

Adriaan C. Neele (ed.)

Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706)

Text, Context, and Interpretation



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**Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706):
Text, Context, and Interpretation**

With a Foreword by Carl R. Trueman

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pietate cum scientia conjungenda

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Carl R. Trueman

Foreword

The last thirty years have witnessed a remarkable revolution in the study of Reformed Orthodoxy, that broad movement of theological consolidation which took place in the two centuries between the early breakthroughs of the Reformation and the reorganization of intellectual disciplines within the university world heralded by the arrival of the various intellectual and cultural developments known collectively as the Enlightenment. The old models which tended to prioritize one or two figures in the Reformation (typically John Calvin and Heinrich Bullinger) as the gold standards of Reformed theology, by which all future generations could be judged in terms of fidelity or deviation, has gone. So too has the narrow intellectual focus which tended to prioritize ideas or doctrines in the abstract without paying attention to the wider pedagogical or cultural contexts.

In place of this older scholarship, we now have a growing number of studies which seek to place Reformed thinkers of the period in a much wider context. Attention to the primary texts has revealed that exegetical, philosophical, and polemical concerns all helped to shape Reformed Orthodoxy, as did the more material conditions of its instantiation in the university context. And in place of older questions about whether the Reformed Orthodox stood in continuity or discontinuity with their Reformation forebears, we now have a wealth of scholarship which seeks not so much to evaluate the Orthodox in terms of anachronistic criteria, but rather to explain them in terms of their own particular historical context.

One of the results of this is that serious scholarly attention is now being directed at figures who were previously neglected. John Owen, the English Puritan, was for many years of interest only to pietistic strands of Protestantism. Now he is regarded as one of the most significant theological voices of the seventeenth century. And among the continental Reformed, figures such as Gisbertus Voetius and Johannes Cocceius have emerged as significant voices in shaping the Christianity of their day.

To these we can add Petrus van Mastricht, a German-Dutch theologian who was the author of a major system of divinity. This work is in the process of being

translated into English (two volumes are available at the time of writing). Mastricht is also the subject of a growing body of literature in English, of which this volume is a fine example.

The essays contained in this work represent precisely the range of scholarly interests that the new approach to Reformed Orthodoxy has come to embody. Dealing specifically with the areas of theology, philosophy, and reception, this book points toward three critical areas of study.

First, the question of theology is obviously important, given that it is a truism to say that Mastricht would have thought of himself as a theologian. The authors in the theology section address key questions about Christology and also about Mastricht's major work, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, bringing out the intimate connection that exists between dogma and practice in Reformed Orthodox thinking.

There are also essays in this volume assessing the impact of Cartesianism on Mastricht's thought. For every theologian, the question of the relationship between the broader philosophical currents of the day and the Christian faith is a pressing one. Given the typical past (and mutually incompatible!) critiques of Reformed Orthodoxy (that it was a regression to a form of Aristotelianism or a capitulation to Enlightenment rationalism), the matter of Descartes's influence is important. This is reflected in the second section, on philosophy, where the matter of determinism is addressed, in addition to a second essay reflecting on the relationship with Descartes.

Finally, a third section addresses matters of reception. This again is important and adumbrates what is surely the next phase of discussion of Reformed Orthodoxy. Much of the new scholarship has built on the Oberman paradigm of setting the Reformation in the context of the late Middle Ages. Through the work of Richard Muller and others this has been extended, tracing theological, metaphysical and exegetical development from the Middle Ages through the Reformation through to the early eighteenth century. What happens then, of course, is that the dominant metaphysical paradigms that had shaped intellectual endeavor since the twelfth century give way before the philosophical traditions inspired by Descartes, Leibniz, Locke and others. The question then shifts to how Reformed Orthodoxy, built in connection to the older metaphysical paradigms, is transformed in this new context.

Jonathan Edwards is important in this area because he is the pre-eminent recaster of Reformed theology in light of these new developments. And Edwards loved Mastricht's theology. The section on reception gives a taste of how this question might be approached, of how we might begin to map the path (and fate) of Reformed Orthodoxy within these new philosophical paradigms. It is to be hoped that this inspires other scholars to explore and elaborate this area further.

This is a fine collection of essays. It is not just a statement of the state of the art on Mastricht studies. It also points the way forward for further exploration of Mastricht's thought and the history of Reformed Orthodoxy in general.

Carl R Trueman

Grove City College, June 2019

Adriaan C. Neele

Preface

This volume presents a collection of essays on various aspects of Petrus van Mastricht's (1630–1706) theology, philosophy, and biblical exegesis in the context of the challenges to orthodoxy in his day. It will look at his appreciation and appropriation of Reformed orthodoxy, scholasticism, and Cartesianism, among other topics. This volume is unique in the broad array of topics it analyzes to advance our understanding of Mastricht's thought. This volume is timely, as translations of Mastricht's *magnum opus*, the *Theoretico-practica theologia*, in an English edition and a new Dutch edition were released to the market in 2018,¹ and a growing scholarship on Mastricht is evident in studies on Early Modern Reformed theology and New England. The praise of Cotton Mather (1663–1726) for the *Theoretico-practica theologia* was a first across the Atlantic, declaring,

The World has never yet seen so valuable a system of divinity.... 'Tis orthodox, 'tis concise, 'tis complete. In one word, it is everything.... In these two volumes, our young ministers would have a rich library.... Happy would our churches be, if they were fed from the stores, and with the admirable spirit of the most vital piety, all along breathing therein, which are to be found in Dr. Mastricht.²

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) was equally hyperbolic in stating,

But take Mastricht for divinity in general, doctrine, practice, and controversy; or as an universal system of divinity and it is much better than Turretin or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible, in my opinion.³

1 Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-practical Theology*, Todd M. Rester (transl.), Joel R. Beeke, ed. (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018—); Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretisch-praktische godgeleerdheid* (Barneveld: Gebr. Koster / Stichting Gereformeerd Erfgoed, 2018—).

2 American Antiquarian Society, MSS Cotton Mather, U/AAS, May 10, 1720. Cf. Kenneth Silverman, *Selected Letters of Cotton Mather* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 306–307.

3 *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957–2009), 16:217.

Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706): Text, Context, and Interpretation, then, will locate Mastricht's ideas in the context of the theological and philosophical currents of his day. The pre-critical status of theology and philosophy in the wake of the Enlightenment faced many of the same problems we see in theology today, related to the use and appropriation of classical theology in a twenty-first century context. Ideas about the necessity of classical primary sources of Christianity in sustaining Reformed theology are once again becoming important, and Mastricht has many insights in this area.

This volume is intended for a diverse range of academic and faith-based audiences. As it is interdisciplinary in nature, it will appeal to those interested in history, philosophy, and divinity (exegesis, doctrine, polemics, and the *praxis pietatis*) and can be used by scholars of early New England, as well as those interested in Protestant scholasticism and Reformed orthodoxy. Thus, it will be of interest to the ever-increasing scholarship on Edwards as well as Reformation and Post-reformation studies. Hence, this book seeks to properly position Mastricht within early modern Reformed theology, philosophy, and biblical exegesis.

The contributors to this volume are scholars with expertise in a diversity of Mastricht's thought and work. Ryan M. McGraw offers in the introduction, "Petrus van Mastricht and Reformed Orthodoxy," an overview of Mastricht in his time, and notes nuances in Mastricht such as Reformed orthodoxy, Protestant scholasticism, and Reformed piety.

In the section on theology, Jonathon D. Beeke reflects on "Petrus van Mastricht and the Twofold Kingdom of Christ," and shows the relevance of the seventeenth-century formulation of the doctrine of the two kingdoms suggesting that future advocates of a Reformed "two-kingdoms theology" may wish to reconsider the labels and language they use by drawing upon the precise terms and definitions of Reformed orthodoxy. Elco van Burg shows in "Petrus van Mastricht and the External and Internal Call." Cartesian Influence of Reformed thinking," that the subject of internal and external calling in seventeenth-century Reformed theology shows that caution and nuance in interpreting terms like internal and external is warranted, as the relationship of these two is not as clear as is sometimes supposed. Gyeongcheol Gwon helpfully shows in "Petrus van Mastricht on Christ's Suretyship in the Old" that, rather than transforming the essence of Voetian thought on the issue, Mastricht recast his method of presentation in this early modern intra-Reformed debate. Todd M. Rester's expertise on Mastricht is illuminating in the chapter, "Petrus van Mastricht on *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, Saving Faith, and the Ministry of the Word." Rester argues convincingly for an inseparable linkage between theological method, saving faith, and preaching.

In the section on philosophy, Philip J. Fisk opens with a careful assessment of “Petrus van Mastricht and Freedom of the Will,” and suggests that Mastricht’s disputations related to the freedom of the will is a broad and comprehensive framework for understanding essential arguments against the prominent opponents and movements that were challenging the classic- Reformed tradition in that day. In the chapter, “Petrus van Mastricht and Descartes’s New Philosophy,” Yoshi Kato demonstrates that Mastricht’s life-long and systematic criticism of Cartesianism was not to offer a new version of Christian faith, but to express a profound concern with the *theologia practica* or *praxis pietatis*. This concern of Mastricht regarding Cartesianism is highlighted, furthermore, by Daniel J. Ragusa in the chapter, “Petrus van Mastricht’s *Ad Verum Clariss D. Balthasaren Beckerum*: Beginning with Scripture, Ending with Worship.” Ragusa shows the importance of Scripture, exegesis, and practice for Mastricht in philosophical debates.

The last section deals with the reception of Mastricht’s work—in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic and New England. Brandon J. Crawford shows in “Petrus van Mastricht’s *A Treatise on Regeneration*: An Old World Voice for a New World Controversy” the immediate historical and theological context of the English translation of the chapter on regeneration, published as *A Treatise on Regeneration*. Regarding the controversy between New England Congregationalism and Sandemanianism over matters of theology and practice, as well as the intramural theological debates within New England Congregationalism over the appropriateness of encouraging unregenerate persons to make use of the means of grace as preparatory steps toward regeneration, Mastricht’s work was indispensable. The editor concludes this volume with a recent archival discovery of the thus-far unknown translator of the Dutch translation of the *Theoretico-practica theologia* as *Beschouwende-Betrachtende Godtgeleertheit* (1748–1753), and its reception in the Dutch Republic.

Finally, this volume stands as a go-to resource for Mastricht-research by providing appendices containing “Petrus van Mastricht: Chronology of Life and Work,” “Petrus van Mastricht: Published works,” and “Petrus van Mastricht: Secondary Literature.”

In conclusion, a word of gratitude is offered, first of all, to all the contributors to this volume. Your collegiality, scholarship and friendship, as well as prompt keeping of publication deadlines has been much appreciated. We wish acknowledge Herman J. Selderhuis, the series editor for *Reformed Historical Theology* at Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, who was immediately receptive and supportive throughout the publication this volume. Last but not least, Carl R. Trueman is acknowledged with gratitude for writing a foreword for this book.

Introduction

Ryan M. McGraw

Petrus van Mastricht and Reformed Orthodoxy

Introduction

Petrus van Mastricht was a prominent Reformed orthodox theologian who stood in the tradition of the Dutch *Nadere Reformatie*. It is becoming well-known that Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) called his *Theoretico-practica theologia* a better work than Turretin's as a full system of divinity and the best book apart from the Bible. Including this statement on the dust jacket of the recent English translation of his work will likely result in many sales. Scholarly interest in Mastricht appears to be gaining momentum with a recent Dutch edition of his work as well as a large-scale seven-volume English translation of the original Latin text in process.¹ Though he was respected in his time as an opponent of the new philosophy of René Descartes (1596–1650), he is best known as a theologian. The preeminent example of his theological output was his *Theoretico-practica theologia*.² His contribution to Reformed orthodox theology lies not only in the orthodox content of his theology, but in the division of his chapters into exegesis, didactic theology, elenctic theology, and praxis. This combination of features is what stood out to Edwards and what makes Mastricht's work an ideal place to explore varied features of the Reformed theological system.

The aim of this chapter is to show that Mastricht fit squarely in the Reformed orthodox theological tradition, while reflecting the piety of the Dutch *Nadere Reformatie*. The author will demonstrate this point by highlighting what Mastricht held in common with the broader tradition of Reformed orthodox theology and scholastic method, what was distinctive about his theology in light of his

1 Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, ed. Joel R. Beeke, trans. Todd M. Rester, vol. 1, 7 vols. (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018).

2 Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia. Qua, Per Singula Capita Theologica, Pars Exegetica, Dogmatica, Elenctica & Practica, Perpetua Successione Conjugantur* (Trajecti ad Rhenum, & Amstelodami: Sumptibus Societatis, 1724). The author draws in this essay from the 1724 text, largely because this is the clearest full Latin original that was available at the time of writing. The outlines and pagination are also more accurate than the 1715 edition.

Nadere Reformatie context, and what the present state of scholarship on his theology is. In light of the fact that Mastricht wrote a scholastic system of theology in order to train ministers of the gospel who would serve the church, it is appropriate that just over three-hundred years after the publication of the final edition of his work, he is gaining traction in scholarly research, as well as in the church, through Dutch and English translations.

What is Common in Mastricht's Theology

Certain key features connect the character of Mastricht's theology to the broader Reformed tradition. Mastricht was a Reformed orthodox theologian. He was also a scholastic theologian in that he used scholastic distinctions to teach theology in the University. These features provide a lens through which readers can focus on the character of the Reformed tradition as a whole. After explaining what it means for Mastricht to be both orthodox and scholastic, this section concludes by giving examples of how aspects of both movements worked themselves out in his writing.

Mastricht as Reformed Orthodox

Reformed orthodoxy referred decisively to content.³ Reformed content, in turn, was defined by Reformed confessional theology.⁴ As Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism defined themselves by official creeds and confessions, so did Reformed theology. Reformed orthodoxy thus distinguished Reformed teaching from Lutheran and Catholic orthodoxies. Of course, in Reformed theological systems, authors frequently referred to themselves alone as “the orthodox.”⁵

3 W. J. van Asselt et al., *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*, trans. Albert Gootjes (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011); Willem J. van Asselt, “Scholasticism Revisited: Methodological Reflections on the Study of Seventeenth-Century Reformed Thought,” in *Seeing Things Their Way*, ed. Alistair Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad S. Gregory (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 154–74.

4 See Richard Muller's monumental work on this subject. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003); Richard A. Muller, “The Problem of Protestant Scholasticism – A Review and Definition,” in *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, ed. W. J. van Asselt and Eef Dekker (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 45–64.

5 This was a common feature of Reformed orthodox writings from the time. For two examples of books devoted exclusively to this topic and an example where the term “the orthodox” appeared within a theological system, see William Perkins, *Catholicus Reformatus, Hoc Est, Expositio et Declaratio Praecipuarum Aliquot Religionis Controversiarum: Quae Ostendit*,

However, Reformed churches faced the disadvantage of having several confessions or sets of confessional documents rather than one decisive set, such as those found among their counterparts.⁶ They included the Scots Confession, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, (arguably) the London Baptist Confession, and a host of others. This makes defining Reformed, as opposed to Roman Catholic or Lutheran, orthodoxy less neat and tidy.

How should we define the parameters of Reformed orthodox confessional theology in terms of content? Attempting to cut through differences in peripheral matters treated by Reformed authors, Eberard Bush characterized Reformed orthodoxy by the “fundamental directing power” of Scripture, the “seminal importance” of the covenant, a “unique interpretation” of the law and the gospel, predestination, and “appreciation of church order.”⁷ Each of these points requires significant expansion in order to get a feel for the character of Reformed orthodoxy, but all of them include vital aspects of it. While Lutherans and Roman Catholics held to the authority of Scripture, though only the Lutherans agreed with the Reformed over its exclusive authority, the Reformed alone taught the sufficiency of Scripture. This meant that while other communions were comfortable adding practices, especially in divine worship, that did not contradict Scripture, the Reformed pressed the principle of neither adding to nor taking away from Scripture. The role of regulating Scripture in public worship is where this point stood out most clearly.⁸ In addition, while Lutherans and Roman Catholics had a covenant theology, especially in their Bible commentaries where related terms arose, the covenant had “seminal importance” in Reformed thought only.⁹ The covenants of works and of grace, and later the eternal intra-

Quatenus Ecclesiae Ex Dei Verbo Reformatae in Iis Cum Ecclesia Rom. Qualis Est Hodie Est, Consentiant, et Quatenus Ab Edadem Dissentiunt, Adeoque in Quibus Numquam Ei Consentire Debet (Hanoviae, 1601); Daniel Chamier, *Panstratiae Catholicae Corpus, Sive Controversarium de Religione Adversus Pontificos Corpus*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Genevae, 1626); Amandus Polanus, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae Ab Amando Polano a Polansdorf: Juxta Leges Ordinis Methodici Conformatum, Atque in Libros Decem Digestum Jamque Demum in Unum Volumen Compactum, Novissime Emendatum* (Hanoviae, 1610), 180, 599, 818, 825.

6 Paul T. Nimmo and David A. F. Fergusson, *The Cambridge Companion to Reformed Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

7 Eberard Busch, “Reformed Theology in Continental Europe,” in *Cambridge Companion to Reformed Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 240–44.

8 For two studies on the centrality of worship in Reformed theology, see Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Philip Benedict, *Christ's Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

9 For a brief comparison of Reformed and Lutheran views of the covenant, especially in relation to the Mosaic covenant, see J. Mark Beach, *Christ and the Covenant: Francis Turretin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 265–69.

trinitarian covenant of redemption, helped direct and connect the entire system of Reformed thought.¹⁰ While it would be conceivable to read a Lutheran or Roman Catholic theological system without encountering a chapter on the covenant, it would not be so in a Reformed context by the mid seventeenth-century and later. As far as a “unique interpretation of the law and the gospel,” this was related closely to covenant theology. Lutheranism used law and gospel distinctions as a hermeneutical key to reading Scripture, often identifying commands and threats with law and grace and promise with gospel.¹¹ Reformed theologians saw commands, threats, law, and grace in all covenants and they increasingly couched the heart of the law/gospel distinction in the covenants of works and of grace as two contrary methods of justification.¹² They also drew a broader division of the law into moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws from medieval precedents.¹³ While recent attempts to identify predestination as a central dogma in Reformed thought have been off base, predestination remained integral to the Reformed system.¹⁴ It highlighted the supreme majesty and sovereignty of God and brought it to bear on the salvation of the elect.¹⁵ Lastly, an “appreciation for church order” is a cautious statement. Concern over proper church government both characterized and plagued Reformed orthodoxy. While Dort included a church order, no international consensus was reached on many points of polity, allowing Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and

10 Chapter 7 of both the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1643) and the *Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order* (1558), which was based upon it, set forth covenant theology along these lines. 8.1 of the *Savoy Declaration* refers to “a covenant” between the Father and the Son as the basis for Christ’s work in the covenant of grace. This reflects the development of the covenant of redemption in Reformed theology during this time period. For helpful treatments of this development, see Richard A. Muller, “Toward the Pactum Salutis: Locating the Origins of a Concept,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 18 (2007): 11–65; J. V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception*, vol. 35, *Reformed Historical Theology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016); J. V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2016).

11 For a classic Lutheran orthodox author on this point, see Johann Gerhard, *Tractatus De Legitima Scripturæ Sacræ Interpretatione* (Ienæ: J.J. Bauhofferi, 1663), 150.

12 For an expansion of these themes see Ryan M. McGraw, “The Threats of the Gospel: John Owen on What the Law/Gospel Distinction Is Not,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 51 (2016): 79–111.

13 For a clear outline of the various uses of law in Reformed thought, see James E Bruce, *Rights in the Law: The Importance of God’s Free Choices in the Thought of Francis Turretin*, vol. 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

14 For game changing research on this question, see Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

15 For a recent study of predestination in the teaching of a Reformed orthodox theologian, see David H. Kranendonk, *Teaching Predestination: Elnathan Parr and Pastoral Ministry in Early Stuart England* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011).

hybrids among them to flourish in Reformed communities.¹⁶ We could call this aspect a common concern and goal rather than a doctrinal consensus. These five aspects of Reformed thought do not correspond to what people today call the five points of Calvinism, but they fairly encompass much of the core of Reformed systems like Mastricht's. A summary like this can be dangerous in that it communicates too little about Reformed orthodoxy, but it is necessary to help readers gain a general view of the standard paths that Reformed thought took.

Mastricht fit soundly in the Reformed orthodox tradition, particularly as expressed by the Three Forms of Unity (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of Dort). His dependence on these documents is not often overt in the *Theoretico-practica theologia*, but his theology is in line with them and his church received them. Readers should keep in mind that the purpose of a broad scale system like this one was not to press the fundamentals of Reformed doctrine, but to explore the entire system of theology.¹⁷ This resulted in a Reformed character in the system while allowing variations among individual theologians along the way. The material treating the *Nadere Reformatie* below will try to illustrate where some of these variations appear in Mastricht's context.

Mastricht as a Scholastic

Scholasticism referred primarily to theological method. In particular, scholasticism relied on clear distinctions and uses of terms, disputations, and declamations.¹⁸ Disputations, in general, represented a method of teaching students to defend their views against opposing positions.¹⁹ A professor might pose a

16 For an outstanding illustration of this kind of diversity in a Reformed context, see Hunter Powell, *The Crisis of British Protestantism: Church Power in the Puritan Revolution 1638–44*, Politics, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

17 Francis Turretin offers a clear example of how high orthodox theologians treated “fundamental articles.” Martin Klauber illustrates how late orthodox Reformed theology often began to shift their theological systems to consist solely of fundamental articles. See Francis Turretin, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Geneva, 1679), 1.14; Martin I. Klauber, “Theological Transition in Geneva from Jean-Alphonse Turretin to Jacob Vernet,” in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 256–70.

18 Dolph te Velde, “Reformed Theology and Scholasticism,” in *Cambridge Companion to Reformed Theology*, ed. Paul T. Nimmo and David A.F. Ferguson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 215–29; Ulrich G. Leinsle, *Introduction to Scholastic Theology*, trans. Michael J. Miller (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010); Ryan M. McGraw, *Reformed Scholasticism: Recovering the Tools of Reformed Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2019).

19 The remainder of this section, the conclusion excepted, is used with permission from Bloomsbury and is taken from my *Reformed Scholasticism: Recovering the Tools of Reformed Theology*, 79–80.

question in response to which the student was expected to define what the question should include and what it should not. The student would then state his position as well as that of his opponent(s). After refuting his opponent point by point, the student would then include a positive defense of his position from Scripture and the church fathers. Francis Turretin's *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* exemplifies this method in every section of the work.²⁰ Many Reformed professors of theology wrote theological systems based on the cycle of disputations used at the University in which they taught. Some of these works were extensive, such as Voetius's five massive volumes of disputations.²¹ Others appeared in summary fashion consisting of roughly five-page chapters, such as those of Franciscus Gomarus (1563–1641) and Johannes Cloppenburg (1592–1652).²²

Giving declamations represented a more positive approach to presenting theological topics than making disputations. Students were expected under this method to present their positions from the ground up rather than merely by responding to opposing viewpoints. This did not exclude refuting errors, but the starting point and the focus of the declamation differed from that of the disputation. While disputations were largely exercises in logic, declamations often tested student's rhetorical skills.²³ If Francis Turretin exemplified the disputation model clearly, then Johannes Heidegger illustrates a fuller expression of the Reformed system, including declamatory style.²⁴ Johannes Markcius's (1665–

20 Turretin, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae*; Leonard Ryssen, *Francisci Turretini Ss. Theologiae Doctoris Et Professoris Compendium Theologiae Didactico-Elencticae, Ex Theologorum Nostorum Institutionibus Theologicis Auctum Et Illustratum: Ut Praeter Explicationes Theticas Et Problematicas in Controversiis Verum Statum Proponatur, "Præton Pseudos" Detegatur, Vera Sententia Confirmetur, Argumentis Ad Paucas Classes Revocatis, Praecipuae Adversariorum Exceptiones Et Objectiones Diluantur, Calumniae Etiam Adversariorum, Abstergantur* (Amsterdam, 1695).

21 Gijsbert Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum Pars Prima (Quinta. Accedunt Dissertatio Epistolica De Terminis Vitæ. Exercitatio De Prognosticis Cometarum. Antehac Seorsim Editæ)*, 5 vols. (Ultrajecti, 1648).

22 Franciscus Gomarus, *Syntagma Disputationum Theologicarum, in Academia Lugduno-Batava Quarto Repetitarum* (Rotterdam: Impensis Ioannis Leonardi a Berewout bibliopolæ, 1615); Johannes Cloppenburg, *Exercitationes Super Locos Communes Theologicos* (Franeckeræ, 1653).

23 Theodore G. van Raalte, "Francois Lambert D'Avignon (C.a. 1487–1530): Early Ecclesial Reform and Training for the Ministry at Marburg," in *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition*, vol. 170, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 88.

24 Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger, 3 vols. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1992); Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *Corpus Theologiae Christianae*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Tiguri, 1732). Turretin referred to Heidegger, who taught in Zurich, as, "our particular friend." Turretin, *Institutes*, 3:198; 18.20.18.

1731) full theological system generally followed the declamation pattern as well, while including elements of the disputation style in its elenctic sections.²⁵

Finally, the use of distinctions was a preeminent mark of scholastic theology in any century.²⁶ Johannes Maccovius (1588–1664) illustrates this point well in that he wrote an entire book introducing his students to the terms and distinctions that they would need to know in order to study theology in the University.²⁷ Richard Muller observes that Reformed scholastics employed four kinds of logical distinctions: *distinctio realis*, *distinctio formalis*, *distinctio rationis ratiocinatae*, and *distinctio rationis ratiocinans*.²⁸ Sometimes they added the *distinctio modalis*, which belonged to “the vocabulary of trinitarian theology” to describe modes of subsistence in the Godhead.²⁹ Scholasticism was a method of teaching that aimed at clarity through precision. Methodologically, this stood in contrast, for example, to mystical strands of theology, which inherently defied definition and struggled for adequate description—though readers should remember that some of the most prominent scholastics, such as Thomas Aquinas, had a mystical bent as well. Though scholastic theology aimed to explain its content clearly and effectively, scholastic authors never claimed that all things were explicable. They also denied that creatures could comprehend God, even though they could apprehend him.³⁰

While it is well-known that many early Protestants used the term “scholastic” in a derogatory way to refer to perceived medieval and Roman Catholic abuses in theology, positive uses of scholastic method grew up with the Reformation itself. Protestant scholasticism generally, and Reformed scholasticism particularly, reflected a well-developed and self-conscious scientific method of teaching theology in the schools during this time period.³¹ Mastricht’s theological system

25 Johannes Marckius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae Didactico Elencticum: Immixtis Problematibus Plurimis & Quaestionibus Recentioribus Adauctum* (Amstelodami, 1696).

26 In his conclusion to his entry on *distinctio*, Muller gives the following example: “In Protestant scholastic theology, as in the theology of the medieval scholastics, the question of distinctions is of paramount importance in the discussion of the divine attributes (*attributa divina*). How can theology make predications of an essentially simple being whose attributes are essentially identical? Most of the Protestant scholastics reject the formal distinction and accept the *distinctio rationis ratiocinatae*.” Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 94.

27 The Latin and English text of this work is available in Johannes Maccovius, *Scholastic Discourse: Johannes Maccovius (1588–1644) on Theological and Philosophical Distinctions and Rules* (Apeldoorn: Instituut voor Reformatieonderzoek, 2009).

28 Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 93–94.

29 Muller, 94.

30 Polanus, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae*, 879.

31 Asselt et al., *Reformed Scholasticism*, 7.