

**Biblical Interpretation and
Doctrinal Formulation
in the Reformed Tradition**

Biblical Interpretation and Doctrinal Formulation in the Reformed Tradition

Essays in Honor of James A. De Jong

Edited by
Arie C. Leder
and
Richard A. Muller



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Biblical Interpretation and Doctrinal Formulation in the Reformed Tradition

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Preface

All the essays that follow are presented to honor the life and work of James A. De Jong as teacher, scholar, and valued colleague. In his teaching, research, and service as president of Calvin Theological Seminary, Jim has made significant contributions to the understanding of Reformed theology whether in his own writings, his encouragement of other scholars, his support of the translation of major works of Reformed theology, or in his vision for advanced seminary study at the PhD level. The appreciation and deep respect that the contributors share for Jim is well expressed in Calvin Van Reken's introductory essay.

Although the essays approach the broad topic of biblical interpretation and doctrinal formulation from rather varied perspectives, all relate to aspects of the work that has been done and continues to be required for a full-orbed analysis of Reformed thought as it developed in and after the era of the Reformation. The essays examine Calvin's influential understanding of the teaching office in the church and its impact on later Reformed thought as well as the issues in biblical interpretation and doctrinal formulation in a diverse group of thinkers—notably, Calvin, Vermigli, Beza, Ainsworth, à Lapide, Flavel, Klinkenberg, and Hoeksema—illustrating issues of style, context, development, and debate from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Readers will notice that à Lapide was Roman Catholic and that his work well illustrates the progress of precritical exegesis in the seventeenth century, offering a point of comparison and contrast with the work of Ainsworth, Flavel, and Klinkenberg. Two other essays take up debates in Reformed thought, namely, the creedal article of Christ's descent into hell and the problem of free choice and illustrate paths taken by Reformed exegetes and theologians as they moved from biblical exegesis to doctrinal formulation.

An understanding of biblical interpretation and doctrinal formulation in Reformation and post-Reformation Reformed circles can hardly find a better starting point than the teaching office of the church. Joel Beeke's essay explores this issue

with reference to Calvin and the later Dutch Reformed tradition, noting both the importance of the office to the birth and early development of the Reformed churches and the sometimes ambiguous place of the teaching office in modern Reformed circles. Calvin's efforts to develop and reinforce the curriculum at the Genevan Collège de Rive and to institutionalize the office of teacher in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 emphasized the importance of supporting the ongoing task of instructing the church in its doctrines, specifically those doctrines grounded on the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments. As Beeke points out, Calvin therefore understood the teaching office as "an integral part of the church's ministry" both for the education of pastors and for the general instruction of the church. Early assemblies representative of the Reformed movement in the Low Countries, like the Synod of Wesel (1568), followed fairly closely on the Genevan model and identified the office of teacher, or "doctor," as a significant church office, between that of preacher and elder. Here, moreover, the office of doctor was developed to include weekly expository gatherings, doctrinal examination of preachers, catechetical instruction, and synodical duties. At the Synod of Middelburg (1581) it was explicitly stated that the office of doctor included the duty to oppose doctrinal error. These understandings were maintained and developed at the Synod of Dort (1618–1619). As Beeke indicates, the synod in no way diminished the importance of the teaching office, as has sometimes been claimed; rather, the gradual weakening of the office began later in the seventeenth century and continued through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the context of this volume and the studies that follow, Beeke's conclusions point to the close connections between the role of the teacher or professor of theology, the tasks of exegesis, biblical instruction, doctrinal formulation, and confessional identity in the early modern era.

My own contribution to the volume, an examination of the style of Calvin's series of published sermons on Genesis, deals with some of the more significant differences between Calvin's work as a preacher and his work as a commentator. Although further examination would be required before applying its conclusions generally to Calvin's sermons, the essay indicates a more doctrinally expansive style in the sermons, supported by a far wider gathering of collateral texts from other places in Scripture, and presented in a rhetorical mode quite different from that of the commentaries. Whereas at least one previous study argued little rhetoric in the sermons, the present essay demonstrates the presence of major rhetorical considerations couched in plainer, simpler, more direct, and frequently more pointed grammatical constructions than can be found in the commentaries. Arguably, the rhetoric of Calvin's sermons was adapted to his sense of the requirements of this office as teacher in the pulpit as distinct from the academy.

Al Wolters's essay on Calvin's lectures on Zechariah is less a study of what Calvin thought than an exercise in textual criticism of the lectures themselves. Wolters offers examples of problems found in the earliest published Latin text, which was itself based on a transcript of Calvin's lectures. Whereas some of these problems could have arisen in the work of the transcribers, Wolters rather convincingly argues that many were actually the result of slips of memory on Calvin's part, largely consisting in mistaken references to biblical texts. The French translation of the lectures that appeared shortly after the Latin edition corrects some of the references, while others are corrected in the second Latin edition of the lectures. More significantly, Wolters also identifies a series of mistakes on the part of those who transcribed Calvin's lectures—mistakes that can only be rectified by a close reading of the Latin, followed, probably, by reconstructions. As he indicates at the very beginning of his essay, Wolters's purpose is to offer a preliminary study to an analysis of Calvin's work on Zechariah. He has also provided a preliminary model for a critical edition of the lectures. Both of these preliminary purposes direct us toward a clearer approach to the nature and content of Calvin's work as teacher.

The third essay on Calvin, Keith Stanglin's study of Calvin's interpretation of the Maccabean Psalms, raises a series of issues for the study of early modern, so-called precritical exegesis. Stanglin begins with Calvin's premise that the exegete must engage with the "mind of the author" and draws out the point by noting that scholarship has rarely and never in any detail recognized that Calvin assigned the writing of Psalm 44 not to David but to an author at the time of the Maccabean revolt—largely on the basis of anonymous authorship, the nature of the suffering described, and the specific form of prayer in the Psalm. Calvin goes on to argue that Maccabean context not only for Psalm 44 but also for Psalms 74, 79, 85, 106, 123, and 129. Stanglin notes that the association of the message of these psalms—apart from the question of authorship—with the Maccabean era has a long history, extending back to Eusebius of Caesarea and Theodore of Mopsuestia and running through major medieval interpreters, including Nicholas of Lyra. What is perhaps most interesting here is that this attention to the literal sense, to the *Sitz im Leben* of the text, and to the intent of the human author are all points that have been used to argue Calvin's departure from purportedly allegorical pre-Reformation exegesis and, equally, his forward step toward modern critical understandings but actually connect his work strongly with the older tradition of precritical exegesis. Still, as Stanglin demonstrates, Calvin does add a unique dimension, given his willingness to set aside traditions of Davidic authorship and a prophetic or predictive interpretation of the Maccabean Psalms in favor of actual authorship during the Maccabean era.

Mark Larson's study of Peter Martyr Vermigli's approach to just war theory in comparison to Aquinas's views demonstrates, among other things, a significant continuity between early modern Protestant thought and main lines of the medieval tradition. In the context of a scholarship that has seen varied medieval backgrounds reflected in Vermigli's thought, Larson's study serves to reinforce the conclusion that not only is there a medieval background to Vermigli's thought but also that the background was, at least in part, Thomistic. This is the case, Larson indicates, despite Vermigli's occasionally pointed criticisms of the medieval Scholastics. Perhaps even more interesting is that Vermigli could have constructed a just war theory from the perspective of the Augustinian tradition but instead appears to have looked primarily to Aquinas, quite specifically reproducing Aquinas's series of necessary constituent factors for a just war—and did so in a *locus* constructed in view of the basic structure of a Scholastic *quaestio*. Moreover, Vermigli constructed that *locus* as an explanatory exercise in his commentary on 2 Samuel 2. There was, in other words, an exegetical location for Vermigli's thoughts on just war, and his exposition provides not only an example of Reformation-era use of medieval backgrounds and Scholastic method but also a significant example of the way in which Reformation exegesis moved from the text and the theological questions raised by the text to broader theological treatment in the commentary itself and from thence to doctrinal exposition: Vermigli's *locus* was eventually extracted from his commentary and placed into his posthumous *Loci communes*.

The interrelationship of various strands of sixteenth-century Reformed theology is explored in Lyle Bierma's study of Theodore Beza's confessions as among possible sources of the Heidelberg Catechism. Bierma reexamines the argument, presented over a half-century ago by Walter Hollweg but since then largely ignored, that Beza's *Confessio christianae fidei* and his *Altera brevis fidei confessio* influenced the structure, content, and even some of the wording of the Heidelberg Catechism. Hollweg had identified structural similarities and linguistic parallels. As Bierma points out, some modification of Hollweg's thesis is in order. The background to some of these passages in the Heidelberg Catechism is more probably Ursinus's own Smaller Catechism, and there are also reflections of Johannes Brenz's small catechism. But Bierma also notes a series of resemblances and connections between the Heidelberg Catechism and Beza's two works that were missed by Hollweg. In the balance, then, a Bezan influence must be recognized. What is more, there was a close connection between Beza and Olevianus and a clear Bezan influence in Olevianus's own *Firm Foundation*, a catechetical work related to the Heidelberg Catechism but more detailed. There are, therefore, arguably Bezan influences on the Heidelberg Catechism that came by way of Olevianus's *Firm Foundation*. Bierma carefully documents

all these points. What is significant to the scope of the present volume is the breadth of influences on the Heidelberg Catechism and, by extension, the broad international context both of the Heidelberg Catechism and of the Reformed faith in the sixteenth century.

Henry Ainsworth, as Raymond Blacketer identifies him, the “Harried Hebraist,” occupies an important place both in the ecclesiastical history of early modern Protestantism and in the history of biblical interpretation. In his own day, Ainsworth stood in the forefront of Protestant Hebraism, including the study of cognate languages as a tool in biblical exegesis. Blacketer offers concise introductions to Ainsworth’s somewhat turbulent life and to the development of Hebraism in Protestant circles in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ainsworth was positioned, moreover, on one side of a debate among Christian Hebraists concerning the use of Jewish sources. Virtually all agreed that non-scriptural sources like the Talmud and later rabbinic commentaries could be used for lexical purposes and all paid attention to the Masoretic marginal readings or *Qere*, but many argued that Jewish sources should be viewed with suspicion from a theological perspective. Ainsworth, however, particularly in his debate with John Paget, took the more positive approach, holding that the Masoretic marginalia were typically authoritative, that the Masoretic text was definitive, and that the Talmud and the rabbinic interpretive tradition ought to be used as a positive tool in interpretation of texts, setting aside the claims of others that Jewish readings of the Old Testament included many forgeries and alterations of text for the sake of undermining Christian interpretations. As to the question of which variant to follow, the line of the text (*Ketiv*) or the Masoretic marginal (*Qere*), Ainsworth argued that both ought to be examined carefully and that the exegete ought to decide on the basis of lexical and philological study. Blacketer provides a series of examples of Ainsworth’s practice, focusing on his concision in an exegetical approach that focused on philological issues, ancient customs and practices, and precise translation in view of the significant grammatical and syntactical differences between the Hebrew and English. Significantly, despite the intense criticism directed at Ainsworth by rival Hebraists like Paget and Broughton, Ainsworth’s own effort as commentator was to avoid explicit controversy and, as Blacketer indicates, his exegetical results were highly influential in his time, significantly dispelling the older lines of scholarship that tended to ignore the technical mastery of seventeenth-century exegetes and to assume that they had reduced biblical interpretation to dogmatics.

Christ’s descent into “hell” or, more properly, *hades*, is a topic that has gained renewed attention in evangelical and Reformed circles in recent years; as Jay Shim shows, the early modern Reformed addressed and debated it as well. After indicating issues in the early modern debate, including those between Reformed

and Roman Catholic writers, and noting the fairly concerted recourse to patristic understandings of the doctrine in the works of William Perkins and William Whitaker, Shim (like Blacketer) takes issue with those modern critics who have ignored the philological and textual interests of seventeenth-century biblical interpreters and claimed a fundamentally dogmatic approach to Scripture. The focus of Shim's essay, illustrating this thesis by way of exegetical understandings of Christ's descent into hades, is on the interpretive work of Hugh Broughton, James Ussher, and John Lightfoot. Broughton is of interest in particular given his use of Jewish commentators, his attempt to defend what he held to be the proper interpretation in the context of the Thirty-Nine Articles against Roman Catholic interpretations, and his polemics against what he identified as the "Genevan" interpretation of Calvin and others, according to which Christ's soul suffered the torments of hell while on the cross and did not "pass into hades." (Broughton's critique did not, of course, address all "Genevan" views of Christ's descent: Beza, making a detailed philological argument in his *Annotationes*, understood the *descensus* as the burial of Christ.) Shim shows that Broughton's reading was based on a detailed lexical and philological study in Hebrew and Greek and rooted in a sense that, given its use in the New Testament, the Septuagint necessarily joined with the Hebrew text in understanding the Old Testament. Broughton also assumed a classical "heathen" background to any proper understanding of Greek. On this basis, Broughton concluded that hades in the New Testament ought to be read as indicating sheol and not the place of final punishment. Lightfoot, also a noted Hebraist, perhaps the greatest of the British Hebraists of the era, also took the interpretation of Christ's descent as an opportunity to argue a Protestant reading against Roman interpretations but (like Broughton) also against the Calvinian view, but specifically with the intention of arguing that the descent was not for the sake of suffering the torments of the final hell. Ussher, also adept in the languages and study of ancient texts, similarly identified the Greek hades with the Hebrew sheol and argued that the creedal phrase should be taken to mean the place of the dead, specifically referencing both the place of the dead body and the separated existence of the departed soul. Taken together, the three theologians, Broughton, Lightfoot, and Ussher, offer evidence of major linguistic and philological skills brought to bear both on the interpretation of biblical passages underlying Christian doctrine and on the formulation of Protestant understandings of aspects of traditional, catholic teaching.

John Bergsma's essay proposes a complement to studies of the trials of Protestant exegesis in the early modern era by examining the work of a major Roman Catholic interpreter, Cornelius à Lapide (1567–1637), in comparison with and contrast to the early critical proposals found in the work of René Descartes, Lodewijk Meyer, and Baruch Spinoza. It can be noted here that the precritical

exegetical models found in the work of Lapidé are not unlike those found in the commentaries of Reformed exegetes of the era—several of whom, like the English commentator John Mayer, referenced Lapidé in a positive manner as an important interpretive resource. A striking point of comparison, indicating both common ground and a significant parting of the ways, appears in Lapidé's approach to an "ecclesial hermeneutic." Bergsma rightly points out that Lapidé's hermeneutic fits within the approach to Scripture outlined in the documents of Vatican II: Scripture is to be interpreted "within the living Tradition of the whole Church" with attention to the analogy of faith. He might well have cited the Profession of the Tridentine Faith (1564) that surely provides the context of Lapidé's method and remarks: there the "holy mother Church" is identified as having the authority to identify the sense of Scripture in accord with "the unanimous consent of the Fathers." The common ground with Reformed Protestant interpretation—something that Lapidé could not or would not recognize—is that the Reformed interpretation of Scripture was also assumed to be a churchly task, framed both by the analogy of Scripture and by the analogy of faith as identified in the ecumenical creeds and the church's own biblically based confessions. *Sola Scriptura* did not mean Scripture without the church. This Reformation-reading of Scripture, moreover, as Heiko Oberman pointed out, had significant medieval roots in what he called "Tradition I," namely, a reading of Scripture in the context of the tradition of doctrinal interpretation that nonetheless identified Scripture itself as the sole source of necessary truths concerning God. Lapidé's approach also had medieval roots, what Oberman identified as "Tradition II." There, tradition was identified as a co-equal norm standing beside the text of Scripture. In the Tridentine profession of faith, moreover, a third norm was identified, standing as a basis for authoritative interpretation of both Scripture and tradition, namely, the teaching office or *magisterium* of the church. The Reformed response to this approach was to identify clearly the distinction between Scripture and tradition, to retain the churchly *locus* of biblical interpretation, and to accord tradition a distinctly subordinate status. In the polemics of the era, Reformed writers both insisted on the catholicity of the Reformation and pointed out two things about the tradition: first that their doctrine could rest quite well on the best teachings of the church fathers and even of the early scholastics; and second (a point confirmed by modern patristic scholarship) that there was no absolute consensus of the fathers.

Common ground, polemical context, and difference in interpretation are also illustrated by Lapidé's exegesis of John 3:16: he disagrees with what he takes to be, in Bergsma's words, "an absolute and universal sense" of the implication of the text—which he interprets as if Protestants viewed the act of faith in Christ as the sole factor in salvation apart from the sacraments and the virtuous life. The

common ground, set aside by polemic over justification, can be found in the insistence among the Reformed that justification is only one element of the order of salvation and that the faith on the basis of which Christians are counted righteous is inseparable from the regeneration and sanctification that take place by the grace of God. The Reformed, moreover, understood the sacraments as means of grace, as Vermigli said, “visible words of God.” Sacraments and the redeemed life were not ignored, they were rather understood to belong to the work of salvation. The difference in interpretation between the Reformed and the Roman Catholics lies, ultimately, in the clear distinction made by the Reformed between justification and sanctification, a distinction not clearly made by Roman Catholics. Whereas there were significant differences between Roman Catholic and Reformed exegetes in their readings of key texts at the foundation of disputed doctrinal points (such as the Lord’s Supper, justification, the order of salvation, and the nature of the church), the exegesis of Scripture generally and, more specifically, of the vast number of texts not related to disputed doctrines, evidences continuities of method. These commonalities of pre-critical exegesis are illustrated in the contrasts that Bergsma makes between Lapidé’s work and the rising critical spirit evidenced in the thought of the rationalists, Descartes, Meyer, and Spinoza: Reformed exegetes expressed virtually the same concerns. The differences stand as reminders of separate paths taken by Reformed and Roman theologians of the early modern era, with both groups insisting on their catholicity.

Won Taek Lim’s study of John Flavel’s works surveys the written efforts of this important and neglected late seventeenth-century Puritan who suffered through the Great Ejection, with specific attention to Flavel’s approach to Scripture in the context of doctrinal formulation. Lim moves from an introduction to Flavel’s life and work, recounting the persecution he encountered when he refused to cease preaching after the Ejection and refused to separate from his congregation after the passage of the Five Mile Act in 1665. Lim also examines Flavel’s writings with emphasis on his practical piety, his contribution to devotional literature, and his address to the difficulties confronting Dissenters in his time. The essay then focuses on Flavel’s method of interpretation, which, first, examined the grammar and literal sense of a text; second, determined its scope and argument; third, then tested different readings of the text against these standards; and, finally, looked toward a consensus of interpretation among “learned” readers. This latter aspect of Flavel’s work, when examined, appears as a Protestant approach to tradition inasmuch as Flavel draws on the church fathers, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Martin Luther, as well as a large number of Reformed authors from the time of Calvin to his own. Flavel applied this method in both doctrinal and polemical works. Flavel’s arguments in favor of infant baptism against the writings of Philip Cary illustrate his use of the literal sense of the

text, whereas his approach to the scope of texts is more apparent in arguments against using 1 Peter 3:19 and 2 Peter 2:5 to argue the case for purgatory. Since this text deals with Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison and the question of His descent into hell, Lim's exposition of Flavel can be taken together with Shim's analysis of the seventeenth-century debate over the question. Lim shows that Flavel's patterns of doctrinal formulation draw on these interpretive patterns in order to develop theological statements characterized by basic definition and a series of churchly and personal "uses" of the doctrine.

J. Mark Beach's study of the Hobbes-Bramhall debate on the nature of freedom takes up one of the major questions of early modern theology and philosophy, noting specifically the difficulty of maintaining a traditional view of the question, invested as it was in a series of Scholastic distinctions, in the face of the materialist critique of a thinker like Thomas Hobbes. Beach reviews the context of the debate and the circumstances of its publication. He raises a series of questions concerning the meaning and implications of the debate, both for the significant changes then overtaking European philosophy as it increasingly shed its Peripatetic underpinnings in favor of variant forms of rationalism and for the relationship of Hobbes's determinism to the theological traditions of the era—notably, to the older Scholasticism and to the Reformed tradition. Bramhall, Hobbes's opponent, also is seen to have drawn on the Scholastic tradition, but considerably more fully than Hobbes, and to have argued the case for a more or less "Arminian" view of human freedom, with lines of argument from Molina and Suarez (as was also the case with Arminius). Bramhall, whose arguments Beach presents first, evidences a deep immersion in Scholastic distinctions concerning liberty and necessity, with an insistence that liberty be understood not only as spontaneity but also as freedom from necessity and the liberty of contradiction. He also disputes the argument found among some of the Reformed Scholastic writers that things can be free with respect to second causes and necessary with respect to the first cause. Hobbes, by contrast, defines freedom not as a liberty of contrariety but as the freedom to do as one wills: a person can, then, be free and nonetheless determined by "precedent necessary causes." For Hobbes, as opposed to Bramhall, necessitation is not compulsion. Hobbes also argues against the traditional intellectualist assumption that the last determination of the intellect is the cause or basis of choice: the determination of the intellect is itself caused. In his conclusions, Beach carefully traces out the relationship of Bramhall to the Arminian approach and Hobbes to the Reformed, concluding that Bramhall represented a Scholastic Arminian position but that Hobbes, given his materialism and his understanding of divine remoteness, does not fit easily into the Reformed mold.

Arie C. Leder's essay on Klinkenberg and Nahuys's "Bible Commentary for the Untutored" engages the little-explored topic of the Reformed biblical commentary in the eighteenth century—in this case, a vast, multivolume commentary designed for the instruction not of academics schooled in the biblical languages but of literate laity seeking instruction in Scripture. Klinkenberg's world of discourse (1780–1795) is far removed from the precritical world of Reformed and Puritan commentators of the previous century like Jean Diodati and Matthew Poole and, equally so, from the patterns of expression characteristic of the era of Protestant orthodoxy. His approach to the text registers as that of a child of the Enlightenment. Yet, as Leder shows, Klinkenberg and Nahuys were not deists. They wrote as doctors of theology and professors in the university but also as long-serving pastors of the church whose concern for biblical piety stood alongside of the more rationalistic, nondogmatic elements of their work. They evidence a preference for up-to-date technical tools and for the philological commentary in Michaelis's translation of the Old Testament over the more traditional Dutch *Statenvertaling* annotations; but, as Leder shows, typically they also offer a reading of the text that was conformable to orthodoxy broadly understood, without attention to the controversies that had plagued the Dutch church in the century and a half preceding, except to distance themselves from factional debate. Theirs was a "moderate Christianity" that avoided conflict and proposed a rational or reasonable (*redenlyken*) approach to biblical truth while at the same time preserving the traditional Protestant sense of the perfection of Scripture and emphasizing the importance of reading Scripture for instruction in life and for devotional purposes in the family. And for those latter purposes, Klinkenberg and Nahuys recommended the more traditional text of the *Statenvertaling*. Both the style and the content of the Klinkenberg-Nahuys commentary offer a significant window into the transformation of Reformed theology in the eighteenth century.

Looking back on our past with honesty is not always an easy matter, particularly when so much that passes for history is written with a view either to the justification or the condemnation of a particular cherished point of view. John Bolt's penetratingly honest essay concludes the volume with a new look into one of the more contentious moments in the history of the Christian Reformed Church, namely, the adoption of the "three points of common grace" by Synod of Kalamazoo in 1924. After presenting the rather blunt initial gambit that "Hoeksema was right," Bolt lays out both a significant case for the problematic nature of the "three points" on both confessional and ecclesiological grounds. Perhaps of most interest is Bolt's approach to the common ground as well as the difference between Hoeksema and Kuyper. Most striking here is Kuyper's powerful advocacy of particular grace and, more than that, Hoeksema's appeal to Kuyper in

his 1923 work *Sin and Grace*. Striking as well is Bolt's recognition that Kuyper's more famous work on common grace built on his essays about particular grace and the covenants—and that the language of “grace” in the earlier works references strictly the saving divine *genade*, while the language of “common grace” consciously references the looser term *gratie*, albeit not with an absolute consistency. Kuyper insisted that “common grace” (which, incidentally, could just as well be translated “common divine favor”) was of “a completely different nature” from saving grace. The first point pressed by the 1924 synod blurs Kuyper's distinction by placing the “general offer of the gospel” into the realm of “common grace” even as it, arguably, misuses the language of the Canons of Dort to make its point. Even more problematic was the synod's unwillingness to heed its own advisory committee's recommendation that no statement be made on the topic, given the lack of a Reformed consensus on common grace. It was also Hoeksema's opinion, Bolt reminds us, that the doctrine of common grace should not be elevated to the status of a dogma. Still, the synod refrained from issuing a condemnation of Hoeksema's position: it was Classis Grand Rapids East that used the synod's “three points” as a basis for taking disciplinary action against Hoeksema, without, as Bolt points out, having solid theological or confessional grounds for doing so.

In sum, the volume examines topics from across the chronological and international spectrum of the Reformed tradition. The authors of the essays, all colleagues or former students of Jim De Jong, have benefitted from his work and his support, whether as teacher, administrator, or researcher and student of the Reformed tradition. The essays are an expression of our respect and gratitude.