

The Class of 1652 of the Academia Voetiana

By Adriaan C. Neele

In the summer of 1647, a seventeenth-year young man from the German city Cologne entered the city of Utrecht of the Dutch Republic. Crippled on one foot (*voet* in Dutch), like the biblical *Mephibosheth*, as a result of a fall by a hasty baby nurse—the young man came for a consultation of a podiatrist but stayed studying under Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676). And so, the young man, Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706), commenced his study of theology at the Utrecht academy—the pinnacle of education in Reformed orthodoxy and piety in the Dutch Republic and beyond. Years later, he would become the successor of Voetius and was one of several of the class of 1652 taking prominent positions in the service of the society, church, and academy.

GISBERTUS VOETIUS AND UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

Although not the oldest university in the Low Countries, as that honor goes to Leiden University (1575), Utrecht seized the attention of many throughout Western Europe of the seventeenth century. In fact, the Geneva Academy, founded by John Calvin (1509–1564)—this sixteenth-century center of Reformed theology so reputable to many of the Reformed community throughout the continent and British Isles—was losing its luster, moving the teaching of Reformed thought and practice to seventeenth-century to Northern Europe, including the University of Heidelberg (1386), and the Dutch universities of Leiden, Franeker (1585), Groningen (1614), Harderwijk (1648) and Utrecht. The latter became internationally recognized through the faculties of theology—the “queen of sciences,” philosophy, law, and medicine.

The Utrecht academy (university) was founded in 1636, the same year as Harvard College in New England, with Voetius as Chancellor (*Rector Magnificus*). The inaugural address *Concerning Piety joined with Knowledge*

(*De Pietate cum Scientia conjugenda*) captured his vision for the university—knowledge or learning and piety or godliness can and should coincide for students and instructors, as well as religious practitioners and communities. Voetius was an extraordinarily gifted individual with a lasting influence. Besides a full teaching load, he was a pastor of the local congregation at Utrecht. In fact, “he preached eight times a week and worked tirelessly, bringing many Roman Catholics into the Reformed church. Apart from his ministerial duties, he was a scholar who habitually rose at four in the morning to read ancient literature, study philosophy, law, science, geography, theology and Semitic languages (Hebrew, Arabic, and Syrian). He learned to play the zither, the organ and the flute.”¹ Not only did he have the ability to teach poor children at an orphan home in the morning but he also held technical academic disputations at the university in the afternoon. He preached until the age of 84 and remained professor until his death in 1676, at age 87. He was attentive to the spiritual counseling needs of congregants, as well as combating the new philosophy of the era, the writings of René Descartes (1596–1650). As such Voetius is “known for his early opposition to Cartesian philosophy.”² As a practical theologian, Voetius

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1. Gideon Van der Watt, “Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676): Some perspectives on his influence on developments in the South African Dutch Reformed Church’s missiology and mission practice,” *In die Skriflig* 53:3 (2019): 2.

2. Aza Goudriaan, *Reformed Orthodoxy and Philosophy, 1625–1750. Gisbertus Voetius, Petrus van Mastricht, and Anthonius Driessen* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 9.

is remembered for his masterpiece on church polity (*Politica ecclesiastica*, 1666). In it, and arising from disputations, he addressed issues on marriage, the role of women (in the church), the role of the church in society or church *versus* the state. Moreover, in this work Voetius lays the ecclesiastical foundation for mission work (*De plantationes ecclesiarum*), addressing questions, still relevant for today, “Who sends? (*qui sint mittentes*), To who is one sent? (*ad quos mittendi*), Why is one sent? (*ad quid mittendi*), Who and what kind of people are sent? (*qui et quales mittendi*), and According to which method and in which way are people sent? (*qua via methodo et quo modo mittendi*).” In fact, Voetius was convinced that the internally divided Protestants could learn from the founding of Roman Catholic mission orders, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de propaganda fide*, 1622), and proposed the establishment of a Protestant College for the Propagation of Faith (*Collegia propagandae fidei*) for the training of missionaries—a proposal that came to fruition by Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639), the founder and sole rector of the *Seminarium Indicum* (1622–1632) at Leiden University. This university seminary played a pivotal part in training clergymen who were sent to the trade areas of the seventeenth-century Dutch East India Company. It was Voetius’s, however, who provided a systematic treatment of the theology of mission, the “the first to develop a comprehensive, contextual, and comparative Protestant missiology.”³ As such, Voetius is recognized as the first Protestant missiologist. In summary, Voetius’s books, treatises, textbooks, disputations, and devotional works were written for the church and academy, but also against the teachings of Roman Catholicism, Arminianism, and Cartesianism. These publications, moreover, attest to the overall and fourfold architecture of Reformed theology: biblical exegesis, doctrine, polemic, and practice. Exegetically, Scripture and its interpretation were foundational for doing theology. Doctrine and practice, for Voetius, arose from the reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation of Scripture resonating with the Medieval *LECTIO DIVINA* (*lectio, meditatio, oratio, and contemplatio*).

Voetius’s vision for theological education, furthermore, resulted in the publication *Exercitia et bibliotheca studiosi theologiae* (1644), a comprehensive 700–page

3. Boston University, School of Theology, History of Missiology. Accessed: <http://www.bu.edu/missiology/missionary-biography/t-u-v/voetius-gisbertus-gijsbert-voet-1589-1676/> accessed August 12, 2019.

4. See Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 113–115.

introduction to theological literature and a four-year program of theology. Scripture should be studied in its original languages, reading of theology, with attention to practice, should include the *Institutes of Christian Religion* by Calvin, works of English Puritans, such as Perkins, Sibbes, and Reynolds, as well as representatives of the *Nadere Reformatie*, Taffin, Teelinck, and Udemans. Polemic theology should consider the teachings of Islam.⁴ Its theme is one with his overall vision: theology must be known and practiced. In summary, students received scholastic methodological schooling, including the knowledge of the medieval scholastic definitions and distinctions, but also training in piety and spiritual practices.

Besides Voetius, Carolus de Maets (1597–1651) and Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617–1666) were teaching a broad scope of theology. De Maets and Hoornbeeck taught respectively New Testament and Old Testament, though the latter published various polemical (*Summa Controversiarum Religionis*) and theological works, as well. His *Theologia Practica* (1663–66) (Practical Theology) and other works have been long forgotten. Hoornbeeck may have stood in the shadow of his colleague Voetius, but where the latter was more a generalist concerning missions, Hoornbeeck’s academic view was worked out for theory and practice of missions as found in *The Conversion of Indians and Heathens* (*De conversione Indorum et gentilium*, 1669). Furthermore, together with Voetius, Hoornbeeck wrote *Disputaty van geestelike verlatigen*—arising from academic teaching, a pastoral work on spiritual desertion. Both Voetius’s and Hoornbeeck’s emphasis on *theologia practica* would contribute to the student’s theological formation, receiving a thorough education. To strengthen the Reformed position the university attempted in 1651 to call Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661), who, however, remained in Scotland, and recommended Andreas Essenius (1618–1677), minister at Utrecht.

The vision of Reformed theology and education, however, was not shared by all members of the faculty. The medical professor, Henricus Regius (1589–1679) was promoting Cartesianism—a form of rationalism so opposed Voetius. The latter understood the new philosophy as opposing the common accepted philosophy, Aristotelianism, whereby students who were taught in Cartesianism would not be able to understand the definitions and distinction of scholasticism, and last but not least the consequences of Descartes teaching would be a danger for Reformed orthodoxy theology. Another colleague at the medical faculty, Ysbrand van Diemerbroeck (1609–1674) was more Remonstrant

(Arminian) than Reformed. Voetius, who had attended as the youngest delegate the Synod of Dort (1618–19), disagreed with Diemerbroeck's theological views but contend with his "true Christian religion."⁵ Finally, while most of the faculty of theology taught classical Reformed covenant theology, Frans Burman (1628–1679) advocated a Cocceian understanding of doctrines of the covenant. Cocceius's understanding of the fourth commandment, forgiveness of sin, and doctrine of the covenant—all different from the accepted Reformed theology of the era resonated with Burman. Cocceius suggested the non-binding ceremonial nature of the fourth commandment for New Testament Christians, resulting in a Sabbath-controversy in the Dutch Republic, whereby the followers of Voetius held a stricter Sunday observance than the Cocceians. Furthermore, for the Voetian theologians, Cocceius's distinction between the forgiveness of sin for the Old Testament saints and New Testament Christians held the implication of an incomplete salvation for the believers under the Old covenant. Finally, Cocceius held a doctrine of abrogations, i.e. the covenant of works was progressively abrogated throughout redemptive history together with a proportional increase of the covenant of grace. This eschatological oriented view of the history of the work of redemption included a postmillennial position of Revelation 20, which view was shared by some English Puritans (for example, Thomas Brooks, Matthew Henry), and Dutch Reformed (for example, á Brakel). Despite the controversies within the church (Cocceians) and outside the church (Cartesianism), the (theological) leadership of Voetius in the first forty (40) years of the university, known in its time as *Academia Voetiana*, is unmistakably present. The faculty was broad in its theological and philosophical orientation, and less coherently Reformed than Voetius might have wished for, but its publication output in the year 1636–1676 was more than 400 works combined. The reputation of the university was internationally recognized and attracted many students from home and abroad. Voetius's influence is nothing less than extraordinary and is renowned through the students of the university, the *Nadere Reformatie* (Dutch Further Reformation), and Petrus van Mastricht, Voetius's successor.

STUDENTS

Voetius's vision of education unfolded in his inaugural address (1636), was intended for all studies and students—the diverse incoming and international class of 1652 no exception. The student matriculation registers

of 1647, the *Album studiosorum Academiae rheno-traiectinae*, lists no less than one-hundred and twenty-five (125) students. Sixty-five percent originated from the Dutch Republic, including the provinces of Utrecht, Zeeland, and North-Holland, but other students came from Brandenburg (Duisburg, Cologne, Berlin, Cleve, Oldenburg, Lübeck), Britain (London, York), Denmark, East-Friesland, Hungary, Palatinate (Heidelberg), Russia (Moscow), Sweden, and Transylvania. The arrival of the seventeen year old young man from the German city Cologne, Mastricht, then, was but one of many international students.

Some of the incoming students began their law studies at Utrecht but continued at Leiden University—more prominent for jurisprudence. Others studied medicine or philosophy, while many came to study at the faculty of theology. From the Dutch Republic, Simon Simonides (1629–1675), for example, became a representative of the *Nadere Reformatie* emphasizing in his preaching, pastorate, and publications a continuing reformation of the individual, family, and community. His works on the sacraments were continually reprinted, with *The Right Use of the Lord Holy Supper* (*Het Rechte gebruyck van des Heeren h. Avondmaal*, 1670) going through 125 editions. Others were less known and often remain forgotten, such as, Rochaus Bruynvisch, who defended upon the completion of his theological studies a disputation entitled *De satisfactione Christi* (Concerning Christ's satisfaction), and accepted a call to Tholen (Zeeland). Bartholomaeus Donius became a minister at Bleiswijk and gained short-term fame by publishing an account in the form of a sermon, *Ryper Kleppende Brandt-Klok* (De Rijp's bell which rings when a fire) about a great fire in 1655 at the small town of De Rijp—his place of birth. Others became politicians, such as the aristocrat Scato Gockinga (1624–1683) of Groningen, who studied at Utrecht and returned to serve as a legislator and became a member of the States-General of the Dutch Republic. As such he was instrumental in various peace missions, including the negotiations with the English that led to the departure of the French occupation at Utrecht in 1672. Students like Gerard Mulock became a leading *schout* (law enforcer and prosecutor) at Woerden, and Simon Gabbema (1628–1688) studied theology but became the first and foremost historian of the province of Friesland. The students from the province of Zeeland, Vincentus Ketelaer (1627–1679) and Isaac

5. Volume 1 of G. W. Kernkamp, *De Utrechtsche Academie 1636–1815*, Volume 1, De Utrechtsche Universiteit 1636–1936 (Utrecht: N.V. A. Oosthoek's uitgevers Maatschappij, 1936), 244.

Hoornbeeck (1629–1702), became leading citizens and principals of the Latin schools in their province at Zierkzee and Middelburg, respectively.

Some students from abroad stayed in the Dutch Republic, such as Johannes Thilenus (†1692). Born and raised in London, he studied at Utrecht and became a pastor at Middelburg. His intensive contact with the English Puritans in that city, and in England, resulted in a friendship with the nonconformist John Quick (1636–1706) of the English church at Middelburg. In Thilenus Quick found “a loving and generous spirit, far different from that of the generality of the Nether dutch Ministers, who were of a more narrow and meaner spirit, more closed and reserved in conversation. ‘How could this be,’ Quick would ask, and Thilenus would always reply, ‘My deare Brother, I am no Dutchman, I am an Englishman borne.’”⁶ These students, as said, studied at Utrecht and remained in the Dutch Republic. The Dutch student Jacobus Clavius, on the other hand, left the university in 1652, setting sail to Batavia (Jakarta, Indonesia) under the disguise of a trader for the Dutch East Indies Company, and was instrumental as one of the revisors of the Portuguese New Testament.

Among International students such as the Hungarian students, Stephanus Kaposi became a leading minister of the Hungarian Reformed church, was captured because of his faith, but escaped prison; Michael Tophaeus and Colomannus Justus, the latter who also studied at the Dutch universities of Hardewijk and Franeker, returned to their home country, serving as superintendent and pastor, respectively. The Swede Andreas Krok (1622–83), moreover, became a prominent *landdrost*, a civil commissioner in his home country, while the Englishmen Alexius Vodka (1625–1669) and Christopher Tearne (1620–1673) became a leading practicing medical doctor in York, and physician of the famous St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, London, respectively.

In summary, the class of 1652 was international, diverse, gifted, serving the church, academy, and society throughout the Dutch Republic and Western Europe, having been shaped by Voetius’s vision of education of learning and piety.

NADERE REFORMATIE

The *Nadere Reformatie* was a reforming movement within the Dutch Reformed Church in the seventeenth

6. Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 194.

7. *Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie* XIX (1995): 108

and eighteenth centuries. In response “to the weakening of a lack of living faith,” this movement “put the personal experience of faith and godliness central, from which substantive and procedural reformation programs were established and petitioned by the ecclesiastical and political authorities, and social organizations, and/or in connection therewith, pursued a further reform of church, society and state in word and deed” (*Documentatieblad*, 108).⁷ This reforming movement was not only positively received by Voetius, but its ideas and ideals were also advanced by him *via* the Utrecht University.

Voetius, and particular his students, such as, Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635–1711), Jacobus Koelman (1631–1695), Melchior Leydecker (1642–1721), Simon Oomius (1630–1706), Guiljemus Saldenus (1627–1694), Simon Simonides (1629–1676), and Herman Witsius (1636–1708), among many others, promoted the ideals of the movement in church and society. Voetius’s influence is noticeable in the works of these students, such as Brakel’s *Redelijke Godsdienst* (*The Christian Reasonable Service*, 1700), a practical systematic theology written for the congregation, Koelman’s *De Plichten der Ouders* (*The Duties of Parents*), Oomius’s on old age (*Cierlyke Kroon*, 1707; Honorable Crown), small (bible study) groups (*Ecclesiola, dat is, kleyne kerck*, 1661; Little church), and suicide (*Bescherming des Leven tegen Sels-moorderye*, 1660; Protection of Life against Suicide), and Saldenus on the Lord’s Supper (*De kracht des avontmaels tot troost en heyligmaking van Gods kinderen*, 1664; The strength of the Lord’s Supper for comfort and sanctification of God’s children), are but some of the many works. Valuing and balancing Reformed orthodoxy and piety, the *Nadere Reformatie*, then, resonated with and appropriated English Puritanism.

In summary, Voetius’s vision of learning and piety, was articulated by the students of Utrecht University in society both internationally and domestically through the *Nadere Reformatie*. Academically, however, one student would embody this vision prominently, who worked out the four-fold approach to Reformed theology, attempted to bridge the Voetian-Cocceian debate, was deeply concerned of the rise of Cartesianism, was internationally oriented and succeeded Voetius at Utrecht University: the Hebraist, theologian, and philosopher, Petrus van Mastricht.

PETRUS VAN MASTRICHT (1630–1706) AT UTRECHT
Mastricht was born into a Dutch Reformed refugee congregation at Cologne in 1630. Having Hoornbeeck as his catechist teacher, Mastricht studied at *Schola*

Duisburgensis before coming to Utrecht.⁸ At the academy of Voetius, Mastricht studied didactic-dogmatic theology, which included the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* (1625), and the scholastic *disputationes* of Voetius’s Saturday morning classes; exegesis of Scripture, including attention to the rabbinic interpretations; and both Voetius’s and Hoornbeek’s emphasis on the *theologia practica*; all contributing to Mastricht’s theological formation. In his final year of the five-year study, Mastricht studied at the University of Leiden and traveled to England “for language and practical or Christian moral study.”⁹ The tempting thought that Mastricht did meet John Owen (1616–1683) has been suggested but without support. Upon completion of his theological studies at Utrecht in 1652, Mastricht was called by the congregation of Xanten, near Cologne, as a *vicarus* or assistant pastor—a call he accepted in early 1653. While Mastricht kept his ecclesiastical membership at the congregation of Cologne, not much is known of his work in Xanten. The congregation was served before Mastricht’s arrival by the influential minister at the Brandenburg Court, Johann Kunsius, from 1646–52, and belonged, along with other Reformed churches of the Lower Rhine, such as Duisburg, to the predominantly Cocceian classis of Cleve. The consistory of Cologne, however, recommended the congregation of Mülheim am Rhein in 1655 to call Mastricht as “*sacrosanctæ theologiae candidatus van seer goede gaven en stichtelijke van leven sijnde*” (candidate of sacred theology with many good gifts and piety of life)—a call he did not accept. The reason may have been the care of his mother, who passed away the following year, as well as his working on *Vindicae Veritatis et Autoritatis Sacrae Scripturae adversus Dissertationes Chr. Wittichii* (Vindication of the Truth and Authority of Sacred Scripture against the Dissertations of Chr. Wittich)—Mastricht’s first work of philosophy. Christopher Wittich (1625–1687), teaching at the University of Duisburg, appreciated Descartes’s philosophical thought and argued specifically that the scriptural passages Voetians referred to as incompatible with Cartesianism should not be construed literally—a point Mastricht strongly opposed.

MASTRICHT AT GLÜCKSTADT

Around 1662 Mastricht was called and accepted a full-time pastorate of the Reformed church of Glückstadt near the Danish border. The church building had been a gift of the Danish king Christian IV (†1648) and was attended in the summer months by the Queen of

Denmark, Charlotte Amalie, during Mastricht’s pastorate. Here he published the *Theologiæ didactico-elenchtico-practicæ prodromus*, 1666 (Introduction to didactical-elenctical-practical theology)—his first work of theology. This work, written upon the advice of Voetius and Hoornbeek, dealt with the creation of humanity, humility, and arrogance with respect to God, and the walk with God. A closer look at the *Prodromus* reveals that the pastor of Glückstadt begins each chapter with the exegesis of a biblical text in the original language, from which he infers doctrinal, elenctic, and practical considerations—Mastricht’s trademark for all subsequent theological publications. The time at Glückstadt (“Happy city”), however, was not the happiest of Mastricht’s life. He complained to the church about the inadequate remuneration, and lack of time for academic work, writing for the “Nazarenes,” the students of divinity. He reminded them, furthermore, that he was forced to spend the winter of 1664–65 in the Dutch United Provinces due to the cold of the dilapidated parsonage or manse. Upon return from Amsterdam Mastricht received a call by the Royal House of Denmark to serve the Queen’s church at Copenhagen, a call he declined in favor of a university appointment at Frankfurt an der Oder.

MASTRICHT AT FRANKFURT AN DER ODER

With the change from Lutheranism to Reformed orthodoxy in 1613 by the House of Brandenburg, the University of Frankfurt an der Oder, about 50 miles east of Berlin, became known as the “easternmost bastion of Calvinism” and a “second Heidelberg.”¹⁰ In 1667, Elector Fredrick Wilhelm offered Mastricht a professorate in Hebrew and practical theology at the university. His inaugural address was on the necessity of the *praxis* and theory for the theologian and for theology (*Perpetua Praxeos cum Theoria in Theologicis Pariter Et Theologicis Symbibasis*),¹¹ a theme

8. Adriaan C. Neele, “Life and Work of Petrus van Mastricht,” in Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-practical Theology*, vol. 1. (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), xxv–lxiv.

9. Hendricus Pontanus, *Laudatio Funeris In excessum Doctissimi Et Sanctissimi Senis, Petri van Mastrigt, S. S. Theol. Doctoris & Professoris: Quam jussu amplissimi Senatus Academici D. XXIV. Februarii / postridie sepulturae dixit Henricus Pontanus* (Rotterdam: van Veen, 1706), 4.

10. Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 129; G. Mühlpfordt, “Die Oder-Universität 1506–1811,” in *Die Oder Universität Frankfurt.*, ed. M. Knäbke (Weimar: H. Böhlhaus, 1983), 19.

11. Petrus van Mastricht. *Perpetua praxeos cum Theoria in Theologicis* (Frankfurt an der Oder, 1667).

that was familiar to him already during his study at Utrecht. Mastricht argued for the importance of the *praxis* of the theologian and of theology directed to the glory of God—an importance that ought to show itself in the teaching of the faculty of theology, in the lives of the theological students and the ministers, and in the church as a sacrosanct community. “Let us,” the newly installed professor reminded the elector and his audience, “advance the combining of practice with theory” (Mastricht, 10–12). The Hebrew faculty comprised a leading European center in Hebraic studies, having a renowned press for oriental and Hebrew language publications, including the Babylonian Talmud, which contributed to Mastricht’s standing as a Christian Hebraist. Moreover, during his professorate at Frankfurt an der Oder, Mastricht published the *Methodus Concionandi* (1668), a preaching method for ministerial students and his first work of homiletics. In it he stressed the need for a fourfold approach to the composition of a sermon which was important also for preaching—exegesis, doctrine, elenctic (but only when the biblical text gives a reason), and practice. His work in Frankfurt an der Oder did not stop him from obtaining a degree in theology and philosophy at the University of Duisburg in 1669. Soon thereafter, he was called to the University of Duisburg to serve at the faculty of philosophy.

MASTRICHT AT DUISBURG

Mastricht inaugurated his professorate with an address on the obligation of the academic oath (*De Religione Jurisjurandi Academici*), a subject that he most likely chose under the influence of his younger brother, Gerhardus van Mastricht (1639–172), who was at that time *Rector Magnificus* at the university. Mastricht’s work proceeded in the context of university, church, theology, and philosophy at Duisburg. He served on the faculty of theology, alongside Christoph F. Crell (1626–1700) and Johann H. Huguenpoth (1634–1675). The faculty favored biblical exegesis over dogmatic theology. While Huguenpoth advocated Cocceian covenant theology, Crell was known to be against any form of ecclesiastical separatism. He opposed the influence both of Jean de Labadie (1610–1674) and of Mastricht’s former Duisburg schoolmate, Theodore Untereyck, who served a congregation at Mühlheim am Ruhr, who both promoted conventicles. In fact, the churches of the entire Lower Rhine area leaned toward the *praxis der Gottseligkeit* (the practice of godliness). Mastricht’s position toward the Labadists, however, was far less oppositional than Crell’s. When in

1671 the Labadist movement made inroads in the Reformed congregations of the Lower Rhine area, Pierre Yvon (1646–1707), the emerging leader of the “separating Reformed Pietists,” met with Voetius at Utrecht, with the House of Brandenburg at Duisburg, with Untereyck at Mühlheim am Ruhr, and also with Mastricht at Cologne. With the latter, Yvon discussed the Christian doctrines and his view of the kingdom of God and led Mastricht to write an extensive preface in his publication *Concerning Saving Faith (De Fide Salvifica)*, entitled *De Membris Ecclesiae Visibilis* (Concerning Members of the Visible Church). Despite his disagreement with the Labadists, Mastricht discussed the central question—church or separation?—in an irenic way, placing the objective character of Reformed doctrine over against the subjectivism and separatism of this movement. In contrast to Mastricht’s irenic position toward the Labadists was his fierce opposition to Cartesianism. For Mastricht, there was sufficient reason to address this new philosophy at the provincial synod of Cleve, and to publish the *Novitatum Cartesianarum Gangraena* (New Cancer of Cartesianism), his *magnum opus* of philosophy. Mastricht asserted that *primum Cartesianismi fundamentum*, Descartes’s principle of “universal doubt,” was catastrophic for Reformed theology, undermining the place of philosophy as a handmaiden to theology, and in particular *theoretico-practica* theology. If reason and philosophy become the source of absolute certainty instead of Scripture, Mastricht argued, an author of such writings was “*atheus quidem sed Cartesianus*” (an atheist, certainly, but a Cartesian). The *Gangraena* became the most influential of all late seventeenth-century academic assaults on Cartesianism and was lauded by the Lutheran faculties at Uppsala, Sweden, and Jena, Germany, by the Jesuits in Rome, Italy, and the Reformed throughout the Dutch Republic. In the meantime, Mastricht’s publications had reached the Dutch Republic. Although the theological faculty at Franeker nominated him for a professor, Herman Witsius (1636–1708) was chosen instead. However, the year 1677 became another turning point in Mastricht’s life.

MASTRICHT AT UTRECHT, ONCE MORE

That year he accepted a call from his *alma mater* to succeed none other than Voetius. Mastricht accepted the offer of one thousand guilders per annum in June and was furnished by the States-General (*Staten Generaal*) with a passport to travel with furniture and books to Utrecht. On September 7, 1677, Mastricht delivered an inaugural oration, *De Academicæ Ultrajectinae Voto*

Symbolico: Sol Justitiae Illustra Nos (Concerning the Motto of the Utrecht Academy: Sun of Righteousness Shine Upon Us) and became a professor of practical theology—Utrecht’s only professor of the time with that title. Immediately upon arrival, Mastricht continued the work on the doctrine of God that he had begun at Duisburg. His student, Theodorus Groen, defended the disputation *De Omnisufficiencia Dei* (Concerning the Divine omnisufficiency), and Baldiunus Drywegen and Jacobus de Clyver, both from Zeeland, defended the disputation *De Essentia, Nominibus et Attributis Dei in genere* (Concerning the Essence, Names and Attributes of God in general), a theme that Mastricht pursued until the spring of 1678. That same year, the faculty was expanded with the appointment of Melchior Leydecker (1642–1721), and the consistory (session) of the Reformed church at Utrecht added to its number an elder with the approval to preach, Mastricht. In the years following, Mastricht held various disputations on the assurance of salvation, the nature of theology, and Roman Catholic teachings, some which were attended by (foreign) students from other schools as well as ministers, such as the defense of James Hog of Carnock (1658–1734), an important figure during the Scottish Marrow Controversy, who in the presence of other Scottish students defended on March 20, 1680, the disputation about the assurance of salvation. In attendance were Thomas Hog, Jacob Kirton, Donald Cargill, and John Dickson, who all studied at Leiden, and the ministers Jacobus Borstius (1612–1680) of Rotterdam and Jacobus Koelman (1632–1695). While Mastricht continued his teaching in systematic theology, moral theology, and church history, Herman Witsius of the University of Franeker succeeded Franz Burman (†November 12, 1679) in 1680.

In addition to his academic work, Mastricht served in various administrative capacities at the university from 1681 onward, including as *Rector magnificus*, like Voetius before him. A day after his installation as rector, he welcomed Prince Ludwig of Brandenburg on behalf of the city of Utrecht. The Brandenburg connection cemented at Frankfurt an der Oder and Duisburg, continued. More importantly, however, was the publication of the first four books of the *Theoretico-practica theologia* (*Theoretical-practical theology, TPT*), a culminating work that had begun at Glückstadt and continued with several disputations held at Duisburg and Utrecht. The work was introduced with a disputation on homiletics, *De Optima Concionandi Methodo* (Concerning the Best Method of Preaching), a slightly modified version of the *Methodus Concionandi*. Mastricht argued that the *TPT* was to be used in the preparation of preaching.

Well-timed or not with the arrival of Prince Ludwig, Mastricht’s work of theology was dedicated to Ludwig’s father, Frederick Wilhelm. In the year of his rectorate, he held disputations on the covenant of grace, dealt with ecclesiastical matters regarding the value of the *colloquia* and *testimonia* of the students at the Utrecht academy, and conferred a doctorate *honoris causa* on two representatives of the *Nadere Reformatie*, Franciscus Ridderus (1620–83) and Saldenus. Mastricht worked in the international world of Utrecht’s university.

His colleague Hebraist Johannes van Leusden (1624–99) published a definitive edition of the *Synopsis Criticorum* by the Englishman and Scripture commentator, Matthew Poole (1622–1679), while Mastricht and Van Leusden corresponded with Increase Mather (1639–1723) concerning the Indian language as a form of Hebrew, which resulted in a gift from Harvard College to the Utrecht academy, of the *Biblia Americana* by John Elliot (c.1604–1690), the missionary to the Indians. Furthermore, New England’s theology was not unknown at Utrecht, as Mastricht wrote an approbation, an ecclesiastical approval of the Dutch edition of Thomas Shepard’s (1605–1649) *The Sound Believer* (*De Gezonde Geloovige*, 1685). Such approval was also offered to Mastricht’s former fellow student at Duisburg, Untereijck. When the latter published his major work, *Der N arrische Atheist* (*The Foolish Atheist* 1689), it received commendations from the Cocceians on the faculties of Duisburg, Marburg, and Franeker University. The work was translated into Dutch, requiring an approbation by “those who know the High German language”: and so it was Mastricht who wrote a preface in *De dwaase athei st, ontdekt en van sijn dwaasheyd overtuygd* (*The foolish atheist discovered and persuaded of his foolishness*, 1690), written by the Bremen pastor and important catechists of Cocceius’s federal theology.

The international reputation of Utrecht University continued, with students coming from abroad, such as the later Pietistic Court Preacher in 1685, Conrad Br oske (1660–1713), and in 1686, Colonel John Erskine, the grandfather of John Erskine D.D., Jonathan Edwards’s primary correspondent in Scotland, traveled to Utrecht and heard Mastricht there. Colonel Erskine studied law at the Utrecht Academy in 1686–1687, but also attended theology lectures by Mastricht, visiting him several times with fellow Scottish students. He notes, for example, in his diary on June 7, 1686, “I was a while with Professor van Mastricht: he was very kind, and I do take him to have true religion.” Those who visited Mastricht, such as the students of Scotland or travelers of Germany, were at times honored to have him write

in their *album amicorum*, in which Maſtricht, for example, cites from a sermon of Bernard's on the Song of Solomon:

There are those who want knowledge for the sole purpose of knowing: and that is shameful curiosity;

There are those who seek knowledge in order to sell them the knowledge of his own: and that is shameful profit;

There are those who seek knowledge in order to be known: and that is shameful vanity;

There are also those who seek knowledge in order to edify: and that is charity;

But there are those who seek knowledge in order to be edified: and that is prudence.

Maſtricht's expertise in Cartesian philosophy was called upon by the Amſterdam classis of the Reformed Church in connection with the miniſter and philosopher-theologian, Balthasar Bekker (1634–98), who questioned the existence of Satan, ſpirits, magic, and witchcraft in *The World Bewitched (Betoverde Weereld, 1691)*, with Cartesian philosophical observations and scriptural objections. Maſtricht supplied the Amſterdam classis with his *Contra Beckerum* (1692), in which he asserted that Bekker was placing philosophy above Scripture and that theology was being surrendered to the axiom "philosophy is the infallible interpreter of Scripture": and with that, the deposition of Bekker from the miniſtry came into effect.

In his final years Maſtricht was limited to teaching from home, due to physical weakness, but continued to hold public lectures only on Monday and Tuesday afternoons. He explored in diſputations the theme of ſpiritual desertion (*De Geestelijke Verlating*), like his teachers before him, and returned as Hebraiſt to an exposition of Isaiah 53. To complete the final edition of the TPT (1698/99), he wrote a *Theologia Moralis* and *Theologia Asceticae*. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) would write later,

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

The times were changing, however. The *Academia*

Voetiana and the *Nadere Reformatie* had begun losing their luster. The controversial appointment of a Cartesian professor of theology, Herman A. Röell (1653–1718), led the city council to request Maſtricht, known for his anti-Cartesian views, to live in "peace and friendship."

After a prolific life of teaching, preaching and publication, Maſtricht fell off a kitchen step in the Spring of 1706—the crippled foot was wounded, and he died at the age of 76. The funeral oration was given by Pontanus and was attended by Maſtricht's fellow professors and ministers and the Utrecht magistrate. His brother Gerhardus, with his son Petrus, who studied at the University of Frankfurt an der Oder, was also present. Pontanus described the deceased professor as weak in health, while serving the academy and church with all his strength, underscored by Maſtricht's maxim taken from 2 Corinthians 12:10, ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ τότε δυνατός εἰμι (for *when I am weak, then I am strong*). Maſtricht was buried on February 24 in the Catherine church, the resting place of his teacher Gisbertus Voetius, his colleague and friend Gerhardus de Vries, and his acquaintance Jacobus Koelman. Maſtricht, being unmarried, left in his oleographic will a considerable estate for the study of Reformed theology by students at Utrecht, which served its purpose for nearly 250 years, stating: "Desire and obliged in particular to the study of practical theology to become competent to serve God in his church." It took the university and city council of Utrecht nine years to fill the vacancy left by Maſtricht.

CONCLUSION

Gisbertus Voetius's vision of education, building a leading university, implementing a program of theological education and reform (*Nadere Reformatie*), had an extraordinary result exemplified by Utrecht's students throughout Europe serving the church, academy, and society. Maſtricht continued that vision for theology and philosophy in a profound way, as a Hebraiſt, anti-Cartesian philosopher, and theologian with attention to theory and practice. Forgotten by many for a long time, interest in Maſtricht has recently revived through the English translation and publication of his *magnum opus* of theology, the *Theoretical-practical theology*. Through *it he, although he died, yet speaks*" (Hebrews 11:4). ■