Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the *systema* of Reformed Orthodoxy

"As to the books you speak of: Mastricht is sometimes in one volume, a very thick, large quarto; sometimes in two quarto volumes. I believe it could not be had new under eight or ten pounds. Turretin is in three volumes in quarto, and would probably be about the same price. They are both excellent. Turretin is on polemical divinity; on the Five Points, and all other controversial points; and is much larger in these than Mastricht; and is better for one that desires only to be thoroughly versed in controversies. But take Mastricht for divinity in general, doctrine, practice, and controversy; or as an universal system of divinity and it is much better than Turretin or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible, in my opinion." [Edwards to the Rev. Joseph Bellamy, Northampton, January 15, 1746/7]
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the systema of Reformed Orthodoxy:
  - Peter van Mastricht, *Theoretica-Practica Theologia* (Utrecht, 1699)
  - Post-reformation Reformed era
    - Early ca. 1560 – 1625
    - High ca. 1625 – 1700(*)
    - Late ca. 1700– 1750
  - Systematic Theology
    - Prolegomena [*prefatory remarks; methodological inquiries*]
    - 6 loci of (Reformed) theology
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the systema of Reformed Orthodoxy:

1. Theology
2. Scripture
3. Distribution of Theology

Mastricht, Theoretica-Practica Theologia
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

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#### Élénchs


#### De Necessitate Scriptura

- Necessity
- Authority
- Canon
- Apocrypha
- Purity
- Authenticity
- Perfection
- Perspicuity
- ...

Turretin, *Institutio Theologicæ Elenctica*
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the systema of Reformed Orthodoxy:

  Scripture’s necessity reminds us that we need God’s word to tell us how to live and how to be saved (1 Cor. 2:6-13). General revelation is not adequate. Personal experience and human reason cannot show us the gospel. We need God’s gracious self-disclosure if we are to worship rightly, believe in Christ, and live for ever in heaven.

  Scripture’s sufficiency reminds us that God’s word tells us all we need to know for life and godliness in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3:14-17). We don’t need new revelations, dreams or vision, a council of prophets or a quorum of apostles to present to us new information about Jesus Christ and the gospel. Scripture doesn’t tell us everything we might want to know. But it tells us everything we truly need to know.

  Scripture’s clarity (or perspicuity) reminds us that the saving message of God’s redemption can be understood by all who care to hear it (Deut. 30:11-14). This does not mean every passage in the Bible is obvious or that we should shun proper training in all the biblical disciplines. But when it comes to the central tenets of Scripture, we can discern God’s word for ourselves, apart from official church interpretation. There is a meaning in the text and God knows how to communicate it to us.

  Scripture’s authority remind us that God’s word stands above all earthly powers (Psalm 138:2). On every matter in which the Bible means to speak, the last word goes to Scripture, not to councils or to catechisms or to science or to human experience, but to the word of God. We all have someone or something that we turn to as the arbiter of truth claims. For Christians, in the final analysis, this authority must be, and can only be, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Scripture is needed, is enough, is understandable, and is final.
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the *systema* of Reformed Orthodoxy - theology that mediated the Medieval understanding of Scripture:

- Doctrine of Scripture not a separate question or article

1. The Nature and Extent of Sacred Doctrine
2. The Existence of God
3. On the Simplicity of God
4. The Perfection of God
5. Of Goodness in General
6. The Goodness of God
7. The Infinity of God
8. The Existence of God in Things
9. The Immutability of God
10. The Eternity of God
11. The Unity of God
12. How God Is Known by Us

*Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica* (Benziger Bros., 1947)
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the *systema* of Reformed Orthodoxy - theology that mediated the Medieval understanding of Scripture:
  - *Sacra pagina* to *Sacra theologia*
  - *Doctrina theologia*: discussion of Scripture (Alexander Hales, d. 1245)
  - Authority, Necessity, and Sufficiency (Duns Scotus d. 1308)
  - Scripture understood as
    - foundation (*fundamentum*) of theology
    - *Principium Cognoscendi Theologiae* (*Scripture was the principium of truth, and the norm of doctrine*).
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

• Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the *systema* of Reformed Orthodoxy - theology that mediated the Medieval understanding of Scripture, and appropriated Protestant Reformers thought:

  • Council of Trent: Scripture and Tradition vs. *De Scripturae Sanctae Authoritate* (Bullinger e.o)

  • Confessional codification (Gallican Confession, 1559, Belgic Confession, 1561, Second Helvetic Confession, 1566)
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the *systema* of Reformed Orthodoxy:

  - Prolegomena
    - Rise of Cartesianism - role of philosophy; role of reason
      - Mastricht, *Vindicæ Veritatis Et Authoritatis Sacrae Scripturae in rebus Philosophicis Adversus Dissertationes D. Christophori Wittichii* (Utrecht, 1655)
    - Roman Catholic polemic - Status of authority of Scripture and Tradition
**Locus Scriptura** in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the *systema* of Reformed Orthodoxy:

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Attributes of Scripture

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Treatises / Disputations on Scripture

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Prolegomena discussion on Scripture
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the systema of Late Reformed Orthodoxy:

- Johann Friedrich Stapfer (1708-1775)
  - Grundlegung zur wahren Religion (Zurich, 1746-53) 12 vols.
  - Institutiones theologiae polemicae universiae (Zurich, 1756-57) 4 vols.
Locus Scriptura in the Prolegomena of Protestant Theology

- Edwards understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is formed, in part, by his acquaintance of the systema of Early-High- Late Reformed Orthodoxy:

  - **Early** - Necessity of Scripture for right religion and true theology + revelation / religion
  - **High** - Necessitas Scriptura first in order locus Scriptura + defining Scriptura sacra: Scripture is revealed Word
  - **Late** - Rise of rationalism: Stapfer et al. acknowledged three principia of theology - principium essendi (God), principium cognoscendi (Scripture), principium cognoscendi alterum (Revelation)