

Title: Embracing *Leer* and *Leven*: The Theology of Simon Oomius in the Context of *Nadere Reformatie* Orthodoxy

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ABSTRACT

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.