Eternal Blessedness for All?

A Historical-Systematic Examination of Friedrich Schleiermacher's Reinterpretation of Predestination

Anette I. Hagan

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To Hughie. For everything.

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Foreword

One of the most significant theologians of modernity, Friedrich Schleiermacher continues to generate intense scholarly activity. Often judged to be revisionist, liberal, and romantic in its orientation, his thought has for long been interpreted through a reading of the *Speeches* and the opening sections of the *Glaubenslehre*.

More recently, however, the breadth and complexity of Schleiermacher's work have become more evident. This has coincided with the range of his writings being accorded closer study, more of these now appearing in English translation. Schleiermacher wrote extensively on hermeneutics, literature, and Reformed dogmatics, specialisms that are not often comprehended in a single system of thought. In addition, he preached regularly throughout most of his life, his sermons being an integral element of his theological output. He has to be understood, therefore, as a theologian of the German Protestant Church and as someone who sought the unity of its Reformed and Lutheran strands in the early nineteenth century.

Anette Hagan's volume pays close attention to Schleiermacher's intensive engagement with the doctrine of predestination. This is a topic that he discusses not only in the *Glaubenslehre* but in a key essay that reveals his interaction with the Lutheran tradition. Predestination has been a neuralgic theme in the Reformed tradition for several centuries, many of the most divisive disputes in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries being generated by revisions to its most controversial aspects. Historically, it was also one of several contested issues that deeply divided the Reformed and Lutheran traditions after the Reformation.

In recent times, many Reformed theologians have tended to circumnavigate these waters as if the effort of steering a safe passage through them is either too hazardous or not worth expending the effort. Schleiermacher, however, faced the problems head-on, arguing that much of what

the seventeenth-century Reformed tradition had to say about predestination was correct. This is a somewhat surprising verdict and confirms those contemporary readings of his work that cast him as a multi-faceted and novel thinker. Yet while siding with the determinist leanings of the Reformed tradition, Schleiermacher reworks it in a more explicitly universalist direction. The separation between belief and unbelief is divinely ordained but only as temporary. It is destined to fade through time as the Christian faith spreads across space. Ultimately God's good intention is a universal restoration that must inevitably be accomplished; hence the division of human beings into two groups is not final or eschatological, but one that is destined to vanish.

By working through Schleiermacher's original writings on this theme and his impressive engagement with the Reformed and Lutheran theologians of his own day, Dr. Hagan is able to display the importance of his work as a theologian of the church who is at once both Reformed and ecumenical. What emerges is a valuable study of one of the most significant renderings of the doctrine of election since the Reformation.

David Fergusson

Preface and Acknowledgments

This book has grown out of my dissertation for a Master of Theology by Research, which was accepted by New College, University of Edinburgh, in 2009. It has since undergone a thorough revision and has almost trebled in length.

My interest in Friedrich Schleiermacher was first awakened and fostered by Prof. Dr. Eilert Herms, one of Germany's foremost Schleiermacher experts, whose lectures and seminars I attended between 1990 and 1993 as part of my first degree at the University of Mainz, Germany. It was there, too, that I became interested in the doctrine of predestination, and I even chose it as the subject for my final divinity exam. I then moved to Edinburgh, where I undertook postgraduate work in English Language and later in Information and Library Studies, but with hindsight it is clear that my interest in systematic theology had not disappeared. In 2007, while working as a rare books curator at the National Library of Scotland, I finally decided to take up my old quest and to do some structured research on the topic of predestination. It was Prof. David Fergusson, Principal of New College, the supervisor of my masters program, who suggested that I should concentrate entirely on Schleiermacher for the dissertation, and who asked all the pertinent research questions. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude for his encouragement, his inspiration, and his continuing support, which has extended well beyond the confines of the degree course.

The next step on the road to this book was making the acquaintance of Prof. Terrence Tice, the doyen of all things Schleiermacher in the Anglo-American world of theology; this contact was also mediated through Prof. Fergusson. Prof. Tice has been the most tireless, enthusiastic, inspiring, and helpful companion on the way to this book that anybody can imagine, and I cannot thank him enough for all he has done to further the project. His email epistles are legion, and his encouragement

and fine sense of humor have gone a long way to keeping me focused on the project. This is also the place to express my sincere thanks to his wife Dr. Catherine Kelsey, who provided invaluable technical support for file transfer operations—not to mention their generous hospitality on a visit to Denver in 2009!

Dr. Allen G. Jørgenson, Assistant Professor at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary at Ontario, Canada, very kindly sent me a manuscript copy of the translation into English of Schleiermacher's essay on election, which he had undertaken along with Prof. Iain C. Nicol. I am most grateful to have had access to this magisterial translation even before its publication.

Dr. Paul Nimmo of New College, Edinburgh, acted as external examiner for my MTh thesis, and has since become a most engaging conversation partner regarding *Schleiermacheriana*. I wish to thank him sincerely for all his time and wonderfully constructive criticism, and for the rounds of laughter we've had.

I am also grateful for the inspiration and support offered by PD Dr. Kirsten Huxel, whom I first met in Prof. Herms' Schleiermacher seminar at Mainz. Our friendship has flourished on the basis of the theological interests we share.

Many friends and colleagues have kept asking about the progress of the book and made me feel better when the going was tough next to my full-time job. Among them, I would like to single out Scott McKenna, parish minister of Mayfield Salisbury Church in Edinburgh. Scott's ceaseless enthusiasm for this project and his belief in my ability to pull it off have proved to be a real tonic, and I am hugely grateful for the fun and banter of our friendship.

Most importantly though, I want to thank my husband Hughie. This book would have been impossible to conceive and write without him. He quietly assumed (almost) all the household chores, spent uncountable evenings trying to cheer me up when the task ahead seemed insurmountable, and often kept us both sane with his fantastic sense of humor. Not only that, Hughie also came to be my sounding board regarding the content and structure of the book, and many sections were designed or revised as a result of one of our ding-dongs—and he's not even a Protestant! It gives me great satisfaction that he must now be one of the most knowledgeable Roman Catholics in matters Schleiermacher and predestination, and I can only hope that he revels in that distinction.

1

Introduction

According to its origin, election denotes the epitome of divine favor: the bestowing of God's grace initially on the Israelites. As a result of a shift in perspective from God's determining will for a nation in this world to his foreordination of the eschatological fate of individuals election came to be perceived as a dark enigma, a decree associated with the hidden God even before creation. Now predestination was interpreted in the context of a neutral stocktaking that positioned believers and non-believers side by side and tried to explain the empirical observation that some have faith and others do not by way of election or non-election. At that stage, the relationship between God and human beings came to be seen as a causal relationship according to the motto "nothing happens without a reason."

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) was the first Western theologian to systematize predestination and present it as a doctrine. He employed the notion of omnipotent divine causality to explain the principle of election that God elects whom he wants to elect. Christian mainstream has generally followed Augustine's understanding of predestination as divine foreordination that separates human beings into those that will ultimately be saved and those that will not. Augustine himself stopped short of endorsing the notion of foreordained perdition, and instead referred to the reprobate as those passed over by election. A millennium later, the two major exponents of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin (1509–1564) then unequivocally endorsed double predestination: the divine decree to both salvation and perdition.

During the Reformation, the notion of predestination served as reassurance for the struggling and persecuted Protestant congregations that their very existence was due to a divine decree, and not to human

decisions, and that, as a consequence, human impotence would be unable to cause it to fail. The Reformed tradition then tended to adhere to Calvin's original teaching, albeit with some variations and indeed exceptions, whereas the Lutheran mainstream[1] moved away from Luther's original interpretation to a diametrically opposed position. Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) introduced the humanist ideal into the debate. His emphasis on free will and ethical improvement eventually drove a wedge between those who followed Luther's original teaching and those who sided with Melanchthon. The former retained Luther's focus on the divine decree and the irresistibility of grace, whereas the latter focused on human beings, on freedom of the will, and on personal responsibility. As a result, the strict causal relationship between God and human beings, which Luther had insisted on, was weakened to make room for the power of the human will to accept or reject faith. Lutheran orthodoxy favored Melanchthon's understanding and came to champion a single divine decree to salvation.

In the early nineteenth century, the Reformed theologian Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834) decisively reworked the theory of predestination. He championed the notion of universal restoration, yet he was careful to propound it as a proper doctrine of faith. Upholding the causal relationship between God and human beings endorsed by Luther and by the Calvinists, he nevertheless moved away from the traditional perspective that ultimately distinguishes the elect from the reprobate. His solution to the ancient dilemma of the separation into two groups consisted in explaining that separation as a temporary state of development. Allowing for the *post mortem* working of grace, he argued that the kingdom of God would be completed eschatologically through the universal restoration of all human beings.

This study explores the historical and ecumenical situation in which Schleiermacher's views on predestination took shape. It provides a close examination of the confessional and doctrinal sources Schleiermacher employed and a detailed discussion of his major texts on predestination. It attempts a critical assessment of these works and locates Schleiermacher's interpretation in its systematic-theological context as well as in the universalist tradition. As such, it focuses on original sources and contemporary responses to Schleiermacher's position. No evaluation of the critique of Schleiermacher's interpretation of predestination by the representatives of neo-orthodoxy, such as Emil Brunner, or of dialectical theology, in

1. There were variations and exceptions in the Lutheran tradition as well.

particular Karl Barth,[2] is attempted here. Instead, this study is intended to provide a critical assessment of Schleiermacher's interpretation of predestination in its original context.

The first section of this study explores the historical background as well as the theological, ecumenical, and political situation in which Schleiermacher's thinking on predestination took shape. To this end, it first provides an overview of the confessional developments in Western Europe from the Reformation to the early seventeenth century. It then focuses on Schleiermacher's part in the negotiations and debates that brought about the Prussian Church Union of 1817, one of the first unions of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the German states. Predestination was one of the issues that had traditionally separated the two Protestant Churches. Schleiermacher argued in favor of preserving doctrinal differences and debating them in academic circles while insisting that such differences should simply be ignored for practical purposes such as joint communion celebrations. He thus had to defend his position on two fronts: against those who opposed any kind of church union and against those who demanded that a doctrinal agreement between Lutherans and Reformed, if not in fact a unitary confession, precede any implementation of a church union. To illustrate those positions, this study analyzes the published correspondence between Schleiermacher and two leading Lutheran theologians, the anti-unionist Christoph Friedrich von Ammon (1766–1850) and the pro-unionist Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider (1776–1848), who advocated doctrinal clarification in advance of union negotiations.

Against this background, the second section of this study examines Schleiermacher's development of the theory of election. It pays particular attention to the confessional and doctrinal texts he cited and referenced as his sources in his main publications on election, and to the treatment and positioning of the theory of predestination in those texts. Historical and biographical details regarding the symbolic books and their authors are provided to contextualize those sources.

This study then discusses Schleiermacher's two main texts on predestination: the essay "On the Doctrine of Election," first published in 1819, and the relevant propositions in the second edition of 1830 of his major dogmatics, *Christian Faith*. The essay, Schleiermacher's first publication on a dogmatic subject, was a direct response to a publication

2. For an exemplary comparison of Schleiermacher's and Barth's understanding, see most recently Matthias Gockel, *Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election*, 2006.

by Bretschneider. In it, Schleiermacher sets out to uphold the Calvinist doctrine against the Lutheran orthodox one, explicitly declaring himself a defender of Calvin in this matter. In about 30,000 words, he argued for the stringency of the Calvinist position while striving to counter the Lutherans' concerns regarding foreordained perdition. In a volte-face, he then reconceptualized predestination as universal restoration and proceeded to advocate that interpretation, hoping that this compromise would prove to be attractive to both Lutherans and Reformed. The analysis of Schleiermacher's essay is followed by a synopsis of different aspects of predestination held by Calvinists, Lutherans, and Schleiermacher in form of a table of comparison. An examination of the reception of Schleiermacher's essay both by his contemporaries and by some recent reviewers concludes that chapter.

Next, the propositions relating to election in Schleiermacher's main theological work, *Christian Faith*, and their position within the structure of that work as a whole are considered. Here, within a purely systematic-theological context and unconstrained by issues surrounding the Prussian Church Union, Schleiermacher still advocates the ultimate election of all to salvation, but he is reluctant to posit universal restoration as a proper doctrine. His discussion of election is embedded within the doctrine of pneumatology, which, in turn, constitutes part of the doctrine of ecclesiology.

The last chapter in Part II examines a number of Schleiermacher's sermons with a view to a comparison of his homiletic with his doctrinal output on election. The series of homilies he preached on Acts in 1820 provide the focus for discussion, because they were closest to his essay on election not only with regard to subject matter but also in terms of their time of production. A number of other relevant sermons, in particular but not exclusively on Acts, are also considered.

The last section of this study considers Schleiermacher's account of election in its systematic context. It first explores his treatment and positioning of those doctrines that are most closely related to predestination: providence, hamartiology, soteriology, and eschatology, and their relation to predestination. Schleiermacher's understanding of divine providence, in which human choices are imbedded in divine causality, his interpretation of the original state of perfection and his rejection of the fall, his emphasis on the role of Christ in election and redemption, and his exposition of the consummation of the church all bear direct relevance to his universalist theory of election. This discussion is followed by an account of the notion

of universalism, its difficulties and advantages compared to particularist versions of predestination, and an attempt to position Schleiermacher in a typology of universalism.

The study closes with an evaluation of Schleiermacher's break with the traditional understanding of particular election. Against the Lutherans, he retained the Calvinist notion of an unconditional decree. In this context, a number of contemporary Lutheran publications are examined to clarify the Lutherans reservations and concerns regarding the Reformed doctrine of double predestination, whose unease is explained by their different understanding of human beings before God, or theological anthropology. Against the Reformed tradition, Schleiermacher dismisses the double decree as incompatible with Christian pious self-consciousness. His account of predestination posits a single, divine, all-encompassing decree to the creation and redemption of the entire human race.

Schleiermacher's family background was Reformed, he was ordained into the German Reformed Church and employed explicitly as a Reformed preacher and teacher. However, the German Reformed Church was never strictly Calvinist, and in some ways, for instance with regard to church government, it was closer to Lutheranism than to Calvinism. The German Reformed never endorsed the doctrine of double predestination. Their main symbolic book, the *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563, makes no mention of the doctrine of predestination, and therefore plays no part in Schleiermacher's publications on the subject. One of the questions underpinning this study relates to Schleiermacher's outspoken endorsement of the Calvinist stance in a theological and political debate in which Calvinism was not even at stake, and the question for whom he actually spoke. A related issue is the success or otherwise of his attempt to convince his opponents of the validity of universal restoration.

This study makes use of a variety of texts in English, German and Latin; where translations into English were available I have employed them and referenced the translators accordingly. All other translations are my own; they are not particularly marked.

I use the term "Protestant" throughout to convey the German term *evangelisch*, which is coterminous with *protestantisch*. This choice is informed solely by the intention to avoid the ambiguity of the English term "evangelical," which has the additional connotation of "fundamentalist." A similar ambiguity does not exist in German, which distinguishes between the terms *evangelisch* and *evangelikal*.

Part One

Background and Context for Schleiermacher's Conception of Election

2

Theological Background

Protestant Confessions

The confessional situation of early nineteenth-century Prussia, which provides the backdrop for the debates and publications to be discussed in this study, cannot be properly understood without some awareness of its historical theological development. This introductory chapter intends to give an account of the political events and theological debates that informed the formulation of the most important Protestant confessions, and it introduces the key players from the Reformation to the seventeenth century.

THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

The first Protestant confession of faith to be officially regarded as a symbolic book is the Lutheran *Confessio Augustana* of 1530. However, this was by no means the earliest Protestant statement of confession. The first such documents were generated in the vicinity of the Zürich Reformation during the 1520s. By the end of the sixteenth century, more than forty confessions had been produced in Europe,[1] many of which achieved only regional importance. Among the earliest statements are the *Sixty-seven Theses* or *Conclusions of Zürich* (1523) penned by the leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531), a "humanistically trained exegete."[2] They were followed in 1526 by the *Eighteen Theses of*

1. See Plasger and Freudenberg, *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*, 9.
2. Muller, "John Calvin," 131.

Ilanz and in 1528 by the *Ten Theses of Bern*, edited by Zwingli, all of which tried to clarify the Reformed faith, but none of which received official recognition outside their regional sphere of influence.

In 1529, Martin Luther (1483–1546) published both his *Small* and *Large Catechism*; they represent the only summary of Protestant teaching by Luther in a single text. Motivated by his church visitations in Saxony Luther intended the two catechisms for instruction in the Protestant faith: the *Small Catechism* for the fledgling Protestant communities and their young people, the *Large Catechism* for ministers and preachers. Although they were not meant to be confessional statements, both catechisms would be included among the final collection of Lutheran symbolic books.

In 1530 the Holy Roman Emperor Karl V (r. 1519–1556) called an Imperial Diet to the south German city of Augsburg with the intention to end the religious controversies in his Empire by gathering everybody under the umbrella of Roman Catholicism. Much as his desire might have been theologically motivated, Karl V also needed a united Christian front for the impending war against the Turks. The Diet occasioned the production of several confessional statements. Elector[3] Johann Friedrich of Saxony (r. 1532–1554) asked the Wittenberg theologians to work out a statement of apology or defense of the Lutheran congregations for Electoral Saxony. In the absence of Martin Luther, who was still holed up in Castle Coburg and was therefore prevented from attending the Diet, Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) drafted a defense statement. He also produced a preface to this statement about ecclesiastical customs, which was to accompany the actual confession by way of an introduction. Both documents together constitute the *Confessio Augustana*. It set out to prove that doctrinally the Protestants agreed with the Catholic Church, and it played down their opposition against the papacy and transsubstantiation in favor of stressing their agreements. It was signed by the representatives of Electoral Saxony, Ansbach, Braunschweig-Lüneburg, Hesse, Anhalt, Reuchlingen, and Nuremberg.

3. In the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, there were traditionally seven Electors, also known as Duke Electors, Prince Electors, or Electors Palatine. Since 1257, these were the Archbishops of Mainz, Cologne and Trier, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the King of Bohemia. In 1648, the Palatinate was added to this list, and in 1692 Hanover. The Electors formed the College of Electors, which had the sole right to elect the Roman-German King: this title traditionally symbolized the candidature for the Holy Roman Emperor. After the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire by Napoleon in 1806, the title of Elector became obsolete.

The *Augsburg Confession*, as it also came to be known, was to be read out at the Diet and presented to the Emperor in written form. However, even before it was submitted, the Catholic delegation decided to commission a critique and refutation of it, trying to deflect from its criticism concerning the misuses of the Church in the last few articles by making the Lutherans out to be heretics. A committee of Catholic theologians drafted the *Confutatio*, and read it out at the Diet. The Emperor considered the *Augsburg Confession* to be thus refuted and demanded obedience to this judgment. The Protestants, however, did not consider themselves to be defeated. Although he was denied access to a written copy of the text of the *Confutatio*, Melanchthon drafted a theological evaluation, the *Apologia*, as a counter reply; the Emperor refused to accept it and the Protestant estates then left the Diet in protest.

Melanchthon proceeded to extend and improve his *Apologia*, an amended form of which was finally published in May 1531. Although it was originally a private document, the *Apologia* gained the status of a symbolic book in 1537 when it was signed by the Lutheran theologians of the Schmalkald League[4] and adopted alongside the *Augsburg Confession*. The latter, in turn, had attained the status of a symbolic book of the Protestant princes and estates when its preface was signed by Gregor Brück, the chancellor of Electoral Saxony. The *Augsburg Confession* in tandem with Melanchthon's *Apologia* became the most important Lutheran confession of faith. It served a dual function as a legal document and as a guide for spiritual teaching. Its first twenty-one articles stress the agreement with Scripture and the Catholic tradition, and only articles twenty-two to twenty-eight discuss controversial issues and call for the cessation of misuses. These misuses concern the two elements of communion, marriage of priests, mass, confession, food laws, monastic vows, and the power invested in the office of bishop. Much to Luther's dismay, the *Augsburg Confession* was silent on the issue of papal primacy.

Also in preparation for the Imperial Diet at Augsburg, the Strasburg reformer and former Dominican theologian Martin Bucer (1491–1551) had met with Luther and Melanchthon to discuss the possibility of a statement of faith that they could all subscribe to. When this proved to be impossible, chiefly because of their conflicting interpretations of communion, Bucer, with the assistance of Wolfgang Capito (1478–1541)

4. This was a defensive alliance of the Protestant princes and cities of the Holy Roman Empire. It was concluded at Schmalkald in 1531 in order to ward off potential Catholic attacks. The Schmalkald League would become "the most powerful Protestant political force in Europe" until the late 1540s. MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 174.

produced the *Confessio Tetrapolitana* (1530) for the four Upper German cities Strasburg, Memmingen, Konstanz, and Lindau for presentation to the Emperor. The *Tetrapolitana* was never officially recognized as a symbolic book. For the Swiss Protestants, their leader Huldrych Zwingli only managed to submit his private confession, the *Fidei Ratio ad Carolum Imperatorem* (1530), in order to clarify the Swiss Reformed position.

After the Diet, Bucer met repeatedly with Melanchthon with the intention to overcome the alienation between the south German cities and the Wittenberg Reformers. Their debates culminated in a statement agreed in Kassel in 1534. This was adopted in the *Wittenberg Concord* (1536), which contains compromise formulations that both sides agreed on, and acknowledges the *Augsburg Confession* and *Apologia* as well as a communion formula drafted by Melanchthon. As a result, doctrinal unity was achieved in Protestant Germany. At the same time, however, this unity meant that from then on Germany and Switzerland would go their separate ways in the further progress of the Reformation.

Also in 1536, Basel saw the production of the first common confession held among the German-speaking Reformed Swiss cities, the *Confessio Helvetica Prior*. Intended to help form a union with the Lutherans, the twenty-seven articles of this confession were penned by Zwingli's successor in Zürich, Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575), as well as Oswald Myconius (1488–1552) and others under the unionist influence of Bucer and Capito. During the year 1536, the *Theses of Lausanne* and the *First Geneva Confession* were drafted in French-speaking Switzerland. It is worth noting that 1536 also marked the publication of the first edition of *Institutio Christianae Religionis* by John Calvin (1509–1564).

In 1537, Luther published the *Schmalkald Articles*, which were originally intended for presentation at the 1537 Council of Mantua. They sharply emphasize the Lutherans' confessional opposition to Rome—the same opposition which the *Augsburg Confession* had tried to cover up. The *Schmalkald Articles* were signed only by theologians attending the Schmalkald Convention of 1537, but they were eventually recognized as a symbolic book in 1580.

During the late 1530s, Melanchthon was working on a revision of the *Confessio Augustana*. He had been commissioned by the Schmalkald League to draft an official new edition of the *Augsburg Confession* for the impending doctrinal discussions. In 1540 he re-published it as the so-called *Variata*. From then on, the original version of 1530 was also known as the *Invariata*. Leaving the preface of the *Augsburg Confession* untouched, in the *Variata* Melanchthon took account of the recently

developed understanding of the doctrine of communion, which brought it into line with the *Wittenberg Concord*, and he greatly extended the text of the original 1530 version. The contrast to the Roman Catholic Church and the Anabaptists also became much sharper. With regard to the church history, the original version, the *Invariata*, remained the standard confession of faith in the Lutheran Churches.

The *Variata* was eyed with great suspicion as a crypto-Calvinist document. As a corollary, it gained its importance from the fact that most Calvinist theologians (though not the Zwinglians) could actually subscribe to it. In fact, even Calvin himself signed the *Variata*. It was also the official document presented at the Colloquy at Worms in 1540 by the Schmalkald League.[5] With the *Variata*, Melanchthon had quietly distanced himself from Luther's view. He had moved relatively close to the Calvinist understanding of the presence of Christ during communion, in that he shared with it a strong sense of the mystery of Christ's presence. As a result, he was open to an agreement with Calvinist views. The *Variata* was to become particularly important after the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555.

This Religious Peace was preceded by another two important statements of confession: one was the *Consensus Tigurinus*, or *Zürich Confession*. It developed out of negotiations between Calvin and Bullinger to unite the Swiss Protestants, and set off a "burst of confessional activity among the Reformed."[6] Drafted by Bullinger in 1549 and published in 1551, it expressed an agreement regarding the doctrine of communion between Calvinist Geneva and Zwinglian Zürich and Bern. It favored the Zwinglian symbolic explanation of the presence of Christ at communion, but allowed a range of definitions of the sacrament. It was quickly accepted by both the French-speaking and the German-speaking Swiss Reformed churches. Safeguarding the Swiss Reformation inevitably meant a sharp break between Calvinism and German Protestantism, marked especially by Calvin's rapprochement with the Zwinglians in the *Consensus Tigurinus* (1549).[7]

The other confession published before the Peace of Augsburg (1555) was the *Confessio Doctrinae Saxonicarum Ecclesiarum Synodo Tridentinae*

5. See Kusukawa, "Melanchthon," 65.

6. Muller, "John Calvin," 135.

7. Calvin was originally very close to the German Lutherans, but the dispute between Melanchthon and Luther's direct followers, the Gnesio-Lutherans, as well as Calvin's increasing agreement with the Zwinglians led to a renewed dispute about communion, and eventually to bitter enmity. See Heussi, *Kompendium*, 315.

Oblata, or *Saxon Confession*, of 1551. It was drawn up by Melanchthon for the Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545–1563) as a repetition and exposition of the *Confessio Augustana*. In effect, it represented an adaptation of the *Augsburg Confession* accounting for the changed state of affairs: unlike twenty years earlier, there was no hope of a reunion with the Catholic Church any more. At Melanchthon's suggestion, the *Saxon Confession* was signed by theologians rather than secular princes. The original manuscript, entitled 'Repetitio Confessionis Augustanae' is dated 1551. It was first published in Basel in 1552.

THE LATER SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In 1555, Emperor Karl V called a new Imperial Diet to Augsburg in order to settle the differences between Catholics and Protestants politically. The so-called Religious Peace of Augsburg, which was negotiated at that Diet, meant that all Protestants who signed the *Confessio Augustana* would be placed under imperial protection so as to enjoy freedom from religious persecution. Sacramentarians, especially Zwingli's followers, and more extreme Protestant groups such as the Anabaptists and Anti-trinitarians could not bring themselves to subscribe to the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession*. Calvinists adhered at least to Melanchthon's 1540 *Variata* version and claimed inclusion in the Peace, but their status remained precarious for nearly a century until the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 and the attendant Treaty of Westphalia.

The Peace of Augsburg also introduced the *ius reformandi*, the right of each sovereign to determine the confession (Catholic or Lutheran) of his territory, thereby abolishing the old law of heretics. The principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* stipulated that the territorial sovereign determined the denomination of his subjects, and it allowed subjects who belonged to a different confession from that of their sovereign to emigrate without any damage to their honor or to their possessions.[8] The reasons behind

8. Developments in Electoral Palatinate can serve to illustrate the power of this principle. Elector Friedrich III (r. 1559–1576) turned the Palatinate into a Calvinist territory in 1560. His eldest son and successor Ludwig IV (r. 1576–1583) reinstated Lutheranism and withdrew favor from Reformed clerics and academics, thus forcing them to emigrate or to take refuge in the small Reformed enclave of Neustadt. Neustadt was ruled by Ludwig's younger brother, Count Johann Casimir, who, in turn, was an enthusiastic Calvinist. After Ludwig's death, Johann Casimir ruled for his underage nephew, Ludwig's son Friedrich. When the latter became Elector Friedrich IV (r. 1583–1610), he enabled Johann Casimir as principle regent to extend the Reformed faith throughout the entire Electoral Palatinate. The returning ministers marked their

this principle were not of a purely political nature, however. The drive of nearly all European sovereigns to permit only one denomination in their territory was partly informed by the conviction that no territory could have a permanent basis if truth and untruth, true worship and idolatry were allowed to exist side by side. The mutual assurance of Catholics and Lutherans that they would not wage war against an imperial estate because of its confession lasted for more than six decades until the onset of the Thirty-Years War in 1618. It is important to note, nevertheless, that the Religious Peace of 1555 guaranteed the religious unity of individual territories, but it dissolved the religious unity of the Empire. The confessional era had begun in earnest.

The French and Dutch Reformed statements of confession were mainly a result of Roman Catholic oppression. The *Confessio Gallicana* or *Huguenot Confession* of 1559 was occasioned by persecutions, heretics' courts, and executions of Protestants under King Henri II of France (r. 1547–1559). In May 1559 a national synod of French Reformed Churches met secretly in Paris in order both to strengthen their confessional identity and to reach a consensus on some doctrinal differences, one of which concerned the doctrine of election. The moderator of the synod was François Morel, a pupil of Calvin. Calvin learned about the Synod very late. Fearing that its theological resolutions would not go far enough, he sent three delegates of the Geneva Church Council to Paris, who conveyed thirty-five articles of faith to the Synod. This draft confession had been prepared by Calvin and his pupil Antoine de la Roche Chandieu (1534–1591), and the Paris Synod approved it with only minor revisions. It was finally declared the binding confession of French Protestantism at the National Synod of La Rochelle in 1571. The *Confessio Gallicana* was disseminated throughout Germany by the Huguenot congregations living in Prussia.

Three more Protestant confessions followed in short succession: the *Scots Confession* in 1560, the *Confessio Belgica* in 1561, and the Anglican *Thirty-nine Articles* in 1563. The first two stood in the Geneva tradition and, together with the *Huguenot Confession*, formed "a trilogy of Calvinian theology."[9] The *Scots Confession* was commissioned by the Scottish Parliament as a summary of the articles of faith that the Protestant faction adhered to. It was drafted by six theologians including John Knox

celebrations with an iconoclastic campaign, much to the annoyance of the general populace.

9. Plasger and Freudenberg, *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*, 124.

(1510–1572) within four days, and passed by Parliament along with three other Acts to constitute Scotland as a Protestant nation.

The *Confessio Belgica* was composed by Guy de Bres (1522–1567) for the Reformed Churches in Flanders and the Netherlands on the basis of the *Huguenot Confession*. Its ratification by the Synod of Antwerp in 1566 marked the final acceptance of Calvinism in the Low Countries, and it made the *Confessio Belgica* the confessional standard for the Reformed Church in the Netherlands.

The *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Anglican Church in England do not represent a statement of confession as such, but a summary of doctrinal formulations. First issued in 1563 and accepted by the Church of England, the *Thirty-nine Articles* were a revision of the original *Forty-two Articles* of 1552. They moved away from the Calvinist tendency expressed in the *Forty-two Articles* and were passed by the Westminster Parliament in 1571.

The statement of faith that was to become the most important symbolic book for the German Reformed Church for centuries to come was the *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563. Moderately Calvinistic, it was intended to serve as a kind of unionist confession in Electoral Palatinate, then the largest territory in the Holy Roman Empire. It strove to satisfy both Melanchthon's sympathizers, the Philippists, and the Reformed theology of western Europe.[10] In 1556, under Elector Ottheinrich (r. 1556–1559), the Palatinate had become Lutheran. Melanchthon, himself a native of Electoral Palatinate, had acted as chief counselor, impressing a moderate Lutheranism friendly to Calvinism upon the territory. The Lutheran *Augsburg Confession* was adopted as the doctrinal basis, whereas worship was remodeled after Reformed principles. Elector Ottheinrich also granted Calvinist refugees asylum in the Palatinate. Heidelberg, its capital city and university town, began to attract Protestant scholars of all denominations. As a result, it became a battleground where Lutheran, Philippist, Calvinist, and Zwinglian views collided. To settle some of the differences, Ottheinrich's successor Elector Friedrich III (r. 1559–1576), called The Pious, arranged a public disputation for June 1560 on the doctrine of communion. When the different Protestant groups subsequently demanded of him to unequivocally embrace one confession, he decided in favor of Calvinism, thus turning the Palatinate into the first German Reformed territory in 1561.[11] Elector Friedrich III commissioned the divinity professor and

10. See MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 254.

11. Calvinism was subsequently introduced in Bremen (1580), Nassau (1586), Anhalt (1596), Hesse-Kassel (1605) and Brandenburg (1614).

Melanchthon pupil Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583), according to MacCulloch "the most prominent theologian of the Palatinate,"[12] probably along with the more Calvinist Kaspar Olevian (1536–1587) and other theologians, to draft a statement of the doctrines befitting this new orientation. As far as possible, this statement would bring together the divergent Reformed trends. The resultant *Heidelberg Catechism* deliberately included points that would unite Zwinglians, Calvinists, and Philippists. The doctrine of the sacraments hovered between Zwinglianism and Calvinism, and any discussion of predestination was deliberately omitted. After its adoption, the *Heidelberg Catechism* was read out in church over the course of each year, with one passage being treated each Sunday. It also served as an elementary text for the religious instruction of the youth, as the doctrinal norm next to Scripture for ministers, and as edification for families.[13] The Elector also ordered the *Heidelberg Catechism* to be incorporated in the Palatine Church Order. Soon after its publication, this "most catholic and popular of all the Reformed symbols"[14] spread throughout Germany and to the Netherlands, even superseding Calvin's *Catechismus Genevensis* of 1545. Not surprisingly, it was violently attacked by Lutherans for its alleged Zwinglian and Calvinist heresies, and the Palatinate was threatened with exclusion from the protection of the Peace of Augsburg. At the Synod of Dort in the Low Countries, which took place from 1618 to 1619, the *Heidelberg Catechism* attained the status of a Reformed symbolic book. Soon after its publication, it was introduced in Brandenburg, and it was still used for the instruction of the Hohenzollern princes, the Royal House of Prussia, in the late nineteenth century.[15]

The *Confessio Helvetica Posterior* or *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566) was the most important confession of the German Swiss Reformation. It was originally drafted in 1561 by Heinrich Bullinger, Huldrych Zwingli's successor in Zürich, as his private confession. He had intended it to be presented on his death to the Town Council of Zürich, but in 1566 it was printed and put into the public domain. The reasons for this were mainly political in nature. The introduction of the Reformed faith and of the *Heidelberg Catechism* in the Palatinate had attracted strong criticism from some Lutheran princes, because some parts of the *Catechism*, in particular its doctrine of communion, contradicted the *Augsburg Confession*. Strictly

12. MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 355.
13. See Plasger and Freudenberg, *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*, 153.
14. Schaff, *Creeds* I, 540.
15. See ibid., 548.

speaking, therefore, the Palatinate was in violation of imperial law. So, in 1566 the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II (r. 1564–1576) called an Imperial Diet, again to Augsburg. The Diet threatened Elector Friedrich III with exclusion from the protection of the Peace of Augsburg. In his defense statement, the Elector emphasized the agreement of the Palatinate Church with the Protestant Churches abroad. He had been aware of Heinrich Bullinger's private confession of 1561, which Bullinger had previously circulated within the Swiss Reformed cities. Friedrich III had it translated into German in order to present it at the Diet. Bullinger's confession then found broad acceptance in the Palatinate. It is not clear whether it was actually read out at the Diet, but the Elector's arguments and obvious piety ensured the Palatinate's further protection by the Peace of Augsburg, and secured further the unity among the German Protestant princes.

Bullinger's confession of faith did not attain the status of a symbolic book in the Palatinate, but it was signed by the Protestant cities in Switzerland. All Reformed German-speaking Swiss cities apart from, initially, Lutheran Basel, accepted Bullinger's confession, now entitled *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*. It was also given official recognition by the Reformed Churches of France, Scotland, Poland, Hungary, and the Netherlands, and it signified the final separation of the Reformed from the Lutheran Church. By the late 1560s, the Reformed tradition had, as Muller notes, "a well-defined doctrinal codification"[16] in the shape of national and regional confessional statements.

In 1577, the Lutheran church produced the *Formula of Concord* as its final statement of confession. This step was deemed necessary in the face of the competing positions that different Lutheran territorial churches had taken. After Luther's death in 1546, two distinct groups of his followers had begun to emerge: the Philippists, who followed Philipp Melanchthon and identified with his desire to unite Lutherans and Calvinists, and the Gnesio-Lutherans, or "Lutheran ultras,"[17] who remained faithful to Martin Luther's teaching.[18] Melanchthon himself had gradually diverged from Luther with regard to the doctrines of election, original sin, good works, christology, and communion, and he had gone public with his new convictions in the 1540 *Variata*. Certainly with respect to communion, the Philippists now approached the Calvinist understanding of the presence of

16. Muller, "John Calvin," 134.

17. MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 349.

18. The Gnesio-Lutherans upheld Luther's understanding of passive righteousness, God's grace, and human sinfulness. See Kolb, "Confessional Lutheran Theology," 71.

Christ at communion, and the Gnesio-Lutherans were not entirely wrong in regarding them as Crypto-Calvinists. It is also noteworthy that the German Reformed approached the Philippist understanding of a synergism of God's act and human cooperation, and that they never did accept the strict Calvinist interpretation of predestination as a double decree.

The sharp distinction between the two Lutheran factions was particularly visible in Saxony. Electoral Saxony, under Elector Albrecht and with the University of Wittenberg as its theological center was Philippist, whereas the Saxon Duchy, under Duke Ernst and with the University of Jena slowly advancing as its theological center was Gnesio-Lutheran.[19] In 1559, the Gnesio-Lutherans under their leader Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520–1575), still a personal disciple of Luther, drafted the *Weimar Book of Confutation*. The Philippists responded to that a year later with the publication of the *Corpus Doctrinae Christianae*, which contained the three Early Church confessions and some of Melanchthon's writings. Initially a private collection of confessional statements, this work quickly gained respect. In 1567 it was officially accepted in Electoral Saxony.

LUTHERAN CONSOLIDATION

The *Augsburg Confession*, according to Hillerbrand the "most ecumenical of Lutheran confessional statements,"[20] had been designed to demonstrate the Reformers' agreement in many points with the Catholic tradition. Clearly, though, it was not suited to settle the disputes between Philippists and Gnesio-Lutherans. These disputes set the agenda for the *Formula of Concord*,[21] which strictly delimited the genuine Lutheran understanding from the Reformed one. According to its full title, the *Formula of Concord* represented "the general, true, correct and ultimate reiteration and explanation of several articles of the *Confessio Augustana*" that had been debated since its initial publication. It excluded more extreme statements of both parties, among them the *Variata* of the *Augsburg Confession* as an

19. See Heussi, *Kompendium*, 346.

20. Hillerbrand, "Legacy," 237.

21. The evolution of the text of the *Formula of Concord* is rather complex. It was based on the *Swabian Concord* of 1574, which was revised by Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586) and others to become the *Swabian-Saxon Concord* (1575). After more editorial work, the *Formula of Maulbronn* was drafted, and the following year a theological colloquy at Torgau produced the *Torgau Book* based on the *Swabian-Saxon Concord* and the *Formula of Maulbronn*. Eventually, the *Torgau Book* itself was revised and turned into the *Formula of Concord*. See Hägglund, *Geschichte der Theologie*, 215–16.