

## PREFACE

Among the many figures who crowd the sixteenth-century stage, the lay reformer Katharina Schütz Zell was an outstanding leader of the often invisible players who brought the new Protestant teaching down to earth for “ordinary” people. Katharina Schütz was probably born in early 1498, one of a number of children in a family of artisans, solid citizens of the free imperial city of Strasbourg. A devout young girl, she received a good vernacular education, reading and writing German fluently although she knew very little Latin. The focus of Katharina Schütz’s life was her faith, and she often mentions her dedication to God’s service at the age of ten. The message proclaimed by Martin Luther and others, and actively spread by Strasbourg’s popular cathedral pastor Matthew Zell, became the second definitive moment in the young Christian’s life. Though convinced of personal faith from childhood, Katharina’s girlhood was troubled by fears of never being able to do enough to earn God’s grace. And thus the call to justification by faith alone came to her as a wonderful freedom, drawing her up “out of the grim bitter hell to the lovely sweet heaven,” and orienting her lifelong vocation as a “fisher of people” until her death on 5 September 1562.<sup>1</sup>

The public ministry of Katharina Schütz began not long after she became a follower of “the gospel,” as it was called, the new Biblical teaching of Christ as the sole savior by grace alone. Being a “fisher of people” meant witnessing to Christ’s saving work and acting in obedience to God’s Word to love her neighbors as herself. The first visible step in this program was marriage to a priest and Strasbourg’s first Protestant reformer, Matthew Zell, as their common act of witness to the authority of scripture in the church and in their lives. During the first year of marriage, Katharina Schütz published her first two booklets. One was a letter of consolation to the women of the city of Kentzingen who were suffering for their Protestant confession. The second was a defense of clerical marriage

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<sup>1</sup> Conversion account in *Ein Brieff*, at nn.16ff, quotation at n.20.

as Biblical and moral, based on a letter originally written to Strasbourg's Roman Catholic bishop, but expanded and in its final form directed to answering difficulties raised by lay Christians. These texts also set a pattern for the reformer's passionate and unwavering commitment to addressing the issues which troubled "ordinary" people.

Over the following years, alongside the many responsibilities of a pastor's wife and a friend to refugees, reformers, and anyone in need, Katharina Schütz Zell continued her public ministry with writings which, like the first two, were prompted by needs she perceived in the church and community at large. One such lacuna was the limited number of Protestant prayerbooks to replace medieval hymns to the saints. To respond to this lack, in 1534-36 this "church mother" edited a hymnbook of the Bohemian Brethren, intending to provide parents and heads of households with devotional and catechetical material for family and personal "prayer, praise, and teaching."<sup>2</sup> When her husband died in January 1548, Schütz Zell spoke at his burial and later circulated in manuscript form a memoir of this occasion, urging his flock to remember and follow their pastor's preaching and example, especially in the face of the Interim which soon re-established Roman Catholic worship in Strasbourg.

The years around mid-century brought considerable changes to Protestantism; the first generation was being replaced by the second, in the context of major political and military reversals and increasing confessional divergence. Most of Schütz Zell's later publications were shaped by this altered scene, in which the lay reformer of the 1520s could no longer fit comfortably. Correspondence reflects this pain, but it is especially evident in her longest book, an exchange of polemical letters with the young Lutheran pastor Ludwig Rabus, formerly Zell's assistant and then his successor. This extensive historical and autobiographical piece, published at the end of 1557, gives a rich picture of the early years of the Reformation, as Schütz Zell defends the first generation and herself against charges of having fallen away from the gospel, and turns the charge of unfaithfulness back against Rabus. The next year she published her last book, a collection of Biblically-based devotional writings composed over a number of years. Included were an expo-

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<sup>2</sup> cf. *Lobgsång*, at n.5 *et passim*.

sition of the Lord's Prayer (from 1532), and some deeply personal meditations on several Psalms (probably from the late 1540s), put together in 1558 with a letter of pastoral consolation to an old friend now afflicted with leprosy, as a kind of legacy of prayerful counsel for troubled souls.

Besides these texts written for or later offered to a wider public, there were a number of private writings to individuals. Over the years, Schütz Zell carried on a vigorous correspondence with many people, both high and low. Most of these letters have been lost; enough remain, however, to give a lively picture of her interpersonal relationships with reformers and refugees, aristocrats and authorities of church and state, big names and the forgotten, hypocrites and the hopeless. Some letters are quite short, but one is almost a small treatise. Even as private letters, along with the personal there is always a consciousness of the wider religious scene and an active involvement with both people and faith.

The writings of Katharina Schütz Zell might be called unique for their time and place. Lay pamphleteers were common in the early Reformation, especially 1521-1525, but few continued to be published later.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, Schütz Zell's literary work spans thirty-four years, well over a generation, and covers a period of time that is particularly interesting, from the beginnings of the Protestant movement until the confessionalization process was well under way, if not yet complete. Women writers were also known in the sixteenth-century, but with very rare exceptions they were of noble or aristocratic background and/or members or former members of religious orders. There is no other lay woman from the ranks of "ordinary" citizens for whom such a body of writing exists, and very few who published even a fraction of the amount produced by Schütz Zell. In terms of the sheer variety of genres, her writings are probably unique for a lay person. The range includes an amazing breadth: pastoral and homiletical, Biblical and catechetical, devotional and musical, polemical theology and personal meditation, with historical and autobiographical themes throughout.

Simply the opportunity to view an exciting and turbulent age through the eyes of a member of its (usually silent) majority would

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<sup>3</sup> cf. Paul Russell, *Lay Theology in the Reformation. Popular Pamphleteers in Southwest Germany, 1521-25* (Cambridge, 1986). Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions*, pp. 6-7.

make access to Schütz Zell's entire corpus worthwhile. In fact, however, the intelligence and coherence of the writings themselves are remarkable, the Biblical and historical knowledge is impressive, and the directness and humor make them lively reading.<sup>4</sup> Also making the acquaintance of the person and personality of a fascinating and exasperating character, with all her gifts and all her faults, gives a new texture to the picture of how the Reformation of faith and life was taken up and experienced, explained and enacted, by "ordinary" people.

This edition of Katharina Schütz Zell's works is intended to provide access to her complete corpus. With certain clearly defined exceptions, all of her writings are assembled here. The exceptions are of two kinds: some correspondence, and a newly discovered anonymous pamphlet which she might have produced. In both cases, these other materials are or soon will be available in twentieth-century publications,<sup>5</sup> which is not true of the texts gathered in this edition. The organization of the writings presented here is basically chronological; all the larger and public works are ordered according to date of publication, from 1524 to 1558. The one exception is the series of personal letters, which for simplicity's sake have been kept together in one chapter but arranged sequentially there. The correspondence is inserted at a mid-point, where three of the five letters belong by date, between the 1548 sermon and the polemical exchange with Rabus, because the last letter is a kind of logical prelude to the argument with Rabus.

The principles of transcription for this edition follow modern standards for German texts, employing as little modification as possible, consistent with clarity. The original orthography has been retained, and in most cases also original punctuation and capitalization, with a few exceptions. The letters "u" and "v" are distinguished but not "i" and "j"; the modern punctuation of comma has

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<sup>4</sup> For analysis of literary characteristics, cf. McKee, *Katharina Schütz Zell*[I], chap. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Two pieces addressed to the city council in Strasbourg in early April 1557, concerning the state of the one of the city's welfare institutions, are published in Winkelmann, *Fürsorgewesen*, II, #33-34, pp. 72-77. Prof. Thomas Kaufmann of Ludwig Maximilians Universität in München has just discovered an anonymous pamphlet from 1524 which he attributes to Schütz Zell, and which he proposes editing in a collection entitled *Sammlung von Frauenflugschriften der Reformationszeit*; cf. the appendix to the *Entschuldigung*. The rest of the correspondence is published in the collected works of other reformers.

been very sparingly inserted where the sense demands it. For texts printed in the sixteenth century, capitalization has been respected; because it is very difficult to distinguish between large and small letters in the manuscripts, capitalization there has been very sparingly regularized, being used for proper names and beginnings of sentences. Some other details of transcription, which apply only to the sixteenth-century manuscript sources, Schütz Zell's letters, are explained in the introduction to the correspondence. The paragraph divisions of the original sources have been preserved but the typeface has not, and marginal references have been inserted into the text in brackets and italicized. Abbreviations have normally been expanded, except in such cases as "*s. Paul*" or "*h. schrift.*" Textual alterations have been kept to a minimum but obvious typographical errors have been corrected in the text, with the original placed in the notes. However, repetitions at the foot of a page, which serve only to indicate the sequence of pages, have been silently suppressed.

The principles of annotation require some explanation. There are both textual and content notes, with several categories of the latter. Textual notes are not separately numbered from the rest of the apparatus. Explanatory content notes are varied, because the anticipated audiences include specialists from different fields: Reformation theology, women's studies, social history, Germanic languages, and perhaps others. For each discipline, some of the notes will be redundant, but may be of use to other audiences; please bear with unnecessary explanations in your own sphere, in courtesy to other readers. Individual notes are supplemented by a considerable number of cross references intended to enrich the picture with related information.<sup>6</sup>

One of the key categories of content notes is Biblical. Like most devout lay Protestants, Schütz Zell knew her Bible well and regarded it as THE authority, and her use of it is impressive. The

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<sup>6</sup> The cross references are usually marked using a short title for each text (*Weyber zu Kentzingen*, *Entschuldigung*, *Lobgsång*, *Klag*, letters [for short letters], 1553 letter [for long letter to Schwenckfeld], *Ein Brieff*, and *Den Psalmen*) and the appropriate footnote numbers. In some cases, the reference is to both text and note and is marked: "at n.\_\_\_\_"; in others, to information in the note: "n.\_\_\_\_." A third form refers to comments in the text which are not (or only loosely) related to the closest note; these are marked: "@n.\_\_\_\_" to indicate a general locus, which may be before or after the number of the note. Cross references to notes in the introductions to chapters are marked "intro. n.\_\_\_\_."

Biblical notes can be divided (somewhat fuzzily) into three levels: explicit citations by the writer (e.g., “as Christ says”), clear allusions (e.g., “the book with the seven seals”), and more elusive Biblical images or language. The first level of citation is noted in brackets in the text itself (with some specific exceptions); the other two levels are placed in the footnotes, but not marked according to level, since the line between obvious allusion and Biblically-shaped image can be very hazy. The purpose in attempting to make the Biblical citations as complete as possible is to illustrate the kind of scriptural acquaintance which a devout and studious lay person could acquire. Because of her marriage to a reformer and her concentrated independent study, Schütz Zell was not a typical person-in-the-pew; however, she shared with other urban laity the basic orientation and possibilities for hearing sermons and reading the Bible, so her learning gives some insight into what a person who was not formally trained in theology might know.

Another category of content notes, much fewer but interesting for many of the same reasons as the Biblical ones, are the theological or historical references. Schütz Zell cites church fathers, and especially Protestant (or occasionally Roman Catholic) reformers, with considerable frequency and a high degree of accuracy. Since she apparently knew little Latin, and certainly could not read it easily, the question of her sources becomes important. The theological notes, therefore, include both the source and, as much as possible, a printed German-language channel through which Schütz Zell could have learned about the point. Sometimes such sources are not available, but it is known that the topics were discussed by local clergy and it must be supposed that this lay reformer picked up her information from contact with those whom she considered her colleagues (and would not have hesitated to question!). In the historical notes, references to contemporary people or events have been explained as necessary, but also extra information has been supplied to provide a context for Schütz Zell’s reporting; the latter is almost always found to be amazingly accurate and reasonable, even in the heat of a debate.

The category of linguistic notes is very small; there are occasional explanations for German words or popular proverbs, but these are given only where the sense of the text appears to be in question. One common difficulty for non-German-speakers is the frequent use of “*für*” for “*vor*.” This practice, because it recurs con-

stantly, has not been marked each time; if a phrase including “für” seems like nonsense the first time, try reading it again substituting “vor.”

The method of citation in most notes is by short title. If a work is used only once, full information is given in the note; otherwise, full data is found in the bibliography. In many cases, points touched on in the text are not dealt with fully in the notes; most themes are given fuller treatment in the biographical companion to this edition, entitled *Katharina Schütz Zell*[1]: *The Life and Thought of a Sixteenth-Century Reformer*.<sup>7</sup>

At the end of a long period of research one has always accumulated many debts; it is a pleasure to thank those who have assisted me in different ways over the years.

First, the historians in or associated with Strasbourg who first asked me to undertake a biography of Katharina Schütz Zell and who have helped at various times in locating or copying texts, especially Prof. Marc Lienhard and Prof. Gerald Hobbs; Prof. Lienhard’s bibliography of Schütz Zell’s writings and many secondary sources about her has been a priceless aid.<sup>8</sup> Also their colleagues in the Archives Municipales de Strasbourg, the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, and the Stift St. Thomas, especially Drs. Joseph Fuchs, Jean Rott, and Gustave Koch, who have so cheerfully and generously welcomed and assisted in finding rare texts and deciphering fragments of handwriting (including around the holes in the paper!). And my generous friend and hostess, Dr. Marjolaine Chevallier, whose welcome was always like that of our mutual friend Katharina.

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<sup>7</sup> A selection of translations is in process.

<sup>8</sup> cf. Lienhard, *Catherine Zell*.

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While I am deeply grateful to those who have helped in any way, the responsibility for all errors remains mine; Schütz Zell would certainly have appreciated the justice of that!

Finally, I would like to dedicate Katharina's writings to all her daughters, scattered across the world, naming especially a few of those whom I have known personally. Katharina had no use for titles, and I trust her daughters also know that their names are spoken with respect and appreciation that goes beyond any titles: Joy Abdul (Trinidad), Esther Acolatse (Ghana), Daisy de Andrieu (Venezuela), Tshitenga Anna (Congo-Zaire), Susan Anyambod (Cameroon), Thelma Boa Goodrum (Brazil), Emily Boehler (USA and Congo-Zaire), Nantawan Boonprasat Lewis (Thailand and USA), Esther Byu (Burma), Kimberly P. Chastain (USA), Marjolaine Chevallier (France and Algeria), Yuriko Chiba (Japan), Claire Chimelli (Switzerland and Lebanon), Janet Corpus (USA), Rose Costas (Puerto Rico), Mary Brown Crawford (USA and Congo-Zaire), Jane Dempsey Douglass (USA), Raquel Galcerá d'Araguas (Spain), Vicky Griffiths (Argentina), Silvia Gutierrez Lee (Mexico), Miriam Hernandez (Chile), Perla Intia (Philippines), Ruth Jörg (Switzerland), Aniko Juhasz (Hungary and Romania), Ngosa Kabeya (Congo-Zaire), Young Kim Sawa (Korea and Japan), Lois Livezey (USA), Ilse von Loewenclau (Germany), Nyambura Ngoroge (Kenya and Geneva), Morrisine F. Smith (USA and Congo-Zaire), Mercy Amba Oduyoye (Ghana, Nigeria, Geneva), LaVerne G. O'Rear (USA and Congo-Zaire), Katherine D. Sakenfeld (USA), Jeanne Stevenson Moessner (USA), Jung Sun Suh (Korea), Loganayaki Thambidurai (India), Phozo Zondo (South Africa).

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