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Exchanges in Scotland, the Netherlands, and America: The reception of the theoretico-practica theologia and a history of the work of redemption

ABSTRACT

This article explores the theological connections between the Netherlands, Scotland and early America, relevant to academics, translations, publications, correspondence and cross-influences. It provides representative examples of these connections, traces the development and reception of two works that crossed the Atlantic and were known in Scotland, and important for both fields of scholarship, that on Edwards and Post-reformation Reformed studies: The theoretico-practica theologia of Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706) and the Work of the history of redemption of Jonathan Edwards. The aim is to discover if any undercurrent is present before, during, and after the periods of eighteenth-century intercontinental correspondence and revivals. In particular, the question is raised whether there is a kinship present among these New England, Scottish and Dutch theologians, pastors and religious practitioners - and if so, what kind of kinship?

My friends, if your Ears be open, there are Three Things that you may hear this Day... I. To offer some Remarks concerning the Covenant in general... II. Offer some reasons of the doctrine: the great Mystery of the Covenant of Redemption, ... and III. Draw some Inferences for Application’.²

Thus wrote the eighteenth-century Scottish preacher Ralph Erskine (1685-1752), in a sermon entitled Christ the people’s covenant - preached (1722), published in Scotland (1725, 1747), translated and published in Holland (1743), received by Jonathan Edwards in a package from Scotland (1749),³ and published at Boston (1770). This example touches on the extent of intercontinental correspondence, publications, translations, and covenant theology. More generally, it relates to two fields of scholarship: Edwards and Post-Reformation studies.

Since about 1980, both the studies on Jonathan Edwards and on the Post-Reformation era have seen a considerable increase and development.⁴ At the same time, however, while scholarship on Edwards seems to suffer from a growing lack of awareness and attention to the fact that eighteenth-century New England is somehow connected to the continental intellectual thought of the seventeenth century - an understanding that was present in the preceding

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generation\textsuperscript{5} – scholarship on the Post-reformation Reformed period shows a tendency to focus primarily on European developments at the exclusion of early American history and theology, particular that of New England.\textsuperscript{6}

In such broad contexts of Edwards and Post-Reformation studies, furthermore, one observes, that, on the one hand, the theologian of Northampton and Stockbridge, while residing at the frontiers of New England, was an active participant of a transatlantic community of evangelical exchanges.\textsuperscript{7} As such, attention has been given to Edwards and the Scottish connection, the possible influence of Edwards upon the Scottish clergy, and the other way around.\textsuperscript{8} The majority of these studies focus on the New England-Scotland epistolary exchanges, and the revivals, though it is recently proposed to include the Netherlands, and in particular the Dutch Great Awakening, in these appraisals.\textsuperscript{9} On the other hand, however, these studies lack the broader historical-theological background, and in particular, of the trajectories and continuities between the Dutch, Scottish and New England proponents of Reformed orthodoxy.

Therefore, this article, first, explores the connections between the Netherlands, Scotland and early America, relevant to academics, translations, publications, correspondence and theological cross-influences. Secondly, to provide representative examples of these connections, it traces the development and reception of two works that crossed the Atlantic and were known in Scotland, and important for both fields of scholarship, that on Edwards and Post-reformation Reformed studies: The \textit{Theoretico-practica theologia} of Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706) and the \textit{Work of the History of Redemption} of Jonathan Edwards. The aim is to discover if any undercurrent is present before, during, and after the periods of eighteenth-century


\textsuperscript{6} Early American history and theology would fall within the divisions of the Post-reformation Reformed era proposed by Muller into early orthodoxy (c. 1565-1640), high orthodoxy (c. 1640-1725), and late orthodoxy (ca. 1725-1775). Muller, R. A. (2003), vol. 1, pp. 31-32.


intercontinental correspondence and revivals. In particular, is there a kinship present among these New England, Scottish and Dutch theologians, pastors and religious practitioners – and if so, what kind of kinship?

In the first part of this contribution I will thus focus on the context of the completion of the Theoretico-practica theologia (henceforth TPT), presented within the academic context of Maastricht’s stay at Utrecht from 1676 to 1706: the university, colleagues, correspondence and students, particularly as they relate to Scotland and New England, as well as the reception of the TPT. In the second part, I place the reception of the Work of the History of Redemption (henceforth HWR) in the Dutch context of 1776, and review its structure and content in light of the TPT, and conclude with some final remarks.

1. THE THEORETICO-PRACTICA THEOLOGIA: CONTEXT AND RECEPTION

The University of Utrecht in the seventeenth century had grown from a humble beginning in 1636 to a prestigious and internationally acclaimed academy by the time of the death of its chancellor and chair of theology, Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676). For more than forty years Voetius had lead the Academy with the motto of his inaugural address of 1636, Scientia cum pietate conjugenda (‘science [or academics] joined with piety’). The faculty of theology was recognised throughout Europe as the apex of Protestant scholasticism and orthodoxy. Voetius’ formative influence, through his disputationis on Reformed theology, was widely known and long-remembered, as attested in a letter of 1748 by Thomas Gillespie (1708-74) to Jonathan Edwards.10 Voetius’ colleagues Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617-66) and Andreas Essenius (1618-77) have long been regarded as standing in his shadow as one of the foremost advocates of the praxis pietatis of Reformed theology. However, their major works were much admired internationally throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. New England pastors such as Edwards, and physicians such as Samuel Woodward (1750-1835), read the Summa controversiarum religionis of Hoornbeeck, and Essenius’ systematic theology, the Compendium theologiæ dogmaticum, became the standard textbook at the divinity school of the University of Edinburgh in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and formative for a generation of Scottish divinity students, Ralph Erskine (1685-1752) and Thomas Boston (1676-1732) among them.11 Essenius’ appointment in 1654 at the Utrecht academy was due to Samuel Rutherford’s (1600-71) turning down the chair of the faculty of theology. The senate of the university, the Reformed

10 Printed in Smith, J. E. (ed.) (1959), p. 497: ‘(what if I remember right Voetius terms obsessio, and one in that situation obsessus)’.

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church, and city council of Utrecht, had tried, during seven months of intense correspondence between Aberdeen and Utrecht, to persuade the Scottish theologian of St. Andrews to come to the Utrecht Academy. Even the Scottish church of Rotterdam consulted with Rutherford’s brother, James Rutherford, sergeant of the Scottish garrison based in Holland, in support of the request of the Academy.12 However, Rutherford stated in a letter to the senate his surprise that the Academy invited him, as there was already an ‘eminent theologian’ in Utrecht, namely, Essenius. Shortly thereafter, both Voetius and Essenius passed away and Mastricht was called from the University of Duisburg, Germany, to succeed Voetius in the chair of theology.

Mastricht was not unfamiliar with the Utrecht Academy. In 1647, while he came from Cologne to be treated in Utrecht for his crippled foot,13 he stayed there for the study of theology under Voetius and Hoornbeeck, the latter his former pastor and catechism teacher at the Reformed and international refugee church at Cologne. Mastricht received a thorough education: didactic-dogmatic theology, which included the loci communes as presented in the Leiden Synopsis purioris theologiae; an introduction to the Summa Theologia of Thomas Aquinas; and an acquaintance with the scholastic disputationes of Voetius’ Saturday morning teachings. The study programme was a result of Voetius’ 1644 publication, Exercitia et bibliotheca studiosi theologiæ, a comprehensive 700-page introduction to theological literature and a five-year programme of theology. In summary, Mastricht received a scholastic methodological schooling, including the knowledge of the medieval scholastic definitions and distinctions, whereby theology must be known and practiced.14

Before his graduation in 1652 Mastricht, as commonly was done at the time, visited other universities for study, among them Leiden University, where he probably studied under the great covenant theologian Johannes Cocceius (1603-69), and at the universities of Heidelberg and Oxford. Following his graduation he returned to Germany to take up a vicariate at Xanten, Cleve, followed by a five-year pastorate in Glückstadt in the north of Germany on the Denmark border. In Glückstadt, an international transfer point between the Netherlands, Scotland, eastern Germany and the Baltic states, he finished his first major theological treatise, De Prodromus.15 This work shows already the contour of Mastricht’s fourfold and integral approach to theology: exegesis, doctrine, elenchtic and praxis. Following Glückstadt he served between 1662 and 1677 at the universities of Frankfurt an der Oder and Duisburg, respectively as professor of Hebrew, and Hebrew and philosophy. While at Frankfurt he published a method of preaching,16 which later became the introductory disputation to his major theological work, the TPT, and in Duisburg his major philosophical work De Gangraena,17 a work widely acclaimed, not only by the Reformed church and academy but also by Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians.18 Furthermore, at

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13 The Dutch word for ‘foot’ is voet. The name Voetius is the Latinised form for Voet.
Duisburg he commenced in 1676 with *disputationis* on the doctrine of God, which he continued without interruption upon his arrival at the Utrecht Academy in 1677.\(^{19}\) In Utrecht followed a flow of publications with a wide range of theological topics, such as the nature of theology, Roman Catholic teachings, the work of redemption and the assurance of salvation.\(^{20}\) His work, in the form of disputations, treatises and other publications culminated ultimately in 1699 in his *magnum opus*, the *Theoretico-practica theologia* – a work completed amidst his daily work with his colleagues, correspondence and students.

In 1679, while Mastricht concentrated his teaching on dogmatics, ethics, and church history, the Dutch theologian Herman Witsius (1636-1708) was appointed as professor of theology. Witsius had earned recent fame with his publication, *De æconomia fœderum Dei cum hominibus (On the Economy of the Covenant of God with Man)* – an influential work that attempted to reconcile the reigning orthodoxy and covenant theology. Witsius’ theological works were greatly appreciated by various Scottish theologians, among them Donald Fraser of Kennoway, translator of Witsius’ work *Excercitationes in Symbolum (On the Apostles’ Creed)*, and Thomas Bell of the Relief Church, who, upon advice of Edwards’ major correspondent John Erskine D.D. (1720-1803), translated Witsius’ *Animadversiones irenicae (Considerations for peace).*\(^{21}\) In New England, it was in particular Edwards who also approvingly cited multiple works of Mastricht’s colleague, including, *On the Economy of the Covenant*, the *Apostles’ Creed*, and *Miscellanea Sacra*, in his writings such as ‘Notes on Scriptures’, the ‘Miscellanies’, the ‘Blank Bible’, and ‘Subjects of Inquiry’\(^{22}\).

In addition, there was for some time an ongoing scholarly correspondence between Harvard

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20 van Mastricht, P. (1678) *Disputationum practicarum prima de certitudine salutis ejusque natura, Johannes Kamerling*, Utrecht: Meinardus à Dreuenen; *idem.* (1679) *Disputationum practicarum tertia de certitudine salutis, eique opposita presumptione seu securret carnali, pars prima, David de Velder*, Utrecht: Meinardus à Dreuenen; *idem.*, (1680) *Ad illust. episcopi Condomensis expositionem doctrinae, quam vocat, Catholicae, diatribe prima de consilio auctoris*, Rutgerus van Bemmel, Utrecht: Meinardus à Dreuenen.


College of New England and the faculty of theology at University of Utrecht. One topic of exchange concerned the relationship of native American dialects and the Hebrew language, which Mastricht’s colleague, the Christian Hebraist Johannes van Leusden (1624-99), rejected. Furthermore, Mastricht was involved in correspondence regarding a gift of Harvard College, John Eliot’s 1663 edition of the Algonquin Bible. Moreover, Mastricht wrote approbations, required by Dutch Reformed church order, for the Dutch translation of works by Thomas Shepard of New England, the Sound Beleever, and probably The Sincere Convert.23

The international character of the Utrecht academy was constituted in part by the significant presence of Scottish students.24 The harbour city of Rotterdam was a centre of commerce and religious communication, through the Scottish Kirk, between Scotland and Holland since the early 1700s, and served as a safe haven for Scottish exiles preceding the Glorious Revolution of 1688, among them Thomas Halyburton (1674-1712), later divinity professor at St. Andrews.25 Scottish students studied at the Dutch universities at Leiden, primarily for law, and at Utrecht, principally for theology, though transfers between these academies and cooperative studies regularly occurred.

With respect to Leiden, the defence of Mastricht’s student, James Hog (c. 1658-1734), a graduate of Edinburgh University, is illustrative.26 He defended on 20 March 1680 a disputation about the assurance of salvation27 in the presence of other Scottish students Thomas Hog, Jacob Kirton, Donald Cargill, and John Dickson, who all studied at Leiden. In addition, this defence was attended by two Reformed ministers. One of them, Jacobus Borstius (1612–80) of Rotterdam, was known for supporting the Scottish nonconformists in that city and advancing the Scottish cause by translating and publishing several Scottish works into Dutch, among them the History of the Churches of Scotland as well as works by Rutherford, whose Examen Arminianismi was printed


24 Kernkamp, G. W. (1936), vol. 1, p. 180. Though we know that the Utrecht senate reprimanded in 1693 seventy to eighty Scottish students – approximately twenty percent of the total number of students – of not attending the Anglican Church services, the Album Studiosorum of 1689-1693 shows about a quarter of that number present. See also (1836) Album studiosorum Academiae rheno-traiectinae MDCXXXVI-MDCCLXXXVI, Utrecht: J. Beijers en J. van Boekhoven; du Rieu, W. N. (1875) Album studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae MDLXXI-MDCCCLXX, The Hague: n.p.


26 James Hog graduated from Edinburgh University with an M. A. in 1677, and then studied theology in the Netherlands in the 1680s.

first at Utrecht for the benefit of the Scottish students of divinity there. The other minister was Jacobus Koelman (1632–95), a prolific theologian and translator of multiple works of Scottish theologians into Dutch, such as those of the Glasgow professor of philosophy and preacher Hugh Binning (1627–53), David Dickson (1583-1662), professor of divinity of the College of Glasgow and University of Edinburgh William Guthrie (1620-1665), and also Rutherford. In addition, Koelman introduced the translations of the works of Thomas Hooker of New England to the Dutch religious public.

Another example showing that students alternated between universities is Colonel John Erskine, the grandfather of John Erskine D.D., Edwards’ primary correspondent in Scotland. Colonel Erskine studied law at the Utrecht Academy in 1686-7 but also attended lectures of theology by Mastricht and visited him several times with fellow Scottish students. He notes, for example, in his diary on 7 June 1686, ‘I was a while with Professor van Mastricht: he was very kind and I do take him to have true religion’. However, most of Mastricht’s Scottish students did not recall him, an exception being James Hog, who appealed to his teacher during the Marrow controversy.

In this academic and international setting at Utrecht, replete with Scottish students and New England correspondence, Mastricht completed his life-long project, a work written over a period of thirty years. Commenced at Glückstadt and finished at Utrecht in 1699, his magnum opus, the Theoretico-practica theologia, became a major and influential work of Protestant scholastic and Reformed orthodoxy of theoetrico-practica theology. He could not have envisioned the


30 Macleod, W. (ed.) (1893) Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock, Edinburgh: University Press for the Scottish Historical Society, pp. 192; 184 (April 6, 1686): ‘I was seeing professor Van Mastricht, with Mr. Melvel and Pardiven. He gave a large testimony of the church of Scotland, particular to the church discipline, affirming to be the purest that has been since the apostles days; p. 219, (January 4, 1687): ‘I was seeing Professor Van Mastricht who was most civil and kind to me, and useful company’.

31 A Scottish ecclesiastical dispute occasioned by Hog’s republication, upon the recommendation of Thomas Boston, in 1718 of The Marrow of Modern Divinity by Edwards Fisher.

32 Van Mastricht, P. (1699) Theoretico-practica theologia: qua, per singula capita theologica, pars
favourable reception of his TPT throughout Europe, and that the work particularly would be recognised and approvingly cited by eighteenth-century theologians in Scotland and even New England.

Edwards, ‘America’s theologian’, wrote in 1746 to his student and colleague Joseph Bellamy (1719-90): ‘But take Mastricht for divinity in general, doctrine, practice and controversy; or as a universal system of divinity; and it is much better than Turretin or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible, in my opinion’.33 Though this quote may be the most cited but least explained appraisal of Mastricht in Edwards scholarship, one has to realise that Edwards reiterated a common understanding among the New England theologians. Take, for instance, the generous praise of Cotton Mather (1663-1728) in his Manuductio ad Ministerium: ‘But after all there is nothing that I can with so much Plerophorie Recommend unto you, as a Mastricht, his Theologia Theoretico-practica... I know not that the Sun has ever shone upon an Humane Composure that is equal to it’. Mather had written an earlier and grandiose opinion on the TPT to a Dutch merchant at Albany, New York: ‘The world has never yet seen so valuable a system of divinity... ‘Tis orthodox, ‘tis concise, ‘tis complete. In one word it is everything’.34

Mather’s commendation of Mastricht’s TPT was echoed from Boston into the valleys of New England, throughout the eighteenth century and later, by Benjamin Colman (1673-1747), Joseph Seccombe (1706-60), the anonymous editor of the only English translation of a chapter from the TPT, entitled On Regeneration, and Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803).35 Mastricht’s work of theology was probably used by Bellamy,36 and extensively read. Edwards’ ‘Account Book’ records that he lent the work repeatedly, and Edward Amasa Park (1808-1900), at the close of the nineteenth century, notes that Jonathan Edwards Jr. (1745-1801) read the TPT seven times.37 Edwards, Sr.,

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34 Mather, C. (1726) Manuductio ad Ministerium. Directions for a candidate of the ministry: Wherein, first, a right foundation is laid for his future improvement; and, then, rules are offered for such a management of his academical & preparatory studies; and thereupon, for such a conduct after his appearance in the world; as may render him a skilful and useful minister of the Gospel, Boston: Thomas Hancock, p. 85; Silverman, K. (1971) Selected Letters of Cotton Mather, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, p. 306.

35 Colman, B. (1736) A Dissertation on the Image of God wherein Man was created, Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, pp. 27, 28; Hopkins, S. (1793) The system of doctrines: contained in divine revelation, explained and defended: showing their consistence and connection with each other: to which is added, A treatise on the millennium, Boston: Isaiah Thomas and Ebenezer T. Andrews, p. 769; Seccombe, J. (1742) Some Occasional Thoughts on the Influence of the Spirit with Seasonable Cautions against Mistakes and Abuses, Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, the title page of which has the epigram: ‘oportet intelligentem, phantasmata speculari. Van Mastricht’; van Mastricht, P. (n.d. [1770?]) A Treatise on Regeneration. Extracted from his System of Divinity, called Theologia theoretico-practica; and faithfully translated into English; With an APPENDIX containing Extracts from many celebrated Divines of the reformed Church, upon the same Subject, New Haven: Thomas and Samuel Green, p. v.


however, referring in his ‘Catalogue’ of Reading to the TPT as a ‘Body of Divinity’,\textsuperscript{38} frequently concurs throughout his corpus with the TPT. These connections, as I have argued elsewhere,\textsuperscript{39} are related to an Edwardsean understanding of the covenant of grace.

In respect to Scotland, the ‘Marrowmen’, such as Ralph Erskine (1685-1752) and John Brown of Haddington (1722–1787), were favourable towards Mastricht’s thought on the doctrine of the covenant, probably influenced by Mastricht’s student James Hog – a Scottish interest that continued even into the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{40} The influence of Mastricht upon Ralph Erkine’s intellectual thought is significant. In his theological debate with James Robe on the question, ‘Is it not that unusual in the Reformed theological trajectory, Erskine espouses a view similar to the formulation of doctrine, followed by a practical application. Though such sermon structure this communion sermon, Erskine, like Mastricht, moves from the biblical text explication to theological thought, as explicated in his sermons, with a strong emphasis on the covenant, such of the ‘Imaginary Christ: La Tells’, Shell, Ideas Neele, C. (2009) (2008), (ed.) 152. p.

40 The influence of Mastricht upon Ralph Erkine’s are related to an Edwardsean understanding of the covenant of grace.

41 Though such sermon structure is not that unusual in the Reformed theological trajectory, Erskine espouses a view similar to Mastricht’s rather unique, in the context of 17th-century Reformed dogmatics, exposition of the work of redemption, the covenant of grace, both throughout history and with an application for


the believer. Erskine exhorts that the God of the covenant is not forgetting Scotland throughout history, in particular the people of Dunfermline, ‘with a view to the sealing of the covenant’. Moreover, Erskine, like Mastricht, understands the sacrament of holy communion as a covenant renewal. Furthermore, the reception of the TPT in Scotland attests that the Dutch theologians, among them Mastricht, exerted considerable influence on Scottish theology. As one scholar of Scottish religious history has noted, ‘Covenant theology which had been imported from Holland, and was destined to occupy a prominent place in the orthodox school in Scotland’. Thus far, we have seen that the context of the development of Mastricht’s TPT shows continuing interaction with Scotland and New England, in correspondence, and among colleagues and students. Its reception was more positive in New England than in Scotland. Though Mastricht’s work was acknowledged by three generations of eighteenth-century theologians and pastors in New England, it is in scholarship ‘often mentioned but rarely explored’.

Mastricht’s magnum opus consists of two parts: the first part comprises eight books, which could be described as systematic theology, or as Mastricht states, addressing the nature of the believer. Erskine exhorts that the God of the covenant is not forgetting Scotland throughout history, in particular the people of Dunfermline, ‘with a view to the sealing of the covenant’. Moreover, Erskine, like Mastricht, understands the sacrament of holy communion as a covenant renewal. Furthermore, the reception of the TPT in Scotland attests that the Dutch theologians, among them Mastricht, exerted considerable influence on Scottish theology. As one scholar of Scottish religious history has noted, ‘Covenant theology which had been imported from Holland, and was destined to occupy a prominent place in the orthodox school in Scotland’. Thus far, we have seen that the context of the development of Mastricht’s TPT shows continuing interaction with Scotland and New England, in correspondence, and among colleagues and students. Its reception was more positive in New England than in Scotland. Though Mastricht’s work was acknowledged by three generations of eighteenth-century theologians and pastors in New England, it is in scholarship ‘often mentioned but rarely explored’.

Mastricht’s magnum opus consists of two parts: the first part comprises eight books, which could be described as systematic theology, or as Mastricht states, addressing the nature of faith. The second major section concerns the character of obedience, presented as an outline of moral theology and theologia ascetica. These two parts, that of faith and obedience, reflect Mastricht’s defining theology as the ‘art of living to God’, and in turn consist of two aspects: how one is made spiritually alive and, being alive, how one lives unto God (Deo vivere). In regard to systematic theology, Mastricht appears to follow the division of the six Reformed loci of theology, with these significant differences: first, faith is not discussed in the context of soteriology but as a commencement of the discussion of theology proper. Secondly, each locus is presented in four parts: exegesis, doctrine, polemic and praxis. The formulation of doctrine and practice is a result of and is guarded, for Mastricht, by the exegesis of Scripture. Thirdly, and contrary to what one may expect of a Post-reformation Reformed systema, the work lacks a chapter entitled ‘eschatology’; instead, the last chapter is called De dispensatione foederis gratiae (‘On the dispensations of the covenant of grace’). This chapter consists of a grand narrative from the creation account to Mastricht’s own time, and attests to a broad international and up-to-date interest in historical, philosophical, and theological publications.

Mastricht moves in four major sections from the dispensation under the patriarchs and

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44 Erskine, R. (1725, 1770), p. 4: ‘[God] commends [Christ] for an able Saviour, that will through his work... not [be] forgetting Scotland’. See TPT, bk. VII.5, pp. 829-845; and Erskine, R. (1725, 1770), p. 4: ‘[There is a company of people meeting in Dunfermline, about a communion-table’. See also pp. 15, 26.
45 Erskine, R. (1725, 1770), p. 56: ‘consider, that you have a good claim and right to this covenant... you are welcome to it’.
48 TPT, Prologus, 1102: ‘Fidei naturam, octo libris hactenus expedivimus’.
Moses to Christ and ends with a treatment on the dispensation of eternity. In the first section, he is concerned with the propagation, theology and heresies of the covenant of grace in the era from Adam to Noach to Abraham to Moses.\footnote{50} In the second section, he enlarges the discussion by including sacred and world history as well as the progress and regress of this covenant during the period of Moses to David; David to the Babylonian captivity;\footnote{51} and the latter to the coming of Christ. The third section, the dispensation of Christ, is the largest of the chapter, in which Mastricht blends theology, sacred and world history, typology and shadows, confessions and creeds, heresies, persecutions, schisms, the rise and fall of the antichrist, and Roman Catholic and Islamic theology, into one and continuing expanding narrative.\footnote{52} However, in each section he notes explicitly the propagation or progress, renovation or renewal of the covenant of grace throughout the ages,\footnote{53} whereby his exposition of the dispensation of Christ coincide with an analysis of the Apocalypse chapter six and the dispensation of eternity with an exposition of the Apocalypse chapter seven to eleven. In particular, this section of Mastricht’s exposition of the dispensations of the covenant of grace differed with a work of one of his students, Moses Lowman (c. 1680-1752), whose work Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation became one of Edwards’ major sources for both his ‘Notes on the Apocalypse’ and An Humble Attempt.\footnote{54}

Mastricht’s view on theology and history, or the development of the covenant of grace, is based on the work of redemption. He notes that the exposition of the dispensation of the covenant rests upon and extends his discussion of the application of the work of redemption, as expounded in the preceding book five, based on Genesis 3:15.\footnote{55}

One should note, however, that the presentation of church history throughout several dispensations was not uncommon in Post-reformation Reformed theology, as seen in Frederick Spanheim (1632-1701), Mastricht’s colleague at University, whose Historica Ecclesiastica Mastricht praises.\footnote{56} Further, to present the history of the church in relation to the covenant of grace was worked out to a great extent by Johannes Cocceius,\footnote{57} Mastricht’s former teacher at Leiden University. In addition, the exposition of the Apocalypse in relation to church history


\footnote{51} For example, \textit{ibid.}, bk. VIII.2.xxvi, p. 908: ‘Secundum ergo epochae Mosaicae curriculum, à Davide pergit usque ad captivitatem babilonicam’.


\footnote{53} On the progress and renewal of the covenant, see, for example, \textit{ibid.}, bk. VIII.3.xxi, p. 962: ‘Quantum ad Statum Ecclesiae, sub hac aetate; occurrunt penes eam (1) Propagatio Ecclesiae, talis ac tanta’; and \textit{ibid.}, bk. VIII.2.xvii, p. 896, ‘Primum ergo foedus, apud Sinai renovatum’.


\footnote{55} TPT, bk. V.1.i, p. 389: ‘Foedus gratiae pandemus in prima promissione, protoplastis peccatoribus . . . quae prostat Gen. III. 15’.


was also done by Mastricht’s contemporary Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711). However, Mastricht stood apart in his time, in that he merged the history of the church and the covenant of grace with sacred and world history concurrently and in concert with the exposition on the Apocalypse: an approach of which he writes, ‘I had planned for long... a great work about the adventures of the Church’.

In summary, Mastricht’s work contained a fairly strong and rather unique notion of the covenant of grace throughout history. This theological notion was a part of his overall system of theoreti-co-practica theology, whereby history was understood as theology. This Latin tome was translated into Dutch in 1749, prefaced by Cornelis van der Kemp (1702-72), pastor and professor of theology at Rotterdam: ‘Here, the major parts of theology are brought together in a manner not seen before; why this book is called a universal system of divinity; ‘tis called a treasure, a storehouse... for the perfection of the theologian’.

2. THE HISTORY OF THE WORK OF REDEMPTION: CONTEXT AND RECEPTION

The entire translation of Mastricht’s work took place between 1749 and 1753, which context is a part of the reception of the Dutch translation and publication in 1776 of Edwards’ work, The History of the Work of Redemption.

First, the publication of Mastricht’s work was accompanied in the period from 1740 to 1760 – corresponding to the New England and Scottish revivals – with translations of various Scottish authors such as Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, Thomas Halyburton, Josiah Smith, and Edwards’ correspondent, James Robe (1688-1753).

Secondly, in addition to the publishers, three other persons were involved in this translation enterprise: Hugh Kennedy (1698–1764), the pastor of the Scottish church at Rotterdam, whose publications were critically received by Edwards; the translator Mr. Jan Ross, assumed to be a member of the Scottish church at Rotterdam; and the pastor and philosopher-theologian at Woubrugge, Alexander Comrie (1706-74), a Scot by birth, having as his catechism teacher Ralph Erskine and Thomas Boston (1676-1732), whose major works he translated into Dutch.


59 TPT, praefatio: ‘Adpersa est libro octavo, de dispensatione foederis gratiae per omnia Ecclesiae secula, historia Ecclesiastica, plena quidem’.

60 Ibid.: ‘Occeperam dudum quasi pro commentario, in breviorem prioris editionis epitomen, opus satis copiosum de Fatis Ecclesiae’.

61 Van Mastricht, P. (1749-53) Beschouwende en praktikale godgeleerdheit: waarin, door alle de godgeleerde hoofdstukken henen, het bybelverklarende, leerstellige, wederleggende, en praktikale deel door eenen onafgebroken schakel, onderscheidenlyk samengevoegt, voorgestelt word; hierby komt een volledig kort-begrip der kerklyke geschiedenis, een vertoog der zedelyke, en een schets der plichtvermenende godgeleerdheit, enz.; in het Latyn beschreven; naar den laatsten druk in het Nederduitsch vertaalt, benevens de lykrede van den vermaarden hoogleeraar Henricus Pontanus, over het afsterven van den hoogwaardigen autheur; met eene voorrede van den heer Cornelius van der Kemp, 4 vols., Rotterdam: Hendrik van Pelt; Utrecht: Jan Jacob van Poolsum, vol. 1, preface, p. 3.

62 The bibliography of translations of just these few authors is extensive, but instructive, and has not hitherto been fully enumerated. See the Appendix to the essay.

63 Kennedy, H. (1752) A short account of the rise and continuing progress of a remarkable work of grace in the United Netherlands. In several letters from the Reverend Mr Hugh Kennedy ... to some of his correspondents in Scotland and at London. In the epistle to the reader, there are some seasonable observations, London: printed for John Lewis; ibid. (1743) A discourse concerning the nature, author,
thing these publications have in common: a particular attention to the covenant of grace. In particular, the communion sermons aimed for a personal, and sometimes national, ‘covenant renewal’.64

Thirdly, these publications and Mastricht’s translated works were widely read during the time of the Dutch Great Awakening, and in the same period approvingly cited by Edwards of Northampton,65 whose account of David Brainerd appeared in 1756 in the Dutch language, also translated by Jan Ross but published at Utrecht.66 The probable reason for this location of publication was the presence of Gisbertus Bonnet (1723-1803), the second successor of Mastricht at the University of Utrecht and correspondent of John Erskine, D. D., of Scotland.67

At the very least, Bonnet was instrumental in another publication of Edwards, the History of the Work of Redemption in 1776, the structure and content of which does not deviate that much from Mastricht’s discussion of the dispensations of the covenant of grace.

The HWR originated in 1739 as a series of sermons—or, more accurately, a single sermon delivered on thirty consecutive ‘preaching occasions’. After Edwards’ death, the sermon manuscripts remained for a while in the custody of Joseph Bellamy, who eventually passed them on to Jonathan Edwards, Jr. He transcribed them and sent them to John Erskine, D. D., in Scotland, where they were tailored into a ‘continuing treatise’ and published in Edinburgh for W. Gray in 1774.68 John F. Wilson remarks, ‘Erskine may never have known how relatively

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64 See the Appendix to this article.


67 This is another major network, not only between Scotland and the Netherlands, but between Utrecht and the Middle Colonies. G. v. Schuyltenborgh was pastor near Utrecht, and was involved in translations of some works of Edwards and, during his study of theology at Utrecht University, provided lodging for Johannes Freylinghuyzen, son of Theodorus Freylinghuyzen, who was introduced by Schuyltenborgh to his wife to be, Dina van den Bergh, who joined him to Newark. On Dina van den Bergh, see House, R. and Coakly, J. (eds) (1999) Patterns and Portraits: Women in the History of the Reformed Church in America, Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, pp. 33-51.

unfinished and incomplete some sections of the Redemption Discourse actually were’ – a remark that may also apply for the Dutch edition. Erskine, after acquiring the Dutch language for his correspondence, had in turn sent a copy to Bonnet at Utrecht, where it was almost immediately translated by Engelbert Nooteboom into Dutch and published by the university printer Abraham van Paddenburg in 1776, prior to the first American edition of 1786. But more notably, the Dutch interest in New England theology continued in the eighteenth century after Edwards’ death.

Edwards’s sermons two to twelve, like Mastricht’s first two major sections on the dispensation of the covenant of grace, moves from the fall to Noach to Abraham to Moses to David to the Babylonian captivity to the coming of Christ. Here, not only in structure but also in content Edwards was firmly within his theological tradition by commencing the covenant of grace with Genesis 3:15, the proto evangelium. Mastricht not only begins with this text but he used it also as the Scriptural foundation for his entire exposition of the preceding chapter on De Foedere Gratia. Mastricht comments, although the ‘form or the name is not yet present’, this text contains ‘all the material and essential parts of the covenant of grace’. Likewise, according to Edwards, Christ began his mediatorial work as soon as mankind fell, and the ‘gospel was first revealed on earth, in these words, Genesis 3:15’. Edwards calls this ‘the first revelation of the covenant of grace’; an echo of Mastricht, when he writes, ‘immediately after the fall [was] established a covenant of grace’.

The next major section of Edwards’ work, sermons fourteen to twenty-four focuses on Christ’s incarnation to his own time: Mastricht collectively treats this period in his discussion on the dispensation under Christ. Both TPT and HWR show similarities in content about the time of Christ till the Protestant Reformation. Illustrative is the discussion on the Reformation, where both Mastricht and Edwards note the Roman Catholic opposition, specifically but not limited to the Council of Trent, as well as wars and persecutions. Furthermore, both identify the rise of the Socinians and Arminians as hostile to Reformed teachings. On the other hand, the success of the gospel shows for Mastricht and Edwards a reformation in doctrine and worship.

Finally, Mastricht has a separate discussion on the time to come, de dispensatione sub aeternitate, an application of the work of redemptive history that addresses the continuation of
earth, heaven and hell. Edwards’ sermons twenty-seven to thirty address also the eternal state of the church. More precisely, the seven steps pertaining to the last things, as formulated in the last four sermons of Edwards’ redemption discourse, are similar to the seven steps Mastricht formulated in his chapter on the eternal dispensation. Coinciding with Mastricht’s discussion of these seven steps, Mastricht provides an exposition of the seven trumpets of Revelation 8-11. On the seventh trumpet, for example, he comments that this woe is to the peace and happiness of the church and to the destruction of its enemies. Edwards’ understanding of this last trumpet in sermon twenty-four seems closer to Mastricht’s understanding than to the exposition on the same by Mastricht’s student Lowman.

Thus, Edwards, like Mastricht, divides the history of redemption into major sections, of which each is divided into dispensations, periods and epochas, though both understand these differentiations in the history of redemption as belonging to the same covenant of grace, which is the golden thread throughout the _HWR_, as it is in Mastricht’s chapter on the dispensations of the covenant of grace. So central is this theological concept to Edwards’ work that it is suggested that one could almost substitute the title of, ‘A History of Covenant of Grace’ for _HWR_, as, _de historiae foederis gratiae_, an echo of Mastricht’s _TPT_ preface.

The Dutch readership, then, was not that unfamiliar with the structure and content of Edwards’ work. For them, there was a continuity of theological thought, in particular, that of covenant theology. Antecedents were readily found in Mastricht’s work, as well as in the immediate context of Edwards’ Dutch edition of the Redemption Discourse.

Therefore, I conclude with three observations. First, the reading of Edwards’ _HWR_ should not be limited to the historical-theological context of England or New England, but should consider Mastricht’s _TPT_ as its background. As this major work was influential in the formation of eighteenth-century Scottish covenant theology, so the parallels in structure and content between book eight of the _TPT_ and _HWR_ may point to a marked influence. For Mastricht, the covenant of grace and eschatology are inseparable – a trajectory found in the redemption sermons of Edwards. Actually, for both Mastricht and Edwards, the progressive development of

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82 Edwards:

(1) Christ’s glorious appearance
(2) The last trumpet & destruction of Antichrist
(3) The church will be caught up
(4) The righteousness of the church & judgment
(5) Judgment of the righteous and wicked
(6) The ascent of Christ and His church
(7) World on fire and eternal life

Mastricht:

(1) Christ’s glorious return
(2) Destruction of the Antichrist
(3) Resurrection of the dead
(4) The last judgment
(5) The acquittal of the church & condemnation of others
(6) Handing over the Kingdom & the end of ages
(7) Eternal life


the covenant of grace in history is teleological. The covenant of grace, according to Mastricht, is being directed toward an end or shaped by a purpose: the teleos of creation or the divine glory in the eternal dispensation. It may be, therefore, that the positive reception of the TPT in New England was a consistent presence in the development of New England theological thought. On the other hand, the reception of the HWR in Holland is not that surprising – which leads me to the next observation. Secondly, the exchanges between New England, Scotland and Holland took place between people of different denominational affiliations. Nevertheless, there was a latently present kinship, a theological kinship: that of covenant theology. Thirdly, as this essay suggests, the interaction between scholarship on Edwards and Post-reformation studies can open new ways of approaching the continuities and trajectories of historical and theological thought.

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opus quasi novum. Ed. nova, priori mucho emendatior et plus quam tertia parte auctior, Utrecht: Thomas Appels.

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APPENDIX

A chronological bibliography of Dutch translations of religious works by Scottish authors, 1740-67

Thomas Boston


Ebenezer Erskin

Ralph Erskine

(1740) De overeenstemminge der goddelijke eigenschappen, doorstralende in het werk der

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(1742) De zwangere belofte, en hare vrucht; of De kinderen der belofte voortgebragt en beschreven, trans. Jan Ross, Rotterdam: Hendrik van Pelt, Adrianus Douci.


Thomas Halyburton

(1745) Gedenk-schriften, in zig behelzende het leven, de bekeeringe, en merkwaardige gevallen van... Begrepen in vier deelen. Waar by gevoegt is, een verhaal van zyn laatste woorden, Rotterdam: by Hendrik van Pelt en Adrianus Douci.

James Robe
(1743) Geloofigwaardig en kort verhaal van ’t heerlyke werk Godts, geopenbaart in de overtuiginge en bekeeringe van een groot getal zielen in de gemeinte van Cambuslang, en in andere plaatsen van Schotlandt, voorrede Hugh Kennedy, Rotterdam: Hendrik van Pelt, en Adrianus Douci.

(1743) Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal van ’t heerlyke en uitmuntende werk Godts; gewrogt in de bekeeringe van veele zielen in verscheidene gemeintens van Schotlandt, inzonderheit tot Kilsyth, preface Hugh Kennedy, Rotterdam: Hendrik van Pelt, en Adrianus Douci.

(1743) [Tweede] Nader en uitvoeriger verhaal van ’t heerlyke en uitmuntende werk Godts; gewrogt in de bekeeringe van veele zielen in verscheidene gemeintens van Schotlandt, inzonderheit tot Kilsyth, preface by Hugh Kennedy, Rotterdam: Hendrik van Pelt, en Adrianus Douci.

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John Smith

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