

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**EMBRACING *LEER* AND *LEVEN*:  
THE THEOLOGY OF SIMON OOMIUS  
IN THE CONTEXT OF  
*NADERE REFORMATIE* ORTHODOXY**

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This dissertation entitled

**EMBRACING *LEER* AND *LEVEN*:  
THE THEOLOGY OF SIMON OOMIUS IN THE CONTEXT OF  
*NADERE REFORMATIE* ORTHODOXY**

written by

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the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

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To Sarah



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God is truly good—to him alone be the glory!

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## Abstract

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Scholarship has tended either to brush aside the Dutch Reformed piety of the movement known as the *Nadere Reformatie* (c.1600-1750) as an aberration from the Reformation, or it has tended, more recently when it has shown interest in the movement, to fail to place the theology of its proponents in its proper orthodox Reformed theological context. This latter failure has resulted, often, in a bifurcation between the *Nadere Reformatie* and Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism during the post-Reformation era of Reformed church history and theology. The two have tended to be viewed as mutually exclusive movements. The *Nadere Reformatie*, with its strong spirituality and practical drive, has been separated from Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism with their academic rigor, feisty polemics, and concern for right doctrine. Beyond creating a bifurcation between the two movements past scholarship on the period has tended to describe them as opposed to one another. As the account sometimes goes, the pious representatives of the *Nadere Reformatie* sought to counteract the damaging influence of Reformed orthodoxy with its rigidity and dogmatism.

This dissertation illumines, in theological context, the theology of a yet unexamined pastor and theologian of the *Nadere Reformatie*, Simon Oomius. Beyond illuminating this relatively unknown figure, this study of Oomius' theology shows that viewing the *Nadere Reformatie* and Reformed orthodoxy as two mutually exclusive or opposing camps is not tenable. The theological program and theology of Oomius, seen especially in his prolegomena, doctrine of Scripture and doctrine of God—the only *loci* completed of his impressive *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*—show that a neat distinction between the two movements simply cannot be made. As practical as Oomius' writings are, and as concerned for the spiritual life of the believer as he is, he works out of a Reformed scholastic training which he greatly valued, drew on, and used throughout his life. He did not write his *Institutiones* or any of his works out of reaction to Reformed orthodoxy; on the contrary, a Reformed orthodox himself, he saw his “practical theology” as naturally flowing out of his orthodoxy and, indeed, as a legitimate and necessary element of it.

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## **PART I: SIMON OOMIUS IN CONTEXT**

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### **Chapter 1** **Oomius in the Context of** **the *Nadere Reformatie* and Reformed Orthodoxy**

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#### **1.1 Thesis of This Study**

In the history of scholarship the *Nadere Reformatie* of the Dutch Reformed Church of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries has tended to be viewed in terms of its spirituality, piety, and practicality, but not so much in terms of its Reformed orthodox and scholastic theological context. Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often has been viewed as “dry,” “rigid,” “dead” and unrelated to spirituality or much practical at all. In general, the spirituality of the *Nadere Reformatie* and the orthodoxy and academic rigor of the Reformed scholastics have tended to be separated from one another in the scholarship of these largely overlapping periods of the history of the Reformed churches. The possibility that there was unity of learning and orthodoxy with praxis and piety during this period has been

inadequately acknowledged and examined in studies on seventeenth-century Reformed theology.

This dissertation will show through a contextual analysis of the theology of one particular Nadere Reformatie figure that this type of bifurcation does not stand. Contrary to this typical way of viewing Reformed orthodoxy and the Nadere Reformatie, the theology of Simon Oomius displays a strong orthodoxy arising out of a scholastic training as well as a profound spirituality and an intensely practical drive. Though one may wish to argue that orthodox theology, academic study, piety, and praxis have been separated in other church contexts and in other periods of church history, this dissertation will suggest, using the theology of Oomius as an example, that this was not necessarily the case in the seventeenth-century Nadere Reformatie. In Oomius, at least, orthodoxy, Reformed scholasticism, piety, and praxis cannot be separated.

## **1.2 Scholarship on the *Nadere Reformatie* and Reformed Orthodoxy**

There are at least a couple of somewhat interrelated problems which this dissertation seeks to overcome. They can be handled in conjunction with the problem raised in the thesis. The central problem is that of the separation that has been made between spirituality and orthodoxy, learning and piety, or theory and practice in studies of seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed theology. Historically this separation has been quite typical in the scholarship on the period with the result tending toward either the



figures of the Nadere Reformatie being waved off as merely pietists<sup>1</sup> or, looking at the movement only in terms of its spirituality and practical thrust as a reaction to what is often presupposed to be the rigid dogmatic orthodoxy of the scholastic theology of the time.<sup>2</sup>

The result of the former has been a lack of much scholarly attention on the period until relatively recently. O. J. de Jong and W. van 't Spijker<sup>3</sup> mention a number of older church historical studies which, in their negativity toward the period as well as the tendency especially of the Groninger school to color its study of the period with its own ideals, did little to invite further and deeper study of the Nadere Reformatie. These include such studies as the general histories of the Dutch Reformed Church by A. Ypeij and I. J. Dermout,<sup>4</sup> E. J. Diest Lorgion,<sup>5</sup> J. Reitsma,<sup>6</sup> and L. Knappert<sup>7</sup> as well as the work laying out the mid-nineteenth-century program of the school of Groningen and its

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<sup>1</sup> See on this O. J. de Jong, "De Nadere Reformatie binnen Nederland," in *Het eigene van de Nederlandse Nadere Reformatie*, by O. J. de Jong, W. van 't Spijker and H. Florijn (Houten: Den Hertog B. V., 1992), 10.

<sup>2</sup> See on this point W. J. van Asselt and E. Dekker, "Introduction," in *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, ed. W. J. van Asselt and E. Dekker (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> See his survey of Nadere Reformatie scholarship, "Bronnen van de Nadere Reformatie," in *De Nadere Reformatie en het Gereformeerd Piëtisme*, by T. Brienens, K. Exalto, J. van Genderen, C. Graafland, and W. van 't Spijker ('s-Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum B.V., 1989), 5-51.

<sup>4</sup> *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk*, 2 vols. (Breda: W. van Bergen en Comp., 1819 and 1822).

<sup>5</sup> *Kerkgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden* (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1873).

<sup>6</sup> *Geschiedenis van de Hervorming en de Hervormde Kerk der Nederlanden*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1949).

<sup>7</sup> *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk gedurende de 16e en 17e eeuw*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff & Co., 1911).

approach to church history by P. Hofstede de Groot.<sup>8</sup> As O. J. de Jong rightly notes, in these studies especially later representatives of the period, but also earlier ones were quickly labeled “piëtist” or “mysticus,” and as a result were gently pushed outside of the Reformed tradition and therefore considered unworthy of study. From Germany, Albrecht Ritschl’s *Geschichte des Pietismus*<sup>9</sup> should also be mentioned in this context. Ritschl’s work contained a particularly biting critique of “pietism” in the Dutch Reformed Church of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, seeing in it a return to medieval mysticism and at the same time a turn away from the Reformation.<sup>10</sup> Along this same line of a negative reaction to the Nadere Reformatie which has tended to pull scholars away from the field leading well into the twentieth century is the suggestion that if not Abraham Kuyper himself, than certainly his followers, have tended to be quite negative about, or at least, uninterested in what they perceive as pietism in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>11</sup> This series of mostly

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<sup>8</sup> *De Groninger Godgeleerden in hunne eigenaardigheid. Toespraak aan zijne vroegere en tegenwoordige leerlingen na vervulde vijftientigjarige hoogleeraarsbediening* (Groningen, 1855). For the program of the Groninger school see especially pp. 29 and 213.

<sup>9</sup> *Geschichte des Pietismus in der reformirten Kirche*, 3 vols. (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1880). See here especially the second book of the first volume, “Der Pietismus in der reformirten Kirche der Niederlande,” 101-363.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to W. van ‘t Spijker see the following on Ritschl in the context of a helpful survey of the history of Nadere Reformatie scholarship: W. J. op ‘t Hof, “Studie der Nadere Reformatie: Verleden en Toekomst,” *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 18:1 (1994): 1-50; Two important works that are generally considered to have helped pave the way toward less pejorative understandings of the period should also be mentioned here: H. Heppel, *Geschichte des Pietismus und der Mystik in der Reformirten Kirche, namentlich der Niederlande* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1879) and W. Goeters, *Die Vorbereitung des Pietismus in der Reformirten Kirche der Niederlande bis zur Labadistischen Krisis 1670* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1911).

<sup>11</sup> See on this point of view Joel Beeke, “Appendix: The Dutch Second Reformation (*De Nadere Reformatie*),” in *The Quest for Full Assurance* (Grand Rapids: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1999), 305. I

negative evaluations of the Nadere Reformatie, even from very early studies of the period, did not help invite interest or research in this area of church history.

The latter point above, that the spiritual and practical drive of the Nadere Reformatie has been viewed as a reaction to what has been called the “dry” and “dead” orthodox theology of the time, has contributed toward a focus in the Nadere Reformatie scholarship that does exist on helpful biographies and studies of the spirituality of the period, including its devotional and practical literature, but few studies on the (orthodox and scholastic) theological context of the period. For example, the largest and still only significant study on Gisbertus Voetius by A. C. Duker does very little with this theologian’s theology.<sup>12</sup> This work on a man who is the central figure of the Nadere Reformatie and seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed scholastic theology alike, is a thorough and well-researched biography, but it is not much more than a biography. Studies like this have been the trend in Nadere Reformatie studies dating from the late nineteenth century to today.<sup>13</sup> While these studies have been extremely helpful in recovering our knowledge of the figures of the Nadere Reformatie and are thus valuable, the theology of these figures as well as the theological context could have been more thoroughly examined in many cases.

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think it is a matter of debate whether the origin of the negativity toward the period is to be traced to Kuyper or to some of his followers.

<sup>12</sup> A. C. Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, 3 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1897-1914).

<sup>13</sup> E.g. F. J. Los, *Wilhelmus à Brakel* (Leiden: G. Los, 1892); W. J. M. Engelberts, *Willem Teellinck* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Ton Bolland, 1898); W. Snoeijer, *Wandelen Voor Zijn Aangezicht. Jodocus van Lodenstein, een mysticus uit de Reformatie* (Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok, 2000).

In both of these somewhat different problems—the lack of interest in the Nadere Reformatie because of its pietism and the interest in the pietism at the expense of the Reformed theological context—the shared tendency is the creation of a bifurcation between the spirituality of the Nadere Reformatie and the more scholastic, orthodox theology of the period. This bifurcation can be traced by looking more closely at some of Nadere Reformatie scholarship over the years.

Typical of some of the earliest general church historical studies of the Nadere Reformatie as well as studies of individual representatives of the Nadere Reformatie is what A. J. Krull does in the introduction to his work on Jacobus Koelman.<sup>14</sup> Here Krull states that Koelman was reacting against the stagnation of “dogmatism” and “dead, fine-print theology” which developed at the cost of the practice of Christianity and heartfelt piety and spiritual life.<sup>15</sup> Krull favorably quotes the earlier Ypeij and Dermout church historical study when it states that people were only concerned with doctrine and thus there was no power in the heart toward godliness, morality, and virtue.<sup>16</sup> Typical of others, Krull speaks of the movement of piety in the seventeenth century as a reaction to a dead dogmatism and a concern with fine points of doctrine.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Jacobus Koelman: Eene Kerkhistorische Studie* (Sneek: J.Campen, 1901).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>17</sup> See also, for example, P. Proost. *Jodocus van Lodenstein* (Amsterdam: J. Brandt en Zoon, 1880), 3-8; Engelberts, *Willem Teellinck*, i and ii; L. Knappert, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk gedurende de 16e en 17e Eeuw*, Vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff & Co., 1911), 234, 273; J. Reitsma, *Geschiedenis van de Hervorming en de Hervormde Kerk der Nederlanden*, 338.

Similar evaluations of the relation of Nadere Reformatie figures to Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism have continued in later years. C. Graafland has described the “bijbelsbesef” of the Nadere Reformatie as helping to correct the “schadelijke inwerking” of scholasticism.<sup>18</sup> T. Brienens in his work on the preaching of the Nadere Reformatie mentions, favorably, J. van Genderen who describes the Nadere Reformatie as a “reaction against dead orthodoxy.”<sup>19</sup> Brienens himself takes up the description of the period given by A. F. N. Lekkerkerker when he sees it as a “reaction to and warning against ‘leerheiligheid’ which after Dort threatened to become master of the church and her preaching.”<sup>20</sup> E. Osterhaven speaks of experiential theology reacting to rationalism in theology as well as the Reformed “pietists” reacting against the almost exclusive emphasis on the intellect. He sees a Nadere Reformatie figure like William Ames as reacting against orthodoxy.<sup>21</sup> Stoeffler, in his major work, speaks of an attempt “to correct the then current dry-as-dust orthodoxy in favor of the Christianity of the reformers, which was a living, vital, and hence effectively satisfying faith.”<sup>22</sup> He claims that in contrast to the orthodoxy of their day, the Reformed pietists wanted a living faith. Further, Stoeffler says, they disliked the “rigid objectivity” of orthodox theology and

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<sup>18</sup> C. Graafland, “Gereformeerde Scholastiek VI: De Invloed van de Scholastiek op de Nadere Reformatie (2),” *Theologia Reformata* 30 (1987): 340.

<sup>19</sup> *De Prediking van de Nadere Reformatie* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Ton Bolland, 1974), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> M. Eugene Osterhaven, “The Experiential Theology of Early Dutch Calvinism,” *Reformed Review* 27 (1974): 183.

<sup>22</sup> F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 11.

“blew the roof off of the tight little structure of orthodoxy.”<sup>23</sup> In Stoeffler, polemical and devotional theology, the seventeenth-century orthodox and the seventeenth-century “pietists,” simply do not go together. Indeed, this view seems typical of numerous past studies of the Nadere Reformatie.

A different but in some ways related issue in this field of study seems to be a particular view of Reformed scholasticism and orthodoxy. A number of the above references have already made this view clear. As has been suggested and explained elsewhere, older scholarship on post-Reformation theology has tended to negatively evaluate Protestant and Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism with such terms as “rigid,” “dry,” “dead,” “decretal,” “legalistic,” “speculative,” and “rationalistic.” In recent years there has been a reappraisal of the Reformed orthodox documents from the perspective of the *principia* of orthodoxy, theological method and the “central dogma” idea in theology.<sup>24</sup> By and large, this reevaluation of the older scholarship on and documents of Reformed orthodoxy during the post-Reformation period has not yet been applied to Nadere Reformatie scholarship. Without this reevaluation, the sometimes pejorative evaluations of the older scholarship remain, thereby inviting a continuing bifurcation between the Nadere Reformatie and Reformed orthodoxy. For, in this older

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 17, 19.

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the older scholarship as well as the perspective of the newer scholarship see, for example, Richard A. Muller, *Scholasticism and Orthodoxy in the Reformed Tradition: An Attempt at Definition* (Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary, 1995); “Calvin and the Calvinists: Assessing Continuities and Discontinuities Between the Reformation and Orthodoxy, Part I,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 30:2 (November, 1995): 345-75; “Part II,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 31:1 (April, 1996): 125-60; *Ad fontes argumentorum: The Sources of Reformed Theology in the Seventeenth Century* (Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht, 1999); Willem J. van Asselt, P. L. Rouwendal, et. al. *Inleiding in de Gereformeerde Scholastiek* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1998); Van Asselt and Dekker, *Reformation and Scholasticism*.

line of thinking and scholarship, how could something “dry,” “rigid,” and “dead” be anything but negatively related to the Nadere Reformatie with its spiritual and practical drives? The conclusions of the newer scholarship on post-Reformation orthodoxy, however, rightly allow the possibility of the two to coexist. Through an analysis of the theology of Simon Oomius in its proper theological context, taking into account the newer scholarship on post-Reformation Reformed theology, this dissertation will seek to argue not only that the two did coexist, but also seek to discover precisely how the two coexisted.

### 1.3 Goal and Method of This Study

Part of a more general problem which this dissertation seeks in some small way to overcome is the simple lack of studies on many aspects and figures of post-Reformation church and theology, and particularly the lack of studies on many figures and aspects of the overlapping period known as the Nadere Reformatie. More figures and their theology need to be placed in context in order to get an accurate picture of the theological development of the period. Though many studies have been done in recent years on themes and figures of the Nadere Reformatie,<sup>25</sup> much still needs to be done; many figures

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<sup>25</sup> See, for example, the work of scholars such as S. van der Linde, C. Graafland, J. van der Haar, W. J. op 't Hof, T. Brienens, K. Exalto, J. W. Hofmeyr, F. A. van Lieburg, A. de Reuver, and W. van 't Spijker. Also see the work of the journal *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* as well as numerous other individual studies, for example: Joel R. Beeke, *The Quest for Full Assurance: The Legacy of Calvin and His Successors* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1999); R. Bisschop, *Sions Vorst en volk. Het tweede-Israëlidee als theocratisch concept in de Gereformeerde kerk van de Republiek tussen ca. 1650 en ca. 1750* (Veenendaal: Kool, 1993); Martin Brecht, *Geschichte des Pietismus I: Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1993); F. G. M. Broeyer and E. G. E. van der Wall, eds., *Een Richtingstrijd in de Gereformeerde Kerken: Voetianen en Coccejanen, 1650-1750* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1994); C. A. de Niet, *Gisbertus Voetius, De praktijk der godzaligheid, deel I: Inleiding en tekstuitgave, deel II: vertaling en commentaar* (Utrecht: De Banier,

of the period are still relatively unknown<sup>26</sup> or have not been placed well in their theological context, or both.

More directly related to this study's thesis, it would be most useful for the scholarship on the period to be complemented not only by studies of figures that have not yet been covered, but also by the results of newer scholarship on seventeenth-century post-Reformation Reformed theology in order to get an accurate picture of the theology and church of the period. Though there are signs the scholarship is beginning to take the Reformed orthodox theological context seriously,<sup>27</sup> including seeing the possibility of a unity of orthodoxy and piety in the period, there is a need for more work on this to be done.

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1996); O. J. de Jong, W. van 't Spijker, and H. Florijn, *Het eigene van the Nederlandse Nadere Reformatie* (Houten: Den Hertog B. V., 1992); L.F. Groenendijk, *De Nadere Reformatie van het Gezin: de Visie van Petrus Wittewrongel op de Christelijke Huishouding* (Dordrecht: Uitgeverij J. P. van den Tol, 1984); W. B. Kranendonk, G. Saldenus: *Predikant en Dichter* (Houten: Den Hertog, 1996); C. J. Malan, *Die Nadere Reformasie* (Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom Universiteit vir CHO, 1981); C. J. Meeuse, *De Toekomstverwachting van de Nadere Reformatie in het Licht van haar Tijd: Een onderzoek naar de verhouding tussen het zeventiende-eeuwse chillasme en de toekomstverwachting van de Nadere Reformatie, met name bij Jacobus Koelman* (Kampen: Uitgeverij De Groot Goudriaan, 1990); S. D. Post, *Bernardus Smijtgelt, Dienstknecht van God* (Houten: Den Hertog, 2001); Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982); J. C. Trimp, *Jodocus van Lodensteyn, predikant en dichter* (Kampen: Kok, 1987); G. van den End, *Guiljelmus Saldenus (1627-1694): Een praktisch en irenisch theoloog uit de Nadere Reformatie* (Leiden, 1991); J. van Oort, C. Graafland, et al., eds., *De Onbekende Voetius* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1989); W. Verboom, *De catechese van de Reformatie en de Nadere Reformatie* (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1987). In addition, in recent years reprints of older Nadere Reformatie studies as well as numerous reprints and new editions of various works from the period itself have been appearing at a rapid pace the past couple of decades from various publishers, including Den Hertog B. V., Uitgeverij J. J. Groen en Zoon, and De Schatkamer.

<sup>26</sup> As J. Beeke rightly notes in "The Dutch Second Reformation," 104. He mentions here some figures who still need to be more thoroughly studied: Theodorus à Brakel, Theodorus van der Groe, Adrianus Hasius, Abraham Hellenbroek, Nicolaas Holtius, David Knibbe, Johannes à Marck, Petrus van Maastricht, Gregorius Mees, Franciscus Ridderus, and Rippertus Sixtus.

<sup>27</sup> See as an example, T. Brienens, et al., *Theologische Aspecten van de Nadere Reformatie* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1993).



Dr. Simon Oomius, a pastor from 1654 until his death in 1706 who studied at Leiden, and later at Utrecht under Gisbertus Voetius and Johannes Hoornbeeck, is a post-Reformation Dutch Reformed theologian deserving of more careful study. He has an extensive number of published works to his name and he appears to belong to both the Nadere Reformatie and Reformed orthodoxy. This study will show that though some of the scholarship on the period seems to point in this direction, Oomius' piety and practical drive were not in reaction to his orthodoxy. His theology and theological program formed a unified vision which included both an uncompromising orthodoxy, with scholastic training, and a concern that all theology is intensely practical by its very nature.

A word should be said about the Nadere Reformatie and Oomius' connection to the period. Attempts at defining the Nadere Reformatie have been many and various over the years. The *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie*, vigorous in its study and promotion of the study of the Nadere Reformatie, has provided what may be considered the most authoritative definition of the period:

De Nadere Reformatie is die beweging binnen de Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw, die in reactie op de verflauwing van of een gebrek aan levend geloof de persoonlijke geloofsbeleving en godsvrucht centraal stelde en van hieruit inhoudelijke en procedurele reformatieprogramma's opstelde, bij de bevoegde kerkelijke, politieke en maatschappelijke organen indiende en/of in aansluiting hierbij zelf een verdere hervorming van kerk, samenleving en staat in woord en daad nastreefde.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> C. Graafland, W.J. op 't Hof, F.A. van Lieburg, "Nadere Reformatie: opnieuw een poging tot begripsbepaling," *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 19:2 (1995): 108.

Coupled with an interest in the scholarship to define the period are attempts to determine which pastors and theologians can properly be called representatives of the Nadere Reformatie, and which cannot. This dissertation will show that the concerns of the Nadere Reformatie mentioned in the above definition connect very closely with the concerns Oomius reveals in his writings. Living (from 1630-1706) during the very heart of the movement, fruit of godliness, a personal and living faith, and further reformation of the church and society were all of intense interest to Oomius. Furthermore, he was aware of and seems to have participated in the program of further reformation in his day, through both his writings and his pastoral work. A survey of his writings shows a pastoral interest not only for the church, but also the home, politics, and society in general. For example, the fact that he wrote his *Ecclesiola*, shows a typical Nadere Reformatie concern. Representatives of the Nadere Reformatie considered godly homes, or “little churches,” to be the foundation of a program to reform the church and all of society.<sup>29</sup>

The characteristics of the Nadere Reformatie that the *Documentatieblad* lists to illumine its definition fit Oomius as well.<sup>30</sup> The Nadere Reformatie’s concern for piety, striving for reform in the church, theocratic ideal, desire for moral reform, and strong connection with English Puritanism—all these are characteristics of the theology of Simon Oomius.

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<sup>29</sup> See on this subject L.F. Groenendijk, *De Nadere Reformatie van het Gezin. De Visie van Petrus Wittewrongel op de Christelijke Huishouding* (Dordrecht: Uitgeverij J. P. van den Tol, 1984 ).

<sup>30</sup> See *ibid.*, 137-150.

Though Oomius was one of the most fruitful writers of his time according to Abraham van der Aa (who lists about thirty-five works to his name), until very recently little or no archival work has been done on Oomius, let alone theological study.<sup>31</sup> His published works include practical treatises on such matters in the Christian life as solitude, tears, fear, the spiritual home, old age, and suicide. Among other published works, Oomius also wrote various treatises on the occasion of Dutch political developments in the 1670s and 1680s, an expansive work on Islam, and an *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, which, though unfinished, spans 2400 quarto pages and includes a prolegomena, a doctrine of Scripture and a doctrine of God. Though several of Oomius' works have been republished recently in the Netherlands<sup>32</sup> and there have been brief studies done on his work on suicide<sup>33</sup> and his *Schriftuerlijke prognosticatie*,<sup>34</sup> as well as a

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<sup>31</sup> Van der Aa, *Biographisch woordenboek der Nederlanden, bevattende levensbeschrijvingen van zoodaanige personen, die zich op eenigerlei wijze in ons vaderland hebben vermaard gemaakt*, Vol. 5 (Haarlem: J. J. van Brederode, 1852-1878), 39. On the archival work done thus far on Oomius see F. van der Pol, "Simon Oomius in Reactie op zijn Tijd," *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 23 (1999): 44-62; *idem*, "Religious Diversity and Everyday Ethics in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch City Kampen," *Church History* 71:1 (2002): 16-62.

<sup>32</sup> Most notably his prolegomena to the *Institutiones*, the *Dissertatie van de onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid* (1997). Also the following have been republished: *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments...* (1998), *Satans Vuistslagen* (2000), and *Troost-fonteyn geopent in de verhandeling van verscheyde theologische stoffen...* (2003). All are published by *De Schatkamer*. Another work, *'t Weenen der Tortel-duyve, ofte een tractaet, in welcke gehandelt wordt van de tranen in 't gemeyn*, was rewritten in contemporary Dutch spelling by J. van der Haar (Dordrecht: J. P. van der Tol, 1974).

<sup>33</sup> P. Buijs, "Van zonde naar ziekte: Nederlandse opvattingen over zelfmoord ten tijde van de Verlichting" *De Gids* CXXV (1992): 301-312; K. Exalto, *Geen hand aan u zelf. Gedachten over de Zelfmoord* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1989), 68-73.

<sup>34</sup> See F. van der Pol, "Religious Diversity and Everyday Ethics in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch City Kampen," 20-22.

study on his book about Islam,<sup>35</sup> there remain many aspects of Oomius' works and theology worthy of investigation.

Recently, K. Exalto developed a research proposal concerning Oomius.<sup>36</sup> Here he suggests the worth of a study of his *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, noting that it is substantial enough to be placed alongside of similar works by figures like Voetius, Hoonbeeck and Van Maastricht who also fall both into the camp of the Nadere Reformatie as well as the Reformed orthodox. Exalto notes, moreover, that a study of this work can be nicely complemented by Oomius' numerous treatises on various parts of the *praxis pietatis*.<sup>37</sup>

Exalto notes elsewhere the problem in studies on the seventeenth-century Reformed of scholars making too sharp an opposition between the orthodox Reformed theologians and their more pietistic contemporaries.<sup>38</sup> He sees in Oomius an example of the close connection between Reformed scholasticism and Nadere Reformatie spirituality of the period. In some ways, it is Exalto's research proposal that this dissertation wishes to take up, paying particular attention to areas like the orthodoxy/piety issue where the older scholarship on Nadere Reformatie and seventeenth-century orthodoxy can be

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<sup>35</sup> J. van den Berg, "Het Geopende en Wederleyde Muhammedisdom of Turckdom. Beschrijving van een werk van Simon Oomius (1630-1706)" (Doctoraalscriptie THUK Kampen, 1998).

<sup>36</sup> "Onderzoekvoorstel betreffende Simon Oomius," *Nieuwsbrief SSNR* 7 (1997): 15-16.

<sup>37</sup> "*Praxis pietatis*," refers to the life of faith of the believer. While "*pietas*" is often translated in English as "godliness" and in Dutch as "*godzaligheid*," and is a sufficient understanding of the word for the purposes of this study, the reader should recognize there are problems with this standard translation and complexities surrounding the proper understanding of how the term was used in the seventeenth century. See on this issue Aart de Groot, "Godzaligheid is gelukzaligheid. Verkenning in de geschiedenis van een woord," *Kerk en Theologie* 27 (1976): 177-187.

<sup>38</sup> "Simon Oomius (1630-ca 1706)," in *De Nadere Reformatie en het Gereformeerd Piëtisme*, T. Brienens, K. Exalto, et al., ('s-Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum B. V., 1989), 156.

complemented by the newer research in and understandings of post-Reformation Reformed theology.

The dissertation seeks to take advantage of past scholarship on the Nadere Reformatie and its figures as well as advantage of more recent suggestions and findings of scholarship on late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformed theology. In order to see how the Nadere Reformatie and academic or scholastic theology connect in Oomius, the proposal is first to set the primary sources clearly in context—both historical and pastoral as well as intellectual, academic and theological. In this connection the value of the recent work of church historian Frank van der Pol on Oomius should be noted. He has done archival work on Oomius and recently published an article which examines Oomius in the context of the city of Kampen in the late seventeenth century.<sup>39</sup> This dissertation will take into consideration aspects of Van der Pol's work as well as various other contextual matters such as Oomius' university training, including his interaction with his teachers. Church and city archives have also been examined to form a picture of Oomius as pastor.

In order to study the theology of Oomius in its proper seventeenth-century context with a view especially towards taking note of both his orthodoxy and scholasticism as well as his piety and practical drive, chapter 1 of the dissertation will be followed by an overview of Oomius' life and works in chapter 2. His early life, academic training, and pastorates will be looked at with a view toward his theological placement within the

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<sup>39</sup> Van der Pol, "Religious Diversity and Everyday Ethics in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch City Kampen."

seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed Church. An overview of his published works will serve to give a sense of Oomius' overall goals and interests as a theologian.

The bulk of this dissertation will involve an examination of Oomius' *magnum opus*, the *Institutiones theologiae practicae*. Here Oomius' orthodoxy and scholastic training will be seen, as well as his very practical concern to carry the orthodox doctrines into the life of the church and the believer. In Part II of this study especially Oomius' *Dissertatie van der onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid*, the introduction to his *Institutiones*, will be examined. Here Oomius lays out what his conception of theology in general is as well as what he means by "practical" theology in particular. Furthermore, in the *Dissertatie* Oomius explains his purpose in writing his *Institutiones* as well as an explanation of such matters as his audience, style, language and his perceived need for these "onderwijsingen" in his time and ecclesiastical situation. Through an analysis of the *Dissertatie*, complemented by other pertinent writings,<sup>40</sup> an understanding will be gained of Oomius' theological placement in the seventeenth-century context, his sources and his understanding of theology, including its goal, as well as his own theological program and sense of purpose behind his writings.

After this, the remainder of Oomius' *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, will be analyzed in light of the above findings and with a view towards establishing the dissertation's thesis. Part III will involve a study of his doctrine of Scripture and Part IV

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<sup>40</sup> Such as, for example, his foreward to the Dutch translation of Isaac Ambrosius' *Prima, media et ultima, ofte de eerste, middelste en laetste Dingen* (Amsterdam: A. Boekholt, 1660), and his own *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments in het keurlyk cieraed van voorbeeldelijke godtsaligheyd* (Amsterdam/Leiden: Daniel vanden Dalen & Frederik Haringh, 1696). Also there is much insight to be gained into his theology, his theological program, and his sense of theology and the church of his time in the "Opdracht" and "Aen den Lezer" sections which precede many of his works.

his doctrine of God. By analyzing Oomius where he deals particularly with these doctrinal *loci* we will be able to demonstrate our point of the blend and balance of orthodox theology with spirituality and practice in the theology of Oomius, noting that for him these aspects are, in fact, inseparable. In order to fully appreciate his Reformed orthodoxy a full chapter will be spent on his explanation and defense of each doctrine before turning to how he brings each doctrine into the practice. Because Oomius will have already been placed in theological context to some extent through the examination of his *Dissertatie*, however, the focus in Parts III and IV will be an examination of the practical application of the doctrines, which, he writes, is his “*voornaemste oogemerck*.”

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## Chapter 2

### The Life and Works of Oomius

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#### 2.1 Biography

##### 2.1.1 Introduction

The best and most complete source of information on the life of Simon Oomius comes from his own pen. In his final, posthumously published work, *Cierlijke kroon en krans des grijsen en goeden ouderdoms*, we find a complete chapter where the author describes his life, from birth to near death.<sup>1</sup> This autobiographical account will be used as the foundation of the following description of Oomius' family background and academic training with archival sources as well as biographical information gleaned from Oomius' other writings serving in a complementary role.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 14 in *Cierlijke Kroon* (Leiden: Daniel vanden Dalen, 1707), 296-366. Recently this autobiography was adapted and reprinted: W. van Gent, "De Zwanenzang van Simon Oomius," *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 1 (1977): 42-66. Van Gent puts Oomius' account into contemporary Dutch, but he also shortens Oomius' original account. Because of this, although other recent descriptions of the life of Oomius all reference "De Zwanenzang" for Oomius' autobiography (see K. Exalto, F. van der Pol, J. van der Haar, and J. van den Berg who have all written with varying degrees of completeness on the life of Oomius), perhaps simply because the Van Gent version was more easily accessible. Here we will reference the original—and, as mentioned, complete—account as found in Chapter 14 of the *Cierlijke Kroon*.

<sup>2</sup> The first archival work on Oomius appears to have been done just in the past few years by J. van den Berg for his 1998 thesis on Oomius' work on Islam, and by F. van der Pol in the context of his broader studies on church and spirituality and the church and civic life in early modern Dutch culture, with the city of Kampen as a case study. By Van der Pol's account, both he and Van den Berg seem to have restricted their research to the archives in Kampen, where Oomius spent most of his years as pastor. See for the results of this research J. van den Berg, "*Het geopende en wederleyde muhammedisdom of turckdom*."



### 2.1.2 Family

Simon Oomius was born March 1, 1630 in a small place called Heenvliet.

Oomius writes that it is in the land of Voorne, which remains this island-region's name today located in the southern and western part of the province of South Holland in the Netherlands. Though small it received city rights in 1469 from Charles of Burgundy—this was concurred by Charles V and the entire council of the Netherlands in 1531. During Oomius' time Heenvliet was especially known for its annual horse market which attracted many people to the city around the month of May.<sup>3</sup>

Church-historically, Heenvliet is known for its famous pastor, a Reformed martyr, who ministered there from 1532-1552. Oomius notes, proudly, that he was born in the same house in which the “learned, eloquent, godly, mild, and persevering martyr of Jesus, Angelus Merula” lived. Oomius tells the reader his source on Angelus Merula: his grandnephew Paulus Merula wrote about the tragedy of his life, which Oomius finds significant enough to share with his reader in his autobiography.<sup>4</sup> Born in Den Briel in 1482, Angelus Merula was called by the patron and lord of Heenvliet and the surrounding area, Joost van Kruiningen. This lord seems to have been convinced of the teachings of the Reformation by the previous pastor of Heenvliet, who was an Augustinian monk from

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Beschrijving van een werk van Simon Oomius (1630-1706)” (Doctoraalscriptie THUK Kampen, 1998); F. van der Pol, “Simon Oomius in Reactie op Zijn Tijd,” *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 23 (1999): 44-62; and *idem*, “Religious Diversity and Everyday Ethics in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch City Kampen,” *Church History* 71:1 (2002): 16-62.

<sup>3</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 297-298.

<sup>4</sup> See P. Merula, *Fidelis et succincta rerum adversus A.M. (...) ab inquisitoribus gestarum commemoratio* (Leiden, 1604). This book is often known as *Historica tragica*, the name used by W. Moll to refer to it.

the monastery at Dordrecht. Joost van Kruinigen found a like-minded successor for the pastorate of Heenvliet in Merula. Merula seems to have come to his similar opinions through not only knowledge of the writings of Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, Brenz, and Capito, but also through his own thorough study of the church fathers and the Bible in the original languages. Very quickly after arriving at Heenvliet the pastor began preaching against veneration of the saints, pilgrimages, and processions. In July 1533 an investigation was made. One witness noted that Merula often “sows bad seed in his sermons.” Though some perceived heresies were discovered, such as Merula’s silence on the subject of purgatory and his rejection of the merit of good works, he was left alone, likely through the protection of his lord. After the death of Joost van Kruiningen, his son Johan came to power—he was no longer willing to protect the pastor. With evidence of his guilt as a heretic readily found Merula was imprisoned in 1552. A long trial process ensued, with attempts by Merula to demonstrate the legitimacy of his beliefs and attempts by his accusers to force him to recant. Broken down, Merula recanted in 1554—but greatly grieved about this action he recanted his recantation in 1555, both in writing and verbally. Though pressed to again recant, Merula was unwilling and was sentenced to be burned at the stake on July 26, 1557. Merula apparently died shortly before his burning, near the place of his judgment, kneeling for his last prayer.<sup>5</sup>

Just over sixty years after this event, Cornelis Simonsen Ooms, the father of Simon, became pastor at Heenvliet in May 1620, and he remained there until his

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<sup>5</sup> For Oomius on Merula see *Cierlijke Kroon*, 298-300. See also on Merula, “Angelus Merula,” in *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*, Vol. 2 (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1983), 325-327.

retirement on April 10, 1646.<sup>6</sup> Cornelis Ooms was born ca. 1576 in Turnhout, today within the province of Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium.<sup>7</sup> There, according to his son, the Ooms family still had standing and ruled in the government in the early eighteenth century, as they did in Antwerp and some other places in the southern Netherlands. Despite the standing of his extended family, Simon Oomius writes that more grace was given to his father and his father's brother because through the reading of the Holy Scriptures their eyes were opened and they were called out of "the Egyptian darkness of the pernicious papacy to the wonderful light of the Gospel." More than once Cornelis told his son that he was confirmed in the true (i.e. Reformed) doctrine against the papacy through the *Biënkorf der heyliche roomsche kercke*, written by Marnix van Sint Aldegonde.<sup>8</sup> As a result of siding with the Reformed, Cornelis lost most of his possessions as well as his brother to murder.<sup>9</sup>

Cornelis fled the southern Netherlands and ended up in Delft where he was a schoolteacher.<sup>10</sup> During this time Cornelis, with the encouragement of various godly

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<sup>6</sup> F. A. van Lieburg, *Predikanten*, part 1 of *Repertorium van Nederlandse hervormde predikanten tot 1816* (Dordrecht, 1996), col. 183.

<sup>7</sup> This approximate date of birth is suggested by F. A. van Lieburg in his *Repertorium*, Part 1, col. 183. This is confirmed elsewhere by a discovery in the student directory of Leiden that Cornelis was enrolled there as a student in 1646. His age is listed then as seventy. See Column 370 in the "Nomina Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae" section in G.N. Du Rieu, ed., *Album studiosorum acadmiae Lugduno Batavae MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXC accedunt nomina curatorum et professorum per eadem secula* (Hagae Comitum: Martinum Nijhoff, 1875).

<sup>8</sup> [Isaac Rabbotenu, pseud.], (Emden, 1569). Numerous editions and reprints appeared, especially between 1557 and 1664, but up to 1769. Marnix was the "right-hand man" of William of Orange according to F. A. van Lieburg, *Profeten en hun vaderland* (Doctoral Dissertation, Vrije Universiteit, 1996), p. 124.

<sup>9</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, p. 301.

<sup>10</sup> "Cornelis Simonsz" is listed in Appendix H, "Schoolteachers in Delft," of P. H. A. M. Abels and A. Ph. F. Wouters, *Nieuw en Ongezien*, part 2 of *Kerk en Samenleving in de classis Delft en Delftland*

people, appears to have presented himself to the church council of Delft to begin studying the Holy Scriptures and making preparations to become a pastor. He eventually passed his “Exam. Praeparatorio,” and was approved to enter the ministry.<sup>11</sup> Starting in 1586 in the Netherlands there were two ecclesiastical exams for candidates seeking to enter into the ministry: the “praeparatoir” exam and the “peremptoir.”<sup>12</sup> The first of these was done in the classis where the ministerial candidate lived. If the exam was passed, the individual was eligible to receive a call. When passed, the candidate could preach in churches, but not yet administer the sacraments. Upon receiving a call a second exam followed in the classis of the calling church. This was the “peremptoir” exam. After passing this exam, a candidate was admitted into the office of minister and could administer the sacraments. Before 1586 there was only one exam equivalent to the “peremptoir.”

While it was always difficult for a candidate without the usual academic training, like Cornelis, to be admitted into the ministry in Classis Delft, the attitude of the classis—and that of the other classes of the Netherlands—became even more restrictive after the national Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-1619.<sup>13</sup> The synod determined that schoolteachers, craftsmen, and others without university training would be admitted into the ministry only after it became absolutely clear that the candidate had exceptional gifts.

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1572-1621 (Delft: Eburon, 1994). He is listed there as a teacher of reading and writing with the date November 13, 1615.

<sup>11</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 301-302.

<sup>12</sup> See *Nieuw en Ongezien*, Part 1, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-83.

If a candidate presented himself to a classis, that classis—in consultation with the provincial synod—could give him an initial pre-exam (“voor-examen”). After this exam, much time was to be given the candidate to study and prepare for the praeparatoir exam. Cornelis appears to have presented himself to the classis initially already in 1610 and his pre-exam may have taken place then. At that time he was approved to study further to prepare himself for the next level of examination. Perhaps especially in response to the decision at Dordrecht there was strong opposition against Cornelis and another teacher, Christiaen Dircksz, going forward to the next level of examination. In September of 1619 neither had yet been considered far enough along in their studies to go on to the praeparatoir exam. But in December of the same year the classis decided to allow the examination to take place. The classis determined, following the decision and recommendations of the national synod on the matter of admitting those without university training, that both candidates had to continue their preparations for awhile.

Cornelis only had to prepare a couple of months longer. He passed his praeparatoir exam in February of the next year, and, since there were no vacancies in Classis Delft, the ministers of the classis wrote to other classes on February 22, 1620 a letter approving the candidacy of Cornelis, noting that though he did not go to the university, he was a godly man who understood the main points of the Christian religion, and that he would serve well any church to which he is called.<sup>14</sup> The person who signed

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<sup>14</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 302.

the letter of recommendation was Henricus Arnoldi, whom Simon Oomius describes as having stood out as one of the lights of the Church.<sup>15</sup>

Oomius tells us that his father had no contemptuous qualities—he had a good mind, a solid memory, and he was never idle, usually studying and reading until deep in the night. He learned the Hebrew language with the grammar of Sixti Amama, was practiced in the histories of the papacy, as well as in the differences the righteous have with that “Babel,” and the differences between the Reformed and the followers of Arminius. Further, Cornelis’ son recalls him having an intimate (“gemeensame”) and kind nature, and being modest and neat in dress. He was quiet, very frugal in food and drink, and he was particularly great in his passion for the teaching and honor of his Lord—Oomius states he never saw him otherwise.<sup>16</sup>

After his retirement from the pastoral ministry on April 10, 1646, Cornelis likely very soon moved to Leiden, apparently to continue in his learning. We find his name written in the student directory of Leiden in 1646, at age seventy, among students mostly in their early twenties.<sup>17</sup> However, unlike most listings of students, there is no area of study given by Cornelis’ name, which could mean that he was registered for reasons other than study.<sup>18</sup> Oomius tells us that his father died in Leiden on November 8, 1653,

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<sup>15</sup> Henricus Arnoldi was a strong Contra-Remonstrant and a delegate to the national synod of Dordrecht. For more on Arnoldi see *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*, Vol. 5 (Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok, 2001), 20-21.

<sup>16</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 303-304.

<sup>17</sup> The name given is “Cornelis Simonides Oom,” from “Brabantus.” See also footnote 7.

<sup>18</sup> See J. Roelevink, “Gedicteerd verleden” (Dissertation, Amsterdam/Maarssen, 1986), 17-18: “er staan ook personen ingeschreven die niet werkelijk studeren maar wel de voorrechten van de student zoals

due to severe injuries from an accident involving the bolting of horses drawing a wagon.<sup>19</sup> Cornelis would have been about seventy-seven years old.

Oomius' mother's name was Elisabeth Jans, and by her son's account she was from a blameless family from Geertruidenberg. She was an attractive woman, and her beauty could still be seen in her old age, although she had become wearied through ailments and birthing twenty-one children (with Simon being the twenty-first). Significantly, as a "Daughter of the King" she always remained completely radiant within—a woman of Proverbs 31, writes her son. Oomius tells us too that she was always an example of simplicity, kind-heartedness, patience, modesty, humility, inexpressible diligence, and fiery devoutness. She was so kind to everyone that, as far as Oomius knows, there was no one she felt ill-disposed towards. Elisabeth died in Heenvliet, likely before her husband's retirement since he apparently had moved to Leiden the same year as he retired.<sup>20</sup>

Records show that Simon Oomius was himself married twice, although his first wife is never mentioned by him in his autobiography in the *Cierlijke Kroon en Krans des Grijsen en Goeden Ouderdoms*. We know of his first wife from two other sources. First, in the Baptism, Burial, and Marriage Records of the city of Kampen—where Oomius last served as pastor—there is record of the burial of Oomius' wife, with no name except her husband's given, on December 11, 1685, a year before the record of the

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vrijdom van bepaalde imposten en onderwerping aan een eigen academische rechtbank wensten te genieten."

<sup>19</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 306.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

December 10, 1686 marriage between the widower Simon Oomius and the widow, Hester Worst.<sup>21</sup> The second source of our knowledge of a previous marriage is found in the dedication of his work *De heerlickheyt van een kindt Godts, ofte Godts vriend*.<sup>22</sup> The book is dedicated to “his parents by marriage,” Thomas Slosius, a pastor in Vleuten, and his wife, Johanna van Eyndthoven.<sup>23</sup> So, though Oomius never mentions her by name, he was married in 1658 (the date of the book’s publication) or earlier to the daughter of Rev. Slosius. Nothing more is known of this wife. Little more is known of his second wife, Hester Worst, beyond the above-mentioned date Simon and she married. We do know the following: she was a widow when she married Oomius; she was a daughter of a mayor of Kampen, Willem Worst; and she wrote the four-page dedication to her husband’s final, posthumous book, *Cierlijke kroon en krans des grijsen en goeden ouderdoms*. Oomius speaks of the Lord’s goodness in sending Hester to him. He lived with her in peace, unity, and inexpressible sweetness.<sup>24</sup>

Records reveal that Simon Oomius had only child. Cornelis Oomius was very likely born to Simon and the daughter of Rev. Slosius during the years they lived in Purmerland, Oomius’ first pastorate. The appropriate archival records do not show the baptism of Cornelis, though, since the records for 1660 are missing, that may have been

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<sup>21</sup> *Gemeente Archief Kampen*, Begraven Bovenkerk 16<sup>e</sup> en 17<sup>e</sup> Eeuw, Mu-Ov 246, fol. 77; Ondertrouw N.H. Kerk 17<sup>e</sup> Eeuw, Ob-Pe 132, fol. 38. The letters and number immediately following them refer to booklets in the Kampen city archives with collected information from folios. The number of the folio from which the information was collected is given here immediately following the booklet reference.

<sup>22</sup> (Amsterdam: Jan Pieterszoon Kuypen, 1658).

<sup>23</sup> J. van der Haar published his discovery of this little fact in *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 2:4 (1978), 117-120.

<sup>24</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 341-343.



the year of Cornelis' baptism, and thus likely his birth as well.<sup>25</sup> The Kampen records show that Cornelis, of Purmerland, was married on September 26, 1684 to a widow, Simontje Arents, of Enckhuysen.<sup>26</sup> The baptismal records show the baptism of three daughters and two sons of Cornelis and Simontje between March 11, 1685 and February 20, 1696.<sup>27</sup> Three of their children were buried at a very young age.<sup>28</sup> Cornelis was buried in the Buiten Kerk of Kampen on October 31, 1718 and his wife was buried there on October 30, 1727.<sup>29</sup>

Simon Oomius died on November 25, 1706.<sup>30</sup> He lived to be almost seventy-seven years old—nearly as long as his father. On December 1 he was buried in the Boven Kerk of Kampen on December 1. His wife Hester died within a year of Simon and was buried on August 15, 1707, also in the Boven Kerk.<sup>31</sup>

### 2.1.3 Academic Training

Already before Oomius was seven years old his parents sent him to nearby Den Briel to study with Henricus van Rossem, whom Oomius tells us was a worthy writer and a very wise man who was a sailor when he was younger and was later admitted into the

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<sup>25</sup> *Streekarchief Waterland*, Inv. Nr. 8, IL, DTB (Ipendam: Doop-, trouw-, en begraafboeken). These records contain the baptismal records from February 6, 1622 to December 26, 1659 and April 24, 1661 to April 11, 1666. Over a year is missing.

<sup>26</sup> *Gemeente Archief Kampen*, Ondertrouw N.H. Kerk 17<sup>e</sup> Eeuw, Ob-Pe 132, fol. 25.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Doop N.H. Kerk 17<sup>e</sup> Eeuw, Na-Ov 36, fol. 25v., 31, 74, 99, 115v.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Begraven Bovenkerk 16<sup>e</sup> en 17<sup>e</sup> Eeuw, Mu-Ov 246, fol. 99v; Begraven Bovenkerk 18<sup>e</sup> Eeuw, No-Ov 269, fol. 29v, 59v.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, Begraven Buitenkerk, No-Ov 296, fol. 140, 182v.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, N.H. Kerk, No. 11, Council meeting on November 26, 1706.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Begraven Bovenkerk 18<sup>e</sup> Eeuw, No-Ov 269, fol. 76, 84v.

ministry. When Van Rossem was called to De Lier, not far from Delft, Oomius' parents sent him there to continue to be instructed under the same man.<sup>32</sup> After returning home from his training in De Lier, Oomius' parents sent him to Den Briel again, this time to learn languages. Though Oomius does not speak highly of his first instructor during this period, he speaks well of his successor, Petrus Magerus, called from his teaching position in Nieuwland to be rector at Den Briel.<sup>33</sup> Oomius applies to him the following words from the forward of a work by the man, the *Methodus*: "poeta, philosophus, philologus, Theologus rari exempli."<sup>34</sup> In Nieuwland, Oomius notes that Magerus had much association with Johannes Cloppenburg (1592-1652), whom he calls a theologian of deep learning, later a great light at the academy of Franeker, and the grandfather, writes of Oomius, of "my Marckius," who at Leiden amazed everyone.<sup>35</sup> Though little is known of Magerus, the theologian Cloppenburg is known as a sympathizer of Gomarus, a friend of Voetius (who called him his "alter ipse"), a combatant against the Remonstrants, Socinians, and papists, a covenant theologian, and a colleague of Cocceius.<sup>36</sup> Under the

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<sup>32</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 306-307.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 309-310.

<sup>34</sup> Petrus Magerus, *Methodus formandarum concionum inprimis, quae praxin spectant* (Leiden: David à Lodensteyn, 1653). This work includes contributions by Philips van Marnix van Sint Aldegonde and Johannes Hoornbeeck.

<sup>35</sup> "Marckius" is Johannes à Marck (1655-1731), Reformed pastor and professor at Franeker and Groningen. It is unclear what prompts Oomius to refer to Marckius with a term of endearment.

<sup>36</sup> Cloppenburg studied theology at Leiden under Gomarus and Polyander, at Franeker, and at various other places: Heidelberg, Basil, Geneva, and Saumur. He was pastor at Aalburg, Heusden, Amsterdam, Brielle (Den Briel), and then professor at Harderwijk and Franeker. He disputed under B. Turretinus at Geneva and had association with Buxtorf for a year in Basil. His two major works are *Disputationes theologiae XI: de foedere Dei et testamento veteri et novo* (1643) and *Excercitiones super locos communes theologicos* (1653). J. à Marck edited and published his *Theologia opera omnia* in 1684 in Amsterdam. See on Cloppenburg the following: *Biografisch Lexicon*, II, pp. 127-129; David N. J. Poole,

leadership of Magerus the school at Den Briel blossomed. Oomius fondly remembers sitting around his table with thirty fellow boarders. Through this modest, friendly, and good-natured, yet magnificent man Oomius enjoyed learning Latin and Greek and also started Hebrew. Oomius writes that the memory of this excellent man will remain with him as long as he lives, and he is glad to hear that his sons are walking in his footsteps.

Oomius concluded his primary education with an oration and then he enrolled at Leiden.<sup>37</sup> The *Album Studiosorum* of Leiden shows Oomius first registered there July 2, 1647 with the name “Simonides Ooms,” age twenty (which is presumably incorrect), as a student of philosophy.<sup>38</sup> Oomius is again listed as a student, now of theology, on July 5, 1650, age twenty (this time correct).<sup>39</sup> At Leiden Oomius reveals that he studied philosophy under Adamus Stuartus and the “widely-known” Adrianus Heereboord, and theology under Jacobus Trigland, Fredericus Spanheim, and Constantinus l’Empereur, with the latter mostly teaching Hebrew and Chaldean.<sup>40</sup> In one of his writings Oomius

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*The History of the Covenant from the Bible to Johannes Cloppenburg: De Foedere Dei* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 211-252.

<sup>37</sup> Cierlijke Kroon, 310-311.

<sup>38</sup> Du Rieu, *Album studiosorum academiae Lugduno Batavae MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXC accedunt nomina curatorum et professorum per eadem secula*, col. 37, in the section “Nomina Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae.” The exact listing is “SIMONIDES OOMS Briellensis. 20, P.” That year over 500 students were registered—about 65 in theology and 66 in philosophy)

<sup>39</sup> *Idem*, col. 405: “SIMON OOMS Heenvlietano-Batavus. 20, T.” About 350 students were enrolled in 1650.

<sup>40</sup> On Heereboord see F. L. R. Sassen, “Adriaan Heereboord (1614-1661). De opkomst van het Cartesianisme te Leiden,” *Algemeen Nederlandsch tijdschrift voor wijsbegeerte en psychologie* 36 (1942): 12-22; H. de Dijn, “Adriaan Heereboord en het Nederlands Cartesianisme,” *Algemeen Nederlands tijdschrift voor wijsbegeerte* 75 (1983): 56-69; Henri Adriën Krop, “Scholam naturae ingrediamur: Adrianus Heereboord als geschiedschrijver van de filosofie,” *Geschiedenis van de wijsbegeerte in Nederland: documentatieblad Werkgroep "Sassen"* 4:1 (1993): 3-13. On Jacobus Trigland see H. W. Ter Haar, *Jacobus Trigland* (’s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1891); M. A. Thompson, “Jacobus Trigland en zijn tijd,” *De Katholiek* 109 (1896): 417-439, 540-557; 110 (1896): 1-22; B. J. W. de Graaff, *Jacobus Trigland*

calls Heereboord his “friend and master.”<sup>41</sup> In his *Het geopende en wederleyde Turckdom*, Oomius also writes of his studies at Leiden that he followed the lectures of Jacobus Golius, professor of Arabic, on Islam, and that one of his fellow students was Fredericus Spanheim, Jr., later professor at Heidelberg and Leiden, and son of the professor at Leiden.<sup>42</sup>

Oomius records that while at Leiden he was allured to Utrecht by the worldwide fame of its professors and by excellent witnesses to the education he would receive there.<sup>43</sup> The *Album Studiosorum* of Utrecht shows Oomius enrolled there by 1649 (already before the listing of Oomius as a theology student at Leiden in 1650).<sup>44</sup> Oomius thinks very fondly of his study of philosophy with Paulus Voetius at Utrecht, while words cannot express what he feels about his instructors in theology: Gisbertus Voetius, Carolus Dematius (“De Maets”), and Johannes Hoornbeeck.<sup>45</sup>

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(Vianen: De Banier, 1970); J. Lussenburg, “Het predikantengeslacht Trigland. 1. Prof. dr. Jacobus Trigland,” *Gereformeerd kerkhistorisch tijdschrift* 16 (1979-1980): 17-23, 33-40, 49-56; 17 (1980-1981): 1-9, 17-24, 33-40, 49-56; 18 (1981-1982): 1-9, 17-24, 33-40, 51-57; 19 (1982-1983): 1-8, 17-24, 33-41, 49-53. On Fredericus Spanheim see Ch. Borgeaud, *Histoire de l'Université de Genève*, I (Geneva, 1900), pp. 348-353, 636, 640; On Jacobus Golius see J. J. Witkam, *Jacobus Golius (1596-1667) en zijn handschriften* (Leiden, 1980); G. A. Wiegers, *A learned Muslim acquaintance of Erpenius and Golius: Ahmad b. Kasim al Andalusî and Arabic studies in The Netherlands* (Leiden, 1988); On these and the Leiden faculty in general see A. Eekhof, *De Theologische Faculteit te Leiden in de 17e Eeuw* (Utrecht: G. J. A. Ruys, 1921).

<sup>41</sup> *Institutiones theologiae practicae* 1.1 (Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672), 828.

<sup>42</sup> See J. van den Berg, “*Het Geopende*,” 9, citing Oomius, *Het geopende en wederleyde Turckdom*, I, 163-164.

<sup>43</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 311.

<sup>44</sup> *Album studiosorum academiae Rheno-Traiectinae MDCXXXVI – MDCCCLXXXVI accedunt nomina curatorum et professorum per eadem secula* (Utrecht: J. L. Beijers et J. van Boekhoven, 1886), p. 20 in the section “Nomina Studiosorum per singules Rectores.” He is listed with around 170 other students in 1649 as “Simon ab Ooms – Heenvlieta-Batavus.”

<sup>45</sup> On Johannes Hoornbeeck see J. W. Hofmeyr, *Johannes Hoornbeeck as polemikus* (Haarlem, 1975); On Voetius see W. van ‘t Spijker, “Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676),” in *De Nadere Reformatie*:

Oomius expresses great appreciation for his instructors at both Leiden and Utrecht, and displaying, typical of his age, an appreciation of and a sense of the authority of the early church, he compares his professors to the church fathers: he states that they exhibited a knowledge as great as Tertullian, a purity of the faith like Ignatius, Polycarp, Justinus, and Irenaeus, an eloquence like Basil, a kindness like Gregory of Nazianzus, and a fluency like Lactantius. He believes he would do a disservice to his instructors if he did not compare their knowledge of Scripture with that of Jerome, their courage with that of Athanasius, their diligence with that of Augustine, their steadfastness with that of Crysosthom, their holy zeal with that of Cyprian, and their simple godliness with that of Bernard. Oomius praises the grace of God by which he was so privileged to have studied under professors by whose instruction he became both “wiser and better.”<sup>46</sup> This kind of wording and way of viewing his education is very typical of Oomius’ constant stress on learning as well as a godly walk; knowledge about God and living for the Lord; understanding and practice.

After spending several years at Utrecht—and having received praiseworthy testimony to his potential as a godly, wise, and diligent pastor—Oomius passed his praeparatoir exam, which included a sermon by him prepared on Hebrews 11:1, on September 17, 1652 at Classis Haarlem and thus became an eligible ministerial

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*Beschrijving van haar voornaamste vertegenwoordigers* ('s-Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum B. V., 1986), 49-84; J. van Oort, C. Graafland, et al., eds., *De Onbekende Voetius* (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1989); On the Utrecht faculty in general during the 17<sup>th</sup> century see J. A. Cramer, *De Theologische Faculteit te Utrecht ten tijde van Voetius* (Utrecht: Kemink en Zoon N. V., 1932).

<sup>46</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 311-312.

candidate.<sup>47</sup> His first sermon was preached five days later, on September 22, at Bloemendaal. As a candidate for the ministry Oomius writes that various churches were interested in him, including the “blossoming and famous” church at Oostzaan.<sup>48</sup>

Oomius, though many years later after his initial academic training, was also promoted to a doctor in theology. He is listed by the academy of Harderwyk on February 12, 1674 as a theological candidate associated with the church at Purmerland.<sup>49</sup> On that same date he is listed as having promoted to a doctor under Dr. Samuel à Diest, with no title of a thesis given, though typically this was listed with the promotion date and

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<sup>47</sup> *Archief Classis Haarlem*, Oud-Archief Inv. No. 5, Classis ordinaria, 17 september 1652, Articles 2 and 7.

<sup>48</sup> Oomius is proud to include in his autobiography a recommendation given by his professors at Utrecht to the council of Oostzaan. The recommendation was written by Hoornbeeck and signed by him as well as Voetius on January 8, 1653: “Honorable, wise, godly brothers, we have been asked to provide a witness to the life and studies of Mr. Simon Ooms, who for some years lived and studied at our academy under our supervision and instruction, and is now a candidate in the honorable classis of Haarlem. We understand that this same Mr. Ooms has come under consideration to be called as minister in your church. We do not want to be negligent in our duty of assuring the church concerning the aforementioned person that, alongside of others, he was diligent and pious in all that he did, but he also stood out above others in his tranquility, modesty, and piety of life, being very diligent in everything—studying German as well as English sermons. He was so industrious in his studies that few equaled him. With much commendation, he made the most of all the lessons, classes, and disputations, as he displayed sufficiently various times in public disputations against Arminians and others. He advanced in preaching such that through his distinguished, clear, and penetrating enunciation as well as through excellent content—always urging to the practice—he will always be judged to be (by God’s grace) an excellent minister in his church. We are of the opinion that the church who makes use of his service in the evening or the morning will be blessed from the edification that we all expect from him. With this we end our sought testimony, truthfully given, etc.” Oomius records this on pp. 313-314 of the *Cierlijke Kroon*.

<sup>49</sup> D. G. van Epen, *Album studiosorum academiae Gelro-Zutphanicae MDCXLVIII-MDCCCXVIII. accedunt nomina curatorum et professorum per eadem secula cura* (Hagae Comitatus: Jacobus Hoekstra, 1904), 27.

promoter's name.<sup>50</sup> Oomius was the first person to promote at Harderwyk after 1672, the year of disaster for the Netherlands.<sup>51</sup>

Van Diest was at Harderwyk from 1664 to 1681 and would likely have left for Leiden in 1666 after Hoonbeeck's death had Cocceius helped advance his appointment. Though Van Diest was not in every respects a Cocceian, he was apparently friends with Cocceius and had even lived in his professor's home for a year while he studied at Leiden. Van Diest agreed with Cocceius on the sabbath debate of the day and he honored Cocceius as a second father.<sup>52</sup> That Oomius, who looked up to Voetius and Hoonbeeck and expressed tremendous appreciation for them as professors, could promote under a moderate Cocceian like Samuel van Diest shows the complexity of the theological relationships of the time, against those who would set up rigid camps between which no theologian could ever wander. On behalf of the theological faculty of Harderwijk, Van Diest would later write a kind and very complementary attestation for Oomius' work on the doctrine of the Trinity. There, hoping that Oomius will be able to complete his *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, Van Diest calls him a "very learned" minister and a "very faithful" teacher, indicating that his *Institutiones* have thus far proven extremely useful for the up building and edification of God's Church.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> O. Schutte, *Het Album Promotorum van de academie te Harderwijk* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1980), 40.

<sup>51</sup> Hermannus Boumann, *Geschiedenis van de voormalige Geldersche hoogeschool en hare hoogleraren*. 2 vols. (Utrecht: J. G. van Terveen en Zoon), 1844), I, 368.

<sup>52</sup> *Biografisch Lexicon*, II, 165.

<sup>53</sup> Oomius, attestation for *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godtgeleertheydt, vervolgh van het eerste tractaet des tweeden boecks van het eerste deel* (Schiedam: Laurens vander Wiel, 1680).

### 2.1.4 Pastorates

A ministerial candidate for over a year, Oomius was called on December 12, 1653 by the congregation at Purmerland, not far from the larger town of Purmerend in the province of North Holland. This call was approved by Classis Edam on January 5, 1654, with an examination, including a sermon on Matthew 23:27, planned for February 3. Oomius was examined at that time by D. J. le Marre and then ordained on February 22 by Ruardus Clerq, pastor at Purmerend.<sup>54</sup> Oomius remained at the church of Purmerland just under twenty-four years.

As a pastor, writes Oomius, he especially tried to practice three things: godliness, peacefulness, and diligence.<sup>55</sup> As for godliness, Oomius believes that the Spirit of wisdom taught him that ministers are the light and salt of the earth and that through the Lord's grace it is vital that their "*stemme en wandel*," "*leere en leven*," "*woorden en wercken*," and "*tonge en hand*" work together. When people are called to heaven by the pastor's voice, they should not be pulled toward hell by their lives, finds the pastor. Thus, though no one can be sinless, Oomius attempted to live an upright life, not giving even the appearance of evil. Living in peace with others must also be a part of godliness, according to Oomius.

For Oomius diligence meant reading the books of God's Word as well as other older and newer books. He writes that he did not want to neglect the gifts that God gave him—implying that he was good at studying and assimilating material. Nothing in the

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<sup>54</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 313-315.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 315-328.



world gave him more pleasure than books and the pastor wishes he could have gotten his hands on enough books in order to truly satisfy his desire for reading. Oomius writes that no one could fault him for any laziness in his preaching or catechizing. In his total of fifty-four years of preaching he believes that he was only absent from his pulpit on Sundays twice, as well as during the time he served as chaplain in the Dutch military.<sup>56</sup> Oomius writes that he has always been extremely careful with how he spends his time, viewing this as the costliest of possessions, and notes that part of his time, from his earliest years in the ministry, was spent writing books. We can be confident in Oomius' claim to be committed to diligence in this regard: in his time at Purmerland he published more than one book each year, plus he had a number of unpublished manuscripts—ready for the press—stolen by the enemy during the war in the mid-1670s.<sup>57</sup>

Oomius writes that he saw that the church especially needed a Body of Practical Theology. Not only did he see this need, but several excellent men saw it and encouraged him to write one. It is for this reason especially that he began to write very early on in his ministry—he knew this would take much time. Oomius writes that learned men both in their books and many personal letters to him have indicated that the works he published to this end have been well received.<sup>58</sup> Almost unbelievably, writing

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<sup>56</sup> This was likely from 1674-1677. The classical archives of Edam show that on May 21, 1674 Oomius responded to a vote from classis and a letter from the Prince of Orange to the synod of Noord-Holland, asking the classis to send a minister to the army. After Oomius' accepted this responsibility he asked that his colleagues take care of the preaching responsibility at Purmerland while he was away; they agreed. See *Archief Classis Edam*, Inv. Nr. 5, 1652-1674, Classis ordinaria, 21 may, 1674, Article 3.

<sup>57</sup> This is noted by J. van den Berg, "*Het Geopende en Wederleyde Muhammedisdom of Turckdom. Beschrijving van een werk van Simon Oomius (1630-1706)*," 10.

<sup>58</sup> Among these he mentions the "great" Hottinger who asked him to publish a bibliography of his works. See part 2.2.1 below.

at the very end of his life, Oomius reveals that he has just as many books ready for the press as he has had published up to that time.<sup>59</sup> He hopes to put the finishing touches on some of these before he dies, if the Lord allows.

Thus, living and learning (“levende en leerende”), as much as possible in godliness, peace with others, and with diligence, Oomius tells the reader he led the church at Purmerland.<sup>60</sup> He led with much care and the church grew under him—people from neighboring areas, especially Oostzaan, would even come to listen to his instruction. During his time at Purmerland some factions developed in the church and Oomius himself was considered suspect because of his professors. Oomius writes that he was never involved in such divisions and did not encourage them in any way. The divisions must have been related to the Cocceian debate because Oomius writes that he read the works of the “great” Cocceius ten times more than those who liked them in order to be knowledgeable about the issues. Oomius does not, however, at all speak negatively about Cocceius here.

In December of 1677 Classis Edam gave Oomius permission to accept a call to the church at Kampen.<sup>61</sup> This was a move to a significantly larger church community.

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<sup>59</sup> He mentions the following: *Immanuel, vernederd in de kribbe, en verhoogd aan het kruis, en in beide, zoo de liefde des Vaders, als des Soons, den geloovigen ter verrukkinge in verwondering voorgesteld* and *Tractaat van de vervolgingen*.

<sup>60</sup> Oomius tells what little he does about his time in Purmerland in particular on pp. 328-329 of the *Cierijke Kroon*.

<sup>61</sup> *Archief Classis Edam*, Inv. Nr. 6, 1674-1704, classis extraordinaria, 21 december, 1677, Article 2.

At that time the church at Kampen had five pastors.<sup>62</sup> In the previous weeks the church council of Kampen had gone through a process of nominating and narrowing down their choice of pastors to call from twelve to six to one. The final vote to call was not unanimous: Oomius received twenty-two votes; the other pastors received nineteen, seventeen, sixteen, and the final two each received eleven votes.<sup>63</sup> Oomius writes that he had never before been to Kampen and that no one there knew him, except through his good name and his writings. Purmerland thanked him for his service, and according to Oomius, would have been happy to have him as pastor for a longer time. He writes that his farewell sermon from 2 Corinthians 13:11 was very moving. There was much sniffing and crying and many people in the congregation were there—especially those whom he had led and brought to the church.<sup>64</sup>

In January of 1678 Oomius began his service in Kampen. His first sermon, in the *Broederkerk*, was on 2 Corinthians 5:20—the material that would later form his *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments in het keurlyk cieraed van voorbeeldelijke godtsaligheyd*.<sup>65</sup> In April of the same year he was welcomed for the

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<sup>62</sup> See F. van Lieburg, *Gemeenten*, Part 2 of *Repertorium van Nederlandse hervormde predikanten to 1816* (Dordrecht, 1996), col. 169-170. Oomius joined Theodorus Smith, Johannes van Doesburg, Lucas van der Meer, and Abraham Fabricius.

<sup>63</sup> See *Gemeente Archief Kampen*, N.H. Kerk, No. 13, council meetings of November 26 and December 2, 1677. The magistrate and classis gave approval to the choice of Oomius, according to the December 6 council meeting.

<sup>64</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 329-333.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

first time at Classis Kampen.<sup>66</sup> He remained a pastor in Kampen for about twenty-nine years, until his death in late 1706.

According to F. van der Pol, Oomius' writings as well as his work in the city of Kampen showed that he was a representative of the Nadere Reformatie—he sought to promote a theocratic ideal, improving society, together with his colleagues in the ministry at Kampen.<sup>67</sup> As for the particular pastoral work in which Oomius was engaged, Van der Pol's research found that the pastor was involved on numerous occasions with various church discipline issues. When church admonition was ignored, church members would be called before the city magistrate.<sup>68</sup> On the whole, relates Van der Pol, referring to Oomius' own words in his *Cierlijke Kroon*, the pastor displayed much love for those to whom he ministered in his second and final pastorate, affectionately calling them his “*Kampenaren*” and his “hope,” “joy,” and “crown.”<sup>69</sup>

In everything he did at Kampen, Oomius writes, he tried diligently to be an example of good works and just as he tried to be pure in doctrine, he also tried to be upright in his life. As Oomius puts it: “*Ik hebbe alle neerstigheid toe-gebragt om mijn selven in alles te betoonen een Voorbeeld van goede Werken, en gelijk in de LEERE*

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<sup>66</sup> *Gemeente Archief Kampen*, N. H. Classis Kampen, No. 19, Classis ordinaria 8 april, 1678, Article 1. Classis Kampen encompassed the churches in the following communities: Kampen, Kampereiland, Ens, Emmeloord, Genemuiden, Mastenbroek, Wilsum, Ijsselmuiden, and Zalk. See Gemeente Kampen, *De Archieven der Gemeente Kampen. Deel III. Het Nieuw-Archief* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1971), 163.

<sup>67</sup> Van der Pol, “Religious Diversity and Everyday Ethics in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch City Kampen,” *Church History*,” 18 and 61.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, citing pp. 335, 336, 350, 351, 362, 363, and 365 of the *Cierlijke Kroon*.

*onvervalsheid, alsoo in mijn LEVEN deftigheid en opregtigheid.*”<sup>70</sup> As will be seen in subsequent chapters, this statement about the importance of unfalsified *leer* (“doctrine”) as well as an upright *leven* (“life” or “living”) strikes not only to the heart of Oomius’ ideal for his personal life, but also to the heart of his theology and theological writings.

## 2.2 Published Writings

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Van der Aa notes that Simon Oomius was one of the most fruitful writers of his time.<sup>71</sup> Over the years there have been several bibliographies of Oomius’ works assembled. The first of these was written by Oomius himself—before all his works were published—in the forward to his *Twee dissertatien, van het eerste pascha gehouden van de Israëlitin in Egypten, ende van het laetste, dat de Heere Iesus gehouden heeft korts voor sijn doot, met sijne discipelen*.<sup>72</sup> It is worth noting here his introduction to this bibliography. He writes there that from the beginning of his ministry his goal was to practice two things: godliness in his life and diligence in his studies. The second of these he believes has not gone forward without fruit. If it were not inappropriate, Oomius notes he could show what the most celebrated of men, both within and outside of the

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<sup>70</sup> *Cierlijke Kroon*, 334-335.

<sup>71</sup> K. J. R. van Harderwijk and C. D. J. Schotel, eds., *Biographisch Woordenboek der Nederlanden*, Vol. 5, (1852-1878; reprint, Amsterdam: B.M. Israël, 1969), p. 39. F. van der Pol incorrectly notes about Oomius’ entry here that it is the only one to be found in a biographical dictionary. Oomius is also listed in the third part of Jöcher’s *Allgemeines Gelehrten Lexicon* (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Gleditschens Buchhandlung, 1751), 1078.

<sup>72</sup> (Groningen: Tjerck Everts, 1684).

Netherlands, in various kingdoms and republics, even in the Dutch East Indies colonies, have said about his works in their published writings. Additionally, he could show innumerable letters in which these men have been so good as to greet him and spur him on to serve Jesus' church with even more books.

Not long before the writing of this introduction, writes Oomius, a very learned man wrote to him that his *Theologia Practica* was the most needed book in the world. In fact, this individual went on to say that since the time of the apostles no better work of both practice and theology had appeared. Another individual, the "famous" Justus Heidericus Dauber, pastor of the Reformed congregation at Creuznach, also expressed much appreciation for Oomius' *Institutiones*, saying that it was a wonderful and excellent work that could not be praised enough, and that people in the German churches were looking forward to the next volume. In response to requests from various pastors and theologians, including Johann Henricus Hottingerus of Zürich, Oomius then gives a list of his published works up to the 1684 publication of the work the list is in.

Subsequent significant bibliographies are those of Van der Aa, Van Gent, Van der Haar, and Van den Berg.<sup>73</sup> A difficulty in constructing an accurate and thorough bibliography is that the books of Oomius are quite rare, though four of his books have recently become more widely available.<sup>74</sup> J. van den Berg's recent bibliography is very

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<sup>73</sup> See W. van Gent, *Bibliotheek van oude schrijvers*, rev. ed. (Rotterdam: Lindenberg's Boekhandel en Antiquariaat, 1979), pp. 105-106; J. van der Haar, *Schatkamer van de Gereformeerde Theologie in Nederland (c.1600-c.1800)* (Veenendaal: Antiquariaat Kool B.V., 1987) pp. 342-345; J. van den Berg, "Het Geopende en Wederleyde Muhammedisdome van Turckdom. Beschrijving van een werk van Simon Oomius (1630-1706)" (Doctoraalscriptie Theologische Universiteit Kampen, 1998), Appendix B.

<sup>74</sup> While no private or public library has a complete collection of Oomius' works, some of the best collections are at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Koninklijke Bibliotheek,

good, having amended those that came before. The list of works given here, based on those listed above as well as additional research done in Dutch libraries, confirms Van den Berg's amendments, and adds four works to his list.<sup>75</sup>

Until now there has been little effort at classifying Oomius' works by type. Some of what has been noted thus far, however, is correct, if not complete. Already in the nineteenth century Van der Aa noted that his works were "*ascetischen*" in nature.<sup>76</sup> More recently Van der Haar has noted that this simple designation does not do Oomius or his works justice since he was a completely Reformed and self-conscious theologian of the Nadere Reformatie.<sup>77</sup> With this statement Van der Haar seems, rightly, to be pointing out that Oomius wrote more than only works that were "*ascetisch*" in nature. Another writer has noted his writings seem to focus on one of two areas: faith (or the *praxis pietatis*) or

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Theologische Universiteit Kampen (Oudestraat), and in the personal library of Mr. W. van Gent. As a result of the research done for this dissertation, currently by far the most complete collection of Oomius works (mostly on microform) is at the Hekman Library of Calvin College and Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A. *De Schatkamer* has reprinted several of his works with new introductions: *Dissertatie van de onderwijzingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid* (1997) and *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments...* (1998). *De Schatkamer* hopes to soon publish another: *Troost-Fonteyn geopent in de verhandeling van verscheyde theologische stoffen*. In 2000 *De Schatkamer* published *Satans vuistlagen*, which is a reprint with contemporary spelling by J. van der Haar. Another book of Oomius was also reprinted with contemporary spelling by J. van der Haar: *Het wenen der tortelduive* (Dordrecht: J.P. van den Tol, 1974).

<sup>75</sup> The four additions are all disputations. Van den Berg lists one of the disputations Oomius defended, but research quickly indicated that there are in fact a total of five extant disputations defended by Oomius during his student days—four with Hoornbeeck presiding, and one with Voetius.

<sup>76</sup> Van der Aa, *Biografisch Woordenboek*, Vol. 5, 39. This Dutch word refers to the fact that some of his works fall into a particular category of theology of the time: *theologia ascetica*. See 2.2.2 for the seventeenth-century understanding of this term.

<sup>77</sup> J. van der Haar, "Simon Oomius. Minder bekende oudvaders uit de Gouden Eeuw," *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, October 26, 1973, 10.

politics.<sup>78</sup> K. Exalto has correctly observed that in the works on the *praxis pietatis* he often focuses on crisis situations in the Christian's life.<sup>79</sup> These kinds of designations prove helpful when first approaching Oomius, but they could be more exact and no one has described Oomius' works in such a way that fully encompasses what he wrote. Here five general categories of writings will be suggested as an aid for approaching the theology of Oomius. All of his writings are theological, so these categories should be understood as sub-categories under that broader one. A chronological listing of all of Oomius' works, with full bibliographic details, is given in Appendix A of this study.

### 2.2.2 On the Christian Life

These works fall under the seventeenth-century category of *theologia ascetica*. During this period of the Reformed church and theology this referred specifically to the practice of devotion and could be taught using the Heidelberg Catechism's explanation of the Lord's Prayer as a framework.<sup>80</sup> Oomius himself sees *theologia ascetica* as dealing with the practice of repentance and faith, as well as with all spiritual exercises of godliness and devotion.<sup>81</sup> Perhaps the most well-known complete theology on this subject of the Post-Reformation Dutch Reformed Church was written by one of Oomius'

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<sup>78</sup> J. van den Berg, "Het Geopende en... Beschrijving van een werk van Simon Oomius (1630-1706)," 15-20.

<sup>79</sup> K. Exalto. "Simon Oomius (1630-ca. 1707)," in *De Nadere Reformatie en het Gereformeerd Piëtisme* ('s-Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1989), 174.

<sup>80</sup> See G. Voetius, *De theologia practica*, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum, Pars Tertia* (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1659), 3. The nearest English cognate "ascetic" is not being used to refer to *theologia ascetica* because its meaning is much narrower than the seventeenth-century meaning of *theologia ascetica*. To refer to some of his works as "ascetic" would certainly give the wrong impression.

<sup>81</sup> *Dissertatie van de Onderwijsingen in de Practycke der Godgeleerdheid* (Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672), 417.



professors, Gisbertus Voetius. A survey of some of the topics in his *TA ΑΣΚΕΤΙΚΑ sive Exercitia pietatis* will help give a sense of *theologia ascetica* during the seventeenth century. Voetius' discussion includes the following topics: spiritual contemplation (*de meditatione spirituali*), prayer, tears and laughter, how to spend the day in a godly/happy way (*de die pie ac feliciter transigendo*), the practice of the Sabbath, temptations, spiritual desertions (*de desertionibus spiritualibus*), dying well, and martyrdom. Another category of topics were directed to people of various ages, circumstances and professions, such as, women, children and young people, old men and women, mothers, fathers, prisoners, kings and other authorities, soldiers, fishermen, students, and many others.<sup>82</sup>

Oomius himself wrote books on such topics as contentment, suicide, tears, solitude, old age, and how to be a godly Minister of the Word. Subjects that fit into the seventeenth-century category of *theologia ascetica* comprise a large amount of Oomius' works. The following thirteen works all belong here: *De heerlickheyt van een kindt Godts, ofte Godts vriendt*; *Opweckinge ende bestieringe, om in allen staet, van voor- of tegenspoedt met het tegenwoordige vergenoeght te zijn*; *De bestieringe der gedachten*; *Prophylacticum Vitae, ofte bescherminge des levens tegens selfs-moorderye*; *De schrickelickheydt, beyde van genomen en gegeven ergernissen*; *Tractaetken vande geestelicke verlatingen*; *Ecclesiola, dat is, kleyne kercke*; *'t Weenen der tortel-duyve, ofte een tractaet, in welcke gehandelt wordt van de tranen in 't gemeyn*; *Des Sathans vuyst-slagen, ofte tractaet vande inwerpingen der godtslasterlicke ghedachten*; *Tractaetken*

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<sup>82</sup> This work was originally published in 1664. An excellent critical edition with introduction and Dutch translation exists: *De Praktijk der Godzaligheid*, 2 vols., ed. C. A. de Niet (Utrecht: Uitgeverij de

*vande eensaemheyt, en eensaeme oeffeninge der godtsaligheydt; De godtsalige siecke en krancke op haere bedroefde legersteden onderricht ende vertroost; Afbeelding van een waer dienaer des Nieuwe Testaments in het keurlyk cieraed van voorbeeldelijcke godtsaligheyd; and Cierlijke kroon en krans des grijsen en goeden ouderdoms.*

### 2.2.3 Occasional

Oomius' writings indicate that he was deeply concerned with social and political events of his time. Five of these—a series of “*bazuynen*”—handle Dutch political and military issues with the French and English in the early 1670's. Oomius also wrote a work celebrating Prince William III's ascension to the English throne in the late 1680's. A work on the plague is also included here as well as his “Scriptural Prognostication.” A

total of ten of Oomius' works can be characterized as occasional: *Des Heeren verderflicke pyl, ofte twee boeken van den pest; Trouhertige waerschouwinge tegen Hollandts onderganch; Schriftuerlijke prognosticatie, ofte voor-beduydtselen van Godts naerderende oordeelen over landen en luyden, tot waerschouwinge voor d'ingesetenen deser Nederlanden; Troost-fonteyn geopent in de verhandeling van verscheyde theologische stoffen, uytgewrocht op de practijcke, in dese bedroefde tijden; Oorloghs-bazuyne, geblaesen ter opweckinge van alle ingesetenen in de nogh overige provincien, steden en sterckten van Nederlandt, om onder de banieren van (...) Willem de III (...) kloeckmoedighlick te veghten tegen onze tegenwoordige vijanden, Part 1; Oorloghs-bazuyne, Part 2; Troost-bazuyne, geblaesen ter aenmoediging van alle bekommerde*

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Banier, 1996). For more on this subject and the placement of *theologia ascetica* within the broader category of *theologia practica* see the discussion in Chapter 3.2.1.

*ingesetenen in het Vereenighde ende nu seer vernederde Nederlandt; Triumph-bazuyn geblaesen bij gelegentheydt van de (...) overwinningen (...) onder het hooghwijs beleydt van onse (...) veldtheer Willem de III (...) met aenwijsinghe der middelen (...) om de verkregen victorien nogh verder voort te setten; Vrede-basuyne, geblasen soo bij gelegentheydt der aengenaeme vrede (...) gemaect tot Westmunster den 19. febr. 1674, als der verwonderlicke verlatinge der overheerde steden, sterckten ende provincien van desen staet door de vijanden; and De wonderen des alderhoogsten, uitgevoerd in, onder en door sijn koninklyke hoogheyt Willem de Derde.*

#### 2.2.4 Polemical

The following nine works all fall under the genre of polemical or apologetic literature. While there are polemical elements in many of Oomius' writings, the main thrust of the works here involves a defense, attack, or simple argument of a certain position in light of a perceived need to set forth certain matters clearly. Included here are five short works which fall under the genre of *disputatio*. In each case Oomius, a student at the time, was the *respondens*, or the one defending a certain proposition usually presented by the professor, in these cases Hoornbeeck (for four) and Voetius (for one).<sup>83</sup> The disputations where Oomius was respondent are: *Disputatio theologica de synodis veterum. pars prima*; *Disputatio ex politia ecclesiastica de liturgiis. pars secunda*; *Disputatio theologica de humiliatione. pars prima*; *Disputatio theologica, in orationem dominicam. pars prior*; and *Disputatio theologica in orationem dominicam. pars altera*.

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<sup>83</sup> For a good introduction to *disputationes* in the seventeenth century and those where Voetius presided in particular see the introductory chapter of W. J. van Asselt and E. Dekker, eds., *De scholastieke Voetius* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1995), 1-33.

The following works also fall under the category of polemical or apologetic writings: *Eirenicum, of vrede-schrift in dese verwerde en twistige tyden tot noodige waerschouwinge en onderrichtinge voorgetstelt*; *Theologico-politica dissertatio, ofte discourse over dese vrage: of den paus-gesinden, in dese vereenighde Nederlanden, niet en behoorde toegestaen te worden, d'openbaere exercitien van haere religie, in eenige openbaere kercken, of capellen van eenige steden, of ten minsten in eenige privato-publycke plaetsen*; and *Het geopende en wederleyde muhammedisdom of turckdom*. The *Dissertatie van de onderwijnsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid* should be included here as well, even though parts of this work fall into categories 2.2.5 and 2.2.6 below. Most of section two, a large portion of the whole of the *Dissertatie*, defends the practical nature of Reformed theology against the Catholics, Remonstrants, Socinians, Lutherans, and Enthusiasts or Libertines.<sup>84</sup>

### 2.2.5 Dogmatic

Dogmatic works by Oomius include all of those which deal directly with a particular doctrinal *locus* typically found within the systems of the theology of the time. Oomius wrote on prolegomena to theology, the doctrines of Scripture, God, providence, church, and the sacraments.<sup>85</sup> In these books, while the doctrines are explained and defended from Scripture and historically, Oomius' focus and goal is to discuss the practical application of the teachings.<sup>86</sup> The dogmatic works are as follows: *De*

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<sup>84</sup> See pp. 34-343 of the *Dissertatie*.

<sup>85</sup> Oomius wrote a book early in his career (1656) on ecclesiology, but its exact contents are not known since to date it is not to be found in any public or private libraries.

<sup>86</sup> This goal of Oomius' theology will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4 of the dissertation.

*eyenschappen ende voortgangh van de kercke enz.; Tractaetken van de goddelicke voorsienigheyt; Dissertatie van de onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid; Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid. eerste deels eerste boeck; Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godtgeleertheydt, eerste tractaet des tweeden boeck's van het eerste deel; Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godtgeleertheydt, vervolg van het eerste tractaet des tweeden boecks van het eerste deel; De praktycke der twee heylige sacramenten des Nieuwen Testaments, des doops ende avondtmaels; and Twee dissertatien van het eerste pascha (...) ende van het laetste.*

### 2.2.6 Programmatic

These are works which, more than anything else, lay out Oomius' theological program. They make clear (as do various other statements found especially in the dedications and forwards to some of his works), what he is attempting to do in his writings and the purpose behind them. The *Dissertatie van de onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid* should be included here—as well as in 2.2.4 and 2.2.5 above—because it contains large programmatic elements in addition to polemics and theological prolegomena. Two other works which are of this sort are Oomius' forward to a Dutch translation of a book by Isaac Ambrose found in *Prima, media, et ultima. Ofte de eerste, middelste en laetste dingen*. The other, also included in 2.2.2 above, is the reworked and greatly expanded inaugural sermon Oomius preached when he started his ministry in Kampen: *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments*. This

sermon, in addition to giving a picture of what a pastor should and should not practice, while doing this, gives examples of pastors who, in Oomius' opinion, practice the same kind of theology as he does.

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## **PART II: INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF OOMIUS**

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### **Chapter 3 Oomius' Understanding of Theology**

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With the preceding description of Oomius' life and works as an important backdrop, Part II of the dissertation seeks to provide the theological window through which aspects of this pastor's doctrine of Scripture and God can be analyzed in Parts III and IV of this project. Oomius provided much material in his writings to give his audience a clear sense of his theological approach: he wrote on issues belonging to the subject of theological prolegomena, he explicitly laid out his theological program in some detail, and his method of referencing gives the reader a good sense of his sources. An examination of Oomius' understanding of theology and his theological program will serve to position Oomius theologically and shed much light on his writings as a whole. This examination will particularly serve to illumine the method and content of Oomius' practical-theological works on the doctrines of Scripture and God which will be analyzed in Parts III and IV.

Simon Oomius begins his *Dissertatie van de onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid*, the introduction to the *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, dealing with issues that belong to the area of theological prolegomena.<sup>1</sup> In the first of four sections of this work he discusses theology in general, including such issues as the term itself, its archetypal and ectypal division, and its genus and goal. In the second section of the *Dissertatie* Oomius turns to discuss *theologia practica* more specifically and what that term means.

This concern to write on theological prolegomena puts Oomius squarely in line with the Protestant scholastics—and, as a result, also with trajectories of argument reaching back into medieval scholastic theology—and the concern of these theologians to write on this topic. This concern was seen particularly and initially in the influential first chapters of Franciscus Junius' *De theologia vera* (1594), and after Junius, earlier in Oomius' own century, in theologians like Polanus, Gerhard, Alsted, Scharpius, Walaeus, Ames, Maccovius, Gomarus, and Keckermann.<sup>2</sup> While the interest in writing on prolegomena remained strong throughout the seventeenth century, emphases could vary, as could treatment.<sup>3</sup> For example, the Amesian and Maccovian definition of theology as “the science of living blessedly forever” would become important to many Nadere Reformatie writers. Also, Ramist bifurcations and definition of theology were followed

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<sup>1</sup> *Dissertatie* (Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672; reprint, with an introduction by K. Exalto, Geldermalsen: De Schatkamer, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> See Richard A. Muller, *God, Creation, and Providence in the Thought of Jacob Arminius* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 24-25, 55. For a more detailed history of the development of Reformed prolegomena see his *Prolegomena to Theology*, Vol. 1 of *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 53-82.

<sup>3</sup> See Muller, *PRRD*, I, 77-79.



by certain theologians through the influence of Ames and Perkins. General treatment of theological prolegomena could vary from quite lengthy and detailed to quite brief.

In some ways the order and content of Oomius' prolegomena reflect early orthodox treatment (circa 1560-1620). For example, during high orthodoxy (1620-1700) a simpler model was typically used than that found in Oomius and early orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> Also, Oomius starts with a definition of the term *theologia* and moves to a discussion of true and false theology, whereas after the early orthodox period many theologians, like Ames and Maccovius, would start directly with *theologia nostra*, that is, the theology of the orthodox Reformed. Oomius then discusses archetypal and ectypal theology and moves to a description of theology's genus and goal. But Oomius also clearly reflects his own time: the brevity of some aspects of the above discussion as well as the detailed treatment of a term like *theologia practica* indicate particularly post-1620 developments in Reformed theological prolegomena.

### 3.1 *Theologia*

#### 3.1.1 Term

Typical of early orthodox systems, Oomius opens the first section of his *Dissertatie*, on theology ("Handelende van de Theologie"), with a chapter on the etymology and meaning of the word *theologia*.<sup>5</sup> He notes first that the word comes from *theologus* and is of Greek origin. After citing a number of uses of the term and related

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<sup>4</sup> See Ibid., 101-102.

<sup>5</sup> *Dissertatie*, 2-6.

terms among the Greeks—he gives as an example that the teacher of Pythagoras, Pherecydes Syrus, was called a *theologus*—Oomius turns to the Christian tradition and points out that Origen called the apostle John a *theologus* and this same title was used to refer to Gregory of Nazianzus. Although the Greek words that make up the term are found in Scripture, sometimes together in the same context as seen in John 1:1, Revelation 19:13, Hebrews 4:12; 5:12, Romans 3:2, and 1 Peter 4:11, Oomius notes that the word *theologia* itself is nowhere to be found in the Bible—it was brought over by Christians from the heathens who used it in various ways.<sup>6</sup>

Further explaining the various non-Christian uses of the term, including showing the futility of each, and referring to Augustine’s citation of Quintus Mutius Scaevola, Oomius repeats the fairly standard argument that a distinction has been made in older literature among the uses of the term: one can distinguish between *theologia fabulosa*, *theologia politica*, and *theologia mystica* or *physica*. Oomius passes by the first of these rather quickly, stating that even the heathens judged it to be frivolous and detrimental. Despite, and because of, the great diversity of gods and ceremonies associated with *politica theologia* in various times, regions, and cities Oomius writes that it has not arrived at anything enduring or of substance. The accomplishments of *physica theologia* too are regarded as misguided and resulting in foolishness, writes Oomius, pointing to what he sees as the apostle Paul’s agreement with this opinion in Romans 1:21 and 22. Oomius concludes that the theology of the heathens was and remains in the end idle, dry,

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<sup>6</sup> *Dissertatie*, pp. 1-4. Cf. Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf, *Syntagma theologiae christianae* (Geneva, 1617), I.i; Antonius Walaeus, *Loci communes S. theologiae*, in *Opera omnia* (Leiden, 1643), 114; Francis Turretin, *Institutio theologiae elencticae* (Geneva, 1679-85), I.i.1; et al.

and barren. It has always resulted in “naked and cold speculation,” and never in knowing God.<sup>7</sup>

Leading into his description of true theology, Oomius writes that the word *theologia* is properly understood either as a knowledge of God himself, or as a knowledge about God or divinity. Oomius judges that theology properly deals with knowledge of God or his Word rather than God himself. This too, he finds, is more the sense the Greek language conveys: *physiologia*, *astrologia*, *meteorologia*, and *cosmologia* are, respectively, knowledge of nature, stars, meteors, and the world. In the same way, suggests Oomius, theology rightly understood is “a knowledge or teaching, or, even better, a wisdom, of God.” God is thus understood as the author and the object of theology, but the meaning of the word indicates that theology refers more to the object of knowledge than the origin of knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.1.2 The Archetypal and Ectypal Division of Theology

After dealing with the term *theologia*, and in that context briefly discussing the idea of true and false theology, in the second chapter of the first section of the *Dissertatie*, Oomius elaborates on the meaning of true theology. It quickly becomes clear when he comments that theology must be regarded as it is in God and as it is in creatures,

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<sup>7</sup> *Dissertatie*, 4-6. Oomius cites the following in this discussion of false uses of theology: Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Praecognitorum theologicorum libri duo: naturam theologiae explicantes, et rationem studii illius plenissime monstrantes* (Frankfurt, 1614), I.i and iii; Augustine, *The City of God*, IV.xxiii and xxxi, VI.v, ff., and VIII.i; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, IV; Reinier Vogelsang(h), *Oratio de exercitatione theologica* (1656), I.28; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, I; Verulamius (Francis Bacon), *De augmentis scientiarum* (Leiden, 1652), III.vi.

<sup>8</sup> *Dissertatie*, p. 6, with Oomius citing Augustine, *The City of God*, VIII.i; Samuel Maresius, *Systema theologicum: hactenus saepius recusum, nunc vero locupletatum prolixis annotationibus, ad illius explicationem & defensionem facientibus*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Groningen, 1659), I.i; Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.ii; Polanus, *Syntagma theolog.*, I.i.

that Oomius is using the archetypal and ectypal distinction of theology to frame his discussion.<sup>9</sup> Likely first used by Junius in his *De theologia vera*, this distinction was a common one made among Reformed orthodox prolegomena.<sup>10</sup> Oomius writes, “although theology is not twofold, but one with respect to the thing that is known, yet it is distinguished with respect to its form and manner,” and, “theology ought to be distinguished between *archetypa* and *ectypa*.”<sup>11</sup> Oomius notes that Owen is not pleased with this division and that for Vogelsang the making of such a division is completely superfluous and an unnecessary level of subtlety.<sup>12</sup>

First *archetypa theologia* is discussed.<sup>13</sup> It is defined as “that knowledge and discipline with which God, in a divine way and manner, understands himself and all other things.”<sup>14</sup> This knowledge or discipline is God or the being of God himself. After giving this definition of archetypal theology, Oomius writes that it can be divided into two: a knowledge of God’s nature and a free knowledge. The knowledge of “nature” or “necessary” knowledge is described as that through which God, especially through his

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<sup>9</sup> *Dissertatie*, 7-15.

<sup>10</sup> On this subject among the Protestant orthodox and in Junius in particular see Muller, *PRRD*, I, 123-136, and also W.J. van Asselt, “The Fundamental Meaning of Theology: Archetypal and Ectypal Theology in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Thought,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 64 (2002): 319-335.

<sup>11</sup> *Dissertatie*, 7, citing Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.iv.

<sup>12</sup> Oomius, citing John Owen, *Theologoumena pantodapa, sive de natura, ortu, progressu, et studio verae theologiae libri sex quibus etiam origines & processus veri & falsi cultus religiosi, casus & instaurationes ecclesiae illustriores ab ipsis rerum primordiis, enarrantur* (1661), I.ii and Vogelsang, *Oratio*, I.19.

<sup>13</sup> *Dissertatie*, 7-8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

all-sufficiency (“algenoeghsaemheyt”) and power, knows his being and persons and from these possible things. God is the one known, the one knowing, and the science—he is the theological object, the theologian, and the theology. This knowledge and science is common to all three divine persons in the divine being.

The second type of archetypal theology, the free or voluntary knowledge, is called such because of its objects which have been decided upon through a free determination of the divine will. This knowledge is not only the knowledge through which God, with one most simple deed, knows the certain council and free decree of his will as well as all past, present, and future things according to the decree, through his ordaining power, but it is also the divinely determined theological knowledge, which God, according to his good pleasure, wishes to share in various ways and to various degrees with reasonable creatures in time, according to his decree. God, continues Oomius, has determined our theology from all eternity in himself, out of the eternal and infinite treasure of his wisdom. He is also the first and true idea or example of all theology in reasonable creatures, which is called *theologia ectypa* by contrast.

Archetypal theology, then, for Oomius, refers to all knowledge of God known by God himself. Because of the simplicity of God it is equal with God himself. This knowledge of God, or God himself, is the archetype or pattern of all human theology. This complete knowledge of God himself includes the knowledge that God has of himself which he has decreed to share with humans—Oomius calls this free or voluntary knowledge. This corresponds with the idea of *scientia libera* or *voluntaria*, widely used

by the Protestant orthodox, to refer to God's knowledge of what he wills into actuality as distinct from *scientia necessaria*, which is God's knowledge of all possibilities.

*Theologia ectypa*, for Oomius, is "that knowledge and science of God that God shares in time with reasonable creatures."<sup>15</sup> This theology is a kind of image or reflection of the first example or idea in God imprinted on reasonable creatures. According to its subjects, manner, and degree there is a threefold subdivision in ectypal theology: it is shared by God through personal union, contemplation or vision, or revelation (*personeele vereeniginge, aenschouwen, or openbaeringe*). Though Oomius only uses Dutch terminology here, it is clear that these categories correspond to the categories generally identified by the scholastics as *theologia unionis*, *theologia visionis* (consisting of two modes: directed to angels or humans) and *theologia revelationis* or *viatorum*.

The theology of personal union is described by Oomius as that knowledge which Christ has of God and divine things—it is shared through the Holy Spirit with Christ's human nature and flows out of the personal union with the person of the Son of God.<sup>16</sup> Though this knowledge is finite because human knowledge is finite, this is the most perfect knowledge shared with reasonable creatures. This knowledge was as great as was necessary for the execution of Christ's mediating work. The second category of ectypal theology, the theology of contemplation or vision, is described as the knowledge of God and of divine things shared to the blessed in heaven. This occurs in two different modes: both to elect angels now and to glorified humans after the resurrection when souls and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 8. The full discussion of *theologia ectypa* is on pp. 8-15. By his definition of *theologia ectypa* Oomius cites Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.v and Polanus, *Syntagma theol.*, I.iv.

<sup>16</sup> Oomius, citing Alsted, *Praecog. theol.* I.iv at his description of the theology of personal union.

bodies are once again united.<sup>17</sup> The third category, the theology of revelation, also called *theologia studii, stadii*, and *viae*, is that knowledge, necessary for salvation, which is shared by people on earth, in this life.<sup>18</sup> It is this theology that must be studied by humans during the course of this life. The way in which this theology is shared, explains Oomius, is twofold: in nature and in grace—a natural and supernatural theology.

Natural theology is divided in Oomius' discussion between how it was before the fall and after the fall.<sup>19</sup> Before the fall this type of theology was created in and shared with human nature and it was perfect, giving the human understanding enough knowledge to receive eternal life and glory according to the covenant of the law. Through the fall this perfection and purity was lost, but yet it has remained in part—both inwardly, innately in the hearts of people, and outwardly. Innately because the human understanding still has implanted in it some small sparks of knowledge and remains of wisdom which were once perfect. These sparks point to the Archetype and their Author as well as that man owes him. The natural conscience comes from this and the natural beginnings of what is right and proper. Thus it is known by all and written on the heart that there is a God—no serious and stable person has ever been able to deny this.

The outwardly remaining theology, writes Oomius, is that knowledge which men receive from God partly through their own reasonings and partly from the teachings of

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<sup>17</sup> For this second category the following are cited: Polanus, *Syntagma theol.*, I.viii.; Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.vii; and Essenius, *Systemis dogmatici* (Utrecht 1659), I.xii. Polanus speaks here of *Theologia angelorum beatorum* and *Theologia hominum beatorum*.

<sup>18</sup> Oomius, citing Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.viii.

<sup>19</sup> Oomius, citing Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.xvii.

others. The first of these can be divided between things that are actually in people themselves and those that stem from looking to other creatures.<sup>20</sup> As for theology received by people's own reasoning, the things known from within people themselves come from not only the sparks by which people have a natural conscience, but also from the nature of humans—from the fact that a man is a small world and thus provides a summary understanding of the other works of God. For example, by observing the faculties of the soul and the intricacies of the anatomy of the body, one is drawn out of himself to recognize the great Artist. Through people's own reasonings one can gain knowledge of this theology by looking at the rest of creation too. This can happen by observing the general works and rules of nature as well as special workings, as seen in miracles. One can climb from these effects and movements to the cause and first mover, the unmoving and unchanging God. One can know from these things that there is a God and also his wisdom, power, goodness, glory, and other attributes. One can come to know that someone created all, still rules all and also that just as the Creator's works are great, his thoughts are deep. God reveals himself in such a way in the world that no one can open their eyes without observing him everywhere.

This natural theology is known not only in these two ways through people's own reasoning, but it is also known through the instruction of others. By this Oomius is referring to that which is taught by the researchers of nature and the philosophers. Oomius finds that this natural theology is, in itself, objectively, without question good, but when it is observed subjectively as it is in the unregenerate and corrupted man it is

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<sup>20</sup> Oomius, citing John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.iii-v.



impure, an enemy of God, and consequently evil. But in the regenerate person it is improved and sanctified through grace. Through this natural theology one can know that there is a God, and only one, and one can also know the essential attributes of God, both of the first and second order, yet, one cannot discover the mystery of the Trinity. In other words, one cannot know who God is, according to Oomius. General works of God can be known like creation and providence, but not special works, or works of grace, like salvation through the mediator, Christ, or sanctification. Man can understand through natural theology that God must be loved and honored, but not how to love and honor him. That which is honest and virtuous or dishonest and vicious can be known too, which is clear from the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, as well as others. Also the covenant of law can be known, but not the covenant of grace and salvation in Christ.

So, according to Oomius, natural theology leaves us knowing many things quite imperfectly, but it can yet accurately reveal enough that is true to leave those who having nothing but this natural theology without excuse. This idea is presented by Oomius as against the Pelagians and the Socinians, Remonstrants, and some papists who would suggest that natural theology is sufficient for salvation. Oomius writes that, as Campanella teaches, there is no general and natural religion by which all people can be saved—this can only come from God's Word, through Christ. This was the advantage the Israelites had over the heathens: they had supernatural revelation and the promise of grace, while the heathens had only natural.

Next, Oomius discusses the second category under the third type of ectypal theology, *theologia revelationis*: supernatural theology.<sup>21</sup> This he maintains is from God's grace and depends on divine revelation. This theology is distinguished between extraordinary and ordinary. Supernatural theology which is extraordinary refers to that infallible knowledge which God brings either through the Holy Spirit unmediated or by means of angels to the prophets and apostles.<sup>22</sup> Unregenerate or those estranged from God can also receive this type of knowledge. Ordinary supernatural theology is divine knowledge received through ordinary revelation: from the outside by God's Word and from within by God's Spirit, making us competent and acting supernaturally so that we understand a presented truth, detect its divinity, and submit and conform our understanding, will, and entire life to it. This can be perceived either as a habit or abstractly. If it is regarded as a habit in people instructed by God it is then a knowledge of God and divine things shared by God to the salvation of the elect. If it is regarded abstractly Oomius judges it to be described as a divine wisdom of God and divine things, revealed in the Bible to God's glory and our eternal salvation in Christ.

### 3.1.3 Genus and Goal

In chapter three of the first section of his *Dissertatie* Oomius takes up a more detailed discussion of ordinary, supernatural theology, elaborating on the explanation of theology as it is revealed in God's Word which he began at the end of the second

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<sup>21</sup> On supernatural theology Oomius cites Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.xvi; Franciscus Gomarus, *De Theologia*, in *Opera theologica omnia, pars tertia* (Amsterdam: Johannis Janssonii, 1644), thesis 42, p. 3; Voetius, *Disp. II. de Theolog.* sect 2. probl. VI., 31-32)

<sup>22</sup> Oomius, citing Polanus, *Syntag. theol.*, I.x.

chapter.<sup>23</sup> In this final chapter of section one of the *Dissertatie*, Oomius begins his discussion with a description of the genus of theology. Discussions of theology's genus, as well as its goal, though not of interest for the Reformers, were typical of Protestant scholastic systems of theology and go back to medieval theology.<sup>24</sup> For example, Turretin, paralleling the first question of Aquinas' *Summa*, discusses whether theology is a science, whether it is a form of wisdom, and whether God is theology's subject matter. The Protestant scholastics, using the standard paradigm of five ways of knowing (*intelligentia, scientia, sapientia, prudentia, and ars*) inherited from Aristotle through the medievals, typically concluded with theologians before them, that *scientia* and *sapientia* are the primary possibilities for theology.

Richard Muller notes the various answers given to the question of theology's genus by the Protestant orthodox.<sup>25</sup> He has discovered that Trelcatius and Perkins, among others, identify theology with *scientia*, whereas Junius, Scharpius, Polanus, Turretin, and Walaeus all choose *sapientia*. Others are unwilling to say one way of knowing alone applies to theology and thus they arrive at different conclusions for those above: Wollebius combines *scientia, sapientia, and prudentia*; Burmann combines *sapientia* and *prudentia*; Keckerman chooses *prudentia* mainly; Leigh chooses wisdom

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<sup>23</sup> *Dissertatie*, 15-23.

<sup>24</sup> For an analysis of theology's *genus* as discussed by the Protestant orthodox see Muller, *PRRD*, I, 6.2.

<sup>25</sup> See *ibid.* for a helpful discussion on the various answers the Protestant scholastics gave to the question of the *genus* of theology.

combined with *ars*; Alsted tends to define theology as a kind of wisdom, but also allows for the idea of theology as science.

Oomius opts for calling this supernatural, revealed theology a wisdom (“wysheyt”) and quotes numerous Scripture passages to support this point.<sup>26</sup> Wisdom, he finds, embraces not only the theoretical, but also the practical—knowing as well as doing. As noted elsewhere already, Oomius often points out the necessity of combining learning with doing and the theoretical with the practical. Thus his definition of wisdom here—and perhaps his very choice of wisdom as theology’s genus—seems to be entirely in character with the thrust of his theology. Perhaps more accurately, as we shall see, Oomius’ descriptions of theology and his treatment of various aspects of theology elsewhere reflect this initial description of its genus as a wisdom embracing the theoretical and the practical.

While the topic is approached here, the idea of *theologia practica* is discussed in more detail in the next section of the Dissertatie. Oomius recognizes that not all theologians have called theology a wisdom—other terms which have been used are “knowledge of salvation,” “prudence of the righteous,” “understanding,” and “knowledge.”<sup>27</sup> He does not spend much time arguing against these other possibilities

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<sup>26</sup> Oomius, on theology as wisdom, citing Polanus, *Syntagma theol.*, I.xiii; Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.ix; Junius, *Lib. de Theolog.* Cap. II; Gomarus, *De Theologia*, theses 8 and 9; Antonius Walaeus, *Loci Communes*, p. 4, edit. in quart.; Vogelsang, *Oratio*, I.35; Johannes Polyander, *Disputatio 1*, in *Synopsis purioris theologiae* (Leiden, 1625), Ch. 10; Essenius, *Disp. I thes. III*; Lucas Trelcatius, *Institutiones theologiae* (1607), *Lib. I p.m.* 3.

<sup>27</sup> Oomius, citing Alting, *Theologia didactica*, I, p. 1; Johann Heinrich Hottingerus, *Thesaurus philologicus, seu clavis scripturae* (Zürich: Johann Jakob Bodmer, 1649), I.ii.; Amesius, *Medulla theologica*, I.i.2; Voetius, *Disp. 1, de Theol.*, probl. III, p. 5.

because, he writes, he does not wish to dispute about the genus of theology as he sees some do. He cites Owen as one who agrees with him on this point against disputation of the matter.<sup>28</sup> Oomius further defines this wisdom as divine (“Goddelick”) with respect to its origin, content, and end. Further, supernatural theology is a divine wisdom, first and foremost of God but then also divine things. This wisdom is even further defined as being revealed by God, unknown without that revelation, and incomprehensible by the light of nature. The outward beginning of our theology, or the *causa constitutionis instrumentalis* is Scripture.

There is a significant description of Oomius’ understanding of the end or goal of theology near the end of the first section of the *Dissertatie* where he is discussing supernaturally revealed theology.<sup>29</sup> The first and primary end is God’s glory. The secondary and subordinate end is man’s eternal salvation in Christ. In this life a fellowship with God and enjoyment of his grace is begun through Jesus Christ. From this beginning a great harvest can be expected in the future: perfect fellowship and enjoyment of God, which is the highest good. A type of beholding—a clear view of God without outward means—will replace our current dependence on divine revelation in Scripture. People will know perfectly the highest and truest good; we will love God perfectly with a love of union and friendship; God will be all in all.

The final chapter of the *Dissertatie*—the sixth chapter of the fourth section—is called “In which the learned and teachers are earnestly urged to the practice of godliness;

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<sup>28</sup> Oomius, citing Owen, *Theologoumena*, I.ii.

<sup>29</sup> *Dissertatie*, 19-22.

where this *Dissertatie* will close.”<sup>30</sup> This section also gives a sense of what Oomius perceives as the goal of his theology. Here, in the context of Oomius’ discussion of the *Institutiones*, he indicates that he wants his project of a *theologia practica* to encourage godliness in the lives of its readers. He hopes at the same time to himself be an example of good works by practicing what he is teaching in his books—his desire is to be upright in living as well as pure in his teaching and thus to win people over by his lifestyle. Many predecessors of Oomius have desired this as well: Origin, Polychronius, Cyprian, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, Sisinius, Luther, Calvin (whose Institutes of his own Christian life Oomius counts as more worthy of fame than his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*), Junius, Perkins, Ames, Maccovius, Bolton, Thaylor, Schotanus, Hoornbeeck, and Voetius (of whom Amerbachius of Zwingerus once said that his knowledge is small compared to his godliness). Oomius wants it never to be said of him or other Christian pastors and teachers that their walk differs from their talk. Various examples and quotes from earlier Christian teachers are brought into the discussion which confirm the importance of this. Looking to the enemies of Reformed theology, Oomius notes that nothing can better convince them of the truth of a theology than if its promoters live well. The closer we are with God, writes Oomius, the more we will glisten with holiness. Oomius encourages excellence in teachers: no sin should be condemned in others that they are not free from as far as human weakness will allow; no virtue should be taught that they do not first show in their example.

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<sup>30</sup> This chapter is on pages 484-499.

Just as one would not find someone fit to practice law or medicine just because he disputed difficult questions in school, so much more so for someone engaged in this *Mystica* or *Affectiva Theologia*. One needs to have his heart filled with a deep, living, and powerful sense of holy doctrine, not just his brains filled with powerless speculation. Those who speak and write of the practice without having it themselves sin greatly, writes Oomius. The more learned will be more responsible to God because of the greater gifts given them. Oomius finally writes as he closes the *Dissertatie* that, despite its and his weaknesses, he offers this work to be used by God.

The chapter on supernatural theology (and the first section of the *Dissertatie*) ends, after the section on the goal of theology, with a brief discussion of how people receive this end of faith, the salvation of souls.<sup>31</sup> They must, writes Oomius, not only raise this wisdom above all else, they must practice the faith of godliness and a religious life. People must be concerned not only with knowing divine things, but with doing them, “just as theology does not exist in speculation, but in practice.”<sup>32</sup> This last point Oomius takes up in greater detail in the following section of the *Dissertatie*.

### **3.2 *Theologia Practica***

In the second section of his *Dissertatie* Oomius narrows his treatment of *theologia* to discuss *theologia practica*. Though the focus here will be on his positive treatment of the term, it should be noted that section two of the *Dissertatie* also contains a large

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 23.

polemical section on *theologia practica* where Oomius refutes attacks against Reformed theology as insufficiently aimed toward the practical, and argues in detail the inadequacy of the theology of the Catholics, Remonstrants, Socinians, Lutherans, and Enthusiasts or Libertines in this regard.<sup>33</sup>

Introducing this second section of his work, Oomius explains that it is generally known that theology receives different names and is treated differently depending on such things as the manner in which it is handled and the understanding or condition of the audience. The following types are mentioned: *Catechetica*, *Didactica* and *Dogmatica*, *Polemica* or *Elenctica*, *Scholastica*, *Historica*, and, *Practica*.<sup>34</sup> In Oomius' understanding, theology is called *Practica* when it predominantly deals with the practice and is appropriated to the practice of repentance, belief, hope, love, or for the use of encouragement and comfort. As the objective of others has been to present the basics of theology simply in a *theologia catechetica* or to provide a defense against attacks in a *theologia elenctica*, Oomius states that his objective in the present work is to deal with the practice: "We call this our theology *Practica* because we will primarily test according to, comment on, and press towards the practice."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Section two of the *Dissertatie* is found on pp. 23-343. The polemical section defending the practical nature of Reformed theology covers pp. 34-343.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 23. Oomius, citing Antonio Possevino, *Bibliotheca selecta de ratione studiorum* (Venice, 1603), II-III; Alsted, *Praecog. theol.*, I.xviii; Hottingerus, *Bibliothecarius Quadripartitus* (Zürich: Melchior Stauffacher, 1664), III.i, p. 371.

<sup>35</sup> *Dissertatie*, 24.



### 3.2.1 Term

Before proceeding to the details of what Oomius has to say about this idea, the term *theologia practica* should be examined in its context to avoid potential confusion. Confusion can arise from a typical English translation of the term, “practical theology,” because it is usually understood today as that division in the seminary theological curriculum which encompasses disciplines such as homiletics, liturgics, pastoral care, church polity, and church administration. Likely the seventeenth-century pastor or professor of theology in the Netherlands would have something else—or a number of possibilities—in mind when confronted with the term *theologia practica*. Gisbertus Voetius’ definition can illumine the seventeenth-century understanding of this term. As professor of various aspects of *theologia practica* for over forty years at the University of Utrecht—thus having influence over hundreds of pastors, including Oomius—and as the typifier of Dutch Reformed orthodox theological precision, his definitions will serve well.<sup>36</sup> There are particularly two places in his writings where he approaches and defines the term *theologia practica*. First, the disputation, *De theologia practica*, from 1646, will be examined where the definition of the term is explored.<sup>37</sup> Second, the first chapter of

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<sup>36</sup> For an introduction to the theology of Voetius—including information on Voetius as an orthodox theologian as well as a representative of the Nadere Reformatie—see W. van ‘t Spijker, “Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676),” in *De Nadere Reformatie: Beschrijving van haar voornaamste vertegenwoordigers* (‘s-Gravenhage: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum B.V., 1986), 49-84 and J. van Oort, C. Graafland, et al., eds., *De Onbekende Voetius* (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J.H. Kok, 1989).

<sup>37</sup> This disputation, defended in 1646 in six parts, can be found in Voetius’ *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum* (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1659), Vol. 3, pp. 1-59. The following English translation will be referenced and quoted, though in one or two places amended based on the Latin: “Concerning Practical Theology,” in *Reformed Dogmatics. Seventeenth-Century Reformed Theology Through the Writings of Wollebius, Voetius, and Turretin*, ed. and transl. John W. Beardslee (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 265-316.

Voetius' *TA AΣKHTIKA sive Exercitia pietatis* (1664) will be analyzed—Voetius opens this work, which contains his *theologia ascetica*, with a definition of the term *theologia practica*.<sup>38</sup>

In *De theologia practica* Voetius starts out by defining the broadest sense of the term, indicating that it may refer to all theology based on the Scriptures, whether in commentaries, *loci communes*, or catechisms. The reason he says this is that for Voetius “all theology among pilgrims on earth [*Theologia viatorum*] is in its nature practical [*est disciplina practica*], and no portion of it can be correctly and completely discussed unless it is developed practically; that is, applied to the practice of repentance, faith, hope and love, or to consolation or exhortation.”<sup>39</sup> Voetius writes that this is not something he wants to discuss further here—he writes that it is discussed in the *loci*, as well as in his disputations on theology,<sup>40</sup> and he assumes it. This broad definition, encompassing all of theology, is followed by two narrower senses in which the term can be used.

According to Voetius, *theologia practica* may in a more restricted sense mean “a practical and specific exposition or application of the content of the polemic or didactic exposition of theological *loci*.”<sup>41</sup> This is called either *theologia practica* or *casuistica*, or the practice of faith, hope, love, repentance, or amendment of life. Interestingly, Voetius

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<sup>38</sup> For this a recent Latin edition with an introduction, Dutch translation, and commentary will be used: Gisbertus Voetius, *De praktijk der godzaligheid (TA AΣKÉTIKA sive Exercitia pietatis – 1664)*, 2 vols., ed. C.A. de Niet (Utrecht: Uitgeverij de Banier, 1996). References will be to the Latin text. English translation was done only after consultation with the excellent Dutch translation.

<sup>39</sup> “Concerning Practical Theology,” 265.

<sup>40</sup> Perhaps he is referring here to “De theologia scholastica” in the first volume of his *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum* (1648), 12-29.

<sup>41</sup> “Concerning Practical Theology,” 265.

seems to indicate that this is a new way of approaching theology. He defends it as not either imposing “strange and new additions and burdens” or “multiplying” theology, but simply as a different method and form of teaching which has developed “to suit the differing abilities and skills of man.” Thus some, writes Voetius, have spoken of a fourfold theology, like Altingius: didactic (which includes practical for him), apologetic, controversial (*problematica*), and historical. Alsted has five categories: natural, didactic-polemical, catechetical, practical or casuistical, and homiletic (*prophetica*). Referring to Danaeus, Zanchius, Polanus, Martyr, Junius, Zepperus, Calvin, Melanchthon, Musculus, Van Til, the Leiden *Synopsis*, Wendelinus, Gerhard, Maccovius, and Gomarus, Voetius notes that based on their readers’ abilities as well as their own freedom these theologians have written various types of theology, from commentaries, to polity, to combinations of didactics and polemics, to purely positive theology, to purely apologetic. Voetius knows of none who have disapproved of these various works and approaches.<sup>42</sup>

Besides the above definition, continues Voetius, another more restricted sense in which *theologia practica* is used is to refer to that part of theology which is not concerning faith or the doctrines of faith (*de dogmatis fidei*). This other part of theology is called by some moral theology (*theologia moralia*) or casuistry (*casuistica*). This definition of the term has both a broad and a narrow meaning. More broadly, it can refer to all parts of theology except the ones on faith, that is, what is to be believed—these are Scripture, God, God’s works, redemption by Christ, the person and offices of Christ, and the application of salvation. In another sense, however, Voetius understands *theologia*

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<sup>42</sup> The discussion of this is on pp. 265-266 of “Concerning Practical Theology.”

*practica* as strictly referring to *theologia moralia* (that is, the exposition of the ten commandments), and not *ascetica* or *politica ecclesiastica* (church polity), though often writers of *loci* combine these two with moral theology. Voetius explains that upon his arrival at the University of Utrecht he introduced, in addition to weekly disputations and lectures on the *loci communes*, topics in practical theology. He divided *theologia practica* into three parts: 1) moral theology (based on the part of the Heidelberg Catechism which deals with the Decalogue); 2) *theologia ascetica* or the practice of devotion (based on the part of the Catechism which deals with the prayer); 3) church polity, including study of Dutch liturgy, the church constitutions, the section in the Catechism on the Keys of the Kingdom, and homiletics (*theologia prophetica* or *theologia practica concionatoria*). Voetius does not pretend that this is the only possible way of dividing the matter, but he states that this division has been most useful for him.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, although Voetius speaks of all of theology as practical, and that therefore this is one very broad sense in which *theologia practica* can be understood, there are primarily two ways the term *theologia practica* is to be understood: 1) as the application of didactic or polemic exposition of theology in the *loci*, or 2) as that part of theology which is *not* on faith, or what is to be believed. In Voetius' use of this latter sense of the term it refers to moral theology, *theologia ascetica*, church polity, and homiletics. In this second sense of the term *theologia practica* can more narrowly either refer to this whole part of theology, or more particularly to the subdivision of moral theology.

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<sup>43</sup> For this discussion of the second, more restricted, meaning of *theologia practica* see *ibid.*, 266-268.

In the first chapter of his *TA ΑΣΚΕΤΙΚΑ sive Exercitia pietatis*, published eighteen years after the above disputation was defended, Voetius introduces the description of his intention to write a *theologia ascetica* with a definition of *theologia practica*.<sup>44</sup> According to Voetius, much of his initial material defining *theologia practica* is taken from a public disputation, *De exercitiis pietatis & devotione*, held on November 25, 1637, defended by a certain Petrus Johannis.<sup>45</sup>

As in the previous disputation, the discussion here opens by noting that although all theology—at least pilgrim theology—is practical (*Theologia tota [saltem viatorum] quamvis sit practica*), *practica* usually has a more particular meaning. What follows are definitions which roughly parallel what we find in *De theologia practica*, but here Voetius gives more detail: seven possible definitions are given. *Theologia practica* can refer to the following:

1. The practice or application (*usus*) of the doctrine of salvation (*doctrinae salutaris*) as it is divided and described in specific chapters or general doctrines of theology. In this sense the term encompasses “the manner, method, and art [*ars*] of applying theology to daily practice and using it for the up building of the spiritual life towards the management of the will and the emotions, and toward good conduct.” In order to properly distinguish this use from others the terms like the following are often

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<sup>44</sup> This discussion is found in Par. 1 of Chapter 1 of the *TA ΑΣΚΕΤΙΚΑ*. The chapter title is *De ascetica, ejusque generalissimo actu & adjuncto, devotione*.

<sup>45</sup> This disputation is not included in any of the five volumes of the *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*. Copies can be found both at the Evangelisch-theologisches Landes-Seminar at Herborn and St. John's at Cambridge, according to C.A. de Niet. See *De Praktijk der Godzaligheid*, Vol. 2, p. 23, note 1.

used: “practice of godliness” (*praxis pietatis*), the “art of serving God” (*ars colendi Dei*), “affective theology” (*theologia affectiva*), “imitation of Christ” (*imitatio Christi*), etc. Just as philosophers subdivide logic, so too theology can thus be viewed in either theory or practice.

2. As opposed to that part of theology that deals with those things to be believed (*credenda*), that is the faith, that part of theology that deals with the rules for life, the Decalogue, or, those things to be done (*agenda*). This is called moral theology or casuistry—*theologia moralia* or *theologia casuum* or *casuistica*. This can be considered generally when it refers to all believers and the life of Christians in general, and particularly when it refers to the ecclesiastical community of believers united in one church community

3. The most elevated part of the practice of godliness: praying (silently—*oratione mentali*) or meditating (*meditatione*), or both. Here all parts of theology come together, writes Voetius.

4. The variants of the theology and practice of godliness that are aimed toward people of various age groups, such as young or old; conditions of life (*vitae status*), such as married, unmarried, rich, poor, foreigner, exiled; and occupations, such as rulers, nobles, professors, students, soldiers, sailors, etc. These various parts of practical theology can be found in specific books.

5. Spiritual warfare the Christian is engaged in and temptation.

6. The theology of sermons or homiletics (*theologia concionatoria* or *ecclesiastica concionandi*). Delivering a sermon in the church is different than an

academic and higher (*scholastica & acroamatica*) type of address. As for style and method, the former is directed to the average person. The material is not just found in reasonings, but also and especially in matters of the affections. In this use is not made only of theses and abstractions, but also and especially in the application of the spiritual state and conscience of each one personally.

7. The spiritual exercises: especially praying, singing, the reading of, listening to and meditation upon the Scriptures. This last meaning, which can also be called *theologia ascetica*, is what Voetius wishes to handle in the *TA AΣΚΗΤΙΚΑ*.

In this explanation of the term we see not only the two definitions given in *De theologia practica*—namely, that it refers either to the application of the doctrines of the faith, or to all the parts of theology except the *credenda*, or, sometimes, to just moral theology—but also that *theologia practica* can refer to each of the other subdivisions of that part of theology which is not concerning faith. So, besides moral theology, it can refer to *theologia ascetica* or homiletics, which Voetius mentions as part of his curriculum along with church polity in *De theologia practica*. Beyond these narrower definitions, *theologia practica* can refer even more specifically to the following: 1) what he calls the most elevated part of godliness, that is prayer, 2) the practice of godliness aimed at particular audiences defined by age, certain societal positions, or occupation, 3) spiritual warfare or temptation. It would seem that these three most narrow divisions are likely subdivisions under *theologia ascetica* (particularly prayer, since Voetius mentions it under point seven). Either they do not all fit properly under *theologia ascetica* for Voetius, or, one or more of these do belong there but are sufficiently

important to be drawn out in such a way that *theologia practica* can at times refer to one of them specifically.

This introduction to the understanding of “practical theology” in the seventeenth century, as understood by one of Oomius’ teachers, will serve as an important approach to what Oomius writes specifically on this matter and as a way to comprehend the importance and use of this term for Oomius’ theology and his program. What follows will show that Oomius is very much in agreement with Voetius’ broad understanding of the term as referring, in a sense, to all of theology. His working definition, however, particularly with a view towards his *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*, is less broad than this, but the most broad of the other definitions Voetius gives. Oomius is using the term to refer to the application of all the doctrines of theology.

### 3.2.2 Theology: Theoretical or Practical?

After his introduction to the second section of the *Dissertatie* Oomius discusses in the first chapter of this section whether supernatural theology can best be described as practical, theoretical, both, or something else altogether, and then, finally, he states what exactly his opinion on this matter is.<sup>46</sup> Inherited from medieval theology, this type of discussion on the character and purpose of theology is typical of the Protestant scholastics, particularly, as mentioned earlier, following the era of early orthodoxy.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Dissertatie*, 24-34.

<sup>47</sup> See for a discussion of the varied conclusions of the Reformed orthodox on this question Muller, *PRRD*, I, 215-226.



The following categories given by Oomius—along with the listing of theologians in each category—seem to reflect a standard paradigm among the Protestant orthodox.<sup>48</sup>

On exactly what supernatural and saving theology should be called—whether theoretical, practical, or something else—there is both a difference of opinion among the scholastics (“schoolgeleerden”) in the Roman Catholic Church and among “our” (i.e. “Reformed”) theologians, writes Oomius.<sup>49</sup> Some, among the Catholics, are of the opinion that this theology is, simply, speculative, like Henricus in his *Summa*, as well as those convinced by the proofs that can be read in Scotus, Durandus, and Johannes Rada.<sup>50</sup> Others have said that it is practical, like Scotus and those who follow him. Since all theological knowledge is directed toward love, they think, it is also directed toward practice. Amesius and Polanus are listed by Oomius as theologians who are also of this opinion—they call theology a *Theozöia* or *Theurgia*: an instruction to live for God and to do his will.<sup>51</sup>

Others, continues Oomius, have maintained that this theology is at the same time speculative and practical or “practical-theoretical”—that is, that it consists partly in a

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Turretin’s paradigm in his *Institutio*, I.vii and as analyzed by R.A. Muller, “Scholastic Protestant and Catholic: Francis Turretin on the Object and Principles of Theology,” *Church History* 55 (June 1986): 193-205.

<sup>49</sup> See *Dissertatie*, 24.

<sup>50</sup> Oomius, citing Henricus, *Summa*, VIII.3; Scotus, *Proleg.*, qu. iv, fol. 14, col. 3 & 4; Durandus, *Proleg. sentent.* qu. vi; Juan de Rada, *Controversiae theologicae inter S. Thoman et Scotum super quatuor Sententiarum* (Venice: Ioannem Guerilium, 1617), 211.

<sup>51</sup> Oomius, citing Polanus, *Syntagma theol.*, I.xiii and III.i; Amesius, *Medulla*, I.i.10-13. Ames writes in I.i.11, “Neque revera quidquam est in Theologia, quod non ad finem ultimum, aut ad media illum finem spectantia refertur: cujus generis omnia directe tendunt ad praxin,” and in 13, “... quo respectu non minus recte θεοζωια vel θεωρυγια potest vocari, quam Theologia.”

knowledge and science and partly in practice.<sup>52</sup> Fennerus, Maccovius, Wendelinus, Voetius, Hoornbeeck, Vogelsangh, Cocquius, and Poudroyen seem to all be placed by him in this category. Oomius notes that they are not convinced of Scotus' reasonings and that they do not want to oppose the opinion of the scholastics on this matter. This idea is also that of Thomas: God's theology is speculative and practical and so too should ours be, since it is the *exemplum* of God's.

From here, Oomius seems to make a distinction between two different types of what he calls the "*Practico-theoretische*" concept of theology: one emphasizes the theoretical or speculative, and the other emphasizes the practical. The former Oomius associates with Thomas. He makes clear at once that this emphasis on the speculative is not his opinion—Oomius follows his explanation of Thomas' opinion by saying that against this can be brought the fact that the object of Christian theology is not only God, but also religion and the service of God. Beyond this, it must be recognized that all practice of our theology must be applied to our union with God and enjoyment of him. The Thomists, however, Oomius writes, tend towards making theology either entirely speculative, or partly so—in either case Oomius finds that for them theology becomes more speculative than practical. Junius and Gomarus are named as examples of Reformed who are also of this opinion, which Oomius also calls the opinion of the "scholastics." Others also see theology as a mixture of speculative and practical, but they emphasize the practical: Alsted, Walaeus, Polyander, Wollebius, Maresius are named

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<sup>52</sup> See *Dissertatie*, 24-25.

here.<sup>53</sup> Polanus and Voetius are also said to have sympathies with this opinion. Essenius calls theology practical-theoretical.

A final category is briefly named of those who call theology neither speculative or practical or both, but affective or dialectic, like Aegidius Romanus and Gerhardus Senensis.<sup>54</sup> Oomius finds that this is based on an incorrect understanding of the terms they are using to describe theology as well as an incorrect understanding of “practical.” Oomius thinks very little of those in this type: he finds that they are trying to say something new in order to make a name for themselves. The only result of their ideas that he sees is that they make things more confusing for the readers.

After listing these various categories, Oomius proceeds to give his own opinion on the matter: “All of theology, as far as it stretches out, is practical and solely active.”<sup>55</sup> In this he writes he is in agreement with Johannes Picus Mirandulanus when he writes, “*Theologia viatoris, ut viatoris est, simpliciter Practica dicenda est.*”<sup>56</sup> Then, so there is no confusion in what he is describing, Oomius gives his definition of the word *practicum*: “an action or deed of virtue and a generation and practice of deeds concerning the objects of, not the body, but the heart, and either a pursuit of good or an avoidance, with all capacities, of evil.”<sup>57</sup> Just as ethics or morality is practical, metaphysics is not because

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 25-26.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>56</sup> Oomius, citing what he calls the *Besluytingen* of Mirandulanus.

<sup>57</sup> *Dissertatie*, p. 26.

the latter remains in contemplation of the truth whereas the former demands virtuous action.

In an effort to more precisely define his terms, Oomius next gives a more detailed explanation of what *speculativum* means and how it is to be distinguished from *practicum*.<sup>58</sup> Speculative or theoretical does not here refer to speculating about a particular truth, or contemplating it, regarding it, or knowing it.<sup>59</sup> If this were true, Oomius says all disciplines would be theoretical (for all disciplines must do this with their objects of study). Theoretical, as defined by Oomius, is that which *remains* in naked contemplation of an object, looking for knowledge without moving on to the practice—*speculativum* does not necessarily make this move by its nature. In this understanding of the term, *speculativum* or *theoreticum* is opposed to *practicum*, or, at the very least, not necessarily associated with it. Thus the discipline which speculates or theorizes as part of its activity is not necessarily speculative and opposed to the practical, but that which remains in speculation without going further is what Oomius defines as speculative or theoretical. On the other hand, that which demands, beyond the speculation, practice, is called practical. Now since theology does not only, idly and nakedly speculate, but moves to the practice of duties in relation to God, our neighbor, and our self, it is called practical, writes Oomius, and beyond that, it is the primary and highest practical discipline because there is no other that at every point more demands

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>59</sup> Oomius, on this definition, citing Johannes Hoornbeeck, *Institutiones theologicae ex optimis auctoribus concinatae* (Utrecht, 1653), I.xi; *idem*, *Disput. de theolog.*, thesis xv; *idem*, “Prolegomena,” in *Theologiae practicae. Pars prior* (Utrecht: Henrici Versteeg, 1668), 5; Vogelsang, *Oratio*, I.40.

practice or that less can be separated from it.<sup>60</sup> All theological truths either demand practice or are able to direct towards practice. Nothing will be taught in this work, maintains Oomius, that does not belong to this goal or to the means bearing upon that goal: all things will cry out for practice.

In Oomius opinion, no discipline or science can be called theoretical and practical at the same time, including the theological.<sup>61</sup> Again, this is not to say that there are no things about which a theologian theorizes—he must first examine and know things before he can be driven to practice—but Oomius feels that there is no appropriate place to only speculate or where theorizing by itself is an appropriate goal. This is also taught by the Jewish Rabbis, says Oomius. So there is no doubt, “We are teaching here that *thæoreticum* and *practicum* are opposed to one another—they have opposing distinctions, disciplines, and peculiarities.”<sup>62</sup>

Oomius proceeds to give some reasons of proof for his statements that theology is a practical discipline.<sup>63</sup> First, Oomius argues that the nature of Reformed theology is such that it only supports the practical and the exercises that go along with it. Also, it consists only of knowledge that is full of good fruit (James 3:17), not outward, empty, or superficial knowledge. Every part of this theology has as its goal the honor of God and our salvation as well as the means towards these two things. As God knows us, we are

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<sup>60</sup> Oomius, citing Juan de Rada, *Controversiae theologicae inter S. Thomam et Scotum*, III.i; Vasquez, Thom. I. qu. I. Disp., VIII, Cap. VI; Sylvius in I. qu. I art. IV.

<sup>61</sup> *Dissertatie*, 28.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.

called to know him. He knows us, not only with a *notitia visionis*, as described in the schools, through contemplating knowledge, but also with a *notitia approbationis*: through a loving knowledge and a knowledge resulting in deeds, which is always *cum affectu & effectu*. So theology teaches us to know God not with a naked contemplating knowledge—even hypocrites and demons know him this way—but with a knowledge resulting in deeds. Theology demands not only a knowledge of understanding, but of affections—a discipline that exists not only in the mind, but in the heart, not just in the mouth, but one’s life. Thus it is undeniable that even the slightest knowledge and belief has immediately some practical use for godliness. Scotus is cited as maintaining that the fact that God is triune, that the Father generates the Son and the Father, and that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son is practical. The divine attributes and the mystery of the Trinity cause us to honor God, serve him and love him.

Moving from an argument based on the nature of Reformed theology, Oomius proceeds to an argument from Scripture.<sup>64</sup> Scripture, he writes, presents us with a teaching that does not love naked speculation and knowledge, but always leads to practice and wants us to not only speak holy things, but to do them. There is no theological knowledge or faith without practice. Theology is not only called a wisdom of highest mysteries because of the high principles or grounds of Scripture and not only a sure and fast science because of the testimony of the Holy Spirit, but also a spiritual prudence, that is, a faculty concerning things that must be brought into practice.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 32-33. Oomius cites numerous Scripture passages to make his point: e.g., John 13:17, Luke 11:28, and Rev. 22:14 on not only speaking of holy things, but doing them; 1 Tim. 4:16, 1 Cor. 13:2, 8:1-3, James 2:17, Gal. 5:6, and 1 Thess. 1:3 on the futility of knowledge not leading to practice; 1 Thess. 1:22-26, 2 Peter, and Jude on urging to practice the faith.

A further argument Oomius makes beyond the argument from the nature of Reformed theology and from Scripture to show that theology is practical is that theology is handled with a *methodo analytica*, as can be seen in the Catechism—this method belongs to a practical kind of knowledge.<sup>65</sup> It is usual in practical disciplines to present the goal and summary first. This is not the case among the Remonstrants: they handle in the last question what the Heidelberg Catechism presents in the first (and clothe it in their own teaching).<sup>66</sup> Also, Franciscus Piccolomineus, against his colleague, Jacobus Zabarella at Padua, wrote his *Ethica* in the *ordine synthetico* and speaks of his goal at the end of his work, in the tenth book. Writes Oomius, anyone who is only a little practiced knows this is the wrong way to go about things, because though the goal is the last thing, it is the first in our understanding and thus needs to be known before we begin so that we proceed orderly and with good understanding. This is how Grotius proceeds in the Gouda Catechism of 1607.

In summarizing this section, Oomius writes that as the whole of our theology is presented from the Scriptures and in our Confession and Catechism and as it is daily taught according to God's Word, it will be proven in abundance in this work that will follow that this is a practical theology.

In his description of the *Institutiones* Oomius gives the reader a sense of how he sees the relationship between the more theoretical and the more practical parts of theology work out in his theology—and how this will be worked out in his *Institutiones*

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>66</sup> Oomius, citing Abraham Heidanus, *Proeve en wederlegginghe des remonstrantschen catechechismi* (Leiden, 1641).

specifically.<sup>67</sup> “We continually give the knowledge of truth the priority,”<sup>68</sup> he writes, since the foundation and beginning of the Christian’s practice is the light of knowledge. Thus Oomius finds that knowledge leads to practice: we must first have knowledge of things in order to believe them, act upon them, and have hope of them. Oomius writes in further explanation, referencing Hebrews 11:6, Psalm 9:11 and 91:14, and 1 John 4:19: “We can not come to God, or believe in God, before we first know him and who he is” and “We must know how friendly and loving the Lord is before we can love him.”<sup>69</sup> Oomius agrees with Augustine who wrote that we are called to love things we haven’t seen, but not things that we do not know. As can be seen among the heathens, without knowledge or understanding, godliness will be lacking and sin will abound. In contrast to this godliness will always follow true knowledge of the truth. Oomius believes that just as rays of the sun not only give light, but also warmth, so too with true knowledge of Christ: the more knowledge there is of such things as assurance and comfort, the more one’s heart will burn with love for God and good works. Knowledge of godliness is of such great importance that Christians will not know how or where to direct their hands and hearts.

Oomius gives evidence of the importance of the foundation of knowledge of right practice by pointing to a number of theologians: Augustine, Chrysostom, Martyr, Beza, Danaeus, Perkins, Ames, Usserius, Voetius, Hoornbeeck, and Essenius. These, he

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<sup>67</sup> See *Dissertatie*, 397-401.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 397.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*



mentions, were the greatest of theologians concerned with practice, yet they were “the sharpest in making distinctions, the most successful in interpreting Holy Scripture, and the most practiced in all parts of other scholarship as in theology.”<sup>70</sup> It is the opinion of Oomius that when didactic theology is done thoroughly and well, the practice of each truth will flow out quite naturally from it. Oomius hopes to show in his work how useful Reformed doctrine is for the practice, believing that the truth of theological teaching is known by its practical fruit and its power.

Oomius states that he has never particularly liked the fact that usually the *practica* is handled outside of the system of didactic theology—in fact he has often lamented this. This has helped lead to doubt as to whether theology is a practical discipline at all, and, even if it is not doubted, there remains a lack of understanding exactly how it is practical. Oomius is of the opinion that there is a direct correlation between writers of *loci communes* setting out the right teaching, or orthodoxy, while overlooking the practice and the fact that many students are not properly directed towards the practice of theology in their academic studies and that they are unprepared to handle the practice and to derive and lay out the practice from every point of doctrine. The practice alone loses the power and spirit of theology; the truth taught without practice loses that which is unique to theology, that is, that we learn from it to live well for God. Oomius points out that it is clear from the apostles in the Bible that following the things which are to be believed are encouragements for life, which are not taken from human reason, but flow like rivers and fountains from the main points of the Christian faith. Paul shows in Romans 12:1,

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 398.

Ephesians 1, and Hebrews 12:1 how naturally godliness and the practice of Christianity flow out of the grounds and knowledge of religion. “This shows not only that knowledge is the foundation upon godliness should be built, but also that what God so closely connected and built as one, ought not to be separated.”<sup>71</sup> Oomius quotes Lactantius and Honorius Augustodunensis on this, and also Hugo de S. Victore among the papists. It was also the judgment of the Leiden professors that the *practica* and the *theoretica* ought not to be separated from one another. This is why Altingius and Essenius, though briefly, after each *locus* pointed to its practice and uses.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 401.

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## Chapter 4

### The Theological Program of Oomius

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While the last part of the previous chapter began to approach this issue, the purpose of this section is to see exactly how, and to what extent, Oomius works out his description and understanding of *theologia practica* in his writings and ministry. Throughout Oomius' various writings, including his dedications and forwards, the reader gets some clear statements which help to place him theologically, which illumine his sense of the church and theology of the time, and which explain what his purpose is in writing theology. After these matters are examined in a variety of his writings, a separate section will focus on these matters relating to Oomius' theological program as he discusses them in detail in his *Dissertatie* with a view toward his *Institutiones theologiae practicae*.

#### 4.1 A Practical Theology for the Unlearned

In this section a chronological examination of some of Oomius' statements regarding his theological program will be done in order to get a sense of the overall purpose behind Oomius' theology and theological writings.

In the dedication of one of Oomius' earliest works, *Opweckinge ende bestieringe, om in allen staet, van voor- of tegenspoedt met het tegenwoordige vergenoeght te zijn* he gives a good sense of his purpose and writing.<sup>1</sup> There he states that he uses a "humble style" rather than eloquent words or newly constructed phrases as has become the custom among some who seem to be intentionally not wanting their works to be read or understood by all. Oomius finds it is preferable for a theologian to use half the amount of words, rather than all of them if it means that the simple will be edified. He makes a point of noting that his "instructions" are written for the simple, and that he would rather be rebuked by the linguists than to be not understood by the people. Oomius finds that it is especially his duty to see to it that the faith of the people not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God—this, after all, was Paul's concern too.

Another early writing, a forward to a Dutch translation of a work by the puritan, Isaac Ambrosius, provides some substantial detail about Oomius' sense of theology during his time.<sup>2</sup> He begins by noting that no one can deny many English theologians surpass other writers in the area of the "*Practycke*." Compared with the learned of other lands they have had the luxury of focusing much more on this aspect of theology because of the suppression of both the papacy and other sects in their country. Theologians in other countries, especially the Netherlands, have not had this fortune—in the Netherlands

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<sup>1</sup> (Amsterdam: Jan Kuypen, 1658).

<sup>2</sup> Simon Oomius, Foreward to *Prima, media, et ultima, ofte de eerste, middelste en laetste Dingen*, by Isaac Ambrosius, trans. I.G. (Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin: 1660). In a recent article W.J. op 't Hof examines this introduction as well as some other early works of Oomius in an effort to illumine his use of and appreciation for Puritan theologians: "Simon Oomius en het piëtistisch Puritanisme," *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* 26 (2002): 89-98.

they have had to be much too busy dealing with adversaries of the truth and the Reformed faith in disputations and polemical writings. It is as if the Dutch theologians have to use one hand to hold a weapon to protect the faith and the other to build the house of the Lord, illustrates Oomius. Despite the great worth of writing on the practice, they have not been able to do this as much as either they or the average church member would like. Referring to Bernard at the beginning of his eightieth sermon on the Song of Songs, Oomius says that after so much disputing against the enemies of the truth there is very little or no moral and practical instruction in most sermons.

Oomius explicitly rejects a solution given to this problem in 1582 by D. Coornhert.<sup>3</sup> According to Oomius, Coornhert suggested that in order to decrease the number of sects and various parties preachers should only be allowed to read or speak the clear text of the Scriptures, without adding or taking away a syllable. Unhappy with this kind of suggestion, Oomius tells the reader that it is necessary to impress the people with the ground of religion and to show them how they can convince and win over opponents, or how they can ward them off. All means to this end should be used, especially the Catechism—and this should happen not out of routine, but out of a holy compassion and an inner pity for the unlearned people.

While this must be done, the “other” (in other words, writing on the practice) which is the “main and greatest work” (*voornaemste ende grootste wercke*) should not be relaxed. Oomius opines that the devil, who brought the first disputation into the world, is

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<sup>3</sup> On Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert (or Koornhert) see *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*, Vol. 3 (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1988), 78-83 and Gerrit Voogt, *Constraint on Trial: Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert and Religious Freedom* (Kirkville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2000).

trying to distract the Reformed in the Netherlands with the work of disputations and polemics, obstructing them from their main work and pulling them away from godliness and the practice of the holy religion God and Christ have prescribed. Satan wants people to get smothered and lost in disputing so that they come to think that this is the beginning and end of religion and that it by itself is the proper and only work of a Christian.

Oomius finds that the devil is, to a certain degree, succeeding with his distractions. With Savanarola Oomius can say that there are many disputers, but few practitioners.

Throughout the history of the church, writes Oomius, the times that were most fruitful in curious questions and disputations were most unfruitful in godliness. While Oomius could go on, he doesn't find that necessary—the best and most learned theologians have complained about the same thing. Johan Abrenethii in the forward to his book called the *Medicine of the Soul* and Willem Teellinck in his *Nootwendigh Vertoogh* are mentioned as works that indicate a similar concern.<sup>4</sup>

Oomius finds that the Reformed are attacked in his day for a perceived lack of a concern for the practice. The Remonstrants say about Reformed theology that it is only speculative and that it has nothing in common with the practice of true godliness. The papal teachers too reproach the lack of practical instruction in the Reformed schools and academies. Oomius defends the Reformed here, though. He writes, “While the Remonstrants have filled the whole of the Netherlands with little blue books, where are their practical writings? Where is their moral theology?” He wonders further where their

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<sup>4</sup> Willem Teellinck, *Noodwendigh vertoogh, aengaende den tegenwoordigen bedroefden staet, van Gods volck...* (Middelburg: Hans vander Hellen and Jacob vande Vivere, 1627)

works on the ten commandments and where their spiritual instructions are. While practical theology is taught incorrectly among the papists, the Remonstrants rarely write it at all.

But contrary to what the enemies of the Reformed argue, there are many examples of this concern for the practice among the Reformed. Oomius notes Calvin, especially in the third book of his *Institutes*, is the prime example of practical writing among the Reformed that should put adversaries to shame. Among many English worthy of fame for doing this, Oomius points to Perkins' practical treatises. The Dutch too have had their practical writers, though they were usually first aroused by those in England: Taffin, Hyperius, Trelcatius, Arnoldus Cornелиi, W. Teellinck. The shining light of the Dutch theologians would have been much less bright if it was not for the useful and excellent writings of the English. Oomius praises at length the influence of the English, noting the many translations of their works, and that other theologians speak highly of the English.

Oomius continues to argue his point that the Reformed are concerned with the practice by turning to the national Synod of Dordrecht. There, in Session xvii, lamenting the fact that in the examination of students the tendency has been to only test doctrine, the synod strongly encourages practical theology to be taught in the academies. Directly in response to this the Synods of South and North Holland with the curators and professors at Leiden sought to fill the position of Professor of Practical Theology at the university. Oomius points to similar concerns at the Synod of Alkmaar, by Classis Edam in 1644, article 51, at the Synod of Haarlem in 1645, article 34, at the Synod of Amsterdam in 1646, article 36 and the Synod of Hoorn in 1647, article 29. All of these

wisely judged that theology must not end in speculating and in disputations, but it must be applied to the practice and for the up building of the conscience. Casparus Streso, along these lines, wished that elenctic theology would be tempered with practical in the churches of the Netherlands. Zeperus agrees with this, as does the papist Iohannes Gerson—an excellent theologian and “practisijn,” writes Oomius. Isaac Ambrosius, the author of the translated work in which Oomius’ forward finds itself, is also of this opinion.

For this reason, writes Oomius in the conclusion of his forward of the Ambrosius translation, it is his goal to collect a *corpus theologiae practicae*, from books of the English theologians as well as from others. By now, if he had not been so busy with some other projects, evidence of this *corpus* would be seen.

The dedication and the forward of the second edition (the only edition to be found in the public libraries) of *Des Sathans vuyst-slagen, ofte tractaet vande inwerpingen der Godts-lasterlicke ghedachten, ingestelt soo tot noodige onderrichtinghe, als vertroostinge van vele treurghe te Sion* introduces both *Des Sathans vuyst-slagen* and the brief *Tractaetken vande eensaemheyt, en eensaeme oeffeninge der godtsaligheydt*,<sup>5</sup> bound with it. Here too we find evidence of Oomius sense of theological purpose. These works are dedicated to Rev. Franciscus Ridderus, a fellow proponent of the Nadere Reformatie. In the dedication Oomius speaks of his “few, little writings,” put together with much trouble quite quickly, and intended for the most part to instruct the simple. Oomius finds that his works are developed simply and not really worthy of someone with such learned and

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<sup>5</sup> Both works: (Amsterdam: Samuel Bernardt, 1663).



practiced eyes as a Ridderus, Hoornbeeck, Witte, Elgersma, Simonides, Borstius, or others who are renowned heroes in our “Israel” because of their excellent writings.<sup>6</sup> Oomius states that he knows the limits of his understanding, and that he would not try to prepare something worthy of the eyes of such men as these. So that he does not completely waste the time he has left in “this place,” he states that he does not need to have learned people as his readers—and they don’t need him as their teacher.<sup>7</sup>

In the “Word to the Reader,” after discussing the first work, Oomius focuses on his intention in his tract on *Eensaemheyt*, and interestingly connects it to the rest of this writings. He notes that his goal for some time has been to publish a work such as this as well as other small writings like it. Oomius writes that this goal will start to be realized in the soon-to-appear first part of the books of his instructions, which, he says, “will contain, if I do not deceive myself a *medulla* or *mergh* of the whole practical theology, comprehensive, yet short, as much as possible.”<sup>8</sup> These instructions are for the service of all true ministers of godliness and in particular for the “Nazarites,” who are preparing themselves for the service of the Lord.

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<sup>6</sup> For a good study on the idea of the second Israel as a theocratic ideal in the Dutch Reformed Church from 1650 to 1750 see the following: Roelof Bisschop, *Sions Vorst en Volk* (Veenendaal: Kool Boeken Distributie, 1993). See too Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), Ch. 2, 51-125.

<sup>7</sup> Presumably “this place” refers to Purmerland, where he was pastor at the time.

<sup>8</sup> The Dutch word translated “instructions” is *onderwijsinghen*, the same Dutch word he uses for *Institutiones*.

In the introduction to *Des Heeren verderflicke pyl* Oomius makes the same reference to a *medulla* of practical theology.<sup>9</sup> Under point nine, he states that he is busy bringing together a *medulla* or *merch* of the whole practical theology. Interestingly, although the work on the plague does not on the title page profess to be part of the Instructions in Practical Theology he is working on, Oomius says here that this title, as well as some others he has written demand a place in that *medulla*.

In the last of his books published during his lifetime, *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments in het keurlyk cieraed van voorbeeldelijcke godtsaligheyt, welcke op 't krachtigste wort aengedrongen*, Oomius gives his readers a clear sense of his own theological placement and purpose in the context of an explanation on what being a true minister of the Word involves.<sup>10</sup> The work is the rewritten and greatly expanded inaugural sermon for his work as a minister in Kampen. Oomius tells the reader that he had much more material than could be put in that sermon which he now wishes to include in this published work.<sup>11</sup>

He begins his forward by stating that he believes it is clear enough from Scripture that a true servant of the New Testament (i.e. a true minister of the Word) “*moet gezondt van Leere, en heyligh van Leven sijn, ende daer by begaeft met Voorsichtigheyt, om de Gemeynte des levendigen Godts wel te regeeren.*” Thus near the end of his life, already

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<sup>9</sup> *Des Heeren verderflicke pyl, ofte twee boeken van de pest, in dewelcke alles, 't geen tot dese stoffe behoort, kortelick en klaerlick, tot noodige onderrichtinge, waerschouwinge, en vertroostinge, is verhandelt* (Amsterdam: Willem van Beaumont, 1665).

<sup>10</sup> (Amsterdam: Daniel vanden Dalen and Leiden: Frederik Haringh, 1696).

<sup>11</sup> See “Voor-reden” in *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments*, XV.

as he begins this work, Oomius' emphasis on doctrine and life, *leere* and *leven*, comes through, completely in line with his definition of theology from the *Dissertatie*. The practice of these two duties, and a third, being able to carefully rule the congregation of God, are of utmost importance for a minister of the gospel, according to Oomius.<sup>12</sup> As he almost always does in making his point, Oomius strengthens his point with a look at church history. He proceeds to show how throughout the history of the church theologians and pastors have always displayed, in various writings on the subject of being a good pastor, how important it is that ministers practice these duties if churches are to thrive. Moving through "*de meer dan Egyptische dicke duysternissen des Pausdoms*," Oomius looks to the reformers on this subject, highlights what the English have done, then moves to the Dutch. He names two great lights "*die een nieuw leven gegeven hebben aen de Reformatie*," Willem Teellinck and Gisbertus Voetius.<sup>13</sup> The language he uses to describe these two shows Oomius' concern for a continuation of the Reformation in his time and thus a desire for a Nadere Reformatie. Oomius mentions the work of other Dutch theologians on this subject as well: I. Pikardus, P. Koeller, Rivetus, Molinaeus, F. Ridderus, I. Vollenhoven, Pricquius, Saldenus, Costerus, Goltzius,

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<sup>12</sup> "Voor-reden" in *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments*, I.

<sup>13</sup> "Voor-reden" in *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments*, VIII. Specifically Oomius points to Teellinck's *Nootwendigh Vertoogh* (Middelburg: Hellen, Vivere, 1627) and Voetius' *Politica ecclesiastica* (Amsterdam: Joannis à Waesberge, 1663-1676). He adds that all of Voetius' other works are useful and should be included in the libraries of all men of God.

Bolwerck, Schotanus, F. Spanhemius the younger, and H. Witsius. Oomius also mentions “my” Hoornbeeck and a number of his disputations.<sup>14</sup>

Pastors of congregations, writes Oomius, should be urged to have a much higher standard than others in both knowledge and in godliness of life.<sup>15</sup> He notes, however, that if he were to choose one over the other he would much rather have the piety without the learning rather than the other way around. We will have to much more give account of our life than our learning before the great Judge, reminds Oomius.

In the work itself, after a thorough discussion of duties to be practiced and avoided by ministers of the Word,<sup>16</sup> Oomius points out particularly exemplary ministers. Calvin, he states, was an amazing man. As impressive as his *Institutes* are, the church, God, Oomius himself and many others have even more esteemed the institutes of his Christian life.<sup>17</sup> Some other pastors mentioned and expanded upon by Oomius are John Knox, William Perkins, William Ames, and Thomas Thaylor.<sup>18</sup> Ministers of the Word from the Netherlands are also mentioned by Oomius: Franciscus Gomarus, Andreas Rivetus, Thysius, Triglandius, Spanhemius, l’Empereur, Willem Teellinck, and Gisbertus

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<sup>14</sup> Including the following: *de personis ecclesiasticis, de ministrorum ecclesiae vocatione, de electione ministrorum, de ministerii acceptione, de examine ministrorum, de ministrorum ecclesiae officio, and de ecclesiasticorum vita.*

<sup>15</sup> See “Voor-reden” in *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments*, XVII.

<sup>16</sup> See especially pp. 1-124 (paragraphs I-XLI) of the *Afbeelding*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, XLVI, 135-137.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, XLVII, 137-140.

Voetius.<sup>19</sup> Throughout the work Oomius emphasizes the combination of piety or a godly life with learning and scholarship as the ideal for pastors.

Together, these various statements point to a unified purpose and program that Oomius had in writing theology. Oomius defends the Reformed against those who claimed that they were not practical enough, and at the same time he acknowledges that the Reformed have not been able to produce as much practical theology as they would have liked because so much time and energy has needed to be spent on defending Reformed theology against various groups. He has a desire to add to the amount of Reformed practical theology that exists.

As for style and audience, Oomius makes it clear that he is writing in a simple style for the simple, rather than in an eloquent or difficult-to-understand style. His goal is to instruct the simple in practical theology. In two of his later writings he speaks of instructions of practical theology. Already in the dedication of one of his earliest works, the *Opweckinge ende bestieringe*, Oomius refers to his “instructions,” indicating that he had a long-term project in mind already during the first years of his ministry. Oomius seems to speak of instructions in practical theology in general, which many of his books seem to be a part of, but he also speaks specifically of a *medulla* of practical theology, which likely refers to his *Institutiones*, discussed in detail in section 4.3. In the context of his *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments* we see a strong desire on Oomius’ part for a union of learning with piety. This desire, and his sense that this has

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<sup>19</sup> The last of whom Oomius writes that his scholarship and learning were great, though not so great compared with his godliness.

been the ideal for believers—especially pastors as he states in the *Afbeelding*—since the early church, is at the heart of his plan to create instructions in practical theology.

## 4.2 The Need for an *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*

Oomius wrote the *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, his *medulla* of practical theology as he describes it in his forward to the *Tractaetken vande eensaemheyt*, to create a complete system of practical theology. Included in it would be an attempt to bring each theological *locus* into the practice. The *Dissertatie*, which was already examined insofar as it serves as a general introduction—a prolegomena—to Oomius' theology, also functions as an introduction for his *Institutiones*. The third section of the *Dissertatie* explains his sense of the urgent need for these instructions in his time, and the fourth gives a thorough description of them. Both of these sections will be examined because they illumine Oomius' particular theological program and purpose in the creation of a marrow of practical theology.

### 4.2.1 The Academic Need

In the third section of his *Dissertatie van de onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid*, Oomius explains that he perceives there is an urgent need in his day for such instructions. He finds there is a need particularly in three areas: the academy, the church, and in books and writings.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Dissertatie* (Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672; reprint, with an introduction by K. Exalto, Geldermalsen: De Schatkamer, 1997), 344-390.

Oomius shows the necessity for these instructions in the academies with respect to theology itself, the students of theology, the churches, and also in light of both the scornful reproaches of the papists and the continual desire for these instructions from churches and schools as indicated by complaints in Reformed churches, classes, and synods about the lack of these instructions. First, their need is discussed with respect to the nature of theology itself as Oomius understands it.<sup>21</sup>

Insofar as theology is a teaching and knowledge of the truth toward godliness—it completely exists in this and always has this as its end—the professors in academies must not only explain and rightly handle the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15), but they must also show how it must be appropriated to the practice of faith and to godliness. If the first of these is accomplished with all care, yet the second is omitted, theology is neither handled properly or in its entirety. Theology is not handled properly because the most important—the soul, as it were, of theology—is omitted, and it becomes like a statue without life or a skeleton without flesh. Theology is not handled in its entirety either: those who only explain the Scriptures and bring everything to disputations and who believe that the soul of theology and of teaching theology lies in such things teach only a part of theology, and then the least important part. Oomius goes on to say that there is not a single truth in the common places (i.e., the *loci communes*) that does not have many practical uses. The law, for example, makes up a large part of theology, but it is mutilated by those who do not teach students to appropriate it to instruction and governance of life, to the conviction of sin, repentance, and longing for grace. Those

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 344-346.

who explain the Scriptures and then move on to the unraveling of thorny questions without showing the manner in which the theory and the holy things handled can and must be brought to practice and godly acts do so in a very meager way and only half-way. The differences do not encompass all of religion, but only those that, according to heretics, are in question.<sup>22</sup> In this approach the theologian is starting from the perspective of a given error, not from the ground of faith itself. The problem with this is that the faith is not negative, after all, but affirmative. It exists not in the denial of errors, but in the affirmation of the truth. Oomius gives a long quote from Ames on this, then a quote from Sixtinus Amama.<sup>23</sup>

After dealing with the nature of theology in the context of the argument he is making, in four points Oomius discusses the importance of *Institutiones theologiae practicae* with respect to the students of theology.<sup>24</sup> First, he suggests that students will then be more led to read and search the Bible, because through it sermons must move and live, as Clement of Alexandria so rightly said.<sup>25</sup> Otherwise students will only deal with little parts of the Bible collected by others in order to develop a *locus* of theology or settle a dispute. This will only result in awful ministers. Here Oomius quotes Teellinck on the importance of students of theology being versed in the practice of godliness.<sup>26</sup> Second,

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<sup>22</sup> Oomius, citing Franciscus Burmannus, *Oratio inauguralis de doctrina christiana* (1662), 68.

<sup>23</sup> Oomius, citing Amesius, *Paraenes: ad Studios: Theolog adjunct. ad calc. Cas. Consc.*; Sixtinus Amama, *Antibarbarus biblicus, libro quarto auctus* (...) (Franeker, 1628).

<sup>24</sup> *Dissertatie*, 346-349

<sup>25</sup> Oomius gives no reference here.

<sup>26</sup> Oomius, citing Willem Teellinck, *Nootwendich vertoogh, aengaende den tegenwoordigen bedroefden staet van Gods volck*, III.iv (p. 86). Teellinck writes at III.iv.2 on p. 86 the following: "Ende



he finds that these instructions will create students that “taste like the flesh and blood of the Scriptures, and that lead to the practice of godliness.”<sup>27</sup> Not only are many strangers to the practice of godliness simply through lack of knowledge, but some scorn it. Polyander is quoted in his recommendation to read not only books that make one more learned, but also better.<sup>28</sup>

Third, these instructions will encourage godliness. What confidence is there in the orthodox religion, asks Oomius, if its theology remains suspended in the brain and is not rooted deeply in the heart? How can there be an enlightenment of the understanding without the sanctification of the inner man or the igniting of one’s heart and emotions? Theological knowledge that remains in subtle disputations and eloquence of words will quickly shrivel up without the juice of experiential spirituality and the roots of practice. Those who promote these things in their life will be passionate, experimental, sound, and well-rooted theologians and clear and powerful ministers. Someone can be a good butcher or shepherd without being a good man, but someone who is not a good man will never be a good minister. The professors, as masters and fathers of the students, must be concerned about forming tested men and true men of God. This can be done in no better way than urging godliness along with the truth. We have to make sure that the old

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soo zijn vele Studenten / uyt de Hooge Scholen, ghevallen in de Predick-stoelen; sonder dat sy vele ervarentheyt hebben ghehadt / van het Gheestelijke leven oft levendighe bevindinge van de verborgentheyt des Conincrijcke Gods; daer door het dan oock gebeurt is / dat de Predick-stoelen selve ten platten Lande / onder den gantsch slechten menschen (daer van de meestendeel / noyt eenich swaer verschil der Religie beseft en hebben) vervult zijn worden / met Disputyen ende Controversien; tot merckelijke schade der slechter luyden....”

<sup>27</sup> *Dissertatie*, 347.

<sup>28</sup> Oomius, citing Johannes Polyander, preface to *Commentarii succinti & dilucidi in Proverbia Salomonis*, by Thomas Cartwright (Leiden: G. Brevvsterum, 1617).

complaint of Sibr. Lubertus is not renewed, when he pointed out that people who were living dishonestly as students were being allowed into the ministry.<sup>29</sup>

Fourth, these instructions will make students better at bringing all sorts of things clearly and powerfully to the conscience in their sermons and in all areas of their service. It is not as easy a task as some think to understand the practice well and to preach it to others.<sup>30</sup> A long quote from Zepperus is given lamenting the lack of theory moving to practice among the theological faculties.<sup>31</sup> In order that this complaint not continue professors must deal with all of theology—the students must be taught everything in the schools, including being hand-led to the practice of theology.

After discussing the importance of an *Institutiones* for students of theology Oomius notes, thirdly, their use and importance for the church.<sup>32</sup> From the academies, the fruit of these types of instruction should flow out into the churches—resulting in growth and blossoming with God’s grace—because they are supplying the churches with shepherds who will teach and live out the practice. These instructions are fourthly necessary in light of the papal reproaches against the Reformed.<sup>33</sup> Oomius deals with this in detail in chapter three of part two, but notes here that the Reformed should, in their

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<sup>29</sup> Oomius, citing Amama, *Antibarbarus biblicus*.

<sup>30</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*, Vol. 4, p. 43. This is in the disputation, *De lege et evangelio* which covers pp. 17-62 of the fourth volume.

<sup>31</sup> Oomius, citing Wilhelmus Zepperus, preface to *Politia ecclesiastica: sive, forma, ac ratio administrandi, et gubernandi regni Christi, quod est ecclesia in his terris ...* (Herborn: Christophorus Corvinus, 1595; rev. and enl., 1607), 2 ff.

<sup>32</sup> *Dissertatie*, 353.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

practice of theology, convince the papists of their mistaken criticisms and even put them to shame.

Oomius finds, fifthly, a necessity for these instructions in light of the complaints at the local church, classical, and synodical levels that these instructions are lacking in the churches and schools of the Reformed.<sup>34</sup> The provincial synod of Zeeland gave some advice on this, reproduced in the acts of the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619. The necessity of a Practical Theology in the academies, writes Oomius, was, after dealing with the Remonstrants, another important function of the Synod as it sought to protect the church against her own errors as well as that of others. Related directly to this the synod in 1619 decided to have a professor at Leiden who specifically focused on teaching *ethicam* or *theologiam practicam* and commended Amesius to this end. This position, up until that time, was lacking.<sup>35</sup> Oomius trusts that the churches will be following the synodical decision when the professors deal in every place of theology with dogmatic, elenctic, and practical matters, and deal more thoroughly with the latter so that students are led from theory and distinctions to practice, thus learning to appropriate all the truths.<sup>36</sup> At the same time our churches, classes, and synods have always recognized the danger of encouraging the conscience of people who did not learn art of handling it appropriately.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 353-357.

<sup>35</sup> Oomius, citing Andreas Rivetus, preface to *Praelectiones in cap. XX. Exodi* (Leiden, 1632), I (p. 1222).

<sup>36</sup> Oomius, citing Petrus van Mastricht, preface to *Theologiae didactico-elenchtico-practicae prodromus tribus speciminibus* (Amsterdam: Johannem van Someren, 1666).

This teaching of and instructing in Practical Theology is managed by excellent men in the various schools.<sup>37</sup> At Leiden Oomius mentions Rivetus, Triglandius and Walaeus—this latter particularly because his son, Balduinus, tells us in his biography that after a revision of the Dutch Bible he started working on a *Een tractaet van de gevallen der conscientie*. At Franeker particularly Amesius is to be mentioned, as Sixtinus Amama, a no less godly man, tells.<sup>38</sup> This was later published under the title of the *Gevallen der conscientie*—a book very much liked by the professors at Leiden.<sup>39</sup> Maccovius also published a work or lecture on the affairs of the conscience, but he could not finish more than a rough draft under the title *Disputatien over de thien geboden*, before his death. Meinardus Schotanus was called to Franeker as the professor of Theology and Godliness, as was made clear from the words of the academic program introducing him to the school. The curators advised him to teach the students of theology the practice of theology and of godliness. At the academy of Groningen the practice was faithfully taught by Henricus Altingius—Hottingerus notes that he wrote, but did not finish, a *theologia practica* or *ascetica*.<sup>40</sup> Maresius witnesses to this too in his *Lÿck-Oratie*.<sup>41</sup> Instructions in practical theology and godliness were presented by Gisbertus Voetius from the beginning of his work at Utrecht. He taught it in the academy *in actu*

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<sup>37</sup> *Dissertatie*, 358-360.

<sup>38</sup> Oomius, citing Sixtinus Amama, *Antibarbarus biblicus*.

<sup>39</sup> Oomius, citing Hoornbeeck, *Nader bewering van des Heeren dags heyliginge* (Leiden: C Banheining, 1654), 43.

<sup>40</sup> Oomius, citing Hottingerus, *Bibliothecarius*, III.ii (p. 396).

*signato* and spoke it in the pulpit *in actu exercito*, so that students would see the practice of theology as well as learn it. Also Utrecht, along with Voetius, are to be mentioned Schotanus, Dematius, Hoornbeeck (who later went to Leiden), and, now, Andreas Essenius, which is apparent from his published practical disputations and books.

These professors have done, and continue to do this in an honorable way after the example of William Perkins, according to Oomius. Also well-known for these types of instructions are Robertus Rollocus at Edinburgh, as witnessed by Melchior Adamus and his commentaries on some of the Psalms, John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Daniel, etc. Thomas Cartwright at the academy of Canterbury and his commentary on Proverbs is mentioned, as is Joannes Davenantius and Robertus Bodius at Salmeurs.

#### 4.2.2 The Ecclesial Need

Oomius proceeds to show the necessity of instructions of practical theology for the people in the churches both because of the state and circumstance of the people as well as because of the intense longing and desire of the godly among them for these instructions. First, the state of the people demand these practical instructions.<sup>42</sup> People in the church, says Oomius, must not only be taught what to believe and how to debate the truth with enemies, but they must also be taught how to live—otherwise everything else is in vain. “Science,” without “conscience,” is an idle word, or, as the Arabs say “a

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<sup>41</sup> Oomius, citing Samuel Maresius, *Oratio funebris in luctuosissimum obitum theologi celeberrimi D. Henrici Alting, in academiis Heidelbergensi per IX, & Groningo-Omlandica per ipsos XVII annos Doctoris ac Professoris meritissimi...* (Groningen: Jan Claessen, 1644), c. 8.

<sup>42</sup> *Dissertatie*, 361-363.

learned person without works is like a cloud without rain” (“*Doctus sine opere, est uti nubes sine pluvia*”).

Oomius finds problematic the “unlearned” Coornhert’s solution in 1582 to the overabundance of sects and factions.<sup>43</sup> Coornhert recommends that ministers ought to do nothing else than preach, read, or speak the Scriptures from the pulpit, without adding a syllable to them. In contrast to this Oomius finds it necessary that the people get sharper in their knowledge of the Reformed faith and that they can learn how to witness to, convince, or fend off challenges to it. But just as one must courageously and vigorously go about this work, he cannot leave behind the other work, which is by far the most important. The devil, the first father of quarreling and who brought disputation into the world tries to prevent us from our principal work, pulling us away from godliness and practicing our religion, and causing us to lose ourselves in disputations, thinking that they are the beginning and end of the work of our religion. We say with Savonarola, “We see now many debaters, but few doers or those who practice.”<sup>44</sup> It has always been the case that the centuries of the church which are the most fruitful in debating are the least fruitful in godliness because it causes the people to think that religion is just about the understanding.<sup>45</sup> This must be unlearned through a thorough handling of the practice of theology which up until now has only been dealt with in short. Now that we have

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<sup>43</sup> Here he sounds remarkably similar to a section of his Foreward to *Prima, media et ultima, ofte de eerste, middelste en laetste dingen*, previously discussed.

<sup>44</sup> Citing, Girolamo Savonarola, *Libri ... de simplicitate Christiane vite*, trans. from Italian (Paris, 1510); Jac. de Paradiso. *Lib. de Offic. Eccles. personar.* Cp. I, pag. m. 35.

<sup>45</sup> Oomius, citing Richard Sibbes, *Het gekrookte riet en de glimmende vlas-wiecke* (Amsterdam: Johannes Crosse, 1641), 57.

conquered our enemies we must in these safe and peaceful times commit ourselves to the preaching of the practice in order to show our enemies what our goal has been in this previous fighting.

There is also a need for such instructions in the churches, perceives Oomius, given the intense longing mainly of the godly who would rather hear only the ministers that touch and search the soul.<sup>46</sup> Some complain that many graduating students are going to the pulpits with only disputations and polemics and the uncatechized people and those not grounded in the Christian religion are hearing words from the preacher himself and the Reformed church rather than the words of the Good Shepherd.<sup>47</sup> They are in their element with this manner of preaching because that is all they ever learned. John Owen *stijckt oock de wanaghtinge der selve ernstigh deur.*<sup>48</sup> Oomius mentions Amesius as one who speaks similarly and before Owen and Amesius, John Abernethy, “Much time, many books, and most sermons are wasted on contemplative and polemical theology, on the disputed chapters of the *loci*, but too little on theology that lies in the practice to heal the languishing soul, which is the most important thing.”<sup>49</sup> The theologians of Transylvania complained about the same thing coming from our theological schools in

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<sup>46</sup> *Dissertatie*, 363-365.

<sup>47</sup> Oomius, citing Teellinck, *Noorwendich Vertoogh*, III.iv (p. 86). See quote in footnote 14.

<sup>48</sup> Oomius, citing Owen, *Theologoumena*, VI.iii (pp. 468, 469) and IX (pp. 524, 525).

<sup>49</sup> *Dissertatie*, 365. Oomius, citing John Abernethy, forward to *Een christelijck ende goddelijck tractaet, inhoudende de medicine der ziele...*, trans. from English (Amsterdam: Johannes van Ravesteyn, 1660; prev. ed., 's-Gravenhage, 1623), 2.

their *Ordeel van den eendraght der evangelische*, given to Duraeus in the 1634.<sup>50</sup> For the same reason Casparus Streso wished that in the churches of our fatherland the elenctic Theology would be a little tamed with the practical.<sup>51</sup> This is the means of saving people from their doubting thoughts as to whether our theology is useful and powerful for godliness and whether true practice can be found in it.

If all of this is followed, states Oomius, some who are concerned about such things will not have to worry about following into heresy and errors, because, as God's Word and experience teach us, that decay in doctrine follows when decay in godliness and morality occurs.<sup>52</sup> Chrysostom said when commenting on 1 Tim. 1:19 that an unhealthy heart makes an unhealthy head—first the hearts of people go to Rome, then their heads follow. People become Arminian and Papist first in their lives, and after that in their beliefs. Aquinas also speaks this way when commenting on 1 Tim. 6. In contrast to this, there is no better means to prevent errors than a godly walk. Truth and godliness are always found together and the one is strengthened by the other. When godliness is lost, the truth is in great danger. This is why Dort prescribed living doctrine more faithfully as a means to heal the schism at that time and to prevent other errors.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Oomius, citing Hoornbeeck, *Dissertatio de consociatione Evangelica Reformatorum et Augustanae Confessionis sive de Colloquio Cassellano, Pridem habito d.V. Julii, anno 1661* (Amsterdam, 1663), 47.

<sup>51</sup> Oomius, citing Caspar Streso, preface to *Fundamenta patientiae...* ('s-Gravenhage: Franck van der Spruyt, 1641).

<sup>52</sup> *Dissertatie*, 366-368.

<sup>53</sup> Oomius, citing Godefridus Udemans, *Corte ende duydelijcke Verclaringe over het Hooge-Liedt Salomo* (Zierikzee: Hans vander Hellen, 1616), fol. 316.



The summary of this, for Oomius, is that false teachings and heresies must be carefully preached against and disputed in the churches, but beyond this, people must especially stand on the instructions in practical theology and revival of godliness.<sup>54</sup> It would be very useful for the church if the whole practice of theology could be explained in light of the read texts just as the main points of our religion are dealt with in the catechism and, as well, just as the historical things of Christ are handled. Among the English, Thomas Hooker appears to have done this in his sermons on calling and justification and, under the Germans, Johannes Arnd in his books on true Christianity.

#### 4.2.3 The Need in Books and Other Writings

In the third and final chapter of this discussion on the necessity of an *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, Oomius demonstrates the need for these instructions in books and writings.<sup>55</sup> Before giving a detailed list of practical theological writers Oomius notes that instructions in practical theology are needed for teachers as well as for regular Christians. Teachers and preachers need instructions if they are going to be preaching the practice of theology in their sermons so that they learn the key to the method of dealing with the practical side of matters. Even the most experienced practitioners, as witnessed by Gisbertus Voetius, will be able to pick up something new from any practical work.<sup>56</sup> Because of the gain that these books bring teachers, Johannes Polyander also

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<sup>54</sup> *Dissertatie*, 368.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 368-389.

<sup>56</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum*, Vol. 4, pp. 43-44.

recommends their reading.<sup>57</sup> The average Christian will be able to gain much from reading books of this sort as well. Oomius is of the opinion that the practical writers are the best for Christians to read—rarely is one so bad that a Christian will receive no spiritual gain. Oomius lists some examples of theologians who write of the importance of these writings: Polyander on the publishing of Teellinck's *Huysboeck*; Casoubonus on the *Oratien* of Heinsius, and Lacantius.

Oomius proceeds in the rest of this chapter to list those theologians—older writers as well as more recent ones—who have “breathed” the practice in their books. The theologians from the early church which Oomius names are Cyprian, Basil of Caesarea, Cyril of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Jerome, Irenaeus, Augustine, Ambrose, Ephraem Syrus (or “the Syrian”), and Gregory the Great.<sup>58</sup> He praises all these for their attention to such things as morality, godliness of life, and virtue in their writings and preaching. The specific proof of praise comes in the form of sometimes mentioning various works of a particular figure, or, quoting other church fathers, like Jerome and Gregory of Nazianzus, in their praise of one of the figures Oomius has selected. Oomius finds that particularly in the first three centuries of the church, until the fourth, Christians were concerned more with the practice of true godliness in their teaching and in their living than with theoretical knowledge. Indeed, Gregory the Great is the only name mentioned under the “old” writers outside of this time period, though Oomius does indicate that he could have named others beyond the list he gives.

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<sup>57</sup> Oomius, citing Polyander, preface to *Commentarii succincti et dilucidi in Proverbia Salomonis...*, by Thomas Cartwright.

<sup>58</sup> *Dissertatie*, 371-372.

Next the “new” writers are mentioned in two large categories: the English, and then those in other lands, including the Swiss, French, German, and Dutch. Oomius introduces the English as standing above theologians of other nations in this regard. The reason he gives for this is the peace the English have enjoyed—because the Catholic church and other sects have been suppressed for some time in England, suggests Oomius, the English theologians have had more opportunity to focus on the practical part of theology than theologians in other countries, especially those in the Netherlands, who have been busy with disputations and other polemical writings to fight against the enemies of the truth.<sup>59</sup>

The fount of practical theology in England, “the true Homer and Father of the English practical writers,” writes Oomius, is William Perkins. Changing a quote of Petronius Arbiter in a satirical writing, *Tolle obscaena, & tollis omnia* (“take away the indecent things and you take away everything”), Oomius writes of Perkins books that if you take away the holy things, you take away everything. With a similar zeal, finds Oomius, many other English theologians have walked in Perkins’ footsteps.<sup>60</sup> The

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 373.

<sup>60</sup> Though it is difficult to determine exactly who some of the individuals are whom Oomius lists since he sometimes only gives the last name or uses an odd spelling, the following are clear: John Bradford, William Tyndale, Richard Greenham, Edward Dering, Thomas Cartwright, Paul Baynes, Robert Bolton, Daniel and Jeremiah Dyke, William Whately, Nicolas Byfield, John Preston (though Oomius gives only his last name and thus he could be referring to Richard Preston, John Preston was better known to the Dutch through translation), Richard Sibbes, Nicolas and Nehemiah Rogers, John Downname, Thomas Hooker, William Gouge, Joseph Hall, Thomas Taylor, Samuel Smith, John Denison, Arthur Dent, Thomas Tymme, William Fenner, Whitfield (likely Henry or Thomas—Oomius does not give a first name), Henry Scudder, Edward Reynolds, John Ball, Jeremiah Burroughs, Joseph Caryl, William Cowper, John Cotton, John Dod, Daniel Featly, Thomas Gataker, Thomas Goodwin, Robert Harris, Samuel Hieron, William Pemble, Robert Sanderson, John Andrewes, John Boys, Andrew Willet, John Trapp, Francis Roberts, John Barlow, Nathaniel Hardy, Richard Cameron, Thomas Watson, Christopher Sutton, Thomas Brooks, Jeremiah Lewis, George Swinnock, Robert Abbot, Peter King, John Dod, Robert Cleaver, Richard Baxter, Isaac Ambrose, John Angier, William Attersoll, John Bendrigge, William Bradshaw, William Bridge, John

following are given as sources with more detailed information on the English practical works: Wilkens *Ecclesiastes*, Voetius' *Biblioteec*, and the *Bibliothecarius Quadripartitus* of Hottingerus.<sup>61</sup> Oomius quotes Conradus Rittershusius writing from London in 1611 to Casaubonus: "It is only Holy Theology that blossoms here; almost the only books published here are theological and almost all of them English."<sup>62</sup>

Oomius proceeds to reprimand those who question or do not esteem the English authors.<sup>63</sup> Some suggest that the English cannot be developing a practical theology from the Scriptures uninfluenced by the Anabaptists or Enthusiasts—these critics find that the English do not properly distinguish themselves from these groups as theologians do in the Netherlands. The critics also suggest that the Dutch should not be drawing so much on the theologians of another nation, though Oomius appears to have no problem with this.

Many have judged differently than these critics, maintains Oomius.<sup>64</sup> The translation of the English books on practice is something that proves this. The following

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Brinsly (not clear whether Oomius means the younger or the elder), Anthony Burgess, Daniel Rogers, Edward Elton, William Jenkyn, Gryffith Williams, Christopher Love, Edmund Calamy, Richard Capel, Thomas Cobbet, William Colvill, Zachary Crofton, Ezekiel Culverwell, John Davenant, David Dickson, William Greenhill, George Hakewill, Sir John Hayward, Charles Herle, Robert Hill, John Lightfoot, Thomas Manton, John Mayer, Joseph Mede, John Norton, John Owen, John Paget, Elnathan Parr, John Prideaux, William Prynne, Ralph Robinson, Samuel Rutherford, Francis Rous, Obadiah Sedgwick, Thomas Shepard, William Sclater, John Stoughton, James Usher. Oomius states that many others could be mentioned who have published explanations of some books or chapters of the Bible, or sermons of particular. These names, notes Oomius, are not given in any particular order—they were written as they came to him and by glancing at his English library.

<sup>61</sup> Oomius, citing J. Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes, ofte een discoers, aengaende de gave van 't prediken*, trans. from English by J. Grindal (Amsterdam: J. Benjamin, 1652); Voetius, *Excercitia et bibliotheca studiosi theologiae* (Utrecht, 1651), II.iii (p. 491-504) and I.xvii (p. 202 & ff.); Hottingerus, *Bibliothecarius*, I.ii (pp. 36-69). No information is given by Oomius beyond the title of the Wilkens work.

<sup>62</sup> *Dissertatie*, 374.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 375-376.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 376-379.

translators, from churches and academies, are listed as famous for their godliness, though Oomius says there are many others that he either has not seen or cannot remember as he is writing: Johannes Lamotius, Vincentius Meusevoet, Eustatius Manglierius, Philippus Ruyl, Frederick de Vry, Tobias Tegeneius, Daniel van Laren, Gillis van Breen, Everhardus Schuttenius, Simon Ruytingius, M. Panneel, Julius Huisinga, I. Sanderus, Hadrianus Visscherus, Petrus Theodori, Cornelius à Diemberbroeck, Samuel Althusius, Johannes Hoornbeeck, Casparus Steso, Nic. Arnoldi, and Neibenus. Beyond these translators, which speak of the positive influence of the English, are many theologians as well as politicians who have spoken of the pleasure they have received from the English books. Verulamius suggests, according to Oomius, that if the best remarks throughout the English sermons were laid out, less the verbose admonishments and applications, their writings would be the finest theology written since the time of the apostles.<sup>65</sup> Dr. Hakewille is mentioned as one who agrees with this statement.<sup>66</sup> Lest Hakewille's opinion is lessened by the possibility that he is simply speaking out of love for the theologians of his own nation, Oomius mentions that all those, including the French, Hungarians, and Germans, who are busy translating the English writings are of the same opinion. In this context Oomius notes that Johannes Duraeus has said that at the request of the German theologians there are deliberations among the English to put together from their most prominent authors an entire *Syntagma* and body of practical theology. Oomius indicates that he would love to see this, but he doubts that it will be able to be put

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<sup>65</sup> Oomius, citing Verulamius (Francis Bacon), *De augmentis scientiarum* (no location specified).

<sup>66</sup> Oomius, citing George Hakewill, *An apologie or declaration of the povver and providence of God in the government of the world* (Oxford: William Turner, 1635), II.vii.2.

together only using their writings. The worth of the English writings in many theologians' eyes is further proven against the critics, according to Oomius, by virtue of the fact that so many people in various nations spend so much money trying to acquire the books and so much time looking for them as well as learning the English language to be able to read the books. As a final means to demonstrate the value of the English theological works Oomius brings in quotes on this matter from four authorities: Fredericus Spanhemius, Abraham Heydanus, Hottingerus, and Francis Bacon.

Yet, Oomius acknowledges that he is not unaware that the English are not without their faults and shortcomings.<sup>67</sup> One problem is that the English tend in their tracts to repeat things already, and better, handled by others. This is why, says Oomius, there are so many books on such topics as conversion, confession of sins, love, the Lord's Supper, etc. Oomius cites as good advice a letter from Jacobus Acontius to Johannes Wolfius, learned from Franciscus Bacon, recommending that someone who wants to write should first determine what already has been written, for what is the point of writing good things if they are unnecessary?<sup>68</sup> It would be much better, finds Oomius, to write about topics which have not been comprehensively treated by others, or which have not yet been touched on at all—there are not a few of such topics in practical theology, finds Oomius.

Concerning the published sermons, which make up the largest part of their practical works of the English, Oomius mentions the following various problems that

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<sup>67</sup> *Dissertatie*, 379-381.

<sup>68</sup> Oomius, citing Jacobus Acontius, *Satanae stratagemata libri octo: accessit eruditissima epistola, de ratione edendorum librorum, ad Ioannem Wolfium* (Basil: Petrum Pernam, 1565); Hoornbeeck, *Summa controversiarum religionis* (Utrecht, 1653 and 1658), 33.

tend to appear: 1) They divide matters up into too fine pieces. 2) They do not explain the texts, but move immediately to the teachings (*“leeringen”*). On this point Oomius writes that he does not think that too much time needs to be spent on the exegesis so that there is no time to apply the text, but at the same time, he finds that the minister is a teacher of the Bible and that a solid explanation of the text gives the proper foundation for the teachings presented—they should arise out of text. Oomius quotes unfavorably that these preachers tend in their sermons to go without explanation of the text immediately to the application with the transitional phrase, “this [is] the point.” 3) They add greatly to their applications and teachings on the text by bringing things to the text rather than letting everything arise out of the text. 4) Some take a single word out of a text and ground their meditation on it, leaving out the main part and purpose of the text. 5) Sometimes the sermons go too far in the amount of uses and applications they find in the text.

But in conclusion, writes Oomius, it would be unkind and impolite to criticize these and other shortcomings in the English writings too strongly, especially since these can be found in our writers as well. Like all people, all books have their shortcomings and it is certainly easier to criticize others than to better oneself. Especially books having to do with the practice ought to be read with a simple heart (*“eenvoudige oog”*), looking for that which can edify and spur one on to godliness, rather than with an intensely critical eye to judge each concept and the manner the author deals with the material. We ought, suggests Oomius, to be gracious to others just as we wish others to be gracious to

us, recognizing that everyone has his own style, order, and manner of dealing with issues—and no author has yet succeeded in pleasing everyone.<sup>69</sup>

Oomius continues now to mention practical writers in other lands. He lists Swiss writers.<sup>70</sup> Among the French Oomius first mentions Calvin, almost all of whose works, he suggests, are practical, especially his commentaries, which Oomius states are written with such power and clarity that they need no other interpreter. He also gives examples of other theologians who wrote on the practice of theology among the French.<sup>71</sup> Among the Germans Oomius also admires practical writers of theology.<sup>72</sup> Otto Casmannus' writings, notes Oomius finally, have done more to promote godliness than anyone else's—all his many writings breathe godliness and Christian practice.<sup>73</sup> Oomius reserves the most space in this section on practical theological writings from countries

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<sup>69</sup> *Dissertatie*, 381-382.

<sup>70</sup> Ulrich Zwingli, Johann Oecolampadius, Rudolphus Gualtherus (who Oomius says is the true Antesignanus of practical theologians in that region), Heinrich Bullinger, Benedictus Aretius, Otto Werdmyllerus, Guilelmus Bucanus, Ambrosius Blaurerus, Otto Werdmyllerus, Johannes Fabricius, Johannes Huldricus, and Wolfgangus Mejerus. Often Oomius lists a number of works of these figures after mentioning their name.

<sup>71</sup> Jean Calvin, Theodorus Beza, Simon Goulart, Lambertus Danaeus, Franciscus Junius, Antoine de la Roche Chandieu (pseudonym: Antonius Sadeel), Philippes de Mornay, Jean de L'Espine, Charles Drelincourt, Toffanus, Andreas Rivetus, Nicolaus Vedelius, Pierre Du Moulin, David Primerose, Joannes Dallaeus, and Amyraldus.

<sup>72</sup> Henricus Wolfius, Theophilus Neubergerus, Felix Wissius, Ulmerus, Johannes Odenbach, Johannes Zuiccus, Matthias Erben, Joannes Hofmeisterus, Joannes Rivius, Sobnius, Abrahamus Scultetus, Henricus Alting, Johann Heinrich Alstedius, Zacharias Ursinus, David Pareus, Andreas Hyperius, Wilhelmus Zepperus, Ludovicus Crocius, Johannes Wurzius, Marcus Widler, Willingus, Franciscus Burmann, Johannes Hallerus, Stumphius, Jacobus Kollerus, Conradus Kochius, Theodorus Gernlerus, Johannes Grossius, Bernhardus Textor, Jacobus Zwingerus, Georgius Raumerus, Marc. Burchkardus, Theod. Wollebius, Merianus, Swaebelius, Jacobus Brandmyller, Ruegius, Hollenderus, Fuchsius, and Wiserius. Oomius writes that there are others whom he cannot remember now.

<sup>73</sup> *Dissertatie*, 382-385.



other than England for works originating from his countrymen.<sup>74</sup> Without mentioning any names Oomius also writes that those who write on the Catechism must not be forgotten since many questions in it give occasion for dealing with practical matters—these are pointed out by Voetius.<sup>75</sup>

Oomius mentions Gisbertus Voetius as a theologian who has published important parts of practical theology. His following works are mentioned: the *Ascetica*, his many practical disputations on the ten commandments, and two parts of his *Politica Ecclesiastica*—Oomius hopes Voetius will live long enough to finish this extremely useful and necessary work so that he will be able to begin a *theologia moralia*. These works, finds Oomius, show Voetius' amazing skill in practical writings and godliness and

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 385-389. He names the following: Jean Taffin, Cornelius van Hille, Lucas Trelcatius (the younger), Gideon van Sonneveld, Franciscus Lansbergius, Henricus Conradi, Wernerus Helmichius, Justus Jacobi Bulaeus, Daniel Souterius, Godefridus Udemans, Willem Teellinck, Rudolphus Petri, Balthazar Lydius, Rippertus Sixti, Johannes Bogermann, Wassenburgius, I. van houten, Johannes Polyander, Jacobus Trigland, Johannes Georgius Pruschenccius, Dionysius Spranckhuysen, Hermannus Faulkelius, Everhardus Schuttenius, the Swalmii, Crucii, Henricus Gheesteranus, and, writes Oomius, many others. He proceeds to mention others who have written tracts on particular matters: Ludovicus de Dieu, Andreas Lansman, the Schotani (likely Meinhardus and Christianus), Caspar Sibelius, Henricus Velthusius, Van Diest (likely Henricus), Ludovicus Gerardus à Renesse, Guilielmus Apollonius, Johannes Martinus, Jodocus Larenus (Joos van Laren?), Caspar Streso, Johannes and Hadrianus Visscherus (perhaps Piscator?), Petrus Wittewrongel, Joannes Penon, Clercquius Lupenius, Otto Belcamp(ius), Theodorus Wyckenburgius, Jacobus Sceperus, Jacobus Borstius, Franciscus Ridderus, Simon Simonides, Cornelis Gentman, Jodocus van Lodensteyn, Jacobus Stermont, Maximilianus and Johannes Teellinck, Samuel van Doreslaer (son of the more well-known Abrahamus à Dooreslaer), Guilielmus Saldenus, Abraham van der Velden, Bartholomaeus Donius, W. Costerus, Franciscus Elgersma, Gell. Boëthius, Thomas Alberthoma, Sixtus Brunsveld, Daniel Reneman, Everhardus Bornaeus, Georgius de Raad, Theodorus à Brenck, Johannes Vollenhove, Hermannus Witsius, and Guilielmum Diepenbeeck. Oomius mentions these as among many others who do not come to his mind at the moment of writing.

<sup>75</sup> G. Voetius, *Politicae ecclesiasticae* (Amsterdam: Joannis a Waesberge, 1663), part 1, II.iii.1, (pp. 857-858). A sampling of some of the topics Voetius lists are as follows: *de consolatione fidelium* (qu. 1), *de examine conscientia & probatione sui ipsius*, *de amore divino*, *de dilectione proximi* (qu. 4-5), *de praxi fidei* (qu. 26, 28), *de meditatione passionis Christi crucifixi, ejusque fructuum* (qu. 35-36, 44), *de bono mortis*, *consolationibus contra metum mortis* (qu. 45, 49, 51), *de meditatione practica praedestinationis & perseverantiae* (qu. 55), *de praxi coenae*, & *debita ad eam praeparatione* (qu. 88-91), *de praxi & sanctificatione sabbathi: & opposita profanatione* (qu. 103), *de veracitate, simplicitate, sinceritate, de regimine linguae: cum oppositis, garrulitate seu multiloquio, mendacio, dolo, fraude, simulatione, aequivocatione & mentali reservatione, falso*, etc. (qu. 112).

he suggest that Voetius would be by far the most fitting person to publish a complete *Systema theologia practica* if he wanted to, or if he had the time to do so, or if this time would be given him by others.

Oomius also lists those who have written or are beginning to write a complete body of practical theology. Adrianus Cocquius is named as publishing a *Theologia praxis* in 1658.<sup>76</sup> Oomius knew of an early publication by Petrus van Mastricht, which he refers to as *Theologia didactico-elenchtico-practicae prodromus*. It was in three parts: on the creation of man, on humility and arrogance with respect to God, and on the walk with God—Oomius hopes Van Mastricht is able to complete this work.<sup>77</sup> Next Johannes Hoornbeeck, Oomius' "greatly esteemed friend and highly worthy master,"<sup>78</sup> is noted for his service to the church for the many practical disputations he held as a professor at Utrecht, and later, Leiden to lead students to the practice of theology. In 1663, writes Oomius, the first part of his Practical Theology appeared.<sup>79</sup> Several weeks after the 1666 publication of the second part of this work, according to Oomius, Hoornbeeck died—the pain from his illness prevented him from more thoroughly handling much of the material in the second part.<sup>80</sup> Professor David Stuart, in his description of the life of Hoornbeeck,

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<sup>76</sup> A. Cocquius, *Theologiae praxis, de ware practycque der godt-geleertheit* (Utrecht: Simon de Vries, 1658).

<sup>77</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theologiae didactico-elenchtico-practicae prodromus tribus speciminibus*. Mastricht was able to complete this work: it appears to be a precursor to his *Theoretico-practica theologia* (Amsterdam: 1682-1687; *editio nova*, Utrecht: 1699, 1715, 1724).

<sup>78</sup> *Dissertatie*, 388.

<sup>79</sup> *Theologiae practicae. Pars prior. Accessit ejusdem irenicum, de studio pacis atque concordiae, et oratio, de prudentia* (Utrecht, 1663).

<sup>80</sup> *Theologiae practicae. Tomus alter* (Utrecht, 1666).

witnesses to this, writes Oomius.<sup>81</sup> If his illness and death had not prevented it, Oomius believes this work of Hoornbeeck could have been one of the greatest works the world has ever seen—it is not clear whether Oomius means by this the greatest work on any subject or on *theologia practica* specifically, in any case, such was Hoornbeeck's learnedness, understanding, judgment, and godliness in Oomius' eyes. Oomius expects, however, that Andreas Essenius, professor at Utrecht, will do an excellent job of completing Hoornbeeck's work through his promised *Systema practicum*.<sup>82</sup> Some of Essenius' disputations (such as *De observantia*, *De conscientia*, and *De mortis et vita spirituali*) hint that this will be the case and it causes Oomius to long for other parts of the work until it is complete. To this end Oomius wishes Essenius length of days and strength.

Concluding this section on theologians from other lands, as well as the entire third section of the *Dissertatie van de onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid*, Oomius mentions there are worthy works also from the Poles, Hungarians, and Italians.<sup>83</sup> These writings from various other countries—especially from his own country where practical writings are published daily—prove to Oomius that other theologians no longer have to yield anything to the English. He finds that since the English have taught the others so much in this regard they no longer need to work as hard as they once did in

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<sup>81</sup> See D. Stuart, *Clarissimi viri Johannis Hoornbeek, theologi nobilissimi vita* (Amsterdam, 1669).

<sup>82</sup> Glasius notes that Essenius promised a *Systema practicum* in the forward of the second part of his three-part *Systema theologiae dogmaticae* (Utrecht, 1659), but that it never appeared. See B. Glasius, *Biographisch Woordenboek van Nederlandsche Godgeleerden*, Vol. 1 ('s Hertogenbosch: Gebr. Muller, 1851), 447-448.

<sup>83</sup> *Dissertatie*, 389-390.

writing practical theological works. The publication of these types of works, by the English and subsequently by other Reformed in various countries, has countered those who have imagined that the theology of the Reformed “is only argumentation, or exists in idle theory, as if it were barren, dry, dead, empty of all godliness, and a speculation of indolent emptiness.”<sup>84</sup> Oomius is of the opinion that in the *practische theologie*, especially the *ascetica*, no less than in exegetical and polemical studies, the Reformed are far beyond the papists and have exceeded them in the handling and writing of spiritual matters. Hottingerus is quoted here: “*Reformationis tempore, dogmata erant primo purganda: nunc, ne aliud dicere, aliud sentire videantur Theologi Reformati, mores et vitam dogmatibus adaptant.*”<sup>85</sup>

### 4.3 Description of the *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*

In the concluding fourth section of his *Dissertatie*, Oomius gives a thorough description of his *Onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid*,<sup>86</sup> the work he views as his *magnum opus*. This section includes a description of such matters as the structure of the *Institutiones*, its occasion and audience, its language and style, and its method and sources.

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 390.

<sup>85</sup> Hottingerus, *Bibliothecarius*, III.iii (p. 398).

<sup>86</sup> *Dissertatie*, 390-499. This is the Dutch title Oomius gives to his *Institutiones theologiae practicae*.

#### 4.3.1 Occasion and Audience

Oomius introduces the fourth section of the *Dissertatie* with a defense for the project he is commencing. He writes that just as people make common places (“*Gemeene plaetsen*”) in dogmatic theology, elenctic theology, and historical theology, he finds it will be especially useful to have common places for practical theology so that there are notes written down on those things related to the practice of theology which are difficult or impossible to remember.<sup>87</sup> He notes that while there has been much written on the *theologia practica*, a whole body or system of practical theology does not yet exist—this is what he is attempting to do, by God’s grace. Although such a system may yet appear from some who have begun publishing on parts of the practice of theology, a full system has not yet been completed, and, furthermore, even if one were completed, there are none currently in development which are being written in either the language or manner that Oomius and others would like to see. Already before Oomius became aware of some of the practical theological studies currently being worked on he states that he has had such a work in mind from the beginning of his ministry. At the suggestion of Hoornbeeck Oomius began this work already as a student, taking notes from books in the libraries or from books that were placed in his hands by friends.<sup>88</sup>

The audience of this work seems to have been, first, himself and his congregation at Purmerland, but also, beyond this, others who love godliness and seek to live godly lives. Oomius also particularly targets students of theology—these seem to him to lack a

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 420.

knowledge either of practical writings or the means to acquire the important and necessary writings on this topic. Oomius reckons that his proposed work will be of use to them since, while not everything will be covered in his book, most subjects—and the most important subjects—will be covered.

Citing Cyprian's reliance on his teacher Tertullian, Oomius writes that it is not unusual for there to be various books and writings on the same subject, especially if it is an important one. Furthermore he notes that various books on the same subject are necessary given the fact that not everything written falls into everyone's hand, and that it is good for there to be books in a variety of styles on the same subject since a single style does not always reach every reader the same way.

#### **4.3.2 Structure**

Oomius envisions his instructions in practical theology as being divided into two main sections: faith, or “the correct knowledge of matters and truths which God has revealed to us,”<sup>89</sup> and love, or “godly dealing of things, virtues, and good works which God prescribed to be done.”<sup>90</sup> With references to various Scripture texts Oomius shows that he believes this division between faith and love is a proper one. Evidence of this division is also found when Oomius looks to the teachers of the early church: Ignatius, Irenaeus, Lactantius, Ambrosius, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, and Augustine, in whose footsteps more recent theologians like Beza, Danaeus, Zanchius, Ursinus, Kimenontius, Polanus, Essenius, and many others have followed. That the Jews (e.g.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 392.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

Abravanel) distinguish between the practical commandments and the theory of faith is cited as support for Oomius' basic structure, as is even the heathens' typical distinction of teaching into dogmatic and paraitic parts, as evidenced in Lipsius. This division he is making, writes Oomius, is not so much theological, since all theological matters are practical, but it has to do with the manner and method in which theological matters will be handled.

Oomius plans on distinguishing between two books in the first part, on faith.<sup>91</sup> The first of these, on Holy Scripture, which he published in the same year as the *Dissertatie*, he calls the *principium doctrinale*, that is, the doctrinal foundation of all things to be believed, and by consequence, all things to be done. Oomius finds it most proper to begin with a treatment of the Bible because it is the principal instrument in which God reveals theology to man. The second book of the first part will contain explanations of the truths which God has revealed in the Bible. This book will be divided into particular treatises, which will in turn be divided into sections and chapters. Oomius plans to hold to the following order in each chapter: "we will present each truth with a concise description, which we, in all its parts, will describe shortly and succinctly affirm; after that we will refute the opposing errors, and finally we will demonstrate the practice of each truth."<sup>92</sup> Though Oomius does not lay out the subject matter of the various treatises of part one, book two here, he does so in the first treatise, on God, which was the

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 393-397.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 397.

only treatise he completed. The five treatises of the second book were to have been: on God, on God's works, on man, on the Mediator, and on the benefits of the Mediator.<sup>93</sup>

Oomius planned on distinguishing two books in the second major division of the work, on love, just as he had distinguished two books in the first part.<sup>94</sup> In the first book he proposed to deal with *theologia moralis*, which he defines as being occupied with the explanation of the morals of people and in the explanation of duties and virtues and, opposite these, vices and sins of people according to their age, state, and calling, with respect to God, their neighbors, and themselves. The second book was to deal with *theologia ascetica*, encompassing the practice of repentance, of faith, and then all spiritual practices of godliness and devotion.

What is suspected by a lack of works in existence in public and private libraries today is confirmed definitively by a statement made by Oomius' widow, Hester Worst, in her dedication written by her for her husband's last, posthumously published book:<sup>95</sup> Oomius only completed the introduction to the *Institutiones* (the *Dissertatie van de onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid*), the first book of part one (on Scripture), and the first treatise of the second book of part one (on God). In fact, it is not

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<sup>93</sup> *Institutiones theologiae practicae ofte onderwijsinge inde praktijk der godgeleerdheid. Eerste tractaet des tweeden boeck's van het eerste deel, vervattende de verhandelinge der theologia didactica.* (Bolsward: Widow of Samuel Harninghouk, 1676), 1.

<sup>94</sup> *Dissertatie*, 417.

<sup>95</sup> *Cierlijke kroon en krans des grijsen en goeden ouderdoms* (Leiden: Daniel vanden Dalen, 1707). In the first sentence of the dedication of the work, Hester Worst indicates that the last part of Oomius' *Onderwijsinge inde praktijk der godseleerdheid*, on the Trinity, was published over twenty-seven years ago. This is accurate: Oomius published a continuation of his doctrine of God, the first treatise of the second book of the first part of the *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, in 1680. This work, which appears to have completed his treatise on God, was on the Trinity.



entirely clear if the treatise on God was completed: he did write on God's name, essence, attributes, and the Trinity; compared with other orthodox writings of the time, these topics would seem to cover the doctrine, but it is possible he planned on writing more on God after the Trinity section. The completed *Institutiones theologiae practicae* would have looked as follows:

**Introduction** (*Dissertatie van de onderwysingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid*)

**Part 1: Faith**

**Book 1:** *The Principium Doctrinale*—Scripture

**Book 2:** The Truths Revealed in Scripture

**Treatise 1:** God

**Treatise 2:** God's Works

**Treatise 3:** Man

**Treatise 4:** The Mediator

**Treatise 5:** The Benefits of the Mediator

**Part 2: Love**

**Book 1:** *Theologia Moralis*

**Book 2:** *Theologia Ascetica*

One can really only speculate as to why, though he lived for twenty-six years after the work on the Trinity, Oomius never published beyond Treatise One of Part One, Book Two. He was quite healthy until the very end of his life, so sickness did not prevent him. Perhaps he was simply too busy in his Kampen pastorate. Perhaps among the works the enemy stole from him while he was a chaplain were additional parts of the *Institutiones* and it was too much work to rewrite what he had already completed. Perhaps the project was turning out to be too big and he just grew tired of it. After all, though he had only completed the Introduction and parts 1.1 and 1.2.1 (at least through the Trinity), he had already written close to 2400 quarto pages of text. If he had continued with the other

parts of the project writing as much as he did in the first books of the *Institutiones*, the remaining four treatises of Part One, Book Two and the two books of Part Two, could have totaled another 5000 quarto pages.<sup>96</sup> The *Institutiones* were shaping up to be an immense project. Even if Oomius had wanted to complete it, it may have turned out to be practically impossible to do with his pastoral responsibilities. In addition he was continuing to write books on other topics after 1680—we know of seven.

Though these thoughts remain speculation it does seem as if what must have been added pastoral responsibilities in the larger pastorate of Kampen prevented Oomius from having the same productivity in the second part of his ministry in Kampen as he had in Purmerland. From the beginning of his pastoral responsibilities in Kampen in early 1678 until his death twenty-nine years later we know of eight published works. From 1656 to 1676, all in Purmerland, he published around twenty-seven works, a few quite small, but many quite large. Since it seems poor health would only have been a factor near the very end of his life—in fact likely only in his last year—the disparity of publication productivity between the two periods seems likely to have been the great amount pastoral responsibility in the larger church. Adding to this the size of the project he had embarked on, a simple lack of time to write would appear to be a main reason for the *Institutiones* never being completed.

### 4.3.3 Language and Style

From various perspectives such as from the work's language and style Oomius

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<sup>96</sup> That would be assuming 750 pages for each of the four treatises for the rest of Book Two, Part One (the first treatise totalled 880 pages) and 1000 pages each for the two books in Part Two (the first book of Part One was 998 pages).

defends his treatment of the material he is presenting. Oomius, for example, gives the reader an explanation for the fact that the *Institutiones* are written in Dutch.<sup>97</sup> Some perhaps, suggests Oomius, would have rather seen these instructions written in Latin so that the unlearned and lay people would not be too wise and become like the ministers. Oomius responds to this potential criticism. He writes that he could very well have published the work in Latin, and he admits that writing in Latin would have saved him much trouble since so much needed to be translated. Nevertheless, the work was purposefully written in the common language of Dutch for the purpose of more spiritual gain (he refers to 1 Corinthians 9:19 here). Oomius wants nothing to do with keeping knowledge from the average citizen; rather he feels obliged to make matters concerning the faith known to others. In writing the work in the Dutch language Oomius says that he is showing that his first obligation is to his countrymen and to the general practice of virtue which he wants to see promoted and spread everywhere. Another reason he states for writing the *Instructions* in Dutch is to counter the many theological innovations that had begun creeping into Dutch life. Because problematic theological ideas are not only written in Latin, but also in the Dutch language, an antidote is necessary to counteract them on the same level. Oomius desires to show opponents to the Reformed faith, who often out of ignorance trouble the church, that the Reformed teach a doctrine that agrees with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oomius also anticipates complaints about the style of the work. Oomius states that there has been no attempt to write in an ornate style, but that he simply wrote in

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<sup>97</sup> *Dissertatie*, 432-433.

order to be understood. Quoting Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:4 Oomius writes that he does not want to speak with wise and persuasive words, but in the power of the Spirit. The majesty of God's Word, finds Oomius, must not be hidden with undue human words. An ornate style leads to the reader being amazed at the writer, rather than being implanted with the fear of the Lord. What does it matter, asks Oomius, how well-spoken a doctor is as long as the medicine heals? What does it matter whether the key to knowledge is of gold or of silver as long as it opens the door to the Kingdom of Heaven?

#### 4.3.4 Method

Oomius suspects that some will have complaints about the order and division of the material in the book as well as the manner of treatment of the material—he thus defends his approach.<sup>98</sup> Some, he states, believe that theology is constrained, as it were, in a human harness by descriptions, divisions, and through laws of an orderly method. Oomius believes, however, that nothing of theology's majesty and worth is removed by this sort of careful and exact treatment. For example, the use of a syllogism is necessary in order to distinguish between true and false theology. He finds nothing wrong with using ways of arguing and analysis that belong to the laws of a method. There is nothing about using a certain method that lessens the majesty of theology, finds Oomius. “Danaeus, Junius, Trelcatius, Spanhemius, Maresius, and so many others, would never have handled theology with such a tidy method had they judged it would remove something of its majesty, that through divisions, distinctions, etc. God's Word would be

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<sup>98</sup> See *ibid.*, 433-441.

restrained as if by many belts and chains and be restricted.”<sup>99</sup> Oomius has no problem using methods from other fields to aid theology. He believes that it is inappropriate that in any field there be only one manner or method that is used for all times in dealing with matters, but that, in every case, attention should be given to the material handled. In preaching, for example, Oomius states that he has never criticized someone’s manner or method: he has always judged it to be enough that the content is correct, that is, that Christ be preached. Each preacher, as for method, should decide what is most fitting for him—there is freedom in manner and method.

In a similar way, writes Oomius, he has decided upon what he finds the most fitting method of treatment for his instructions. What has determined his decision is what he was found helpful from his teachers on this topic. Experience has taught him that his manner of handling the material is “the most appropriate for understanding, the easiest to remember, and above all, the most powerful to stir the conscience.”<sup>100</sup> In writing, as in preaching, one cannot do better than first explaining a subject, then applying it.

Defending the old Reformed truth, Oomius states that he does not plan to deviate from the way of speaking, the *termini*, the *technologemata*, and distinctions that up until his time have been used in the schools and in the writings of theologians. To do so would be dangerous and almost certainly would risk damaging the concepts which are being explained.<sup>101</sup> Oomius thus seems to choose quite clearly for the use of the typical

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 435.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 436.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 413.

scholastic Reformed orthodox language. Out of his explanation and affirmation of the doctrines will naturally flow a rejection of errors—thus Oomius will include a polemical or elenctic part to his theology. He does not plan on spending too much time on this since there are enough other Reformed writers to point to on this. After this, Oomius plans on turning to his main objective: from these truths—and from Scripture—he will lay out instructions, corrections, admonitions, or comfort.<sup>102</sup> “Everywhere we will be concerned with showing and convincing Christians that knowledge and practice must always go together; just as heat and light come together in sunrays.”<sup>103</sup>

#### 4.3.5 Sources

Besides the most obvious source of information on Oomius’ sources—his actual citations—in his *Dissertatie* Oomius anticipates questions about his use of sources and he spends some time describing this aspect of his work.<sup>104</sup> Oomius opens the discussion by assuring the reader that his use of so many renowned individuals from the early church, from among the heathens, and from those of his own time period is not due to an attempt to be ostentatious, but it has been done out of necessity. He finds that the use of many sources is necessary for him to reach the goal for his work.

Part of the reason for his citation of these sources is to show the reader that the opinion and teaching which he explains and defends is “not a private one or a new one, but an old one”—his teaching is the same one “taught by the early church fathers and

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 415-416.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 416-417.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 446-474.

God's Catholic, that is, orthodox church."<sup>105</sup> A second reason he gives, as he quotes Hoornbeeck on this, is that he will bring examples from church history to every head of doctrine where he lays out instructions in the practice of theology.<sup>106</sup> Thus, we can expect that examples from past Christian practice will play a role in his own *theologia practica*.

As for his use of authors who are not Christian, Oomius sees the need to defend the fact that he uses them, though, he notes, he does use them sparingly and carefully.<sup>107</sup> The truth, he believes, is always the truth. He finds truth and wisdom such pleasant things that he goes to look it up in philosophy and out of the books of the so-called wise.<sup>108</sup> Oomius uses the example that a blind man, though blind, can carry a lantern for others. God, he writes, used the treasures of Egypt for the tabernacle. The sayings of wise heathens, Oomius believes, can appropriately be compared to costly pearls found in impure and poisoned minds. The apostle Paul himself did not hesitate to use heathens as seen in Acts 17:28, Titus 1:2, and 1 Cor. 15:33. Oomius finds that Christians ought not completely reject the liberal arts ("*liberale wetenschappen*"), useful for truth and morality, just because the heathens have misused them, but Christians must take them and use them properly to proclaim God and the gospel. Basil, Gregory of Naziansus,

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 446.

<sup>106</sup> Oomius, citing Hoornbeeck, preface to *Euthenasia, ofte wel sterven; waer in veel voorbeelden der stervenden en hun laatsten doodtspreuken verhaald worden* (Utrecht, 1651).

<sup>107</sup> *Dissertatie*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>108</sup> Oomius, citing Simon Simonides, preface to *Ouranopolitès, ofte Verhemelde Ziele. Dat is: Een beschrijvinge van een hemelsch-gesint man, zijn wandel en verkeeringe op aerden* (Rotterdam, 1658). (Oomius refers to this as "Hemelingh."—confirm)

Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Athanasius, Damascensis, Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Augustine, Jerome, Lactantius, and others were all of similar opinion. So, writes Oomius, “we fly like bees through all sorts of writings, and we gather all that is good in each one for our use.”<sup>109</sup> Oomius judges that in books more freedom ought to be given, especially in this matter, than in sermons. It would not be in the best interest of the congregation to deal with all sorts of names, matters, histories, etc.—a wise minister will pay close attention to what his listeners are able to handle.

Oomius’ use of newer theologians is also for a purpose.<sup>110</sup> They are cited not so much for the average church member (for whom it is best to draw out the practice of godliness directly from God’s Word), but for the students and those who are preparing for the ministry or who are already in it. Oomius wants these to have knowledge of the books he cites and to read them on their own. Since the *Institutiones* do not involve much handling of the differences between various religious groups, Oomius thought it would be good at times to point to those theologians who do this, since those inexperienced readers would not know what excellent forbearers the Reformed have: Raynoldus, Martyr, Rivetus, Vossius, Voetius, and innumerable others. Oomius also thought it would not be harmful to cite practical writers for further instruction and to pass that instruction on to others, whether in private or in public—after all, many eyes can see more clearly than one eye. Moreover there are differences of opinion concerning moral

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<sup>109</sup> *Dissertatie*, 450.

<sup>110</sup> See *ibid.*, 450-452.



and casuistic matters. Because of this, Oomius finds that it is profitable for the reader to see what various authors have to say and to make their own judgment.

#### 4.3.6 Theological Placement

Also in his description of his *Institutiones* we get a clear sense of Oomius' general theological commitments. Section two of the *Dissertatie* contains a large polemical section where these can be examined in relation to such parties as the papists, the Remonstrants, Socinians, Lutherans, and Enthusiasts. Elsewhere in the *Institutiones* the specifics of these commitments will be examined at particular doctrinal points. Near the end of section four of the *Dissertatie*, however, Oomius gives the reader a general, initial summary of where he is coming from theologically.<sup>111</sup> He states that in his explanations of the *theologia didactica*, encompassing the main points of the faith, he will hold religiously to the Reformed Confession (the Belgic Confession) and the Catechism (the Heidelberg), which he once signed.<sup>112</sup> He rejects all innovations (that is, departures from these teachings) and counts it an honor to fight them, waging the Lord's battles against them because of the danger they present to the truth, to godliness, and to the peace of the churches. Mentioning Arminius and the Remonstrants Oomius notes that there have always been those who are interested in innovation, attaining a great name, and in being viewed as one with great understanding. These show more interest in the former than in simple faith and in the glory of the gospel—as if there weren't enough opportunity to

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 401-417.

<sup>112</sup> Oomius would have done this at least three times: first, at Classis Haarlem, likely in 1652, when he was approved to preach in the churches, and also at Classis Edam and Classis Kampen when he entered his ministry in those regions.

show one's great understanding and learning in promoting the faith and its practice.

Oomius lists over a number of pages examples of problematic innovations and deviations from the Reformed faith: ranging from the claim that the fourth commandment is a ceremonial, not moral law, to Cartesian philosophy.<sup>113</sup> Though freedom of exploration must be allowed, writes Oomius, we should promote not that which damages the old truth, but that which aids it or makes it clearer. Especially concerning those matters that do not involve the heart of Reformed theology, Oomius promotes freedom of difference and opinion, and he says, "let the truth remain a pure virgin."<sup>114</sup>

To conclude this chapter and briefly focus the above findings, it could be said that Oomius desired, with a foundation of theology well explained and defended, to see Reformed theology stated positively and applied practically to the life of the believer. Given Oomius' statements about his life's work there is good reason to see most if not all of his writings as fitting into his overall project of bringing theology into the practice.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 405-412.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 413.

<sup>115</sup> In fact, there is reason to take this a bit further: a good number of his works, though Oomius does not specifically list them as part of the *Institutiones*, could be viewed as part of them. As seen earlier, Oomius wrote on various topics that ordinarily fall under *theologia ascetica*. If he had reached the section of his *Institutiones* where he was to deal with *theologia ascetica*, it is hard to imagine he would have written again on those topics—a number of these works were typical subtopics of *theologia ascetica*. Another example of a written work not explicitly mentioned by Oomius as part of the *Institutiones*, but nevertheless fitting well within its framework is Oomius' book on the sacraments: *De praktycke der twee heylige sacramenten* (Groningen: Tjerck Everts, 1683). Based on its contents and its method of treating the material it would fit perfectly well somewhere in the second part of part one of the *Institutiones*, under the truths taught in Scripture. Rather than rewriting on the topic, it would not be difficult to imagine Oomius simply inserting this work, perhaps somewhat revised, at the appropriate point had he gotten that far into his *Institutiones*. Also pertinent here are Oomius' statements about creating a body of practical theology in his autobiography. He claims to have begun this early in his ministry. The first part of the *Institutiones* was not published until 1672, over fifteen years after he entered the ministry. This could make it likely that

The *Institutiones theologiae practicae* were to become the first complete system of practical theology in the Dutch language. In the *Institutiones* all theological *loci* were to have been applied for the up building and aid of the believer. After a handling of the doctrine of Scripture and the doctrines contained in Scripture, a *theologia moralis* and *ascetica* were to have completed the *Institutiones*. Though Oomius' works in general seem to have been directed toward the "simple" or "unlearned" believer, the *Institutiones* were designed for the instruction of pastors and students of theology, as well as for the interested and perhaps more well-read lay person, so that the reader could in turn instruct others.

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he considered even those writings published before the *Institutiones* to part of his planned body of practical theology.

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## PART III: THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

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### Chapter 5 The Explanation and Defense of the Doctrine

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#### 5.1 Introduction and Overview of the Doctrine in Oomius' *Institutiones*

The first book of the first part of Oomius' *Institutiones theologiae practicae* is on the doctrine of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> Oomius understood this work to be the proper foundation to the second book of the first part of his instructions, dealing with the explanation, defense, and practical application of the truths taught in Scripture—the last of these being his “main aim.”<sup>2</sup> Following the dedication, words to the Christians reader, and the table of contents there is another title page, which gives a longer title than that of the original title page at the beginning of the volume. This extended title specifies that just as the author's aim for all the main points of the Christian religion taught in Scripture will be urging the

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<sup>1</sup> *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijnsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid. Eerste deels eerste boeck, vervattende de verhandelinge der theologia didactica* (Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672). This work will be referred to as *Institutiones* 1.1—showing that it is the first book of the first part of his *Instructions*. According to Oomius' design for his work as a whole, the first part, in two books, would deal with “Faith,” and the second part with “Love.”

<sup>2</sup> Page 1 of “Christelicke Leser,” in *Institutiones* 1.1.

doctrines toward godliness after a proper handling of their explanation, determination, and defense, so too will that be his aim in this work on Scripture.

By beginning with the doctrine of Scripture and proceeding then to the doctrines taught in Scripture, Oomius, like Calvin and most Reformed orthodox in later generations, follows an *ordo cognoscendi*, rather than an *ordo essendi* in his theology.<sup>3</sup> Besides noting the medieval scholastic precedent for this ordering, R.A. Muller shows how this ordering had another precedent which both maintained but also transformed the medieval: the “confessional embodiment of the *sola Scriptura* of the Reformers.”<sup>4</sup> Muller writes further that the movement from the treatment of Scripture in the prolegomena to a full *locus* of Scripture following the theological prolegomena, as evidenced here in Oomius and many other Reformed orthodox, was a natural outgrowth of the Reformed confessional pattern and treatment of the idea of *sola Scriptura* found in places like Calvin’s *Institutes* and Bullinger’s *Decades* and *Compendium*.

Early orthodox and high orthodox treatments of the doctrine of Scripture could vary.<sup>5</sup> It becomes clear through a glance at the contents of the work—and by noting that it is 999 quarto pages in length—that Oomius’ doctrine of Scripture is not a brief treatment such as can be found in the compendia of Ames’ *Medulla* or Marckius’

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<sup>3</sup> See R.A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 150-152. Muller notes that almost all Protestant orthodox figures, including Polanus, Maccovius, Gomarus, Cocceius, Turretin, Van Maastricht, Pictet, and the Leiden *Synopsis*, move from the *principium cognoscendi* of theology, Scripture, to the *principium essendi*, God. Thus, notes Muller on p. 151, “the cognitive emphasis of Calvin’s theology was not lost on the orthodox.”

<sup>4</sup> Muller, *PRRD*, II, 153. See pp. 152-156 for his discussion of the medieval and Reformation precedent for this order.

<sup>5</sup> On the various treatments of the doctrine among the orthodox Reformed see *PRRD*, II, 89-90.

*Medulla* and *Medulla medullae*, but rather it more closely parallels the treatment found in larger systems of fellow high orthodox theologians like Turretin in his *Institutio theologiae elencticae* and Van Mastricht in his *Theoretico-practica theologia*. Like the authors of these works, Oomius goes beyond a basic treatment of doctrine. For example, he develops a strong and detailed polemic against the non-Reformed; he goes into linguistic issues; and he discusses in some detail the attributes of Scripture. By way of more exact comparison, however, it should be noted that Van Mastricht's treatment, while thorough and longer than many, is much shorter than that of Oomius. His "*De Sacra Scriptura*" is less than thirty (24 cm-height) pages in length.<sup>6</sup>

What follows is the basic structure of the book. A look at the major divisions of *Institutiones* 1.1 makes it clear that the first two divisions discuss the explanation and defense of the doctrine—this comprises a little less than one-third of the entire volume. The remaining five divisions, all dealing with *pligheten* ("duties"), turn to what Oomius finds to be the practical application of the doctrine of Scripture. Thus the entire work on Holy Scripture is divided into seven main divisions, with a neat separation made between the explanation and defense of the doctrine and its application:

*First Division: The Holy Scriptures in General*<sup>7</sup>

Chapter 1: On the Unwritten Word of God

Chapter 2: On the Written Word of God in General

Chapter 3: On the Scriptures of the Old Testament

Chapter 4: On the Scriptures of the New Testament

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<sup>6</sup> See Petrus Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, editio nova (Utrecht, 1699), I.i.ii, Vol. 1, 17-47.

<sup>7</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 1-83.

*Second Division: The Necessity, Divinity, Divine Authority, and Excellence of the Holy Scriptures*<sup>8</sup>

Chapter 1: The Necessity of the Holy Scriptures Explained and Affirmed

Chapter 2: On the Divine Origin of the Holy Scriptures

Chapter 3: On the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, how far it reaches, etc.

Chapter 4: On the Excellence of the Holy Scriptures and the Eloquence of the Holy Writers

Chapter 5: On the Perfection of the Holy Scriptures

Chapter 6: On the Clarity of the Holy Scriptures

Chapter 7: On the Great Use of the Holy Scriptures

Chapter 8: On the Great and Divine Power of the Holy Scriptures

*Third Division: Duties to be Practiced, with Respect to God and Others*<sup>9</sup>

Chapter 1: Showing that we are to Receive and Use this Excellent Word with a Thankful Heart to God

Chapter 2: On the Duties to be Practiced with Respect to Others

*Fourth Division: Internal Duties to be Practiced with Respect to the Holy Scriptures*<sup>10</sup>

Chapter 1: On the Esteem and Heart-Felt Love of God's Word

Chapter 2: On the Spiritual Longing and Desire for God's Word

Chapter 3: On the Spiritual Pleasure in (or "Enjoyment of") God's Word

Chapter 4: On the Contemplation of God's Word

*Fifth Division: External Duties to be Practiced with Respect to the Holy Scriptures*<sup>11</sup>

Chapter 1: On the Private Reading of the Holy Scriptures

Chapter 2: On the Public Reading of God's Word

Chapter 3: On the Singing of Psalms

Chapter 4: On Listening to the Preaching of God's Word

Chapter 5: On Catechizing

Chapter 6: On Having Conversations About God's Word

*Sixth Division: External Duties to be Practiced Particularly by Theologians*<sup>12</sup>

Chapter 1: On Translating the Holy Scriptures out of the Original into the Common Languages

Chapter 2: On the Interpretation or Explanation of the Holy Scriptures

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 83-291.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 292-303.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 304-374.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 375-859.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 859-913.

*Seventh Division: Some Particular Duties*<sup>13</sup>

Chapter 1: On the Violation, especially the Distortion of the Holy Scriptures

Chapter 2: God's Word Demonstrated as our Judge and Counselor

Chapter 3: Paying Close Attention to the Pronouncement of God's Word

Before focusing on the duties in chapter 6, the explanation and defense of the doctrine will be briefly examined in two sections in this chapter, paralleling Oomius' structure. The first deals with Scripture in general, discussing the written and unwritten word of God both in general, and then specifically focusing on the written word in the Old and New Testaments. The second section deals with issues such as the necessity, divinity, and authority of Scripture as well as the properties or attributes of Scripture.

## 5.2 Scripture in General

In the first division of the book, on the Holy Scriptures in general ("*Handelende van de Heylige Schriftuyre in 't gemeen*"), Oomius first discusses the unwritten Word of God.<sup>14</sup> He begins by noting that it is taught in both Old and New Testaments, as well as by heathens like Socrates, that true religion requires that we are to know God and divine truth rightly, but also that we are to serve God uprightly in a way that corresponds to his holy nature and righteous will.<sup>15</sup> Referring to Acts 17:30, Ephesians 4:17-18, 5:8, and Romans 1:18, 21, 25, and 28 Oomius writes that unfortunately our understanding is

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 914-998.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1-12.

<sup>15</sup> Citing Lactantius, *de vera Sapientia*, IV.xxviii.



darkened and corrupted—Aristotle too knew this and lamented it.<sup>16</sup> Divine revelation—where God’s nature, will and works are explained to us—is necessary to accomplish the goal of knowing God and serving him rightly. Both David (Psalm 4:7 and 36:10) and Paul (Ephesians 1:17) understood our need for God’s revelation and the weakness and blindness of human understanding.<sup>17</sup>

Though God’s Word was never absent from his church at any time, continues Oomius, it has not always been revealed in the same manner.<sup>18</sup> When one follows biblical history it becomes clear that God used both the unwritten and the written Word. As is typical of other Reformed orthodox writers, Oomius explains that the different modes parallel the different stages of the church as it matured from childhood, to youth, and finally, to adulthood.<sup>19</sup> In the church’s infancy, from Creation up to Mt. Sinai, only the living voice was used, sometimes God’s own, sometimes others like Adam, Seth, Enoch, Lamech, and Noah. These, and others whom Oomius calls Patriarchs and Prophets, were teachers of the church. They did not live for centuries so much for the furtherance of their family, but to be “lights and pillars of the church and living libraries of God,” sharing what they had received from God.<sup>20</sup> This teaching from God—both

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<sup>16</sup> Citing Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, II.i.

<sup>17</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 1-2. By the Psalms references Oomius cites Samuel Maresius, *Systema theologicum: hactenus saepius recusum, nunc vero locupletatum prolixis annotationibus, ad illius explicationem & defensionem facientibus*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Groningen, 1659), I.xv-xvi, 8-9. This is in I.xvv, p. 16, of the 1673 Groningen edition.

<sup>18</sup> Citing Heinrich Alting, *Theologia historica* (Leiden, 1644), II, 69 and ff.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Turretin, Van Rijssen, Burmann, and Marckius, all cited in Muller, *PRRD*, II, 201. Muller notes on p. 202, that this teaching was found in nearly identical form in the English Reformed theologians.

<sup>20</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 3. Oomius, citing Johann Heinrich Hottingerus, *Thesaurus philologicus, seu clavis scripturae* (Zürich: Johann Jakob Bodmer, 1649), I.ii.2, 82-83.

law and gospel, according to Oomius—got off track between Seth and the flood so that a new revelation of his word was needed with Noah and then again got off track between Shem’s descendents and Terah, so that a new revelation was needed again with Abraham.<sup>21</sup> After Joseph and his brothers died, again, their children got off track. In the meantime, in the rest of the world some hints of the histories, teachings, and ceremonies had remained through tradition. At Sinai the church entered the stage of youth, where God’s Word was both written and spoken. God would choose to feed the church with the written Word until the end of the world. In the church’s adulthood, presumably from New Testament times onward, Oomius says the church is fed by Scripture alone.<sup>22</sup>

Oomius makes a point of saying that this distinction between God’s written and unwritten Word is not a “real” distinction or one of different parts, but of a single subject in its accidents. Describing the standard orthodox opinion on the matter R.A. Muller writes that this division is not one of a genus into its species, but it is “the distinction of a single subject, the Word, according to its incidental properties (*accidentia*) belonging to it at different times.”<sup>23</sup> Also like other Reformed orthodox, Oomius notes that this is not a present distinction, but one from the past which has since ceased.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> On the falling away of Seth’s descendants Oomius cites John Owen, *Theologoumena pantodapa, sive de natura, ortu, progressu, et studio verae theologiae libri sex quibus etiam origines & processus veri & falsi cultus religiosi, casus & instaurationes ecclesiae illustriores ab ipsis rerum primordiis, enarantur* (Oxford, 1661), II.iii, 147-148 and III.iii, 181.

<sup>22</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 3-11.

<sup>23</sup> Muller, *PRRD*, II, 204.

<sup>24</sup> See *idem* and Oomius, *Institutiones* 1.1, 12. Oomius cites Andreas Rivetus, *Isagoge seu introductio generalis ad Scripturam Sacram Veteris & Novi Testamenti: in qua ejus natura existens, autoritas, neccesitas, puritas, versionum & interpretationum rationes & modi idagentur; ajusque dignitas, perfectio & usus, adversus veteres & novos Scripturarum licifugas, asseritur; & de vero controversiarum fidei judice, fusius dispatur adjuncti sunt indices necessarii* (Leiden, 1627), iv.2, 866.

Next, in chapter two of the first division, Oomius discusses the written Word of God in general.<sup>25</sup> Here Oomius writes of various issues introductory to the approach of Scripture. He begins with the fact that though made up of many books, the Bible forms one book. They are also called holy books because of their origin (from God, or the Holy Spirit, and from holy men), their content (they deal with holy matters and they only teach that which is holy and pure), and their effect (they make us holy).<sup>26</sup> Most of the chapter consists of a discussion of how exactly the Scriptures have one main cause, or Author, God, and yet many human authors. Oomius writes that the human writers wrote through an extraordinary work of the Spirit. This is not to say, however, that the human authors wrote against their will, or, as the Socinians said of the Old Testament writers, that they did not always understand their own prophecies. Against this latter idea Oomius has numerous citations from such writers as Episcopius, Jerome, and Hoornbeeck.<sup>27</sup> This extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit included the fact that the human authors could be given the subject matter of their writing, the words, and even the manner or style of their writing. Most importantly, the Spirit led the authors in writing so they did not make mistakes. Socinians, Arminius, Episcopius, Castellio, and Grotius committed a damaging

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<sup>25</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 12-27.

<sup>26</sup> Oomius, citing *Synopsis purioris theologiae, disputationibus quinquaginta duabus comprehensa, ac conscripta* (Leiden, 1625), III.iii, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Simon Episcopius, *Opera theologica* (Amsterdam, 1650-1665), I, 26; Jerome, preface to *Comment. in Esa.*, V, p. 3; Johannes Hoornbeeck, introduction to *De convincendis et convertendis Judaeis et Gentilibus Libri VIII* (Leiden, 1655), 42.

error when they said that the authors did make mistakes, especially in the histories.<sup>28</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:19-21 are referred to in support of Oomius' position on this. If the Holy Scriptures do err in something, he finds, they are not the pure Word of God, but partly of God and partly of man, and the whole of the Scriptures is in danger of being untrue and their authority weakened. If a single error is recognized, who will believe that the Holy Spirit is the author?

Oomius concludes the chapter by giving the three ends to which God wanted the Holy Scriptures written: for the common, enduring, and perfect rule for faith and morals, for the blessed instruction of the church, and, by consequence, of eternal salvation, because it is the law of the Lord that converts the soul, and, finally, for the glory of God, the great Savior.<sup>29</sup>

The final two chapters of the first division of this work discuss first the Old, and then the New Testament. As a sort of introduction to both Testaments, Oomius defines the term "testament" at the beginning of chapter three, noting that it 1)witnesses to us the will of God—this is why the testaments are often called witnesses; 2)"*contesteert de verbonden en pacta, van aertsche geestelicke, ende hemelsche goederen oock van ceremonien;*" and 3)encompasses "*dat legaet des Hemelsche erfdeels 't welcke gemaect*

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<sup>28</sup> Oomius, citing Hoornbeeck, *Socianismus confutatus*, 3 vols. (Utrecht, 1650; Amsterdam, 1662 and 1664), Vol. 1, I.i.2, 2 and ff. and 8; Petrus de Witte, *Wederlegginge der Sociniaensche dwalinge* (Delft, 1655), I, 13.

<sup>29</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 26-27. By the first of these Oomius cites, Friedrich Spanheim, "Disputatio de fine Sacrae Scripturae," in *Disputationum theologicarum syntagma* (Geneva, 1652), I, 31-38.

*is den aengenomen Kinderen, in den Ouden Testamente bevestigt door de Typische ofte voorbeeldende, in het Nieuwe, door de ware ende reële doodt des Testateurs.”*<sup>30</sup>

Oomius continues, focusing on the Old Testament, by discussing the language of the Old Testament, including its origin, name, and the letters, points, and accents with which it is written, and the books of the Old Testament, including their number, various ways of dividing them, and the certainty of their purity.<sup>31</sup> In these discussions careful explanations of various disagreements among scholars surrounding these matters are included. Another matter discussed is the addition or subtraction of books from the canonical thirty-nine, as the Reformed divide the books. Of those who subtract books Oomius mentions the Samaritans, Sadducees, and the Talmudists of the Jews. Of those who add books Oomius refers to the apocryphal books counted as canonical by the Council of Trent in 1546. To refute the addition of these books Oomius lists the marks of a writing of the Old Testament: It must be 1) written by a prophet, driven by God’s Spirit, 2) written in Hebrew, 3) recognized by the Jewish Church as canonical, and 4) in no part against the truth and divine teaching in the canonical books.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 28. By the first of these Oomius cites Rivetus, *Isagoge*, xxix.9-10, 1032. By the third he cites Ambrosius, *de Cain & Abel*, I.vii, in *Opera*, Vol. 4, 123.

<sup>31</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 28-56.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-67. Since discussion of this sort is not the goal of his work, Oomius points the reader to some other writers who deal more thoroughly with this subject: Daniel Chamierus, *Panstratiae Catholicae, sive Controversiarum de Religione adversus Pontificios corpus, tomis quatuor distributum* (Geneva, 1626), Vol. 1, V; Rivetus, *Isagoge*, vii, 879; *idem*, *Cathol. Orthod.*, I.xiii, in *Opera*, Vol. 3, 83-98; Martin Chemnitz, *Examinis Concilii Tridentini* (Frankfurt, 1566), I, 44 and ff.; Joannes(?) Molinaeus, *Nieuw. des Pausdoms*, I.lx and ff., 187-203; *idem*, *En Schildt des Geloofs*, iii.1, 3 and ff.; Thomas Morton, *Apologiae Catholicae* (London, 1605), Part II, I.i and ff., 1-29; Spanheim, *Disputat. Theol.*, II.vi and ff., 121-293; Pieter Cabeljau, *Catholiick memory-boeck der gereformeerde, gestelt tegen het roomsch-memory-boeck der paus-gesinde...* (Leiden, 1661), I.i, 3-26; Andreas Lansman, *Apostasia Romana, ofte Roomsche afval, dat is historie der voornaamste paapsche dwaalingen, in haar afwijkinge, voortgang en vast-stelling*

The chapter on the New Testament Scriptures opens with a brief discussion of the word “new.”<sup>33</sup> This Testament is new, writes Oomius, because it contains new things, new histories, but it is also new in time—it comes after the Old. It explains figures and shadows from the Old—the Old is the foundation of the New and the New is the fulfillment of the Old. Like the previous chapter, some space is spent on the language of the New Testament, number and divisions of the book, as well as the certainty of their purity as received. Included in this discussion here too are discussions of disagreements among scholars surrounding these matters. As with the Old Testament, some have thrown out New Testament books or doubted the authority of the books the church has accepted. Oomius mentions the Ebion-evangelists, Cerinthus, Marcion, Valentius, the Alogians, Manicheans, Cerdo, and Arius. Just as great a mistake is the addition of books like the Letter to King Abgarus, or the Letter of Mary. Finally Augustine is cited as distinguishing three marks to help determine the canonical books: 1) the oldest Fathers should witness to them, 2) the style must match that of the other books, and 3) in meaning and doctrine they should not differ from the canonical books.<sup>34</sup>

### 5.3 The Necessity, Divinity, Authority and Excellence of Scripture

This second major division of the doctrine of Scripture is especially important in Oomius’ overall aim—he states specifically that his discussion here will provide the

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*door alle de eeuwen der Christelijke kerke* (Amsterdam, 1665), ii, 27-36; Alting, *Theologia historica*, II, 93-94, 97, 99-100, 109-110; Hottingerus, *Thesaurus philologicus*, II.ii.1, 516-524.

<sup>33</sup> On the New Testament see *Institutiones* 1.1, 68-83.

<sup>34</sup> Oomius, citing Augustine, *contra faustum*, XXII.

foundation for the practice of the duties which will be discussed later in the book.<sup>35</sup>

Oomius writes here about the necessity, divinity, divine authority, and excellence of the Holy Scriptures. Under the heading of “excellence” Oomius discusses the attributes or properties of Scripture. He seems to include excellence itself as a property of Scripture, but then Oomius goes on to show four ways in which Scripture’s excellence is shown: in its perfection, perspicuity, efficacy, and divine power. Depending on how one looks at it, Oomius discusses one property (excellence, with the others included as subcategories under it), four (perfection, perspicuity, efficacy, and divine power all as further elaboration of Scripture’s excellence), or five (the four just mentioned, plus excellence).

In a certain sense, everything in this section—including necessity, divinity, and divine authority—might be considered a property of Scripture, although Oomius does not use the term “property” or “attribute.” This would give Oomius eight properties total. The reason this is a bit difficult to precisely determine is not strange given the state of the discussion among the Protestant orthodox at this time. There really was no standard number or even exact designation of properties of Scripture. Polanus, Scharpius, Van Rijssen, and Turretin have relatively few attributes—three or four—though the latter two consider what others call attributes without formally calling them properties or attributes. Burmann gives six, Leigh seven, and Van Mastricht, eight. More often than not, the differences among the Reformed orthodox on the attributes of Scripture are not so much in content, but in classification, enumeration, and organization.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 83.

<sup>36</sup> On this issue see Muller, *PRRD*, II, 317-318.

**Necessity (*Noodtsaecklickheyt*).** Though, writes Oomius, God could have used his own voice to reveal his Word to his people as he did earlier on in the history of the world, and though he could have chosen to use angels or special outpouring of his Spirit, now the Bible is necessary.<sup>37</sup> This necessity can be shown from the witness of Jude 3, the biblical commands to write (both general and particular), the biblical commands to search and read the Scriptures, an examination of the goal to which God has ordained the Scriptures, and the weaknesses and dangers the Lord wants to prevent, such as our forgetfulness, the deceptions of the devil, and the evil of heretics and fanatics. Oomius points out that neither the Roman Catholic writers or the Libertines recognize the necessity of Scripture. The Catholics think of the Bible more as for the church's well-being, than as necessary, and they add next to it their unwritten tradition where they believe divine truth is preserved.<sup>38</sup> The Libertines, Enthusiasts, and Quakers speak of the leading of the light of the Spirit. This results in a setting aside of the Scriptures—pointing to 2 Peter 1:9 they tend to say that now that the clear knowledge of Christ and the truth of the gospel has come, the Scriptures are for children in the faith and the Spirit for adults. In response Oomius writes that he does not deny the inward light of the Spirit, but it should never be disconnected from the Word. The result of the Enthusiasts' position is very much like that of the pope who says he is led by the same Spirit. In the final section of this chapter Oomius writes that the reader can see how this doctrine

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<sup>37</sup> Citing William Whitaker, *Disputatio de sacra Scriptura* (Cambridge, 1588), ii.

<sup>38</sup> Oomius, citing Robert Bellarmine, *De controversia prima fidei christianae, quae est de verbo Dei scripto et non scripto quatuor libris comprehensa / cum notis & animadversionibus Danielis Tileni Silesii* (Sedan, 1618), IV.iv and xii; Thomas Morton, *Apologiae Catholicae, in qua paradoxa, haereses,*



works in the practice in the following sections of the book: Division 3, Section 1, paragraph 6; Section 4, Chapter 1, Section 3, paragraph 1, letter 1; Chapter 2, Section 3, paragraph 1, letter a; Division 5, Chapter 1, Section 5, paragraph 1, letter a; and Chapter 4, Section 3, paragraph 2, letter a.<sup>39</sup>

**Divinity (*Goddelijkheid*).** In this section Oomius gives some proof of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures against those who deny it or put into doubt. This latter can be a problem even for Christians through the temptations of the devil—for this reason various theologians have dealt with this issue in their practical writings.<sup>40</sup> Oomius writes that since the unbelievers will not be convinced with the most powerful proof of the divinity of Scripture—the testimony of the Holy Spirit—other proofs must be brought before them.<sup>41</sup> First, he mentions some general marks given by Arrianus to determine whether human histories are true: 1)The writers must be trustworthy; 2)The writers must have been present at the things of which they speak; 3)There must not be found any reason why they would write other things than that which happened.<sup>42</sup> These marks and others are more readily found in sacred history than in human history, finds Oomius.

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*blasphemiae, scelera, quae Iesuitae, et Pontificij alij Protestantibus impingunt, ferè omnia, ex ipsorum Pontificiorum testimonijs apertis diluuntur* (London, 1605), part 2, I.xxxiii, 157-161 and xxxv, 165.

<sup>39</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 84-92.

<sup>40</sup> Oomius mentions the following: William Perkins, *A case of conscience...* (London, 1595), II.iii, 28; John Downname, *The Christian Warfare*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 1604), Part 1, II.xlxxii, 161 and ff.; Samuel Hieron, *The dignitie of the Scripture together with the indignity which the unthankfull world offereth thereunto* (Cambridge, 1607), on Hosea 8:12, sermon 2, p. 83; Baluin., *Cas. Conscient.*, II.i.3, 50; Pierre Ravanel, *Bibliotheca sacra, seu, Thesaurus Scripturae canonicae amplissimus...* (Geneva, 1650), Part 2, *in voce Scriptura*, 556.

<sup>41</sup> Citing, *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, II.xii, 12-17.

<sup>42</sup> Citing, Flavius Arrianus, preface to *De expeditione sive rebus gestis Alexandri Macedonum regis libri*.

Some of the writers were kings or princes, or at least of noble blood. All were upright and holy men. The writers also were witnesses to what they wrote. None sought worldly glory—quite the opposite, they were persecuted, crucified, and killed in this life. There is finally a beautiful similarity in what the writers taught and described, although they wrote in various times, places, and styles—this is proof that God directed them.<sup>43</sup>

More particular proofs of the divinity of Scripture can also be given. First Oomius mentions that the perfection of the Christian religion found in the books of the Bible is proof of the Bible's divinity: they reveal the only true God, how man can be reconciled to him, and the duties of people towards God and their neighbors. Oomius next gives a variety of marks that show the divinity of the Scriptures: miracles, its contents (such as time and order of creation, the Trinity, dispensation of God's grace, the excellence of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, how prophecies came true, the excellence of the spiritual promises to those who believe in Christ), its style and manner (with great simplicity and clarity it speaks of the deep wisdom of God), and its great antiquity.<sup>44</sup>

Oomius continues by emphasizing that though these reasons should be enough to combat opponents, they are not enough to convince someone to believe that the Scriptures are God's Word.<sup>45</sup> Without the witness of God's Spirit, all these other reasons are insufficient—this is clear because many wise and learned people in the world do not

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<sup>43</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 94-100.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 101-113.

<sup>45</sup> Citing, Downname, *The Christian Warfare*, Part 1, II.xxiii, 169-171.

believe the Scriptures. Just as natural light of nature is necessary to understand natural things, supernatural light is necessary to believe.<sup>46</sup> To those who deny the divinity of the Scriptures Oomius writes that he can do no better than to strongly defend it and take away any prejudices and doubts brought by opponents.<sup>47</sup> This teaching will be brought to the practice in the following sections of the book: Division IV, Chapter 1, Section 3, paragraph 1, letter b; Division V, Chapter 1, Section 5, paragraph 1, letter b; Chapter 4, Section 3, paragraph 1, letters a and b.<sup>48</sup>

**Divine Authority (*Goddelicke Autoriteyt*).** The chapter on the divine authority of Scripture begins with a discussion of the distinction between the authentication of history and the authentication of rule or command (“*Authentie der Historie*,” and “*Authentie van Regel, ofte Gebodt*”).<sup>49</sup> The bulk of the discussion under this heading, however, is in answer to the question, “How far does the authority of Scripture reach?” Oomius makes twelve major points in answer to this question. First, the authority is equally great throughout the Bible.<sup>50</sup> Along with other reasons given for this conclusion, 2 Timothy 3:16 is the primary biblical text cited. Numerous evidences to the contrary of

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<sup>46</sup> Oomius, citing Reinier Vogelsang(h), *Oratio de exercitatione theologica* (1656), IV.12, 69.

<sup>47</sup> Citing Philippe Mornaeus, *De veritate religionis christianae liber: adversus atheos epicureos, ethnicos, judaeos, mahumedistas, et caeteros infideles...* (Herborn, 1632), xxiv, p. 370, xxv, p. 398, and xxvi, p. 402 and ff.; Perkins, *A case of conscience*, II.iii.7, 41-63.

<sup>48</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 116-119.

<sup>49</sup> Oomius, citing Gisbertus Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum* (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1648-1669), Vol. 2, 30-31; Andreas Essenius, *Systema theologiae dogmaticae* (Utrecht, 1659), I, *Disp. de Script.*, xvii, 25.

<sup>50</sup> Oomius, quoting Nethenus, *Disp. de princip. theol. continuat.*, II, xviii. Nethenus is referred to throughout Oomius’ discussion on the extent of the Bible’s authority.

this point are mentioned and refuted. Second, the Scriptures' authority extends to the Hebrew and Greek text. Among various reasons given are: they are brought to us by God's provision; the church Fathers and even the papacy recognizes the authenticity of these texts, as do the teachers at Sorbonne.<sup>51</sup> Third, translated texts have authority with respect to the contents, but not the words themselves or the manner of speaking.<sup>52</sup> With the Scriptures, this is true of the texts of all editions and languages, including that of the Septuagint and the Vulgate. Oomius spends some time and great detail proving his case regarding the Vulgate, referring to the Council of Trent and various papal decisions.<sup>53</sup>

Fourth, the authority of the Scriptures does not extend to everything found in our Bible. For example, most titles of books, the present chapter and verse divisions, the marginal notes (called "*Keri*" and "*Ketib*"), and the order of the books. Also, it does not extend to such things as the catechism, renditions of Psalms, formularies, and prayers which were bound with the Bibles in Oomius' day. Fifth, Oomius deals with the fact that not all people acknowledge the authenticity of the Old and New Testaments: Cerdo, Marcion, the Gnostics, and Manes all had problems with the Old Testament; others similarly questioned the authenticity of the New. The Anabaptists, Socinians, and Remonstrants of Oomius' day are all mentioned under this point as well.

Sixth, the authority of the Scriptures not only extends to theological and supernatural matters, but also the following types of matters: philosophical, physical,

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<sup>51</sup> On the papacy's recognition of the authority Oomius cites Petrus Suavis Polanus, *Historiae Concilii Tridentini, libri octo*, ed. nova (Leiden, 1622), II, p. m. 136.

<sup>52</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*, Vol. 5, probl. xi, pp. 22-23 and probl. xv, pp. 33-34.

pneumatical, metaphysical, mathematical, ethical, economical, political, topological, chronological, prosopological, and mechanical.<sup>54</sup> Here Oomius makes a distinction between how Scripture deals with natural things: either *ex professo*, or *incidenter*.<sup>55</sup> The first he describes as dealing with things with purpose or incidentally (“*met opset, of incidenter*”), the second as dealing with things suddenly or by opportunity (“*by inval en seeckere gelegtheydt*”). Christian philosophers and theologians throughout history, such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Augustine, Ambrose, and Chrysostom, have always agreed with this, assures Oomius. Various new ways of thinking about Scripture from science and among the Cartesians, such as saying that the Scriptures often describe things as they appear, and not as they are, are offensive, dangerous, and will not be found among Reformed theologians. Oomius lists a number of Reformed who have set themselves up against this kind of thinking: Martinus Schoock, Jacobus de Bois, Petrus van Mastricht, Matthias Nethenus, Johannes Beusekom, Arnoldus Niepoort, and Henricus Troy (the last three defended disputations under Essenius). Oomius then proceeds to give some of his own reasons of defense against the new ideas about Scripture. The reason he does this, he states, is to defend the orthodox Reformed faith in the Dutch language since these new ideas have also been presented in the Dutch language. Oomius reminds the reader that part of the aim of his work is to build a sure foundation for godliness and the fear of God

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<sup>53</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 120-146.

<sup>54</sup> Oomius, quoting Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*, Vol. 1, 39.

<sup>55</sup> Citing Martinus Schoock, *De scepticismo libri IV...* (Groningen, 1652), IV, 399-401.

in the common language of the people.<sup>56</sup> As Oomius explained in his *Dissertatie*, he believes the defense of the Reformed faith must occur not only in Latin, but also in Dutch precisely for the reason that unsound ideas are being presented in Dutch and thus reaching those who do not know Latin.

Seventh, though we believe in the authority of the Word of God it must be established that the things belonging to the ceremonial law have passed away. Eighth, the words, advice, and deeds of the devil, his angels, and the ungodly are not a rule of authority for God's church.<sup>57</sup> Ninth, the words of believers now are not a fast rule for the believers' life, and not all in the Bible are either: for example, the words of Job's friends when they went with him—they were punished for not speaking rightly.<sup>58</sup> Tenth, not all the words and deeds of prophets and apostles in the Bible are a rule for our life: they all—Moses, Abraham, David—showed their weaknesses and mistakes. Eleventh, the words of those who wrote the holy books, and of others that they, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit included in Scripture for the teaching and edification of the church, are a rule for our life. Twelfth, the examples of various people that are in conformity to God's law are authentic and should be followed by us.<sup>59</sup>

After asking how far the authority of the Scriptures extends, Oomius discusses that on which this authority depends. The papal opinion makes this a necessary point of

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<sup>56</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 146-183.

<sup>57</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*, Vol. 1, 38; Nethenus, *Disp. de princip. theol. continuat.*, VII.xxxvii.

<sup>58</sup> On this general point Oomius cites, *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*, Vol. 1, 38; Nethenus, *Disp. de princip. theol. continuat.*, VII.xxxviii.

<sup>59</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 184-191.

discussion. The church, however, does not give the Scriptures their authority—neither does any other authority. That is like saying the light of the sun comes from the eyes that see it. A final topic of discussion for Oomius is how others recognize the authority of the Holy Scriptures. This recognition comes from the Holy Spirit—though the witness of the church is a wonderful means, it does not give certainty on this matter. God, through the inner testimony of the Spirit, must touch a person's heart. Without this movement and work of the Spirit the witness of the church is completely useless. This inward testimony, Oomius points out, is quite different from that of which the Enthusiasts and Libertines speak.<sup>60</sup>

**Excellence (*Voortreffelickhey*t).** Here Oomius shows the outstanding excellence of the Scripture, and, related to this, he deals with the style and eloquence of the biblical authors. As an introduction to this attribute Oomius notes that the Lord speaks of this in the Bible when the Word is called such things as a royal law, a pearl of great worth, gold, and silver. The excellence and worth of the Holy Scriptures, maintains Oomius, can be seen especially in five ways. First and most simply, it is seen in the primary author, God.<sup>61</sup> Second, this is seen in the various excellent and holy men, prophets and apostles through which God proclaimed his Word. This category includes God's Son, and God himself—for example in Paradise. Third, the excellence is seen in the contents, which are divine and spiritual and deal with God and Christ and godly things. Fourth, the excellence of the Bible is evident in the style in which it is written. Fifth, the excellence

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 191-203.

<sup>61</sup> Oomius, citing Samuel Hieron, *The dignitie of the Scripture together with the indignity which the unthankfull world offereth thereunto* (Cambridge, 1607), on Hosea 8:12, sermon 1, p. 74.

is seen in Scripture's goal, which is the conversion of people and their salvation. Oomius goes into greatest detail in his fourth category, on the style of the Scriptures. Here he notes that there is a two-fold eloquence. The first is the excellent use of words which also can be seen in various eloquent heathen writers. The second eloquence relates to the fact that the Scriptures are a fountain of wisdom. Oomius points out particular examples of eloquence in the Bible: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job (one will never find a better disputation than the book of Job, notes Oomius), the Psalms, Solomon's writings, Peter's letters, and Paul's. Even when the eloquence is not so evident, there is a manly and distinguished language, and it is clear that the writers could raise their style at any time when necessary. Oomius is amazed that combined with the eloquence of Scripture is a kind of simplicity with great clarity and power. These things are rarely found together in the same writing.<sup>62</sup>

Oomius discusses the attribute of perfection (*"volmaecktheyt"*) with the respect to the individual parts which make up Scripture as well as with respect to the teaching contained in Scripture. As for the parts which make up Scripture—Oomius is referring to the various books as well as the contents of the books—no part is missing. Though some try to argue this, Oomius argues in detail how neither Christians, nor Jews, nor Muslims could have either left out parts of the Bible or falsified parts that currently exist. In this context God's special providence, which is certainly not less concerned with the Bible than nature, must be remembered—he made sure the Bible was properly preserved over time for the good of his church. The Bible is also perfect with respect to its teaching.

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<sup>62</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 203-224.



This means primarily three things. First, as the Old and New Testaments testify, the Holy Scriptures contain “wholly and perfectly all the articles belonging to the faith and Christian life that are necessary for salvation.”<sup>63</sup> Second, not only is the doctrine of salvation found in the Bible, but it is presented with words that are full and overflowing with power and meaning—innumerable treasures can be found even in the smallest points and places. Third, the doctrine of salvation is present equally purely everywhere in the Bible—no errors are mixed in anywhere. Though the Scriptures were written in different times and places there is such a harmony that not even the least contradiction exists in it.<sup>64</sup>

This attribute of clarity (“*klaerheyt*”) is discussed both with respect to Scripture itself, as well as with respect to us. With respect to Scripture itself there is clarity or perspicuity of both faith and morals necessary for eternal life—both the articles of faith and the style and manner in which they are presented evidence this.<sup>65</sup> This is not to say that nothing in the Bible requires explanation. Some places are more difficult than others—God wishes to test our understanding; we will only know in part in this life; God has left some things dark so we long for the coming life; God wants some to be teachers and some disciples—but all things necessary for salvation are clear. As for the clarity of the Scriptures with respect to us, while many things in the Bible can be understood by the natural man (heathen philosophers have used things from the Scriptures), without a

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 225-248.

<sup>65</sup> Oomius, citing Augustine, *De doctrina christiana.*, II.ix.

special grace and inward light of the Holy Spirit, natural man will not correctly understand the Bible. For example, the literal sense can be understood, but not the spiritual sense, which contains the inner power of the Scriptures existing in a knowledge of the practice. This is something that is not difficult to prove against the Remonstrants and the Socinians. The spiritual man understands in a much deeper way, but with distinction. First, there was less understanding in the Old Testament than in the New, and second, children must be distinguished from youth and adults in the faith. In the Christian life we try to understand more and better.<sup>66</sup>

Efficacy (“*grootte gebruyck*”) is the third way Oomius says he is showing the excellence of the Bible. The Apostle says that Scripture is useful both for teaching people true doctrine as well as for teaching them how to refute the error of false teachings. Man’s will also needs to be corrected from evil and error and so Scripture is useful too to lead to a godly and righteous life—the knowledge of Scripture would be dry and unfruitful if it did not lead to deeds.<sup>67</sup>

Divine Power (“*goddelicke kragt*”) is the fourth way the excellence is shown. The Scriptures themselves show the power of the Word by comparing it to many things, such as water, a seed, and especially, a double-edged sword to not only defend one from an enemy attack, but also to vanquish an enemy. This power is not in the Word itself, but in the working and power of the Spirit. Oomius distinguishes the power of the Word with respect to the unregenerate and the already saved. For those not saved, the Word

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<sup>66</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 248-263.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 264-269.

has the power to regenerate—there are numerous examples of this in the Bible and also throughout the history of the church, from the older history to more recent history. This power also extends to those already saved since they can daily feel the power of God's Word to instruct, sanctify, build up, pick them up when they fall, and to comfort.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 269-291.

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## Chapter 6

### Duties with Regard to Holy Scripture

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After the initial two divisions of Oomius' doctrine of Scripture dealing with the explanation and defense of the doctrine, the remainder of *Institutiones 1.1* handles the main aim of Oomius in this work and all of his *Instructions*: the practice of the doctrine. The first—quite brief—of five major divisions of the work on the *plighen* to be practiced deals with those to be practiced with respect to God and others. Oomius divides the rest of his discussion on the practice of the doctrine of Scripture into four sections. The first two of these he describes as dealing with the general duties to be practiced with respect to the Holy Scriptures, both internal and external. The last two of these deal with particular duties to be practiced—the duties of theologians are emphasized in one section, and some other particular duties are examined in the last section. Thus, though Oomius divides his discussion of the practice of the doctrine into five divisions, there are really just three major divisions of subject matter. It may be helpful to visually note below the basic division of three according to subject matter.<sup>1</sup> Included are significant subsections of Division 5.

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<sup>1</sup> Thus divisions 3-7 of *Institutiones 1.1* will be analyzed in sections 4.3-4.7 of the dissertation.

**The Duties to be Practiced with Respect to Holy Scripture:**

- I. Duties with Respect to God and Others (Division 3)
- II. General Duties
  - A. Internal (Division 4)
  - B. External (Division 5)
    - 1. Alone (5.1)
    - 2. With Others (5.2-5.6)
      - a. In Public (5.2-5.5)
      - b. In Private (5.6)
- III. Particular Duties
  - A. Of Theologians (Division 6)
  - B. Other Particular Duties (Division 7)

The sheer massiveness of what Oomius has written should not escape the reader. Petrus Van Mastricht, one of the few other theologians of the time who wrote a thorough explanation, defense, as well as practical implications of the doctrine of Scripture wrote just over seven 24 cm-height pages on the practice of the doctrine of Scripture in his system of doctrine, the *Theoretico-practica theologia*.<sup>2</sup> Oomius wrote over 700 quarto pages on the same topic. This translates to roughly 6400-6500 words on the topic by Van Mastricht compared to roughly 175,000 by Oomius.

It might also be added that though Van Mastricht perhaps lays out his non-practical sections of the doctrine more neatly than Oomius when he distinguishes clearly between his exegetical, doctrinal, and polemical parts (while Oomius lumps them all together), the practical section of Oomius' doctrine of Scripture is much more clearly and carefully organized than that of Van Mastricht. Van Mastricht's structure is simply a series of numbered paragraphs, whereas Oomius', as seen above, is more detailed.

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<sup>2</sup> See Petrus Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, Vol. 1 (Utrecht, 1699), I.ii, pp. 39-47.

Though, as we will note below, Van Mastricht's uses of Scripture parallel a number of those of Oomius they are simply listed and not organized, for example, as general duties or special, or as external or internal.

When comparing overall what Oomius does in his doctrine of Scripture with another contemporary pastor and theologian who wrote theology with similar concerns just a bit later than Oomius the same thing can be observed. In Volume 1, Chapter 2 of the doctrinal system of Wilhelmus à Brakel, the *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Brakel deals with the Word of God by explaining the doctrine of Scripture, defending it, and briefly laying out the practice of the doctrine. Brakel suggests some obligations that believers have towards Scripture and he gives guidelines for reading Scripture, but again, like Van Mastricht there is no great level of detail or organization, just a listing of a couple of ideas related to the practice.<sup>3</sup> While the theology of these men is not radically different from one another, the size and level of organization of the practical section is simply much greater in Oomius. Not only in size, but also in structure and layout Oomius' unique goal of bringing the doctrine into the practice becomes very clear.

## 6.1 Duties Toward God and Others

The first division, section three of *Institutiones* 1.1, is by far the shortest—it deals with the practice of the doctrine with respect to God and others. Our practice with respect to God involves praising God's benevolence and mercy, with a thankful disposition, throughout our whole life, for the fact that he has given us his excellent word.

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<sup>3</sup> Wilhelmus à Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: D. Donner, 1881), II.xl-xlv.

Oomius calls people to be deeply impressed with what a great thing it was that the Creator came from his heavenly throne to speak to such small people who crawl around here on the earth. Not only did God speak, but he left people his written Word. The very fact that God gave people his Word as well as its wonderful preservation throughout the ages calls for great praise of God. Beyond this, God's Word is honored in us when we not only praise him and speak holy things, but when we go beyond that and practice them.<sup>4</sup>

In this section duties with respect to others are also outlined—there are mainly two, writes Oomius. Both have a strongly evangelistic flavor. First, he writes, “we must try to bring, as far as it is possible for us, others to this rich and wonderful treasure of God's word, and tell them of all the practical uses and of all the comfort which we have found in it.”<sup>5</sup> Second, “according to the opportunity of our calling and gifts,” we must share the light of God's Word with others through our life and our teaching.<sup>6</sup> The Word of God does not dwell in us richly for nothing, but so that we can teach others.

## 6.2 Internal Duties

The first of the two divisions dealing with the general duties to be practiced for this doctrine focus on the internal duties of believers. Four major internal duties are discussed in the chapters of this section. In general, Oomius organizes his discussion of

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<sup>4</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, pp. 292-302.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

each duty as follows: 1) showing with examples from the Bible and church history that the particular duty is one Christians are called to practice, 2) indicating that many, both inside and outside the Reformed churches, fail to practice this duty, and 3) suggesting ways in which Christians can be persuaded to practice the duty.

### 6.2.1 Esteem for and Heartfelt Love of God's Word

In this first chapter of this section Oomius discusses, with various examples from the Bible and church history, that we are to esteem and love God's Word. This corresponds with Van Mastricht's second of the ten uses of Scripture he gives: "*Secundus usus est de amore verbi divini.*"<sup>7</sup> In this second use Van Mastricht gives seven reasons why Christians should love God's Word and he also discusses ways in which people ought to show their love for God's Word. Though more thoroughly, Oomius does the same in his first chapter on this topic. That God's children should regard his Word highly is not a surprise, according to Oomius, because they have been spiritually enlightened, regenerate, touched by the same Spirit through which the Word was given, and thus they are drawn to God's Word just as surely as infants are drawn to their mother's milk. Christians, unlike Jews and Muslims, do not show their esteem with outward things like binding Bibles with gold or silver.<sup>8</sup> Jews say that no one with

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<sup>7</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, sections 63-66, pp. 40-41.

<sup>8</sup> Oomius, citing Jerome, *De virginit. servand. ad eustoch.*, I, p. 146; *idem*, preface to *Libr. Job*, III, p. 24; Crysosthom, *In Joan.*, Hom. III.



unwashed hands may touch the Bible and want people to kiss it all the time—Muslims do similar things with the Koran too (here Oomius points his reader to his book on Islam).<sup>9</sup>

God's children show their esteem and love in other ways.<sup>10</sup> For example, they elevate God's Word above all other books, all other things, and even above their life itself. Here Oomius gives the example of Wessel Gansfort who was in the service of Pope Sixtus IV for sixteen years.<sup>11</sup> Gansfort was told by the pope that he could ask for whatever he wanted. Rather than asking for a bishopric or other position of power and wealth, Gansfort, to the pope's surprise, asked for a Greek and Hebrew Bible from the Vatican Library—thus God's Word was worth more to Gansfort than any treasure of this world.<sup>12</sup> Christian martyrs have shown that the Word was worth more to them than even their lives. As further examples of the type of esteem Christians have for the Bible Oomius shows that they love what is written in it: they read the Bible; they listen to it explained in churches or in private homes; they meditate on the Scriptures; they often speak of and out of the Scriptures; they make the Scriptures a rule for their life. Christians also show their esteem for God's Word by their love and esteem for those who preach and proclaim the Word.

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<sup>9</sup> *Het geopende en wederleyde muhammedisdome of turckdom* (Amsterdam: W. van Beaumont, 1663).

<sup>10</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 304-315.

<sup>11</sup> Citing Albert Hardenberg, *Vita Wesseli Groningensis conscripta ab A.H...., sed mutila*, in *Opera quae inveniri potuerunt omnia...*, by Wessel Gansfort (Groningen, 1614).

<sup>12</sup> Oomius, citing Jacobus Trigland, *Kerkelycke geschiedenissen...* (Leiden, 1650), III, p. 119.

A second major topic discussed under this heading is the reality that many, both within and outside the Reformed churches, do not esteem the Scriptures.<sup>13</sup> Van Mastricht does not include a topic like this in his discussion of love of God's Word, though his third use of the doctrine of Scripture is a list of things (such as outright hatred of God's Word and neglect of it) that go against love of God's Word.<sup>14</sup> Oomius begins his discussion of this topic by indicating that outside the Reformed churches both atheists as well as papists not only do not esteem God's Word, but they despise it. Their behavior both towards the Word of God as well as to those who love it displays this. As an example of the latter, Oomius notes that they call the Reformed "*atramentales theologi*" ("ink theologians"), word-servants, "*Verbi-Deisten*," and biblicists.<sup>15</sup> Also in Reformed churches Oomius finds those who hate and despise the Word of God. Some out rightly show their hatred for it—and this happens more and more as the end of the world draws near, observes Oomius. Others may proclaim their love for the Word, but they show in their practice how little they actually love it—for example, they have money to buy all sorts of unnecessary things, but they do not have enough money to buy a Bible.

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<sup>13</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 315-328.

<sup>14</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, section 67, p. 42.

<sup>15</sup> Citing Johan Eck, *De script. sub. sinem.* in *Enchiridion locorum communium aduersus Lutheranos* (Cologne, 1526); Johannes Decumanus, *Dialogus de colloquio ratisbonensi* (Mainz, 1603), pp. 1-3; Albertus Pighius, *Hierarchiae ecclesiasticae assertio* (Cologne, 1538), I.ii; Henri Lancelot, *Pharos Apostolica seu pseudo-ministerium pseudo-reformantium, hoc est de illegitima praetensa et subrepticia missione seu vocatione ministrorum pseudo-reformatae Ecclesiae lutheranorum, zwinglianorum, anabaptistarum, calvinistarum...* (Antwerp, 1611), xiv, pp. 107 and ff.

Next, and finally under this duty, Oomius gives ways in which people can be moved to love God's Word and to esteem it highly.<sup>16</sup> The main points of the second division of the doctrine of Scripture come into play here, as Oomius promised they would. Van Mastricht also briefly gives the means to practice the love of Scripture, but he does not name means that correspond with anything in his doctrinal section.<sup>17</sup> Oomius does parallel what he does in the doctrinal section and asks, how could one not help but love something that is necessary, divine, of divine authority, and excellent? Each of these points is discussed. Looking to ourselves, we cannot expect a blessing or even assurance that we are reborn without high esteem of the Bible. Furthermore we cannot be sure that we will love the Lord rightly—*qui regem amat, legem amat* ("who loves the king, loves his law")—without his Word. He who does not love God's law, does not love God, but he who does love his law, loves the Lord.

### 6.2.2 Spiritual Longing and Desire for God's Word

This develops in the heart of the true believer out of the above—it can be seen especially in King David in Psalm 27:4 as well as in other places in Scripture. Peter in 1 Peter 2:2 describes the believer as wanting unfalsified milk like a newborn child.<sup>18</sup> With respect to God's Word this means that we should want it at once and without delay, just as babies immediately desire the mother's breasts after birth. So too, as babies want their food so much that they make it difficult for the mother, so we should want it

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<sup>16</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 328-336.

<sup>17</sup> See Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, section 66, p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 336-340.

“*vyerighlick*” (“ardently”). It should overtake the Christian’s entire soul (Psalm 42:1). It should also mean that we want it continually—a child always wants food; after a short rest it wants mother’s breast again. Thus it is not enough for a believer to only now and again suck on the breasts of comfort, but he must do so daily and continually. This should mean too that there is nothing the believer wants more or esteems or loves more than God’s Word. The cause of this desire for the Word is the working of the Holy Spirit in the regenerate—just as it is in the very nature of a newborn baby to want her mother’s breasts, through the Spirit it is in the very nature of a believer to desire and love God’s Word.<sup>19</sup>

Oomius finds that it is clear from this how small the number of newborn babies in the church is.<sup>20</sup> Many are dead in their desire and have no longing for the Word of God. Where are those who cry out for God? Many, notes Oomius, don’t even take the trouble to leave their homes to hear the minister and be instructed by him. The visit of a friend, a little rain, the slightest wind prevent them. While in Acts 13:42 the believers prayed for the preachers to preach, Oomius finds that in his day the preachers are praying for listeners to hear. Of those who are in the church there are those whose thoughts are outside it: in the store, in the barn, on the land, or a hundred miles over the sea.

As in the previous section Oomius concludes with ways to inspire people to be moved to this general duty to be practiced.<sup>21</sup> Looking to God’s Word first, the necessity,

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<sup>19</sup> Oomius, citing Caspar Streso, *Commentarius practicus in Actorum Apostolicorum per Lucam...* (Amsterdam, 1669), VIII.xcv, p. 293.

<sup>20</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 341-342.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 342-348.

divinity, authority, and excellence of it are again mentioned, this time as reasons to long for God's Word. Looking to ourselves, Oomius notes that an attraction to the Word is sure proof that we are newborn children in Christ, while a lack of desire for God's Word shows a lack of desire for God himself. The desire for God's Word is linked with a desire for God's church—"one cannot be an upright child of the church if he has a distaste for and does not desire the breasts of the church."<sup>22</sup> Oomius further writes in concluding this section that just some desire is not enough—without a strong or burning desire for the Word of God we do not please God and the reading and hearing of God's Word do us no good.

### 6.2.3 Spiritual Enjoyment in God's Word<sup>23</sup>

Just as hungry people get pleasure from eating, so too believers receive pleasure from God's Word.<sup>24</sup> David witnesses to this—he received all his enjoyment in God's law; he had continuing enjoyment in it; and he had enjoyment in not some, but in all God's commands. The apostle Paul witnesses the same thing. Believers receive spiritual enjoyment in God's Word through a variety of means: by reading, hearing, thinking about, and speaking God's Word; by discovering what the law says; by practicing God's law and Word.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2, 347, citing Streso, *Comm. pract. in Act. Apostol.*, VIII, xcv, p. 293.

<sup>23</sup> The Dutch word translated "enjoyment" is "vermaeck."

<sup>24</sup> Oomius, citing Jeremiah Dyke, *Reghte eetinge en verteeringe des woordts*, 275 and 299.

<sup>25</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 348-351. On contemplating, speaking, and practicing God's Word Oomius cites Martin Bucer, *S. Psalmorum libri quinque ad ebraicam veritatem versi, et familiari explanatione elucidati* (Argentorati, 1529), Psalm 1, p. 5.

Similar to his development of thought in the previous sections, Oomius turns next to discuss the fact that there are many who find their enjoyment in other things, and the chapter concludes with reasons for spiritual enjoyment in the Scriptures.<sup>26</sup> With respect to God, here we again see reasons given based on the necessity, divinity, authority, and excellence of Scripture, the latter applying here particularly. With respect to ourselves we display that we are truly God's children by gaining our enjoyment from it, and if we receive all our enjoyment in God's law he will make us walk on the path of his commands.<sup>27</sup>

#### 6.2.4 The Contemplation of God's Word

The final section on general duties discussing the internal duties to be practiced with respect to Scripture is structured the same as the previous three: first, a positive expression, with examples, is given of the duty; second, it is acknowledged, with examples, that not all practice this duty; third, reasons, both with respect to God and ourselves, are given for practicing the duty. This corresponds with Van Mastricht's eighth use: "*de meditatione verbi divini*."<sup>28</sup> There he treats the topic quite systematically by asking the following: "*Quid sit meditatio*," "*Quod sit meditandum*," "*Quare meditandum*," and "*Quomodo mediatandum*."

In speaking positively of what meditation of God's Word means Oomius first directs the reader to David in Psalm 119:97 and his expression of love for God's law and

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<sup>26</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 352-357.

<sup>27</sup> On displaying that we are God's children Oomius cites Wolfgang Musculus, *In sacrosanctum Davidis Psalterium commentarij* (Basil, 1551), Psalm 1, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, section 73, pp. 44-46.

his desire to meditate on it. Oomius distinguishes four characteristics of this contemplation. First, it is an exercise of the understanding which involves the memory of things read or heard as well as actual contemplation or reflection of the matter without having an internal dialogue or investigation about it.<sup>29</sup> Second, it is a holy exercise, thus distinguishable from the kind of contemplation of an unregenerate person or of natural things. Third, it is a contemplation which keeps our thoughts busy, is earnest, and concerns read or heard things from God's Word. Finally, we keep our thoughts busy with these matters in order to be inspired to holy things and to do the things that are in the Word. Contemplation and practice go hand in hand like two sisters. While the aim of study is knowledge, the aim of the Christian's contemplation or meditation is godliness, or the application of truth. Contemplation of the Word is not about naked study, but it is to lead to practice and obedience. Naked study, writes Oomius, is like the winter sun—it has little warmth. Using another image, he states that study seeks a vein of gold, but contemplation digs it out. Contemplation of God's Word is like eating and then re-chewing, without which no beasts were pure in the Old Testament. Contemplation or meditation is commanded numerous times in Scripture.<sup>30</sup>

This duty is not practiced by many—many hear the Word, but don't keep it or let it live in them; it is neither cooked or rechewed. A result of this is that there are many Christians without fruit and without joy. Encouragement to meditate on God's Word can

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<sup>29</sup> On the fact that contemplation is an exercise of the understanding Oomius cites Gansfort, *Scala meditationis*, IV.xxv, p. m. 312; Thomas Watson, *Heyl. bespiegel.*, in *Opera omnia of Alle de wercken van Thom. Watson* (Amsterdam, 1670), iv, p. 279.

<sup>30</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 357-363.

be gained by looking to the Word itself, its meditation, or ourselves. God's Word is worthy of contemplation because it is excellent and overflowing with material for continual contemplation. For example, everywhere in the Word are living impressions of God, his being, his attributes, and his glorious works of nature and grace.<sup>31</sup> Looking to the meditation of the Word it is found to be necessary, pleasurable, and useful. Looking to ourselves we see particularly that without meditation of God's Word we cannot show that we love God's law and esteem it. Also contemplation of God's Word is proof of that Word in the regenerate. More generally, we meditate because we want God's Word and promises in our thoughts; it is better to have that in our hearts than the wrongs done to us—it helps us forget those things; and we are blessed if we do this.<sup>32</sup>

### 6.3 External Duties

The second part of the general duties to be practiced by all Christians are the external duties—this is discussed in the fifth division of *Institutiones* 1.1. These are divided by Oomius into those done alone (Chapter 1) and those done with others (Chapters 2-6). The latter are in turn divided into those that are done in public (Chapters 2-5) and duties done in private (Chapter 6). This section is by far the largest in the book,

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<sup>31</sup> Oomius, citing Petrus Wittewrongel, *Oeconomia christiana. Ofte christelicke huys-houdinge: Bestiert naer den reghel van het suyvere woordt Godts* (Amsterdam, 1655), II.xxxii, p. 848.

<sup>32</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, pp. 364-374. On the blessings of contemplating God's Word Oomius cites Bucer, *S. Psalmorum libri quinque*, Psalm 1, p. 6.



covering about half of the total contents, and seventy percent of all the material in the section dealing with the practice of the doctrine.<sup>33</sup>

### 6.3.1 Scripture Read in Private

A single chapter is devoted to external duties which are done alone. Here Oomius emphasizes first that both the Old Testament and New Testament indicate that all Christians are to read the Scriptures—the greatest people on earth, such as kings and princes, the learned, both young and old, both men and women.<sup>34</sup> By all of these the Scriptures must be read regularly, even daily and at every opportunity. Oomius lists various examples of this in the Bible. Good examples of this can also be found in church history. Emperor Theodosius is said to have been regularly in the Scriptures and that he could discuss them well with bishops, as if he were himself an experienced bishop. Gregory of Nazianzus' sister is mentioned. More recent examples are also mentioned: Johan Alrecht and Johannes Gadius, a Sicilian theologian. The latter knew the Scriptures so well that it was said that if they were lost from the world he would be able to restore them.<sup>35</sup> Oomius gives numerous other examples of those who knew the Scriptures well and read them often.

Next, Oomius laments the terrible situation under the papacy where the Roman church forbade the average person from having or reading the Bible.<sup>36</sup> Pope Pius IV is

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<sup>33</sup> This section covers pages 375-859.

<sup>34</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 375-380.

<sup>35</sup> Oomius, citing Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Thesaurus chronologiae, in quo universa temporum & historiarum series in omni vitae genere ponitur ob oculos* (Herborn, 1624), 267.

<sup>36</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 381-396.

mentioned as putting the Bible on the register of forbidden books through the Council of Trent—Sixtus V and Clemens VIII only confirmed and increased this type of behavior.<sup>37</sup> The popes said that experience has proven that when the Bible is known by the people it brings about more bad than that which is useful. They believed this so strongly that the Roman church stated that anyone who dares to have or read a Bible without permission will not receive forgiveness of sins. The papal church also would punish book sellers who sold the Bible in the common language.<sup>38</sup> Oomius gives various other examples of the papal position on this. The result has been an extreme lack of biblical knowledge in the Roman church—what the people did receive was from lies, the mass, images, relics, and other rubbish. This went so far that as Friedrich Spanheim writes, the true light of God's Word was oppressed and people were only presented with the deeds of past saints.<sup>39</sup> In various places there were readings of Aristotle's *Ethics* on Sundays as Melanchthon is said to have witnessed himself in 1512.<sup>40</sup> As almost everywhere, only sermons from Thomas and Scotus were presented in Zürich. Others were told that if the Bible was lost one could find the way to salvation through Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Plutarch, or other heathens. Thus it happened that it became rare or unheard of for even theologians to have read all of the Bible—exceptions were men like Comestor, also called Trithemius, and Luther. Many didn't even know what language Paul wrote in.

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<sup>37</sup> Oomius, citing *Indic. Libr. prohibet. subjecto canonil. conc. Trident. Colon.* (1603, edit. in 12; 1633, edit. in 8).

<sup>38</sup> Oomius, citing Morton, *Apologiae Catholicae*, Part 2, I.xv, pp. 74 and ff. and xvi, p. 79.

<sup>39</sup> Oomius, citing Spanheim, *Geneva restituta* (Geneva, 1635), 17.

<sup>40</sup> Oomius, citing Philipp Melanchthon, *Apol. Aug. Confess. ad artic. de justificat.*, 62.

Conradus Heresbachius, a lawyer, witnesses that he heard a monk say openly in a sermon that there was a book written in Greek, called the New Testament, that was full of heresies.<sup>41</sup> Along with all of this, more time was spent on scholastic questions than on understanding the gospel of Christ. Thus the leaders of the church led the people away, and those led by them today are fooled.<sup>42</sup> Oomius next notes that this doctrine and practice of the Roman church not only goes against the teaching of God's Word, but also against the doctrine and practice of the Jewish church, the ancient Christian church, and even the opinion of some papal teachers.<sup>43</sup>

Having spoken against the Roman church, Oomius turns to the Reformed church and the lack of this practice there.<sup>44</sup> First, those who cannot read and do not have the desire to although they have the time and understanding to do it are rebuked. Oomius finds it a shame that people do not want to learn what is so necessary for religion. There are others, though, that can read, but they have no Bible or if they do have one, do not read it. Some people are so profane that they do not even have a Bible in their home—as Luther somewhere says that the world without the Word of God is hell, homes are a hell without the Word of God found or read in it. Some, though, have a Bible, but do not read

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<sup>41</sup> Oomius, citing Christianus Becmanus, *Oratio secularis, De Barbarie, et superstitione superiorum temporum...* (Ambergae, 1617), citing Sixtinus Amama, forward to *Bybelsche Conferentie, in welke de Nederlandtsche oversettinghe des Bybels, die eertijts uyt de Hoogduytsche Lutheri in't Nederlantsch ghestelt, ende tot noch toe in de Nederl. Kercken ghebruyckt is, van capittel tot capittel aen de Hebreusche waerheyt beproeft ende met de beste oversettinghen vergheleken wort...* (Amsterdam, 1623), V, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> "Siet, soo waeren de Leyders van het Paepsche volck verleyders, ...," 396.

<sup>43</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 397-411.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 411-415.

it. Some hardly open it, but they read idle comedies, which are the devil's best catechism, and they play cards. Others are concerned with having a nice printing of the Bible, one that is bound with fine silver, for example. This is idleness, writes Oomius. People look for a nice printing, but it would be much better to have one's heart imprinted with the Spirit of God. Few, laments Oomius, open the Bible daily, often, and at every opportunity—there are even some who openly despise God's Word.

Next, Oomius turns to the reasons why he is persuaded of this duty to read the Scriptures in private.<sup>45</sup> He divides these into three—those concerning the Bible itself, the reading of the Bible, and ourselves. Concerning the Bible itself Oomius, as in the previous section, turns to the necessity, divinity, authority, and excellence of God's Word as convincing reasons to read it privately. Under the excellence of Scripture Oomius notes that not only the parts of the Bible, but the teaching is perfect concerning spiritual matters, but also natural, such as legal, political, historical, chronological, medicinal, physical, and poetic matters. As for the reason having to do with the reading of the Bible, Oomius finds that it is especially useful and necessary for various matters. First, it is useful and necessary to get a true knowledge of divine and spiritual things and to increase those in our soul. Second, the reading of the Bible is useful to prepare us and make us more fitting to hear God's Word. Third, it is useful to secure our spirit and the strengthen the good in us and to become more holy. Fourth, it is useful and necessary as a protection and antidote against all sorts of attacks. Fifth, the reading of the Bible is useful to continually have material for holy meditation. The third of Oomius' reasons to

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 416-452.

read God's Word is related our own life. In general, without the reading of God's Word, we cannot show that we properly love God's Word and delight in his law; we cannot be sure of our salvation; and, if we are truly regenerate, we have a right to this costly pearl—the Word of God—it is written for us. Particularly, Oomius notes all the advantages Christians have in his day: the freedom to read God's Word, the many available Bibles in all sorts of languages, the cheap price of Bibles, the helpful chapter and verse divisions. Also, what good does it do to criticize the papists for not letting the average person read if we are not actually reading it? Oomius feels that the Reformed must back up their rhetoric with their practice. Finally, Oomius notes the need for Christians to spend time in the Bible—though it is not as if they should not be reading other edifying books, even heathen ones. Oomius gives the Muslims' voracious reading habits of the Koran as an example to Christians.

The final two sections of this chapter deal with which biblical books ought to be read by everyone and in which order and manner they ought to be read.<sup>46</sup> As for the books to be read Oomius notes that despite what the Jews said about not reading the last eight chapters of Ezekiel, Songs of Songs, or Genesis 1 before age thirty, or despite the Socinian distinction between the teaching of the Old and New Testaments, without question, all the books of the Bible should be read and need to be read. And though it is true that many ceremonies in the Old Testament do not have a place in our time, it is useful to read them because they bring us to Christ—we are strengthened in the faith

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 452-481.

when we see the shadows of the Old Testament and can compare them to the grace and freedom of the New Testament.

As for the manner in which the books should be read Oomius has advice for before, during, and after reading the Scriptures. Beforehand we must prepare our hearts by putting off the false feeling that we can please God by reading his Word while thinking that listening to the hearing of the Word is unnecessary, by putting off all godlessness and by putting off all the cares of this world which can choke the Word and make it unfruitful. At this point Oomius gives examples from Islam and Judaism about the importance of purity before reading sacred texts.<sup>47</sup> Also before coming to the Word we must reject the tendency to unnecessary curiosity that might sidetrack our study. As examples of this Oomius gives trying to delve into the secret things of God, and trying to bend the Word to our understanding in difficult matters, rather than the other way around—the Word must be the master by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Oomius notes that Arminius was at fault for not having given up his own speculations and prejudices and bad teachings before coming to the Word. Those who enjoy the teachings of Descartes must learn the same thing. Moving to Oomius' advice during the reading itself he recommends reading daily and at every opportunity. Zanchi, he notes, suggests at least two chapters a day.<sup>48</sup> As for the state of our heart, we must read with godly

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<sup>47</sup> Citing Hottingerus, *Bibliothecarius Quadripartitus* (Tiguri: Melchior Stauffacher, 1664), II, p. 156; Thomas Erpenius, notes to *Historia Josephi Patriarchae ex Alcorano, Arabice: cum triplici versione Latina et scholiis Thomae Erpenii; cujus alphabetum Arabicum praemittitur* (Leiden, 1617); Thomas Erpenius, Jacobus Golius, and Jacobus Alting, *Arabicae linguae tyrocinium. Id est Thomae Erpenii Grammatica Arabica...* (Leiden, 1656), p. 182, edit. in quarto.

<sup>48</sup> Citing Hieronymus Zanchi, *De scriptura sacra* (Heidelberg, 1593), 387.

attention. In John 5:39 Jesus is teaching us to read the Scriptures, to do so attentively, and to recognize that the Scriptures witness to Christ. Besides reading with godly attention, we must read with humble honor, with a holy attempt to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, with a strong faith, and with application to our ourselves as if the Bible were a letter written to us from heaven for our teaching. After reading the Bible, we must keep what was read in our heart as a costly treasure, meditate on it, practice what we read, and also thank God that he gave us his Word.

### 6.3.2 Scripture Read in Public

Following the first chapter of external duties done alone in private are four chapters dealing with external duties done with others in public: God's Word is to be read, sung, preached, and catechized. The first of these chapters has to do with the public reading of and listening to God's Word.<sup>49</sup> Van Mastricht deals with this topic and the previous, reading God's Word in private, together under his fifth use, *de lectione verbi divini*.<sup>50</sup> Though well-organized—Van Mastricht moves from *quod* (that this practice is necessary), to *quare* (why it is necessary), to *quomodo* (in what way it is to be practice)—this treatment is extremely brief compared to that of Oomius.

Oomius begins this topic by noting that this has been the normal practice of God's people throughout all of time. Among the Jews, for example, the Levites read God's Word for the people—Ezra reintroduced this and the Levites in his time translated what was Hebrew into Syrian or Chaldean for the people. In the early Christian church, after

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<sup>49</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 481-503.

<sup>50</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, section 69, pp. 42-43.

the apostles, this was also practiced, as Oomius illustrates with many examples. Because of the long history of this practice in Reformed churches, the churches of Oomius day had the office of *voor-leser* (reader)—and though usually the ministers do not perform this duty, Oomius feels that they should not consider it beneath them to do so if need be. This reading is necessary in church meetings for the building up and expansion of God's kingdom. It builds up the people in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, is especially helpful for those who cannot read, prepares the listener for the sermon, and it also helps maintain purity of teaching because the teacher will be less apt to add his own embellishments.

From the above it is clear that situations where Scripture is read in a foreign language or where there are no people—as in the papal church—must be rejected. Readings from apocryphal books or other human writings must also be rejected. Also to be rejected is the reading of arbitrary parts of Scripture as in the Roman church where something is read from the Old Testament, the New, an epistle, and a gospel without rhyme or reason.<sup>51</sup> In the same vein lectionary readings are to be rejected—reading the same thing throughout the year without giving thought to the different situations in the various churches Oomius likens to giving the same medicine and diet to all people at the same times, months, days, and year until the end of the world. This kind of reading goes against the early church who read and expounded books of the Old and New Testaments. A tendency with lectionary readings is to think that the parts not read are less important.

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<sup>51</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *Politicae ecclesiasticae* (Amsterdam: Joannis a Waesberge, 1663-1676), part 1, IV.ii.1, p. 604.



This is a mistake. Genealogies, descriptions of the tabernacle and new temple should be considered useful. Even if they don't apply directly to our day they have historical use and there are various other uses they can have. As an example of the uses of such passages, Oomius refers to 2 Timothy 4:13 where Paul asks for the cloak and his books, and notes that it can teach us that holy men can have more than one cloak. From this passage we can also see what a lover of books—especially holy books—Paul was and how he never stopped studying.

Not only should Scripture be read, but the listeners must reverently pay attention to the reading. This did not always happen in the ancient church and this failure continues in the church of Oomius' day. Oomius mentions how some people during the church meetings walk around, talk, chatter, make noise, etc., as if people were there to get the news. Others do not come into the church building before the Word is read—no one with spiritual sensitivity could not find this inappropriate. Not only does this disturb other people there and show what little desire we have for the Word of God, but it also gives the opponents of the Reformed opportunity to rebuke the Reformed in writing for their rowdiness. One wonders too why people would be less reverent toward the reading of God's Word, which is completely pure in its truth, and more reverent during the preaching since sermons have much human weakness and ignorance mixed in with the truth.

### 6.3.3 Scripture Sung

The second chapter on the external duties to be performed with others in public deals with singing songs.<sup>52</sup> Scripture is to be read and also sung by Christians. Introducing the chapter, Oomius writes that it will discuss the singing of the Psalms of David and other scriptural and ecclesiastical songs. Even though the words of Scripture are set to poetic paraphrase or rhyme in these songs, there is no doubt that they can be called holy songs given their object—they can even be called divine because of their agreement with Scripture, or at least in that they do not go against Scripture, although of course they are not divine in the same sense as the Scriptures themselves. This chapter will deal with the singing and use of Psalms both during church gatherings and outside of them.

After dealing with the meaning of the term “Psalms” and their authorship Oomius reviews the purpose of singing Psalms (to praise the Lord, according to 2 Chronicles 7:6) and the history of Psalm singing, beginning with the Scriptural commands encouraging this practice. In the discussion of the New Testament commands, Oomius indicates that the three different songs referred to by Paul in Colossians 3:16 are considered generally by the Reformed to be various names to refer to the Psalms—this is Beza’s opinion.<sup>53</sup> Oomius himself judges that “Psalms” is used in a broad sense for all kinds of holy songs, and that under this general category are two types: “praise song,” which is directed

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<sup>52</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 504-574.

<sup>53</sup> Oomius, citing Theodore Beza, *Annot.*, on Col. 3:16.

toward God's praise, and "song," which covers other holy songs.<sup>54</sup> Christ and the Apostles are recorded as singing the Psalms of David. This was also the practice in the early church—in fact there seems to have been a special position of "singer" in the church, similar in position to the office of reader. The early Christians would sing "Hallelujah" often and they would also sing antiphonally, to each other, though Oomius finds this a fleshly way of singing which is still practiced in the Catholic church—not the words, but the sweetness of the modulations predominate in this type of singing. Besides the Psalms of David, they would also sing other hymns and praise songs which Tertullian said belonged to the freedom of Christians.<sup>55</sup> The early Christians would also sing in their homes, at their tables, in their stores, in the fields, on the street, at funerals, in short, everywhere.

Oomius wishes next to demonstrate that the singing of Psalms was practiced by the Reformed in the "first" Reformation. In the first Reformation, Oomius writes that it is undisputed that the Reformers sang Psalms in their meetings. Luther, he says, is the first to have made hymns in Europe. After that, Clemens Marot and Beza, the most renowned poets of their time, put the Psalms of David to rhyme—Marot began the work and Beza finished it. Some of the history behind Marot and his Psalm work is given by Oomius.<sup>56</sup> These Psalms were translated into Dutch by Petrus Dathenus and first published in Dutch in 1567, though Dathenus complained more than once about how he

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<sup>54</sup> The Dutch here is *Lof-sangh* and *Liedt*, 509.

<sup>55</sup> Oomius, citing Tertullian, *ad Uxor.*, II.ix.

<sup>56</sup> Citing, among others, Famianus Strada, *De bello Belgico decas prima* (Antwerp, 1635), III, anno 1562, pp. 160-162 and V, anno 1566, p. 269.

had to get the work published in such haste and in difficult times. Various Dutch Reformed synods since that time approved their use along with a few other songs such as the Ten Commandments, the songs of Zachariah, Mary, and Simeon, and the Lord's Prayer.<sup>57</sup> As for the singing of these Psalms, Oomius wishes to follow his spiritual forefathers on this matter, judging that although it does not belong to the very being of the worship service, it belongs to the church's well-being and completeness and is thus in a certain respect necessary. It was also not uncommon—and it remained so through Oomius' day—for the Reformers to sing in their homes, at the table, and at work, and, though not common in the Netherlands, in other countries Psalms are sometimes sung at funerals.

Given the above practice of the church, various errors both within and outside of the Reformed churches are shown by Oomius. Outside of the Reformed, Oomius focuses on the papists, the Mennonites, and the Independents in England. The Catholic church mocks the Reformed for their Psalms and their use of them. The Psalms sung are criticized for the very fact that they are brought to rhyme and for the quality of the rhyme.<sup>58</sup> Oomius defends the Reformed whole-heartedly against the first critique. For one, the Hebrew text of the Jews itself was poetic. For another there is nothing wrong with using meter and rhyme according to contemporary usage of singers in Europe so that

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<sup>57</sup> Oomius refers to the following synods: Dordrecht 1574, Article 43; Dordrecht 1578, Article 76; Middelburg 1581, Article 51; 's Gravenhage 1586, Article 62; 's Gravenhage 1591, Article 23.

<sup>58</sup> On the first critique Oomius refers particularly to Jacobus Pamelius and his notes on Tertullian where he compares the Reformed and the rhymers of the Psalms to Nicolaitans, Gnostics, and Valentinians, calling them singers of Marottic Psalms, not of Christ's Psalms. See his notes on *de Carne Christi*, in *Q. Septimii Florentis Tertulliani ... Opera quae hactenus reperiri potuerunt omnia: iam postremum, ad*

they can be better sung—a poetic paraphrase conforming to Scripture, or at least not against it, does not take away from the text of Scripture.<sup>59</sup> As for the second critique, Oomius admits that the rhyme could be better—Dathenus’ translation out of the French was done with much haste. Though some have tried to improve it, because the people are so familiar with Dathenus’ text, change could only be made with great commotion from the congregations. Conceding the papists’ point here, Oomius counterattacks noting that the Catholic songs of praise are filled with superstition, idolatry, and errors. Instead of showing this here, Oomius points the reader to Voetius’ demonstration of this point.<sup>60</sup>

Oomius also defends the actual singing of the Reformed both in public and private against the papists’ criticism of this practice. As for the public singing, they call Reformed Psalm-singing “Hermaphroditic” Psalm-singing because men, women, and children all sing together. On the basis of the early church practice, however, Oomius defends the Reformed practice and says that though women may not do some things in public worship, they may sing. The quality of the Reformed singing is also criticized. In response to this Oomius writes that not only the experienced singers should be able to sing, but everyone—in the early church a simple song, with one voice rather than four, was sung so that even the inexperienced can follow the *voor-sanger*. Against the Catholic church Oomius also defends the fact that Psalms are sung by people outside of

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*exemplaria manuscripta collatione facta, quam accuratiss. recognita, aliquot etiam libris auctiora...* (Paris, 1583), xvii.134, p. 403.

<sup>59</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *Politicae ecclesiasticae*, Vol. 1, 533.

<sup>60</sup> Voetius, *Politicae ecclesiasticae*, part 1, II.ii.2, entitled “De benedictionibus, salutationibus, doxologiis, & cantu ecclesiastico,” 532 and ff.

public worship, even while they are working—this too was the practice in the early church and if it is good for people to read their Bibles everywhere, why not sing the Psalms too, which are part of the Bible? The papists, after all, mumble their Ave Marias and Pater-Nosters everywhere and the nuns count their beads—why can a pious person not praise his God in his store?

After his defense against the Catholic criticism, Oomius points to Reformed complaints against the papists: they change the Psalms and praise songs of David and others into Psalms of Mary and the saints; they sing their superstition and idolatry in an unknown language, which is both against the teaching of God's Word and the practice of the early church; they only allow the "clergy and trained singers" to sing; there is no dignity in their song.<sup>61</sup>

Other groups are also critiqued by Oomius. Against the Mennonites, his main complaint is that they only want Christians to sing some of the Psalms because there are histories of people there which do not apply to us today.<sup>62</sup> Oomius says with this reasoning one could throw out a great deal of Scripture, then he gives some reasons why these types of Psalms can be usefully sung by Christians.<sup>63</sup> Against the Brownists and Independents, mainly in England, Oomius writes that some throw out all of the Psalms, pointing to Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 14:26 that when the believers come together

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<sup>61</sup> The Dutch is "Den geestelickheydt en den canunnicken," 544, citing Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.v.10.

<sup>62</sup> Citing Frans de Knuyt, *Een corte bekentnisse onses gheloofs,... sommige Psalmen ende geestelijcke liedekens*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Amsterdam, 1623), p. 16 (Oomius calls this work *Clare Vertooningh*); Claes Claesz, *Bekentnisse van de voornaemste stucken des christelijcken gheloofs* (Amsterdam, 1624), 387.

<sup>63</sup> Oomius, citing Pierre Philippe Bontemps, *Kort bewijs van de menighvuldige doolingen der wederdoopers, ofte mennisten...* (Haarlem, 1641), IV.xi, p. m. 636.

each one has a Psalm, a teaching, etc.<sup>64</sup> Others of this group do not sing at all. The final group to which Oomius gives reprimand are those among the Reformed who do not sing with other believers in the church or who sing when they are drunk or sing “whore’s songs,” or who seldom or never enjoy singing Psalms at every opportunity outside public worship, as was the early Christian practice.

Oomius next gives four reasons to move each person to the practice of singing Scripture. First, looking to the Psalms themselves, they are simply glorious, and all that is in the rest of the Bible is there in brief—that is why the ancient teachers of the church praised them so much. The Psalms are useful for learning, especially about the person of our Savior, for correction, for spiritual improvement, for teaching, and for comfort in physical adversity, spiritual difficulties, and especially in the hour of death. Among other examples of this latter point, Oomius notes that Christ at his death had Psalms 22 and 31 on his tongue. Second, considering the singing of the Psalms, Oomius finds this a heavenly exercise. The singing of Psalms serves us spiritually by working the things of which we sing deeper in our heart, by inspiring us to serve God and practice godliness, by sanctifying and healing the emotions of our soul (Augustine witnesses how he was often moved to tears of joy through the songs of the Christians in Milan), by unifying and quieting our hearts (for how can one call someone his enemy with whom he has sung Psalms to God with one voice?—even wild animals can be stilled by music: wolves, elephant, deer, and even fish), by driving out sadness, and by driving out even the devil

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<sup>64</sup> Oomius cites in defense of this point Voetius, *Politicae ecclesiasticae*, part 1, II.ii.2, qu. 3, p. 527.

himself. Temporally, singing sweetens our work and also encourages us in the face of enemies. Third, when we consider God, he not only commands this practice, but it is especially pleasing to him—and he is said to live under the praise songs of Israel (Psalm 22:3). Also, God is worthy of us bringing these offerings too him—it is part of our Christian service to glorify God in a special way. Fourth and finally, when we consider ourselves, we are called to sing to the Lord and inspire others to this, especially considering that we have even more reason to celebrate and rejoice than those in the Old Testament. We should be encouraged even more to do this because we may sing freely and in safety—many, because of the sound of the singing of Psalms early in the morning, have been put in prison and even killed.

In the last section of this chapter Oomius discusses the manner in which Psalms should be sung by Christians.<sup>65</sup> In general, it should be noted that the singer should be sanctified—in the godless mouth a Psalm is like a jewel in the snout of a swine. Particularly, with regard to our outward voice, we should follow the *voor-sanger* with a strong voice without trying to sing above the other singers or the *voor-sanger*. We should also not sing just to enjoy the sound—there is a place for simplicity in Christ. For example, in the eastern and western church the Christians sang in such a way that did not differ too much from reading so they could pay better attention to the call of their hearts and on the agreement of the voices. This is not to say that there can be no use of musical skills, but it is to say that we do not pay so much attention to the sweet modulation of the voice to show our musical and singing experience. Musicians in the church must pay

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<sup>65</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 568-574.



attention to stateliness and spiritual devotion in the church's song so that the ignorant and inexperienced can participate and be edified. Those who pay attention only to the outward melody should know that their songs of praise are not attractive in God's ear—according to Augustine such singing is like the barking of dogs, the mooing of cows, and the oinking of pigs.<sup>66</sup> As for our inner state, we are to sing the Psalms with understanding and knowledge so that we are edified; we are to sing with special reverence and pleasure in our heart; and we are to sing to and of the Lord, to his glory, with thoughts toward his blessings, and sensing his divine presence.<sup>67</sup>

#### 6.3.4 Scripture Preached

The third public duty Oomius' discusses (in the fourth chapter on the external duties with regard to Holy Scripture), is the most expansive of any of the duties to which he believes the doctrine of Scripture leads.<sup>68</sup> Van Mastricht, again, though much briefer, mentions this topic as his sixth use, "*de auditione verbi*," and handles it under the questions of "*quod*," "*quare*," and "*quomodo*."<sup>69</sup>

As usual, Oomius begins with the commendation in biblical, early church, and more recent history to practice this duty—these histories tell us that the preached word must be carefully listened to by all, on Sundays as well as on work days as much as is

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<sup>66</sup> Oomius, citing Wolph., *Lect. memorab. centur.*, XII, fol. 346.

<sup>67</sup> On singing with understanding and knowledge so we are edified Oomius cites, Edward Elton, *An exposition of the Epistle of St Paule to the Colossians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 1615), p. 532; John Davenant, *Expositio epistolae de Pauli ad Colossenses* (Cambridge, 1627), p. 434; Paul Baynes, *A commentarie upon the first chapter of the epistle of Saint Paul, written to the Ephesians* (London, 1618), 633.

<sup>68</sup> It covers pages 575-737 of *Institutiones* 1.1.

<sup>69</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-practica theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, section 70, p. 43.

possible and one's calling allows. Oomius' second main point deals with the reality that, despite the clear evidence of its need shown by church history, various people both within and outside the Reformed church have, in sin, not followed this practice.<sup>70</sup>

Beginning with those outside the Reformed churches, Oomius turns first to the atheists and Epicurists, whom he writes are usually called Deists in France.<sup>71</sup> These are "profane and godless people who think they can live without God or his word."<sup>72</sup> In general they are criticized for being so secure in their own wisdom and knowledge that they believe they have nothing more to learn from preaching. Furthermore, they do not realize that one does not listen to God's Word only to become wiser, but also to become better—the end of listening to God's Word is not just knowing, but practicing. Among these are also those who have an aversion to the service and preaching of God's Word because they despise the preachers or the content of what they preach or the manner in which some preach. Second, Oomius addresses the lack of this duty among the Enthusiasts and Libertines, criticizing their derision of sermons as trite lessons for children.<sup>73</sup> The following groups are included here: Henric-Nicolaiten, Familisten, the brothers and disciples of the house of love, David-Joristen, Schwenckfeldians, Sebastiaen-Franckisten, and Weigelianen.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 583-642.

<sup>71</sup> He addresses their sin on pp. 583-603.

<sup>72</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 583.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 603-605.

<sup>74</sup> In his explanation of the error of these groups and his defense against them Oomius cites passages such as the following: Voetius, *Politicae ecclesiasticae*, part 2, II.i.1, par. 3, pp. 217 and ff.; *idem*, *TA ASKÉTIKA sive Exercitia pietatis* (Gorinchem, 1664), III, pp. 77, 81; Altling, *Theologia historica*, II,

Third, Oomius focuses on the Half-Libertines or those who are neutral who do not deny the authority and use of Scripture but do not, out of self-conceit, trust in their own knowledge, or a holier-than-thou attitude, find the ordinary worship services to be profitable, and thus say they do not need them, like the previous group.<sup>75</sup> Oomius puts the Coornhertists in this category, whose master, Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert, he finds a half-heathen and half-idiot.<sup>76</sup> A couple of his books make his Half-Libertine ideas plain. The ministers of Delft wrote a tract in Dutch refuting one of them in 1582. Lambertus Danaeus refuted the other in the same year, although, notes Oomius, in Latin.<sup>77</sup> Other Half-Libertines are mentioned: the Seekers and Waiters in England, the first Anabaptists and their leaders Nicolaus Storchius and Muntzerus, the present-day Anabaptists in England. There are also those in the midst of the Reformed churches who have these views like Ant. Daventriensis. All of these sorts have their predecessors in the ancient heretics like Severus, Montanus, and the Donatists. Calvin, Cyprian, Tertullian,

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p. 163; Philips van Marnix van St. Aldegonde, *Ondersoekinghe ende grondelijcke wederlegginghe der geestdrijvische Leere aengaende het geschrevene Woirt Godes* ('s Gravenhage, 1595), II, fol. 6-7; Hoornbeeck, *Summa Controversiarum Religionis cum Infidelibus, Haereticis, Schismaticis: Id Est, Gentilibus, Judaeis, Muhammedanis, Papistis, Anabaptistis, Enthusiastis et Libertinis, Socinianis; Remonstrantibus, Lutheranis, Brownistis, Graecis* (Utrecht, 1653), VI, pp. 381, 384-385, 398 and ff., 438 and ff., 455, and 387; *idem*, *De Paradoxis et Heterodoxis Weigelianis Commentarius, ubi et de Swencfeldo, aliisque similis indolis* (Utrecht, 1646), VI, pp. 398 and ff., 438; Trigland, *Kerkelycke Geschiedenissen*, pp. 155 and 770-772; Robbert Le Canu Robbertsz, *De rechter vleugel* (Amsterdam, 1596), Lett. A, 2; Caspar Sibelius, *Coronis Sacrarum Concionum continens diversos ex Vet. & Novo Testamento selectiores textus...* (Amsterdam, 1658), in *Epist. Jud.*, p. 468; Johannes Crocius, *Anti-Weigelius, id est, Theologiae quam Valentinus Weigelius ex Paracelsi potissimum et veterum haeticorum lacunis haustam, variis sparsit libellis, ex sacris literis et antiquitate promota confutatio* (1651), II.ii; John Calvin, *Instruct. adv. Libertin.*, ix in *Opusc. part. II, Class. 2*, p. 510.

<sup>75</sup> The Half-Libertines are discussed on pp. 605-616.

<sup>76</sup> See the reference to Coornhert in Chapter 3.

<sup>77</sup> See on Danaeus, or Daneau, O. Fatio, *Méthode et théologie. Lambert Daneau et les débuts de la scolastique réformée* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1976).

Jerome, Crocius, Casaubonus, Spanheim, and Voetius are all pointed to as defending against this type.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, against those outside the Reformed camp who fail in this duty, Oomius mentions an unnamed group of people who think the Word of God is as powerful read as when it is preached.<sup>79</sup> In response, Oomius notes that God did not institute the worship service to consist of naked reading of the Bible, but to consist of its explanation and application—furthermore, not readers, but preachers and teachers were instituted. Just because preachers can err does not mean preaching should be thrown out. Who would remove wine from the table because it can make you drunk? For more refutation of this type Oomius recommends the writings of Samuel Hieron and Samuel Maresius.<sup>80</sup>

Oomius next turns to several categories of people who do not practice this duty within the Reformed churches.<sup>81</sup> First are those who seem to be disgusted by the ordinary church service, the so-called, Half Practical Libertines. Some of these simply live independent from the shepherds of the church and the service of the Word, while others openly argue with the ministers, or seek to hurt them with lies, or drive them out with violence. Another group in addition to the Half Practical Libertines are those who break fellowship from the visibly instituted church to join another ecclesiastical

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<sup>78</sup> Calvin, *Instruct. adv. Libertin.*; Jerome, *adv. Helvid. in init.*, Cyprian, *de Unitat. Eccles.*; Crocius, *de Libertin. Haeresi*, I, *Comm. in epist. ad Gal.*, p. 197; Spanheim, *Disputationum Anti-Anabaptisticarum...* (Leiden, 1643-1648), XVI-XX; Voetius, *Exercitia et bibliotheca studiosi theologiae* (Utrecht, 1644), II.ii.5, pp. 551 and ff.

<sup>79</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 617-629.

<sup>80</sup> Oomius cites Samuel Hieron and also Samuel Maresius, *Dissertatio theologica de usu et honore sacri ministerii...* (Groningen, 1646), 14, 18, 20 and ff.

<sup>81</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 629-643.

fellowship made up of gathered schismatic former members of the church. Finally, those are discussed who are simply languid in listening to God's Word. Some are content with only hearing one sermon; others stay away from the preaching of God's Word for weeks, months, even years; others seldom come to the preaching of the Word during the middle of the week, though they find time to spend at the tavern or other places.

Oomius continues his discussion of this duty, as might be expected from the development of topics so far, with the reasons for practicing this duty.<sup>82</sup> These reasons are derived from God's Word itself (God himself speaks in it), from the hearing of God's Word (this is a necessary, useful, and holy activity for people), and from looking to ourselves (to take advantage of the freedom the church enjoys to listen without persecution, to receive blessing in this life and the next, and to show that we belong to God).

The final two points of discussion under this duty are 1) what exactly we are to hear in preaching, and 2) a detailed explanation of the way and manner in which we are to listen to the preaching of God's Word.<sup>83</sup> Oomius writes that we must listen to nothing but the teaching of the Lord or the preaching will not have a sanctifying work in us. What follows this initial statement is a discussion of whether or not one should choose to follow and listen to one preacher over another. Oomius sees no reason why one should not do this if a particular preacher's gifts are particularly powerful—especially if that preacher is going to be handling things that will be useful to one's spiritual state. After

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 643-655. Oomius notes here that these reasons do not include those that are dealt with under the title of "the Holy Gatherings." This may be an unknown work of Oomius.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 655-664 and 665-737, respectively.

all, out of many honorable and rich daughters, a man must choose one as his wife, and one must choose friends among many people. Why would it not be the same in listening to sermons and making use of preachers? Oomius advises caution, however: 1) in a town with only one preacher, it is not normally good to visit a neighboring church to hear the preaching and leave one's own church empty; 2) during the week one should not leave their own place just because their favorite preachers is not preaching; 3) one should never esteem one preacher over another for fleshly reasons; 4) in general, one should not leave their own preacher too often; 5) no one should make a distinction between preachers to build up a faction in the church as happened at Corinth; 6) just as it is not proper at mealtimes to speak of which dish we like best, people should not speak to others about this if they use their freedom to sometimes listen to the preacher they like best.<sup>84</sup> Oomius adds to this discussion that in the bigger cities there is nothing to prevent one from going to this or that church—the papal parishes have been abolished by the Reformed.

The final point of discussion on the duty of listening to God's Word preached advises on the way and manner in which God's Word must be listened to. This discussion is divided into what should happen before, during, and after the preaching of God's Word.<sup>85</sup> Before listening to God's Word we must prepare ourselves, just as when

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<sup>84</sup> Among those Oomius cites here are the following: Arthur Hildersam, *Fonteyne des levens. Dat is de historie vande Samaritaensche vrouwe...*, transl. from English (Arnhem, 1646), LVIII, p. 350; *idem*, *CVIII lectures upon the fourth of John* (London, 1632), LVIII, p. 351; *idem*, *CLII lectures upon Psalme LI...* (London, 1635), III, p. 21; Cornelis Gentman, *Bedenkingen wegens scheuringen en afscheidinge van de Kerke* (Utrecht, 1669), 5, 9, 11; Hoornbeeck, *Theologiae Practicae, Tomus Alter* (Utrecht, 1666), IX.xxi, p. 376.

<sup>85</sup> The three major parts of this discussion are found on pp. 666-676, 676-726, and 727-737, respectively.

the Lord spoke to Israel he commanded Moses to prepare the people. Oomius finds this preparation necessary with respect to the following: the place we are going (it is where God is present—in the past churches were called “basilicas,” i.e. places where the great king lived), the thing we must practice (they are spiritual, holy, glorious), ourselves, our spiritual enemies, and the fruit of our holy practice. In the preparation certain general things must be removed: 1)evil desires, 2)earthly, worldly and spiritual thoughts, 3)hardness of heart, as well as some particular things such as, 1)curiosity (in the sense of prying too deeply into certain matters), 2)self-conceit, 3)wrong feelings (like bias, preconceived notions, sinister thoughts about the preacher), 4)excess in eating and drinking (this can make one fall asleep easily; one should not eat such a large meal at noon or go to a bar before church). In the preparation other things must be actively present: 1)a heartfelt longing just as a new-born child longs for mother’s milk, 2)a resolved disposition to receive all that the Lord will be pleased to reveal to us, 3)an examination of our sins and imperfections—we need to be armored with the sword of the Spirit, God’s Word, so that sin can be killed in us, 4)prayer for the preacher and ourselves. Finally, Oomius suggests that we must arrive on time.

Oomius continues by giving various suggestions on how best to practice this duty during the preaching of the Word. The following must be present during the preaching of the Word: humble reverence, godly attention, insatiable to learn, to know God’s will, and to receive saving wisdom, holy desire to understand what is heard, faith of heart, application to ourselves, humble submission, holy intention to believe, do, and obey what is presented, prayer that we would transcend to God, control of our sins, patience if the

sermon gets long, and finally, Oomius writes that the people must not leave the service early.

Oomius adds some interesting details to a number of these points. Under the necessity of being humbly reverent Oomius details inward and outward sin.<sup>86</sup> He highlights a number of outward problems going on in the worship services of the church of his time by referring to different offending groups, such as: the chatterers (*klappaerts*), who disturb everyone by talking during the preaching or other parts of the service—the church is not a place to go hear the news; the quarrelers (*kijvers*); the flaunters (*pronckers en praelders*), who come with glittery eyes, curled hair, and made up faces as if they were speckled birds, as if they wanted to outshine the heaven with all its stars; the idle dawdlers (*beuselaers*), who nod piously in agreement when the preacher names this or that sin, verifying that he hit the nail on the head; the readers, who read this or that tract or chapter when they do not like the sermon; and finally the sleepers who without shame sleep from the beginning to the end of the sermon.

Under the importance of godly attention Oomius emphasizes that people need to pay attention to the sermons with both body and soul.<sup>87</sup> With the body, our ears and eyes should hang on the mouth of the preacher like babies hang on the breasts of their mother. Also, people should stand in order to pay attention best, just as the custom was in older times, except, as Augustine allowed, when one needs to sit because of weakness. With the soul people pay attention by listening to the words, but not so much the words

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<sup>86</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 679-682.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 687-697.



themselves as much as the things being explained by them. Writing down what the preacher says can help in this, as can applauding and calling out in order to show reception and enjoyment in what is being preached.

Under patience Oomius says, like Luther, that the preacher needs to know three things: how to climb up the pulpit, what to say, and how to climb down again. In the Bohemian churches no more than an hour was suggested for the morning sermons and a half an hour for the afternoon and evening. The church order of Wittenberg says no more than forty-five minutes and fifteen minutes in the afternoon and during the week. The Jesuits preach not longer than an hour.<sup>88</sup>

The last section under the practice of the duty of listening to God's preached Word handles that which is to be practiced after hearing God's Word.<sup>89</sup> Eight suggestions are given: 1)we must remember the sermon, lock it up, and keep it in our heads and hearts, like the ark kept the manna inside it; 2)we must continually contemplate it on our own; 3)we must repeat it by ourselves or with others; 4)we must test the teaching since we could get things wrong because of the preacher, whether on purpose or not, or because of our own weakness of understanding; 5)we should go to the minister if we have any doubts or if we do not understand something; 6)we must move to

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 723-725.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 727-737.

obedience and the practice of what was taught—hearing comes before obedience; 7) we need to seek God’s grace to determine what was taught; and 8) we must praise God.<sup>90</sup>

### 6.3.5 Scripture Catechized

Here Oomius deals with catechization at home, school, and especially, in the church.<sup>91</sup> He begins his discussion with an explanation of the term, “catechizing.”<sup>92</sup> Taken from the Greek it refers to “a simple, clear, and general manner of instructing the unlearned in the fundamentals of the Christian religion, taken from the teaching of the prophets and apostles.”<sup>93</sup> Oomius emphasizes that the fundamentals should not be taken from the traditions of the Fathers, or the idle rules or councils, or other false ordinances and decisions of the church as is the custom of the Catholic church.

The next part of the discussion of this duty turns to the historic weight of evidence recommending the practice of the duty of home, school, and church catechization.<sup>94</sup> Both Old and New Testaments clearly suggest catechization in the home by parents and heads

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<sup>90</sup> At point six Oomius notes that this is really what it is all about: people should go to the house of the Lord to be taught in his ways and to walk in his paths. Since he deals with this idea enough elsewhere, however, he chooses not to go into it again now.

<sup>91</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 738-843.

<sup>92</sup> He references Georg Sohn, *de Verb. Dei*, in *Opera* (Herborn), Vol. 1, II, p. 48. Some others he cites in the context of explaining the term are the following: Heinrich Alting, introduction to *Catechisatie over den Heydelbergschen Catechismus* (Steenwyck, 1662), p. 1; Benedictus Aretius, *Problemata theologica continentia praecipuos nostrae religionis locos, brevi & dilucida ratione explicatos* (Lausanne, 1576), LXVIII, p. 200; Tertullian, *de Idolol.*, x; *idem, de Peonit.*, vi.

<sup>93</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 738-739. Note: the Dutch word *catechizatie* is from the same Greek root as the English term.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 738-739.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 742-779. Oomius first points to the Synod of Dordt, session xvii, p. 55, as evidence of this practice.

of the home. Outside of the Scriptures, this has always been practiced by both Jews and Christians. History has also shown the importance of catechization in the schools.

Oomius spends most of his time dealing with the practice of catechization in the church throughout history.<sup>95</sup> Beginning with the biblical evidence, Oomius points to the time when Jesus' parents found him in the temple among the teachers—what was going on there was not preaching, but questions and answers, that is, catechization. The apostle Paul is referring to something similar—different than ordinary preaching—when he speaks of “prophesying,” according to Oomius. This kind of prophesying happened in the early church according to some of Chrysostom's homilies. Later, Zwingli and Ames wanted to bring this kind of prophesying back into use.<sup>96</sup> Who will deny the need for this type of instruction if we truly want God's Word to dwell in us richly, asks Oomius—it serves “to the revival and multiplication of spiritual knowledge; to the keeping of the orthodoxy in the churches, and the defense of the same against adversaries.”<sup>97</sup> For this reason this practice has been used in some of the Reformed churches—in Geneva, London, Antwerp, Dordrecht, Emden, and elsewhere. Oomius next traces in more detail the practice in the early church up to the time of the “first” Reformation and beyond to the seventeenth century. The students of catechization in the early church were always of two types: those born inside or outside the church. Oomius notes that the Roman church

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 749-782.

<sup>96</sup> Oomius, citing William Ames, *Conscience with the power and cases thereof* (Amsterdam, 1639), IV.xxvi.15, sect. 41-44; Ulrich Zwingli, *Adversus Hieronymum Emserum canonis adsertorem Huldrychi Zvinglii antibolon* (Zürich, 1524), Vol. 1, p. 196.

<sup>97</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 758.

has begun to see the profit of these instructions and has not only begun to admit that they are permissible, but also started to practice catechizing themselves.

All of the examples of the practice of catechization throughout the history of the church give much reason to regret the fact that church catechization, like other types of catechization, is neglected by so many Christians, and even spoken against.<sup>98</sup> In general this is because people are so little concerned about the salvation of their souls. More particularly this has happened because it is not directly commanded in God's Word and because it was not practiced in earlier times—the papists neglected it. Also, some neglect the practice because they feel they know so much already, while others, out of shame for their ignorance, do not want to learn the fundamentals of the teachings of Christ at an old age.<sup>99</sup> Oomius writes that the omission of the practice has led to all sorts of disorder, imprudence, idleness, and debauchery—in general, a Libertine attitude.

Next Oomius gives reasons for both the elderly and children to practice this duty.<sup>100</sup> The elderly are divided up into those who just need to attend catechism and those who need to attend and also participate by answering questions. Older people, especially those who are still children in their understanding, are required to make use of catechization by at least attending and listening, with respect to themselves (to grow in the knowledge of God and because all true Christians must desire the Word of the Lord night and day), their children (for fathers must make God's truth known to the children),

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 783-786.

<sup>99</sup> On the last of these Oomius cites Willem Teellinck, preface to *Huys-boeck* (Middelburg, 1639).

<sup>100</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 786-799.

and their ministers. Other elderly people should not just attend and listen, but should participate. These are those who search the Scriptures for answers to their questions, who read other books, and who pay close attention to what is taught by the preacher. Their presence is not only good for themselves, but it is good for all in attendance.

Oomius also gives reasons for children to go to catechism.<sup>101</sup> He finds it is necessary for them to attend with respect to, first, Christ, because he wants the children to come to him. Second, attendance is necessary with respect to the children themselves: we are to think of our Creator in the days of our youth; the first teachings are an important foundation for more and higher knowledge; children are very capable of learning because their memory is strong, their worries are less, and they have much freedom; that which is learned young is remembered best; and it is particularly sweet to see God's praise in the mouths of children.<sup>102</sup> Third, fourth, and fifth attendance is necessary with respect to the things a Christian is to know, with respect to their parents, and with respect to the church. Finally, attendance is required with respect to the police because through good instruction virtuous and faithful citizens are formed.

In the final section under this duty Oomius recommends what should be practiced by various groups of people in the context of the practice of this duty: in particular families, schools, churches, and the police are included here.<sup>103</sup> Parents and guardians

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 789-799.

<sup>102</sup> On thinking of the Creator in the days of youth Oomius notes that he will deal more with this under the title, *Het Leven der Jonge Lieden* ("the Life of the Young Members"). Whether this was to be a separate work or a perhaps a topic under the ascetic theology of his *Institutiones* is unknown.

<sup>103</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 800-843.

are encouraged through various means to implant the foundation of religion in their children and other people under their care. Oomius laments the fact that sometimes parents think they have done quite a bit if they teach their children some outward civil duties. With Teellinck, Oomius speaks of the importance of each family being a small church.<sup>104</sup> A reason for implanting religion in children is that they are born in sin—Oomius writes that parents in part of the cause of this.<sup>105</sup> Various catechisms are recommended by Oomius to help the parents in their task.<sup>106</sup> He mentions that there are so many means to help parents that there is no excuse for them not to be able to exercise their duty in this regard. To give a very brief overview of the section on schools it should

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<sup>104</sup> Citing Teellinck, *Sleutel der Devotie* (Amsterdam, 1624), IV.xvii, p. 534. See too Oomius' own *Ecclesiola, Dat is, Kleyne Kercke* (Amsterdam, 1661).

<sup>105</sup> He writes that he explains this further in his *Van onse natuyrlieke en aen-geboorene Verdorventheyt*, iv.2, par. 2, lett. b. This appears to be a now-unknown work of Oomius.

<sup>106</sup> Oomius says he will skip over Olevianus' since it is written in German, and then goes on to list the following: Marnixius, Willem Dÿck, Caspar Streso, *History-Catechismus... (voor eenvoudigen)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. ('s Gravenhage, 1641); *idem, Het Voor-beelt Vande Gesonde Worden*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. ('s Gravenhage, 1641); Jacobus Borstius, *Kort Begrip der chr. Leere* (1661), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.: *Eenige korte Vragen voor de Kleyne Kinderen* (Zwolle, 1697); Daniel van Henghel, *Korte Catechismus voor den Eenvoudigen*, after his sermons on Matthew 6:33; Jacobus Usherus, *'t Lichaem der goddelycke leere, of 't Begrijp ende het wesen der christelijcke religie, catechetische wijze voor-gesteld en verklaert...*, trans. from English (Amsterdam, 1656); Guilielmus Saldenus, *Christelijke kinder-school onderwijsende de jonge jeugd...* (Utrecht, 1669); Adrianus Cocquius, *Theologiae praxis, de ware practyque der godt-geleertheit: met een bysondere toepassing op de gevallen der conscientie en des menschelijcken levens: tot gerust-stellinge van vele bekommerde zielen, en verwackeringe der trage in de oeffeninge der godtsaligheid, in dese bedorvene tyden* (Utrecht, 1658); Franciscus Ridderus, *Dagelijkxe Huys-Catechisatie* (Rotterdam, 1657); Hermannus Witsius, *Practycke des Christendoms...* (Enkhuizen, 1665); Petrus de Witte, *Catechisatie over den Heidelbergischen Catechismus der Gereformeerde Christelicke Religie* (Hoorn, 1652); Cornelis van Poudroyen, *Catechisatie...over de Leere des Chr. Catechismi* (Utrecht, 1653); Johannes Martinus, *Grootere Catechisatie over den Catechismus...* (Amsterdam, 1665); Jacobus Stermont, Frans Ezausen den Heussen, *Catechisatie over de Christel. Catechismus* (Enkhuizen, 1668); Johannes Hoornbeeck; Andreas Essenius, *Christlike en Een-voudige Onderwyzing Tegens de Sociniaensche en zommige daer aen grenzende dwalingen* (Amsterdam, 1663). Oomius is particularly impressed with Guilielmus Saldenus' catechism for the youth because it is concise, especially designed to commit well to memory, and not only introduces the doctrines, but also the practice of godliness. Oomius also includes here some works particularly intended to instruct on the sacraments. Note that these works also contained polemical elements—a glance at the title of the Essenius work indicates that it is likely almost entirely so. Oomius did not see polemical argumentation as opposed to the encouragement towards the practice of godliness.

be mentioned that Oomius writes that those put in charge at schools must teach the foundations of religion and godliness, as Dort recommends, not only reading, writing, and singing.

Those in charge at churches, especially preachers, elders, and deacons have duties to practice here. In this context, the importance of sermons on the catechism, which are to be relatively short and understood by the youth, is emphasized. Oomius suggests that it might be a good idea for memorization to set the catechism to rhyme and meter and sing it—apparently Luther did something like this in 1525 and Hoornbeeck tried to do this for a number of years using the melody of the Ten Commandments song.<sup>107</sup> Both those who are not yet members of the church as well as members should be taken into consideration and catechized accordingly. For those who are members Oomius suggests levels of teaching covering: all or most questions of theology (using the explanations of Ursinus, Pareus, and Festus Hommius, translated into Dutch—these are not to serve the students of theology who know Latin, but they are for the unlearned so that they have material in which to be instructed), differences of religions (e.g. papists, Mennonites, etc.), the text of Scripture, and the practice of the exercises of godliness. In the churches, writes Oomius, not just men, but also women should be catechized.

Oomius also combats some reasons given against catechizing in the church.<sup>108</sup> Though some see teaching the catechism as an innovation and departure from the old ways, Oomius writes that such people do not know the old ways. Here he emphasizes

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<sup>107</sup> Citing Hoornbeeck, *De conversione Indorum et Gentilium libri duo. Accessit ejusdem vita ab amico edita* (Amsterdam, 1669), II.xiv, p. 242.

<sup>108</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 826-830.

that one must also distinguish innovation in the thing itself and in the way of doing it, the latter of which is always left in freedom to change according to the circumstance of the times and issues—just as there is a difference between preaching and the manner of preaching. It is good for there to be changes in how things are done. Oomius says we must remember too that those who came before did not see everything correctly—their example is to serve as an inspiration, not a hindrance. We must not stand still, but continually move forward.

The duties of the police have to do in particular with allowing the freedom for these instructions to occur (Oomius writes that he does not think force needs to be used to make this happen) and to ensure that the poor children too receive training in the catechism. Oomius ends this section by recommending that Christians who are being taught ought to make sure they prepare what is going to be handled in the sermon on every day up until Sunday and that they should be able to answer any questions the minister has.

### 6.3.6 Scripture Discussed with Others

The final external duty to be practiced with respect to Scripture is one, like the previous four, that is done with others, but this final duty, as opposed to the previous four practiced in public, is one to be practiced in private with small groups of people.<sup>109</sup> This duty is discussed in Van Mastricht as his ninth duty: “*de colloquiis Scripturariis*.”<sup>110</sup> Oomius begins with a description of this type of practice. He states that they can occur

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 843-859.

<sup>110</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, sections 77-83, p. 46.



publicly, in ecclesiastical gatherings, private-publicly, or completely privately with one's own family members or with other godly people. The latter of these is his focus for the rest of the chapter. As for the latter sort, they can be divided into set meetings (*gesette*) or incidental (*voorvallende*). The set meetings refer to regular discussions by godly people about the main points of the faith either on Sundays or any other day. These ought not to be confused with the name "conventicles," since these are improper (*ongeoorlofde*) meetings. Oomius finds that it would be a most wonderful thing if these could all be changed into the sort of Christian meetings he is talking about here.

Incidental discussions refer either to those general meetings that happen when two godly people happen to meet while walking or traveling, like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, or during particular times: either unhappy (like during an illness or other difficulty or when God allows his judgment to come upon the church, fatherland, or a city) or happy (during mealtimes). These discussions can be on a particular book, chapter, or text of Scripture, on a particular point of the Christian faith, or on a sermon.

Oomius spends little time in this section speaking on the fact that the duty is not practiced except to say that it is such a shame that people get together often enough to discuss worldly things, but not to talk about God, heaven, morality, and Christianity.<sup>111</sup> The next part of the discussion of this duty deals with the reasons to practice it.<sup>112</sup> Here Oomius notes such reasons as hindrance of evil, encouragement for us and others, the up building of the fellowship of believers (such gatherings are like many glowing coals),

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<sup>111</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 852.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 852-857.

showing that we are Christ's disciples. Furthermore, everyone else gets together as a group to speak of matters that concern them—businessmen, artists, students, politicians—why should Christians not get together to speak of holy things?

Oomius concludes the discussion of this duty with some particular matters to which attention must be paid.<sup>113</sup> First, not all people should be allowed into godly conversations. There should be meetings for the “worldly,” writes Oomius, in order that they be further led to the kingdom of heaven, but the openly godless should not be included in these types of discussions because they may mock God, his Word, and us. Second, the time of these discussions should simply be the best time for all. They should not occur during the times set aside for the public worshipers, however—this is what certain schismatics do. Third, the subject matter of the discussions should be that which are necessary and which serve the best for mutual edification. Finally, the matter of discussing should be with a humble holiness and honor. Time should not be wasted by unnecessary questions; rather the meetings should be spent on that which strengthens the heart, gives us and others edification and grace, and enflames our heart in a holy glow.

#### **6.4 Special Duties**

Having dealt with the general internal and external duties to be practiced by all Christians with respect to Scripture, Oomius concludes his work with two sections on particular duties. The first of these discuss duties for theologians.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 858-859.

<sup>114</sup> See *ibid.*, 859-913.

### 6.4.1 For Theologians

This discussion is divided into two chapters, the first dealing with the translation of the Bible and the second dealing with the interpretation of the Bible.

**The Translation of Scripture.** Though not exclusively, Oomius writes that it is mainly the work of theologians to bring the Word into a language the people can understand.<sup>115</sup> Unlike the papists, the Reformed believe that translation into the common languages is to the profit of the churches and according to God's will. This can be shown from the Scriptures themselves—both Old and New Testaments show that God willed that the Bible be put in the language the people would understand; Christ did not send out his apostles to teach all peoples without first giving them knowledge of the various languages; there are innumerable instructions for each one to continually read the Scriptures, to contemplate them, and to impress them upon the children. It should be plain to all, according to Oomius, that the command to translate is included in these instructions. Furthermore, the early church fathers and teachers agreed with the importance of translating the Bible. Under the discussion of translation, Oomius includes a word of thanks to God for providing people with gifts to translate, and he impresses the need for translators, just like ministers of the Word when they preach, to remain faithful. In this, truth and correctness of words should take priority over neatness of language.

**The Interpretation of Scripture.** The remainder of this section on special duties for theologians is on the interpretation and explanation of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>116</sup> Van

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 860-865.

<sup>116</sup> See *ibid.*, 865-913.

Mastricht has a similar discussion for his seventh use (*de interpretatione Scriptura*), though he subsumes translation under this topic and he does not distinguish between general and special duties as Oomius does.<sup>117</sup> Oomius describes the difference between interpreting and translating the Bible as the difference between literal (*woordelicke*) explanation and explanation of the content (*saeckelicke*).<sup>118</sup> Having initially shown with some reasons that the interpretation of Scripture is indeed necessary, Oomius shows in the second section of this chapter some of the details on how to find the true meaning of Scripture. Everyone would agree on the importance of discovering the true meaning, writes Oomius, except the Remonstrants who believe that everyone is free to understand Scripture and serve God as he believes—this is such a strange belief that it requires no refutation. Oomius begins his discussion of what is necessary when approaching the interpretation of Scripture with two qualities necessary for all Christians: 1) purity of understanding, heart, and of one's whole life, and 2) a diligent and sharp study. For the learned and those seeking to understand more difficult matters in the Bible, the following are necessary: 1) knowledge of the original languages, 2) knowledge in the way things are said and written—i.e. training in *grammatica*, *rhetorica*, and *dialectica*, and 3) training in philosophy, which should serve, but not rule, as famous theologians have always said—on this Oomius points particularly to Baronius, Heerboord, Hemmingius, Rivetus, Maresius, Hottingerus, Alstedius, and Hyperius, and quotes Gerson.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> See Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, sections 71-72, pp. 43-44.

<sup>118</sup> Oomius, citing Rivetus, *Isagoge*, xiv, p. 929.

<sup>119</sup> The following citations are given: Caesar Baronius, *Philosophia Theol. ancillans.*; Adrianus Heereboord, *Dissertat. de rite recteque instituendis Collegiis privatis*, p. 6; Nicolaus Hemmingius,

In addition to the above qualities necessary Oomius recommends that which should be present before, during, and after this holy practice of interpreting the Scriptures.<sup>120</sup> Before this study especially the following is necessary: particular holiness and highest honor, as well as fiery prayer to God since he is the interpreter of his words. During the holy study various matters must be determined: who is speaking and spoken to, the time, place, manner, and goal of the material, that which comes before and after the text, comparison with various other similar or dissimilar passages in the Bible, and whether the passage is literal or figurative. After the study one must go to other interpreters of the passage. The older interpreters must be examined, but not that we remain completely satisfied with them—some made mistakes in their translations and interpretations because they did not know Greek and Hebrew (for example Abrosius on Luke and the letters of Paul). Newer interpreters too must be used. This includes rabbis and the papists, but mainly interpreters one is sure about, especially those who bring theoretical theology into the practice—to holy meditations, and godly practices. Oomius judges the following to be this sort: Musculus, Martyr, Zanchius, Hyperius, Mollerus, Davenantius, Crocius, etc., and especially Calvin, whom he calls an almost divine interpreter gifted with astonishing wisdom. In the use of past interpreters people sin who

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dedication and preface to *Syntagma institutionum christianarum* in *Opuscula theologica* (Geneva, 1586), p. 675; Rivetus, *Cathol. Orthod.*, in *Opera theologica* (Rotterdam, 1651), Vol. 3, pp. 103-104; Maresius, *De Abusu philosophiae Cartesianae, surrepente et vitando in rebus theologicis et fidei, dissertatio theologica* (Groningen, 1670), xi, p. 6; Hottingerus, *Specimen Philosophiae Historicae*, in *Dissertationum miscellanearum* pentas (Zürich, 1654), third dissertation, pp. 125 and ff.; Alsted, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Libri Duo: Naturam Theologiae explicant, et rationem studii illius plenissime monstrantes* (Frankfurt, 1614), II.x-xi; Andreas Hyperius, *De Theologo, seu de ratione studii theologici libri IIII* (Basil, 1559), I.iv-vii; Jean Charlier de Gerson, *Consolatio theologiae*, I.

<sup>120</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 878-889. Oomius cites Polanus, *Syntagma theologiae christianae* (Geneva, 1617), I.xlv, on this in general.

proudly despise all interpreters, like the Anabaptists. But on the other side of spectrum, people also sin who depend too much on interpreters—the papists for example cannot depart at all from Thomas, Aegidius, and Scotus. But Oomius is speaking here too to Reformed who are robbed from the true understanding of the Scriptures by not departing from their teachers. Going to other interpreters of a passage goes beyond reading what others in the past wrote—it also includes discussing the passage with others in conversation.

The following section examines who the interpreter and judge of the right sense of Scripture is. The main and inerrant interpreter, writes Oomius, is God himself.<sup>121</sup> Lesser interpreters, all dependent on God, are people, either shepherds and teachers or laypersons. After Augustine Oomius finds that the purity of interpretation and thus also the Christian doctrine began to get worse.<sup>122</sup> But God awakened people like Gregory I around 590, Isidorus around 596, Beda around 733 (among the English), the German Rabanus Maurus around 839. Beginning around 1200 the Scholastics left the simple interpretations of Scripture and turned them completely into thorny questions filled with philosophical sharpness.<sup>123</sup> But God led some out of this: Nicolaus of Lyra around 1320,

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<sup>121</sup> Citing Voetius, *De iudice & norma fidei*, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum* (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1648-1669), Vol. 5, p. 423; Essenius, *Disp. VII, de Scriptura*, in *Systema theologiae dogmaticae*, thesis cxiii, p. 60.

<sup>122</sup> Citing Johannes Polyander à Kerckhoven, *Syntagma exercitationum theologicarum Johannis Polyandri: varias orationes ac disputationes complectens, in quibus praecipuae quaestiones theologiae breviter ac perspicue explicantur* (Leiden, 1621), I.xv, p. 237.

<sup>123</sup> Oomius, citing Lambert Danaeu, forward to *In Petri Lombardi librum unum sententiarum de vero Deo commentarius* (Geneva, 1570), I.xii and ff.; Altling, *Problema theologicum, de veritate et existentia purgatorii pontificii: An sit, sive verè existat?* (Groningen, 1628), I.iii, p. 9; Voetius, *De theologia scholastica*, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, Vol. 1, pp. 12-29; Hottingerus, *Specimen Philosophiae Historicae*, pp. 100, 116, 124; Johann Gerhard, *Conf. Catholic*, I.ii.15; Robert

John Wycliffe in 1364, Johannes Hus, Luther, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Calvin, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Martyr, Bullinger, Musculus, Zanchi, Ursinus, Beza, Bretius, Aretius, Mercerus, Junius, Hyperius, Mollerus, Voetius, Hottingerus, J. Wilkins, and many others. All believers have the right to interpret the Bible as well. In a similar way, the correct judge of the interpretation of Scripture is first God, and then also ministers and all people.

The final section of this chapter on the interpretation of Scripture lists a number of parties who err on this matter.<sup>124</sup> Those err, first, who set up the churches, pope, or a council to be the main and infallible interpreter or judge or standard of interpretation, or make these a *principium* or foundation of the faith. Second, those err who set the word of the Spirit in each individual above or instead of or without the inward moving of the Spirit in all—those who do this are fanatic enthusiasts. Those err, thirdly, who make nature human reason and understanding the rule and standard. The Socinians and Remonstrants do this. Oomius' opinion on reason is that it is distorted through the fall, almost dead with respect to spiritual salvation and supernatural matters—it is certainly too fallible to be a rule or right standard. Furthermore there are mysteries in the Bible which go far above all understanding of reason. Others err, fourth, who believe that the hearts of people contain the seeds of all things (like the Weigelians and the Quakers),

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Parker, *Polit. Eccl.*, II.xxxiv; Hoornbeeck, *Dissert. de Controvers. & Disp. Theol.*, p. 44; Owen, *Theologoumena*, p. 516; Michael Walther, *Centuria miscellaneorum theologicorum: seu Liber singularis de quaestis et responsis per epistolas* (Ulmae Svevorum [Ulm], 1646), p. 256.

<sup>124</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 898-913.

fifth, who promote the *Axioma Philosophicum* and examine theology by this axiom, and, finally, who make philosophy, particularly that of Descartes, the standard.

#### 6.4.2 For Everyone

In the seventh and final main section of this volume of the *Institutiones* Oomius discusses three special duties for all Christians with respect to Holy Scripture.<sup>125</sup>

**Not Desecrating or Distorting Scripture.** Oomius speaks both of ways Scripture can be desecrated and how Christians can take care that they do not succumb to this sin. Violation of Scripture can happen either directly or indirectly. Oomius identifies four different ways this can happen directly.<sup>126</sup> First, this can happen by addition. The obvious way this occurs is by simple addition to the text, but another way is when the Bible is not touched at all, but certain other books are considered divine and added to the books of the Bible. Second, desecration of the Bible happens through subtracting entire books from the canon (like the Samaritans who accept only the five books of Moses) or by leaving something important out of a text. Third, sometimes changes are made—for example, exchanging one word for another or changing one or more letters around to change the sense of the text. Finally, Scripture is violated too when books are mixed. An example of this is placing one of the books of Moses before another one, thus changing the order.

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<sup>125</sup> This final section is in *Institutiones* 1.1 on 914-998.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 915-919.



Indirectly the Word is violated when it is misused. Three ways are identified here.<sup>127</sup> First, Scripture is indirectly violated by bad interpretation, whether this happens through ignorance, evil, mockery (*sottelick*), or ridicule. Second, God's Word is desecrated when it is used incorrectly. This can happen in the context of defense against errors or recommending others to sin. Third, God's Word is desecrated through false application or when it is used for sinful or idle things.

To help correct against the misuse of Scripture Oomius gives reasons to encourage people against the desecration and distortion of Scripture.<sup>128</sup> Looking to the Bible itself Oomius finds that its authority and great holiness dictate against this kind of action. Looking to ourselves, if we desecrate the Scriptures we are giving evidence that we are an unlearned, groundless, and godless people. Finally, looking to God we find that he does not want his Word desecrated or misused and that he will hold such people guilty who desecrate it both in this life and the next and in body and soul.

**Following Scripture—Always and in all Things.** The second special duty recommended by Oomius is that always and in all things concerning both doctrine and life we ought to follow the Scriptures as our judge and advisor.<sup>129</sup> Van Mastricht's tenth and final use of Scripture seems to be close to this duty that Oomius gives. Van Mastricht calls it, *de praxi, & observatione verbi divini*.<sup>130</sup> Oomius writes that there are

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 920-941.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 941-947.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 947-975.

<sup>130</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, I.ii, section 84, pp. 46-47.

many who sin against this practice by going elsewhere for teaching and for advice for their lives. As for those who go elsewhere for teaching and doctrine, outside the Reformed churches the papists are mentioned as are those who follow new revelations. In the latter category Oomius places besides some Catholics, also the Weigelians, Anabaptists, Enthusiasts, and Quakers. Within the Reformed camp Oomius identifies of this sort people who are amazed by this or that minister or teacher because of the great learnedness or speaking ability of the person. People sin too by going to places other than God's Word for living. Some simply do not go to the Holy Scriptures for advice. Others go to wrong places for advice—their own reason and ingenuity, the examples of others, or to flesh and blood. Still others go to the Bible, but they do not wait for Christ's answer, like Peter who took out his sword immediately.

Oomius looks to the Bible and to people themselves for reasons to follow the Scriptures.<sup>131</sup> As for the Bible, it is a judge and the pronouncement it makes about matters is such that one can stand safely on it and follow it because it is unchangingly true, clear, impartial, and because in the law of the Lord is found everything needed for doctrine and for a good life. The Scriptures are also our best advisor for how could one find better advice than that which is found in God's witnesses? With respect to ourselves, we will never be sure if our deeds please God without the advice of Scripture. Without it we cannot honor God or obey his commands. We need God's Word all the more because we walk among so many dangers in this life. To the end of this duty there

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<sup>131</sup> *Institutiones* 1.1, 963-971.

sin so that Christians are encouraged to practice paying attention to the Word.<sup>135</sup> The first reasons center on Holy Scripture itself—how could we not pay attention to the words of him who is higher than the highest, and given the greatness and usefulness of the content of those words, how could we not pay them attention? Oomius also finds reasons when looking to people. For one, we need to pay attention to the Word because our own understanding is so dark, as is the ignorance of our heart—so much so that we are estranged from God and his life. We need the light of God’s Word to shine in the darkness of our hearts. If we do pay attention to the Scriptures we will experience God’s favor and grace and we will participate in the physical light of temporal blessing, the spiritual light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the countenance of Jesus Christ, and in the glorious light in heaven, which goes about the other two. At the end of this section Oomius makes a point of urging his readers to practice this duty of paying close attention to the pronouncement of the Scriptures.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 991-997.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 997-998.

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## PART IV: THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

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### Chapter 7

#### The Explanation and Defense of the Doctrine

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#### 7.1 Introduction and Overview of the Doctrine in Oomius' *Institutiones*

Oomius' discussion of the doctrine of God is found in two publications which together make up the first treatise of the second book of the first part of the *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*.<sup>1</sup> The first part of the *Institutiones*, is on faith, that is, what is to be believed. The first book of the first part of the *Institutiones* deals with Scripture, or what Oomius calls the "principium doctrinale."<sup>2</sup> The second book of the first part, to have been made up of a number of treatises, is on the truths that are revealed and described in the Holy Scriptures. The remaining treatises of the second book, never published, were

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<sup>1</sup> *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae. ofte Onderwijsingen in de Practycke der Godtgeleertheydt. Eerste Tractaet des Tweeden Boeck's van het Eerste Deel, Vervattende de Verhandelinge der Theologia Didactica. In welke (na de uytlegginge en vast-stellinge van de Tegenstellingen der valschelick genaemde Wetenschap, die aen de Practijcke getoetst en tot desselve worden onnut gethoont Verklaeringe der voorkomende Kerckelicke Oudtheden) de Leere der Waerheyt wort aengedrongen tot de Godtsaligheyt* (Bolsward: Wed. van Samuel Harninghouk, 1676) and *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae. ofte Onderwijsingen in de Practycke der Godtgeleertheydt. Vervolgh van het Eerste Tractaet des Tweeden Boeck's van het Eerste Deel, Vervattende de Verhandelinge der Theologia Didactica* (Schiedam: Laurens Vander Wiel, 1680).

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 4.

to have been on God's works, on man, on the Mediator, and on the benefits of the Mediator. Though it is not entirely clear, since, with no explanation by the author, the second of these two publications on the doctrine of God is the last part of his *Institutiones* he would write, thus leaving them far from complete, the first treatise, on God, appears to be complete—Oomius covers the topics typically discussed in the doctrine: God's being, name, and attributes are handled in his 1676 publication and the divine persons are covered in its continuation published separately in 1680.<sup>3</sup> Nowhere does Oomius indicate that there were any additional topics to have been included in his discussion of the doctrine of God.

The full title of the work affirms what Oomius writes in his *Dissertatie* about the goal and method for his *Instructions in Practical Theology*: after explaining and defending the doctrine it will be “pressed toward godliness.”<sup>4</sup> In the dedication to *Institutiones* 1.2.1 the reader finds some additional, initial descriptions of the work by its author. Oomius tells the reader that most of the book had been written for some years, but that recent difficult times, particularly those during the “year of disaster” for the Dutch Republic, 1672, prevented the publication.<sup>5</sup> The content of the work is the

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<sup>3</sup> These works will be referred to as *Institutiones* 1.2.1 and *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), showing that they are the first treatise of the second book of the first part of the *Institutiones*. Though both publications are part of the same work, a separate designation is needed for the section on the Trinity—its pagination starts over again with page one because it was published separately.

<sup>4</sup> See above in footnote 1: “Aengedrongen tot de Godtsaligheyt.”

<sup>5</sup> Oomius is likely referring here to events begun in 1672 (four years earlier). That year, the same year the introduction to and the first book of the first part of the *Institutiones* were published, was one of great disaster for the Dutch Republic. Dutch finance and commerce as well as building and art, came virtually to a stand-still due to the greatest crash of the Amsterdam Exchange in early modern times. At the same time there were simultaneous military attacks on the Low Lands: the French by land and the English by sea. While the English were held off, the French invaded and occupied the country until 1674. Various

doctrine of God and his attributes, while its treatment is described as refraining from in-depth and “curious” issues since they can be found easily enough elsewhere. Basil is quoted as writing, “It is a sickness of the heart to search too deeply into God.”<sup>6</sup> Oomius wonders what good it is to turn the doctrine of the Christian religion into a dark and subtle science, teaching people to dispute, but not teaching them how to live. Those who do this neglect the most important part of religion, that is, teaching people how to live in godliness. The true end of theology is life. Oomius opens the holy pages of Scripture not so much to become more learned, but to become better and more to instruct the heart than to sharpen the understanding. Oomius thus does not want to write for the schools, but for living and to show Christians what practical use they can gain from the doctrine of God and his attributes.

Despite the fact that he is not writing for the schools and not so much for understanding as for life, Oomius states that the application of the doctrine will be done only after every topic, to the extent that the author judges it necessary, is explained and defended. Like his procedure in his doctrine of Scripture, Oomius explains and defends the doctrine in addition to applying it. In describing the doctrine the pastor notes that he will not try to display any innovations in doctrine—he wants to teach the old, orthodox theology. Oomius would rather say something wrong than deviate from orthodoxy even a straw’s breadth. Philosophers and theologians who do introduce new ideas do so to make a name for themselves, suggests Oomius. Oomius laments the fact that the

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other internal political and ideological issues plagued the Republic in the years following 1672 as well. See Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 796-825.

<sup>6</sup> “Animi morbus est, malè & superflue de Deo quaerere.” No citation is given for this quote.

innovators in doctrine and its application are praised to the heavens while the faithful theologians are made out to be *victimae publici odii*. The innovators should have the wind taken out of their sails by the authorities because it is their duty that godliness, as well as the republic which depends on it, is not damaged by the ambitions of disputations and innovations. Nevertheless, Oomius himself will not refrain in the work which follows from pointing out doctrines which are unhealthy or not in accord with the old and correct theology. Oomius hopes, however, that in doing so it will not be shown that he hates the people who teach the errors, but that he hates the errors. Despite his good intentions on this point, he suspects he will likely be misunderstood by some.

Unlike Oomius' doctrine of Scripture, *Institutiones* 1.1, which divides the explanation and defense of the doctrine from its practice and application, the doctrinal and practical sections of *Institutiones* 1.2.1 interweave. After each point of the doctrine application immediately follows. The contents of the treatise are as follows with the beginning page number following each chapter:

### **First Division: God in General**

Chapter 1: Where it is proven that there is a God

Chapter 2: Descartes is refuted

Chapter 3: Where it is taught that whether or not there is a God ought not to be disputed on the pulpit

Chapter 4: Where Atheism and Atheists are handled

Chapter 5: Where it is taught that one may not doubt God and divine things

Chapter 6: Where it is urged that one should try to know God correctly and well

### **Second Division: God's Being, Names, and Attributes**

#### *First Subdivision: God's Being*

Chapter 1: Where it is explained what is understood by God's being

Chapter 2: Where it is shown that there is only one God

*Second Subdivision: God's Names*

Chapter 1: The names of God in the Old Testament

Chapter 2: The names of God in the New Testament and the application of this entire teaching

*Third Subdivision: God's Attributes*

*First Section: The Doctrine of God's Attributes in General*

Chapter 1: Explanation of the ways we come to knowledge of God and the teaching of what the attributes of God are

Chapter 2: Various distinctions of God's attributes

*Second Section: The Doctrine of God's Attributes in Particular*

First Subsection: Attributes of Being

Chapter 1: Primacy and Independence

Chapter 2: Simplicity, Unity, Invisibility, Intangibility, Indepictability

Chapter 3: Immutability

Chapter 4: Perfection, All-Sufficiency

Chapter 5: Eternity

Chapter 6: Immeasurability, Omnipresence

Chapter 7: Incomprehensibility

Chapter 8: Showing that the infinite God is the portion of true believers

Second Subsection: Attributes of Life

First Article: Attributes attributed to God by manner of powers

Chapter 1: God's life

Chapter 2: God's understanding and omniscience

Chapter 3: God's will

Chapter 4: Power or omnipotence

Second Article: Attributes attributed to God by manner of morals

Chapter 1: Wisdom

Chapter 2: Holiness

Chapter 3: Goodness, love, grace, loving-kindness

Chapter 4: Mercy

Chapter 5: Patience or forbearing

Chapter 6: Truth, faithfulness, perseverance

Chapter 7: Justice, especially vengeance

Chapter 8: God's wrath

Third Article: Attributes in which God's highest excellence is apparent

Chapter 1: Might or rule

Chapter 2: Glory

Chapter 3: Beatitude ("zaligheid")



### **Third Division: The Divine Persons<sup>7</sup>**

- Chapter 1: Where the doctrine of the holy Trinity is affirmed
- Chapter 2: God the Father
- Chapter 3: God the Son
- Chapter 4: God the Holy Spirit
- Chapter 5: On the grieving of the Holy Spirit
- Chapter 6: On the extinguishing of the Holy Spirit
- Chapter 7: Where it is shown that believers must manifest that they are the temples of the Holy Spirit
- Chapter 8: Where it is taught that believers must let themselves be led by the Holy Spirit

As in the doctrine of Scripture—and as noted above—though Oomius' goal is to apply the doctrine in the practice, he spends some time explaining and defending the various topics of the doctrine. Though the explanation and application of the doctrine interweave in this volume, the treatment here will follow the treatment in the previous chapter: with the exception of the description of the first division, an overview of Oomius' explanation and defense of the doctrine will be given before concentrating on the practical application.

Oomius introduces his treatment of the doctrine by saying that he is beginning his treatment with God not just because he is the beginning of his thesis or of man's knowledge, but also insofar as he is the subject and the first and main place of theology on which all other things depend, from which they flow, under which they are understood, and to which they must all be brought.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This final division of the treatise on the doctrine of God was published separately in 1680, four years after the first two divisions appeared together in one volume.

<sup>8</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 2.

## 7.2 God in General

The first of the three main divisions of the doctrine is made up of six chapters which deal with God in general.<sup>9</sup> In this first division the topics of the doctrine usually are not specifically brought into the practice—though at times Oomius will move to a discussion of the practice, for the most part, only initial explanation and defense of the teaching are handled here. Because Oomius seems to bring this first division of the doctrine to the practice only as occasional asides, this division does not warrant a separate treatment of the application of the doctrine as the other topics of the doctrine all do. Any practical discussion will simply be included in the discussion below.

The first of the six chapters in the first division of Oomius' doctrine of God is called, "Wherein it is proved that there is a God."<sup>10</sup> Oomius begins the chapter by stating that there is nothing that is more important or that should come earlier in order of treatment than the fact that there is a God because he that comes to God must believe that he exists. Most of the chapter consists of a discussion of a number of matters that Oomius believes ought to be taken into consideration for people to be convinced of the truth that there is a God: 1)the works of God—creation (both by noticing the whole world and seeing that nothing causes itself so that it must come from elsewhere—and where but from the eternal—as well as by noticing particular parts of the world such as the general harmony of so many different things, as well as the human body and soul); 2)the innate seeds of knowledge, called *notiones communes* in the schools; 3)matters going against

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 3-108.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 3-34.

the human conscience; 4) matters going according to the conscience; 5) the heroic deeds done above and beyond all power of human understanding and power by Moses, Joshua, Samson, Elijah, Cyrus, and others; 6) the work of the devil (some have been led to believe in God after witnessing it); 7) special protection by God above and against natural means; 8) miracles; 9) accurate prophecies of future things; 10) such various things as, a) the oath used in all lands to be sure someone is telling the truth, b) the normal speech of all peoples—they are acknowledging a divine power when they are thankful or happy after saying, “it is raining,” or “it is snowing,” c) an unexpected peril or fear—when this happens even the godless turn to God, and d) the plethora of idolatry among the heathens—this shows that all have a sense of the divine; and 11) the “anticipation” of God in all people. Numerous classical, medieval, and contemporary authors are cited by Oomius in the context of these eleven points.<sup>11</sup> These reasons are followed by various examples of historical figures who denied there was a God as well as those who came to a knowledge of God for various reasons and through various circumstances.

The second chapter of the first division seeks to refute Descartes.<sup>12</sup> Oomius begins the chapter, immediately contrasting himself with the new philosophy, by stating

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<sup>11</sup> E.g. Johannes Hoornbeeck, *Socianismus confutatus*, 3 vols. (Utrecht, 1650; Amsterdam, 1662 and 1664), Vol. 1, I.vii.2, p. 151; Daniël Tilenus, *Syntagmatis disputationum theologicarum in Academia Sedanensi habitarum pars I* (Sedan, 1614; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), viii.4, p. 50; Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.*, II, p. 200 and III, p. 334; *idem*, *de Divination*, II; *idem*, *pro Arch.*; Lactantius, *Libr. de Ira Dei*, x (pp. 783-793); Lambert Danaeus., *Christianae isagoges ad christianorum theologorum locos communes* (Geneva, 1583-1588), I.iii (fol. m. 3-4); *idem*, *Ethices christianae libri tres* (Geneva, 1577), I.vi, xvii, xxi; Justin, *Apolog.*, II; Tertullian, *de Anima*; Amesius, *Cas. Consc.*, I.ii; Gisbertus Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1648-1669), Vol. 1, 141-153; Chrysostom, *Serm. de fid. & leg. natura*; Ambrose, *Epist. LXXI ad Irenaeum*; Hemming., *de Lege Naturae.*, 275, 291 and ff.; Plotinus, *Ennead.*, III.vii;

<sup>12</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 34-46.

that in listing the various proofs for God's existence he is not adding anything new, but simply presenting reasons given by past theologians to prove that there is a God.<sup>13</sup> He points out following this point that Descartes has written that there were never solid reasons found or demonstrations given to convince the atheists that there is a God.<sup>14</sup> Several points are made reflecting generally on Descartes' opinion about the proofs for God's existence. First, writes Oomius, if what the philosopher suggests is true, atheists and heathens would have an excuse not to believe in God, contrary to what Paul states in Romans 1:19 and 20. Paul judged that the heathens and atheists could come to a certain knowledge of the existence of God such that they are made without excuse. In response to this, Descartes and many other Scholastics might say the heathens are not without excuse because of "probable evidence" (*probabele evidentie*) or a kind of moral certainty.<sup>15</sup> This is not enough for Oomius. He is of the opinion that Paul is saying the heathens are without excuse because God has revealed his existence from his effects—this is not only a probable and moral surety, but also a physical and clear one (*physice en baerblijckelick*). Second, if what Descartes says is true, then God labored in vain and insufficiently to show his people and the heathens that there is a God. In the Old Testament God goes back to the work of creation and the effects of nature to show with certainty that he is God. If this was only a probable proof, the Jews would have surely

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>14</sup> Oomius, citing Paulus Voetius, *Theologia naturalis Reformata, item de Anima separata* (Utrecht, 1655), iii.2, pp. 25 and ff.

<sup>15</sup> Oomius, citing Theodorus Smising., *Disputationes theologicae de Deo uno...* (Antwerp, 1624), I.i.4.

objected that they had not received sufficient proof. Third, according to Descartes in the New Testament the Holy Spirit, through his apostles, proved to the heathens that there is a God. Without the Holy Spirit bringing sure reasons through Paul, the wise among the heathens—like the Sophists in Athens—would have been able to resist and easily silence Paul. It follows from this that Paul was imprudent in arguing with them about the existence of God since they could have evaded this argument and thus denied God's existence. Fourth, and finally, if Descartes was the first to find solid reasons to convince the heathens, it follows that God himself, and the Holy Spirit, could not provide such reasons or chose not to. The first of these would display a lack of power and knowledge in God and make Descartes wiser than the Holy Spirit. The second of these would suggest a carelessness in God by not using stronger arguments through his apostles.

In the rest of this chapter, Oomius explores the demonstration of Descartes.<sup>16</sup> It comes from an innate idea or conception of God. Oomius finds that the philosopher prepares a way to God with the premise that “what is true, is that which I can clearly and distinctly understand.”<sup>17</sup> The idleness of this notion Oomius states he has pointed to in the first book of the *Institutiones*.<sup>18</sup> Here Oomius deals with this premise briefly and shows that it is either outright false, or the same proof which theologians have used before him, but it has been darkened and mutilated by Descartes.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 38-46.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>18</sup> See *Institutiones* 1.1, p. 909.

<sup>19</sup> Oomius cites Descartes, *Meditat.*, III when referring to his premise and Vogelsang., *Diatrib. de Idea Dei*, 72, when he suggests it may be outright false. See the following on the history of the reception of Descartes by the Dutch Reformed: Aza Goudriaan, “Die Rezeption des cartesianischen Gottesgedankens

The brief chapter which follows teaches that it ought not to be disputed on the pulpits whether or not there is a God.<sup>20</sup> Here Oomius emphasizes that though he has dealt with God's being and existence on the previous pages, these matters should not be presented on the pulpit. He notes that though various "practical writers" (*practisijnen*) deal with the issue of atheism they certainly do not do so with the intention that it should be discussed on the pulpit.<sup>21</sup> To answer the atheists and prove in front of the people that there is a God is not only unedifying, but very dangerous.

The fourth chapter of the first division is on atheism and atheists.<sup>22</sup> From what has thus far been discussed, begins Oomius, it should be clear how damaging and cursed atheism is since it is nothing else than a renouncing of reason and a denial of humanity.

Atheism takes away the only completion of humanity (the knowledge of God the Creator), the hope of the human race, and the order which religion brings to the world.

Oomius finds that it would serve the reader to spend a little time dealing with atheism.

As a definition the following is given: "those who directly or indirectly reject themselves

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bei Abrahamus Heidanus," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 38, no. 2 (1996): 166-197; Theo Verbeek, *Descartes and the Dutch: Early Reactions to Cartesian Philosophy, 1637-1650* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992); C. Louise Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme* (Amsterdam: N.V. Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1954).

<sup>20</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 46-48.

<sup>21</sup> The following are listed and cited: James Ussher, *'t Lichaem der goddelycke leere, of 't Begrijp ende het wesen der christelijcke religie, catechetische wijze voor-gesteld en verklaert...*, transl. by Simeon Ruytinck (Amsterdam, 1656), 29; originally published as *A body of divinitie, or, The summe and substance of Christian religion; catechistically propounded, and explained...* (London, 1645); Alexander Grosse, *Man's miserie without Christ*, xxiii, p. 431; John Abrenathy, *Een christelick ende goddelick tractaet, inhoudende de medicine der siele...*, transl. from English (Amsterdam, 1648), iii, p. 54; Henry Smith, *God's Arrow against Atheists in Sermons of M. Henry Smith* (London, 1657), i; William Perkins, *A Case of Conscience* (Edinburgh, 1592), II.ii, p. 3 (Oomius calls this work *Casus Conscientiae*); Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Summa casuum conscientiae: novâ methodo elaborata* (Frankfurt, 1628), v, 60-61.

<sup>22</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 48-84.

or deny others the knowledge, faith, and service of God.”<sup>23</sup> Oomius begins his discussion—and frames the elaboration of his definition—by highlighting the indirect and direct distinction of this definition, and within this discussion speaks of practical and speculative atheism.<sup>24</sup> This structure and his discussion closely parallel especially Voetius and Turretin, and, more broadly, the discussion of atheism in Charnock and other Reformed orthodox.<sup>25</sup> Indirectly one can be an atheist practically or theoretically. Those who are atheists practically neither fear or serve God, as shown in Job 21:14-15. There are several types. First, there are those who with their witness and confession find the practice of religion and godliness without use and they also reject all the means to the knowledge of religion and godliness. Those who find the practice of religion and godliness useless are the Epicurists, Libertines, Licianites, and other profane people who are called deists in France. Examples of those who reject the means of godliness are the history writer Aytzema and the philosopher Descartes.<sup>26</sup> Second are those who reject all practice of the true religion, but yet they do profess a religion, such as the heathens who have many gods and religions. The Muslims and Jews, as well as the Socinians among the Christians, can in this sense be called atheists. Third, those are practical atheists who deny religion and God not so much with their convictions or confession, but with their

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 49. Here passages such as Job 21:14-15, Psalm 10:4, 14:1, 36:1, 1 Corinthians 15:32-34, Ephesians 2:12, and 1 Thessalonians 4:5 are cited.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 49-64.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Voetius, *De atheismo*, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, Vol. 1, 114-226; Francis Turretin, *Institutio theologiae elencticae* (Geneva, 1679-85), Vol. 1, III.ii; Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (London: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1853), I-II.

<sup>26</sup> Oomius, citing E. van Aytsema, *Verhael van Staedt en Oorlogh*, XLVI, p. 383 and XLIV, p. 131 (edit. in quarto).

walk. Fourth, some practical atheists use religion as a garment, taking off and putting it on, or they show themselves to be a friend to all religions and sects even if they disagree with their doctrines. Various examples of this last category are given.

There are also theoretical or speculative atheists, according to Oomius. These are those who through a firm belief deny God and take away his divinity. Thus those who, for example, deny God's providence are atheists.<sup>27</sup> Also, those who deny God's justice are to be considered atheists, because to call God unjust is to say that he is no God. To give another example, those who with the heathens deny the divinity of Scripture or put it into question with the papists are to be considered atheists.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, those who deny all or most of God's attributes are atheists because they are in effect denying God. Oomius calls "secondary" atheists those who deny such things as God's infinity, God's immutability, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body. Several examples of secondary atheists follow.

Oomius turns next to direct atheists who are either so externally or inwardly.<sup>29</sup> Externally one is a direct atheist when one disputes, wickedly and against his own feelings, that there is no God. Inwardly one can be a direct atheist in several ways. First, when one does not know of God, that is, he does not know what God is, who he is, or even whether he is.<sup>30</sup> The example Oomius gives here is one who was raised alone in the

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<sup>27</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *De atheismo*, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, Vol. 1, 119.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Institutiones* 1.1, 316 and 325-326.

<sup>29</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 64-65.

<sup>30</sup> Oomius, citing Martinus Schoock, *De scepticismo libri IV...* (Groningen, 1652), XI.xiv, 143.



wilderness and never heard from anyone that there was a God. This is not really so much an atheist, admits Oomius, as someone parallel in many ways to a child who knows very little of God, but cannot really be called an unbeliever. Second, one is an atheist who is plagued with doubts to such an extent that they quench belief and sure knowledge. Third, someone is an atheist who believes he has achieved the highest possible rank of godliness and thus thinks he is freed from fear of God. Fourth, one is an atheist who tries to snuff out all knowledge, feeling, and belief in God and thus tries to achieve a certainty and clarity about atheism in his heart.

Oomius concludes from this discussion that there really can be no direct or speculative atheists who are completely convinced that there is no God. When the fool says in his heart that there is no God in Psalm 14:1, that should be understood as practical atheism. Oomius takes up a further discussion of this point by examining the person of whom David is speaking in Psalm 14 and then what David says about that person.<sup>31</sup> What follows is one of the few times in this first division that Oomius specifically moves into the practice. The first point of application from this discussion concerns the faith life of all Christians—out of this passage Oomius finds certain things to be avoided as well as things to be practiced.<sup>32</sup> First, the following is highlighted by Oomius: 1)no room must be given to atheistic thoughts; 2)not only must godless books by and for the unlearned be avoided, but so must those which get into disputations and general idleness dealing with the issue of whether or not God exists; 3)Christians must not worry about the fortune of

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<sup>31</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 65-77.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-79.

the godless and the misfortune of the godly or the godless life of some Christians, even ministers of the gospel, which can lead to a doubting atheism—God does not always punish sinners immediately.<sup>33</sup> More positively, Oomius suggests a number of duties to be practiced in light of his Psalm 14 interpretation and analysis of practical atheism. First, we must continually pray that God, through the Holy Spirit, would guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, as Philippians 4:7 says, and that he would convince us of all those things that we must believe for salvation. Second, we must reverently submit our understanding to the Scriptures in case something comes up which we cannot comprehend. Third, we must make good use of the natural light (presumably of reason) and healthy philosophy. Fourth, we must love and honor the truth so that God does not send us a powerful delusion (see 2 Thess. 2:10 and 11) and give us over to a wrong understanding.<sup>34</sup>

Oomius next states that everyone should feel obligated to do their best to diminish the number of atheists and, if possible, to completely drive atheism away. In this context, the magistrates and authorities, the learned, and all Christians have duties to practice.<sup>35</sup> Magistrates have a responsibility to push out atheism, because, among other reasons,

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<sup>33</sup> Against this last point Oomius writes that his readers can particularly arm themselves with the means he suggests in his *Tractaet van de Ergernisse* (“Tractate on Vexations”). This appears to be an unknown work of Oomius.

<sup>34</sup> Oomius, citing John Calvin, *tract. de Scandal*, XXI (fol. 45); Gabriel Putherbeus, *Theotimus sive, De tollendis et expugnendis malis libris, iis praecipue, quos vix incolumi fide ac pietate plerique legere queant libri tres / multa complectens, quae tum ad mores tum ad religionem faciant* (Paris, 1549), II, pp. 180-181; Marin Mersenne, in *Genes.*, 669; Cornelius à Lapide, *Commentaria ad Jud.* and *Commentaria ad 2 Pet.* in *Commentarii in Sacram Scripturam* (Antwerp, Paris, 1622-1638), Jude 7 and 2 Peter 2:10.

<sup>35</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 79-84.

atheism is the most damaging evil which causes society to unwind. So the magistrates ought to severely punish those foolish and ungodly people who publicly state that there is no God. Also, godless books ought to be forbidden and even burned. Moreover, atheists ought not serve in governmental offices or in schools and academies. Teachers must be cautious in teaching their disciples and students the arts and sciences—for example, when using books written by heathens they should explain matters that go against godliness and the true religion. They should also powerfully refute atheists with their mouths and pens. All Christians should allow their children and households to be faithfully instructed in the truth of the faith with much prayer, and they should avoid all godlessness and living according to the flesh so that no occasion is given to doubt that there is a God.

The fifth chapter of the first division of Oomius' doctrine of God is called, "Where it is taught that one should in no way doubt God and divine things."<sup>36</sup> He states that just as it is supreme godlessness to deny God, it is also terrible and sheer idleness to doubt God and divine things. Yet, this is what Descartes and his followers do since they say that one must remove all preconceptions and doubt all things before one can know and prove that there is a God—this is how Descartes begins his first mediation.<sup>37</sup> After going in some detail into further discussion of Descartes' premises, Oomius states that in order to be a follower of him, one must *especially* doubt whether or not there is a God before he can come to any kind of knowledge. This establishes any Cartesian

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 84-94.

<sup>37</sup> Descartes is quoted and cited in this discussion: *Meditationes*, I, pp. 8, 11, 15, 16, 20; *Principia philosophiae* (Amsterdam, 1644), I.ii and vii; *Resp. ad Quint. Object.*, 411; *Resp. ad Secund. Object. postul. 1.*

philosopher as an atheist and a deserter of God. An example of this kind of thinking arose in a disputation on doubting at Leiden in 1664, from which Oomius quotes in order to prove his point about the followers of Descartes doubting God. Oomius is of the opinion that a Cartesian must either not believe that there is a God, or, renounce his Christianity and his faith for the time he is doubting God and his existence. With good reason Musculus placed the question, “whether or not a God exists” in the first place in order to warn students of theology.<sup>38</sup> Oomius laments the fact that students are now being taught, in the first place, to doubt, and he is unsatisfied with the opinion of those who say that such methodology is simply the manner of philosophy and thus acceptable.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore he is unsatisfied with the opinion of those who say that Descartes’ initial doubting or denials can be overlooked given the fact that he comes to such a clear proof that there is a God. For these reasons the profane Leiden disputation, through the zeal of Hoornbeeck, rector of the academy at that time, was forbidden by the theological faculty. For this, the synod of North Holland, held in that year in Amsterdam (and of which Oomius states he was a member) heartily thanked the faculty. Oomius questions whether God perhaps allowed the academy to fall on hard times for this disputation as well other propositions. For more on the issue of Cartesian doubting Oomius recommends the following authors to the reader: Revius, Voetius, Maresius,

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<sup>38</sup> Oomius, citing Andreas Musculus, “Tit. de Deo,” in *Loci communes theologici* (Erphordiae, 1563), 2.

<sup>39</sup> Oomius, citing Calvin, *Institutiones*, I.iii.3; Zacharias Ursinus, *Opera theologica* (Heidelberg, 1612), I, p. 17.

Vogelsang and the philosophers Adamus, David Stuart, Paulus and Daniel Voetius, and Schulerus.

The final chapter of this first of the three divisions on God is called “Where it is urged that one should try to know God correctly and well.”<sup>40</sup> This is a natural encouragement and warning given that there is a God. It is to be lamented that the human understanding pays such close attention to all sorts of things, but neglects the knowledge of God, which is the beginning of wisdom.<sup>41</sup> In order to be encouraged towards knowing God it should be remembered that the knowledge of God is very excellent, useful, and necessary. Oomius develops each of these three points.<sup>42</sup> The next major point of discussion in this chapter deals with the need to fan the sparks of divine knowledge, which Oomius takes as innate. Given that knowledge of God can also be received through reasoning (both from our own minds and from creation) Oomius states that people must climb from themselves to the Creator and be amazed at God’s wisdom, power, goodness, and glory. God’s works are like a school in which we can be taught God’s knowledge. Since the book of nature, however, only gives us some, imperfect knowledge of God, which is not enough for salvation, the book of Scripture must be consulted as well.<sup>43</sup> From the book of nature people can know that God exists and what

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<sup>40</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 94-108.

<sup>41</sup> Oomius, citing Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.i; *idem*, *Ethics*, II; Cicero, *de Finib.*, II and V; Augustine, *Confessions*, V.iv.

<sup>42</sup> See *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 95-101.

<sup>43</sup> Oomius, citing his *Dissertatie*, 13-14; Philippe Mornaeus, *De veritate religionis christianae liber : adversus atheos epicureos, ethnicos, judaeos, mahumedistas, et caeteros infideles...* (Herborn, 1632), IV, p. 44; Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, III, “de Theolo. Dubit.,” 839; Hoornbeeck, *Socianismus confutatus*, Vol. I, I.vii.1, pp. 136-137; John Owen, *Theologoumena pantodapa, sive de*

he can do, but in the book of Scripture people can learn what God wants and there God has revealed all his wisdom that is necessary for us to know. The natural knowledge is only so that people are not without guilt, but the supernatural knowledge is for salvation. Also, that which is known in nature is much more gloriously explained in Scripture. Oomius expands on this point with numerous examples. Beyond looking to the books of nature and Scripture, the fanning of the knowledge of God includes learning from others who have good understanding and knowledge of the Lord. Oomius concludes the chapter with a short section on the need to pursue the knowledge of God with holiness and modesty, as he discusses in *Institutiones* 1.1 in more detail.

### 7.3 God's Being and Names

For the purposes of his discussion, Oomius divides the second major division of his doctrine of God into three sub-divisions: God's being, names and attributes.<sup>44</sup> These topics are explained and put into the practice. For the purposes of this discussion God's being and names will be discussed together here and the attributes will be examined in the next section—the practice of these doctrines—that which is particularly of interest to this study—will be analyzed separately.

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*natura, ortu, progressu, et studio verae theologiae libri sex quibus etiam origines & processus veri & falsi cultus religiosi, casus & instaurationes ecclesiae illustriores ab ipsis rerum primordiis, enarantur* (1661), I.iv, digress. I, pp. 43-58; Abraham van de Velde, *De wonderen des alder-hooghsten* (Middelburg, 1668), 319-327; Benedictus Aretius, *Problemata theologica continentia praecipuos nostrae religionis locos, brevi & dilucida ratione explicatos* (Lausanne, 1576), I, pp. 1-5; Antonius Walaeus, *De theologia*, in *Loci Communes*, 10, edit. quarto; Stemannus, *Photin*. Disp. III, Qu. 3, p. 26; Henricus Altling, *Problema theologicum, de veritate et existentia purgatorii pontificii: An sit, sive verè existat?* (Groningen, 1628), I.i, pp. 2-5.

<sup>44</sup> The section covering God's being covers *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 109-123, God's names, 124-161, and God's attributes, by far the longest section, 161-620.

The discussion of God's being is divided into a chapter on an explanation of what is to be understood by the being of God and a second chapter showing that there is only one God. The being of God means, according to Oomius, citing numerous Scripture texts here as he does elsewhere in his doctrinal discussions, that he is, who he is.<sup>45</sup> He is the one who is, who was, and who will be—the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. The being of God means nothing else than his nature. The terms used to describe this are not physical (*physicè*), but hyper-physical (*hyper-physicè*) and supernatural. The being of God, furthermore, is living.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately a full description of God cannot be given since he is incomprehensible. Although the art and logic of God himself would be needed for a perfect description, yet, in a small measure we can know God in part from his Word and “chatter” (*tatelen*) about divine things.

This God is one and alone explains Oomius in the second chapter on this topic.<sup>47</sup> This is how he is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, which Oomius gives evidence of from both the Old and New Testaments. After the biblical evidence, Oomius writes that there are also other powerful reasons to confess the fact that God is one.<sup>48</sup> He states that he does not judge these, however, to be taken from the oneness of the world, or movements,

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<sup>45</sup> Here he cites Revelation 1:4,8; 21:6; 22:13; Exodus 3:14-15; Galatians 4:8; 2 Peter 1:14; Philippians 2:6, and Colossians 2:9.

<sup>46</sup> The following Scripture texts are cited: Deuteronomy 5:2,6; 32:40; 1 Samuel 17:36; Jeremiah 5:2; 1 John 5:20; John 5:26; Job 11:7-9; Psalm 139:6; Ecclesiastes 8:17; Colossians 2:9; Matthew 11:27; John 5:20; Psalm 86:8; 1 Timothy 6:16; Exodus 15:11; Psalm 86:8; 89:7; and 113:5.

<sup>47</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *Problematum de Deo*, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, Vol. 5, 63.

<sup>48</sup> The following Scripture passages are cited as evidence: Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; 32:39; Isaiah 43:10; 44:6, 8; 45:5, 6, 14, 21-22; 46:9; Hosea 13:4; 1 Kings 8:60; 1 Chronicles 17:20; Psalm 18:32; Joel 2:27; Mark 12:32; Romans 3:29-30; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Ephesians 4:6; and 1 Timothy 2:5.

or other such reasons, but rather from the divine attributes such as God's perfection, primacy and supremacy, omnipotence, infinity, and omniscience, and he spends some time discussing this with each of these attributes. A reason can also be gained from God's governance of the world since where there is order, there must be only one who first ordained all other things. As further evidence beyond the Scriptural, and the reasons from God's attributes, Oomius cites the agreement of the general wisdom of the world among the heathens who reject a plurality of gods in favor of one God.<sup>49</sup> Even those heathen who have multiple gods always have one main god who serves as the father of all the gods and of all people.

The second sub-division of the second major division of the doctrine of God deals with the divine names. The first chapter explains the names given to God in the Old Testament and the first part of the second chapter explains the divine names in the New Testament. Before turning to the Old Testament directly in chapter one, Oomius introduces the idea of God's names.<sup>50</sup> The discussion begins with an acknowledgement that God really does not need a name—in his being and nature he is already distinguished from all other things and thus does not need a distinguishing name. In addition, no word or name can adequately or fully express his unfathomable properties. Yet God chose to use some names to lead us to a more intimate knowledge of and a more complete

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<sup>49</sup> Oomius, citing Athanasius, *Orat. c. Idol.*; Cyprian, *Libr. de Idol. vanitate*; Lactantius, *div. Instit.*, I.iii; Johannes Hoornbeeck, *De conversione Indorum et Gentilim libri duo. Accessit ejusdem vita ab amico edita* (Amsterdam, 1669), II.iv, pp. 125-127; Joan. Lud., *Viv. de Verit. Fid. Christ.*, I.viii, p. 79; H. Grotius, *de Rel. Christ. Verit.*, I, pp. 14-16; Alting, *Theologia historica, sive Systematis historici loca quatuor* (Amsterdam, 1664), III, pp. 216 and ff.

<sup>50</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 124-127.



relationship with him, and also so that he would be more clearly distinguished from creatures and idols. His names also serve to help us understand his wonderful might and powers with respect to his creatures and especially towards believers. Although God is one in being his deeds and properties are many and thus need to be expressed with various names. Even outside of the Scriptures God is attributed various names by certain philosophers and old teachers. He is called, “the Being of all beings,” “the First that is,” “the First Cause of all things,” “the First Mover,” “the First Cause of all movements.” Although such names do explain some of God’s properties, writes Oomius, he judges it is best to remain within Scripture on this matter.

Most of Oomius’ explanation of God’s names in the Bible focuses on the Old Testament.<sup>51</sup> Oomius notes first that Jerome, in his letter to Marcella, counts ten divine names in the Old Testament, as do the Hebrew Cabalists. The latter divide the names up in a fashion which Oomius wishes to use: names taken from the divine being and names taken from the divine attributes and works. The names which point directly to the divine being are the following three: Jehova, “Eheje,” and Jah. These are thoroughly discussed before moving on to a discussion of the names taken from the divine attributes and works: Elohim, El, Shaddai, Adonai, Sabaoth, and Elion. As for the divine names in the New Testament, discussed in the second chapter of this sub-division, Oomius focuses on God (θεος) and Lord (κυριος). The remainder of the chapter deals with the practice of the doctrine.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 127-148—the discussion of God’s names in the New Testament in the second chapter covers less space: 148-150.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 150-161.

## 7.4 God's Attributes and the Divine Persons

The third sub-division of the second section of Oomius' doctrine of God discusses, explains, and applies the divine attributes.<sup>53</sup> Here an overview of the topic's explanation by Oomius will be given, while the practice of the doctrine will be discussed later.

This sub-division is divided into two main parts: God's attributes in general and God's attributes in particular. The discussion on God's attributes in general contains two chapters. The first deals with the ways we come to the knowledge of God and in this chapter Oomius also teaches exactly what the attributes of God are.<sup>54</sup> Oomius begins this chapter by stating that he has been discussing the doctrine of God, first through the being of God as such, then according to the divine names, and now according to the attributes attributed to God. He notes these three ways of approaching God are respectively called the *quidditativa praedicata*, the *praedicata nominativa*, and the *praedicata* of the "*fundamenten*."<sup>55</sup> Nature helps us track down the latter of these, God's attributes. Through reasoning we can come to knowledge of these in three ways: causality, negation, and excellence.<sup>56</sup> These ways, which Oomius describes, can be confirmed by Scripture.

From these ways of knowing God, writes Oomius, we can climb higher and approach the attributes of God, because we cannot know God through his being, but

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 161-620.

<sup>54</sup> This chapter is on 161-167.

<sup>55</sup> The first of these answers the question *Quid est?* or "What is it?"

<sup>56</sup> Oomius, citing Dionysius, *Libr. de Divin. Nominib.*, vii. He calls him an "unknown author."

through his effects, from which we attain his attributes. The word “attributes” is not to be taken literally as if these are things attributed to God, but rather they are perfections which are understood and expressed by us as affects or attributes. In this sense we attribute attributes to God because the Scriptures (notably Exodus 34:6 and 7) explain God in that way and because the perfections, expressed by the attributes, truly belong to God and are in him.<sup>57</sup> The attributes, notes Oomius, are not in God in the same way in which they are understood by us because they are inadequately understood by us.<sup>58</sup> After further defining the attributes, Oomius states that all of the attributes of God are revealed in the Word for especially three reasons: 1)that we might recognize that the Lord is the only true God who is all-sufficient for our salvation and thus the only one in whom we ought to have faith; 2)that we might know all the more clearly the one in whom we have faith; 3)and that we might ponder each of these attributes to be led to assurance, comfort, and stimulation to honor and serve God.

The second chapter of this first part (on God’s attributes in general) of the third sub-division (on God’s attributes) discusses various ways in which distinctions of God’s attributes can be presented.<sup>59</sup> Oomius begins by noting that the attributes will have to be divided in order to keep some sort of order in his treatment. Five possible types of divisions are given before Oomius presents the division of his choice. The first division

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<sup>57</sup> For the Exodus passage Oomius cites Hieronymus Zanchius, *De natura Dei sive de divinis attributis libri V* (Heidelberg, 1577), I.xviii, pp. 42-43.

<sup>58</sup> Oomius, citing Voetius, *De unica et simplicissima*, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, Vol. 1, 233-234.

<sup>59</sup> Chapter two is on pp. 167-170.

considered is that between absolute (*absolyte*) and respective (*respective*) attributes. The former are attributes, such eternity and infinity, which have no relationship to anything else, whereas the latter, such as justice and mercy as well as the names Creator and Lord, do. The distinction is not real (*reële*) with respect to God, but it is only a distinction with respect to creatures—it is a “notional concept.”<sup>60</sup> A second possible division is that between affirmative or positive terms to describe the attributes (omniscience, omnipotence, goodness) and negative terms (infinity, incomprehensibility, invisibility, immortality). A third division is between those attributes said to first be attributed to God and secondarily to creatures (such as goodness and justice) and those, figuratively, which are first to be attributed to people and secondarily to God (such as repentance, sadness, and wrath). A fourth possible division of attributes is that between working or *operativa* and non-working or *non operativa* attributes. Those belonging to the former are displayed outwardly, such as, power, justice, and mercy and the latter are not displayed outside God, such as, eternity, simplicity, etc. The fifth division is that between incommunicable (*on-mededeylbaere*) and communicable (*mededeylbare*) attributes. This is not to say that God’s attributes can be communicated to or shared with creatures as the Arians once taught with respect to the Son of God and as the Lutherans do when they speak of the omnipresence of the body of Christ.<sup>61</sup> This is not possible because, as mentioned, God’s attributes are God himself and not distinguishable from his being. Incommunicable is meant in the sense that nothing of such an attribute is found in

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<sup>60</sup> Citing Walaeus, *Loci Communes*, 104.

<sup>61</sup> On the fact that God’s attributes cannot be shared with creatures, Oomius cites, Zanchius, *De natura Dei*, II.i.3, pp. 48-55.

creatures. Communicable attributes can be found by analogy or in a certain proportion in creatures either by nature or grace. Thus God is called holy, justice, etc. *in abstracto*, but people are such *in concreto*. In creatures holiness and justice mixed with other things.

Oomius chooses, like some others, to divide the attributes a sixth way, different from any of the five he lists: he speaks of attributes of the first or the second class (*geslachte*) or of the first or second type (*soorte*).<sup>62</sup> The first are the attributes of being and the second are attributes of life. The first can only be found in God and are those things which distinguish creatures from God. The others are first and perfectly in God and only in creatures by analogy and completely imperfectly.

Oomius turns from God's attributes in general to the second part of the third subdivision where he discusses in detail the attributes of God. The discussion is divided into two major parts: attributes of being and attributes of life. The first class of attributes is divided into a number of chapters, each dealing with one or more attributes.<sup>63</sup> Each chapter is divided into a doctrinal section, explaining and defining the attributes discussed, and a practical section. The chapters discussing the attributes of being describe the following attributes:<sup>64</sup>

### **Attributes of Being**

Chapter 1: Primacy and Independence

Chapter 2: Simplicity and flowing out from this: Unity, Spirituality, Invisibility, Intangibility, and Indepictability

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<sup>62</sup> He cites particularly Hoornbeeck, "Distinguunter nostri respectu in attributa quasi *primi*, & *secundi* generis; in quasi *esse primo*, vel in *esse secundo*: quorum illa in *quid*, haec quasi in *quale*, de Deo praedicantur," in *Socianismus confutatus*, Vol. I, II.iv, p. 371.

<sup>63</sup> Covering pp. 170-310.

<sup>64</sup> The eighth and final chapter is not included here since it does not deal with a particular attribute. It is a practical chapter showing that "the infinite God is the portion of true believers."

- Chapter 3: Immutability with respect to God's being, accidents, knowledge, location, and his will
- Chapter 4: Infinity with respect to God's being, or, Perfection, and flowing out of this is God's All-Sufficiency
- Chapter 5: Infinity with respect to God's duration, or, Eternity
- Chapter 6: Infinity with respect to place or space, or, Immeasurability and Omnipresence
- Chapter 7: Incomprehensibility

The second part of this section on the attributes discusses attributes of life.<sup>65</sup> The properties of life are in turn divided into three sections: the powers, morals, and excellencies attributed to God. The attributes of life are described as attributes of God which reach out to touch creatures, but only in a dependent, accidental, finite, and imperfect way. Also, the attributes of the first class all touch on those of the second class so that God's life, will, mercy, and justice are all simple, immutable, eternal, perfect, and incomprehensible. The attributes of life, as Oomius organizes them by chapter and subsections, are as follows:

### **Attributes of Life**

#### *Attributed to God by manner of powers*

- Chapter 1: Life
- Chapter 2: Understanding or Omniscience
- Chapter 3: Will
- Chapter 4: Power or Omnipotence

#### *Attributed to God by manner of morals*

- Chapter 1: Wisdom
- Chapter 2: Holiness
- Chapter 3: Goodness, Love, Grace, Loving-kindness
- Chapter 4: Mercy
- Chapter 5: Patience or Forbearing
- Chapter 6: Truth, Faithfulness, Perseverance
- Chapter 7: Justice, especially Vengeance
- Chapter 8: Wrath, Hatred, Zeal, and Revenge

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<sup>65</sup> Covering p. 310 to the end of the book.

*Attributes in which God's highest excellence is displayed*

Chapter 1: Might or Rule

Chapter 2: Glory

Chapter 3: Beatitude (“*Saligheyt*”)

The third division of Oomius’ doctrine of God, published separately from the first two, discusses the teaching, defense, and practical application of the doctrine of the Trinity. The first chapter of the work deals with the doctrine of the Trinity in general—both explaining it and discussing its practical application.<sup>66</sup> The following three chapters do the same for each of the persons of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The last four chapters deal with particular aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Here the explanation and defense of these doctrines will be set forth.

In the first chapter on the doctrine of the Trinity Oomius establishes, affirms, and defends the doctrine. In the first section of the chapter Oomius seeks to provide a basic definition of the fact that there are three persons in the one, simple divine being—one in being yet distinguishable from each other—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>67</sup> Especially church fathers are quoted here.<sup>68</sup> In the following section, in order to more cleanly explain this great truth, the names and words which the church has used for this doctrine are discussed: being, person, unity, Trinity, etc.<sup>69</sup> The Socinians, against whom Oomius immediately defends the Reformed and all other trinitarians, are mentioned as criticizing

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<sup>66</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 1-57.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-3.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. Athanasius, Augustine, and Hilary.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-8.

the fact that words are used which are not found in the Scriptures.<sup>70</sup> The section concludes with an affirmation that God is one in Being, not only in name, but in deed, and that he is three-in-one (*Drie-eenigh*, *Tri-Unitas*, or *Tri-Unicus*) also not in name alone, but in deed.<sup>71</sup> The name *Drie-eenigheyt*, or *Drie-eenheyt* (in Latin, *Triniteyt*) comes from the three persons in one divine being.<sup>72</sup>

In the following section of the chapter Oomius first indicates that what he has thus far written has only been for the direction of the simple—more learned people can get their thirst quenched elsewhere. He then goes into more detail, particularly on the matter that this doctrine can only come from Scripture, not through the light of nature.<sup>73</sup> While belief in the Trinity does not go against natural reason, it does go far above it. What Oomius shows in the fourth section follows from what he has found in the third section: the doctrine of the Trinity is taken from God's revelation. Differing from Moses Amyraut, Oomius explains in some detail that Adam, before he fell, must have known this mystery.<sup>74</sup> While the doctrine is in both Testaments of the Bible, it is found more clearly and fuller in the New Testament. Oomius organizes the biblical proofs as

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<sup>70</sup> Oomius, citing Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xiii.3; Hoornbeeck, *Socianismus confutatus*, II.v; Martin Chemnitz, *Loci theologici* (1591), I, pp. 78 and ff.

<sup>71</sup> Oomius, citing Hoornbeeck, *Vetera et nova, sive Exercitationum Theologicarum libri III, quorum ultimus ex parte complectitur materias, quas Auctor Tomo III Theologiae suae Practicae, destinaverat. Accedunt ejusdem orationes quaedam* (Utrecht, 1672), II.vii, p. 56. Hoornbeeck, whom Oomius calls here his "honorable master," judges that *Tri-Unus* is the best word to use.

<sup>72</sup> Oomius, citing Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf, *Syntagma theologiae christianae* (Geneva, 1617), III.viii, p. 411. The page number Oomius gives seems to be incorrect—it should likely be p. 224.

<sup>73</sup> Oomius, citing Paulus Voetius, *Theologia naturalis Reformata*, vii.1, pp. 100 and ff.; Polanus, *Syntagma theologiae*, III.vii, p. 403.

<sup>74</sup> Oomius, citing Amyraut, *Dissertatio de Mysterio Trinitate*, 121, 158 and ff.



follows: 1) texts that show there are multiple persons, 2) texts which indicate three persons in particular, and 3) texts which speak in particular of the person of the Son or Holy Spirit in particular or prove their divinity in particular. Discussing Genesis 1 Oomius finds much support for taking that chapter to be referring to a multiplicity of persons, especially because of the name given to God there, “Elohim.”<sup>75</sup>

After proving the doctrine with a variety of other passages from Scripture, Oomius defends the Trinity against those who diminish the doctrine and deny it (section 5), and those who strongly combat the doctrine (section 6). Among the first Oomius mentions Bernardinus Ochinus, whom he calls a forerunner of the Socinians, and the Remonstrants. Among the latter Oomius counts the Jews (“the patriarchs of the heretics”) and also various Christians. After mentioning various persons and groups from the early church as well as Mohammed, Oomius turns to the sixteenth century, then finally, names the Socinians as well as some Anabaptists, in his own century.

The three chapters which follow the introductory chapter on the divine persons in general deal with the individual persons of the Trinity, beginning with the Father in chapter two.<sup>76</sup> Only a brief explanation of the doctrine is given.<sup>77</sup> The first point of

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<sup>75</sup> Among the Catholics Oomius finds the following in support: Lombard, Lyranus, Burgensis, Catharinus, Bonaventure, Galatinus, Eugubinus, Cornelius à Lapide; among the Lutheran: Hunnaeus, Johannes Gerardi, Jacobus Martinus, Balduinus, Harvemannus; among the Reformed: Zanchi, Junius, Polanus, Sohnius, Alsted, Alting, Capellus, Walaeus, Bisterfeldius, Voetius, Maresius, Cocceius, Hoornbeeck, Vedelius, Forbesius, Essenius, and Witsius. Oomius names others who disagree with this interpretation: Calvin, Bellarminus, Abulensis, Cajetanus, Pererius, Rivetus, Drusius, Danaeus, Paraeus, Gomarus, Mercerus, Buxtorsius, Spanhemius, Wendelinus, Burmannus, and Leusden. Oomius cites works of each of the above theologians.

<sup>76</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 58-68.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-61.

discussion is whether the Father is the fount of the godhead or of the other persons. Some, also among orthodox teachers, call him the fountain, origin, and beginning of the entire divinity.<sup>78</sup> Yet, Oomius does not think this kind of language is “careful” (*net*) enough, because the divinity is the divine nature of which there is no beginning or fountain—it does not generate and it is not generated. If the Father were the beginning of the entire divinity, he would be the beginning of his being, which is absurd. Rather the Father is the fountain and origin of the persons of the godhead.<sup>79</sup> Next, Oomius discusses two ways in which the name Father is given to God: to the being of God, without distinguishing from the other persons and also as a way to distinguish the first person from the others. Finally Oomius shows that the Father is a distinct person, yet divine, and that he is distinguished through his personal attributes: he is independent; he generates the second person; with the Son he sends out the Spirit; and he is first in order of existence and of works.

The discussion of the explanation of the person of the Son is larger.<sup>80</sup> After a thorough explanation of the doctrine of the Son from the Scriptures, Oomius defends the doctrine against the Arians and Socinians. At the end of his discussion Oomius lists some theologians who have defended the Reformed against the Socinians particularly

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<sup>78</sup> Oomius, citing John Forbes, *Instructiones historico-theologicae, de doctrina christiana et variorum statu, ortisque erroribus et controversiis, jam inde a temporibus apostolicis ad tempora usque seculi decimi-septimi priora* (Amsterdam, 1645), I.xx, 36.

<sup>79</sup> Oomius, citing Melchior Leydekker, *Den Raed des vredes...* (Amsterdam, 1675), ii, p. 29. Others cited as in agreement with Oomius on this are Andreas Essenius, *Systema theologiae dogmaticae* (Utrecht, 1659), I.xvii.14, p. 149; Voetius, *De selectis quibusdam problematis*, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, Vol. 5, 599; Paulus Voetius, *Theologia naturalis Reformata*, vii.3, pp. 114-115; Daniel Voetius, *peculiar. Disp. de hac qu.*

<sup>80</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 68-101.

thoroughly: Bysterfeldius, Botfaccus, Placaeus, Becmannus, Calovius, Tarnovius, Cloppenburgh, Hoornbeeck, and De Witte. Oomius recommends the following shorter defenses for those who do not have the time to read the previous: Keckermann, Walaeus, Wendelinus, Polanus, Vogelsang, Prideauxius, and Burmann.<sup>81</sup>

Chapter four of the third section of Oomius' doctrine of God handles the person of the Holy Spirit.<sup>82</sup> Oomius first positively presents the doctrine from the Scriptures, proving that the Spirit is a divine person, and then refutes primarily the Socinians who deny that the Spirit is a person. The remainder of this chapter and the remaining four chapters on the work of the Holy Spirit all bring the doctrine into the practice.

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<sup>81</sup> Oomius, citing Bartholomäus Keckermann, *Systema s. s. theologiae, tribus libris adornatum* (Hanover, 1602), I.iii, pp. 74-89; Walaeus, *Loci communes*, pp. 338, 347 and ff.; Marcus Fridericus Wendelinus, *Christianae theologiae libri II: methodice dispositi, perpetua praeceptorum succinctorum & perspicuorum serie explicati, & praecipuarum omnium controversiarum, quæ in ecclesiis & scholis theologicis hodie agitantur,...* (Amsterdam, 1639), I.ii, p. 141 and ff.; Polanus, *Syntagma theologiae*, pp. 375 and ff.; John Prideaux, *Opera Theologica*, lect. XVIII.iv, pp. 290 and ff.; Reinier Vogelsang(h), *Oratio de exercitatione theologica* (1656), p. 376; Franciscus Burmannus, *Synopsis theologiae et speciatim oeconomiae Foederum Dei, ab initio saeculorum usque ad consummationem eorum* (Utrecht, 1672), III.xxxiii, p. 203.

<sup>82</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 115-166.

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## Chapter 8

### The Being, Names, and Attributes of God in the Practice

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#### 8.1 Being and Names

The second half of Oomius' discussion of both God's being and names brings these doctrines into the practice.<sup>1</sup> While, as we shall see below, Petrus Van Mastricht does explicitly draw these doctrines into the practice in his *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Wilhelmus à Brakel, who like Van Mastricht published his theological system a quarter century after Oomius wrote his doctrine of God, and is likewise concerned about applying the doctrines to the life of the church and believers, does not. He does say about God's being that he recommends the reader close his eyes in worship before God and he notes that he will not include a polemical discussion on the subject of God's being for fear of disrespecting the Lord.<sup>2</sup>

In Oomius the discussion of God's being applied is in the second section of the second chapter of the first subsection, titled on God's being, of the second main division of his doctrine of God.<sup>3</sup> Oomius begins the section by indicating that he cannot go on to

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<sup>1</sup> See *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 116-123, on the practice of God's being and pp. 150-161 on God's names considered in the practice.

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelmus à Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: D. Donner, 1881), III.v.

<sup>3</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 116-123.

another subject without giving a word of rebuttal, instruction, revival, and comfort. It is interesting to see that Oomius includes a polemical section (“rebuttal”) in the same breath as the more practical parts. He does not seem to see much of a distinction between the defense of the doctrine and its application to the life of the believer in the sense that both are considered part of the practice of the doctrine.

The following are refuted in light of the doctrine of God’s being: the heathens, the Manicheans, Marcionites, Zoroastrians, Persians, the Jews, the Socinians, and all others who separate the God of the Jews from the God of the Christians. The heathen foolishly err in having all sorts of gods made up by men. Various authors are mentioned as having written on the gods of various peoples of the earth and throughout history.<sup>4</sup> Oomius calls the Jews’ notion that their God was only the God of Israel, and not the heathen, an idle presumption. Although God wanted to be called the God of Israel due to the special covenant he had made with Abraham, he was still the God of other peoples.<sup>5</sup> The Socinians, writes Oomius, deny that God is the only true God since they say that angels and people are also true gods. God is incorrectly the only God for them because when

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<sup>4</sup> Including Giglio Gregorio Giraldi, *De deis gentium varia et multiplex Historia, in qua simul de eorum imaginib. et cognominib. agitur, ubi plurima etiam hactenus multis ignota explicantur, et pleraque clarius tractantur* (Basil, 1548); Elias Schedius, *De diis Germanis, sive Veteri Germanorum, Gallorum, Brittanorum, Vandalorum religione syngrammata quatuor* (Amsterdam, 1648); John Owen, *Theologoumena pantodapa, sive de natura, ortu, progressu, et studio verae theologiae libri sex quibus etiam origines & processus veri & falsi cultus religiosi, casus & instaurationes ecclesiae illustriores ab ipsis rerum primordiis, enarrantur* (1661), V.iii and iv, pp. 355-383; Altling, *Theologia historica*, III, pp. 169, 171-175, 177, 183, 185, 191, 193, and 197.

<sup>5</sup> Oomius cites numerous Scripture texts to back up his point: Genesis 9:26-27; 12:3; 17:4; 18:18, 25; 22:18; Psalm 82:8; 2:8; Deuteronomy 32:43; Isaiah 3:19; Haggai 2:8; Luke 2:32; Romans 3:29; 4:17; Galatians 3:8; 1 Timothy 2:4-5.

they say this, they mean it in the sense that God is the highest god, but not because he is God alone.<sup>6</sup>

After the rebuttal of various groups, the remainder of the practical section on God's being contains noticeable less citations, and thus seems to present significant original thinking on the part of the author. This is also to be expected given the fact that the author claims there is a shortage of practical applications of the doctrines among the Reformed in the Netherlands<sup>7</sup> He finds that this doctrine serves for instruction, revival, and comfort. Christians are to be instructed that their religion is the true one since it presents the only and true God to be correctly known and to uprightly serve. Oomius' word of revival is that this doctrine should inspire us to practice certain duties. First, with respect to God, we should be exhorted to 1) learn to know the immeasurable and untraceable greatness of God's might and goodness, 2) ascribe all honor to God alone since he is the fount of all goodness and man's highest good, 3) serve and love God with all our might, and 4) rest in the one God and be satisfied in him. Second, with respect to others, we should be exhorted not to despise other nations or individuals since we all have one Father—there is one God of all. Connected with this, we ought to pray that all people will be saved and know the one God. The word of comfort is that since there is

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<sup>6</sup> Oomius, citing Petrus de Witte, *Wederlegginge der Sociniaensche dwaelingen, in forme van catechizatie...* (Delft, 1655), 39-40.

<sup>7</sup> Remember that according to Oomius this is not because of anything inherent in the Reformed faith, but because there have been so many attacks against the Reformed. This resulted in many more polemical works than works applying the faith to the believer, according to Oomius. See, for example, his "Voor-reden" in *Prima, media et ultima Ofte de Eerste, Middelste en Laetste Dingen* by Isaac Ambrosius (Amsterdam: A. Boekholt, 1660).

only one true God, we should take heart since it means we do not have to fear anyone else.

The topic of God's names is applied to the believer in the second section of the second chapter of the second subsection of part two of Oomius' doctrine of God.<sup>8</sup> Oomius has three main areas of application for this aspect of the doctrine: a word of instruction, warning, and encouragement and revival. There is a word of instruction with respect to God, Jesus Christ, and us. With respect to God, the names of God can show us how great the Lord is—the many divine names on the one hand are proof of human imperfection, but on the other proof of divine perfection. God is the high and exalted one with respect to his dwelling place, his being, his dominion, and his works. Oomius speaks of God's works in several aspects: in himself, revealed in creation, and also continually preserved. Van Mastricht has a point similar to this one on instruction with respect to God when he writes, *theoria nominum divinorum, juvat primo in cognitione Dei*.<sup>9</sup>

With respect to Christ, continues Oomius, we can see that Jesus is the true God because he has the name that belongs only to God, and the names Adonai and Elohim. With respect to ourselves we can see how much thanks we owe God because through his name Jehovah he has revealed himself to us more perfectly than to Abraham, Moses, or any other believer in the Old Testament because in his Son he has shown us in deed that

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<sup>8</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 150-161.

<sup>9</sup> Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1 (Utrecht 1699), II.iv, section 27, pp. 90-91.

he is a Redeemer and Savior. Through the work of grace the Son is said by some to make God's name known.<sup>10</sup>

Oomius indicates that this teaching serves to warn us on the one hand not to attribute profane names or names of idols to God, and on the other not to attribute God's names to idols. There is encouragement in this teaching to practice certain duties with respect to God as well as to his creatures. In general, with respect to God we should be inspired to intimate knowledge of the names by which he has revealed himself.<sup>11</sup> We should also be inspired to lift our souls to God when we hear or read his names. Van Mastricht's second point under the *pars practica* of God's name is similar when he says God's name inspires us to glorify God.<sup>12</sup> In particular this means for Oomius that in our words and deeds we should give proof that we esteem this God who through his names so gloriously and greatly has revealed himself to us. In our works we should take care that we are devout (*godtsdienstigh*), that we fear his glorious name, that we give him all the honor of temporal, worldly, spiritual, inward, and eternal goods, and that in all circumstances—even desperation—we trust in him alone and only in him place all our hope since he can save us. With respect to creatures we should be encouraged to use creation soberly and moderately since God, who is the source of all things, will

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<sup>10</sup> Oomius, pointing to John 17:6 particularly, and citing Franciscus Burman, *Synopseos theologiae et speciatim oeconomiae foederum dei, ab initio saeculorum usque ad eorum consummationem* (Utrecht, 1671), I.xvi.11, p. 101; Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Exodum* (London, 1633), vi.3, p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> Oomius, citing William Gouge, *The saints sacrifice: or, a commentarie on the CXVI. Psalme* (London, 1632), xxi, pp. 45-46.

<sup>12</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.iv, par. 28, pp. 91.



undoubtedly take into account when we are wasteful with the things that have their being in him.<sup>13</sup>

Oomius concludes this section by noting that since these duties are not always practiced, he will give some reasons to encourage us to practice them. First, the Lord has power and authority over us. Should we not then walk before him if we will have to give account of our service one day? Second, the Lord is strong—he has the power to avenge himself.<sup>14</sup> Third, God is the Lord of hosts and a warrior—he can bring innumerable troops and weapons against those who ignore his greatness and sin against him. Fourth, if we do honor and serve the Lord he will treat us well and reward our labor.

## 8.2 Attributes of Being

After an initial description of each of the attributes, Oomius discusses the practical application of each attribute for the life of the believer. His contemporary Van Mastricht also brings the attributes into the practice, though with generally far less detail than Oomius, in his *pars practica* after the exegetical, dogmatic, and elentic parts of the doctrine are detailed. Brakel, in his brief explanation of the attributes of God also often, very briefly, directly applies the doctrine to the life of the believer in a paragraph or two after his basic explanation and defense of each attribute. Sometimes this constitutes a separate subsection within or under the attribute under discussion. It should be noted that

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<sup>13</sup> Oomius, citing Samuel Hieron, *The Back-Parts of Iehovah*, in *All the Sermons of Samuel Hieron* (London, 1614), 171.

<sup>14</sup> Oomius, citing Matthew 10:28.

Brakel gives a more general, but also a more thorough, word of application to the life of the believer at the end of his discussion of the attributes.<sup>15</sup>

As shown in section 7.4, Oomius divides the divine attributes into attributes of being and attributes of life. That division will serve to frame this discussion of the attributes in the practice. Oomius divides his discussion of the attributes of being into eight chapters, dealing with seven major categories of attributes.<sup>16</sup>

### 8.2.1 Primacy and Independence

Primacy and independence are handled first. In the second section of the chapter Oomius comments on the use of these attributes for our instruction, warning, and revival.<sup>17</sup> Van Mastricht, interestingly includes a different use of the doctrine: punishment of those who would minimize the independence of God in any way.<sup>18</sup> We are instructed by Oomius that our God is the true God because he is the first and last, from whom, through whom, in whom, and to whom are all things. Without these attributes the true God cannot be true God. In general Christians are encouraged to two duties for their warning and revival: to continually ascend to God's primacy with their understanding, and to reverently descend in dependence on him. The latter of these helps us humbly recognize that we have our being in him as well as our well-being. In addition, as those dependent on him we are not only moved to rest in him in his primacy,

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<sup>15</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1, III.xliv-xlvi.

<sup>16</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 170-309.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 171-175.

<sup>18</sup> Petrus Van Mastricht, *Theoretica-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.iii, par. 25, p. 84.

but also to obey him and to show him thanks. Kings and all others in high position, since they depend on him, must acknowledge him as their first Sovereign. Other members of society must obey God, who is above all, more than people. These attributes also lead us to be at peace and content with his deeds—since he is the first he does not owe anyone anything.

### 8.2.2 Simplicity

Chapter two discusses God's simplicity, and related to it his unity, spirituality, invisibility, intangibility, and *onafbeeldelickheydt*. Oomius suggests that the teaching of God's simplicity serves us in a number of ways.<sup>19</sup> First, it serves for refuting the heathens as well as some Christians. In the process of describing how this doctrine serves for refutation, Oomius quotes and cites an incredible number of authors, including especially classical writers as well as theologians from the early church and from his own time.<sup>20</sup> Oomius writes that among the heathens, such as Epicurus and Cicero, there are those who have wrongly taught that God has a body. Other heathens, such as Epiphanius, Eusebius, and Damascenus, have wrongly called God the soul of the world, thus making the world a large animal and giving it life. Plato, Thales Milesius, Democrites, and the Stoics all do this. Other heathens have wrongly thought that since God cannot be seen, that there is no God. Among Christians, the Manicheans, Audians (wrongly called Vadians by Prateolus), Photinians, Remonstrants, and the papists all deny the simplicity

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<sup>19</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 181-196.

<sup>20</sup> Here is a sampling of the authors Oomius gleans from: Cicero, Plato, Pliny, Novatian, Lactantius, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Eusebius, Augustine, Zanchi, Calvin, Beza, Perkins, Hottinger, Gisbertus Voetius, Maresius, Paulus Voetius, Hoornbeeck, and Abraham van de Velde.

of God. This attribute also serves as a warning to think spiritually about God's simple and perfect being and not introduce idolatrous ideas such that he is physical.<sup>21</sup>

This attribute should encourage Christians to practice certain duties as well. For example, we must show that we are followers of God by practicing true simplicity and uprightness before God and we must worship God in spirit and in truth. The latter of these must be done with heartfelt devotion, with a purposed focus to seek the edification of the spirit and conscience in all things, and in all righteousness and holiness.<sup>22</sup> These must be done in such a way for several reasons: 1) God wants our service and worship to correspond with his nature; 2) so that we do not grieve him; 3) so that we begin to become like our heavenly Father; 4) because without the above-mentioned things all that we do is void; and 5) because God may excuse our physical and outward failings to serve him if we serve him in spirit.

### 8.2.3 Immutability

The third chapter in the discussion of the attributes of being handles the immutability of God. This attribute serves us in refutation, instruction, warning, exhortation, and comfort.<sup>23</sup> Mennonites, "Ubiquitists" (following the old Noetians, Sabellians, Patripassians, Theopassians, and Eutychians), and Conradus Vorstius and his

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<sup>21</sup> Oomius uses here as an example of incorrect thinking about God a phrase used by the common person of his day: "The man who lives up there."

<sup>22</sup> Under the point of worshiping God in spirit and in truth with heartfelt devotion Oomius cites Guilielmus Saldenus, *De wech des levens; ofte, korte ende eenvoudige onderwysinge, van de natuer ende eyenschappen van de ware kracht der godsalicheyt: Den schijn-heyligen tot beschaminge, ende alle oprechte Christenen tot noodige opweckinge ende versterckinge voor-gesteld* (Enkhuizen, 1657), xi, pp. 305-306, 312. He also references his own *Bestieringe der Gedachten* (Amsterdam, 1660), part 2, V.i, pp. 193 and ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 203-211.

followers are refuted.<sup>24</sup> For instruction, Oomius notes that this attribute tells us that we are worshiping the true God.<sup>25</sup> If he were mutable, neither his glory or the happiness of his children would be assured and he would not be God. We are to be warned that because God is unchangeable in name and being his admonitions will be confirmed if people do not convert.<sup>26</sup> Brakel has a very similar warning about this attribute.<sup>27</sup> In previous times, writes Oomius, God punished the godless—he will continue to do so. The immutability of God should encourage believers to be so in their promises, and especially in their faith, hope, confession, doctrine, and life. It should also encourage believers to submit to his counsel, when it is revealed, since, because it is unchangeable, all murmuring and wrestling against it is no use.<sup>28</sup> It should also encourage us not to wait on anything in this world, but only on the Lord. Oomius finally states that this doctrine should give us comfort: 1) we will stand firm in our calling and election despite all the attacks of Satan, and not be moved; 2) God will certainly fulfill his promises; 3) we can be comforted in the sad changes of this world—though friends and everything else change

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<sup>24</sup> Against Vorstius and his followers the following are cited: Walaeus, *Loci communes*, 144-148; Rivetus, in *Genes.*, LI, p. 213; Tertullian, *adv. Marcion*, I.viii. One work of Vorstius is cited: *Tractatus theologicus de Deo, sive de natura et attributis Dei: Decem disputationes antehac in Schola Steinfurtensis publ. hab.* (Burgsteinfurt, 1606), 212.

<sup>25</sup> Citing Johannes Scharpius, *Cursus theologicus, in quo controversiae omnes de fidei dogmatibus ... nominatim inter nos et pontificios pertractantur* (Geneva, 1618), 91.

<sup>26</sup> Oomius, citing on this general point William Attersoll, *A Commentarie upon the fourth Booke of Moses, called Numbers* (London, 1618), on Numbers 23, pp. 240 and 243. William Gouge is also cited here: *A guide to goe to God: or, An explanation of the perfect patterne of prayer, the Lords prayer*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 1636), sect. 228, p. 312.

<sup>27</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1, III.xv.

<sup>28</sup> Oomius, citing William Gouge, *A learned and very useful commentary on the whole epistle to the Hebrews* (London, 1655), I, p. 100.

daily, God does not.<sup>29</sup> Brakel too has a paragraph outlining the comfort of God's immutability, laying the nature of the comfort out like Oomius does, but in only a few sentences.<sup>30</sup>

Van Mastricht has some points which resemble Oomius particularly in the area of the doctrine's comfort, though here as well as throughout his discussion of the practice of the attributes of God Van Mastricht does not categorize his points under such broader headings as "comfort," "instruction," "encouragement," etc. Again, his detail and organization are simply not as great as that of Oomius. Van Mastricht does, however, often have points that are similar to Oomius such as that this doctrine gives us comfort in all sorts of circumstances, serves to help us in our battle with sin and to stand firm in our relationship with God.<sup>31</sup>

#### 8.2.4 Perfection and All-Sufficiency

Oomius next discusses what he calls infinity with respect to God's being, that is, perfection, and flowing out of it, all-sufficiency. The discussion of the practice of the doctrine is divided into two parts: the use of perfection for the believer and the use of God's all-sufficiency. Perfection is to serve believers for instruction, exhortation and revival, and comfort.<sup>32</sup> The scarcity of citations of other theologians in this section shows how little Oomius is depending on others in the practical section, compared with the

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<sup>29</sup> On the first of these points Oomius cites Johannes Martinus, *Geestelicke hert-sterckinge tegen der geloovigen geestelicken strydt ende swackheyt...*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Groningen, 1650), 453; Franciscus Ridderus, *De mensche Godts verthoont in de staet* (Hoorn, 1658), part 1, VIII.iii, p. m. 913.

<sup>30</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1, III.xv.

<sup>31</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.vii, par. 11-14, pp. 110-111.

<sup>32</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 219-223.

section positively stating the doctrine. Oomius writes that with respect to God, his perfection instructs us that he is the true God since he is completely perfect and the most perfect. With respect to others we are taught how foolish and unthankful it is for others to search for perfection anywhere else than in God alone. The attribute of perfection encourages and revives believers, first, in light of their own imperfection, to practice this perfection of God often. Second, God's perfection encourages believers to direct their desires to the perfect God. Third, it encourages us, like Christ, to place God before us as an example for our whole life. As for the comfort this attribute brings, it can encourage believers in light of their own imperfection—although there are many imperfections in this life, there will be perfection in the next.

There are also various practical ways God's all-sufficiency serves believers. All-sufficiency serves the believer for instruction, punishment, exhortation, and comfort.<sup>33</sup> First, this doctrine instructs the believer that his or her obedience and service to God is not profitable to him and does not further God in any way—God does not need anything beyond himself.<sup>34</sup> This is important to keep in mind since there are those, like papists and others who think that their works are the cause of their salvation, who think that through their works, gifts, and offerings they can pay God for their sins and earn heaven. This kind of error really does not differ from heathens who believe God can be served by human hands. No better than this are those among the Reformed who think that they have done God and his servants a great service when they in some way obey God's

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 224-231.

<sup>34</sup> Oomius, citing Caspar Streso, *Commentarius practicus in Actorum Apostolicorum per Lucam...* (Amsterdam, 1669), II, p. 36.

Word. It is true that God encourages us to repent, but he does not do so for his need, but out of his love and patience, not wishing that any sinner be lost. Second, this doctrine serves as punishment against all those Christians who do not properly and strongly enough believe God's all-sufficiency. There are many in their life and in their practice who show that they do not believe this, for example, those who direct their desires to creatures, and not God; those who leave God to enjoy sin for a time; those who cling to certain means; those who look for help, comfort, and advice from creatures so often, and not God. God's all-sufficiency serves, third, for exhortation to serve God since he is able to enrich those who serve him with gifts and blessings. Believers should also be exhorted to set their hearts completely on the Lord and be completely satisfied in him above all. In addition, believers ought to always look to God, whether in persecution or in times of blessing. Finally, the doctrine serves for comfort. God is all-sufficient to forgive our sins, no matter how great they are. He is also all-sufficient to completely sanctify us, to completely care for us spiritually and physically, and to save us and preserve us forever.

### **8.2.5 Eternity**

Chapter five, on infinity with respect to God's duration, or, eternity, follows a similar structure as the previous chapters when it deals with the practice of the doctrine in the second section of the chapter.<sup>35</sup> Oomius writes that the doctrine of God's eternity serves believers for refutation of Socinians as well as Vorstius, for instruction, for exhortation and renewal, and for comfort. The Socinians as well as Vorstius err when

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<sup>35</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 234-239.



they deny that God's eternity is free from any succession of time and when they say that in some general way the notion of time can be ascribed to God.

This doctrine, like the previous attributes discussed, instructs believers that they are to serve and worship the true God, who is distinguished from all creatures, since only the true God is eternal. In addition believers are instructed that he alone created the heavens and the earth. They also come to see how great the love of God is that he elected believers before the foundation of the world—God knows all his works from eternity, he loves with an eternal love, and believers will give him glory for all eternity.<sup>36</sup> Oomius exhorts believers to remember that the short happiness of this life ought not to be placed above the eternal God and his eternal blessings, to honor God eternally and with good works for these are the seeds of eternity, to put our trust in that God who will never end, and to continually pray that God bless our descendants—we are finite and will not always be there to care for them, but since God remains the same we can give our care and worries about the next generation over to him. Believers can be comforted in all sorts of adversities because of this doctrine. We need not be extremely affected, much less broken, if we have the one who inhabits eternity before our eyes. Enemies will pass away, but not the Most High, and just as he is eternal, he will eternally care for us. Believers can also be assured that because he is eternal, he will give them eternal life. Brakel, in his brief word of application, suggests some different ideas to his readers in light of the eternity of God: do not attempt to reach beyond your human understanding;

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<sup>36</sup> The following Scripture texts are quoted and cited here: Ephesians 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9; Acts 15:18; Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 36:16; John 17:24; 2 Timothy 4:18.

lose yourself in his eternity; worship what you cannot understand; call, with Abraham, on the name of the eternal God.<sup>37</sup>

### 8.2.6 Immeasurability and Omnipresence

The sixth chapter of this part of *Institutiones* 1.2.1 discusses infinity with respect to place or space, that is, immeasurability and omnipresence. The practical use of this attribute, serving for refutation, instruction, exhortation, and comfort, is noticeably longer and more detailed than the previous discussions.<sup>38</sup> Oomius refutes heathens, Socinians (and Vorstius with them), Cartesians, and those, like the Lutherans, who ascribe omnipresence to Christ's flesh, and the papists who ascribe a "multi-presence" of Christ's body. Among the heathens, Oomius first refutes Aristotle's notion of God as the Mover who is not moved and, in this system, is enclosed in heaven.<sup>39</sup> The Stoics too are refuted on this point. In his section against the Socinians, Oomius refers the reader to a large amount of material: works by Hoornbeeck, Walaeus, Rivetus, Voetius, Polanus, Maresius, Alting, Petrus de Witte, Bogermann, Junius, Cloppenburg, et al.

For instruction, this doctrine serves to show that those are guilty of a great godlessness who represent God in paintings—they deny that God's greatness is incomprehensible, making him contained in a small place like a human or other creature. The doctrine also instructs against the foolishness of those who go here and there when they pray when God's omnipresence teaches that God can and wants to be worshiped

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<sup>37</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1, III.ix.

<sup>38</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 245-276.

<sup>39</sup> Oomius cites the following from Aristotle: *Physicor.*, I; *de Generat. & Corrupt.*, II.x; *de Coelo*, I.iii and ix.

with raised hands everywhere. This attribute also instructs that people are reckless who think that they can go ahead and sin, either outwardly or inwardly, because they are hidden from God. Oomius next exhorts the Christian to take God's omnipresence with him everywhere—as Bernard says, in all things that you do, know that God is omnipresent.<sup>40</sup> Various reasons are given for this exhortation. First, considering God, because he is omnipresent he is not far, but near us. If a king or a prince were near us, would we not highly honor him and serve him? How much more, writes Oomius, should we honor and serve God. Also considering God, his omnipresence means that he observes us everywhere—what we think, speak, and do. In addition, he is everywhere working for and in us. Second, considering ourselves, if we do not keep God continually before us, how can we be assured that we are truly God-fearing? Also, if we do not keep him before us, how can we be comforted with his gracious presence in difficult times? Furthermore, if we do not walk before God's presence the Lord will set his presence against us.

This doctrine also serves for comfort in all sorts of difficulties—God is present not only through the infinity of his being, but especially through the friendliness of his favor and grace, just as a loving father is tenderly with his child in times of sickness. God is there with his wise council, his healing consolation, his and his powerful help, against his enemies and for us and all of his children. Besides being with us in difficult times, Oomius writes that we can be comforted that God's presence is with us when facing death—he will receive our souls. Van Maastricht parallels this point on comfort

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<sup>40</sup> Citing Bernard, *Meditationes.*, vi.

with his first use of the doctrine (*primo est in consolatione*)<sup>41</sup> as does Brakel in a short paragraph.<sup>42</sup>

### 8.2.7 Incomprehensibility

The brief seventh chapter on the attributes of being discusses infinity with regard to the understanding, or, incomprehensibility. The practical part of the doctrine is divided into instruction and exhortation.<sup>43</sup> This attribute instructs us that no human or angel, in this life or the next, can have a comprehensive knowledge of God. Creatures know God through causality, negation, and exaltation (*verheffing*). Oomius exhorts his readers to humility given the awareness of our weakness regarding the knowledge of God, to amazement at God's incomprehensibility, and to closely following the leading of God's Word as a lamp in the darkness of this world.

### 8.2.8 The Infinite God as the Portion of the True Believer

The final chapter in this part of Oomius' doctrine of God involves a closer examination and discussion of the practical implications of God's infinity for the believer.<sup>44</sup> Having thus far spoken of God's infinity, begins Oomius, it ought to move us to have the infinite desires of our soul be fulfilled by the Lord. Though this has been discussed elsewhere, Oomius wishes to explain it and apply it a bit more here. His first major point is that God is the portion of believers primarily for two reasons: to

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<sup>41</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.x, par. 14, p. 126.

<sup>42</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1, III.xii.

<sup>43</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 277-280.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 280-310.

distinguish his people from other peoples who serve other gods, and because God provides his people with everything they need. This latter point means that, in all our difficulties, we can be completely fulfilled and satisfied with God. This also means that we can trust God to be our portion also in the future, just as surely as he was in the past. Oomius' second major point in this chapter is that the fact that God is the portion of true believers serves to instruct in light of those who are of the opinion that believers are the most unfortunate people in the world. Oomius uses many Scripture passages to show how this is false. The third major point of this chapter involves examining whether or not the Lord is one's portion. There are various ways to determine this. One should have an interest in and a certain ownership of God. Certain signs should be evidenced to see if someone has God as his or her portion, for example, he should 1) have continual holy and sweet thoughts of God, 2) run to God in all difficulties and persecution, 3) esteem God more than anything else, and 4) hold fast to God and be willing to give up anything but God. Other elements that should be present in the believer to determine whether or not God is his true portion are the following: the sense that no loss should have as great an impact in one's life as that of the loss of God and his grace and feelings his grace; the leaving behind of all earthly and worldly things and being lifted up to God since where one's treasure is, there is one's heart; being able to stand and speak boldly before God; serving and obeying God; regarding highly those who also have God as their portion.

In the fourth major portion of this chapter, Oomius shows, given that which is discussed in the previous section, that it is clear who does not have God as their portion. First mentioned are philosophers among the heathen who place things besides God as

their highest good. Others who belong in this category are those who place other things next to God. Some have other things in heaven, such as the blind heathens who serve the sun or stars and papists who put their trust in angels and saints. Some desire things on earth such as the same aforementioned heathen and papists who cling to idols and images. Worldly and fleshly people find their portion in such things as their stomach, tobacco pipes, their honor, or money. The fifth section of the discussion shows that those who do have the Lord as their portion are to be exhorted and comforted. In general they are to be exhorted to refrain from sinful ways and practices which could place into question the truth of their interest in God. In particular, believers should 1)not concern themselves when they see the success of the godless, 2)not be content with only a little oil in their bottle, 3)rejoice in their portion, 4)never place their hearts in the things of this world. Also comfort is to be gained from this doctrine given that believers know that the Lord is their portion. The final and sixth section of the chapter describes things believers must practice with regard to this doctrine given the sad and oppressive days they are in. Primarily this means that believers should continually think of and look to God—he is our portion, peace, happiness, goodness, gold, everything.

### 8.3 Attributes of Life

The explanation and application of the attributes of life consist of a total of fifteen chapters.<sup>45</sup> These chapters all fit into one of three types of attributes of life—Oomius divides them into attributes of excellent powers, excellent morals or virtues, and

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<sup>45</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 310-620.

attributes of highest excellence. Oomius proceeds in the *Institutiones* by discussing these various attributes as they fall into these three main categories. He begins with a brief explanation of the doctrine and then proceeds to deal with the practical implications of the attribute, often prefacing the practical section with stating that this attribute “serves us for...,” or, “now we will see the uses of this doctrine.” For example, Oomius leads into the practical section of the attribute of omniscience with the following: *Dese Alwetenheden onses Godts die wy tot dus verre verklaerd, en veelsins bevestigt hebben moet ons dienen....*<sup>46</sup> Every once in a while he almost shows impatience with the explanation and defense of the doctrine as he approaches the practical part, as he does when beginning the practical part of God’s will: *Dit aghten wy tot verklaeringe, genoegh geseght te zijn; en willen voorts gaen sien wat Nuttigheden ons uyt dese leere toevloeyen.*<sup>47</sup> Indeed, this confirms what Oomius has said all along: the practical applications of the doctrines are his *voornaemste oogemerck*. Typically the attributes are shown to “serve” for such practical purposes as instruction, rebuttal, warning, and comfort.

### 8.3.1 Attributes of Power

Oomius places four attributes in this category: life, understanding, will, and power.

**Life.** The attribute of life is shown to serve for instruction, rebuttal, warning, and comfort.<sup>48</sup> The attribute of life teaches us that God is the true God because he is life itself

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 338.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 378.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 313-320.

and the origin of all life.<sup>49</sup> The doctrine is used for rebuttal of heathens who have distinguished the divine nature into men and women and various gods and goddesses as well as those among Christians who taught that, after Christ suffered, his divinity died.

As warning the reader is told that this doctrine should tell people to serve no other God but the living God. Many fail to do this. The heathens serve false gods such as Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, and various other gods, but a god who does not live simply does not exist. Those who want to serve God through images also fail in this, as do papists who worship many saints. Saints cannot give us life. The Jews, “Turks,” and Socinians also serve something other than the living God even though they do not serve false gods or images, and they do not worship saints. They fail, however, because they serve God without the Son and the Holy Spirit, without whom God is not a living God.

The positive side of Oomius’ warning against serving anyone or anything but the living God is that we ought to fear and serve the living God. Some reasons are given for this: we have received life from him; we can expect no blessing in this life and no eternal life if we leave the fount of living waters. Beyond serving the living God, we are warned by Oomius that we ought to cling to God because we only live in him—he is the origin, giver, and maintainer of both our natural life and our spiritual life.

The final word on this doctrine is that it gives the believer comfort. Very generally, we are comforted because we know that we are children of the living God. In particular, there is comfort in that all the Lord’s precious promises are ours because God is not dead, but alive. There is also comfort in all difficulties, especially in death—we

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<sup>49</sup> Citing Joseph Hall, *Works*, II (London, 1625), Conc. in 1 Timothy 6:7.



have a God who lives eternally. Some trust in princes, who may esteem you while they live, but when they die protection can cease. Only God is trustworthy eternally and we can say with Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job. 19:25). His favor and comfort is always enough. In both body and soul we will live forever with our living God.

**Omniscience.** Next Oomius discusses God’s understanding and omniscience, finding in the doctrine practical uses for instruction, refutation, warning, humbling our souls before God, encouragement, and comfort.<sup>50</sup> We can be instructed that our God is the true God because he knows all things—even future things. He also knows the heart and the thoughts of man. We can also be instructed that our Savior is true God because he is all-knowing as is the Holy Spirit.

Oomius refutes a number of groups on this topic, beginning with the Muslim philosophers Averröes, Avicenna, and Agafel, including with these three a number of Christians who claim that God knows all things generally, but does not know particular things. Next he mentions that the doctrine of God’s omniscience serves to refute the Socinians and Vorstius who hold to the idea that man has a free will. Oomius spends the most time in this section of refutation against the Socinians, and includes citations from Irenaeus, Junius, Vorstius, Walaeus, Cloppenbergh, Alsted, Alting, Maresius, Nicolaus Arnoldi, Rivetus, Voetius, Hoornbeeck, Petrus de Witte, and Augustine. After the Socinians, Arminians are refuted. Another subsection is spent refuting those who teach that future things and free workings of creatures are known by God by a middle knowledge (*middel-wetenschap*). Also refuted are Pelagians (old and new), Manicheans,

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<sup>50</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 338-371.

and Stoics. Finally, Oomius singles out those in England who say that God does not see the sin of the righteous, referring especially to Thomas Gataker.<sup>51</sup> Oomius believes that by grace the sins of the righteous are hidden from the eye of divine judgment so that they are not punished, but they are not hidden from the eye of divine omniscience to the extent that God does not know when a believer has sinned.

Oomius, like Brakel after him,<sup>52</sup> also includes a long word of warning in his practical section. In general he states that one should be warned to continually walk before the eyes of the all-knowing and all-seeing God. This should warn us against committing even the smallest sins; it should also warn us positively to practice all God's laws, both in private and in public.

Humility is also in order in the face of this doctrine. We need to be humbled if we think that we have conquered all our sins—the all-knowing God sees that we have not. We ought also to be humbled for those times that we have not lived according to our beliefs. Sometimes we do not live as if all things are naked and open to his eyes.

We ought to be encouraged to practice especially two duties. First, we ought to openly confess our sins without trying to hide them or hold anything back, since God knows everything. Secondly, we ought to be encouraged to serve the Lord not only in public, but also in private, since God also sees us there. A godly man lives the same in all places: in his home, out in the street, and in church.

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<sup>51</sup> Referring to his *God's Eye on his Israel*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 1644).

<sup>52</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1, III.xxi.

There is also comfort for the Christian in the doctrine of God's omniscience, especially in four areas. First, when we are persecuted and harmed by the world, we can know that our heavenly Father sees. People can do nothing that the Lord does not see—and he who has an eye to see also has a hand to punish. Second, God sees the false accusations of the devil and of people. When the devil wants to tell us we are enemies of God and hypocrites, the Lord can see the good in us. Third, in want and poverty we can be comforted for God knows our wanderings through the great desert.<sup>53</sup> We can finally be comforted in all our duties—public and private. Even if no ear hears or eye sees, the Lord sees and hears us. When we call out with groans that words cannot express (as Romans 8 speaks of), God knows and hears.

Van Mastricht suggests similar points when he brings this doctrine in the practice. He writes of the need for humility on man's part in light of God's omniscience, of the comfort the doctrine brings, and how God's omniscience ought to drive believers to living well for God and flee sin.<sup>54</sup> Unlike Oomius, however Van Mastricht begins, as he often does, by stating that this doctrine should serve to lead us to glorify God.<sup>55</sup> Brakel, in addition to his word of warning mentioned above, also includes a word of comfort as well as an encouragement to practice godliness. Up to this point, the application of

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<sup>53</sup> Citing Deuteronomy 2:6,7.

<sup>54</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.xiii, par. 25-29, pp. 150-151.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 24, p. 150.

God's knowledge to the believer is the lengthiest word of application Brakel has detailed in his discussion of the divine attributes.<sup>56</sup>

**Will.** The third attribute of power discussed by Oomius is God's will. He finds especially four *nutigheden* flowing out of the doctrine.<sup>57</sup> First, the doctrine is useful to refute Libertines, Remonstrants, Pelagians, Papists, and Arminians. The last three of these are critiqued especially for making God's will dependent on the willing of people rather than the willing and doing of all people dependent on God's will. The doctrine is also useful as a warning. Oomius suggest that the Christian ought not delve into the hidden council of God which he has not revealed in his Word. We may marvel at that will of God, but not search into it.<sup>58</sup>

Christians can be exhorted to practice four duties because of this doctrine. First, we must recognize God's will as the highest cause of all things, including our salvation. Second, we must always subject our will to God's good and pleasing will. Using many examples from Scripture Oomius tells the reader that this includes being content with everything that comes from the Lord. Third, we must place everything we do under the will of God since we can do nothing without it. Thus success that people have does not come from their decisions or from any freedom in their will, but from the leading of God's will. Fourth, we are exhorted by Oomius to follow God's law, since his law is his will, so that there is a harmony between our will and God's. Elaborating on this point,

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<sup>56</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1, III.xxi-xxiii.

<sup>57</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 378-398.

<sup>58</sup> Citing Romans 11:33; Psalm 131:1; Acts 1:7.

Oomius gives detailed reasons for following God's will as well as descriptions of the way God's will ought to be followed, according to our Savior (willingly and without backtalk, with reverence, cheerfully, courageously, passionately, uprightly and from the heart, and faithfully and fully).<sup>59</sup> Certain means are also given to achieve this end. The Christian ought to know God's will; he ought to suppress his own will; and he ought to pray to the Lord that he would make us fitting to do his will.

Finally a word of comfort is given by Oomius. For one, in all difficulties it can be a great comfort for the believer that everything is the will of God. Another reason for comfort is that we will surely be brought into blessedness since God's will is unchanging.

**Omnipotence.** The last attribute of power discussed by Oomius is power or omnipotence. It is found to be useful for refutation, punishment of those who deny God's omnipotence, instruction, warning, and encouragement.<sup>60</sup>

Those refuted are Vorstius, the papists and Lutherans, Cartesians, and certain other philosophers. The papists and Lutherans are brought up by Oomius because they bring out their ideas of transubstantiation and consubstantiation out of the doctrine of God's omnipotence. Oomius also refutes the idea of certain philosophers—not named or referenced by Oomius—who have judged that the First Cause exerted his power because of a necessity of nature that he must do so. The Cartesians are criticized for maintaining

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<sup>59</sup> On the point of doing God's will willingly and without backtalk Oomius cites various authors, including: William Gouge, *On the Lord's Prayer*, sect. 75, p. 89; John Mayer, *The English catechisme. Or A commentarie on the short catechisme set forth in the Booke of common prayer*, 463; John Smith, *Worcks*, 184; George Downname, *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer*, 212 and 318; Perkins, on Matthew 6, p. 1021; Maximiliaen Teellinck, *Huysboeck*, 210.

<sup>60</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 409-428.

that there can only be one world, against the opinion of the fathers, the scholastics, and old and new philosophers and theologians. Oomius writes that Hoornbeeck, Vogelsangh, Stuart, as well as Paul and Daniel Voetius speak in more detail on this.

In an interesting, if brief, addition of ways Oomius speaks of the uses of the various doctrines, he adds under omnipotence that one of its practical uses is that it leads to punishment of those who deny it. Here he speaks of the flesh—both in unbelievers as well as Christians. Also very briefly Oomius describes how the doctrine serves for instruction: when our prayers do not seem to be heard, especially when God's people suffer persecution, and the enemy has the upper hand, this is not because of a lack of power on the Lord's part.

Christians are to be encouraged by this doctrine in various ways. We are to fear the Lord. We are to obey him since even nature teaches that one must obey that which is greater than he. But our God is the best of all and the greatest of all. We must subject ourselves to his will and reign with a humble and believing heart. Additionally we must trust in this strong God of ours and lean on him completely—he can protect us and save us. This involves defending and strengthening ourselves with God's power against all bodily danger and especially against all spiritual danger. The latter includes all our spiritual enemies, our sins, and all sorts of weaknesses that we have in the practice of our duties of godliness, the withstanding of Satan's attacks, and in our courage under persecution. Other ways in which we are to be encouraged include making the strength of our God the main foundation of all our prayers and to proclaim the power of our God everywhere.

### 8.3.2 Attributes of Morals

Four major attributes are placed under this heading by Oomius: wisdom (associated with God's understanding), holiness (associated with God's will, seen with respect to God himself), goodness, and justice (both associated with God's will, seen with respect to man). Under goodness fall love, grace, loving-kindness, mercy, and patience. Under justice fall truth, faithfulness, perseverance, vengeance, and wrath. Here the uses of the attributes of wisdom, holiness, goodness (including love, grace, and loving-kindness), and justice will be examined.

**Wisdom.** The wisdom of God serves the believer in various ways.<sup>61</sup> It serves as instruction that Christ is the true God, since he, like the Father, is called this in Scripture.<sup>62</sup> God's wisdom serves as warning not to speak poorly of or to reprimand any of God's works or judgments since all things are ruled and come to pass by the highest wisdom and goodness.

The wisdom of God serves for encouragement and renewal as well. First, we ought to recognize God and praise him just as men praise people who are famous for their wisdom. Second, we should completely take pleasure in his revealed wisdom and rest in it. Third, we should seek to get wisdom as well as the truth. Fourth, when we do find wisdom we should be modest about ourselves, be unwilling to praise ourselves, and thank God, the Author of wisdom, for what we have received.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 434-442.

<sup>62</sup> Citing Jude 25.

This doctrine can finally bring tremendous comfort to the believer. If we are persecuted by scheming and crafty people and do not know what to do, the wisdom of the Lord can serve as an encouragement. Since he is all-wise he will know a way that we can be saved from distress and danger.<sup>63</sup> He can do this because our God knows the thoughts and deliberations of the enemies of his people. He is also able to hide his own purposes—we cannot always understand his ways. In addition, just as he is wise, he is also strong—we often find these two mentioned together in the Bible.

**Holiness.** Holiness is the second moral attribute discussed by Oomius. The practical implications are treated more briefly than the practice of any other divine attribute.<sup>64</sup> This makes Van Mastricht's treatment of the practical nature of this doctrine and that of Oomius roughly equal in detail and thoroughness, though Oomius is still more clear in overall organization.<sup>65</sup> This is one of the very few treatments of the uses of God's attributes where Oomius' treatment is not clearly more lengthy and detailed than that of Van Mastricht.

For Oomius, God's holiness serves to instruct us in several ways. It shows the foolishness of the heathens who serve gods whom they themselves admit are unclean, sensuous, and adulterers. God's holiness shows the godlessness of the Catholic popes who, even though they are heinous people—many of them dirty fornicators and sodomites, as their own writers make known—want to attribute to themselves the title

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<sup>63</sup> Quoting 2 Peter 2:9; 1 Corinthians 3:19; and 1:25.

<sup>64</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 445-449.

<sup>65</sup> See Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.xix, par. 13-19, pp. 206-208.



“Holiness,” and want to be called the “most holy.” But only God and his Christ are worthy of this title. The holiness of God also instructs us about our own uncleanness. We who were created in God’s image, which also embraced holiness and righteousness, have wandered very far from the state in which we were created. The doctrine also serves for encouragement in that it calls us to sanctify God’s name, to call to God with a holy heart, mouth, and prayers, and to become holy and let our holiness shine in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

**Goodness, Love, Grace, and Loving-Kindness.** Oomius finds various ways in which the attributes of goodness, love, grace, and loving-kindness can serve the Christian.<sup>66</sup> First, they can serve to refute those who hold a different doctrine of these attributes. Oomius refutes the Credonites, Marcionites, Manicheans, and similar heretics of the ancient church who hold to the view that there are two different gods—one, the good and kind friend of people and God of the New Testament who sent Jesus, and the other evil, full of vengeance, who created the world and was the author of the Old Testament. Also refuted are certain philosophers among the heathens who deny that any good in human came from God. Finally, also refuted are the old and new Pelagians, the papists, and the Arminians.

Oomius also writes that goodness and the attributes flowing out of it serve as a warning against sin. First, we are warned about sinning against God. Just as it is unseemly to do evil to someone who is good, it is much more so to do evil against God, who only does good. A particular sin against God mentioned by Oomius is grumbling in

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<sup>66</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 454-465.

difficulty and blaming God. This is wrong since God only wants and does good for his children. Second, we are warned about sinning against our neighbor. Third, Oomius warns about sinning against other created things by misusing them according to our own desires.

These attributes also encourage the believer to practice certain duties with respect to God, ourselves, and others. With respect to God we are called to love and honor God above all because he is good, to thank him since everything we have is from his free love and grace, and to proclaim his grace and loving-kindness everywhere and to others. With respect to ourselves we must attempt to assure ourselves that the Lord's loving-kindness is for us. What good does it do to now that God is gracious and full of loving-kindness if we do not know at the same time that we participate in that? Oomius clarifies that he is not speaking here of God's general loving-kindness that he displays to all people, but he is speaking of God's special loving-kindness. With respect to others we should try as much as possible to follow our God. Generally speaking we should try, following God's example, to do much good for God's Church and the Republic. More specifically, we should love others and be agreeable to others in various other ways, including in loving-kindness.

Comfort is also to be gained from this doctrine. Generally speaking, we can be comforted when we think that we are loved by God, who is love himself—this is nothing less than the beginning of eternal life and a tremendous strength in all difficulties. More specifically there is also comfort against sin. God will graciously forgive us and we will

be healed. Beyond comfort against sin, there is comfort against the hatred of people, physical difficulties, and death as well as the fear of death.

Van Mastricht shows that the doctrine serves in similar ways, and though, as usual, he is not as organized as Oomius, he is nearly as thorough as Oomius in his discussion of the practical uses of God's goodness. He finds, for example, that the doctrine inspires us to love God, to search for goodness only in God, to seek help only from God in the battle against evil, and to recognize the evil of sin.<sup>67</sup>

**Justice, especially Vengeance.** After explaining and defending the attribute of justice, Oomius brings it into practice in a variety of ways.<sup>68</sup> First, this doctrine can be used for refutation of the Socinians. The Socinians are taken to task for connecting God's punishment with his wrath and vengeance, but not his justice. The Socinians, writes Oomius, are also incorrect for saying that the punishing justice of God is merely an effect of the divine will, or "*een voor-bygaende beweeginge*." Oomius, however, has shown that God's justice is something "*dat'se yets is 't welcke waerlick en geduyrich in Godt selve en alsoo hem wesentlick is soo wel als andere eygenschappen Godts die het wesen Godts selve sijn en van het selve niet reëlick onderscheyden worden*."<sup>69</sup> The Socinians are finally critiqued for teaching that God's vengeful justice is not necessary when there is sin and that he can leave sin unpunished. Here one can see that their

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<sup>67</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.xvi, par. 16-19, pp. 174-176.

<sup>68</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 543-564.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 544.

“heilloose” teaching amounts to a denial of the satisfaction of Christ.<sup>70</sup> Also speaking against a false view, Oomius shows that the doctrine serves for instruction by teaching that the distinctions that philosophers are accustomed to speak of in God’s justice have no place in God.

Under the practical uses of God’s justice Oomius includes a somewhat unique use in the sense that it is not one that is often mentioned in the application of the attributes: God’s justice serves for frightening the godless who live in sin and love it, living as if there is no God. There is, however, writes Oomius, undoubtedly a Judge who will not let sin go unpunished. This Judge is a “*Algemeenen Richter*” and not just of this or that corner of the world, but of the whole world. This Judge is a heavenly Judge. It follows from this that he knows all evil against his law and that he cannot be bought—money has no place in heaven. This Judge is Judge above all, which means he will judge all and no one will judge him. He is also a righteous Judge. Brakel after him also calls sinners to be frightened because of this attribute.<sup>71</sup>

After explaining the use of the doctrine for warning and encouragement, Oomius shows its use for comfort. In general, Christians can be comforted in the face heavy persecutions and battles against the church in one’s own country and in other lands. We must not lose courage. It is impossible that God, who is a just Lord, will not finally give the enemies of his church what they deserve. God will not let them go unpunished for he

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<sup>70</sup> Citing Gisbertus Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1648-1669), Vol. 1, pp. 352 and 360; John Owen, *Diatrib. c. Socinian*.

<sup>71</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, Vol. 1, III.xl.

is the helper and protector of his people. Another reason he will punish is that he is “*geraeckt*” especially by the suffering of his people for the enemies of his people are ultimately against him and those who are suffering are his anointed, his adopted children, his first-born, the lovers of his soul, his bride, his turtle-dove, and, finally, his chosen and his own people.

More particularly this doctrine gives comfort in three ways. First, if we are wronged in name, in our possessions, our body, or any other way, we should not want to take revenge against those who have wronged us. We should give our just cause over to the just Lord. Second, if we receive no justice from the judges of this world, if what the Lord said happened to the widow in Luke 18:1 happens to us, if we are judged by our neighbor without reason, or if we are treated poorly by those stronger than us, there is much comfort that there is a just Judge who will have the last word on all things. Third if our conscience accuses us concerning our sins it is very comforting to think that God’s justice is satisfied in our security, Christ (“*in onsen Borge Christo*”). Related to this final comfort, we must pray that God will see Christ and withhold his judgment from us, be sorry for our sins, and appeal to God’s mercy.

### **8.3.3 Attributes Where God’s Highest Excellence is Displayed**

The attributes Oomius places in this final category are might or rule, glory, and beatitude. In these attributes, finds Oomius, appear God’s highest excellence.

**Might.** Careful not to confuse this attribute with God’s power, after an initial explanation of the doctrine, Oomius does something a bit unusual as he brings the doctrine into practice. He first of all speaks of applying the doctrine of God’s might or

rule in general, showing that it is useful for refutation, instruction, warning, and encouragement.<sup>72</sup> Then he applies the attribute more specifically, showing that the fact that God is our King gives encouragement and comfort.<sup>73</sup>

On God's might in general, Oomius uses the doctrine to refute the Remonstrants who say in their *Apologia*, chapter four, that the extent of God's reign depends on his blessings. Since creatures are not infinite and thus cannot contain God's infinite blessings, God's reign over creatures cannot be infinite or completely absolute. Oomius also refutes those who, in an effort to defend the freedom of God's might, attribute preposterous things to God. For example, they say he could believe that which is false or expect something from men that is impossible.

For instruction, Oomius finds in this attribute that God did no one wrong when in eternity he foreordained people to their ends—some to salvation, others to damnation. On this idea of divine predestination the Scriptures teach us that God is a high Sovereign who has had no less might, right, and authority over his creatures as a potter over his clay. And predestination is a deed of the highest might, right, and divine rule. God has shown in this that he is an absolute Lord.<sup>74</sup> We are further instructed that all other might in creatures have their origin in the divine. Finally, we are instructed that the obedience

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<sup>72</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 591-598.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 598-602.

<sup>74</sup> Oomius turns the reader to Altting for further explanation of the absolute right of God in predestination: *Theologica problematica*, I.xvi, p. 35.

we owe to the political powers must be distinguished from that which God is owed.

Oomius makes the distinction here between *in foro foli* and *in foro poli*.<sup>75</sup>

After a word of warning and encouragement, Oomius turns to discuss what it means practically for the Christian that God is our King. This idea encourages the Christian to subject himself to God with holy fear and in all humility as he remembers the high majesty of this King, his unlimited might, and the righteous vengeance he exercises against those that scorn him. It ought also to encourage us to ask him for help through prayer whenever we have needs. The fact that God is our King also brings comfort and joy that we have such a King.<sup>76</sup> David shows us this use in Psalm 97:1 and 149:2. We can have comfort and rejoice that we have a mighty King who can help his people and ruin his enemies. Additionally, the fact that our King is wise and merciful is reason to be comforted and to rejoice.

**Glory.** Oomius writes that the use of this attribute must be given briefly.<sup>77</sup> First, for refutation of heathens and papists who give divine honor and service to things that are not God. Socinians are refuted as well by Oomius. Second, for instruction the doctrine is seen to serve by teaching what it means to give God honor and glory and what it means to take honor away from him.

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<sup>75</sup> For more on this idea Oomius turns the reader to his own *Schriftuylicke Prognosticatie*, Ch. 4, pp. 209-216 and Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*, Vol. 4, pp. 62-91, “de Foro Poli & Soli.”

<sup>76</sup> The Dutch for “joy” is “*verheuging*.” This word is not typically used by Oomius when he examines the practical uses of the doctrines for the believer.

<sup>77</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 609-616. Though Oomius finds this a brief treatment it is noticeably more length than that of, for example, Van Mastricht on the same subject. The practical part of *de Majestate & Gloria Dei* is in Vol. 1, II.xxii, par. 14-19, pp. 229-230 of *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*.

The attribute of God's glory applied also serves for punishment and threatening of those who darken God's glory. Those who do this are those who say there is no God (or who do not recognize him for who he is), idol-worshippers, blasphemers, who wrongly ascribe to others that which belongs to God, haters of God's name, those who confess the true religion but have bad morals and thereby blaspheme God's name, and all unrepentant sinners.

Christians can be encouraged in several ways. First, we are called to recognize God's glory and his infinite perfection in all his attributes since in this his glory is found. Second, we are to be encouraged to be amazed at God's excellence since glory and excellence are the only true source of amazement. Third, by consequence, we are to praise God's glory and proclaim it as God commands and as Christ teaches us to pray. Fourth, we are to be encouraged to make sure that other people glorify God too. To this end we must explain God's glory to others, advance God's Word, proclaim the virtues of God in us, and seek to convert sinners.

We can be comforted too because of God's glory. If we are defamed, what does it matter if we are God's—whose glory is eternal and infinite—and will remain so. And if we glorify him on earth, we will glorify us in heaven.

**Beatitude.** The final attribute discussed by Oomius is a kind of summary of all the attributes, especially of the attributes of life. Oomius briefly speaks of how the doctrine serves for instruction, encouragement, and comfort.<sup>78</sup> We are instructed to worship the true God because he alone is blessed. As opposed to the heathen gods, our

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<sup>78</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1, 618-619.



God alone is free from all evil, overflowing with all good, sufficient in himself, and a God who lacks nothing. We are also instructed that God is the author of no sin—he who is perfectly blessed has no evil in him. We are encouraged to seek all our bliss in him and to ground it in him. Further we are called to despise everything that would appear to bring blessedness or joy, except him. To this end we should try to have fellowship with him and make full use of the means he has given us to this end. On this subject Van Mastricht has as his first point, as he does more often when discussing the attributes, that this attribute should encourage us to glorify God.<sup>79</sup> He also makes points that somewhat parallel some that Oomius makes: he speaks of the foolishness of seeking blessedness outside of God, the need to search for blessedness only in God and to do so seeking and using the various means he has given us to do this, and the comfort this doctrine brings in all sorts of difficult circumstances.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.xxiii, par. 11, 233-234.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., xxii, par. 12-15, pp. 234-235.

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## Chapter 9

### The Trinity in the Practice

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The third division of *Institutiones* 1.2.1, the doctrine of God, discusses the divine persons. Though the focus of this chapter will be on what Oomius indicates are the practical uses of the teaching for each of the persons of the Trinity, the last section of the first chapter on the Trinity, where the doctrine is established, contains a general word about the practice of the doctrine as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Oomius writes there that though people most dangerously err when dealing with the Trinity and have difficulty with the doctrine of the Trinity at the same time there is no doctrine more fruitful—that is, there is no doctrine which has richer opportunity for application to the life of the believer.<sup>2</sup> Oomius, as a proponent and defender of Reformed orthodoxy finds this particularly important to note given that the Remonstrants have judged there to be no practical use for this doctrine and the Socinians have gone beyond stating the doctrine is useless—they find it damaging. This provides Oomius yet another good opportunity to show that the Reformed orthodox are concerned with bringing doctrines into the practice. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 46-58.

<sup>2</sup> Oomius, citing and quoting Augustine, *de Trinitate*, I.iii.3: “*Maximè in his, ubi quaeritur unitas Trinitatis; quoniam nec periculosius alicubi erratur, nec laboriosius aliquid quaeritur, nec fructuosius aliquid invenitur.*”

Socinians speak at length about the practical uses of the attributes of God and of the Being of God in their confession, notes Oomius, but they pass by the practice of the Trinity. Now this would seem obvious given the fact that the Socinians are not trinitarians, but Oomius nevertheless is convinced this is worth mentioning and uses it to bolster his argument. With all the orthodox, Oomius affirms that each main point of the faith has particular practical application, including the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, there are different practical implications associated with each person of the Trinity since each person differs from the other. According to Oomius, the number of different practical uses must parallel the extent to which our concepts differ—"the spiritual practice in our mind follows the understanding of our mind."<sup>4</sup> This is certainly in harmony with his understanding that all doctrine is practical.

Before speaking of God the Father, Son, and Spirit specifically, Oomius gives, in response to the Jews, Muslims, and heathens who fail to see this, the general uses of the doctrine of the Trinity for Christians. In this doctrine Oomius finds material for instruction. An example of what he finds here is that the unity and trinity must each be so honored in such a way that one neither denies the being or confuses the persons. "We must believe the unity so that we do not lose the Trinity and love the Trinity such that we do not deny the unity."<sup>5</sup> At this point Oomius also refers to Maresius, who briefly (in the

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<sup>3</sup> Here, and elsewhere throughout the discussion, Oomius cites Gisbertus Voetius, *De necessitate et utilitate dogmatis de SS. Trinitate*, part 2, in *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum* (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1648-1669), Vol. 1, pp. 477-487.

<sup>4</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 48.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

last of his sixty points on the Trinity) addresses the practice of this doctrine, where he states that it instructs the Christian that human blessedness does not exist in solitude and a lonely eternal life since more than one person is required for the divine blessedness.<sup>6</sup> Material is also found for renewal and exhortation in this doctrine. Here Oomius finds some things to practice with respect to God, ourselves, and others. In general, with respect to God, we should rejoice that we know and believe he goes beyond our description and understanding. In particular this doctrine means we ought to love the triune God, not loving one person without the others and understanding that the love of one person implies the love of the others. We ought also glorify the triune God in such a way that it is a glorification of all three persons. Furthermore, just as the three persons of the Godhead are one in being and will, we too should try to be one in holy fellowship—one in faith and love. With respect to ourselves, the doctrine calls for modesty and humility in light of the fact that God is so far above us, not only with respect to his being and majesty, but also his personality and independence. With respect to others we must be concerned to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace, as Ephesians 4:3 states. There must be the highest and closest unity among believers which exists in the unity of the Spirit. Oomius finally finds there is comfort to be gained in this doctrine. We can know, for example, that he who has and loves one of the persons, has and loves the others, and that he is loved and inhabited by all the persons. And since all things

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<sup>6</sup> Citing, Samuel Maresius, *Systema theologicum: hactenus saepius recusum, nunc vero locupletatum prolixis annotationibus, ad illius explicationem & defensionem facientibus*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Groningen, 1659), III.lx, p. 62. This is found on p. 128 of the 1673 edition: “*Monet humanam beatitudinem non consistere in solitudine & vita anachoretica, cum plures personae ad divinam foelicitatem requirantur...*”

belonging to the Son also belong to the Father, all those who believe in Christ also belong to the Father. We can also be assured that not only will all God's threatenings against his enemies come to pass, but also his promises to his children will come to pass because they are confirmed by not one, but three heavenly witnesses.

## 9.1 God the Father

After a brief explanation of the doctrine of God the Father, Oomius takes the doctrine into the practice. He finds that it serves the Christian for exhortation and renewal as well as for comfort and encouragement.<sup>7</sup> Christians are to be exhorted, for example, that the person of the Father is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and he also belongs to us as our Father. It is not enough to say with the Jews that as the Father of creation he is the Father of all—each Christian must believe that the Father has accepted him or her in particular in his covenant of grace. In connection with this, we must conduct ourselves as his children, just as Christ does. As he does throughout his work, Oomius cites and quotes a variety of Scripture texts to make his point that to behave as the Father's children involves the following: honor and fear (John 8:54; 7:18; 17:1, 4-5; Malachi 1:6; 1 Peter 1:17; Daniel 9:4; Nehemiah 1:5), love and zeal for God's honor and house (Psalm 69:10; John 2:17; Romans 15:3; Psalm 18:2; 1 John 4:19; Acts 17:16; Psalm 119:136), obedience (Psalm 40:8-9; John 4:34; 14:31; 15:10; 1 Peter 1:14; Philippians 2:15; Malachi 3:17; Jeremiah 3:19; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 3:10), patience in the bearing of all sorts of crosses and difficulties (Matthew 26:39, 42; John 18:11;

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<sup>7</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 61-68.

Hebrews 12:5, 9; Genesis 22:6; Psalm 89:31-36; 2 Samuel 13:39; Psalm 103:13; Hebrew 12:5, 6), trust in his might, goodness, grace, wisdom, mercy, and care (Psalm 22:9; Matthew 27:43; 4:4; Psalm 55:22; Isaiah 63:16; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Psalm 103:13; Malachi 3:17; Isaiah 49:15-16; Luke 11:11; Matthew 7:11; Psalm 145:16; Jeremiah 49:1; Genesis 21:10; 1 Peter 3:7; Colossians 1:12; Romans 8:17; James 2:5; Galatians 4:7), fellowship with him through prayer (Matthew 26:39; John 17:1; Hebrews 5:7; Matthew 3:13; 26:18; 1 John 1:3; Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 3:14; Psalm 84:11; Psalm 27:4), longing, panting, seeking, and striving after the heavenly house of our Father (John 14:2-4; 17:5, 11-12, 24; Colossians 3:1; Matthew 6:20; 2 Corinthians 5:2, 8; Psalm 73:28; 2 Timothy 4:8; Romans 12:12; 1 Peter 1:5), and following the example of our Father in various virtues according to Christ's exhortation (Luke 6:36; Matthew 5:44-45, 48; Ephesians 5:1; 1 John 2:6). Van Mastricht also makes the point that we are to conduct ourselves as God's children when he speaks of the practice of the doctrine of God as our Father, but his explanation of what that involves is much briefer than that of Oomius.<sup>8</sup>

Conducting ourselves as the Father's children also involves carrying ourselves lovingly and peacefully in our association with all other true children of God—they are our brothers since we have the same Father. The doctrine of God the Father serves for Christians' comfort and encouragement in several ways. First, we can be assured that we

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<sup>8</sup> Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1 (Utrecht 1699), II.xxv, par. 17-18, pp. 249-250.

are God's children, children of the covenant, and of the promise.<sup>9</sup> Second, we can be assured that we can freely call on God as their Father, even though we are fallible humans. We do not display all the proofs of being children at once nor do we display them perfectly. In Luke 11:2 Jesus commanded his apostles to pray, "our Father" even though they were full of weaknesses such as misunderstanding, unbelief, hardness, fear, etc. Finally, we can safely depend on him and trust in him as one trusts a father—and this father is all-wise, all-knowing, almighty, omnipresent, merciful, rich, faithful and true, and he is an eternal Father who alone is immortal.

## 9.2 God the Son

As outlined earlier, in the first part of the chapter on God the Son Oomius positively states the doctrine as well as vigorously and carefully defends what he claims is the orthodox and traditional Christian view of the Son against such views as those of the Arians and Socinians. Though this first part of the chapter contains heavy polemics, Oomius moves directly out of this section into a discussion of how the doctrine serves us. In fact Oomius begins the section of the practical uses of the doctrine by stating that this doctrine "further" serves us in various ways. This statement, coming out of the polemical part of the chapter, shows that Oomius does not see a major distinction between polemics and application of the doctrine—both are viewed as different ways the doctrine serves the

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<sup>9</sup> Oomius promises to go into fuller detail on the excellence of being in this state in his work, *Vande Aennaminge tot Kinderen*, paragraph four. It is not clear which work he is referring to here—perhaps an unknown book.

believer. Oomius finds that this doctrine further serves for instruction, warning, and comfort.<sup>10</sup>

The way the doctrine can be used for instruction is shown with respect to Christ, God the Father, and ourselves. With respect to Christ it instructs us concerning the distinction between Christ's sonship and the sonship of believers.<sup>11</sup> We are also instructed in this doctrine about the worthiness of Christ's suffering for us, and about his fittingness to save us and to keep us since he is, as true God, stronger than all creatures. With respect to God the Father we can see his great love for us in that he would send his only Son to die so that we could live for him. We can see too why those who are incorporated into Christ are so dear to and loved by God—they are members of the only begotten Son and thus his bride. With respect to us there is material to help us learn to know our misery and wretchedness. We see how pitiful our situation has become through Adam's fall. In addition, in light of the fact that we can see how great the darkness of the world must be since it does not understand the glorious light of the risen Son, believers ought to humble themselves when they become aware of the opportunities they have to know the Son of righteousness.

Oomius warns and exhorts his reader to honor the Son of God as the true God. This will happen, generally, when Christians seek all things for their salvation in and through him. More specifically the Son will be honored when Christians recognize, worship, love, and obey him as true God. Comfort too is to be gained from the teaching

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<sup>10</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 101-115.

<sup>11</sup> Here Oomius again refers to the title, *Vande Aennaminge tot Kinderen*.



on the Son. First, and in general, we can be assured that Christ's prayers for us will be considered pleasing to the Father since he is the Father's only beloved Son in whom he is well-pleased. He will kiss us with the kiss of his mouth and pour out his love in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Our King will embrace us with his favor and grace. He will kiss back those who kiss him and they will feel his affection. Although his wrath will be felt by the disobedient he will surely favor the obedient and his "*gunstgenoten*."<sup>12</sup> Second, and more specifically, there is a great comfort for us. Because the Son is God he is full of gifts to fulfill our need—just as the fullness of God is in him we will receive grace out of this fullness and we will receive such a perfect satisfaction in him that we will not desire another beside him.

### 9.3 God the Holy Spirit

After the presentation and defense of the teaching of the Spirit as a divine person in the first three sections of chapter four of the book, Oomius brings the doctrine into the practice in the second three sections of the chapter. In the first of these chapters Oomius does not use his typical formula of "this doctrine will serve us for...", but writes, "further we must—commenting on the Holy Spirit in his works and as a gift (Acts 10:45), who is given to us by the Holy Spirit and is poured out in and over us (Romans 5:5)—examine if we too have received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) and if the power of the Holy Spirit has come upon us (Acts 1:8)."<sup>13</sup> Thus Oomius seeks to apply this particular

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<sup>12</sup> Oomius, citing Musculus, *Ps. II*, 26.

<sup>13</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 31.

doctrine very directly to the life of the believer. This is elaborated on in the rest of the chapter. A discussion of various aspects of the Holy Spirit's work in the believer follows in the four following and final chapters of the book. Compared with Van Mastricht, this is a much more thorough and in some ways different discussion of the practice of the doctrine than Oomius has for the other persons of the Trinity. Van Mastricht simply follows the exegetical, dogmatic, and elentic part of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit with a *pars practica*, as he does with the other persons; it is similar in detail and length to his *pars practica* of the Father and the Son.<sup>14</sup> What Brakel does with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is in some ways closer to Oomius. Brakel does very little or no application of the doctrine in his discussion of God the Father and the Son, but he spends much time explaining how the Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers, though his treatment is much briefer than that of Oomius and he does not lay out the practice of the doctrine in a clearly organized way as Oomius before him did.<sup>15</sup>

In his chapter on the Holy Spirit in general Oomius discusses the following aspects of the practice: the need to search whether or not one has the Spirit, the fact that there are people everywhere who do not have the Spirit, and why one who has the Spirit should be joyful.<sup>16</sup> Elaborating on the first of these points Oomius writes that though the Spirit of God is our Creator, we must not be at peace until he recreates—the philosophers call him the soul of the world, but Christians need to be able to call him the soul of their

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<sup>14</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.xxvii, par. 22-27, pp. 268-271.

<sup>15</sup> See Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, IV.xxxix-xlix.

<sup>16</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 131-166.

soul. Just as the Spirit of God hovered over the waters at creation, he must hover over our souls in recreation. That he gives us understanding is enough to live in the world, but it is not enough for heaven unless he also makes us godly. Thus we need to ask ourselves many times the same question that Paul asked the disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19:2:

“Have you received the Holy Spirit?” There are three reasons for this. First, since no one is the same without the Spirit no one can remain a believer without the Spirit—all believers have the Spirit. Second, each believer can know whether or not he or she has the Spirit. Third, just as each believer can know whether or not he has the Spirit, he must know whether he has the Spirit and he must search and test this out. Next, Oomius distinguishes three different ways of having the Holy Spirit. Some have the Spirit but often do not know it and do not feel him. Others have the Spirit and know it clearly. Still others have the Spirit, know it, and can explain it.

Oomius follows the above discussion with some distinguishing marks to help the Christian determine whether or not the Spirit of God lives in him. First, those who have the Spirit in them feel something different, something beyond the natural person and beyond one’s own spirit—a spiritual beginning of sorts. Second, the Holy Spirit reveals himself in the soul through spiritual passion whereby the Christian continually desires and searches those things that are above (Colossians 3:1-2). Third, after this passion spiritual works follow because where the Spirit lives, he is not idle but alive and working powerfully, continually urging a person toward good. He works to fight sin and to practice good.

Because of this powerful working the Spirit is compared in the Bible with great and powerful things and elements such as fire, which Oomius goes into great detail to explain. He writes that fire gives light, heat, it burns, it changes everything into fire itself, it lifts itself upwards, it makes metals weak and malleable, and it cannot be hidden since it is always apparent through its warmth, flame, or light. Oomius explains how each of these points parallels the work of the Spirit. For example, just as fire gives light, the Spirit enlightens the dark understanding of people. Just as fire warms, the Spirit of God warms and ignites a fire in the bosom of the believer, which spreads through the entire soul, regenerating to all good works and God's honor. As fire changes everything into itself, the Spirit makes the believer like him, that is, spiritual—the one in whom he dwells he makes into his own image. As fire cannot be hidden, the Spirit expresses himself in words and deeds in the life of the Christian. With his tongue, the believer will edify and teach his neighbor, and will speak whatever is true, right, and lovely (Philippians 4:8). Furthermore with his tongue the believer will continually pray to God and praise him. In the Bible, Oomius also finds that the Spirit is called and compared to water, wind, and oil. Though not in quite as much detail as fire, each of these is elaborated on by Oomius.

The section on searching out whether or not one has the Spirit concludes by saying that where the Spirit is he will fulfill the heart with an overflow of spiritual and divine things, just as he filled the whole house where the apostles were in Acts 2:2. For this reason the Bible so often states of believers that they are full or have been filled by the Spirit—this is said, for example, of John the Baptist, his father and his mother, and all

the apostles. The Spirit is now richly poured out.<sup>17</sup> Oomius writes that the Spirit of the Lord witnesses of the truth of religion and of sin. He reigns in the house he inhabits, fighting against the flesh.

Oomius also comments on the fact that there are many who do not have the Spirit.<sup>18</sup> Here Oomius spends a short time worrying about how his encouragement that people should attempt to receive the Spirit in their hearts may be taken. He emphasizes that he does not want this to be understood as saying that it is in their power or will to receive him—no, this water cannot come from one's own well, but only from the Father in heaven. Yet, people need to be shown the necessity of the gift of the Spirit as well as the means the Lord uses to give him.

The final section of this chapter emphasizes that those who after proper examination and through their own experience and feelings know that the Spirit is given them have reason for the greatest of joy and happiness since they are saved and have a firm hope of the great glory in the life to come.<sup>19</sup> Such people are loved by the Lord and temples of his Spirit. More particularly, they gain assurance and comfort. They are assured that they are reborn and made into new creatures and participants in all of Christ's blessings. They are comforted in the midst of all spiritual and physical

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<sup>17</sup> Here Oomius refers the reader to the title, *Van Christi Hemelsche Heerlickheyt*. This is yet another example of either an unknown work of the pastor, or a section of an unknown work. This, for example, sounds like it could be part of later a treatise of the second book of the first part of the *Institutiones*—what would have been either *Institutiones* 1.2.4 (on the Mediator) or *Institutiones* 1.2.5 (on the Benefits of the Mediator). Whether Oomius had published this work and it is now lost or whether he simply had a future work in mind, or another which is now unknown, simply cannot be determined with the information we currently have on Oomius.

<sup>18</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 146-153.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-166.

difficulties and in the fact that the Spirit is their advocate and eternal Comforter. Here Oomius gives an exegetical excursus on the Greek word, παρακλητος, showing that some translate it as “advocate” or “intercessor” and some translate it as “comforter.” Among those who go with the first meaning are Tertullian, Novatus, Erasmus, Beza, Gomarus, Johannes Gerardus. Athanasius, Augustine, and most of those in the sixteenth and seventeenth century choose the latter meaning, according to Oomius. He thinks that both meanings can be used together, and that the latter is also contained in the first meaning. The chapter on the Holy Spirit in general concludes with a word indicating that those who come to know that they have the Spirit are to be warned to fear God’s majesty and to walk in humility before him.

The final four chapters of Oomius’ work on the Trinity deal with particular aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. The fact that Oomius does not elaborate on the person of the Father or the Son in this way indicates a particular emphasis on the Holy Spirit—both the structure of his work on the Trinity and the content of the doctrine demonstrate this

Oomius writes that he will first discuss two things to be avoided and then two things to practice with regard to the Holy Spirit. To be avoided are grieving the Spirit (“*het Bedroeven des Heyligen Geestes*”) and extinguishing the Spirit (“*het Uytblusschen des Geestes*”). Where Oomius dedicates two chapters to the practices to be avoided Van Mastricht handles the subject, including these practices, briefly, in two paragraphs.<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>20</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.xxvii, par 25-26, pp. 270-271.

final two chapters of Oomius work on the Trinity discuss how believers display that they are temples of the Spirit and the importance of being led by the Spirit.

### 9.3.1 Grieving the Spirit

The first of the chapters dealing with the Holy Spirit's work—the fifth chapter of this section of *Institutiones* 1.2.1—is on grieving the Spirit.<sup>21</sup> Overall, there is comparatively little citation of sources in this chapter, likely indicating some unique contributions to this subject by Dr. Oomius.

In the first section of the chapter Oomius quotes Paul who writes “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit,” in Ephesians 4:30. He examines the meaning of the passage by first discussing the person of whom Paul speaks and then what he forbids in the passage. Examining the latter, Oomius looks at the Greek word for “grieve” and finds that in the New Testament it also means “to offend” and “to do wrong.”<sup>22</sup> He shows these meanings in various other New Testament passages and traces the meaning and use to such Old Testament passages as Isaiah 63:10 and Psalm 56:6. The grieving or sadness of the Spirit includes an absence of happiness, lack of taking care to avoid that which would grieve us, a suffering, and an absence of power to remove that which grieves.

In the second section of this chapter Oomius discusses when and through which sins the Holy Spirit is grieved.<sup>23</sup> As he often does, Oomius moves from speaking “in general” on the subject to speaking more particularly on it. In general the Spirit is

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<sup>21</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 166-195.

<sup>22</sup> Oomius citing, *Musculus*, in *Loc.*, p. 123; *Scapul.*, in *Voc.* “Lupe,” col. M. 1383.

<sup>23</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 173-178.

grieved, first in Oomius' discussion, through willful sins. This involves consciously resisting the inner work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Other ways the Spirit is grieved in general mentioned by Oomius are the following: through repeatedly lapsing into the same sin, by committing certain grievous sins (since certain sins grieve the Spirit more than others), by committing sins which we could easily avoid since we have sufficient means to prevent it in our lives, and by giving the devil place in our hearts.

The Spirit is grieved in particular in certain ways as well according to Oomius.<sup>24</sup> First the Spirit is grieved if we do not follow his leadings and promptings. An example given at this point is when the Lord spoke to Jacob in Genesis 35:1 and said "Go up to Bethel." It would be grieving the Spirit to not follow his leading immediately or properly, or worse, to resist his promptings. Second, the Spirit is grieved when we go against him and thereby ruin or hinder his work, whether that work be sanctification, sealing, or bringing joy. Third, the Spirit is grieved when we doubt his assurance, hinder him, or deny his work in our hearts. Finally, the Spirit is particularly grieved when we leave him and seek our joy and hearts desire outside of the leading of the Spirit or look for another comforter.

In the fifth section of this chapter Oomius discusses in more detail the person of the Holy Spirit as well as the relation of the person to us in an effort to deter people from grieving the Spirit.<sup>25</sup> Right knowledge of the person of the Spirit, believes Oomius, as well as knowledge of the honor due him, will serve to prevent the sin of grieving him as

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 175-178.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 181-192.



well as cause much grief when the sin is committed. Oomius finds it to be an irrefutable rule that the greater the person, the more serious it is to commit a crime against him. Thus it is more hateful to sin against a prince or a monarch than against a magistrate. Using a three-fold cumulative argument Oomius shows the reader that the one offended with this sin is a spirit, who is holy, and who is God. As for the first, Oomius argues that even in nature a spirit is greater than a body, and this spirit is uncreated and the Creator himself. Because he is holy, sins against him appear especially sordid. Since he is also God—and it is worse to sin against greater people—it is particularly grievous to sin against him.

Using many Scripture passages to increase the power of his argument, Oomius next discusses how the Spirit relates to us in an effort to keep people from sinning against him. For example, the Spirit blesses people with the following activities: he is the one who lives in us, makes us alive when we are dead (Ephesians 2:1), sanctifies us (1 Corinthians 6:11), makes us new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17), inspires us to good works, especially faith and prayer (2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:13; Zechariah 12:10), causes our hearts to burn within us (Luke 24:32), comforts (John 14:16; 15:26), etc.

Oomius concludes the fifth section by observing how the Spirit will deal with us when we grieve him. First, the Spirit will give us over to our own spirit and deceptive heart. Second, he will cause us to grieve and treat us as we have treated him.<sup>26</sup> When

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<sup>26</sup> Oomius indicates dependence on Tertullian for this thought without showing where in Tertullian's works he found this idea.

this happens, writes Oomius, our state is very pathetic and our state is to be greatly pitied. Finally, the Spirit will heavily punish the person who sins against him. Quoting Genesis 6:3 Oomius states the Spirit will not contend with people forever.

Oomius concludes this chapter with a word of warning and direction concerning this sin since there is no person alive who has not grieved the Spirit numerous times.<sup>27</sup> First, one should have sorrow that he has caused the Spirit sorrow. Second, one should reconcile with the Spirit, just as good children do with their father when there is something between them. Finally, one should seek to please the Spirit again and take care that he would inhabit us gladly as a pleasant and pleasurable house.<sup>28</sup> We can please the Holy Spirit with our thoughts, words, and our deeds. When we gratify the Spirit, he will in turn gratify us, ensuring us of our calling and election, of our acceptance, and our complete deliverance.

### **9.3.2 Extinguishing the Spirit**

The second of two matters related to the Holy Spirit to be avoided is found in the sixth chapter of Oomius' work on the Trinity: extinguishing the Spirit.<sup>29</sup> In a sense, begins Oomius, this sin is a step further down the road from grieving—one gets to this point through grieving the Spirit. Eventually the Spirit will be extinguished if one continues in that sin. This issue, found in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, is serious enough that

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 192-195.

<sup>28</sup> Citing a commentary by Calvin.

<sup>29</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 195-218.

Oomius believes it should be more closely examined in this chapter. He does this by explaining the text where the sin is found.

Oomius quotes 1 Thessalonians 5:19 as follows: “*En bluscht den Geest niet uyt.*” This translation is consistent with the Dutch *Staten Vertaling*.<sup>30</sup> He first discusses the word “*Geest*” and suggests it neither refers to the being of God in general or the third person of the Trinity in particular, but rather to the gifts of the Spirit. This is consistent with the *Staten Vertaling* and its note on this verse and the meaning of “*Geest*.” Oomius spends some time discussing the gifts of the Spirit, dividing them into extraordinary and ordinary. The extraordinary he identifies as “those divine delights, visions, revelations, etc. which were given the prophets and apostles by the Spirit.”<sup>31</sup> This is not what is meant by “Spirit” in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, in Oomius’ opinion. The ordinary gifts he divides into the lesser and the greater. The lesser are, for example, those given at ecclesiastical gatherings or elsewhere in order to explain holy matters for instruction, edification, and comfort. The greater of these types of gifts include those which do not necessarily have to do with salvation at all, such as those making someone fit for his calling—for example the extraordinary gifts given Samson or the more ordinary gifts given which make people fit for their trade or science. Others of these greater ordinary gifts are directly connected to salvation such as the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of strength, and especially faith, hope, and love.

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<sup>30</sup> The translation ordered by the national Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-1619.

<sup>31</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 196.

Having discussed the meaning of “Spirit” in the 1 Thessalonians passage, Oomius turns to the command not to extinguish the Spirit. It is clear, writes Oomius, that Paul is using figurative speech here having to do with fire—to which the Spirit and his gifts are compared numerous times in Scripture. In this sense one can speak of the Spirit being extinguished in others or in ourselves. In others Oomius speaks of pastors as well as regular church members. Among pastors, the Spirit is extinguished when the pastor does not want to hear him or when he hears, but does not answer in faith and godliness. In regular church members this can happen when people suppress their spiritual gifts and the fire of the Spirit. Oomius cites the Jesuit à Lapide as saying that parents extinguish the Spirit in their children when they do not live uprightly.<sup>32</sup> The Spirit is extinguished in ourselves when we neglect good and do evil, when we don’t take opportunity to grow spiritually, or when we have some knowledge of God, but don’t walk according to it.

In section four of the chapter Oomius describes that people can extinguish the Spirit in two different ways.<sup>33</sup> It is possible to let the fire die out gradually or to snuff out the fire through grievous sins. The former can happen in several ways. First, people can fail to use the gifts of grace in their lives just as the unfaithful servant failed to use his talent.<sup>34</sup> Just like clear, clean iron can rust when thrown in the corner so it can be with grace. Grace can also be like a knife that becomes dull if it is not sharpened. The gifts of the Spirit too can disappear into nothing if they do not result in works. Second, grace can

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<sup>32</sup> No citation of a work is given here, only à Lapide’s name.

<sup>33</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 206-207.

<sup>34</sup> Oomius alludes here to the parable in Matthew 25.

die out like a fire does when it does not receive nourishment. This happens with grace when means of grace, such as sacraments, prayer, sermons, etc. are not made use of. This is analogous to some who does not eat meals regularly—his warmth, strength, health, life, everything will degrade. Third, those who neglect the regular gatherings of believers not only lessen the heat and glow of God’s Spirit, but put themselves in danger of atheism—Oomius notes this has been seen, sadly, in many people during his time. Oomius uses as a biblical example here Thomas, who not being present at the meeting of the disciples not only lost the revelation of Christ but also fell into unbelief.<sup>35</sup>

That believers not extinguish the fire of the Spirit, Oomius concludes the chapter with some things to avoid as well as some duties to practice.<sup>36</sup> Oomius suggests, in general, avoiding sins against the “*conscientie, kennisse en wetenschap*.”<sup>37</sup> It is bad to withhold wood from a fire, but it is a worse extinguishing when water is poured on the fire. The sins mentioned are like water on a fire. In particular, Oomius warns against worldliness and improper affection for earthly things, the mere outward appearance of religion and holy practices, the foolish sense that we have achieved enough grace and godliness in our lives, and quickly cutting off holy duties, such as prayer, during which our hearts are burning within us.

As for duties to practice Oomius suggests first that we must quickly listen to movements of God’s Spirit in our hearts. We must also continually use the gifts of the

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<sup>35</sup> Oomius, citing John 20:24-25 and Proverbs 27:17.

<sup>36</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 214-218.

<sup>37</sup> Oomius, citing Jeremiah Dijck, tract. cit. (*Conc.*), 27-110. This work is cited several times in this chapter.

Spirit, walking in the Spirit as we live in the Spirit. Furthermore, the Christian is called by Oomius to make use of the holy institutes which God wants us to use. He includes here hearing the Word of God, the fellowship of the saints, holy meditations and reflections, and prayer.

### 9.3.3 Displaying That One is a Temple of the Spirit

After spending two chapters on negative practices to be avoided with regard to the Holy Spirit, Oomius ends the work on the Trinity with two chapters on what Christians are called positively to practice in light of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In the first of these, chapter seven of his work on the Trinity, Oomius attempts to demonstrate that believers must display that they are temples of the Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup> The chapter begins with an explanation—supported with various Scripture texts—of the idea that believers are temples of the Spirit. Just as the church in general is called a house (1 Timothy 3:15), each believer in particular is called a dwelling of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22), and a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5).<sup>39</sup> After giving a basic description of what this means, Oomius notes that this dwelling of the Spirit is not a personal union as there is between the divine and human natures of Christ or between the body and soul of a person.<sup>40</sup> Neither is it that the being and nature themselves of the Holy Spirit are shared with believers so that they share the divine nature and thus are deified in some sense.

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<sup>38</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 218-239.

<sup>39</sup> Oomius writes that he has more on this in the following work: *Vande Kercke ofte Gemeynthe Godts*. Once again, this work is now unknown to us. This may refer to a work he lists in his own bibliography of 1684: *De eygenschappen ende voortganch van de kercke enz.*, published in 1656.

<sup>40</sup> Citing, Caspar Streso, *Conc.*, xi; *idem*, *Epis. Ad Rom.*, Cap. 8, vs. 11, p. m. 66.

Additionally, the Spirit is not simply in believers through outward workings as he is in all creatures which he brought forth and over which he reigns—he is not in believers in the same sense as he is in unbelievers through general gifts. Rather, this dwelling means something special which the Scriptures do not articulate except through some comparisons which show that it involves a sharing and a fellowship through which the Holy Spirit makes the body and soul appropriate for himself, sets them apart, and sanctifies them. The Spirit makes the believer, as it were, a store for special works. Oomius identifies this as similar to the explanation the Bible gives of God living in the temple. He dwelt there, not as if he were locked into that location, but in such a way that he gave his gracious presence to the Israelites.

There are especially five ways that believers display they are temples of the Holy Spirit, writes Oomius.<sup>41</sup> First, this is displayed in loftiness.<sup>42</sup> As churches rise above houses in towns and as the temple was build on the heights of Mt. Zion, so true godliness should rise above other people. Believers ought to shine like lights in the world.<sup>43</sup> Second, just as the temple was glorious and magnificent, the glory and majesty of what is within believers should manifest itself outwardly. Third, purity should be displayed in the life of the believer. Christians are set aside for special use, and their bodies, including tongue, ears, eyes, as well as the other body parts, should not be used for profane and sinful practices. Fourth, believers show they are temples of the Holy Spirit by their

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<sup>41</sup> See *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 222-229.

<sup>42</sup> The Dutch is “hoogheyt.”

<sup>43</sup> Oomius refers to another unknown title of his here: *Vande Uytsteeckentheyt inde Godtsaligheyt*.

devoutness.<sup>44</sup> Our bodies ought to be used for God's work—for his honor, our salvation, and the edification of others. Not only our soul, but our bodies too ought to be sanctified in all its members to the service of the Lord: "our tongue must sing his praise; our eyes must be lifted to view his wonderful works; our ears must be used to hear his Word, our hands to do works of righteousness, our knees to bow before him in prayer, and our feet to walk in the way of righteousness and peace."<sup>45</sup> Finally, unity and harmony with others display we are temples of the Spirit.

Oomius notes next that there are many who do not doubt that they are temples of the Spirit of God who nevertheless either do not display it or do not display it clearly enough in their practice of the above-mentioned points.<sup>46</sup> Few people stand out from others in their knowledge of Christ, in true faith, burning love, and living hope. With respect to God as well as ourselves, Oomius gives the reader some reasons to urge them against not standing out among people as temples of the Spirit.<sup>47</sup> With respect to God Oomius organizes his discussion according the person of the triune God. God the Father has created our bodies, and unlike a builder, he not only made us, but he has ownership of us. He not only created us, but he bought us with the blood of his Son and appropriated us to his service. God the Son is our redeemer—he gave himself for us and we are members of Christ's body. Our bodies were bought just as surely as our souls. Since the

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<sup>44</sup> The Dutch used here is "*godtsdienstigheid*."

<sup>45</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 228.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 229-230.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-236.



Spirit is Oomius' focus in this section of the work, he spends most of his time discussing God the Holy Spirit to convince the reader that they should stand out among people as temples of the Spirit. Oomius concentrates his argument here on the holiness of the Spirit and the fact that the Spirit lives in believers and walks among them.

With respect to ourselves, Oomius first points out that we must take note of who we are. We are temples of the Spirit. Oomius believes that this is highest honor we could receive and that thus it calls for extreme thankfulness to that he would so set us apart from other creatures that he would make us his Temple. In addition, Oomius asks his readers to consider that, we have appropriated ourselves to the Spirit through our confession and we are baptized in his name, as his own. As a second argument with respect to ourselves Oomius suggests that if we do not stand out among people we cannot be assured that we have received the Spirit that comes from God. People who have the Spirit of God cannot behave as temples of the devil. Two arch-enemies—enemies as old as the world—cannot live together in the same house.

Oomius concludes the chapter with a section explaining how those who display that they are true temples of the Holy Spirit can receive much strength and comfort.<sup>48</sup> As he often does, Oomius begins speaking “*in ‘t gemeyn*” and then moves to a section “*in ‘t bysonder.*” In general, in this they can see their glory and blessedness, just as Jerusalem was the glory of the earth not so much because of her tall towers, but because the temple was within her walls. In particular, the promises of God come to mind. As he promised to sanctify his temple, he will daily make us more and more pure. He will faithfully feed

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 236-239.

us and care for us. In addition, he will never let us go, but he will always protect us against all sorts of force of the devil.

### 9.3.4 Being Led by the Spirit

Oomius discusses one other matter with regard to what a Christian ought to positively practice in light of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He suggests in this chapter that Christians ought to allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit.<sup>49</sup> One of Van Mastricht's paragraphs parallels the idea in this chapter exactly.<sup>50</sup> This is also a point made by Brakel when he discusses the Spirit.<sup>51</sup> Oomius states that he is not referring here to the Spirit's general work of preserving the world or his work in all creatures, in the sense that he has given each one life, and breath, and being.<sup>52</sup> Further, Oomius is not referring to the general enlightenment of the knowledge of divine things and morality that the Spirit grants people. Beyond this, and in Oomius' view in this chapter, the Spirit works in a special way on the soul of those who show progress in their faith. He enlightens their understanding, powerfully nudges and moves them to do everything that God desires, and leads God's children forward on the path of righteousness.<sup>53</sup> Expanding on the second of these, Oomius writes that the Spirit works in the Christian to make his will, heart's desires, and all things equal to the will of God. God's will is revealed

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<sup>49</sup> Citing Romans 8:14: "because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God," and Galatians 5:18.

<sup>50</sup> Van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, Vol. 1, II.xxvii, par. 23, pp. 269-270.

<sup>51</sup> Brakel, *Redelijke Godsdienst*, IV.xliv.

<sup>52</sup> Citing Acts 17:25.

<sup>53</sup> *Institutiones* 1.2.1 (cont.), 240-248.

outwardly in his Word and it is his will as it is found there that the Spirit moves us to practice. The Spirit, writes Oomius, also often speaks certain things to the believer inwardly, but then never anything except that which is according to God's Word.<sup>54</sup> Being moved to do God's will involves being nudged and moved from evil—and to fight it in ourselves as well as others—and toward that which is good. Doing that which is good involves having an inward delight in the law of God as well as, outwardly, speaking no other words and doing no other works than those which are taught and commanded by the Spirit.

Elaborating on the third point above, Oomius mentions that there are mainly three things that are to be brought to the Christian's attention. First, for people to desire to be led by the Spirit implies that they know their spiritual misery, weakness, and incapacity which is such that they need the Spirit's leading. Second, they know the spiritual enthusiasm which comes to those led by the Spirit. Finally, they know the continual progress of God's children on the way to righteousness.

From the above points, Oomius says it becomes clear who those are who are not led by the Spirit of God.<sup>55</sup> He first focuses on those outside the church, pointing, among others, especially to the Enthusiasts (*"Geestdryvers"*), who, he states, only practice the above on baseless revelations which are against the word of truth. The Spirit always leads his own according to the Word—it is as a straight ruler—and he never causes his

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<sup>54</sup> *"Alsoo spreeckt hy oock dickwils dese ofte gene dingen heymelick tot ons; Dogh noyt anders dan nae Gots Woordt...."* 241.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 248-254.

own to drift away from the Word. Oomius criticizes here, among others, Jan Beuckelsen and Knipperdollingh in the history of the Munster Enthusiasts. These types were natural men, godless, and false prophets and teachers who did not have the Spirit—the Spirit leads no one away from the right path which is always according to God’s laws.

Turning to those not led by the Spirit within the church Oomius first speaks of those clearly not led by the Spirit. These include those who are not enlightened in their understanding and who have no knowledge of the truth. Also included here are those who do not notice, obey, or bow before the gracious movings of the Spirit and his leading. Despite the Spirit’s leading, these people continue to go their own way. Some of these people show concern to stay away from outward sins and they hear the preaching of the Word and make use of the sacraments, but they fail in the inward practices, as if the Spirit does not lead one any further than the outward practicing of one’s faith.

Besides those clearly not led by the Spirit, Oomius writes that there are those who are clearly led, but who are driven by a contrary spirit. Evil thoughts, thievery, whoring, false witnessing, and various others sins are mentioned as proofs that those in this category are not children of the Holy God, but of Apollion, who was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44).

With others, it is in doubt whether or not they are always led by the Spirit in all things. Oomius gives several examples of this type. First, those are of this type who appear to do everything out of obligation and unwillingly. Where the Spirit leads, however, one says with David, “I desire to do your will, O my God” (Psalm 40:9). Second, there are those who do the work of the Lord without passion and very sluggishly.

Here again, this would never happen where the Spirit is leading, according to Oomius. The Spirit spurs the believer on like a great wind (Acts 2:2) to walk in the way of God's laws. Third, it is doubtful whether those are led by the Spirit of God who are led by their own Spirit in the work of the Lord. Finally, those are likely not led by the Spirit who either are going backwards or who are standing still in their walk with God.

Oomius gives some reasons, taken from God's Spirit and from us, why Christians ought to be led by the Spirit.<sup>56</sup> Focusing on reasons from the perspective of God's Spirit, we should be led by him because he leads us in a trustworthy way. Many times leaders lead astray, such as the rulers of Israel, Judas, and the Pharisees. But the Spirit leads in righteousness, holiness and godliness. The Spirit not only leads in a trustworthy way, but he is careful and safe, saving from the hands of the enemy. The Spirit is also friendly and loving and he makes our way successful. So why, asks Oomius, would we not gladly be led by the Spirit. This is pleasing to God, beneficial (*"heylsaem"*) for us, and the alternative—being led by the spirit of Satan and the world and our flesh—is hateful to God and damaging to us.

Focusing on ourselves Oomius also finds several reasons to allow oneself to be led by the Spirit. First, we say we are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. As children ought to follow good parents in their lives, we ought also to follow the Spirit since God is our Father. Second, how can we assure ourselves that we are not hypocrites unless we are led by the Spirit? God gives his Spirit only to his children. Third, if we do not allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit, the Lord will take his leading away from us.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 254-258.

That would be troubling and lamentable. We are powerless and blind children and infants without the leading of the Spirit. In addition, without the Spirit's leading our enemies would attack us. Fourth, if we do allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit, he will lead us even further in the right way.

In the last section of this chapter and of his entire work on the Trinity Oomius tells the reader that there is comfort and assurance to be had if we are properly led by God's Spirit.<sup>57</sup> First, we can be assured that we are God's children.<sup>58</sup> Second, we can be assured that we will be led well on life's journey. While the patriarchs of the Old Testament were led by holy angels we have received much greater grace in that we are not led by created spirits, but by the Creator of all spirits. We can thirdly be assured that if we sin out of weakness the law will not judge us or damn us. A Christian is not under the law if he is led by the Spirit—that is, he is not under the compulsion of the law. This is a great privilege. We should be comforted that all Christians struggle—the Spirit does not lead in such a way that a Christian does not sin.<sup>59</sup> But if we do sin, we will be forgiven in Christ and the Lord will cleanse us. Finally, we can be assured that we will

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 259-260.

<sup>58</sup> Here Oomius refers again to his unknown *Van de Aenneminghe tot kinderen*, par. III.

<sup>59</sup> Citing Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ch. LXIV.

finally be given the inheritance that God has set aside for his own. Just as he leads us on the eternal way, the Lord will receive us after this life into eternal glory where we will enjoy the full freedom of the glory of God's children.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Citing Psalm 139:24, Psalm 73:24, and Romans 8:21.

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## Chapter 10

### Conclusion

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It has been the thesis of this project that the theological writings of Simon Oomius, especially his *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*, do not reflect a particular bifurcation which often has existed in scholarship on the post-Reformation Reformed church and theology. Literature on the post-Reformation Dutch Reformed church of the late sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries includes discussion of both the movement known as the Nadere Reformatie as well as Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism. The general problem in the literature on the period is that it has tended at times to view the Nadere Reformatie and Reformed orthodoxy as two mutually exclusive developments in the post-Reformation theology and church. The Nadere Reformatie, with its strong spirituality, piety, practical drive, and concern for applying the truth of Scripture to the life of believers has been separated from Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism with its academic rigor, feisty polemics, and concern for right doctrine. Beyond creating a bifurcation between the two movements past scholarship on the period has tended to describe them as opposed to one another. As the account sometimes goes, the pious representatives of the Nadere Reformatie came on the scene with their warm spirituality



and practical thrust to counteract the negative influence of Reformed orthodoxy with its rigidity, dogmatism, and deadness.

This study of Simon Oomius, however, shows that viewing the Nadere Reformatie and Reformed orthodoxy as two mutually exclusive or even opposing camps is simply not tenable. Oomius displays elements typical of both the Reformed scholastics and representatives of the Nadere Reformatie. In addition, as practical as his theological writings are, and as concerned for the spiritual life of the believer as he is, he works out of a Reformed scholastic training which he greatly valued and continued to draw from and use throughout his life. He did not write his *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae* or any of his practical works out of reaction to Reformed orthodoxy; on the contrary, a Reformed orthodox himself, he saw his “practical theology” as naturally flowing out of his orthodoxy and, indeed, as a legitimate and necessary element of it.

Oomius’ account of his academic training shows that he was trained under and had tremendous appreciation for a variety of Reformed orthodox figures, but especially Gisbertus Voetius and Johannes Hoornbeeck. Oomius defended disputations—the great medium of the scholastics of the time to defend and expound doctrine—under both of them. Voetius was perhaps the leading Reformed scholastic of the time and Hoornbeeck was one of the leading polemicists of the time. Oomius showed much appreciation and respect for both of them and they for him: Hoornbeeck wrote a glowing letter of recommendation for Oomius as he sought out pastorates after he finished his academic training and both Hoornbeeck and Voetius signed the letter. Oomius tells us in his *Dissertatie*, where he describes and gives the background of his *Institutiones Theologiae*

*Practicae* and shows his perceived need for them, that his professor Hoornbeeck, the great polemicist, is the one who gave him the idea to write a complete system of practical theology. Here we find something much past literature on seventeenth-century theology seems not to allow: polemics and praxis valued by the same person. Oomius certainly followed in professor Hoornbeeck's footsteps in this regard.

Oomius' account of his ideals for himself as a pastor and his life in general show that he valued both doctrine and orthodoxy as well as right, pious living before God. He valued both "*leer*" and "*leven*" and both godliness and diligence in his studies and writing.

The various published works by Oomius likewise display interests typically reserved for Nadere Reformatie representatives as well as writings and concerns generally thought to belong only to scholastics and Reformed orthodox. Oomius wrote many works on the Christian life including, typical of the program of the Nadere Reformatie, the *Ecclesiola*. He, like other Nadere Reformatie theologians, thought it was important to view the home as a little church—the foundation for a continuing Reformation in the seventeenth-century church and broader society. In his *Institutiones Theologiae Practicae*, he sought to apply all of theology to the life of believers and the church as a whole, also a Nadere Reformatie concern. Additionally, Oomius wrote a number of works that showed he had, like representatives of the Nadere Reformatie, concerns beyond the home and church. A number of his writings display that he had

interest in broader social and political developments and he wanted the whole of the Netherlands to experience further reformation.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these strong Nadere Reformatie elements in his writings, Oomius' works show us elements sometimes considered in the scholarship to belong exclusively to Reformed orthodoxy and the scholastics: he defended disputations in Latin as many students of his time did, and throughout his life he explained and also vigorously defended the Reformed faith. He wrote a significant polemical work on Islam, polemical works against "papists," and, in his *Dissertatie vande Onderwijsingen in de Practycke der Godgeleerdheid*, Oomius included a lengthy defense of the practical nature of the Reformed faith against all the major opponents of the Reformed orthodox: Roman Catholics, Remonstrants, Socinians, Lutherans, and Enthusiasts and Libertines. Oomius shows in all of his more dogmatic works that he was concerned both to explain and expound doctrine and to defend it against adversaries of the Reformed faith.

In the first part of his *Dissertatie* Oomius shows a concern for theological prolegomena which is in line with the Protestant scholastics. In his discussion of theological prolegomena he sometimes reflects early orthodox concerns and other times concerns typical of the orthodox of his own time. For example, the detail he goes into discussing *theologia practica*, reflects the latter. Everything he writes on theological prolegomena, however, reflects Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism of the

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the contents of his works and the fact that Oomius wrote on all three levels (home, church, and society) focussed on by Nadere Reformatie figures, Oomius' publishers, those to whom he dedicated his works, and those who wrote poems or other notes of appreciation at the beginning of many of his works all point to Oomius being part of the Nadere Reformatie. Many of these individuals—publishers, city leaders, and fellow pastors and theologians—have been identified as figures of the Nadere Reformatie.

seventeenth century. Furthermore, the categorizing he engages in as well as the detail he often goes into, for example in the discussion of archetypal and ectypal theology, is typical of scholastic precision.

In the context of his discussion and theological precision he arrives at some interesting points which help determine the rest of his theology. Oomius defines theology as a kind of *sapientia*—in other words, he writes, it embraces both the theoretical and the practical. For this reason, for him, theological formulation must be followed by practical application of the theology formulated. His definition and discussion of *theologia practica* also lead him along this route.

One finds that it is exactly out of Oomius' carefully formulated theology that his desire to apply theology to the life of believers flows. His concern for piety and practicality arises out his desire to precisely define theology and its various parts. His detailed discussion on the nature of Reformed theology led him to find that theology is, in its very nature, not dry or dead or speculative, but practical. Precise theological formulation led to this and thus led to the plethora of pages written throughout his life on *theologia ascetica* and such things as what particular doctrines mean for the life of the believer.

Furthermore, Oomius considered his conclusions and thus his theology to be mainstream orthodoxy, not anything odd or different or new. He believed he was engaging in the same program as the early church, the Reformed before him, and as his professors and other Reformed orthodox during his time. Especially his *Dissertatie*, but many of his writings show that he was engaged in an international program. He valued

Puritan theology greatly as his references and translation endeavors show. He saw himself engaged in the same Reformed practical-theological project as contemporary theologians and pastors in England, Scotland, France, Switzerland, and elsewhere.

Oomius did, however, think there was a significant way he could contribute to this program. According to his analysis, though it was in the nature of Reformed theology to bring doctrine into the practice and apply it, given the many groups the Reformed had to continually defend their faith against, he saw a need for more instruction in practical theology—more instruction as well as instruction in the common tongue of the people, rather than the more academic Latin. Though even with the amount of polemics the Reformed engaged in they still had more practical writings than the Catholics and Remonstrants, finds Oomius, more practical theology was needed in the schools of theology, in the churches, and by way of books and pamphlets.

Though not unique in what he was doing he did see a need for two things: to write practical theology in the Dutch language and to create, for the first time, a complete system of practical theology in Dutch. Though some had begun or were planning a system of theology in which the doctrines were applied at every point, no one had as of yet come close to completing such a project. Certainly no one had done this in the Dutch language.

Oomius felt there was a strong need to lay out Reformed theology and defend it, all with the view toward applying it in the Dutch language so that students training to be pastors, pastors themselves, but especially the “unlearned” could grow in the faith. He saw this need too because enemies of the Reformed faith often wrote in the Dutch

language: thus he reasoned a response was necessary in the same language so that people would not be led astray.

When Oomius handles the doctrines of Scripture and God we find what we might expect given his theological prolegomena and his description of his theological program. In the doctrine of Scripture he displays similarities with many other orthodox Reformed. He offers a full locus like many Reformed of his time did—a natural outgrowth of the *sola Scriptura* principle of the Reformation. Also, his description, general discussion, and organization of the attributes of Scripture are typical of the Reformed orthodox of his time, and generally more technical than what one finds in the writings of pastors and theologians considered to be representative of the Nadere Reformatie.

While other Reformed had written on the application of the doctrine of Scripture, Oomius provides something new in the sheer massiveness of what he accomplished. While others sought to apply the doctrine to the life of believer in similar ways, Oomius appears somewhat unique in the tremendous amount of material he wrote. In addition to the length of the writing, the practical section of the work is highly structured and organized, pointing to Oomius' aim—and success—at bringing the doctrine into the practice.

In his doctrine of God we see something similar. While, as his definition of theology dictates, Oomius starts out by explaining the doctrine of God in all of its parts, he moves, in line with his aim, to the practice at each point. His initial explanation of the doctrine shows a concern for technical precision and right doctrine displayed by all the Reformed scholastics. His application of the doctrine, as in the doctrine of Scripture, is

lengthy, detailed, and highly structured. This fact in itself betrays a scholastically trained mind.

The wedding of doctrine with praxis in the thought of Oomius is further illustrated in his doctrine of God by the fact that he regularly includes polemics in his practical sections. For example, when he speaks of how each divine attribute “serves” the believer, he often includes a point on how it serves to refute those who do not believe the doctrine or who do not have a right conception of it. Despite those who suggest that polemics in the seventeenth-century orthodox Reformed was a distraction from or worse, an enemy of praxis, Oomius does polemics and application in the same breath, even subsuming the polemical section of parts of the doctrine of God at times as subsections under the broader heading of practical application.

This study then, which has sought to illumine the life and work of Dr. Simon Oomius, suggests there was no neat split between the Nadere Reformatie and Reformed orthodoxy as some scholarship would claim. At the very least the findings of this study should give us pause in making a distinction between the two too rigid. Given the content of the prolegomena, doctrine of Scripture, and doctrine of God, as well as the overview of the rest of Oomius’ works and his stated theological purposes, and given the teachers and many others whom Oomius saw himself in line with as indicated by his own words and referencing, this bifurcation between the Nadere Reformatie and Reformed orthodoxy does not just split movements, but people. *Leer* and *leven* as Oomius puts it, the theoretical and the practice, doctrine and piety—these are not separated in Oomius, but embraced as two necessary elements of theology and of the life of the believer. And

while Oomius was unique in attempting the most expansive system of practical theology of his time in the Dutch language, his overall view of theology and even his project, as mentioned already, was not unique, nor an exception or aberration. Petrus Van Mastricht shortly after him completed such a project in Latin, though it was not as expansive as that of Oomius. His beloved professor, Johannes Hoornbeeck, suggested the project.

Gisbertus Voetius, had he had the time according to Oomius, would have been the best person to complete such a project. Wilhelmus à Brakel, though again far less expansive and less technical than Oomius, completed a practical-theological system in the Dutch language during Oomius' lifetime. Oomius shows awareness of others internationally who were engaged in similar projects and he particularly indicates appreciation for, and even at times, dependence on English pastors and theologians who have been quite prolific in producing practical-theological works.

The findings of this dissertation suggest that studies illuminating the theology of other pastors and theologians of this period of post-Reformation church history would affirm the thesis of this study of Simon Oomius and his theology.



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## Appendix A: Bibliography of Simon Oomius<sup>1</sup>

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### 1650

1. *Disputatio theologica de synodis veterum. pars prima.* Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1650.  
Location: Hekman Library (HL), Universiteit van Amsterdam (UA), Universiteit Utrecht (UU)

### 1651

2. *Disputatio ex politia ecclesiastica de liturgiis. pars secunda.* Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1651.  
Location: HL, UA
3. *Disputatio theologica de humiliatione. pars prima.* Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1651.  
Location: HL, UU

### 1652

4. *Disputatio theologica, in orationem dominicam. pars prior.* Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1652.  
Location: HL, UU
5. *Disputatio theologica in orationem dominicam. pars altera.* Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1652.  
Location: HL, UU

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<sup>1</sup> This chronological listing includes the location of Oomius' works in public libraries. By far the largest concentration of his works are currently available at three libraries: the Dutch Royal Library (*Koninklijke Bibliotheek*) of The Hague (19 works total), the University of Amsterdam (28), and Hekman Library, the library of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, in Grand Rapids, Michigan (38). Most Oomius works at Hekman are either on microform or are photocopies.

**1656**

6. *De eygenscapen ende voortganch van de kercke enz.* 1656.

Location: unknown<sup>2</sup>

**1658**

7. *De heerlickheyt van een kindt Godts, ofte Godts vriendt.* Amsterdam: Jan Pieterszoon Kuypen, 1658.

Location: HL, UA

8. *Opweckinge ende bestieringe, om in allen staet, van voor- of tegenspoedt met het tegenwoordige vergenoeght te zijn.* Amsterdam: Jan Kuypen, 1658.

Location: HL, UA

**1660**

9. *De bestieringe der gedachten.* Amsterdam: Baltus en Joannes de Wild, 1660.

Location: HL, Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), Theologische Universiteit van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Kampen (THUK-O), Universiteitsbibliotheek Maastricht (UBM), Vrije Universiteit (VU)

10. Foreward to *Prima, media et ultima ofte de eerste, middelste en laetste dingen*, by Isaac Ambrose, trans. I.G. Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin, 1660.

Location: HL, KB, UA, VU

11. *Prophylacticum Vitae, ofte bescherminge des levens tegens selfs-moorderye.* Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin, 1660.

Location: Andover-Harvard Theological Library (Massachusetts) (AHTL), HL, KB, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, THUK-O, UA, UBA, VU

12. *De schrickelickheydt, beyde van genomen en gegeven ergernissen.* Amsterdam: Baltus en Johannes de Wild, 1660.

Location: HL, THUK-O, UA

13. *Tractaetken vande geestelicke verlatingen.* Amsterdam: Baltus en Joannes de Wild, 1660.

Location: see #9 above (this work is included in *De bestieringe der gedachten*)

**1661**

14. *Ecclesiola, dat is, kleyne kercke, ofte aenwijzingen door welcke oefeningen en betrachtungen van godtsaligheydt en godtsdienstigheyt, de huysgesinnen der Christenen kleyne gemeenten kunnen worden; met beantwoordinge van alle*

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<sup>2</sup> This work is listed by Oomius in his own bibliography in the forward to *Twee dissertatien van het eerste Pascha*, but it is no where to be found today.

*tegenwerpingen, ende voorstellinge van beweegredenen, daer toe dienende.*

Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin, 1661.

Location: HL, KB, UA

15. *'t Weenen der tortel-duyve, ofte een tractaet, in welcke gehandelt wordt van de tranen in 't gemeyn.* Amsterdam: Servaes Wittelingh, 1661.<sup>3</sup>

Location: HL, UA

## 1662

16. *Eirenicum, of vrede-schrift in dese verwerde en twistige tyden tot noodige waerschouwinge en onderrichtinge voorgetstelt.* Amsterdam: Abraham Latham, 1662.

Location: AHTL, HL, UA, Universiteit Leiden (UL)

17. *Theologico-politica dissertatio, ofte discours over dese vrage: of den paus-gesinden, in dese Vereenighde Nederlanden, niet en behoorde toegestaen te worden, d'openbaere exercitien van haere religie, in eenige openbaere kercken, of capellen van eenige steden, of ten minsten in eenige privato-publycke plaetsen.* Utrecht: Jacob Waterman, 1662.<sup>4</sup>

Location: HL, UA

## 1663

18. *Het geopende en wederleyde Muhammedisdom of Turckdom.* Amsterdam: Willem van Beaumont, 1663.

Location: HL, KB, Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde in Leiden, Princeton University, THUK-O, Universiteit van Tilburg, UA, UL, UU

19. *Des Sathans vuyst-slagen, ofte tractaet vande inwerpingen der godtslasterlicke ghedachten.* Amsterdam: Samuel Bernardt, 1663.<sup>5</sup>

Location: HL, UA, VU

20. *Tractaetken vande eensaemheyt, en eensaeme oeffeninge der godtsaligheydt.* Amsterdam: Samuel Bernardt, 1663.

Location: HL, UA, VU

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<sup>3</sup> A version of this work, re-written in contemporary Dutch by J. van der Haar, was published in 1974 by Van der Tol in Dordrecht. It is available at KB, UA, and UU.

<sup>4</sup> Instead of the usual "Simon Oomius" the author of this work is given as "Simon van Heenvliedt."

<sup>5</sup> This book was put in contemporary Dutch by J. van der Haar and published by Kool in Veenendaal in 1977. This edition is available at KB, THUK-V and VU. This 1977 edition was reprinted by De Schatkamer in Rumpst in 2000 and is available at KB.

**1664**

21. *Des Heeren verderflicke pyl, ofte twee boeken van den pest.* Amsterdam: Willem van Beaumont, 1664-1665.

Location: HL, UA, UL, U.S. National Library of Medicine (Washington D.C.)

22. *Tractaetken van de goddelicke voorsienigheyt.* Amsterdam: Willem van Beaumont, 1664.

Location: see #21 (this work is included with #21 on pp. 439-536)

**1665**

23. *Trouhertige waerschouwinge tegen Hollants ondergangh, door het verderflicke pausdom, door overtuigende vertooninge van desselfs tegenwoordighe seer gevaerlijcke standt: aen alle die gene, die 't ware intrest van Hollandt oprechtelick en verstandelick beminnen.* Utrecht: Iozeph Christiaenszoon, 1665.

Location: HL, UA

**1666**

24. *Schriftuerlijcke prognosticatie, ofte voor-beduytselen van Godts naerderende oordeelen over landen en luyden. Den ingesetenen der Vereenigde Nederlanden in dese bedroefde dagen van Godts oordeelen voorgesteld tot hoogh-noodige waerschouwinge.* Amsterdam: Hieronymus Sweerts, 1666.

Location: HL, KB, THUK-O, UA, UU

25. *Troost-fonteyn geopent in de verhandeling van verscheyde theologische stoffen, uytgewrocht op de practijcke, in dese bedroefde tijden, I. Tot noodige opweckinge der rijcke. II. vertroostinge der arme, en verarmde door neeringhloosheyt, oorlogh, en andersins. III. Moetgevinge van all goede ingesetenen deser Nederlanden.* Amsterdam: Hieronymus Sweerts, 1666.<sup>6</sup>

Location: THUK-O, UA, VU

**1672**

26. *Dissertatie van de onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid. Eerste deels eerste boek: vervattende de verhandelinge der theologia didactica.* Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672.<sup>7</sup>

Location: Provinciale Bibliotheek Friesland in Leeuwarden (PBF), UA, UBM

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<sup>6</sup> A reprint of this work was done by De Schatkamer in 2003 as the seventeenth volume in the series "*Reprints uit het gereformeerde Piëtisme*," a project of the *Stichting Studie der Nadere Reformatie*. It is available at HL.

<sup>7</sup> A 1997 reprint of this book, with an introduction by K. Exalto, is the first volume of "*Reprints uit het gereformeerde Piëtisme*" by De Schatkamer. The work is available at KB and THUK-V.

27. *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid. Eerste tractaet des tweeden boeck's van het eerste deel, vervattende de verhandelinge der theologia didactica. In welke (na de uytlegginge en vast-stellinge van de hoofstucken der Christelicke Religie, afwijsinge van de tegenstellingen der valschelick genaemde wetenschap, die aen de practijcke getoetst en tot deselve worden onnut gethoont veklaeringe der voorkomende kerckelicke oudtheden) de leere der waerheyt wort aengedrongen tot de godtsaligheyt.* Bolsward: Samuel van Haringhouk, 1672.

Location: HL, KB, PBF, THUK-O, UBM

28. *Oorloghs bazuyne, geblaesen ter opweckinge van alle ingesetenen in de nogh overige provincien, steden en sterckten van Nederlandt, om onder de banieren van onsen seer gewenschten stadthouder Willem de III, doorlughtigh Prince van Orangien &c. kloeckmoedighlick te veghten tegen onse tegenwoordige vyanden.* Amsterdam: Jacob Benjamin, 1672.

Location: Bibliotheek Arnhem, HL, KB, New York Public Library (NYPL), Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG), UA, UBM, VU

### 1673

29. *Oorloghs bazuyns, tweede deel, geblaesen ter opweckinge van alle ingesetenen in de nogh overige provincien, steden en sterckten van het nu vernederde Nederlandt, om onder de banieren van onsen seer gewenschten stadthouder Willem de III, doorlughtigh Prince van Orangien &c. kloeckmoedighlick te veghten tegen onse tegenwoordige vyanden. Opgedragen aen den wel-edelen en manhaften zeeheldt, Cornelis Tromp, &c.* Amsterdam: Daniel van den Dalen, 1673.

Location: HL, KB, NYPL, RUG, UA, UL, VU

30. *Troost-bazuyne, geblaesen ter aenmoediging van alle bekommerde ingesetenen in het vereenighde ende nu seer vernederde Nederlandt, op sekere gronden van hope, datse nogh eens eyndelick, door de reghterhandt des Heeren, alle swaerigheden ontworstelen, ende uyt haere vernederinge verhooght sullen worden.* Amsterdam: Daniel van den Dalen, 1673.

Location: HL, KB, Nederlands Instituut voor Wetenschappelijke Informatiediensten (Amsterdam), NYPL, RUG, UA, UL, VU

### 1674

31. *Triumph-bazuyn, geblaesen by gelegentheyten van de verwonderlicke en heerlicke overwinningen, met welcke de Heere onsen staet heeft gelieven te zegenen, onder het hoogh-wijs beleydt van onsen glorieuse en loffelicken stadthouder en veldtheer, Willem de III, doorlughtigh Prince van Orangien, &c. Met aenwijsinge der middelen, soo geestelicke, als lighaemelicke, om de verkregen victorien nogh verder voort te setten.* Amsterdam: Daniel van den Dalen, 1674.

Location: HL, KB, NYPL, RUG, UA, UL, VU

32. *Vrede-basuyn, geblasen soo bij gelegentheyt der aengenaeme vrede, tusschen den doorluchtigen en groot-machtigen heere koningh van Groot Brittannien, ende de hoogh-mogende heeren staeten generael der Vereenighde Nederlanden; gemaect tot Westminster den 19. febr. 1674. Als der verwonderlicke verlatinge der overheerde steden, sterckten, ende provincien van desen staet door de vyanden.* Amsterdam: Daniel van den Dalen, 1674.  
Location: HL, KB, SABD, UA, UL, VU

### 1676

33. *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid. Eerste tractaet des tweeden boecks van het eerste deel, vervattende de verhandelinge der theologia didactica. In welke (na de uytlegginge en vast-stellinge van de hoofstucken der Christelicke Religie, afwijsinge van de tegenstellingen der valschelick genaemde wetenschap, die aen de practijcke getoetst en tot deselve worden onnut gethoont verklaeringe der voorkomende kerckelicke oudtheden) de leere der waerheyt wort aengedrongen tot de godtsaligheyt.* Bolsward: Weduwe van Samuel van Haringhouk, 1676.  
Location: HL, PBF, THUK-O, UU, VU

### 1680

34. *De godtsalige siecke en krancke op haere bedroefde leger-steden onderricht ende vertroost.* Schiedam: Laurens vander Wiel, 1680.  
Location: HL, THUK-O, UA

35. *Institutiones theologiae practicae, ofte onderwijsingen in de practycke der godgeleerdheid. Vervolgh van het eerste tractaet des tweeden boecks van het eerste deel, vervattende de verhandelinge der theologia didactica. In welke (na de uytlegginge en vast-stellinge van de hoofstucken der Christelicke Religie, afwijsinge van de tegenstellingen der valschelick genaemde wetenschap, die aen de practijcke getoetst en tot deselve worden onnut gethoont verklaeringe der voorkomende kerckelicke oudtheden) de leere der waerheyt wort aengedrongen tot de godtsaligheyt.* Schiedam: Laurens vander Wiel, 1680.  
Location: HL, VU

### 1683

36. *Lex Talionis, ofte Wet der rechtveerdige gelijk vergeldinge.* 1683.  
Location: unknown<sup>8</sup>

37. *De Praktycke der twee heyilige sacramenten des Nieuwen Testaments, des Doops ende Avondtmaels, klaerlick voorgesteld, en kraghtigh aengedrongen.* Groningen:

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<sup>8</sup> Like #6 above, this work is listed by Oomius in the forward to his *Twee dissertatien*, but it cannot be found today.

Tjerck Everts, 1683.

Location: HL, Stadsarchief en Athenaeumbibliotheek in Deventer (SABD)

#### 1684

38. *Twee dissertatien van het eerste Pascha, gehouden van de Israëlitin in Egypten, ende van het laetste, dat de Heere Iesus gehouden heeft korts voor sijn doot, met sijne Discipelen. In welcke breeder ondersoght wordt, of onse Salighmaecker op den selfden dagh, tijdt, of uyre het Pascha ge-eten heeft, op welcken het de Ioden ge-eten hebben, 't welcke veelsins bevestigt wordt.* Groningen: Tjerck Everts, 1684.

Location: AHTL, HL, SABD

#### 1689

39. *De Wonderen des Alderhoogsten, uitgevoerd in, onder en door Sijn Koninklyke Hoogheyt Willem de Derde, doorlugtig Prince van Orangien, en nu verklaart, uytgeroepen, en gekroont koning van Engeland.* Amsterdam: Marcus Doornik, 1689.<sup>9</sup>

Location: HL, KB, SABD, UA, UL, VU

#### 1696

40. *Afbeelding van een waer dienaar des Nieuwe Testaments in het keurlyk cieraed van voorbeeldelijcke godtsaligheyd.* Amsterdam and Leiden: Daniel van den Dalen and Fredrik Haringh, 1696.<sup>10</sup>

Location: HL, New Brunswick Theological Seminary (New Jersey), UA

#### 1707

41. *Cierlijke kroon en krans des grijsen en goeden ouderdoms, so uit de heilige historien, als uit die der Hebreen, Grieken, Romeinen, Franse, Engelse, Hoogduitse, Nederlandse, en veele andere gevlogten, en seer kragtig toegepast tot betragtinge van een deftig leven.* Leiden: Daniel van den Dalen, 1707.

Location: HL, KB, SABD

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<sup>9</sup> This book was published in both quarto and duodecimo editions.

<sup>10</sup> This work was reprinted in 1998 by De Schatkamer as the thirteenth volume in the series "Reprints uit het gereformeerde Piëtisme." It is available at HL, KB, and THUK-V.

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## Appendix B: Propositions

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1. The term “Further Reformation,” or even the untranslated “*Nadere Reformatie*” is preferable to using “Dutch Second Reformation” to refer to the *Nadere Reformatie* in the English-speaking world.

2. It is a misuse of the *Nadere Reformatie* motto, “*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*” to define it as implying a continual need for change in Reformation doctrine.

3. The detail, organization, and content of Simon Oomius’ prolegomena and doctrines of Scripture and God show that he fits comfortably among the Reformed orthodox scholastics of the seventeenth century.

4. The *Ecclesiola* of Oomius puts him squarely in line with other *Nadere Reformatie* figures and their concerns, adding to the argument that he was not merely a Reformed orthodox theologian, but also fit in comfortably among the “Reformed pietists” of the seventeenth century.

5. For at least two reasons the terms “pietists” and “pietism,” are not the best terms to use to refer to pastors and theologians of the *Nadere Reformatie* or its program as a whole. For one, the Reformed of the seventeenth century spoke out against “pietism.” Two, while the terms imply a concern for spirituality in the church and individual Christians, at the same time they often imply a lack of concern or interest in orthodoxy, and thus serve to promote the bifurcation created in some scholarship between the *Nadere Reformatie* and Reformed orthodoxy.

6. In light of those who claim the theology of seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy tends to be dry, impractical, and rationalistic, it is, at the very least, curious that especially the supralapsarians of the time tended to define theology as practical, rather than practical-speculative or speculative.

7. Gottfried Thomasius, considered by some to be the founder of kenotic Christology, is driven in part to his christological theory because of his commitment to a Lutheran conception of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Contrary to the consistent witness of orthodoxy he believes the full divine nature of Christ simply cannot exist in the same



person with the full human nature. He believes then there would be a “twofold mode of being, a double life, a double consciousness.”

8. The charge of subjectivism in Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics by scholars is incorrect if it is used to accuse Schleiermacher of letting go of all objective criteria in interpretation since objective criteria play a large role in interpretation for him. But this charge would be correct if used to refer to what Schleiermacher feels is a necessary intuitive leap made by the interpreter from the objective criteria to the thoughts and feelings of the author of the text.

9. Against the opinion of much past scholarship the federal theology of Johannes Cocceius does not pit itself against the doctrine of election or against Reformed scholasticism. Cocceius taught and held to the doctrine of election and he used the scholastic method at times in his writings.

10. George Lindbeck’s proposed “Regulative Theory” of doctrine as laid out in his *The Nature of Doctrine*, while admirable in a number of ways is ultimately unsatisfactory. While seeking to improve upon experiential-expressivist and cognitive-propositional models of religion and doctrine, Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic framework creates problems. His focus on current vocabulary and grammar of doctrine, which is connected with his ecumenist and postliberal sympathies, shows little concern for the origin of doctrinal language leading to problems not only in the area of revelation, but also relativism and truth.

11. The term “heretic” should not be used carelessly against anyone with whom one has a theological disagreement. It should be used exclusively to refer to someone who denies one or more articles of the *symbola oecumenica*, as interpreted by the church throughout the ages.

12. Given current broad interest in spirituality, the perceived intellectualism by some of the Reformed faith, and a distaste for “piety” among some neo-Kuyperians, an awareness and healthy dose of the Reformed spirituality of the *Nadere Reformatie* would be beneficial to Reformed churches of today.

13. An examination of the seventeenth-century Reformed university curriculum and its courses in the area of *theologia ascetica* could prove helpful in light of the current cry by some for more attention on spiritual growth and practices in seminaries.

14. The Vineyard churches world-wide have produced some excellent worship songs from which Reformed churches could benefit. These songs disprove the often heard mantra in some Reformed circles that contemporary worship songs are too trite, too individualistic, and too man-centered to be used by the church and to the glory of God. A large number of Vineyard songs display elements Reformed—and all—Christians should appreciate: a love for the Psalms, a strong awareness of the sovereignty of God, the importance of confession of sin, a good sense of social justice, and a heartfelt desire for an intimate relationship with the Lord.

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