stone.⁹⁰ However, shortly before the League of Nations would add another tourist attraction to the city, the Reformation Wall, or International Monument to the Reformation, was completed (1917). Like the John Calvin Museum in Noyon, soon to be founded by the History of French Protestantism Society (1927), this wall expressed a desire for monumentalization that was fueled, among other things, by portraits of Calvin and photographs of his church that early twentieth-century magazines began to reproduce.⁹¹ When, in the early twentieth century, rapidly-improving means of transportation made a trip to Geneva less demanding and less costly, increasing numbers of tourists increased the demand for Calvin memorabilia just as, vice versa, monuments such as the Wall attracted visitors.

Among Dutch Protestants, Herman Kuyper and the Dutch Reformed pastor Frederik J. Krop (1875–1945) must have been among the first to literally walk in Calvin’s footsteps in France and Switzerland.⁹² A group of about 400 members of the Dutch Christian Travel Association followed in 1925. In “the city of Calvin,” they visited the *Auditoire de Calvin*, where the “younger” Neo-Calvinist leader, Klaas Dijk (1885–1968), ascended the pulpit to explain the purpose of what he called their “pilgrimage.” If this word alone already indicated a new type of relationship to the Reformer, the lecture itself, which was largely devoted to Calvin’s “noble” character, followed Bavinck’s example more than Kuyper’s. Significantly, Dijk also was far more enthusiastic about the “impressive” Reformation monument (“which in such a unique way preaches Calvin’s universal significance”) than the Reformed Churches had considered appropriate in 1909.⁹³

If social and economic factors might help explain the emergence of such tourist activities, the message communicated by Dijk, on this historic spot, was also indebted to a *historicization* of the Neo-Calvinist

⁹⁰ For religious tourism to Geneva, see the chapter by James Rigney.

⁹¹ For Calvin’s monumentalization in the early twentieth century, see Cabanel’s and Zuber’s contributions to this book.

⁹² H. H. Kuyper, *Farrago: Calvijn en het meer van Genève* (s. 1., [1910]); F. J. Krop, ‘Calvijn en het hedendaagsche Noyon,’ in *Hugenootsche en calvinistische stemmen* (Kampen, [1918]), pp. 270–279.

⁹³ ‘400 Hollanders in Genève,’ *Het Vaderland* (Augustus 1, 1925).

Calvin. This is to say that, in the hands of some authors, the hierarchical superiority of Calvinist principles over Calvin's "application" of these principles in sixteenth-century Geneva was gradually reversed. Both Calvin's personal life and (what friend and foe called) his "rule" over Geneva found their way into Neo-Calvinist reflection as concrete examples of what it meant to live a Calvinist life. Even before criticisms of Kuyper's abstract principles became current in the 1920s, a shift in emphasis toward Calvin's biography and sixteenth-century Geneva as "exemplary forms of life"—Frijhoff's definition of what makes a saint—can be observed.

Perhaps the clearest example of this was the Calvin biography of pastor Sjabbe Datema (1868–1957), in which Geneva reached almost mythic proportions. Relatively unimportant before the days of Calvin, Geneva was destined to become a new Zion in the Reformation era.⁹⁴ "She had to become a city on a hill, a light on the candlestick." Mixing metaphors, Datema continued to call Geneva "an inn for believers, a beacon-light at the dark sea shore." Nowhere had the beneficial effects of the gospel become as visible as in Calvin's city:

Almost every aspect of life began to prosper. Moral life was controlled by the principle of faith. Religion and life went together. (...) As licentious life in Geneva had been, 25 years earlier, as orderly and plain it was near the end of Calvin's life. Fruits of thankfulness were brought forth. (...) Especially the sanctification of the Lord's Day was striking. (...) A sacred Sabbath silence lay spread out over all of Geneva. The city gates remained closed. No oar ruffled the level of the beautiful blue lake.⁹⁵

Against this background, it is perhaps not accidental that Herman Kuyper (whose travel account was eagerly cited by Dijk) expanded his father's favorite *issus de Calvin* phrase to "*nous sommes issus de la Genève de Calvin*."⁹⁶ Descendants of Calvin, understood within the context of a principle-based discourse, or descendants of Calvin's Geneva, formulated in the context of an emerging alternative, in which the human example of Calvin, inhabitant of Geneva, became increasingly

⁹⁴ S. Datema, *Uit het leven en werken van Johannes Calvin: een goed krijgs knecht van Jezus Christus* (Rotterdam, s. a.), pp. 22, 23. Cf. 'Johannes Calvin II,' *Timotheüs* 14 (1909), 346, 354.

⁹⁵ Datema, *Leven en werken* (see above, n. 94), pp. 28, 32, 46.

⁹⁶ H. H. Kuyper, 'De Reformatie in Nederland,' *Stemmen des Tijds* 6 no. 3 (1917), 147. Groen van Prinsterer had used this formulation ("nous sommes issus de la Genève de Calvin") in his *L'Hollande et l'influence de Calvin* (Amsterdam, 1864), p. 9; as well as in his *Nederlandsche Gedachten* 3 (1872), 151.

significant—that difference marked a growing tension between Calvin as an icon and Calvin as a saint.

THE CASE OF SERVETUS

But when Kuyper's followers began to attribute saint-like qualities to the Reformer, they could no longer avoid the question that had haunted Protestants all over Europe since at least the mid-nineteenth century: how to evaluate Calvin's contribution to the infamous case of Michael Servetus? Indeed, when second-generation Neo-Calvinists began to emphasize Calvin's character and historic appearance, the case of Servetus began to receive increased attention. Like many others, these Neo-Calvinists felt, if not ashamed, then at least, to various degrees, embarrassed about Servetus's execution. In the first decades of the twentieth century, four types of response to this event can be distinguished within the Neo-Calvinist tradition—to which we add that none of them occurred in isolation, but rather in conjunction in order to supplement and reinforce each other.

First, outright defenses of Calvin's role in burning Servetus were rare, if not absent in the Neo-Calvinist tradition. Whereas Pietistic theocrats in the Netherlands could still in 1959 endorse Servetus's death penalty,⁹⁷ we have been unable to find a single Neo-Calvinist source that approved the legitimacy of capital punishment in this case. A number of sources emphasized, however, that a serious issue was at stake: not merely a theological difference of opinion, but outright blasphemy.⁹⁸ In Servetus's writings, one author asserted, Calvin encountered a denial of God no less serious than the atheism expressed by "Servetus's spiritual sons," the "contemporary Libertarians" and freethinkers.⁹⁹

But did blasphemy justify capital punishment? In good Kuyperian fashion, some early-twentieth-century authors argued that the Reformer at this particular occasion had been unfaithful to his Calvinist principles and therefore "uncalvinistic."¹⁰⁰ The Neo-Calvinist magazine, *Timotheüs*, for example, claimed that "the identification of church and

⁹⁷ See Herman Paul, 'Johannes Calvijn,' in Harinck, Paul, and Wallet, *Het gereformeerde geheugen* (see above, n. 36), in press.

⁹⁸ H. H. Kuyper, 'Calvijn' (see above, n. 75), pp. 185–186.

⁹⁹ G. Renting, 'Calvijn en Servet in Nederland,' *Gereformeerd Tijdschrift* 10 (1909), 139, 211.

¹⁰⁰ Kaajan, *Laster en legende* (see above, n. 74), pp. 33–34.

state,” which Kuyper’s followers had learned to reject, “had kindled Servetus’s stake.”¹⁰¹ This was an echo of Kuyper himself: “The Calvinist principle, when logically applied, leads to separation of church and state, as soon as the state is not wholly Calvinistic. This principle could not prevail in Geneva.”¹⁰² One could only add, as Philippus J. Kloppers (1848–1912) had done in the late nineteenth century, that Calvin, nonetheless, had helped prepare the times in which Calvinists would be the first to mourn over such “uncalvinistic” conduct.¹⁰³

Wide-spread, too, was the argument that not Calvin, but the “spirit of the age” must be held responsible for Servetus’s death. Kuyper already had identified the “times and customs” of sixteenth-century Europe—or, elsewhere, “the swaddling clothes of the old mother church,” in which the “liberty of conscience” principle still lay buried—as the main causes of Calvin’s actions against Servetus.¹⁰⁴ Invoking similar historicist arguments, several authors, writing at the occasion of the 1909 commemoration, summoned their readers not to judge the man for what was a mistake of his milieu.¹⁰⁵ “Calvin largely accepted traditional and at that time still universally recognized principles regarding authority and freedom, also with respect to the persecution of heretics—a reason why it is so grossly unreasonable to blame Calvin personally instead of the consequences of the commonly accepted insights of that time for the sad history of Servetus.”¹⁰⁶

A fourth and final strategy personified the spirit of the age in others than Calvin. Not Calvin, but the judges of Geneva sentenced Servetus to death—and these judges were certainly “no tools in Calvin’s hands,” said Hugo Visscher (1864–1947), in an attempt to downplay Calvin’s responsibility.¹⁰⁷ In the Neo-Calvinist newspaper, *De Standaard*, George S. Bishop (1836–1914), former president of the Reformed (Dutch)

¹⁰¹ ‘Johannes Calvijn’ (see above, n. 79), 354.

¹⁰² Kuyper, ‘Origin and Safeguard’ (see above, n. 34), 652.

¹⁰³ P. J. Kloppers, *Een man naar Gods hart: het leven van Johannes Kalvijn* (Amsterdam, s. a.), p. 20.

¹⁰⁴ A. Kuyper, ‘Steekt er gevaar in om te stemmen op een Roomsche candidaat?’ *De Standaard* (March 15, 1888); Kuyper, ‘Origin and Safeguard’ (see above, n. 34), 403.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Calvijn-herdenking’ (see above, n. 5); Penning, *Leven van Johannes Calvijn* (see above, n. 78), p. 171; A. L[uukkien], ‘Johannes Calvijn (slot),’ *Timotheüs* 14 (1909), 354; J. Waterink, *Calvijn*, 2nd ed. (Baarn, s. a.), pp. 11–12.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Calvijn’s invloed op het staatsbeleid,’ *De Standaard* (July 12, 1909).

¹⁰⁷ Hugo Visscher, as quoted in *De Standaard* (September 30, 1909). As leader of the Kuyperian-inspired Reformed League (mentioned above in note 14), Visscher belonged to the Neo-Calvinist tradition as defined in this chapter.

Church in America, even went further down this road: “It is true that Calvin believed the crimes of Servetus to be worthy of death, but it is not true that he approved or in any way sanctioned the manner of his death; on the contrary, *he did what he could do to prevent it.*”¹⁰⁸ Few Dutch authors went as far as Bishop did in clearing Calvin’s name, but a desire to draw attention to the responsibility of others certainly existed.

It is worth noting that in this fourfold response pattern, both the “saint” and the “icon” appeared. Whereas the fourth strategy gives firm evidence of the transition this chapter tries to outline—a transition toward a mode of remembrance focused not on principles, but on the person—both the second and the third strategy illustrate that, among second-generation Neo-Calvinists, the Kuyperian principle-oriented discourse did not immediately disappear. In the years around 1909, Calvin’s position in Neo-Calvinist memory was characterized precisely by a tension between icon and saint—a tension that could express itself in alternate use, in shifting emphases, or in open criticism of Kuyper’s legacy.

CONCLUSION

Who were these Dutch Neo-Calvinists, who stayed home from the 1909 celebrations, while considering themselves “the best among all Calvinists worldwide, if only because we understand Calvinism much better than Calvin himself”?¹⁰⁹ This chapter has made clear that their criticism of the festivities in Geneva stemmed from what we called an ‘iconic’ appropriation of the Reformer. As an icon, rather than as a saint, Calvin was supposed not to be remembered for his character or deeds, but for the principles that his work had articulated. Because Kuyper believed these ‘Calvinist’ principles to unfold in time, Calvin’s position in Neo-Calvinism was quite different from Aquinas’s position in Neo-Thomism: not imitation, but emulation had to be the goal. If collective memories of Calvin had to serve this purpose, there was little room for biographies or monuments—let alone for celebrations organized by Protestants who failed to think and live in accordance with Calvinist principles.

¹⁰⁸ George S. Bishop, ‘Calvin and Servetus,’ *De Heraut* (August 1, 1909).

¹⁰⁹ Review of *Johannes Calvijn*, by H. Bavinck, *De Heraut* (September 19, 1909).

In an international context, this Kuyperian principle-based discourse was the most distinctive feature of Dutch Neo-Calvinism. Although Kuyper had some influence in early twentieth-century Hungary, South-Africa, and the United States,¹¹⁰ few religious traditions were, at least officially, so strongly committed to an iconic Calvin as the Neo-Calvinist tradition in the Netherlands. The Dutch *issus de Calvin* remembered the Genevan reformer just as they remembered the Reformation more generally: as instances of principles that had to be identified, refined, and applied in their own time.¹¹¹ Accordingly, more than most other Calvin images discussed in this volume, the iconic Calvin of Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism was an activating one, in the sense that it urged believers to do for the nineteenth century what Calvin had done for the sixteenth.

However, as this chapter has shown in some detail, the iconic Calvin gradually lost ground to saint-like Calvins—defined as representations that portrayed Calvin's character or deeds as worthy of imitation. Distinguishing between various aspects and causes of this shift, we have argued that second-generation Neo-Calvinists, without entirely abandoning the iconic Calvin, became increasingly engaged in discussions of Calvin's character and role in the execution of Servetus. Comparatively speaking, the Dutch Neo-Calvinist entered these debates relatively late (in Germany, Paul Henry had already in the 1840s been engaged in a project of 'humanizing the reformer,' while in France, Emile Doumergue had been challenging negative stereotypes of Calvin since the 1890s).¹¹² It is, therefore, not accidental that the 'compensation strategies' by which Dutch Neo-Calvinists responded to Calvin's critics—which included translations of Doumergue's scholarship and collections of Calvin letters such as had been published abroad—were heavily indebted to foreign examples.

Within Dutch Neo-Calvinism, the tension between icon and saint, which this chapter has identified as central to early twentieth-century Calvin representations, was not soon to be resolved. Fascinating stories could be told about the return of principles—such as Calvin's presumed

¹¹⁰ See the chapters by Botond Gaál, Robert Vosloo, and Bryan Bademan.

¹¹¹ Cf. Paul and Wallet, 'Sun that Lost its Shine' (see above, n. 11), esp. 49–54.

¹¹² See the chapters by Bademan and Cabanel in this volume.

ecumenism—in the postwar reconstruction-period.¹¹³ When, at the occasion of the 1959 commemoration, some speakers tried to interpret Calvin's international contacts as providing support for the World Council of Churches (1948) or the European Economic Community (1958), these, too, were clear examples of an iconic treatment of the Reformer.¹¹⁴ But although these examples show that Kuyper's iconic Calvin (which by the late 1950s had been thoroughly historicized) had been replaced by new icons, an ineradicable interest in Calvin's personal life, combined with a deep fascination for 'holy' places such as Noyon and Geneva, made clear that tensions between icon and saint continued to exist.¹¹⁵

A further study of Calvin's role in Dutch Neo-Calvinism during the 1940s and 1950s would therefore be unlikely to significantly alter the analysis provided in this chapter. What was most characteristic of this Neo-Calvinist tradition—Kuyper's iconic mode of commemoration—had already become a matter of disagreement and dispute during the early decades of the twentieth century. In hindsight, the refusal to join the Genevan commemoration in 1909 had been the last robust expression of the iconic mode in which the first generation of Dutch Neo-Calvinists had chosen to remember John Calvin.

¹¹³ E.g., Willem Nijhuis, *Calvinus oecumenicus: Calvin en de eenheid der kerk in het licht van zijn briefwisseling* (The Hague, 1958); L. Praamsma, *Calvin*, 2nd ed. (Wageningen, [1953]), pp. 8–9, 206–207.

¹¹⁴ E.g., R. Schippers, *Johannes Calvin: zijn leven en zijn werk* (Kampen, 1959), pp. 59, 63.

¹¹⁵ The historicization of Kuyper is best illustrated by G. Brillenburg Wurth, 'Calvin en het koninkrijk Gods,' in *Vier redevoeringen over Calvin* (Kampen, 1959), pp. 55–77. New icons can also be found in D. Nauta, *Calvin: leidsman en voorbeeld: rede ter gelegenheid van den vijfenzeventigste gedenkdag van de stichting van de Vrije Universiteit* (Kampen, 1955); and *Johannes Calvin ter gelegenheid van de herdenking door de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam 1959*, ed. D. Nauta (Amsterdam, 1959). For Calvin as saint, as well as for the "holy" places, see esp. N. J. Hommes, *Misère en grootheid van Calvin* (Delft, 1959).