

The Placement of Predestination in Reformed Theology: Issue or Non-Issue?

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The Historiographical Question

The Placement of Predestination and the Assessment of Reformed Orthodoxy

It is certainly a commonplace in recent discussions of Reformed theology and, particularly, of Calvin's, to claim that the placement of the doctrine of predestination at different points in a theological system alters the impact of the doctrine on the system as a whole as well as the meaning of the doctrine itself. Edward Dowey commented that the location of predestination in the context of soteriology was so "essential to [Calvin's] conception" of the doctrine that "conceived in any other way, we no longer have Calvin's doctrine of election."¹ On the basis of Calvin's placement of predestination in the third book of his *Institutes*, following faith, justification, Christian freedom, and prayer, Dowey contrasts Calvin's thought with the theology of later Reformed orthodoxy, which frequently (although hardly exclusively) placed predestination in some relationship to the doctrine of God. Thus, despite what Dowey calls Calvin's "supralapsarian" doctrine of the decrees, Calvin, in Dowey's view, assumed the soteriological context of the doctrine and unlike later Calvinists, "never [saw] the believer as in direct connection with the precreation decrees."²

¹ Edward A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 186.

² Dowey, *Knowledge of God*, 186. N.B., the terms *supra-* and *infralapsarian* are properly understood in their purely doctrinal sense, as indicating the identity of the human objects of the divine decree, namely, whether God *eternally* considers the objects of his willing as *supra lapsus*, "above" the Fall, i.e., not yet fallen; or as *infra lapsus*, "below" the Fall, i.e., fallen. Neither view implies any temporality on God's part. The classic study of the doctrine remains Klaas Dijk, *De Strijd over Infra- en supralapsarisme in de Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1912). In the present study, the phrases *supralapsarian placement* and *infralapsarian placement* are used to indicate the formal location of the doctrine prior or subsequent to the Fall in the theological systems, as distinct from the supra- or infralapsarian implications of doctrinal definitions.

Even so, the contrast between Calvin's teaching and later Reformed theology made on the basis of the placement of the doctrine of predestination is typically quite unfavorable. In Hall's words,

It was Beza who reverted to the medieval scholastic device of placing predestination under the doctrines of God and providence—the position in which St. Thomas Aquinas discussed it—whereas Calvin has placed it eventually and deliberately under the doctrine of salvation. By doing so, although he was not alone in this, Beza re-opened the road to speculative determinism which Calvin had attempted to close.³

The point is similar to (and, in Dowe's case at least, reflective of) Brunner's view that Calvin had, rather definitively, lodged the doctrine of predestination in the context of "the Grace of God in Christ, the doctrine of Justification" while Beza placed the doctrine "at the beginning of his Dogmatics" and developed it "in connexion with the doctrine of Creation." Beza's approach, according to Brunner, "shows unmistakably that [predestination] is not derived from the Christian revelation, but from the process of speculative thought."⁴ Such characterizations of the development of Reformed theology are almost commonplace.⁵ Their basic thesis is that the placement of the doctrine is a virtually all-important consideration and that Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, was responsible for altering Calvin's biblically and soteriologically conceived placement. What is more, the thesis maintains that, as evidenced by the placement of the doctrine, Beza altered the relationship of predestination to the whole of Christian theology, indeed, was responsible for turning the whole of Reformed theology into a deductive system resting on the decrees.⁶

The claim is common enough—but there are several things about it that are quite remarkable. First, it is not a claim that appears to have surfaced before the

³ Basil Hall, "Calvin Against the Calvinists," in *John Calvin*, edited by Gervase Duffield (Appleford: Sutton Courtney Press, 1966), 27, citing as his proof of the point, Beza's *Summa sive descriptio et distributio causarum salutis electorum, et exitu reprobatorum* from Theodore Beza, *Tractationes theologicae*, 3 vols. (Geneva, 1570-82), I, 170ff. See the general critique of the "Calvin against the Calvinists" approach in Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 63-102, et passim; and Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 1.2.5; 4.8.1 (B.1); hereinafter cited as *PRRD*.

⁴ Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God: Dogmatics*, vol 1, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950), 345.

⁵ Cf. Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity 1689-1765* (London, The Olive Tree Press, 1967), 12-13; Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., "Predestination," s.v. in *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox, 1992), 292, col. 1; Bruce A. Demarest, "Amyraldianism," s.v. in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 41, col. 1.

⁶ Charles S. McCoy, "Johannes Cocceius: Federal Theologian," in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 16 (1963), 366; Basil Hall, "Calvin Against the Calvinists," 27.

mid-twentieth century. Nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century theologians and historians, such as Alexander Schweizer, Heinrich Heppe, and Hans Emil Weber, who held that Calvinist or Reformed theology was a predestinarian system, made little or no distinction between the thought of Calvin and Beza, and certainly did not point to the issue of the placement of the doctrine as a key to understanding the implication of predestination for theology. In the view of Schweizer, predestination was a central dogma because of its fundamental function and interrelationship with other doctrines, not because of its placement in a theological system—and Beza is not described as the major interpreter of the doctrine after Calvin.⁷ Heppe, who took Beza's *Tabula praedestinationis* to be emblematic of a predestinarian system, understood it to be in continuity with the teachings of Calvin.⁸ Weber argued that Calvin's doctrine was the source of the predestinarian metaphysic of "Calvinist scholasticism," indeed, of what he took to be the rationalistic tendencies of Reformed scholastic theology.⁹

The same assumption concerning order and placement, with a different understanding of the function of predestination in Reformed theology is found in Bavinck's *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* at the beginning of the twentieth century: Bavinck indicated that the order of the doctrine, whether a priori or a posteriori "in itself is not principial." Although, moreover, the a—priori model had been frequently used by the Reformed orthodox, it was not to be taken as indicating a speculative doctrine of the decrees or deterministic view of God—but only as identifying the Reformed doctrine as not merely anthropological and soteriological but primarily theological in significance. Underlying this theological understanding of the decree as ultimately to the glory of God, Bavinck understood also a fundamentally religious motive, not a philosophical or metaphysical one.¹⁰

Nor, indeed, was such a conclusion about placement of the doctrine drawn in the era of Reformed orthodoxy: The Reformed thinkers saw little difference between Calvin and Beza on the point—and Arminius (in marked contrast to modern discussion) viewed Beza and Calvin as two ugly peas out of the same

⁷ Alexander Schweizer, *Die protestantischen Centraldogmen in ihrer Entwicklung innerhalb der reformierten Kirche*, 2 vols. (Zürich, 1854-56), 1:5, 10-14; 367-72, 503-5, 2: 44.

⁸ Thus, Heinrich Heppe, "Der Charakter der deutsch-reformierten Kirche und das Verhältniss derselben zum Luthertum und zum Calvinismus," in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 1850 (Heft 3), 671-72. See also the alternative readings of Beza in John S. Bray, *Theodore Beza's Doctrine of Predestination* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1975) and Richard A. Muller, "The Use and Abuse of a Document: Beza's *Tabula praedestinationis*, the Bolsec Controversy, and the Origins of Reformed Orthodoxy," in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, ed. Carl Trueman and Scott Clark (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999), 33-61.

⁹ Hans Emil Weber, *Reformation, Orthodoxie und Rationalismus*, 2 vols. in 3 (1937-51; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), 1:1, 240-48; cf. 1:2, 80-93. See the discussion of the problematic nature of Weber's thesis in general in Muller, *PRRD*, 1:2.6 (B.1-2).

¹⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 4 vols., 4th ed. (Kampen, J. H. Kok, 1928), 2:321-22.

pod.¹¹ Attention to placement of the doctrine is characteristic of the twentieth-century writers who have tended to make a major distinction between the thought of Calvin and the thought of Beza. In other words, structure as indicative of meaning is far more a twentieth-century issue than a problem noted in previous eras.

Second, perhaps even more remarkable than the former issue, the claim, as stated by quite a number of twentieth-century writers (e.g., Emil Brunner, Charles McCoy, J. B. Torrance, Brian Armstrong, and Alister McGrath), is advanced as if it were simply obvious to all.¹² Given the absence of cogent argument and documentation of the point, this view of Calvin's and Beza's relationship to the later ordering of doctrine is open to question—as, indeed, is this understanding of the placement of predestination in the theology of Reformed orthodoxy in general. Neither the rift between Calvin and Beza nor the theological significance of differing placements of the doctrine of predestination were perceptions held either by the seventeenth-century Reformed orthodox or by Arminius—nor, indeed, were these perceptions held by the nineteenth-century proponents of the central dogma theory. Third, the historical context, notably, the rise of the late Renaissance models of education, the limitations placed on the use of reason in theology, the identification of the *principia* of theology and fundamental articles of the faith as other than the decrees or predestination, the use of the *locus* method with its exegetical basis, and the underlying concern for forms of pedagogy that belonged to the era, point in a rather different direction than the modern dogmatic explanation.¹³ Finally, as we will argue below, when one tries to establish the claim by examining actual documents, it simply evaporates.

¹¹ Cf. Jacobus Arminius, *Amica cum Francisco Junio de praedestinatione per literas habita collatio*, translated as the *Friendly Conference of James Arminius with Mr. Francis Junius about Predestination*, in *The Works of James Arminius*, trans. James Nichols and William Nichols, 3 vols. (1825, 1828, 1875, repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 3:27, 28, 32-3, 76-77, 214). This datum, by the way, ought to be profoundly embarrassing to R. T. Kendall's thesis, inasmuch as it depends for its success both on the validity of Arminius' theological perceptions and on Kendall's own assumption of the rift between Calvin and Beza; see R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 13-17, 19, 31-2, 34, 62. Also see Kendall's "The Puritan Modification of Calvin's Theology," in *John Calvin: His Influence in the Western World*, ed. W. Stanford Reid (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 197-214, for a shorter version of Kendall's thesis.

¹² See Brunner, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 345; McCoy, "Johannes Cocceius: Federal Theologian," 354, 364-69; James B. Torrance, "Strengths and Weaknesses of the Westminster Theology," in *The Westminster Confession*, ed. Alisdair Heron 1982), 40-53; idem, "Calvin and Puritanism in England and Scotland—Some Basic Concepts in the Development of 'Federal Theology,'" in *Calvinus Reformator* (Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1982), 264-77; Brian Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy: Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth Century France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 31-40; Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 129-30.

¹³ Cf. Muller, *PRRD*, 1:9.1, 9.3; 2:7.5; also note Muller, *After Calvin*, 105-21.

Karl Barth's Examination of the Location of Predestination

The idea that the placement of the doctrine of predestination within a theological system has massive implications for the meaning of the doctrine and the logic of the system itself has a history—arguably, a history that begins after the close of the high orthodox era. Tracing out the origins and development of that contention is beyond the bounds of the present study. Nonetheless, it is fairly obvious that the discussion of the various placements of predestination by Karl Barth has had an enormous influence on several generations of historians and theologians. Barth identified some six placements of the doctrine in relation to the other *loci* of theological system, each with its own theological significance.

Barth's own comments on the significance of the placement of the doctrine must be juxtaposed with his denial that Beza and other later Calvinists ever constructed a predestinarian system.¹⁴ It is in fact one of the more interesting ironies of twentieth-century theological historiography that Barth, whose insistence on the centrality of Christ to the understanding and formulation of all Christian doctrine (including the doctrine of predestination) played such a large role in the reinterpretation of the theology of the Reformers as “christo-centric,” did not accept these generalizations about the placement of predestination and the role of Beza in the development of Reformed orthodoxy. Thus, in his excursus on the first of the six placements of predestination—namely, the placement of predestination after the doctrine of God and prior to the doctrine of creation—Barth notes that this is the more typical arrangement of the order of doctrines in the Reformed orthodox dogmatics. This is the pattern of the *Irish Articles of Religion* (1615) and of the *Westminster Confession* (1647) and it is found in the theological systems of Polanus, Wollebius, Wendelin, Alting, Heidanus, Burman, Turretin, van Maastricht, and van Til.

This apparent majority pattern is the basis for the “modern” claim that predestination is the “central dogma” of Reformed theology. To the contrary, however, Barth declares that

there can be no historical justification for taking the concept of “central dogma” to mean that the doctrine of predestination was for the older Reformed theologians a kind of speculative key—a basic tenet from which they could deduce all other dogmas. Not even the famous schema of T. Beza was intended in such a sense. Its aim was rather (rightly or wrongly) to show the systematic interconnection of all other dogmas with that of predestination in the then popular graphic fashion. There was no question of making the latter doctrine a derivative principle for all the rest.¹⁵

¹⁴ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 4 vols., ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936-1969), 2:2, 78-79.

¹⁵ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 77-78.

Not only does Barth deny the central dogma thesis of Schweizer and Heppe, he goes the extra mile of concluding that “if we read [the Reformed scholastics’] expositions connectedly we are more likely to get the impression that, from the standpoint of its systematic range and importance, they gave to the doctrine too little consideration rather than too much.”¹⁶ The difference between his own theology and that of the older orthodoxy on this particular point, Barth notes, is that “with these theologians, so far as I can see, the doctrine of election was never regarded or treated as an integral part of the doctrine of God,”¹⁷ but, instead, discussed following the *locus de Deo*.

Barth does have an objection, however, to this formulation—and a reason not to follow it precisely in his own theology. The problem is that it begins with the notion of a general decree that establishes God’s relationship with the world and then subsumes under it a special decree of God’s election in which the relationship of humanity to Jesus Christ is established. Barth would reverse the order and understand the general relationship of God to the world in the light of the special relationship founded in Christ. He also laments what he believes to be the omission of any significant consideration on the part of the older orthodoxy of the *ad intra* activity of the Trinity according to which election may be understood as belonging to the “concrete life of the very being of God.”¹⁸ What is interesting here is that Barth objects not only to the a-posteriori model followed by most of the Reformed confessions, but also to the a-priori pattern followed by the majority of the Reformed dogmaticians on the ground that it is not, so to speak, “high” enough and would replace it with his own form of christologically defined supralapsarianism. In accordance with his own rejection of natural theology and, moreover, of an independent, namely, nonchristological view of creation and providence, Barth proposes a christological supralapsarianism that overrules any sense of a general decree of creation prior to God’s willing of redemption in Christ.

As a second model, which he views as farther from his own approach than the typical Reformed orthodox pattern, Barth notes Zwingli’s *Fidei ratio* (1530) and the *Consensus Bremensis* (1595)—he has found no orthodox Reformed writers to include here, but he offers two Lutheran theologians, Leonhard Hutter and Johann Gerhard. Zwingli, at least by his ordering of the *Fidei ratio*, understands election as “the crown and completion of the doctrine of providence,” all of which had been preceded and framed by an exposition of the doctrines of God, Trinity, and Christ. Gerhard similarly offers the sequence of God, Christ, providence, and predestination. Hutter provides a variant, according to Barth,

¹⁶ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 78.

¹⁷ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 78-79.

¹⁸ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 78, 79. Note that this latter conclusion of Barth’s can be disputed historically: see Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree* (Durham, N.C.: Labyrinth Press, 1986), 10, 94, 113-15, 149-68, 181.

which also points toward one of the other patterns of organization: He inserts the topics of sin, law, the gospel, and justification in between creation and predestination. Barth notes how this sequence does have the effect of highlighting the relationship of predestination both to God and to creation, but he sees the model as less useful than the first inasmuch as it subsumed predestination under providence and, in his view, thereby makes “ineffective” the “precedence given to Christology.”¹⁹

Beyond these two arrangements of the topic, Barth noted four others, all of which have in common the fact that they discuss predestination not in relation to God or creation but much further on in the sequence of doctrines, after sin, as “in some sort the key” to the doctrine of reconciliation. The first of these placements of the doctrine that Barth notes is its location in the doctrine of the church. This approach Barth also finds in Zwingli’s *Fidei ratio* and it appears in the 1536 edition of Calvin’s *Institutes*—although election is also mentioned in connection with faith in the 1536 edition. Barth views this ecclesiological placement as fundamentally biblical and highly to be recommended, although he prefers a model that placed election with the electing God, prior to the identification of the elect people.²⁰ Barth does not note that this placement carried over into the era of orthodoxy as evidenced by Ursinus’ catechetical lectures and by the later sets of lectures and sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism that maintained Ursinus’ model for adding *loci* to the catechetical discussions. The ecclesiological association of the doctrine is evident in its insertion into the argument of Zanchi’s *De ecclesia*—and in expositions of the creed by such authors as Perkins, Yates, Martinius, and Witsius, all of whom discuss the doctrine of election and reprobation under the topic of the church in their expositions of the creed or in catechetical models based on the creedal model.²¹

As a final set of three models of theology, Barth notes various placements of predestination, all of which share with his third option the removal of predestination from the doctrine of God but that also relate the doctrine to the soteriology, or as he calls it in his somewhat Ritschlian fashion, the doctrine of reconciliation. The first of these (the fourth in the full series) places predesti-

¹⁹ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 80-81.

²⁰ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 81-83.

²¹ William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbole, in The Workes of Mr. William Perkins*. 3 vols. (Cambridge: John Legat, 1612-1619), vol. 1; John Yates, *A Modell of Divinitie, Catechetically Composed. Wherein is delivered the matter and methode of religion, according to the Creed, tenne Commandements, Lords Prayer, and the Sacraments*, 2nd ed., enlarged (London: John Legatt, 1623), 257-59; Matthias Martinius, *Christiana et catholica fides: quam symbolum apostolicum vocamus, perpetuis quaestionibus & responsionibus diligenter explicata & in III libros distincta* (Bremen: Thomas Villeranus, 1618), 3:2 (579-87); Herman Witsius, *Exercitationes sacrae in symbolum quod Apostolorum dicitur. Et in Orationem dominicam* (Amsterdam, 1697); in translation, *Sacred Dissertations on What Is Commonly Called the Apostles’ Creed*, trans. D. Fraser, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton / Glasgow: Kull, Blackie & Co., 1823).

nation immediately following the Christology—which Barth identifies as the pattern in Calvin’s 1537 catechism, the *loci communes* of Peter Martyr Vermigli and the *De oeconomia foederum* of Herman Witsius.²² Barth indicates that he knew of no other instances of the approach—but there is, after all, Ames’ *Medulla*.²³

Next (fifth in the series), there is the option of placing predestination following the doctrine of sin and prior to the Christology. This approach, Barth indicates, is common among the Reformed confessions—the Gallican (1559), Scots (1560), Belgic (1561), the Second Helvetic (1566), the Staffort Book (1599), and the Waldensian Confession (1655). He also places the Leiden *Synopsis purioris theologiae* and Cocceius *Summa theologiae* in this group—and, Walaeus as well, despite what Barth identifies as a “highly original and capricious” arrangement of topics. As will be noted later, Barth’s comments on Cocceius and the Leiden *Synopsis* are less than accurate.

Finally (third in the subset and sixth in the full series), the doctrine of predestination can be placed at the “consummation” of the doctrine of reconciliation as “the final and decisive word.” This is the placement that Calvin chose in his 1539 *Institutes* and clarified in the final edition. Barth notes this placement in the list of *loci* provided at the beginning of but not followed by Melancthon’s 1521 *loci communes*, but does not recognize that this is also Melancthon’s model in the major 1543 redaction of the *loci*. Barth also noted the model in Bucanus’ *Institutiones theologicae* (1602), one of the few works of the seventeenth century to follow the model of Calvin’s *Institutes*.²⁴

Taken as a group, Barth argues, these last three approaches understand “election as the divine reality which controls the particular activity of salvation between God and man,” a point also made by the inclusion of the doctrine in relation to the church.²⁵ He notes, in support of his thesis, that placement of the doctrine whether at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the doctrine of reconciliation identified election as “the final word” in matters of salvation (and that, therefore, all three placements are roughly equivalent), the fact that Calvin placed the doctrine at the end of the sequence in his 1559 *Institutes* but at the beginning of the doctrine of reconciliation in the Gallican Confession of the same year—and had, in the 1537 catechism, opted for the middle position.

²² Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 84; cf. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *M. Vermilii loci communes* (London, 1576; editio secunda (much augmented), London, 1583); in translation, *The Common Places of Peter Martyr*, trans. Anthony Marten (London, 1583); Herman Witsius, *De oeconomia foederum Dei cum hominibus libri quattuor* (Leeuwarden, 1685; Utrecht, 1694); in translation, *The Oeconomy of the Covenants between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, 3 vols. (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1763; 2nd ed., rev. and corrected, 1775).

²³ William Ames, *Medulla ss. theologiae* (Amsterdam, 1623; London, 1630), I.xxv.

²⁴ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 84-86.

²⁵ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 87.

By way of conclusion, Barth argues that although each of these three latter placements has its virtues and that, taken together, all three rightly indicate that election “is the last or first or central word in the whole doctrine of reconciliation, he cannot accept this a-posteriori placement. The doctrine of reconciliation itself is “the first or last or central word in the whole Christian confession or the whole of Christian dogma.”²⁶ Election, therefore, must take precedence over every doctrine except the Christology—it is the ultimate “divine self-determination” that frames the entirety of dogmatics, indeed, the entirety of the biblical revelation.²⁷ These considerations lead Barth to reject Calvin’s so-called a-posteriori or soteriological placement of the doctrine and to place predestination in close relationship to the doctrine of God, much as in the Reformed orthodox systems and, indeed, as in the purported model chosen by Beza in the supposed establishment of the predestinarian system of “decretal theology.”

However interesting this divergence of interpretation of basic materials between Barth and various other twentieth-century writers may be, the more important issue for us here is that of the accuracy and usefulness of this structural analysis of the doctrine of predestination. As a preliminary critique of the idea of the placement of the doctrine having a major significance in the theological formulations of the Reformers and the orthodox, we note three points. First, for all his detail, Barth did not discover the entire paradigm for the various placements of the doctrine of predestination in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformed theology. In the above summary of Barth’s approach, we have already seen quite a few significant examples not identified by Barth—notably the ecclesiological association and placement of the doctrine in Zanchi, Perkins, Martinius, Witsius, and various later commentators on the Heidelberg Catechism, from Ursinus, Alsted, and Voetius, to Van der Kemp, and Tuinman.²⁸ Voetius, it should be noted, offers an infralapsarian placement in his *Syllabus problematum theologorum*, governed in part by an organizational distinction between the doctrine of God as creator and the doctrine of God as redeemer: Predestination opens the discussion of *Deus Redemptor*. Here, Voetius coupled the infralapsarian placement with a supralapsarian definition.²⁹ A

²⁶ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 87-88.

²⁷ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 89-91.

²⁸ Carolus Tuinman, *De Toelucht en Sterkte van het ware Christendom in Leven en Sterven, aangewezen in Vyf en Vyftig Predikaatsien over den Heidelbergischen Catechismus* (Amsterdam: Adriaan Wor, 1739), in Lord’s Day 21 (qq. 54-56), 376-78. Bernardus Smytegelt is a bit of an exception—he does not offer a section on predestination in his *Des Christens eenige troost in leven en sterven of verklaringe van de Heidelbergischen Catechismus in LII Predicatie* (Den Haag: Ottho en Pieter van Thol, 1742; reissued Utrecht: Den Hertog, 1981), but briefly defines election and reprobation in discussing Lord’s Day 7 (qq. 20-23), namely, as the foundation of salvation given the fall of humanity in Adam (92).

²⁹ Gisbertus Voetius, *Syllabus problematum theologorum: quae pro re nata proponi aut perstringi solent in privatis publicisque disputationum, examinum, collationum, consultationum exercitiis*, 2 parts (Utrecht: Aegidius Romanus, 1643), part 2, fol. Hh1 recto.

supralapsarian definition without any indication of systematic order is found in his *Selectae disputationes*,³⁰ and an infralapsarian placement and an indeterminate definition in his *Catechesatsie*.³¹ Voetius also understood the two views, supra- and infralapsarian, to be confessionally compatible,³² which surely accounts for the absence of the distinction from his catechism.

Within the models that Barth notes, moreover, there are doctrinal relationships that he omits, some of which may be offered as explanations of the order taken by a particular work, a point that we will take up shortly. In addition, there are significant placements of the doctrine—notably in the list of divine attributes located in the doctrine of the essence or nature of God—that he misses entirely, yet another point to be discussed below. Nor does Barth distinguish between actual placements of a *locus* on predestination into a document and allusions to the doctrine at certain points in a theological system—as in the case of the contrast between Calvin’s 1537 catechism (in which we have an actual *locus* on predestination between faith and justification) and his catechisms of 1542 and following (in which we find a reference or allusion to predestination in the context of the church and another in the discussion of prayer and no topical elaboration of the doctrine whatsoever).³³

Second, it is at least of interest that in his own discussion of these different models, Barth noted some doublets: Thus, he discussed Zwingli’s *Fidei ratio* in two places—as discussing predestination in relation to God, providence, and creation and then noting the doctrine again in the context of the church. We might add that the doctrine of election returns toward the end of the document when, after an extended discussion of the sacraments, Zwingli turns to discuss the preaching of the Word. Thus, there are three references to predestination or election in the *Fidei ratio*, and varied locations of both discussion and reference in Calvin’s catechisms, confessions, and *Institutes*, and (if we look far enough) in the various works of seventeenth-century Reformed writers such as Witsius. Given that the doctrine of predestination or election is similarly referenced in various places in the theological documents of the era, and is placed variously by the same theologians in different works of their own, we may question whether the various locations of the doctrine were intended to offer substantively differ-

³⁰ Gisbertus Voetius, *Selectae disputationes theologicae*, 5 vols. (Utrecht, 1648-1669), pars V, *De selectis quibusdam problematis*, pars III, §15 (602).

³¹ Gisbertus Voetius, *Catechesatsie; Dat is een grondige ende eenvoudige Onderwijsinge over de leere des Christelicken Catechismi*, ed. Abraham Kuyper, from the 1662 Poudroyen ed., 2 vols. (Rotterdam: Hüge, 1891), 1:544, 552 (unnumbered section following q. 54, the church). N.B., Voetius does add a brief discussion of the general decree of God prior to q. 26, on creation (1:309-12), but only to note that it establishes all things, not to introduce election and reprobation.

³² Voetius, *Selectae disputationes, pars I, De iure et iustitia Dei* (356-57).

³³ John Calvin, *Catechism*, in *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters*, ed. Henry Beveridge and Jules Bonnet, 7 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 2:50, 78.

ent nuances of meaning. They may simply be the result of differing confessional or pedagogical contexts or various traditionary relationships.

Third, Barth offers no evidence that the various placements reflect anything more than the relationships with other doctrines that are inherent in the Reformed definition of predestination. In other words, when the doctrine is placed in relation to the doctrine of God and prior to creation, its definition in that place does not lose relationship to Christology, to the various doctrines concerned with reconciliation, or to the church. Even so, when the doctrine of predestination is placed in the context of the *ordo salutis* or the church, it is still concerned with an eternal decree, before the foundation of the world, according to which some human beings are chosen by God to be the elect, apart from any foreseen merit or belief. The series of associations noted by Barth as indicated by the placement of the doctrine are in fact associations inherent in the definition itself, no matter what the placement. In fact, Barth's own concluding discussion, in which he argues that the nature of the doctrine itself indicates that it is the first, the last, and the central word in the doctrine of reconciliation and, therefore, also in the dogmatics as a whole, points in the direction of this conclusion concerning the historical materials rather than Barth's own.

The Location of the Doctrine of Predestination in Older Reformed Theologies

The Placement of Predestination by Calvin and Beza and Some of Their Contemporaries

Calvin offered his readers no explicit explanation for the placement of predestination in any of the editions of his *Institutes*. He did, however, leave us a series of clues to his organization that bears directly on the question of placement of the doctrine and its significance. First, he did not raise issues like those noted by Dowe in his brief comparison of Calvin's *Institutes* with a generalized picture of later Calvinism: Dowe contrasts Calvin's *ordo cognoscendi* with a later *ordo essendi*—a cognitive or epistemological order and an essential or ontic order.³⁴ As far as I can tell, neither Calvin nor later Reformed theologians use such language in describing the shape or structure of their more systematic works. Calvin specifically identifies the need to establish an *ordo recte docendi*, an order of right or correct teaching.³⁵ His primary concern in shaping the *Institutes*—as perhaps one ought to infer from its title, namely an “instruction in the Christian religion”—was neither epistemological nor ontological but

³⁴Cf. Dowe, *Knowledge of God*, 218, 241.

³⁵Ioannes Calvinus, *Institutio christianae religionis, in libros quatuor nunc primum digesta, certisque distincta capitibus, ad aptissimam methodum: aucta etiam tam magna accessione ut propemodum opus novum haberi possit* (Geneva: Robertus Stephanus, 1559), 1.i.3; and note the translation, John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

pedagogical. In other words, the primary implication of the order and placement of doctrines in the *Institutes* is not to convey a theological point other than that conveyed by the exposition of the topic itself, but rather to allow the topic to be understood in its scope and detail.

A close look at the development of Calvin's *Institutes* indicates that Calvin first added the doctrine of predestination to his work in 1539, perhaps because he was at that time involved in completing his commentary on Romans and predestination was one of the doctrinal *loci* that had arisen out of the work on the commentary. According to Calvin's approach to exegesis, it would not be included as a formal *locus* in the commentary but instead added to his "*disputationes*" in the *Institutes*. In 1539, Calvin wrote a chapter on providence and predestination and placed it eighth in order after the chapters on faith and creed (4), repentance (5), justification (6), and the relationship of the Old and New Testaments (7), and before the chapter on prayer (9).³⁶ As I have argued elsewhere, the topics added in 1539 and the order in which they appear reflects Melancthon's rhetorical analysis of the topics or *loci* in the epistle to the Romans.³⁷

In all of the editions prior to 1559, the chapter on providence and predestination remained in roughly the same place—while in 1559, as the chapters on the creed were separated out to become the anchors of the new four-book organization of the *Institutes*, and the chapter on the relationship of the Old and New Testaments was moved forward, out of its original location after justification and into the chapters leading up to the Christology, not predestination but providence was moved. Calvin retained the virtually original location of predestination (he reversed its order with the chapter on prayer) and moved providence into relation to his doctrine of God.³⁸ Far from making the causal patterning of the *Institutes* less rigorous, Calvin had in fact intensified it by retaining predestination as the causal focus of book 3 and creating a causal focus in book 1 with the doctrine of providence. There was, therefore, no conscious movement of the doctrine of predestination *away from* the doctrine of God. What is more, Calvin's 1539 *Institutes* chapter on predestination and his treatise *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* both draw out the connection between providence and predestination, a connection that is, certainly, not broken by the mere shifting of the placement of the topics.³⁹

³⁶ Ioannes Calvinus, *Institutio christianae religionis nunc vere demum suo titulo respondens* (Strasbourg: Rihel, 1539).

³⁷ Cf. Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 29-30, 95, 102-8, 118-39; with idem, "Ordo docendū: Melancthon and the Organization of Calvin's *Institutes*, 1536-1543," in *Melancthon in Europe: His Work and Influence beyond Wittenberg*, ed. Karin Maag (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 123-24.

³⁸ Cf. Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin*, 135-36.

³⁹ Cf. Calvin, *Institutio* (1539), ca 8; with John Calvin, *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione*, in CO 8, col. 249-366, trans. as *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, trans. with an intro. by J. K. S. Reid (London: James Clarke, 1961).

Barth also missed the close relationship between Calvin's arrangement of the *Institutes* and Melanchthon's modeling of the several editions of his *Loci communes*. This historical datum is also of considerable significance to the question given the development of synergistic tendencies in Melanchthon's views on predestination, grace, and free choice. Barth noted the a-posteriori or soteriological placement of the doctrine in the list of topics given by Melanchthon in his 1521 *Loci communes* and its similarity to the pattern of Calvin's 1539 *Institutes*: In 1521, although he did not elaborate on the topic of predestination, Melanchthon was fully monergistic in his soteriology—and, of course, Calvin's 1539 reflection of Melanchthon's order did offer a radically monergistic concept of predestination and election.⁴⁰ What is of significance to the present discussion is that, as Melanchthon moved away from Calvin on the subjects of predestination, grace, and free choice toward a synergistic understanding of those topics, he did not substantially alter the placement of his doctrine of predestination: Witness the 1543 *Loci communes*.⁴¹ The result is that Melanchthon's 1543 *Loci communes* and Calvin's 1559 *Institutes* retain certain structural similarities, particularly those resting on the Pauline order of topics early on argued by Melanchthon, but their definitions widely diverge. Placement of the doctrine, in both of these cases, has little bearing on the content of the *locus*. The reason for placement is the approximation of the order of Romans, for the sake of the right or proper teaching of the topics.⁴²

Among Calvin's contemporaries, Musculus and Hyperius also produced full sets of *loci communes*. Musculus, standing in some relation to the approach of Calvin and Melanchthon placed predestination into the soteriological series of doctrines, after discussions of the gospel, the Scriptures, ministry of the Word, and faith and immediately before repentance, justification, and good works. Musculus also offers some explanation of his decision to place a discussion of election and reprobation after faith: faith, he notes, as indicated in the discussion of that doctrine is not found in all people, but only in the elect, inasmuch as "it depends on the free election of the divine will." For this reason, the discussion of faith leads to consideration of predestination: This approach, Musculus comments, is "not unsuitable to the proper disposition of the topics (*recta locorum dispositionis*)" not as if election follows faith or as if one becomes elect on the basis of belief, but, that "after consideration of faith, it is no more unusual to approach election than after examining a river to return to the study of its source."⁴³ Of course, Musculus' definition of the doctrine observes the eternity of the decree

⁴⁰ Calvin, *Institutio* (1539), ca 8; cf. Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin*, 120-26.

⁴¹ Philip Melanchthon, *Loci communes* (1543), ca xiv, in *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, 28 vols., ed. C. G. Bretschneider (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1834-1860), 21, cols. 912-16. [Melanchthon's *Opera* are hereinafter cited as *CR*].

⁴² See the discussion in Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin*, 127-30.

⁴³ Wolfgang Musculus, *Loci communes sacrae theologiae* (Basel, 1563), ca 24 (404).

and the fact of election “before the foundation of the world.”⁴⁴ Like Calvin, Musculus has an interest in the proper order of teaching or the proper arrangement of the *loci*, not in imparting a new meaning to the doctrine.

Hyperius offers a more traditional model—and he does so, clearly because he has older dogmatic models in mind as the basis for his Protestant theological *Methodus*, notably those of John of Damascus and Peter Lombard. He discusses predestination because it is one of the topics identified in Holy Scripture; and he places it among the attributes of God, as he indicates, because it so well “illustrates the glory, mercy, and justice of God.”⁴⁵ Still, in his exposition of the doctrine, Hyperius emphasizes that election is in Christ, that it is an act of God’s grace, the foundation of our faith, and the “antecedent cause of our integrity”—indicating virtually all of the relationships of predestination with other doctrines.⁴⁶ Although his ordering of doctrines is different from Calvin’s, his purpose in establishing the arrangement is precisely the same: to identify a *methodus* or way through the topics that offers a suitable “order” or “way of teaching” (*docendi via*).⁴⁷

Beza, although he did not explain the placement of the doctrine, did, like Calvin, leave several models for arranging the topics of theology and, also like Calvin, he did make comments concerning the right order of topics for teaching the doctrine. Beza wrote some four presentations of Christian doctrine: his *Confession de la foy chrestienne* (1558), the *Autre brieve confession de la foi* (1561), the *Quaestionum et responsonum christianarum libellus* (1570-76), and the *Petit catéchisme* (1575). There is also the famous *Tabula praedestinationis* (1555/70)—but, inasmuch as it is a tract on predestination and not by any stretch of the imagination a body (or even an outline) of Christian doctrine, it does not bear at all on the question of the placement of the doctrine in a theological system.⁴⁸

None of these works, moreover, is a full-scale dogmatics elaborated to the detail either of Calvin’s *Institutes* or of a later system such as Polanus’ *Syntagma theologiae*. This seemingly minor datum raises the rather significant question of which document Brunner was speaking when he claimed that Beza placed predestination “at the beginning of his Dogmatics.”⁴⁹ The value of the claim is just a bit offset by the fact that Beza never wrote a dogmatics at the beginning of which he might have placed the doctrine of predestination—or, indeed, any other doctrine! As is the case with most of his slippery remarks concerning the

⁴⁴ Musculus, *Loci communes*, ca 24 (406).

⁴⁵ Andreas Hyperius, *Methodus theologiae, sive praecipuorum Christianae religionis locorum communium, libri tres* (Basel, 1567), 182.

⁴⁶ Hyperius, *Methodus theologiae*, 186, 189.

⁴⁷ Hyperius, *Methodus theologiae*, 1.

⁴⁸ Cf. Muller, “Use and Abuse of a Document,” 34-35; idem, *Christ and the Decree*, 79-83.

⁴⁹ Brunner, *Christian Doctrine of God*, 345.

history of Christian doctrine, Brunner offers no documentation for his claim—most probably because he had none. Similarly, Hall’s claim that Beza echoed Aquinas’ placement and thereby reintroduced a speculative determinism is nullified by the fact that Aquinas’ theology was not a speculative determinism—and, moreover, that Aquinas did not move from the doctrine of God to the doctrine of providence to the doctrine of predestination. Rather Aquinas treated both providence and predestination within the doctrine of God as predicates of God, and then, went on to conclude the doctrine of God with a series of other attributes and the doctrine of the Trinity. Beza never produced anything remotely reminiscent of Aquinas’ pattern of organization, and, in any case, Hall’s description of the order and the problem does not resemble either Aquinas’ teaching or Beza’s.⁵⁰

Beza’s *Confession de la foy* offers what is perhaps a unique approach to the location of predestination: He adopts a christological placement—not, as in the Gallican or Belgic Confessions, between the doctrine of sin and the Christology; nor, as in Bullinger’s slightly more nuanced approach in the *Second Helvetic Confession*, following the problem of human free choice and before the Christology; and not as in the systems of Vermigli-Massonius and Ames, after the Christology and before the order of salvation. Beza places the doctrine of predestination into the Christology itself, after his basic statement of the identity of the person of Christ and prior to his discussion of the human nature, necessity of the mediator, and Christ’s saving work.⁵¹ This arrangement is, as far as I know, unique—found also only in the *Confessio Hungarica* (1562), which was modeled on Beza’s work.⁵² Beza’s emphasis in his shorter confession is, similarly, Christ’s work of satisfaction, but here he offers no doctrine of predestination at all.

Beza’s *Quaestionum et responsionum christianarum libellus* (1570-76) begins with a brief discussion of God, moves on to discuss Scripture as the Word of God, then Trinity, Christ, Christ’s benefits and their application, faith, justification, sanctification, providence, and predestination. Then, in the second volume, he continues with the church, sacraments, prayer, and Christian hope. Here, too, we lack the purported Bezan predestinarian arrangement: Predestination is, literally, at the other end of the book from the doctrine of God, in fact, reflecting

⁵⁰ Cf. the discussion of Beza’s several arrangements of the topics of theology in Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 83-85, 89, 95.

⁵¹ Theodore Beza, *Confession de la foy chrestienne, contenant la confirmation d’icelle, et la refutation des superstitions contraires*, 2nd ed. (1558; reprt, 1561); also *Confessio christianae fidei* (Geneva, 1560; London, 1575), 3:v-vi.

⁵² Viz., *Compendium doctrinae christianae, quam omnes Pastores et Ministri ecclesiarum Dei in tota Ungaria et Transsylvania, quae incorruptum Iesu Christi Evangelium amplexae sunt, docent ac profitentur*, in E. F. K. Müller, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche. In authentischen Texten mit geschichtlicher Einleitung und Register* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1903), 376-449.

Calvin's 1539 placement in the *Institutes*.⁵³ Then, there is the famous *Tabula praedestinationis*, in which Beza sets forth in a diagram the order of the causes of salvation and damnation. The work is a brief tract, not a theological system, and although the diagram identified predestination as an eternal decree in God, the text attached to the diagram indicates that the order of teaching ought to follow a Pauline pattern and begin with sin and the law and move through grace and faith to the topic of predestination.⁵⁴ In short, there is no work of Beza that sets forth an order of discussion or teaching in which predestination stands in relation to the doctrine of God. In fact, Beza's argument in the *Tabula* is a clear reflection of the Pauline method adopted by the *Institutes*. Of course Beza places predestination in God in the diagram, just as he defines it in his text—in accord with Calvin—as an eternal decree. However, the definition, whether given in words or in diagrammatic form, is not reflected by the placement of the doctrine in the order of teaching.⁵⁵

A word is in order here concerning the Vermigli *Loci communes*. Barth identifies the placement of predestination in this work as a soteriological placement, virtually identical with the placement in Calvin's 1537 catechism and related in spirit to the placement of the doctrine in the 1559 *Institutes*. There is no reason to dissent from this analysis, but it does need to be augmented and refined from the historical data: the Vermigli *Loci communes* was, after all, not the compilation of Vermigli, but of Robert Masson, after Vermigli's death. The order of the work was based, intentionally, on that of Calvin's 1559 *Institutes*—thus the resemblance in order and arrangement of topics. The shifting of predestination from the end of the *ordo salutis* to the beginning was, therefore, a conscious departure from Calvin's arrangement and, probably, in the mind of Masson, a clearer and better order.⁵⁶ This means, in the first place, that we are not exactly dealing here with an utter alternative model but one that actually grew out of the other and assumed some of its logic as a ground of revision. Second, and more importantly, this editorial history also indicates that there is no necessary relationship at all between the definition of predestination (which is Vermigli's) and the placement of the doctrine (which is Masson's).

⁵³ Theodore Beza, *Quaestionum et responsionum christianarum libellus, in quo praecipua Christianae religionis capita kat' epitome proponuntur* (Geneva, 1570); and *Quaestionum et responsionum christianarum libellus pars altera, quae est de sacramentis* (Geneva, 1576).

⁵⁴ Theodore Beza, *Summa totius christianismi, sive descriptio & distributio causarum salutis electorum & exitii reprobatorum, ex sacris literis collecta [Tabula praedestinationis]* (Geneva, 1555), in *Tractationes theologicae*, 3 vols. (Geneva, 1570-82), 1:170-205.

⁵⁵ Cf. Muller, "Use and Abuse of a Document," 33-61.

⁵⁶ See Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Loci communes D. Petri Martyris Vermilii ... ex variis ipsius auctoris scriptis, in unum librum collecti & in quatuor Classes distributi, editio secunda* (London: Thomas Vautrollerius, 1583), 3:i; and note the infralapsarian definition, *ibid.*, 3:i.10.

Predestination in the Theological Systems of the Reformed Orthodox

Although the majority of Reformed theologians in the era of orthodoxy, when compiling their academic or scholastic theologies (and this is an important qualification!) did discuss predestination under the rubric of the eternal decree, immediately following the doctrine of God and prior to the doctrine of creation, this order—contrary to Barth’s sense of the problem of beginning with the notion of a general decree that establishes God’s relationship with the world and then moving on to a special decree of God’s election in which the relationship of humanity to Jesus Christ is established—offers a fair amount of variety of design in and of itself. Thus, whereas Alsted (who is not cited by Barth) does follow out Barth’s description, van Mastricht (who is cited by Barth) does not. Polanus and Wollebius, both noted in Barth’s discussion, also adhere to the model that he notes. Alsted moves from a discussion of the “decrees of God in general” to the “decree of providence” as a general decree, establishing all things, to the “decree of predestination,” consisting in election and reprobation. Alsted’s doctrine, although indicating a double decree and placed thus prior to creation, is consistently infralapsarian, even defining reprobation as a decree to “leave” the nonelect in the fallen mass of humanity to be damned for their own sins.⁵⁷ Alsted also returns to the providential governance of the world after he has discussed creation.⁵⁸

Mastricht and Turretin, by way of contrast, move directly from the chapter “on the actions and decrees of God” to discuss predestination, election, and reprobation. They follow this with the doctrine of creation and come to providence only after they have discussed the creation of angels and men—so that in their theological models, the relationship of predestination and providence is not as broadly emphasized as that of the part to the whole as it is by Alsted.⁵⁹ Nor should it be omitted that Mastricht and Turretin differed over the issue of supra- and infralapsarian definitions of the doctrine: Whereas both chose the prior or supralapsarian placement, Mastricht argued the compatibility of the supra- and infralapsarian definitions, given that God’s ordination of humanity assumed a movement from possibility to actuality in which the objects of divine decreeing or ordination are, first, possible human beings capable of falling and, second, actual human beings having fallen. Turretin, by way of contrast

⁵⁷ Cf. Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Definitiones theologicae secundum ordinem locorum communium traditae* (Hainau, 1631), ca v-vii. The pattern is identical in Alsted’s lengthier *Theologia didactica* (Hainau, 1627).

⁵⁸ Alsted, *Definitiones theologicae*, ca 9.

⁵⁹ Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Henricus & Theodorus Boom, 1682-1687), 3:i-iv, x.

chose the supralapsarian placement and then argued strenuously for the infralapsarian definition.⁶⁰

What is more, in Alsted's and Turretin's definitions, as in Aquinas' view, the identification of providence as the general and predestination as the special aspect of God's decree (even the identification found primarily among the Medievals of predestination as a "part" of providence), never means, as is sometimes claimed, that predestination is subordinated to providence. Even when predestination is placed after providence, it remains the higher and more ultimate will of God, with "actual providence" (the execution of the general decree) providing the temporal context for the execution of the special decree. Providence governs the temporal life and leads human beings toward the goal resident within their created nature, whereas predestination draws them to their eternal goal, beyond the gifts of their created nature.⁶¹ This recognition of the more ultimate end of predestination, moreover, stands directly in relation to the connection established by Calvin between the two doctrines in the 1539, 1543, and 1550 editions of the *Institutes* and the treatise *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* (where the doctrines are juxtaposed)—leading to the conclusion, once again, of a continuity of definition and meaning even when the question of placement is resolved differently.⁶² Calvin's arrangement of topics puts predestination, as executed, into the context of the divinely governed providential order—without in any way altering the fact that Calvin understood the decree as an eternal divine willing.⁶³

Although a majority of the Reformed orthodox did not discuss the doctrine of predestination as an integral part of the *locus de Deo*, several of the more important Reformed theologians of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Hyperius, Zanchi, Junius, and Maccovius, did discuss the decree among

⁶⁰ Cf. Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, 3:ii.12-13; with Turretin, *Institutio theologiae elencticae*, 3 vols. (Geneva, 1679-85), 4:xviii.4-5, 21-23; and note Barth's analysis of Mastricht's approach, *Church Dogmatics*, 2:2, 132-33. In the following discussion, the terms *supra-* and *infralapsarian* are used as typically defined in the seventeenth century, supralapsarian indicating an understanding of the human objects of creation as above or prior to the Fall in the order of the eternal decree, *creabilis et labilis* or *creatus et labilis*, infralapsarian indicating an understanding of the objects of election as below the Fall in the order of the eternal decree, *creatus et labilis*. Given that the terms *supra-* and *infralapsarian* did not become current and the issues raised by the terms were not debated before the very end of the sixteenth century, there remains an element of anachronism in the discussion. Still, the application of the terms to various definitions of predestination serves to distinguish between what can be called a supra- or infralapsarian placement of the doctrine in a work of theology, either before or after the discussion of the Fall, and a supra- or infralapsarian *definition* of the eternal decree regardless of where it is discussed.

⁶¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae cura fratrum in eiusdem ordinis*, 5 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1962-65), Ia, q. 23, art 1.

⁶² Contra the conclusion in Wendel, *Calvin*, 268; cf. the discussion in Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 23-24 and below, 3.2 (C.4-5).

⁶³ Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xxi.5.

the divine attributes.⁶⁴ This is, moreover, a rather distinctive placement that appears to have been entirely missed by Barth. These writers, in other words, did not juxtapose the doctrine of predestination and the doctrine of God by moving through the discussion of the divine essence and attributes to the doctrine of the Trinity and then, following the Trinity, offering a *locus* on the decrees—they included predestination within the doctrine of God itself among the divine attributes.

Examination of this placement of the doctrine and of its systematic relationships demonstrates three things. First, because only two of the writers who followed this pattern, Junius and Maccovius, were supralapsarian,⁶⁵ placement of the decree among the divine attributes is not in itself indicative of a supralapsarian doctrine of predestination: Hyperius and Zanchi were infralapsarian.⁶⁶ Thus, second, what might be called a radically “supralapsarian placement” of predestination in relation to the doctrine of God did not result either in a highly speculative theological model or in a *supralapsarian definition* of the doctrine. Instead, third, it represents the Protestant orthodox use of medieval systematic models such as those found in the *Summa theologica* of Alexander of Hales or the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, both of which place the doctrine of predestination in relation to the divine attributes or predicates inasmuch as predestination must be predicated of God.⁶⁷

We noted, previously, the one early orthodox writer who modeled his theology largely on the pattern of Calvin’s 1559 *Institutes*. Gulielmus Bucanus arrives at the doctrine of predestination in his thirty-sixth *locus* (after the order of salvation (faith, repentance, justification, and related issues), Christian liberty, and prayer) just prior to his discussion of the last things,⁶⁸ the location identified by Barth as expressing the “consummation” of the doctrine of reconcilia-

⁶⁴ In the cases of Zanchi and Maccovius, this is not the only association or placement of the decree. We have already noted Zanchi’s ecclesiological discussion of the doctrine—and there is the infralapsarian placement of predestination in between the doctrines of creation and providence in his *Distinctiones et Regulae Theologicae ac Philosophicae*, ed., Nicholas Arnold (Oxford: Henry Hall, 1656), ca vi-vii.

⁶⁵ Franciscus Junius, *Theses theologicae Leydenses*, x, 10; xi.2-3, in F. Junius, *Opuscula theologica selecta*, ed. Abraham Kuyper (Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1882); Johannes Maccovius, *Loci communes theologici* (Amsterdam, 1658), xxv (205, 208-10).

⁶⁶ Hyperius, *Methodus theologiae*, 182-186; Zanchi, *De natura Dei*, in *Operum theologicorum D. Hieronymi Zanchii*, 10 vols. in 9 (Geneva: Samuel Crispin, 1617-1619), 2:col. 485; cf. the similar definitions in idem, *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, in *Opera*, 8:col. 307; idem, *De ecclesia*, in *Opera*, 7:2, col. 65; also Zanchi, *De religione christiana fides*, 3:iii; and note the discussion in Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 112, 116.

⁶⁷ Cf. Alexander of Hales, *Summa theologica*, ed. B. Klumper, 4 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1924-1948), Lib. I, inq.1, tr. 5, q. 4, tit. 1-5 (1:315-59); with Aquinas, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 23.

⁶⁸ Gulielmus Bucanus, *Body of Divinity, or: Institutions of Christian Religion*, trans. R. Hill (London: Daniel Pakeman, 1659), xxxvi (445-73).

tion in its “final and decisive word.” What is remarkable here is that Bucanus accepts this so-called a-posteriori placement but then begins his discussion with a set of definitions that distinguish providence and predestination despite his earlier discussion of providence in the fourteenth *locus*. He then sets out the divine knowledge or foreknowledge and predestination, indicating that predestination can refer either to the eternal purpose or decree of God or to the divine disposition of rational creatures toward their ends in election and reprobation—a model that presents the decree or predestination as the initial divine intention.⁶⁹ Bucanus’ definition of the decree itself, moreover, in contrast to his placement of the doctrine, has a supralapsarian accent, although his subsequent definition of election and its objects is infralapsarian.⁷⁰ We note the contrast with several of his contemporaries: Polanus, Wollebius, and Alsted all adopt the supralapsarian placement of the doctrine but argue a distinctly infralapsarian definition.⁷¹ The Leiden *Synopsis*, which, to be precise, sets forth a series of the Fall, sin, free choice, the law, idolatry, oaths, the Sabbath, the gospel, and the Old and New Testaments, prior to coming to predestination and then Christology, also argues an infralapsarian definition—but not precisely in the order indicated by Barth.⁷²

As Van Asselt has observed, aspects of the doctrine of predestination are discussed in various places in Cocceius’ *Summa theologiae*. Cocceius comes to the discussion of the decree first in his fifth *locus*, after the doctrine of the Trinity and prior to creation. Then, in the fourteenth *locus*, after providence and sin and prior to the introduction of the temporal economy of salvation, Cocceius again takes up the discussion, returning to it in *locus* eighteen in relation to the election or adoption of Israel. Cocceius’ stated intention in thus dispersing the topic is not, as Barth hypothesized, to forge a path from the problem of sin to the work of redemption in Christ but to show that the eternal decree or counsel of God is the cause of all things, governs both good and evil, and is related both to grace and to judgment.⁷³ His basic definitions are infralapsarian.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Bucanus, *Institutions*, xxxvi (445–48).

⁷⁰ Bucanus, *Institutions*, xxxvi (452, 457).

⁷¹ Thus, Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf, *Partitiones theologiae christianae*, Pars I–II (Basel, 1590–1596), 1:vi (11); Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium theologiae christianae* (Basel, 1626; Oxford, 1657), 1:iv.2.3, and canon vi; Alsted, *Definitiones theologiae*, ca v–vii.

⁷² *Synopsis purioris theologiae, disputationibus quinquaginta duabus comprehensa ac conscripta per Johannem Polyandrum, Andream Rivetum, Antonium Walaerum, Antonium Thysium* (Leiden, 1625; editio sexta, curavit et praefatus est Dr. H. Bavinck. Leiden: Donner, 1881), xxiv.

⁷³ Willem J. van Asselt, *The Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669)*, trans. Raymond A. Blacketer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 201–3; cf. Johannes Cocceius, *Summa theologiae ex Scriptura repetita*, in *Opera omnia theologica, exegetica, didactica, polemica, philologica*, 12 vols. (Amsterdam, 1701–1706), vol. 7, loci 5, 14, 18.

⁷⁴ Cocceius, *Summa theologiae*, 18:xxxiii.1.

The dispersion of the doctrine of the decrees conjoined with a discussion of predestination after creation, sin, and providence and prior to the doctrines of Christ and salvation also appears in the high orthodox theology of Benedict Pictet—and, what is more, with a fairly clear explanation of the reason for the pattern.⁷⁵ Had Barth encountered Pictet's *Theologia christiana*, he would have had the choice, given his paradigm, of identifying Pictet's approach as similar to that of the Gallican and Belgic Confessions, placing predestination as the first word in the doctrine of reconciliation—or, in view of Pictet's movement from providence to predestination, understanding predestination, as he had in the case of Zwingli's *Fidei ratio*, as “the crown and completion of the doctrine of providence.” Pictet, however, clearly has something else in mind in his ordering of the materials, despite his genuine reflection of the confessional order. Pictet had discussed the decrees of God in a general *locus* immediately following his doctrine of God—the supralapsarian placement—and had, there, offered a detailed and pointedly infralapsarian description of the order of the decrees.⁷⁶ He then inserted his discussion of the subtopics of his analysis of the decrees not in the general *locus* on the decrees but in separate discussions at the point in the system where the execution of the decree in the temporal order becomes relevant. Thus, a *locus* on the decree to permit the fall of angels and human beings (including the discussion of the actual Fall and sin) intervenes between creation and providence;⁷⁷ while providence follows creation and, indeed, follows the Fall, in order that the issue of providence and evil can be addressed.⁷⁸ So also does the doctrine of predestination follow creation and Fall, and indeed, providence, not because it is “the crown and completion of the doctrine of providence” or, indeed, because it is the first word in the doctrine of reconciliation, but because in his view the object of the decree is humanity resident in the created and providentially governed order of the world and fallen into sin.⁷⁹ The governing issue in placement, for Pictet, is the right identification of the object of the decree as created and fallen humanity, but this is, of course, a doctrinal definition that he shared with numerous Reformed theologians who chose to discuss predestination in a different place in their systems.

Placement Versus Definition: An Attempt at Evaluation

From the perspective of the various definitions of predestination offered by the Reformed theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it becomes immediately clear that the placement of the doctrine does not, shall

⁷⁵ Benedict Pictet, *Theologia christiana ex puris ss. literarum fontibus hausta* (Geneva, 1696), 7:i-viii.

⁷⁶ Pictet, *Theologia christiana*, 3:i-iii.

⁷⁷ Pictet, *Theologia christiana*, 5:i-x.

⁷⁸ Pictet, *Theologia christiana*, 6, with ca v-vi on providence and sin.

⁷⁹ Pictet, *Theologia christiana*, 7:2.i.

we say, predetermine its meaning. Thus, the location of the doctrine of predestination above creation and the Fall and in some relation to the doctrine of God—a nominally supralapsarian *placement*—does not necessarily correspond, in the theological systems themselves, with a supralapsarian *definition*. Indeed, definition quite frequently did not absolutely govern the placement of the doctrine. Zanchi, for example, discussed predestination among the divine attributes in his treatise *De natura Dei*, but he also took note of the doctrine in his *De ecclesia*. In both instances, the definition indicates a divine election of some out of the fallen and condemned mass of humanity, a classic infralapsarian definition.⁸⁰ The apparent reason for his discussion of predestination among the divine attributes was Zanchi's reception and use of medieval theology. Following the logic of Alexander of Hales' and Thomas Aquinas' *Summas*, he asked "whether predestination can be predicated of God" and, given his positive answer, placed the decrees with the other divine predicates.

A similar logic is evident in Maccovius' *Loci communes theologici*, where the decree is also discussed among the divine attributes, albeit Maccovius does define the doctrine in a primarily supralapsarian manner as well as give it a supralapsarian placement. Maccovius' definition also raises an interesting issue with regard to the whole question of supra and infralapsarianism—for, unlike those who engaged in heated debate over the definitions (for example, Twisse and Turretin), Maccovius noted that God can and does understand the objects of his decree as *homo condendus, conditus, permittendus in lapsu*, and *lapsus*, conjoining and potentially reconciling the supra and infra perspectives.⁸¹ Several later writers, notably Mastricht, Gill, and Brown of Haddington, also viewed the supra and infra definitions as reconcilable even as they adopted a supralapsarian placement of the doctrine in their theologies.⁸²

It is important to note here, against any and all assumptions concerning the theologically determinative nature of the placement of the doctrine, that the so-called a-priori placement, in relation to the doctrine of God and prior to creation, stands in absolutely no relationship with the individual theologians' choice of a supralapsarian or infralapsarian definition of the doctrine. This is despite the persistence on the part of some modern writers to declare any notion of a decree of predestination prior to the event of creation to be

⁸⁰ Zanchi, *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, in *Opera*, 8:cols. 305-7; *De natura Dei*, in *Opera*, 2:col. 481, 485; *De ecclesia*, in *Opera*, 7:2, col. 65; contra Otto Gründler, *Die Gotteslehre Girolami Zanchis und ihre Bedeutung für seine Lehre von der Prädestination* (Neukirchen: Neukirchner Verlag, 1965), 112.

⁸¹ Maccovius, *Loci communes*, xxv (209).

⁸² John Gill, *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity: or A System of Evangelical Truths Deduced from the Sacred Scriptures, with A Dissertation Concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes*, 2 vols. (1769-70; reissued, London: Tegg & Company, 1839; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978); John Brown of Haddington, *A Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion*. In 7 books (Glasgow: John Bryce for J. Matthews, 1782; second ed. revised, Edinburgh: Murray and Cochrane, 1796; reissued, Philadelphia: David Hogan, Griggs & Co., 1819).

supralapsarian. At one of Calvin's most thoroughly infralapsarian moments, McNeill identified his views as supralapsarian solely on this mistaken ground, and Gründler, equally mistakenly, made Zanchi out to be supralapsarian on the basis of his placement of the doctrine in the *De natura Dei*.⁸³ We are struck by the fact that the supralapsarian definition offered by Beza never led him to a supralapsarian placement of the doctrine in any of his works on the subject; that a supralapsarian such as Perkins would place the doctrine in his ecclesiology; and, conversely, that infralapsarians, such as Zanchi, Alsted, and Turretin, chose a supralapsarian placement of the doctrine in their disputations and systems. The infralapsarian Yates, like Perkins and Alsted, chose an ecclesiological placement in his creedal-catechetical *Modell of Divinitie*.⁸⁴

Then, we have the example of several theologians who, even in the era of orthodoxy, offered different placements of the doctrine in different works, albeit without alteration of the content of the doctrine. We have registered this point in some detail already in the case of Beza, and it can be extended to Zanchi, Perkins (if his *Golden Chaine* is viewed as establishing a systematic order), Alsted, Martinius,⁸⁵ Maccovius, Voetius, and Witsius as well. When, therefore, theologians of the era of orthodoxy placed the doctrine of predestination in relation to the doctrine of God in their more or less systematic works, but referenced it in other places, notably under ecclesiology in their creedal and catechetical theologies (all the while maintaining consistent definition, whether infra or supralapsarian), it becomes highly improbable that placement of the doctrine was in any way conjoined to variations in content and meaning. Rather, in different literary genres belonging to the work of the theologian, differing didactic issues relate to the placement of the doctrine in terms of one or more of the relationships that it would carry with it in any case. These differing placements by the same theologian also stand in the way of the theory of the predestinarian system as presented by Emil Brunner, Basil Hall, and others, in which the so-called movement of the predestination into relationship with the doctrine of God signals a major doctrinal claim. The rigid, logic-chopping scholastics to whom the model is attributed would appear to have been quite lax in the application of their own logic.

The many instances of the placement of the doctrine in the ecclesiology, found most typically in creedal expositions, catechisms, and in lectures or sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism, deserve special note. In the first place, these examples are not separable—given that the ecclesiological placement in

⁸³ Cf. McNeill's note 5 to Calvin, *Institutes*, 2:xii.5; with Gründler, *Die Gotteslehre Girolami Zanchis*, 112.

⁸⁴ Yates, *Modell of Divinitie*, 257-59.

⁸⁵ Cf. Matthias Martinius, *Disputationes theologicae ad summulam s. theologiae enarrandam publice habitatum, decas prima* (Bremen: Johann Wessel, 1611), 9 (145 ff.), with idem, *Christiana et catholica fides, quam symbolum apostolicum vocamus* (Bremen: Thomas Viller, 1618), 3:2.

the catechism is in fact the creedal model. Historically, moreover, Calvin's *Catechism* of 1542 and following, and Ursinus' lectures on the Heidelberg Catechism may have also inspired the ecclesiological placement of the doctrine in such expositions of the creed as those by Perkins and Witsius. Arguably, particularly in later commentaries on the Heidelberg Catechism, this ecclesiological location of predestination was not the result of major theological analysis of the problem of placement on the part of seventeenth-century authors but merely the maintenance of the tradition of locating the doctrine in this place.

Perhaps even more importantly, those few theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who actually do explain issues of placement and order of teaching—notably Calvin, Hyperius, Musculus, Beza, and Pictet—do not offer explanations that resemble the arguments about implications of placement found in Barth, Brunner, Dowey, and Hall. In Calvin's *Institutes*, the issue was not to highlight either a noetic over against an ontic model but to establish, as Calvin himself indicated, a pedagogically suitable model. Beza, as we have seen, distinguished between the diagrammatic placement of predestination as first in the order of causes of salvation and the order to be used for teaching the doctrine—in which he followed fairly precisely Calvin's 1539 Pauline ordering. Similarly, Pictet chose to follow the model established by his infralapsarian ordering of the decrees—so that, one may again say, pedagogically, his system followed an outline that resembled the patterning of its own definition, so that the decree to bring about a particular series of events is discussed prior to the discussion of those events.

This pedagogical concern, as the dominant issue in determining the order of a theology and the relative placement of individual topics, reflects, moreover, the *locus* method followed by nearly all of the Reformed writers of the eras of the Reformation and orthodoxy: the formulation of a theological system or body of doctrine consisted, first, in the identification (on the basis of exegesis and traditional norms) of a series of *loci communes theologici*, commonplaces or standard topics and, second, in the establishment of a suitable *methodus* or path through the topics for the sake of teaching the whole in a suitable manner.⁸⁶ Indeed, as a historically contextual counter hypothesis to the notion of profound theological implications associated with the placement of predestination, we can offer a pedagogical explanation: The forward or a-priori placement in its several variants corresponds, for the most part, with the highly developed and detailed academic model, identified by the Protestant orthodox as scholastic in its method. The ecclesiological placement of the doctrine corresponds with the forms of catechetical theology. The placement in the several variants of the Pauline order belongs, typically, to a middle category of positive theology, such as might be taken by a confession of faith or a basic teaching manual. In the cases of Calvin's *Institutio* and Bucanus' *Institutiones*, this middle

⁸⁶ See the further discussion and bibliography in Muller, *After Calvin*, 49-51, 57-60.

category between catechetical and scholastic/academic is surely identified in the title, *institutio* or fundamental instruction, as is also the case of Bucanus' work by the use of a question and answer format.⁸⁷ All of these categories or models, by the way, were noted by the Protestant orthodox as basic forms of their teaching—and, moreover, the emphasis on pedagogy reflects the concerns of the Renaissance rhetoric and logic at the historical root of the *locus* method itself.⁸⁸

In short, the various placements of the doctrine indicate decisions to teach the doctrine according to differing patterns rather than decisions to impart different meanings to the doctrine. Nor is it the case that placement results in a new or different doctrinal emphasis, inasmuch as the various placements themselves represent different relationships and associations already present within the definitions of predestination and related doctrines rather than new associations created by the placement. None of the various placements presses one or another of the associations between predestination and other doctrines to the exclusion of other doctrinal relationships. In other words, the placements do, in fact, indicate genuine understandings of doctrinal relationships, but it is not the placement that creates the relationships. Nor does the placement argue a particular relationship to be determinative of the meaning of the doctrine beyond what has been already established by the definition.

What is more, in most of the theologians and theological systems noted, the basis for a particular placement of the doctrine (given that placement does not affect the definition) is most likely a pedagogical or traditionary choice rather than a dogmatic claim. The majority of seventeenth-century writers, including those who agreed with Pictet on the ordering of the decrees, still placed predestination after the doctrine of God and before creation, taking both a pedagogically motivated and a traditionary approach. We should not assume on the part of any of these writers that the placement of predestination was arrived at after a great amount of meditation on the theological implications of order and arrangement. The same is true for those later writers who continue the tradition of alluding to or reciting the doctrine of predestination as a part of the exposition of the creedal doctrine of the church. They followed, in other words, the path of least resistance and simply accepted the standard form of dogmatic or catechetical system that they had inherited and then, without any great worry about the order defining their doctrines for them, proceeded to define each doctrine, including that of predestination, within its own *locus* and in its traditional relationships and associations, as modified by their confessional adherence and personal proclivities.

These historical evidences lead us to the rather inevitable historiographical conclusion that nearly all of the extant discussions of the placement of prede-

⁸⁷ Cf. the discussion of *institutio* in Muller, *Unaccommodated Calvin*, 104-8, 142-43, 149.

⁸⁸ On which, see *PRRD*, 1:36, 59, 106-7, 110, 178-81, 198, 202, 446-47.

tionation in the Reformed theologies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been fundamentally misguided. They have consistently confused placement with definition. Frequently they have inferred a supralapsarian definition from a placement of the doctrine prior to the Fall. They have also made the mistake of assuming that a soteriological or a-posteriori placement of the doctrine implies a softening of the rigors of predestination even though such placement has little or no discernible effect on the definition. Contra Dowey who claimed that Calvin's placement of the doctrine "never sees the believer as in direct connection with the precreation decrees,"⁸⁹ one might conclude that, if placement were an issue, Calvin's placement had precisely the opposite implication. In the *Institutes*, Calvin's definition of what Dowey calls precreation decrees is placed into the context of Christian life, whereas in the typical Reformed orthodox model, the precreation decrees are discussed in advance of any direct reflection on the life of the believer, in the place implied by their basic definition, namely, before creation. In fact, neither Calvin nor the later orthodox understand the decree itself in direct connection with the believer, given that election is not an immediate or unmediated act of God but is always understood as being executed by way of secondary causes.

What is even more precarious in these formulations is that they take the supralapsarian or precreation placement of the doctrine as emblematic of a speculative and deductive model, when the most that can be said of this placement is that it relates the doctrine at the point in the system at which God wills the decree, namely in God's eternity, prior to the foundation of the world, which (however one defines the relationship between the decree and its human objects) is no more and no less than the assumption of the entire church (including various semi-Pelagians and Arminians) since the writing of Ephesians 1:4. Contra Brunner and those who follow his thesis, the placement of the doctrine of predestination in relationship with God is hardly speculative—at least no more speculative than the implication of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians. With regard to Barth's argumentation, it is clear that the various placements of the doctrine of predestination in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Reformed theologies do illustrate the different doctrinal relationships that are to be established between the notion of divine decrees and the other topics in Reformed theology, but it is equally clear that these relationships, latent in the doctrine and its basic definition, obtain in virtually all cases of its statement whatever its placement in the outline of a theological system.

In short, the placement of the doctrine of predestination in the Reformed theologies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was, primarily, a matter of genre. Given, moreover, the various placements of the doctrine found throughout the era, there is no evidence for the claim characteristic of an earlier scholarship, that there was a shift in doctrinal implication signaled by a shift

⁸⁹ Dowey, *Knowledge of God*, 186.

in the placement of the doctrine in the generations after Calvin. There is certainly no evidence to uphold the claim that there was a movement from a-posteriori to a-priori placement—as there is no evidence for the claim that a-posteriori placement evidenced a soteriological or Christological emphasis and a-priori placement a metaphysical interest. These explanations amount to the imposition of what Quentin Skinner has called a “mythology of coherence” on the materials of the past. Frankly, it is a mythology the roots of which do not go back before the twentieth century. The placement of the doctrine in any given theological treatise was not an indication of the author’s intention to highlight a particular doctrinal relationship or give a particular cast or emphasis to his theology. Rather, it was an indication of the specific genre and purpose of the document, indeed, an indication of which traditional genre had been selected by the author as a vehicle for the statement of his theology.