

“The Evangelistic Zeal of Calvin’s Geneva as Exemplified in Crespin’s Martyrology”

Thomas P. Johnston, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Evangelism
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
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The following are two short excerpts from Jean Crespin’s 1570 *Histoire des vrais tesmoins de la verite de l’evangile, qui de leur sang l’ont signée, depuis Jean Hus iusques autemps present* [or “*History of the True Witnesses to the Truthfulness of the Gospel, Who with Their Blood Signed, from John Hus to the Present Time*”] published in Geneva:

Michel, called Miquelot, of Tournay (1547)

As far as the account of this martyr, there is an answer worthy of being noted: wherein excellent people have alleged in preaching, as a word spoken by the Spirit of the Lord.

At about the same time Michel, commonly called Miquelot, native of Froyenne, town near Tournay, young assistant tailor, after having been for a certain time in Geneva, returned to his own country, where he did not stay long without being persecuted for the doctrine of the Gospel, which he had made manifest to many. Being a prisoner in Tournay by the enemies of the same, before the definitive sentence of death, was proposed the choice of two: or to have his head removed (according to the posters of the Emperor) in the case that he wanted to recant, or to be burned alive over a small fire if he persisted in his propositions. Miquelot on this offer responded easily answering without asking for time to respond, “Sirs,” said he, “the One who has given me the honor of patiently enduring for his name, will surely give me the grace to endure the fire.” He was burned in the said Tournay, and his death provided edification to those from the Tournay country.¹

Pierre de la Vau, of Languedoc (1554)

Notable constancy as the preceding [martyr] as to the question that the enemies extraordinarily present to accuse those who have the same profession of the Gospel.

Of Pierre de la Vau, native of Pantillac, five leagues from Toulouse, [his] death and constancy in the torments was of renown among the faithful in this same year 1554. He was by trade a cobbler: but as for the rest served the Word of God, and was well instructed in the same. For when he was constituted prisoner in the town of Nimes, after having for a long time maintained the truth of the Gospel, they sought to force him to accuse the faithful ones of whom he had knowledge; it pleased him more to endure the extraordinary questioning, inasmuch as the horrible mutilation and the fracture of his members could be, that he put no one in danger. He was finally burned alive in Nimes, and his death resulted in the sowing of the Gospel in many places of the said country.²

¹Jean Crespin, *Histoire des vrais tesmoins de la verite de l’evangile, qui de leur sang l’ont signée, depuis Jean Hus iusques autemps present* (Geneva, 1570; Liège, 1964), 171.

²Crespin, 293v.

These testimonies are examples of the 580 martyrs listed in the index of Jean Crespin's Martyrology. That this book made an impact on French Protestants goes without saying. In fact, all the Protestant Martyrologies of the era, including those of Ludwig Rabus (German), John Foxe (English), and Adrian von Haempstede (Dutch), have been the object of attack and discrediting since their first appearance in the 1554. Professor of ecclesial history at the University of Liège (Belgium), Léon-E Halkin, explained the passion released when discussing the Martyrologies:

The religious particularities were so strongly opposing the Protestants and the Catholics that the martyrologies of each have never been the object of serious and objective comparison, devoid of passion.³

Hence this paper enters into this passionate world of Martyrologies.

Who was Jean Crespin? He was born in 1520 in Arras, France. In 1540 he received his doctorate, and became a lawyer for the parliament of France. It was the next year that he witnessed the burning of Claude le Peintre in Paris. Here is Crespin's caption regarding this martyrdom:

Claude le Peintre, Parisian (1541)

The streams of the pure Gospel begun and preached in Geneva, as it was discussed hitherto fore, flowed little by little, and watered the ground in France. Behold, Claude le Peintre young assistant goldsmith native of the borough of Saint-Marceau of Paris, after having profited from the said town [Geneva], having lived there approximately three years, returned to the said Paris, to share with his friends the inestimable goodness of the knowledge of eternal salvation. Several in the home where Claude was lodging while exercising his work as a goldsmith, could not handle this flavorful odor of the Gospel of the Son of God, accused him before Morin, criminal lieutenant of the Chastelet, by whom the said Claude incontinent was constituted prisoner. And after he had maintained before him a pure and entire confession of the faith and of the doctrine announced, Morin condemned him to be burned alive. Claude asked for an appeal of his sentence, but the court of the parliament at that time governed by Liset, first president, seeing the perseverance of the young companion, added to the said sentence, that he would have his tongue cut off. I was among the number of those who were spectators of his death and very-happy ending, which confirmed to many who were beginning and had several sentences of the truth, for whom the Lord gave before our eyes through the person of Claude a true and living testimony. It was a thing of admiration to see the constancy and the behavior of this young man, handling with cheerfulness the infinity of

³Léon-E Halkin, "Hagiographie Protestante," in *Mélanges Paul Peeters II*, Analecta Bollandiana 68 (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1950), 461. Translation mine.

humiliations that were thrown on him at Place Maubert, ordained location for the last suffering [*supplice*]: at which place he endured death with a cheerful heart, the year 1541.⁴

Four years later Crespin himself was condemned of being a heretic, whereupon he fled to Strasbourg, and then in 1548 to Geneva. Crespin established a publishing house in Geneva, and in 1550 his publishing house produced 11 books. His first book was by Théodore de Bèze titled *Abraham Sacrifiant* (“Abraham sacrificing”). Crespin’s next 7 books were by Jean (John) Calvin,⁵ including books on catechism, predestination, scandals (in Latin and French), the Christian life (in Latin and French), and the Nicodemites. In 1550 Crespin also printed two books in Italian, and a re-edition of Luther’s 1523 *Praefatio methodica Scripturae* [“On the preliminary means of Scripture”]. In 1551 Crespin published Calvin’s second revision of what was to become the French Geneva Bible, adding the innovation of an alphabetical index. By the time of his death (1572), Crespin’s Geneva publishing house had printed over 257 different imprints (see Tables 1 and 2), including 53 books by Jean Calvin (such as his 1560 *Institutes of the Christian Religion*). Among his English language imprints were three books by John Knox and a 1569 edition of the English Geneva Bible. However, the work for which Crespin is most well known among the French is his French Martyrology, *Histoire des vrais tesmoins de la verite de l’evangile....* The remainder of this paper will focus on the final edition of Crespin’s Martyrology, that of 1570.

Why a paper on the French Martyrology of Jean Crespin? The Franco-Helvetic Reformation had several particularities. First, it was a French Reformation that took place outside of France. Second, it was a Reformation wherein many evangelists, Bible colporteurs, and other Huguenots were burned alive. Third, it was the Reformation that

⁴Crespin, 97v.

⁵This paper will use the French spelling of most names.

Table 1
Imprints per Author per Year from Crespin's Publishing House
 (based on Jean-François Gilmont, *Bibliographie* [1981])*

Year	Augustin	Théodore de Bèze	Bibles (English, French, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Spanish, portions)	Bible Helps (indexes, concordances, lexicons, theological dictionaries)	Henri Bullinger	Jean Calvin (Latin, French, English)	Classical (Homer, Aristotle, Theophrastus)	Jean Crespin (volumes, portions, French, Latin)	Guillaume Farel	Grammars (French, Greek, Italian)	Jean de Hainaut	John Knox	Martin Luther	Philip Melancthon	Jean Oecolampade	Jean de Seire	Jean Sleidan	Pierre Viret	Other (French, Italian, Spanish, English, Latin)	Total
1550		1				7							1						2	11
1551		1	4			9				1				1				1	3	19
1552			2+			11							2					2	4	20
1553			2			2		1	2										1	9
1554			2+	2		3+	1		1										1	10
1555	1		4				2+							1					1	9
1556			1			2+	5		1	1							2		6	18
1557			1		3	2+	1			1			1	1			3+		4	17
1558			1	1	3+		1		1	1	2+	1			4+		5		4	20
1559			1		1	3	2										3		2+	12
1560			1	1		2+	1	1				1							1+	8
1561		2				1+		1		2	1+							1	1+	9
1562				1		2					1									4
1563		1	2			4		1									1		3	12
1564		1	2+					1											2	6
1565		3		1																4
1566		1		3			3			1+							1		3+	12
1567		1				1	2			2					1+				5	12
1568		1		1				1											4	7
1569		1	1+				3													5
1570		2	1+			2	2+	1								1			3	12
1571		4						1								3			4	14
1572						2										1			2	7
Total	1	19	25	10	7	53	14	15	1	11	5	3	5	3	5	5	16	3	56	257

*Jean François Gilmont, *Bibliographie des éditions de Jean Crespin 1550-1572* (Veveys, Switzerland: P. M. Gason, 1981).

Table 2
Languages per Imprint per Year Represented in Crespin's Publishing
 (based on Jean-François Gilmont, *Bibliographie* [1981])

Year	English	French	Greek	Hebrew	Italian	Latin	Spanish	Total
1550		2			2	7		11
1551		12				7		19
1552		12				8		20
1553		3	1		1	4		9
1554		6	0.5		1	2.5		10
1555		7			1	1		9
1556	2	6				7	3	18
1557		11				2	4	17
1558	3	13				3		20
1559		6	1.5			2.5	2	12
1560	1	2		0.5	1	3.5		8
1561		6		+		3		9
1562		1	0.5			1.5		4
1563		9				3		12
1564		5	1					6
1565		+	1			3		4
1566		2	0.5*2			9		12
1567		1	1.5+0.5		0.5	7.5+0.5*2		12
1568		4				3		7
1569	1		1.5			2.5		5
1570		4	+			8		12
1571		1	1			12		14
1572						7		7
Total	7	113	5+0.5*7	0.5	6+0.5	106+0.5*7	9	257

"0.5" refers to book whose content contains two languages, such as lexicons, Greek-Latin New Testaments, or such as Homer's *Odyssey* (with Greek text and Latin translation).

gave us John Calvin, his *Institutes*, and what was to become Calvinism. And fourth, it was a Reformation that was accompanied by a significant amount of urgent evangelism. My thesis is that, as the Book of Acts provides the context for understanding the Epistles of Paul, so Crespin's Martyrology provides the context for understanding Calvin's theological writings.

In fact, the evangelism from Geneva into France between 1545-1560 was counter-intuitive. As the fires of martyrdoms increased, so did the number of martyrs who were

trained and went out from Geneva. Rather than shrink the growth of Protestantism, the martyrs provided a witness of their spiritual strength,⁶ and the Protestant churches in France grew as the martyrdoms increased.⁷ Some were aware, as was Balthasar Hubmaier, that sending martyrs to the fire was itself unchristian, unbiblical, and even heretical.⁸ As for the Huguenots, rather than relax into a culturally-acceptable form of evangelism, the transplanted French returned to their homeland to spread the Gospel to their relatives and neighbors. Their many mission trips and their missional repatriation not only led to their arrest and martyrdom, but also to the possible martyrdom of any who listened to them or lodged them.

In order to consider the evangelistic zeal of Calvin's Geneva, based on Crespin's Martyrology, several topics must be addressed. First, the use of Crespin as a historical source. Second, a look at the 67 named Geneva martyrs (from 1522-1560). Third, particular methods of evangelism used by those Geneva martyrs. Fourth, the principles behind the evangelistic practices of the Geneva martyrs. Finally some concluding thoughts related to Geneva's theology.

⁶“From there he [Pierre Serre] was attached to the post, to be burned alive: where he lifted his eyes to heaven, and held them there until his death: regardless of the heat and vehemence of the fire, he did not stir any more than if he had been unfeeling. All the people were amazed by this: so that it was said by one of the counselors to the parliament, that they should not make the Lutherans die in this way, being that this would not diminish but profit their religion” (Crespin, 277).

⁷“Without depreciating the value of various explanations which have been discussed, it must be admitted that they do not fully account for the spectacular failure of the judiciary to check and squash heresy. ... The rapidly increasing number of heresy accusations [notwithstanding the missing years] would seem to be but a reflection of the growth of Protestantism” (Raymond A. Mentzer, Jr., *Heresy Proceedings in Languedoc, 1500-1560* [Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984], 163-66).

⁸“Article 13: So it follows that the slayer of heretics are the worst heretics of all, in that they, contrary to Christ's teaching and practice, condemn heretics to the fire. By pulling up the harvest prematurely they destroy the wheat along with the tares.” (Balthasar Hubmaier, “Of Heretics and Their Persecutors: a Comparison of Documents Assembled by Dr. Balthasar von Friedberg, Pastor at Waldshut, at the Command of Brother Anthony, Vicar at Constance and a Distinguished Guardian of the Gates,” from “The Writings of Balthasar Hubmaier,” collected and photographed by W. O. Lewis, translated by G. D. Davidson [1524; Liberty, MO: Archives, William Jewell College Library, 1939], 1:29).

Now 437 years since its 1570 edition, attention to Crespin fits into two categories: use as a credible historical source and strongly emotive antagonism. On the antithetical side, in 1556, Crespin's 1554 Martyrology was censored by the Sorbonne (University of Paris),⁹ and then in the 17th Century, French Catholics published a series of anti-Martyrologies to counter the impact of Crespin in France.¹⁰ It was not long until the Bishop of Meaux Jacques-Benigne Bossuet's 1688 *History of the variations of protestant churches* strongly castigated the Protestant movement.¹¹ Unfortunately, Bossuet's framing of the question seems to have guided most Reformation studies since that time.

Among contemporary opinions questioning the historical reliability of Crespin were the 1997 doctoral dissertation of David Watson,¹² as well as the 2004 essay of Mark Greengrass and Thomas S. Freeman.¹³ Of these publications, Greengrass and Freeman seem determined to undermine Crespin's Martyrology in any way that they can, using:

- ◆ Form Criticism to frame Crespin's Martyrology as using a predetermined form;
- ◆ Source Criticism to find fault with Crespin's sources; and

⁹Jean François Gilmont, *Bibliographie des éditions de Jean Crespin 1550-1572* (Veveys, Switzerland: P. M. Gason, 1981), 50.

¹⁰Arthur Piaget, *Notes sur les Livres des Martyrs de Jean Crespin* (Neuchatel: Secrétariat de l'université, 1930). Four of the ten chapters in this book are in a section titled "The antimartyrologies." They include: Chap 5, Florimond de Raemon's *La naissance de l'Hérésie* (Paris, 1605); Chap 6, the Père Garasse' *Le Rabellais réformé* (Bruxelles, 1619); Chap 7, Jacques Servet's *Antimartyrologe* (Lyon, 1622); and Chap 8, Louis Maimbourg's *L'Histoire du Calvinisme* (Amsterdam, 1682).

¹¹"If the Protestants knew at its depth how was formed their religion, with how many variations and inconsistencies their confessions of faith have been dressed; how they separated themselves first from us, then from each other; by how many subtleties, detours, and equivocations they have worked to repair their divisions, and to reassemble the distant members of their dis-unified Reformation, this Reform, in which they pride themselves, would not please them; and frankly to say what I think, it would inspire them to despise themselves" (Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, *Histoire des variations des églises protestantes* [Paris: Chez la veuve de Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1688; Paris: Librairie monarchique de N. Pichard, 1821], 5. Translation mine).

¹²David Watson, "The Martyrology of Jean Crespin and the Early French Evangelical Movement, 1523-1555," Ph.D. dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 1997. Watson also contributed a chapter for David Loades, David Watson, "Jean Crespin and the First English Martyrology of the Reformation," in David Loades, *John Foxe and the English Reformation* (Aldershot, England: Scolar, 1997), 192-209.

¹³Mark Greengrass and Thomas S. Freeman, "The Acts and Monuments and the Protestant Continental Martyrologies" (copyright 2004, The John Foxe Project), from <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/apparatus/greengrassessay.html>; accessed 11 Oct 2007; Internet.

- ◆ Psycho-analytical Criticism to question his psychological stability as an “illegal immigrant” and cultural transplant.

Further, Greengrass and Freeman apply the following criticisms to discredit Crespin:

- ◆ Indiscriminate use of sources from doubtful provenance;
- ◆ Incomplete sources;
- ◆ Outright plagiarism;
- ◆ Changes in material from one edition to another;
- ◆ Microscopic focus;
- ◆ Furtive analogy; and
- ◆ Unscrupulous financial motivation.

These attacks on Crespin, however, appear to be buttressed by a number of historical and logical fallacies. For example:

- ◆ Fallacy of false analogy or proof by analogy;
- ◆ Circular reasoning;
- ◆ Fallacy of composition;
- ◆ Arguments *ad hominem*;
- ◆ Fallacy of irrelevant proof;
- ◆ Fallacy of historical probability, fallacy of presumptive continuity, or fallacy of prediction by analogy.¹⁴

While an analysis of the handling of the material by Greengrass, Freeman, and Watson is beyond the scope of this paper, Halkin’s words regarding “passion” seem applicable here.

Markedly contrasted to these English scholarly efforts are the French writings of Léon-E. Halkin and Jean-François Gilmont. Halkin, professor of the University of Liège, Belgium, detailed his analysis of Crespin in several essays.¹⁵ In his 1950 essay on Crespin, Halkin wrote, “The historical value of the martyrologies nevertheless subsists,

¹⁴See David H. Fischer, *Historians’ Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1970).

¹⁵Léon-E. Halkin, “Hagiography Protestant,” 453-63; Léon-E. Halkin, “Les martyrologes et la critique: contribution à l’étude du Martyrologe protestant des Pays-Bas,” in “Mélanges Historiques offerts à Monsieur Jean Meyhoffer” (Lausanne: Faculté de Théologie de l’église évangélique libre du canton de Vaud, 1952), 52-70; Léon-E. Halkin, “Intolérance et inquisition”, *Initiation à la critique historique*, Cahiers des Annales 6 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1963), 197-219.

but it is of a delicate interpretation.”¹⁶ Later in 1952, Halkin made some even more interesting comments:

We know today that the victims of religious repression were far more numerous than a reading of the martyrologies would lead us to suppose.

For the Low Lands, the diverse martyrologies cite near 1,000 martyrs. ... For only this principality [Liège], our personal research has convinced us that number of martyrs known through the martyrologies must be multiplied at least by ten.¹⁷

Then Halkin commented on the historical value of Crespin:

Our research was limited to the Low Lands—in the large sense of the term—and it was fixed on thirty cases. In each one of these cases, of which the enumeration is joined to the present exposition, the martyrologies were revealed as being documents of unequal but of true importance for religious history.¹⁸

Jean-François Gilmont, from the *Université Catholique de Louvain* (Belgium), authored numerous essays and several books on Crespin as a publisher.¹⁹ His research seems to have taken up the mantle of Halkin. He spoke with a tone of honor for the work of Crespin:

This study of a 16th Century editor had the good fortune of finding an editor with class [*classe*]. The welcome [detail] given to the manuscript, as the constant attention with which he watched over the birth of books, are worthy of Crespin! I will not resist the temptation to apply to him the eulogy that François Portus addressed to Crespin in one of his prefaces: *νῦν δὲ τυχῶν ἀνδρὸς σοφοῦ, καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν τυπουργίαν ἐμμελέστατα σπουδάζοντος, προθυμουμένου καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῖς περὶ τοὺς λόγους φιλοσοφοῦσιν βιωφελὲς ἀεὶ τι συντελεῖν, ἔρμαιον τῶν πολυτίμων τοῦτο ἡγησάμην.* [“Now, then, to have met a wise man, who shows a constant zeal for modeling/shaping the most elegant art/training, who eagerly offers himself to always perfect something useful for life to those philosophizing about words, I consider it a treasure-trove of the highly honored”]²⁰

While Gilmont did not seem to make comments on the historical reliability of Crespin, he expressed a high regard for his ethical and critical standards.

¹⁶Halkin, “Hagiography Protestant,” 461. Translation mine.

¹⁷Halkin, “Les martyrologes et la critique,” 65-66.

¹⁸Halkin, “Les martyrologes et la critique,” 69.

¹⁹Jean-François Gilmont, “Les centres d’intérêt du martyrologue de Jean Crespin (1554-1570) révélés par la cartographie et les statistiques,” *Miscellanea historiae ecclesiasticae*, Vol 5 ,Issue 61, 358-69; Jean François Gilmont, *Bibliographie des éditions de Jean Crespin 1550-1572* (Veviers, Switzerland: P. M. Gason, 1981); Jean François Gilmont, *Jean Crespin: Un éditeur réformé du XVIe Siècle* (Geneva: Dros, 1981).

²⁰Jean François Gilmont, *Bibliographie des éditions de Jean Crespin 1550-1572*, iii. Translation of French, mine; translation of Greek, Radu Gheorghita.

Jean Crespin brought the first edition of his Martyrology for the approval of the Geneva Town Council (as presumably he did with all of the works that he published).

Their meeting minutes were as follows:

Of the book of M. Crespin. In relation to the lord committed to showing the presented book for printing and that it is something that can well be printed, it is affirmed that he will be able to print [it] after correcting the word *saint* and that of *martyr*, and putting some other name, and also that he must include others that are not [found] there also.²¹

Two results from this positive 1554 decision of the Geneva Town Council were:

- ◆ Crespin changed the title to read, *Collection of several people who endured death with constancy for the name of our Savior Jesus Christ* (thereby omitting the words “saint” and “martyr”), and
- ◆ The Geneva Town Council requested that he add further names to his list of martyrs.

It is likely that the Geneva Town Council was aware of the significantly growing body of literature already available on martyrs, which dated back to 1523.²² Also, as explained in the title, Crespin made a confessional determination as to whether each martyr was doctrinally qualified to be a martyr to be listed in his book of martyrs, nor did he include those who recanted prior to their martyrdom. It may be that the execution of the Socinian

²¹The original French reads as follows: “*Du livre de M. Crespin.* Sus la relation du seigneur commys a faire veoir le livre présenté pour faire imprimer et que c’est chose que peult bien imprimé, et est arresté qu’il porra imprimer en corrigeant celluy moct *sainct* et celluy de *martire*, et mettant quelque aultre nom, et aussy que l’on y doibge mettre des aultres qui n’y sont pas encore” (Arthur Piaget, *Notes sur les Livres des Martyrs de Jean Crespin*, 13; from *Registre du Conseil*, vol XLVIII, n. 1). Jean François Gilmont explained that the original request for publication was on 14 Aug 1554, with the above quoted response coming eight days later, or on 21 Aug 1554 (Jean François Gilmont, *Bibliographie des éditions de Jean Crespin 1550-1572*, 49-50). Translation mine.

²²Martin Luther, *Neues Lid* (Wittenberg, 1523); Martin Luther, *Der Actus und hendlung der Degradation und verprennung der Christliche dreien Ritter und merterer Augustiner ordens geschehen zu Brussel* (Wittenberg, 1523); Leonhard Guttman, *Verantwortung Caspar Taubers der zu Wien verprant ist worden* (1524); Balthasar Hubmaier, *Von Ketzern and ihren Verbrennern [On Heretics and Those Who Burn Them]* (Schaffhausen, 1524); François Lambert d’Avignon, *Le Martyre de Jehan Chastellain* (Strasbourg, 1525); François Lambert d’Avignon, *Commentarii in Micheam, Naum et Habacuc* (Strasbourg, 1525); *Alle Acta Adolphi Clarenbach...* (Cologne: E. Hirtzhorn, 1529); N. Volcyr, *Traité nouveau de la desecration et execution actuelle de Jehan Castellain* (Paris, 1534); *The first examinacyon Anne Askew, Lately martyred in Smythfelde* (London: J. Bale; Wessel: Dirik van der Straten, 1546); *The latter examinacyon Anne Askewe...* (London: J. Bale, 1546); C. Senarclens, *Historia vera de morte sancti uiri Ioannis Diazi Hispani...* (Basel: J. Oporinus, 1546); *Troys Epistre de Godefroy de Hamaelle, natif de nivele en Brabant...* (1552); G. da Milano, *Passione di fanino martyre* (1552).

Servetus in Geneva in 1553 was fresh in their memory, as were also the corresponding martyrdoms of 33 Huguenots in France from 1552-1554 (including the five schoolboys from Lausanne martyred in Lyon in 1552) listed in Crespin. As far as the beliefs of the martyr, the Latin adage from Augustine is often repeated when discussing martyrs and martyrdom, *Martyrem non facit poena, sed causa* [“Punishment does not make the martyr, but the cause”].²³ Therefore the beliefs of the martyr were important to be considered a worthy martyr for the name of Christ.

With the above mandate from the Geneva Town Council, Crespin’s book [of martyrs] grew from 180,000 words in 1554 to 1,190,000 words in its 1570 edition. Crespin died April 12, 1572, just four months prior to the unbelievable St. Bartholomew Day massacre on August 24, 1572 in Paris, in which approximately 100,000 “Huguenots” were killed within a few days.

There was also geographic selectivity in the Martyrology of Crespin. Jean-François Gilmont produced several tables which portray the selectivity of Crespin. First, as it relates to the locations of martyrdoms included in his 1570 Martyrology (see Table 3). As regards his editorial choices, Crespin showed a particular interest in martyrs on French soil, with almost half of his words related to those martyrs (the Brazilian martyrs included pastors sent from Switzerland and France to plant Reformed churches in Brazil). Gilmont also compared Crespin’s 16th Century martyrs (1554 edition), with the 1554 German Martyrology of Ludwig Rabus. Gilmont compared them both geographically and chronologically (see Table 4). The differences were quite dramatic.

Gilmont therefore explained that there were geographic preference established in these Martyrologies (as well as perhaps confessional differences). If one added the 17

²³Halkin, “Hagiographie Protestante,” 456; Gilmont, “Les centres d’intérêt,” 361.

Table 3**“Table II, Geographic partition of the 16th Century notices [of martyrs] (1570 edition)”²⁴**

(1) absolute number; (2) percentage; (3) average words per martyr

	Number of words		Number of martyrs		(3)					
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)						
France	495,000	45	316	37.5	1,560					
XVII Provinces	271,000	25	210	25	1,290					
Great Britain	199,000	18.5	246	29	800					
Italy	60,000	128,000	5.4	11.5	19	71	2.3	8.5	3,150	1,820
Germany	21,000		1.9		12		1.4		1,750	
Brazil	21,000		1.9		3		0.3		7,000	
Spain	15,000		1.3		36		4.4		410	
Portugal	3,000		0.3		1		0.1		3,000	
VARIA	8,000		0.7		-		-		-	
Total	1,093,000	100%	843	100%						

Table 4**“Table III.1, Geographic comparison of the Martyrologies of Rabus and Crespin (1554 eds)”²⁵**

	L. Rabus	J. Crespin
France	8.5%	71%
Germany	43.5%	15%
XVII Provinces	37.5%	12%
Italy	4.5%	2%
Spain	3.5%	--
Great Britain	2.5%	--
Total	100	100

Table 5**“Table III.2, Chronological comparison of the Martyrologies of Rabus and Crespin (1554 eds)”²⁶**

	L. Rabus	J. Crespin
Before 1531	58%	8%
1531-1540	4.5%	0.5%
1541-1550	31.5%	27.5%
After 1550	6%	64%
Total	100	100

Provinces (or the Low Lands) to Rabus, German martyrs accounted for over 80% of his work. Likewise, 71% of Crespin’s martyrs were martyred on French soil. Therefore it is

²⁴Jean-François Gilmont, “Les centres d’intérêt du martyrologe de Jean Crespin (1554-1570) révélés par la cartographie et les statistiques,” *Miscellanea historiae ecclesiasticae*, Vol 5, Issue 61, 363.

²⁵Jean-François Gilmont, “Les centres d’intérêt,” 365

²⁶Jean-François Gilmont, “Les centres d’intérêt,” 366.

clear that neither Jean Crespin nor Ludwig Rabus (nor even John Foxe) gave us a complete or entire picture of the Reformation martyrs. Each has its geographic market niche²⁷ (Anabaptist martyrs were not compiled until 1562, [1617], and 1659).²⁸

Much as Halkin noted of the total number of martyrs in the Low Lands actually being over 10 times those reported in Crespin and the other Martyrologies, William Monter likewise noted that the martyrs reported in Crespin for certain sectors of France were quite scant. He also showed the percentage of records available (some of which were destroyed seemingly after the Edict of Nantes [an edict of toleration]):

Table 6
“Executions for heresy by the French parliaments, 1530-1560”²⁹

Parliaments	Arrests leading to death	(in Crespin)	% of arrests conserved [in official records] (1540-1560)	[%of Crespin compared to known arrests leading to death]
Paris	206	(88)	85%	43%
Toulouse	62	(8)	85%	13%
Bordeaux	26	(9)	57%	35%
Rouen	36	(5)	52%	14%
Aix	34	(1)	70%	3%
Grenoble	2	(1)	92%	50%
Dijon	11	(9)	10%	82%
Chambéry	8	(6)	?	75%
Turin	7	(2)	15%	29%
[Total]	[392]	[129]	[incomplete official records]	33%

According to Monter’s study, Crespin wrote of only one third of the known martyrs for heresy in France. Monter also used Crespin as a credible primary source to help provide

²⁷Halkin, *Hagiographie Protestante*, 458.

²⁸Menno Simons, *Een fundament ende clare aenwijzinghe van de salichmakende Leere Jesu Christi* (Dutch: 1562); [Hoorn, *Historie der warachtighe getuygen Jesu Christ* (1617)]; and Thieleman J. van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror* (Dutch: 1659; German: 1748; English: 1886).

²⁹From William Monter, “Les exécutés pour hérésie par arrêt du Parlement de Paris (1523-1560),” *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français*, 142 (1996), 216. Final row mine.

information on some of the destroyed or missing government records. Note that nearly half the records from the parliament of Rouen, “a region filled with heretics,”³⁰ were destroyed. There are also the non-existent official and non-official records for nearly all of the presidential heresy courts established by Henry II (reigned 1547-1559) in 1552:

In addition, we are ignorant of the executions for heresy decided after 1552 by the presidential [heresy] courts from the other locations, especially those of Toulouse, Bordeaux, or Rouen: these three comprised of 23 of the 28 [heresy courts] established outside of Paris.³¹

Similarly, Raymond A. Mentzer, Jr. studied the numbers of heretics convicted in the Languedoc region.³² In Languedoc alone, Mentzer calculated a total of 1,074 arrests for heresy from 1500-1560.³³ Whereas Jean Crespin in his 1570 Martyrology listed only 316 martyrs for all of France from 1500-1570. Thus it is clear from comparing research that Crespin included only a limited number of his martyrs. Monter concluded:

Grosso Mondo, and taking account of all of the gaps in the series of arrests of which we currently know, the number of Protestant martyrs burned in the Kingdom of France approaches five hundred [1523-1560], of which approximately half from the jurisdiction of Paris. The large martyrology of Crespin encloses only one fourth; outside of Paris, Crespin found only one out of six.³⁴

Additionally, it must be kept in mind that the official records were notarized by antagonists of the martyrs, and were therefore tainted. Calvin wrote to Richard Lefevre, “The notary will not write if not something that pleases him: but your confession will not be left unregistered before God and His angels: and will be profitable to His own as he desires it to be.”³⁵ Therefore using the “official” records as more credible than Crespin brings another historiographic problem. Reasons for the low numbers of martyrs in

³⁰Monter, 216.

³¹Monter, 216.

³²His researched entailed archival records of the various principalities in Languedoc (Albi, Anduze, Montauban, Montpellier, Nîmes, Pamiers, and Toulouse, as well as manuscripts in the French *Archives nationales* and the *Bibliothèque nationale*).

³³Mentzer, *Heresy Proceedings in Languedoc, 1500-1560*, 4-6.

³⁴Monter, 217.

³⁵Crespin, 278.

Crespin may be:

- ◆ He had no knowledge of them, as he knew of martyrs only:
 - Through secret prison informants;³⁶
 - Through the writings of family members and friends;³⁷
 - Through the work of colporteur letter carriers who were sometimes arrested with their letters,³⁸ which were used as evidence against the sender or recipient and then destroyed; and
 - Remembering as well that sometimes official city records of martyrs were burned;³⁹
- ◆ Crespin did not deem them noteworthy martyrs for confessional reasons or for reason of a last minute abjuration (which would disqualify them),⁴⁰ or as,
- ◆ He did not have the space to include more martyrs.

David Watson seemed to use Crespin's lack of including all the martyrs as a sign of historical inaccuracy. Not necessarily. Each of these studies shows that the martyrs in Crespin were actual martyrs with very few factual problems (such as exact location or date of martyrdom).⁴¹ Many Roman Catholic commentators, on the other hand, maintained and continue to maintain that the Protestant Martyrologies are either fictional

³⁶Crespin wrote that the prisoner wrote the testimony of his interrogation "from his own hand" (ibid., 433); Archambaut Sepharon wrote of the martyrdom of his cellmates, Philippe Cene and Jacques (ibid., 454).

³⁷Pendigrat, a room mate of Guillaume Gardiner, brought news of his martyrdom in Portugal (Crespin, 194v); Antoine Magne, "this personnage from Orleans in the mountains of Auvergne, brought news to the Church of Geneva, of the imprisonment of the aforementioned martyr [Nicolas Nail], and of others, detained at the same time in Paris for the word of the Lord, in order to recommend them in particular to the prayers of the faithful" (ibid., 269); the father of a martyr, Jean Louys Pascal, wrote to his son Charles in Geneva of his efforts to gain the freedom of Jean Louys, and of his subsequent martyrdom in Rome (ibid., 555).

³⁸Such was the martyr Martin Gonin who was being released for lack of evidence: "As he was leaving [the prison], the jailor searched him and found several letters with holy writings, that Guillaume Farel, Antoine Saunier, and other ministers from Geneva addressed to certain people of the Piedmont who feared God, and loved his word. Thus the jailor told him, 'Return in there, for you are Lutheran'" (Crespin, 87v).

³⁹"Few people understand the difficulty of snatching the judicial acts and confessions of those who were prisoners for the true doctrine; inasmuch that Satan knew well to suggest this trick in the minds of his accomplices, to entirely burn the [legal] proceedings of people" (Crespin, 174v). Likewise, Mentzer included in Figure 1 a table showing the open spaces where registers were missing in the records of criminal chamber of the *Parlement de Toulouse* (an area which includes approximately 8 French departments today)—including a period of over 5 full years from October 1531 to October 1535 (Mentzer, *Heresy Proceedings*, 5). See also Table 6 above.

⁴⁰Speaking about the 1561 persecution in L'isle (Lille, Belgium), Crespin wrote: "But we will state the case only of unto whom the special grace was given of confessing in true constancy this truth, and having sealed it with their blood" (Crespin, 572).

⁴¹See Watson's Chapter 2, which is made up primarily of innuendo and *ad hominem* arguments.

or grossly exaggerated, and consist primarily of anti-Catholic propaganda.⁴² This conclusion prior to the examination of the facts may be expected by those who have made a vow of absolute obedience,⁴³ and whose faith by definition holds to the absolute perfection of the Roman Catholic church and its hierarchy.⁴⁴ By the way, the Reformer

⁴²For example: “Long did old-fashioned English Protestants and other anti-Catholics put their attention upon words such as ‘jesuitical,’ ‘popish,’ ‘jansenistic,’ and ‘inquisitorial’ in their polemics. But possibly the most odious, and the most successfully repromoted, is the idea of the hated Inquisition as the cruel tool of the Catholic Church to crush its enemies. By this means, especially for English-speakers, Catholic Spain was portrayed as the arch-enemy of all Protestantism. ... All properly baptized persons, being *ipso facto* Christians and members of the Catholic Church, came under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition. Foreign heretics, therefore, appeared from time to time in autos held in Spain. The burning of Protestants at Seville in the mid-1500s shows a gradual increase in the number of foreigners seized, a natural phenomenon in an international seaport. ... The discovery of the riches of inquisitorial documentation, and its exploitation first by Llorente and then by Henry Charles Lea, has helped to restore the balance of information but has also created new dangers. Scholars are in danger of studying the Inquisition in isolation from all the other dimensions of State and society, as though the tribunal were somehow a self-explanatory phenomenon: as a result old misconceptions are being reinforced and the Inquisition is once again being assumed to have played a central role in religion, politics, culture and the economy. ... Finally, only one more document need be mentioned, and, according to Peters, it synthesized forty years of anti-Inquisition propaganda. It is the *Apologie* published by William of Orange. It completes the “portrait” of Montanus, and lays stress upon the Spanish Inquisition as the enemy of all political liberty, thus validating the Dutch Revolt. The Spanish king was merely the dupe of the Inquisition, and so legitimacy was not itself directly attacked in the political realm. Needless to say the *Apologie*, written by a French Huguenot, found wide audiences in France, England, and even Germany. ... From Acton’s day to our own, however, most Catholic and non-Catholic historians have tended to use identical historical methodology and to have ceased to approach the history of inquisitions from the perspective of Black or White legends. Although there have been several exceptions to this generalization on both sides of the confessional line, the historical achievements of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made a return to the myths, among professional historians of any creed at least, virtually impossible” (Brian Van Hove, S.J., “Beyond the Myth of Inquisition: Ours is ‘The Golden Age’”; available at: <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/history/world/wh0027.html>; accessed 10 Nov 2005; Internet). Van Hove made extensive use of two sources: Edward Peters, *Inquisition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) and Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

⁴³“Thirteenth Rule. To be right in everything, we ought always to hold that the white which I see, is black, if the Hierarchical Church so decides it, believing that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Bride, there is the same Spirit which governs and directs us for the salvation of our souls. Because by the same Spirit and our Lord Who gave the ten Commandments, our holy Mother the Church is directed and governed” (“Rules for Thinking within the Church,” from *Medieval Sourcebook: St. Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*; available from: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/loyola-spirex.html>; accessed 26 Aug 2005; Internet). See also “Obedience of the Jesuits” (Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 261).

⁴⁴“This is my spiritual testament. I begin it by declaring, in the presence of eternity that will open itself before me, that I want to die with the same convictions in which I have always lived, that being obedience and devotion without limits to the Holy Apostolic Seat and to our Holy Father the Pope, Vicar of Jesus Christ on the earth. I have always believed, and I believe all that they teach and in the sense that they teach it. I have always believed, and I believe that outside of the Pope or against the Pope, there can be in the Church nothing but trouble, confusion, error, and eternal loss. He alone was created as the foundation of

François Lambert d'Avignon believed these types of vows to be contrary to the Christian profession.⁴⁵ Yet Watson seemed to follow the Roman Catholic *a priori* when he wrote:

By concentrating on certain aspects of the story, such as the savagery of the persecutors, and other conventions of the martyrology-writing, the tangible evidence that can be gleaned from these accounts needs to be specifically identified. In accounts such as Caturce and Pointet, the propagandistic and pedagogical value of the stories outweighs their historical value.⁴⁶

Watson, however, was not able to bring to bear one piece of evidence that Crespin was exaggerated, as he vehemently argued from a Form Critical analysis. The sobering reality is, however, that not only were the Protestant Martyrologies historically-accurate, they only memorialized a small number of the true martyrdoms for heresy (when combined).

Whatever the reason, neither Rabus, nor Foxe, nor Crespin were exhaustive. Yet all of their volumes were massive and achieved a specific geographical and confessional purpose. These presumed purposes, however, did not necessitate *sine qua non* a rewriting of history. On the contrary, it has been shown that the Protestant Martyrologies were subdued. Their power was and continues to be because of their historical and ecclesial credibility.

It follows logically, then, that the best Martyrology to gain information about the Franco-Helvetic Reformation martyrs in France is that of Jean Crespin. For the purposes of this study, the evangelistic zeal of Calvin as expressed in Crespin's Martyrology, we will focus on 67 martyrs (See Table 7) listed in Crespin (1523 to 1560) who were said to have spent some time in Geneva, most of whom were martyred in France:

unity and as a consequence [of that] of life, and all that regards things of salvation" (Cardinal Lavigerie [1825-1892], *Ecrits d'Afrique* [Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1966], 235-36. Translation mine).

⁴⁵"Hitherto fore seduced and ignorant of what I was doing, I pronounced vows contrary to the Christian profession of faith. Oh well! I renounce to all these inventions of the *minorites* [Franciscans] and recognize that the holy Gospel is my rule and should be that of all Christians" (François Lambert d'Avignon, "Histoire du moine racontée par lui-même, traduite du latin" [story of a monk told by he himself, translated from Latin], in Franck Puaux, *Histoire de la Réformation Française* [Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1859], 1:416; taken from Gerdesius, *Historia christianismi renovati*, vol IV; translation mine).

⁴⁶Watson, 66.

Table 7
Early Geneva Evangelist-Martyrs (1533-1560)⁴⁷
 Pre-1554 Martyrs

#	DATE OF MARTYRDOM	NAME	PAGE (in Crespin, [1570])	BIRTHPLACE	[FORMER] TRADE	[PLANNED] MINISTRY	PLACE OF MARTYRDOM	OTHER
1	1533	Alexandre Canus	78-78v	Evreux, Normandy, France	Dominican monk	Evangelist	Paris, France	Retired to the country where the Gospel was proclaimed (Switzerland), went from Neuchatel to Geneva (with Farel), felt constrained to return to France to preach the Gospel
2.	1535	Pierre Gaudet	83	Val de Gallie, St. Cloud, France	Order of the Cavaliers of Rhodes	Living peacefully in Geneva	Penay, Savoye, France	Drawn out of Geneva with promises; arrested; five days tormented in the Castle of Penay; martyred
3	1536	Martin Gonin	87v-88v	Unsure	Unsure	Minister in the Piedmont valley of Angronne	Grenoble, France	Martin was sent to Geneva by the inhabitants of Angronne along with Jean Girard (who became a printer in Geneva) to ask Guillaume Farel to return to preach and reform their churches; he was also caught with letters from Farel and from pastors of the churches
4	1539	Jérôme Vindocin	Lelièvre, 77-78	Unsure	Dominican monk	Evangelist to Gascogne	Agen, France	Immediately arrested by order of the inquisitor, Rochet
5	1541	Claude le Peintre	97v	Saint-Marceau, Paris	Assistant goldsmith	Evangelizing while working	Paris, France	Jean Crespin was an eye-witness of Claude's burning, and it confirmed to him the truthfulness of the Gospel
6	1546	Pierre Chapot	169-170v	Dauphin, France	Printer's aid in Paris	Brought Bibles to Paris to sell	Paris, France	Spoke of the silent ministry ["ministère muet"] of Books
7	1547	Michel (Miquelot)	171	Tournay, Belgium	Assistant tailor	Evangelist	Tournay, Belgium	His choice: beheading if he recanted, otherwise burned alive over small fire
8	1547	Leonard du Pré	171-171v	Limoges	Unsure	Evangelist	Paris, France	Stopped in Dijon, seems like he was traveling from Geneva
9	1548	Sanctin Nivet	173v-174	Meaux, France	Unsure	Evangelist	Paris, France	Did not enjoy his relaxation in the country of the Gospel (Switzerland)
10	1549	Augustin [Dumarchiet]	176v-177v	Hanover	Barber	Planning a trip to England	Beaumont, Belgium	Went to Geneva, and then Germany; arrested in Belgium while waiting for a boat to England
11	1549	Marion [Fournier], wife of Augustin (above)	176v-177v	Hanover	Wife	Planning a trip to England	Mons, Belgium	
12	1549	Estienne Peloquin	178	Blois, France	From a noble family	Was ministering to the faithful in Orleans and Blois	Paris, France	Cruelly burned alive over a small fire
13	1549	Leonar Gallimar	179	Vendome, Paris, France	Priest	Evangelist	Paris, France	Burned with others to celebrate the return of the King to Paris
14	1550	Claude Thierry	179v	Chartres, France	Assistant pharmacist	Traveling salesman	Orleans, France	Was imprisoned in Orleans, but called to be seen in Paris to be closer to his parents and friends
15	1550	Jean Godeau	181	Chinon, Touraine	Unsure	Evangelizing	Chambery, Savoy, France	Guilty of warning a priest about blaspheming God's name
16	1550	Gabriel Beraudin	181-181v	Lodun	Unsure	Companion of Godeau	Chambery, Savoy, France	A young man who vacillated in prison due to torture

⁴⁷Taken from Crespin; supplemented by Matthieu LeLièvre, *Portraits et récits Huguenots*, première série (Toulouse: Société des Livres Religieux, 1903).

#	DATE OF MARTYRDOM	NAME	PAGE (Crespin, 1570)	BIRTHPLACE	[FORMER] TRADE	MINISTRY	PLACE OF MARTYRDOM	OTHER
17	1550	Macé Moreau	181v-182	France	Seller of religious images	Bible colporteur	Troyes, France	Betrayed by a man who feigned an interest in the Gospel, Nicolas Vaulterin
18	1550	Claude Monier	182-184	St. Amand, Auvergne, France	School teacher	School teacher	Lyon, France	Publicly announced the Gospel in Auvergne, until forced to retreat to Lausanne, where he studied Scriptures
19	1551	Thomas de Saint Paul	185 (Lelièvre, 95-98)	Soissons	Unsure	Traveling salesman	Paris, France	Moved to Geneva with many family members in 1549; martyred at 18 years old
20 21	1551	Jean Joëry and his young assistant	185v-186 (Lelièvre, 98-100)	Albi, France	Traveling salesman	Seller of good books	Toulouse, France	Young assistant was not fully instructed, but stood strong; while burning, Jean continued to encourage his assistant
22	1552	Martial Alba	197-202v, 234-236 (Lelièvre, 100-103)	Montauban, France	Student	Mission trip to evangelize in their homeland	Lyon, France	Of the "Five of Lyon", students from Lausanne; arrested on their third full day in Lyon by a spy that had met them on the road from Lausanne to Lyon; they visited this man's house, and as they were eating a snack, the sergeant came and arrested them all; they were imprisoned for approximately nine months after which they were all burned alive; Crespin included many letters back and forth from Lausanne and Geneva, as well as a description of their interrogation and confessions
23	1552	Pierre Escrivain	197-198, 202v-209v, 234-236 (Lelièvre, 100-103)	Boulogne, Gascogne	Student	Mission trip to evangelize in their homeland	Lyon, France	
24	1552	Bernard Seguin	197-198, 209v-219, 234-236 (Lelièvre, 100-103)	Reole, Bazadois	Student	Mission trip to evangelize in their homeland	Lyon, France	
25	1552	Charles Favre	197-198, 226-228, 234-236 (Lelièvre, 100-103)	Blanzac, Angoumois	Student	Mission trip to evangelize in their homeland	Lyon, France	
26	1552	Pierre Navihères	197-198, 219-226, 234-236 (Lelièvre, 100-103)	Limoges	Student	Mission trip to evangelize in their homeland	Lyon, France	
27	1552	Pierre Bergier	236-239	Bar-sur-Seine, France	Pastry baker	On business, betrayed by his brother-in-law	Lyon, France	
28	1552	Hugues Gravier	239	Viré, Maine	Schoolmaster in Courtaillou, Neuchatel	Domestic business	Bourg-en-Bresse, France	Was bringing family with him back to Switzerland
29	1552	René Poyet	239v	Anjou	Cobbler	Planning trip to Anjou	Saulmur, Anjou	Illegitimate son of Guillaume Poyet, Chancellor of France
30	1552	Denis Pelloquin	239v-252v	Blois, France	Unsure	Unsure	Ville-Franche-sur-Saône	Wrote his parents referring to the prior martyrdom of his brother Estienne [1549]; sent and received letters from the "Five of Lyon"; of a fellow prisoner converted
31 32	1553	Louys de Marsac [and his cousin]	258-263	Bourbon, France	Soldier	Went to Lyon to help the "Five of Lyon"	Lyon, France	Held in Lyon at the same time as the "Five of Lyon"
33	1553	Etienne Gravot	263-264	Cyan-sur-Loire, France	Carpenter	Arrested in Lyon	Lyon, France	Burned on same day as Marsac and his cousin; died singing the song of Simeon
34	1553	Nicolas Nail	268v	Mans, France	Former Franciscan monk	Bible colporteur	Paris, France	First to have a bunch of sticks placed in his mouth, tied from behind head, to prohibit speech; deformed his face
35	1553	Simon Laloé	274-274v (Lelièvre, 108)	Soissons	Optometrist or eyeglass maker	Arrested while traveling	Dijon, France	His executioner, Jacques Sylvestre, traveled to Geneva where he was converted

#	DATE OF MARTYRDOM	NAME	PAGE (Crespin, 1570)	BIRTHPLACE	[FORMER] TRADE	MINISTRY	PLACE OF MARTYRDOM	OTHER
36	1553	Pierre Denocheau	274v (Lelièvre, 108-109)	Unsure	Clerk for a notary	"Taught the ignorant and reproving blasphemy"	Chartres, France	He worked for a "Lutheran" notary, Estienne Le Roy, who was martyred with him
37	1553	Pierre Serre	276v-277 (Lelièvre, 110-111)	Lese, Languedoc, France	[Former] Priest; in Geneva became cobbler	Evangelizing family members	Toulouse, France	Turned over by a neighbor of his family members; tongue cut out for saying that the statue of Mary was an idol of stone
38	1554	Guillaume Dalençon	277-277v (Lelièvre, 112)	Montauban, France	[Former] priest	Evangelist and Bible colporteur	Montpellier, France	Bible colporteur having made numerous trips, betrayed by false brethren; at his burning, a drapery cutter repented of having recanted and was also burned alive
39	1554	Richard le Fèvre	277v-287 (Lelièvre, 113-117)	Rouen, France	Goldsmith	Bible colporteur	Lyon, France	Lived ten years in Geneva; incarcerated for heresy in 1551, escaped through masked men attacking his transport; numerous letters to and from, including from Calvin; arrested a second time in Grenoble in 1554, burned alive
40	1554	Thomas Calbergue	290v-291v	Tournay	Carpet weaver	Hymn writer	Tournay	His hymns were published in the Geneva Psalter
41	1554	François Gamba	291v-293	Bresse in Lombardy	Unsure	Traveling home	Côme	Shared of his hope with the German executioner, who apologized for having to execute him
42	1554	Denis le Vair	293-293v (Lelièvre, 117-119)	Bayeux, Normandy, France	Former priest	Bible colporteur and evangelist	Rouen, France	Fled the terrors of Queen Mary from the island of Guernesey; condemned to be raised and lowered over the fire three times as he would not release the names of his collaborators

Post-1554 Martyrology Publication Martyrs

#	DATE OF MARTYRDOM	NAME	PAGE (Crespin, 1570)	BIRTHPLACE	[FORMER] TRADE	MINISTRY	PLACE OF MARTYRDOM	OTHER
43	1555	Jean Vernou	340-358 (Lelièvre, 119-121)	Poitiers		Evangelizing	Chambery, Savoy, France	One of the "Five of Chambery"; the first three, Jean, Antoine, and Jean were ministers; denounced by a spy who apparently attended church in Geneva, they were arrested between Annecy and Albertville; numerous letters back and forth from Geneva and Calvin; Jean Vernou confessed his weakness before death, later quoting from the new Reformed <i>Confession</i> ; the executioner asked forgiveness of Antoine
44	1555	Antoine Laborie	340-358 (Lelièvre, 119-121)	Chambery, Savoy, France	One of the "Five of Chambery"	Evangelizing	Chambery, Savoy, France	
45	1555	Jean Trigalet	340-358 (Lelièvre, 119-121)	Nimes, Languedoc	Licensed in law	Evangelizing	Chambery, Savoy, France	
46	1555	Guyraud Tauran	340-358 (Lelièvre, 119-121)	Cahors, Quercy	Merchant	Evangelizing	Chambery, Savoy, France	
47	1555	Bertrand Bataille	340-358 (Lelièvre, 119-121)	Unsure	Schoolboy	Evangelizing	Chambery, Savoy, France	
48	1556	Jean Rabec	408v-414	Cerisy-Monpinson, Normandy	Franciscan monk in Vire, France	Evangelizing	Angers, France	Escaped to and studied the Bible in Lausanne; returned to evangelize in Normandy; fled to Angers; was arrested for reading to people from the Book of Martyrs (as an evangelism technique)

#	DATE OF MARTYRDOM	NAME	PAGE (Crespin, 1570)	BIRTHPLACE	[FORMER] TRADE	MINISTRY	PLACE OF MARTYRDOM	OTHER
49	1556	Pierre de Rousseau	414	Anjou	Unsure	Evangelizing	Angers, France	Spent time in Geneva and Lausanne; betrayed by brother-in-law for rights of inheritance; placed in same cell as Rabec
50	1556	Barthélémy Hector	437v-440v	Poitiers, France	Conductor or transporter	Bible colporteur (9 months full-time)	Turin, Italy	Wife and children in Geneva; Crespin included the Inquisitor's record
51	1556	Nicolas Ballon	520v-521	Poitiers, France	Bible colporteur	Bible colporteur	Arrested in Poitiers; martyred in Paris, France	"Advanced in years"; Ballon was arrested for illegal books, was brought to Paris, escaped, and returned to Geneva for another load of books!
52	1557	Philbert Hamelin	449v-450v (Lelièvre, 122-125)	Tours	Former priest	Bible colporteur and evangelist	Bordeaux, France	Used any method possible; announced the judgment of God to those who renounced it, including their soon death; testimony of his evangelism methodology; pronounced judgment on a priest who was killed that very day!
53	1557	Archambaut Sepharon	451-455	Lamoleyere, Bazadais	Traveling salesman	Evangelizing	Dijon, France	Arrested in Dijon while returning to Geneva; Crespin included several letters to his wife and to friends
54 55	1557	Philippe Cene and Jacques	454-455	Saint-Pierre-sur-Dyne [Dives], Normandy	Pharmacists assistant	Evangelizing	Dijon, France	After they were brought to their execution place, and then returned to prison, they almost recanted, however, Archambaut encouraged them to persevere; it seemed like half the onlookers were consoling them
56	1557	Pierre de Rousseau	455-456v	Angouleme	Lawyer	Overseer of church in Paris	Angers	Arrested traveling with Geneva minister, going to Geneva to consult about ecclesial matters; caught with heretical books
57	1558	Jean du Bordel	460v-464v	Unsure	Unsure	Minister of the Gospel	Brazil	Among the first Geneva martyrs in Brazil, declared heretical by Vice-Admiral Villegaignon (during the reign of Mary Tudor); Villegaignon was so paranoid before the executions that he removed all arms from the people; they were martyred by being pushed over a cliff into the Atlantic
58	1558	Matthieu Vermeil	460v-465	Unsure	Unsure	Minister of the Gospel	Brazil	
59	1558	Pierre Bourdon	460v-465v	Unsure	Unsure	Minister of the Gospel	Brazil	
60	1558	Benoit Romyen	470-472	Arennes, Dauphin	Cabinet maker	Traveling salesman	Toulouse, France	Moved his wife and children to Geneva; betrayed by a man who wanted the dresser that he was selling; arrested, everything confiscated, tried on Genevan heresy, and burned alive
61	1558	Gilles Verdickt	509v-510v	Flanders	Greek student in Emden and Norden in Frisia	Minister in Anvers	Anvers	Trained in the Bible in Zurich
62	1559	Jean Barbeville	514v-515v	Normandy	Stone mason	Evangelist	Paris, France	Returned to teach the Gospel to his neighbors; betrayed by his neighbors
63	1559	Marin Marie	522	Lisieux, Normandy, France	Unsure	Bible colporteur	Paris, France	Struck cross out of a priest's hand
64	1559	Adrian Daussi	523-523v	Douliancourt, France	Assistant merchant	Bible colporteur	Paris, France	Ball placed in his mouth to prohibit him from speaking
65	1559	Jean de Léon	543v-544	Mexico, New Spain	Tailor	Planning trip to England	Seville, Spain	Converted at the convent of St. Isido; traveled to Frankfurt, Geneva; arrested in Belgium, fleeing to England

#	DATE OF MARTYRDOM	NAME	PAGE (Crespin, 1570)	BIRTHPLACE	[FORMER] TRADE	MINISTRY	PLACE OF MARTYRDOM	OTHER
66	1559	Julien Hernandez	543-543v	Seville, Spain	Assistant to Spanish Minister in Geneva	Bible colporteur	Seville, Spain	Was transporting a large quantity of Spanish Scriptures
67	1560	Jean Louys Pascal	544v-557	Cuny, Italy	Soldier; Bible and tract printer in Italian	Bible colporteur	Rome, Italy	Invited to be the minister of a church in Naples

This listing ends in 1560, which was the end of my specific research. Reasons for including such a detailed list of these martyrs in this paper were:

- ◆ To show that many Geneva martyrs were going out prior to the publication of the compendiums of Martyrologies;
- ◆ To give examples of the number of martyrs that came from various walks of life;
- ◆ To show what kind of ministry they accomplished.

These colporteurs were the echo of the call of Jacques Le Fèvre for diligent workers in his 1522 commentary on the four Gospels, “May the Master of the harvest send new and diligent workers.”⁴⁸ The converted French responded. Calvin wrote of these men:

Students and gentlemen, transformed themselves into colporteurs, and, under the shadow of selling their merchandise, they offered to all the faithful the weapons for the holy war of the faith. They journeyed across the kingdom, selling and explaining the Gospels.⁴⁹

Lelièvre added, “These colporteurs, or *carriers* [of] *packages*, were the valiant *avant-garde* of the Evangelical army, exposed to the first blows and decimated by fire.”⁵⁰ It would seem that the ministry of these colporteurs began with the Albigenses and Waldenses, and was later adopted by the Geneva church.⁵¹

Some of these colporteurs ran printing presses in Geneva. Others were barbers, bakers, cobblers, carpenters, merchants, students, cabinet makers, goldsmiths, and the

⁴⁸Lelièvre, 273; quoting *Commentarii Initiatorii in quatro evangelia* (1522); cited by Lutteroth, *La Réformation en France*, 3.

⁴⁹Samuel Lortsch, *Histoire de la Bible en France* (British and Foreign Bible Society, 1910), 6.2.1; available at http://www.bibliquest.org/Lortsch/Lortsch-Histoire_Bible_France-1.htm; accessed: 4 Mar 2005; Internet.

⁵⁰Lelièvre, 274.

⁵¹Lortsch, section 6.2.1; citing M. Petavel, *La Bible en France*.

makers of eyeglasses. Many had families. Some were former priests and monks. The commonality was that they had a passion to share the Gospel with those of their native land who would otherwise have no opportunity to hear it. Thus, they returned ready to spread the Word of God, either through mission trips or by resettling in France.

Likewise it must be noted that Crespin included letters from Geneva pastors to the soon-to-be martyrs while they were yet in prison:

Table 8
Letters in Crespin from Switzerland-Based Ministers to Prisoners

NAME	MINISTRY	NUMBER OF LETTERS	LOCATION OF LETTERS (Crespin [1570], page)
Jean Calvin	Minister in Geneva	11	228-229, 229-229v, 251-252, 254v-255, 255-255v, 261v-262, 262, 277v-279, 350v-351, 357-357v, 468-468v
Guillaume Farel	Evangelist	4	142v-144v, 144v-145, 145-148v
Pierre Viret	Minister in Lausanne	2	229v-232v, 255v-258
François Bourgoïn	Minister in Geneva	1	237
Jean de Saint André	Minister in Geneva	1	237-237v

The general tone of these letters was that the prisoners ought to persevere in believing justification by grace alone through faith alone, outside of sacraments and other accoutrements of the Roman Catholic church, and not give in to the torture and promises of their captors in order to seek to save their lives or minimize their pain in death.⁵² For example, Calvin encouraged the prisoner Richard Lefevre to persevere in the faith, even seeking the salvation of his interrogators:

⁵²It must be noted that Halkin wrote an unusual chapter in which he unconvincingly argued that the sentences of judges and the practices of the executioners were in actuality quite humane (Léon-E. Halkin, “La cruauté dans les supplices,” in *Initiation à la critique historique*, Cahiers des Annales 6 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1963), 159-75).

- ◆ “I will touch briefly several points upon which they have sought to molest you. To give you to understand that we are not justified by the grace alone of God, they have alleged to you that Zachariah and many others were named righteous.”⁵³
- ◆ “Meanwhile pray to Him that He would cause you to feel always better the treasure of the doctrine for which you are fighting: in order that as you consider the same your life will not be precious to you.”⁵⁴
- ◆ “Arm yourself of only this word [Jesus Christ], to bring them [the interrogators] back to the pure doctrine on the Gospel.”⁵⁵
- ◆ “As for the rest, you are able to protest, that we do not deny that Jesus Christ has given us his body, understanding that we seek for it in heaven.”⁵⁶
- ◆ “Rejoice that you are able to sustain his quarrel in good conscience, hoping that he will give you the strength to carry what it will please him for you to suffer. We have likewise remembrance of you in our prayers, as we ought: by pleading this good God, since it has please him to employ you to maintain his truth, that he may give you all that is necessary in this honorable calling: that he may strengthen you with true perseverance: that he may give you true spiritual prudence: so that you seek nothing but the advancement of his name, without having a thought about yourself; and that he shows himself so much your protector, that you will feel it as your consolation, and that others will perceive it, and be edified by it.”⁵⁷

Crespin’s Martyrology also included numerous confessions, testimonies, and interrogation proceedings of the French martyrs.

With this credibility and content in mind, what can be learned about the evangelistic zeal of Calvin’s Geneva? This question will be addressed as we consider the martyrs’ methodology of evangelism, their urgency of evangelism, and their underlying theology of evangelism.

Several types of evangelism methodology of these martyrs stand out. Firstly, there was the silent evangelism of selling spiritual books. Such was the case of the silent witness of Bibles, hymnbooks, and other spiritual books being sold by Pierre Chapot at various markets. Pierre was arrested in Paris by the vigilant Jean André, a bookseller bent on trapping those who sold the contraband Geneva books. Chapot was burned over a fire

⁵³Calvin answered the questions of the prisoner Richard LeFevre: (Crespin, 278). Translation mine.

⁵⁴Crespin, 277v. Translation mine.

⁵⁵Crespin, 278v. Translation mine.

⁵⁶Crespin, 278v. Translation mine.

⁵⁷Crespin, 279. Translation mine.

and strangled in Paris, being forcefully admonished by doctor Maillard of the Sorbonne to say “Jesus Maria” in order to avoid death by fire.⁵⁸

Lortsch explained the colporteurs approach to the “silent evangelism” of selling Bibles and other spiritual books:

Let us allow Crespin, as summarized by Mr. Matthieu Lelièvre, speak to us of the pioneers of this work of the Bible: “Their books formed only one part of their wares, as the Waldensian pastor which Guillaume de Félice brought forth by his touching story, they started by offering their clients beautiful fabric and gold jewelry, before they would present them the ‘pearl of great price.’ One must remember that in the 16th Century, as in the Middle Ages, the sale of merchandise, outside of towns, was being done almost exclusively by traveling salesmen, who brought all kinds of merchandise, including books. The authorities did not dream to disturb these modest salespeople and were quite slow to discover that the heresy was hiding between pieces of fabric.”⁵⁹

Secondly, some were arrested only for warning others of their blasphemous speech. Such was the case for the 18 year old colporteur Thomas of Saint Paul.⁶⁰ Thomas was followed to his lodging and arrested. Although maliciously tortured, he gave no information on any other Christians. He was burned alive at Place Maubert in Paris in 1551.

Thirdly, those who did not like the Gospel called the evangelism of some of these martyrs “dogmatizing” (perhaps “proselytizing” today) or trying to teach others the way of salvation. Such was the case for Bible colporteur Barthélémy Hector, who was arrested in the Piedmont area for having religious books, and was burned at the stake in Turin, Italy in 1556.⁶¹

⁵⁸Crespin, 169-170v.

⁵⁹Lortsch, section 6.2.1. Translation mine.

⁶⁰“Having therefore arrived in Paris, and selling some merchandise he had difficulty suffering the blasphemes of a certain person. Therefore he reproved him with a gentle admonishment with the humanity and tenderness that were a part of his nature. But having irritated the said person, incontinent he became suspicious that he was a Lutheran (as they call them), because he had admonished him in a way that was not the custom among the Papists, but are only used by those people who place the honor of God above that of their own lives” (Crespin, 185. Translation mine).

⁶¹Crespin, 438.

Fourth, there were examples of personal evangelism. Philbert Hamelin, a former priest, converted at Saintes, France, was imprisoned in 1546 for the Gospel. For fear of his life, he faked a renunciation. He fled to Geneva where he established a printing press. After 12 years in Geneva, being married with children, he returned to share the Gospel in the place where he had renounced it. So as a Bible colporteur, he planted churches [*petites communautés évangéliques*] in the area of his hometown. He was arrested in Saintes, and refused to escape jail, lest the jailor be put at risk, and because:

... Those who have the work of announcing the Gospel to others [should not] seek to escape and break out of prisons for fear of danger, instead of maintaining, even in flames, the doctrine that he had announced.⁶²

Hamelin was brought before the tribunal of Bordeaux, where he was degraded of his rank as priest and burned alive in 1557. For fear of his preaching, trumpets were sounding at his funeral, and he was strangled before his body was burned.

The following paragraph described Hamelin's ministry of personal evangelism:

Many faithful spoke of him, how when he went along in the country, often he would spy out and find the field workers at the hour of their break, as they are accustomed to do, at the foot of a tree, or in the shade of a haystack. There he would feign like he was resting with them, taking the opportunity by little methods and easy speech, to teach them to fear God, and to pray both before and after the break, inasmuch as it was him [God] who gave them all things for the love of His Son Jesus Christ. And after that, he would ask the poor peasants if they would like it if he prayed to God on their behalf. Some took great pleasure in this, and were edified, others were astonished, hearing things that they were not accustomed to hearing. Not a few would run after him with hostile intent [*aucuns luy couroyent-sus*], because he would show them that they were on the way to damnation, if they did not believe in the Gospel. When he received their curses and outrage, he often had this warning in his mouth, My friends, you do not now know what you are doing, but one day you will understand, and I pray God to do such a grace on your behalf.⁶³

Such was the personal evangelism of Hamelin in the 1550s.

⁶²LeLièvre, 125. Translation mine.

⁶³Crespin, 450. Translation mine.

Fifth, Jean Rabec was arrested for being overheard reading from the book of martyrs as an evangelism technique.⁶⁴

Sixth, there was tract distribution. Two examples are Guillaume Husson in 1544 and François de St. Roman in 1544. While it is not clear if these men sojourned in Geneva, as the 67 listed above. Although Husson was called a fugitive, which implies that at one time he had fled France for Geneva. Of Husson, Crespin wrote:

During these approximate times of the year 1544, Guillaume Husson pharmacist, fugitive of Blois for the word of God, arrived in Rouen, and found lodging near the gate Martin-ville, with a widow: of whom among other things he inquired the hour that the Court of the Parliament was dismissed. Having heard from her that it was at ten o'clock, he went to the palace, and sowed several little booklets containing the doctrine of the Christian religion, and the abuses of human traditions: of which the the Court became so shaken, that incontinent they shut the doors of the city, and made inquiries of all the hotel keepers to know what people they had in their [hotels]. The priormentioned widow told them that a man had come in the morning to lodge at her home, that he had asked the time of the dismissal of the Court, and having stayed several two hours in the town, returned for lunch, and this done mounted a horse, and left. Having heard this they hurried off couriers to go after him: of which those who took the way to Dieppe, retained him midway, and brought him back to Rouen: where he inquired incontinent of his faith, of which he confessed without constraint: and that he came solely for the purpose of sowing thesaid booklets, and that he was heading for Dieppe to do the same.

The next week he was condemned to be burned alive, and being that he was a man of some learning, they brought him a Doctor of the Sorbonne named De-landa, the Provincial Head of the Carmelite Order, in order to convert him to the faith that they call Catholic. After his sentence was pronounced against him, he was brought from the prison in a chariot before the Cathedral church, accompanied by this doctor: who had secured a torch to the fist of the patient, wanting to persuade him to make honorable ammendment to the image that they call Our-Lady: but Husson not listening to him, on purpose allowed the torch to fall. For this reason his tongue was cut out, and thereafter he was brought to the veal market, where the said doctor gave a sermon that lasted for a long time. When this charlatan [*caphar*] said something of the grace of God, the patient gave him audience. But when he returned to the merits of the saints and similar dreams, he turned his head back. The venerable doctor seeing the countenance of Husson, lifted up his arms and with great exclamation said to the people that this man was damned, and from this moment on possessed of the devil.

Hence after all the joking of the Monk was achieved, Husson was attached and hung in the air by a large pulley, his hands and feet tied behind his back. When the fire was lit, he stayed over the flame for a period of time without moving, if not to render his spirit he was seen to move by dropping his head. Upon leaving this spectacle was heard diverse comments and opinions of the people. Some said that he had a devil in his body: others maintained the contrary, alleging that if such was the case, he would have been in despair, being that the end which comes from the devil, is despair. This holy Martyr in the midst of the flame, brought astonishment to a number of people: for some they remained foolish, the others were incited

⁶⁴Crespin, 408v.

to know more clearly the true God of Israel, who in the midst of the blazing furnace can save those who invoke the name of his Son, only protector and liberator of his own.⁶⁵

Likewise, the story of François de St. Roman is likewise fascinating (though it appears that he never lived in Geneva), as it recounts a Spanish man saved on a business trip to Breme [Germany]. He began immediately preaching to and teaching the ignorant. He also wrote letters of his salvation to his relatives, and he wrote the Emperor, deploring the Spanish Inquisition. Crespin explained further:

He also wrote several little books in Spanish, which dealt with articles of religion: and sharing all that has been written above [his testimony] (which is a marvellous thing) he began to write, and this in one month, or at the most forty days, while he was waiting for a response from the people of Anvers.⁶⁶

They wrote him back that they were touched by what he wrote, and thought that he may help remedy the problem. Several monks were positioned to arrest him before he entered Anvers [Belgium]. He was arrested, tried, and burned on a heap of wood in 1544.

Seventh, there was the evangelism of the interrogators after the soon-to-be martyrs were arrested. While they were in jail, sometimes for up to nine months, the prisoners sometimes sought to share the Gospel to those who came to convict them for their beliefs. These prosecutors included priests, monks, and bishops, as well as the secular court. Calvin, as we noted above, told Richard Lefevre, “Arm yourself of only this word [Jesus Christ], to bring them [the interrogators] back to the pure doctrine on the Gospel.”⁶⁷

Eighth, when there were brief times of peace (a six month reprieve in 1559), the newly called “Huguenot” churches advanced the Gospel through public preaching:

Nevertheless meanwhile the assemblies in order to hear the word of God, carried themselves with less fear, and the things [laws to release all prisoners of Religion] allowed a

⁶⁵Crespin, 131-131v. Translation mine.

⁶⁶Crespin, 133. Translation mine.

⁶⁷Crespin, 278v. Translation mine.

marvelous advance all across the kingdom; as far as, that preaching was begun to be done in public in many places.⁶⁸

Hence the evangelism methods of the Huguenot martyrs who spent time in French Switzerland were both low-key (silent evangelism) and aggressive (remonstrating people for their lack of faith). Ye, it was:

- ◆ An urgent evangelism, understanding the urgent need of their French compatriots to hear the Gospel, and receive Bibles and salvific literature;
- ◆ A self-sacrificing evangelism, pressing on although they would likely die for the Gospel cause;⁶⁹
- ◆ A persevering evangelism, regardless of the likelihood of imprisonment and death; and
- ◆ They were willing to sacrifice their very lives for those who were openly hostile to the Gospel, praying that some may be foreordained to eternal life if only they heard the life-saving message of truth.

It was:

- ◆ A proclamational type of evangelism, they proclaimed (and “protested”) the Gospel that they believed, not only prior to their arrest (in the case of most), but all of them proclaimed it freely after their arrest to those who questioned them (Matt 10:17-18; Luke 12:11);
- ◆ An evangelism by faith: (1) faith that God would utilize their lives and testimony as they obeyed His Word, and (2) faith that God would accomplish through their testimony (and even death) that which was His sovereign will for them (Job 13:15 [Eng Geneva], “Loe, though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”);
- ◆ They were considered obstinate and opinionated, as those who believed the Gospel went against the teaching of the Roman Catholic majority; likewise those who held to assurance of salvation based on the finished work of Christ were said to be pernicious and impertinent, heretical and schismatic.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Crespin, 559. Translation mine.

⁶⁹Note the testimony of Jean Bertrand, martyred in Blois, France, in 1556: “Also, among other things that happened while in those chains, on a certain day as the council was in its process, and made him rise for his questioning, a certain gentleman of papal persuasion who was in the room, after the prisoner had gone out from before the judges, approached him and said, ‘My friend, after what I see and hear, you are hear for your opinionatedness. You must cease from holding your errors, that you may repent of them, and live as the others. Do you want to be more knowledgeable than everyone? If you would like, the sirs will be merciful.’ Bertrand, not astonished of this, said, ‘Sir, I thank you, I am not hear for maintaining an error. I have not said anything that is not true. And God is a sufficient witness for me.’ The gentleman said to him, ‘If you do not speak otherwise, they make you die. Do you want to be the cause of your death?’ Bertrand responded again, ‘If they think, and you also, sir, that in order to avoid that penalty of which you speak to me, I do anything against God, to be deprived of his grace, they abuse themselves greatly” (Crespin, 434). Translation mine.

⁷⁰Of Thomas de Saint-Paul, that he had “pertinacite et opiniastrete” (Crespin, 185); of Jean Bertrand, that he was a “pernicieux Lutherien” (ibid., 433) and “opiniastrete” (ibid., 434); of Pierre Chevet,

In his letters, rather than discouraging them, Calvin told them that they were doing a noble and necessary work. He encouraged them to press on and persevere, regardless of personal cost. Calvin's Geneva was definitely evangelistic!⁷¹

It must have been a humbling thing for Calvin to see so many go to the fire because they adhered to the teaching in his *Institutes*. For example, listen to this explanation of interrogation of Michel Robillard who was martyred in 1564:

My brothers and friends, I make known to you the many propositions and demands that they make to me, first one, and then the other immoderately. And when I think that I have responded to one, the other suddenly starts another proposition, like, And who gave orders to your Calvin? Why do you get yourself burned in this way? I have read the books of Calvin; I have heard him preach; he has preached 4 sermons expressly to incite his own [people] to get themselves burned. And so he is only one man; and opinionated [at that]; and is contrary to Luther; and when Calvin will be dead, another will be raised up who will be contrary to him. He rejects the books of Maccabees, as they are contrary to him....⁷²

Others heard similar questions in 1553, "Item: Have you seen the institution of Calvin, called Christian? I said yes. Here is what I was asked in my first interrogation."⁷³ Or again in 1558:

Q. What books have you read. Rx. I have read the Bible and the Institution of Calvin. Q. Why do you believe Calvin, rather than saint Augustine and other ancient doctors? Rx. I do not believe in Calvin, if not being that he is conforming to the Word of God. What more, he quotes in his Institution the ancient doctors, and proves his sayings with testimonies of the same...⁷⁴

Similar lines of questioning were fairly common in Crespin.⁷⁵ While it must have weighed heavy on his heart, it would have force him to be sure that his opinions lined-up

"heretique et schismatique" (ibid., 517); of Philbert Hamelin, "pertinax et obstine" (ibid., 540v); of Jean de Lannoy, "pertinacement persisté et persiste" (Crespin, 578).

⁷¹Note in the conclusion of his "Excuse of the Nicodemites...": "May the people value the doctrine that it has received, and may all cause it to fructify, by publishing it [spreading it in public] from hand to hand" (Jean Calvin, "Excuse de Jehan Calvin a messieurs le Nicodémistes sur la omplaincte qu'ilz font de sa trop grand' rigueur," with notes from Albert Autin [Geneva, 1544; Paris: Éditions Bossard, 1921], 254). Translation mine.

⁷²Crespin, 632. Translation mine.

⁷³Crespin, 259. Translation mine.

⁷⁴Crespin, 503. Translation mine.

⁷⁵Crespin, 269v, 461v, 466v, 486v, 487v, 528v, 529, 552, 555v-556, 560v, 568v, 595-595v, 602v, 605, 609, 632.

with the Scriptures.⁷⁶ Yet, as the last martyr witnessed, his faith was not based on the words of Calvin, but on the Word of God.

Yes, it may be advantageous for those who study Calvin to be aware of both the evangelistic and deadly setting in which he lived and wrote. In this case one may be benefited from having Calvin's *Institutes* in one hand, and Crespin's *Martyrology* in the other. However, unfortunately for English-only readers, Crespin has never been translated into English, except for portions for a small excerpt in 1894.⁷⁷ Reading both Calvin and Crespin simultaneously may help English readers better understand Calvin's teachings on perseverance and sovereignty. He taught that a true believer would persevere in the faith, even if a fire was lit at his feet while a monk was whispering in his ear that he should recant and return to the Roman Catholic church. In fact, those who recanted under pressure of death by fire were not considered persevering, but rather weakened by Satan. Such was almost the case for Philippe Cene and Jacques:

Therefore you should know that in the beginning these were firm and constant, and their process would soon be completed as you know. They were brought up to the foot of the place of suffering [*supplice*] with great constancy. But because of some appeal, were brought back to prison, saying, to the other prisoners, "We have a little more to live." Being in their first state, and as if at rest, Satan who is slick and wily assailed them, and made them breach, to the point of making them waver and stumble. But the Lord, having foreordained all things, arriving at this point, where I was very sad and remorseful having been brought to such desolation. Briefly, of my small strength I placed on myself the duty of closing the breach by the strength of the Holy Spirit. [they were burned alive five or six days later, "regretting always their fault, believing God for grace before the people"].⁷⁸

Jean des Buissons was said to have perseverance to death, "If it is not similar for many others [martyrs] previously placed, if he did not nevertheless truly persevere, by which he

⁷⁶See for example, Jean Calvin, *Excuses de Messieurs les Nicodémites* (1544; 1921).

⁷⁷Jean Crespin, *The Fourteen of Meaux*, trans. by H. M. Bower (London: Longmans, Green, 1894), 121 pages. This 1546 account comes from the beginning of Crespin's 3rd volume.

⁷⁸Crespin, 454-54v. Translation mine. Likewise also note the weakness of Pierre Annod, of which he repented and apologized (Crespin, 569)

maintained up to the shedding of his blood the pure truth of the Gospel.”⁷⁹ Likewise, as noted above, Calvin, in his letters encouraged the soon-to-be martyrs as prisoners to persevere in the faith. Thus there was no disconnect between the theology of Calvin and urgent evangelism, quite to the contrary.

Therefore, Crespin’s Martyrology provides the context for understanding both Geneva’s methodology and theology of evangelism. It will be up to the reader to apply these evangelism methodologies and theologies to the current day.

⁷⁹Crespin, 569v. Translation mine.