Preface

The history of the Sabbath in Reformed Orthodoxy has remained a puzzle to scholars. While the English Sabbath has attracted a fair amount of scholarly attention, continental views have been unduly neglected. This book does not intend to exhaust the discussion, but it does provide one piece of the puzzle—hence the title “a continental view” rather than “the continental view.” While Cocceius is by no means representative of every theologian on the European continent, he did nevertheless articulate a very different theology of the Sabbath within the Reformed Orthodox tradition from that of the English Puritans. What set Cocceius’s theology of the Sabbath apart was its relationship to his federal theology, the most distinctive feature of his thought. In fact, the chief argument of this book is that Cocceius’s theology of the Sabbath serves as a window into his federal theology.

Cocceius heavily engaged in the Leiden Sabbath Controversies from 1655 to 1659, which facilitated the fracture of the Reformed Dutch Republic into two socio-political blocs—Cocceians and Voetians. I shed light on this neglected yet significant period of Cocceius’s theological career by looking at his writings produced in relationship to it. I examine first the evolution of the problem of the Sabbath in Cocceius’s theological tradition—Reformed Orthodoxy—in Chapters 2–4 and second the development of Cocceius’s doctrine of the Sabbath, structured around the Leiden Sabbath Controversies, in Chapters 5–8.

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