ALL THAT IS IN GOD

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Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism

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For my father,

Richard Dolezal,
the first to teach me the fear of the Lord and
the importance of sound doctrine

All that is in him is himself.
—JOHN OWEN

Whatever is in God is the divine essence.
—THOMAS AQUINAS

There is nothing accidental in God.
—AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

Contents

Foreword

The statement that theology is at a crossroads could be applied to almost any moment in the history of Christian thought. To make that point as a general characterization of the present moment is, therefore, not to say anything new or even revolutionary. What matters, in each historical moment, is the road taken—and the road not taken. In the present moment, evangelical and Reformed theology has before it several different roads, one of which is the extension of those theological approaches that have served Christianity well during its many centuries, while others propose to take Christian doctrine down a series of specious alternative routes that purport to recast various doctrines in ways that seem more appealing to a largely rootless community of postmodern seekers-after-meaning.

Traditional understandings of God, both of the divine essence and attributes and of the Trinity, have been caricatured for the sake of replacing them with notions of a changing, temporal deity whose oneness is merely social. This social trinitarianism, often with tendencies toward subordinationism, has become a convenient tool kit for resolving issues in human society, and even the concept of perichoresis or coinherence (which was developed for the sake of explaining the inward threeness of the ultimate, spiritual, noncomposite, and unitary divine being) has been misappropriated into the mundane order by way of a confused Christian ethics. God is argued to take on new temporal attributes, and the Creator-creature relationship is described in panentheistic terms.

James Dolezal's *All That Is in God* offers an articulate analysis and critique of this series of problematic but fairly widely accepted

developments in contemporary evangelical and Reformed theology. Dolezal's critiques are right on target, fair, remarkably readable, and measured. Even more importantly, his presentation of the doctrinal alternatives that belong to traditional Christian orthodoxy convincingly demonstrates the superiority of classical theism over the recently proposed alternatives.

Dolezal's criticisms of "mutualist" or "temporalist" understandings of God that have invaded evangelical thought provide a salutary warning against the aberrant argumentation of various recent writers who have taken incarnation as the basis of a claim that God takes on new attributes over the course of time, as if the union of the temporal human nature with the eternal divine nature imported temporality into God. Once incarnation is taken as a model for divine self-alteration, the notion of divine temporality is retrojected onto creation and becomes a basis for the claim that God adds new attributes to His nature in order to interact with creatures—in the case of one writer's mutualist speculations, the act of creation indicates a new "covenantal character"; namely, a series of new "properties" in God.

As Dolezal points out, the underlying problem of such argumentation is not only its rather unorthodox treatment of the incarnation and creation but its assumption that "a temporal effect can only proceed from a temporal act," even if the active agent is God (p. 96). The claim that God changes—taking on new attributes and changing in some respect in relation to creation or to human events without, however, being altered essentially—only makes sense when a series of traditionally orthodox assumptions concerning the doctrine of God are either removed from the picture or rendered unintelligible. The notion that God can be ontologically and ethically immutable at the same time that He has a "relational mutability" assumes—quite contrary to traditional orthodoxy—that changes in external relations imply a kind of mutability. As Dolezal points out, there is a clear antecedent to this kind of argumentation in the nineteenth-century "mediating theology" of Isaak Dorner, and that such argumentation yields divine mutability in the sense that God "begins to be what He was not by acquisition of real, new relations in Himself" as well as the conclusions that God is passible, composed of parts, finite, and temporally bound (p. 28).

The problem of composition in God carries over into what Dolezal identifies as "evangelical theistic mutualist" approaches to the Trinity. He points out that without a traditional doctrine of divine simplicity, the three divine persons become understood as "three discrete beings" (p. 105). Particularly telling is Dolezal's deflation of social trinitarianism, with its reduction of the unity of the Godhead to a social relationality, according to which "the Trinity is understood to be one thing, even if it is a complex thing consisting of persons, essences, and relations" (p. 126). This construct, which attempts to avoid the overt tritheism of Moltmann by claiming a generic divine essence, is "not," as Dolezal points out, "at all well suited to the maintenance of monotheism" (p. 127). (It is, by the way, a truism of classical monotheism that "God" is not a kind of being: whereas there is a genus "human," there is no genus "God.") The further social trinitarian argument that this social unity is based on the classic notion of perichoresis or mutual indwelling does not suffice to resolve the problem inasmuch as perichoresis is designed to explain the way in which the three persons participate in the one essence—not the way in which three distinct essences are socially interrelated.

At the heart of the modern aberrations, whether the invention of new divine attributes, the incipient tritheism of the social trinitarians, the notion of a somewhat mutable deity altered by relationality, or other variants on these contemporary themes is a radical misconstrual, whether intentional or unintentional, knowing or unknowing, of several of the traditional divine attributes, notably simplicity, immutability, and eternity, done in the name of divine relationality. What Dolezal provides is both a salutary critique and a clear, constructive argument for the superiority of classical Christian theism or, as I would prefer to call it, traditional Christian orthodoxy. He demonstrates that a traditional understanding of God included sound approaches to the doctrines of divine essence, attributes, and Trinity that accounted ably for the relationship between God and His creatures without compromising eternity, simplicity, and immutability—indeed, by offering a nuanced perspective on how these attributes actually frame and reinforce the doctrine of God. This is an important book. It deserves close attention from teachers, pastors,

and students—indeed, from anyone confronted by the confused mass of misleading theologies put forth today under the guise of new and relevant reconstructions of the evangelical and Reformed faith.

Richard A. Muller

Preface

In this volume, I aim to acquaint readers with some of the fundamental claims of classical Christian theism and to commend these claims as nothing less than the truth about God as He has disclosed Himself in creation and in Holy Scripture. But this is also a polemical work. I endeavor to challenge certain doctrinal errors about God that have taken hold within the world of evangelical theology and even within much of modern Calvinism. Many of the views I critique in this volume are views I once held.

The chief problem I address in this work is the abandonment of God's simplicity and of the infinite pure actuality of His being. I suspect that many Christians make this mistake unwittingly because they have never considered what is involved in those traditional doctrines. This was certainly true for me. Others, however, are knowingly hostile to the traditional doctrines. It is not uncommon to read modern theologians, even many Calvinists, who disparage these older teachings as the unfortunate residue of Greek philosophy. In their estimation, the sooner we dispense with such vain speculations and get back to our Bibles, the better.

But having discarded doctrines such as divine simplicity and pure actuality, we find that we can no longer read the Bible the way most Christians historically read it. In particular, when the Scripture portrays God as changing in relation to His creatures, this would no longer be understood as an accommodation of His revelation to us but rather as an accommodation of His being. Any newness in God's works in the created order is thought to signal a movement of some sort in His very being, just as some change takes place in humans

when we undertake new actions. This seems to make God genuinely relational and personal in a give-and-take way. Divine simplicity and pure actuality are no longer employed in ruling out such mutualistic understandings of the God-world relation. In order not to entirely lose the doctrines articulated in the ecumenical creeds and Reformed confessions, many have suggested that these changes are somehow situated in God alongside His unchanging essence. This approach is thought to preserve the best of both the classical and mutualistic perspectives: God as being and God as becoming.

But can such an arrangement really work? I am convinced it cannot. And the reason is that, because He is simple and purely actual, God is not capable of receiving new determinations or features of being—not even if He sovereignly chooses to. Any change in God, even a nonessential one, would introduce new being or actuality into Him. The Christian who believes that God experiences a change of any sort is no longer able to say with the older theologians, "All that is in God is God." He instead conceives that God's being is a mixture of divinity and the new qualities of being by which His divinity has been augmented. From the viewpoint of classical Christian orthodoxy, such outcomes are unacceptable, for they undermine the very absoluteness of God's life and existence and so, by extension, the believer's utter reliance upon God.

Perhaps it is fitting to say a word or two about sources and method. Our Reformed orthodox forefathers freely and skillfully deployed patristic and medieval Catholic sources in their defense of the classical doctrine of God. In keeping with their approach, I have sought to utilize helpful authors, both old and new, Catholic and Protestant, insofar as these uphold biblical and classical Christian orthodoxy on the points under consideration. This no more signals an endorsement of Roman Catholicism than a Roman Catholic's agreement with a Protestant author on a given point indicates an endorsement of Protestantism.

As for method, it is possible that the discussion in this volume will be more philosophical in character than that to which many readers are accustomed. In some respects, this is unavoidable, as the matters being considered have historically been treated with the assistance of philosophical concepts. These concepts allow us to speak more precisely

than would otherwise be possible. As with any discipline, the proper terminology must be learned if one is to enter more fully into the discussions concerning that field of knowledge. An attempt is made to clarify difficult or technical terminology, and I trust that even those unfamiliar with such vocabulary will nevertheless be able to follow the main threads of argumentation.

Additionally, the method of this work is that of contemplative theology. The contemplative approach to theology has been somewhat obscured in recent history by the rise of biblical theology as a specialized method of theological inquiry. These two approaches to Christian doctrine need not be in conflict. I readily affirm that biblical theology has been a profound catalyst for improving and enriching our understanding of the progress of redemption. But it seems to me that biblical theology, with its unique focus on historical development and progress, is not best suited for the study of theology proper. The reason for this is because God is not a historical individual, and neither does His intrinsic activity undergo development or change. This places God beyond the proper focus of biblical theology. God is not changed by what He does—though what He does certainly brings about progress in history, creatures, and salvation. In an attempt to understand God as one of the historical characters in the narrative of redemption, many have fallen into the trap of historicizing His very life and existence. Suffice it to say, while biblical theology tells us many true things about God, its proper focus on development and progress is not methodologically suitable to the study of the One who does not change.

The contemplative approach to theology proper treats God as an ahistorical being and seeks to discover the timeless truths about Him by thinking through the implications and entailments of those things He has revealed to us in creation and Scripture (and this certainly includes those things revealed about God in the unfolding course of redemptive history). It proceeds in a logical way from major premises through minor premises to conclusions. Sometimes these conclusions involve denials, such as the disavowal of body, parts, and passions in God. At other times the conclusions are more positive, such as affirming God's omnipotence, pure actuality, self-subsistence,

or absoluteness. This volume is full of both affirmations and denials arrived at via contemplation.

In setting forth this volume, it is my hope and prayer that others may be helped to perceive the harmful theological implications of reconceiving God as one who derives aspects of His life or being from His creatures. It is not my intent to question the sincere love for God exhibited by those I critique; neither is it to impugn their persons. It is rather to identify a pattern of unsound words that has regrettably emerged and to aid readers in returning to the older paths of theological orthodoxy, the paths in which God is more truly glorified as God.

Acknowledgments

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Many people have aided me in thinking though the issues discussed in this book. Paul Helm supplied thoughtful feedback on drafts of each chapter. His insight and friendship have been an immense blessing to me. Jonathan Master and Richard Dolezal also provided helpful evaluations of the original lecture notes that eventually evolved into this monograph. Deryck Barson gave useful suggestions for my chapter on the Trinity, and Robert LaRocca has been my constant dialogue partner on the topics discussed in this book for more than seven years. Scott Swain's enthusiasm for this work and his willingness to use an earlier draft of it with his students has been an encouragement to me. Jay Collier and Ryan Hurd of Reformation Heritage Books provided excellent editorial guidance and recommendations.

Most of all, I would like to thank my wife Courtney and our children, Judah, Havah, and Eden, for the many sacrifices they made to enable me to undertake this study and the preparation of this volume. Their love is one of God's greatest benedictions to me.

CHAPTER 1

Models of Theism

Two distinctly different models of Christian theism are presently vying for the heart and mind of evangelical Christianity. The approach of classical Christian theism is what one discovers in older Protestant confessions such as the Belgic Confession, Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Westminster Confession of Faith, and Second London Confession of Faith. This approach is basically in keeping with the view of God as found in the works of patristic and medieval Christian theologians such as Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. It is marked by a strong commitment to the doctrines of divine aseity, immutability, impassibility, simplicity, eternity, and the substantial unity of the divine persons. The underlying and inviolable conviction is that God does not derive any aspect of His being from outside Himself and is not in any way caused to be.

In contrast to this older view of a radically independent, simple, and purely actual God stands the newer approach of theistic mutualism,[1] called by some "theistic personalism."[2] In an effort to portray God as

1. "Mutualism," as I am using the term, denotes a symbiotic relationship in which both parties derive something from each other. In such a relation, it is requisite that each party be capable of being ontologically moved or acted upon and thus determined by the other. This does not necessarily require parity between the parties involved. Accordingly, a mutualistic relation could obtain even if only one of the parties involved were the architect and ultimate regulator of the relation.

2. The label "theistic personalism" appears to be the coinage of Brian Davies. See *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2–16. I have chosen to use the term "mutualism" instead of "personalism" simply for the sake of clarity. Davies's objection to theistic personalism is at its heart an objection to the mutualism that seems to be entailed in all univocist understandings

more relatable, theistic mutualists insist that God is involved in a genuine give-and-take relationship with His creatures. Theistic mutualists may disagree among themselves on precisely how much control God has over the give-and-take process, but all agree that God is somehow involved in such an exchange. Edward Feser explains that the proponent of this newer theistic outlook ordinarily "objects to the notion of God as immutable, impassible, and eternal—finding it too cold and otherworldly, and incompatible with a literal reading of various biblical passages—and typically has philosophical objections to the notion of divine simplicity."[3] Feser identifies modern philosophers such as Alvin Plantinga and Richard Swinburne as advocates of this approach. Theistic mutualism is committed to univocal thinking and speaking with regard to God and the world and thus conceives God as interacting with the world in some way like humans do, even if on a much grander scale.[4]

The orbit of theistic mutualism extends well beyond the realm of philosophy. It also appears in the writings of several evangelical theologians, perhaps most conspicuously in those of the open theist

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of the term "person." David Bentley Hart calls the mutualist conception of God "monopolytheism" since, as he explains,

> it seems to involve a view of God not conspicuously different from the polytheistic picture of the gods as merely very powerful discrete entities who possess a variety of distinct attributes that lesser entities also possess, if in smaller measure; it differs from polytheism…solely in that it posits the existence of only one such being. It is a way of thinking that suggests that God, since he is only a particular instantiation of various concepts and properties, is logically dependent on some more comprehensive reality embracing both him and other beings.

The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013), 127–28. Hart rightly characterizes, in my opinion, what is inevitably involved in all univocist views of God.

3. Edward Feser, "Classical Theism," *Edward Feser* (blog), September 30, 2010, http://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2010/09/classical-theism.html.

4. Univocist approaches to thinking and speaking about God necessarily conceive of God's being as existing (in some respect) within the same order of being as that of creatures and thus as existentially correlative to them. A God who can be moved or affected by His creatures, even if only in accord with His choice to be so moved or affected, is such a God.

persuasion.[5] Less obvious perhaps is how deeply theistic mutualism has taken root in the thinking of many who adhere to the older Protestant confessions. Theologians within the various confessional branches of evangelicalism—usually Calvinists—have been among the most vociferous opponents of openness theology, in particular with regard to the question of divine exhaustive foreknowledge.[6] Nevertheless, many of them share with open and process theists the theistic mutualist belief that God's being is such that He is capable of being moved by His creatures. There are undoubtedly many reasons for this adherence to theistic mutualism among modern evangelical Calvinists, and it is not my purpose in this volume to investigate each of these reasons. Suffice it to say that confessional Calvinists who uphold any aspect of theistic mutualism are faced with the peculiar and perhaps insurmountable challenge of reconciling their mutualist understanding of the God-world relation with the language and intent of the classical Reformed creeds.

It should be noted that there are both hard and soft versions of theistic mutualism. The harder sort regards God as a person who allows other beings to function as first causes or absolute originators of actions, events, or objects and who Himself stands as an onlooker within creation, susceptible to an increase in knowledge. Hard theistic mutualism also tends to regard God as needing the world in some respect; thus, He is compelled to create and sustain it. It is this harder theistic mutualism that is espoused by open theists and process theists. Soft theistic mutualism, in contrast, tends to hold that God does not create the world by dint of absolute necessity; neither does He need the world in any significant sense. Moreover, many soft theistic mutualists do not believe that God is intellectually open or in process of development. Indeed, many who subscribe to the softer

5. See Clark Pinnock et al., *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1994). See also Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

6. See, for example, Bruce A. Ware, "Defining Evangelicalism's Boundaries Theologically: Is Open Theism Evangelical?", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45 (June 2002): 193–212.

variety of mutualism have stood firmly against intellectual and volitional "becoming" in God. They maintain that God neither learns nor depends on creation for His knowledge and that His will is not changed by the actions of creatures. Nevertheless, they do allow for a measure of ontological becoming and process in God. This is to the extent that they—along with the harder theistic mutualists—insist that God undergoes changes in relation and in those alleged intellectual and emotive states of His that are thought to correlate to His changing relations with creatures. This ontological openness to being changed by creatures, whether initiated by God or by creatures themselves, is the common denominator in all forms of theistic mutualism. Theistic mutualists may disagree among themselves on precisely how much process and development to allow in God or even over what the ultimate source or cause of such development might be. But all hold to a divine ontology that allows for God to acquire and shed actuality of being.

At first glance, the moniker "theistic mutualism" (or "theistic personalism") seems harmless enough. Perhaps it is even attractive insofar as orthodox Christians believe in a God who subsists as three persons in relation and who lovingly calls us into the joy of personal fellowship with Him.[7] No doubt patristic, medieval, Reformation, and Puritan theologians held forth the glorious prospect of the sinner's reconciliation to God and the benediction of unbroken fellowship with Him in glory. Theistic mutualists recognize that classical Christian theists believe such things. They are not convinced, however, that the traditional emphasis upon a wholly unchanging, simple, and purely actual God is sufficient to deliver such blessings to us. They think that if God cannot change or be affected by the world in any way, then our relationship to Him seems overly one-sided and thus rather impersonal and nondynamic. Furthermore, the Bible depicts God as ensconced within our history as one whose relationship with humans plays out along the same temporal lines as relationships between human persons—loving and merciful at one moment (Ex. 3:7–9), grieved and angry at another (Ex. 32:9–10; Ezek. 16:42–43), turning away from

7. See John 3:16; 17:3, 21; and 1 John 1:3: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

man and returning to man in mercy and reconciliation (Ex. 32:14; Ps. 80:19; Mal. 3:7). These are the components that make personal relationships truly personal, are they not? From the viewpoint of theistic mutualism, such dynamic reciprocity and mutuality seem to call for an overhaul of the well-intentioned, if misguided, classical emphasis upon a God who cannot change in any way whatsoever. Intended to replace the older strong account of an absolutely unchangeable God, the newer doctrine makes space for mutual give-and-take with God in an interpersonal way. The nineteenth-century German Lutheran theologian Isaak August Dorner expresses this revisionist outlook with pointed clarity:

> We will have to teach the following: that not only does humanity change in its relation to God, but the living relations of God to humanity…also undergo changes, as both are manifest in the world. And if we establish this point, then the concept of God is not merely the wooden concept of the highest being, but the vital absolute personality that stands in a living relation of mercy and love to the life of the worlds and its changing needs and conditions. Without reciprocity between God and world such vital relations would have no authentic reality.[8]

Dorner is particularly insistent that for God to stand in an authentic, loving relation to the world, He must be open to human action and influence upon Him. He continues, "It is also to be said further that the relation of love between God and man must be a *reciprocal relation*, as this is required by the nature of love. Consequently, it is to be taught that God *himself*, who on the side of generating power remains eternally the sole original principle, enters the realm of the ethical or love in a reciprocal relation; *yes, God enters into a relation of mutual and reciprocal influence*."[9]

But should the newer ideal of a mutually interactive, give-and-take relationship with God be allowed to eclipse or adjust the claims of classical Christian theism? The concern from the classical perspective

8. Isaak August Dorner, *Divine Immutability: A Critical Reconsideration*, trans. Robert R. Williams and Claude Welch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 110.

9. Dorner, *Divine Immutability*, 148.

is that theistic mutualists have made human personal relations, which are irreducibly correlative, the paradigm for understanding all meaningful relations. To the extent that theistic mutualists believe God to exist in such a relationship with the world, they appear to undermine His perfection and fullness of being. In short, God has been reconceived as deriving some aspects of His being in correlation with the world, and this can be nothing less than a depredation of His fullness of life and existential absoluteness.

Some adherents to the classical view regard the mutualist account of the God-world relation as advancing an idolatrous form of theism insomuch as it locates the being of God inescapably within the order of finite beings, even if it still affirms that He is the greatest being in that order. The Anglican theologian E. L. Mascall argues that a God who derives any actuality of His being from His creatures—which the God of theistic mutualism necessarily does—could not possibly be the first cause of all creation. This is because He would "provide a foundation neither for himself nor for anything else." Mascall concludes, "Unless we are prepared to accept the God of classical theism, we may as well be content to do without a God at all."[10] Catholic theologian Herbert McCabe notifies us that "there has been a deplorable and idolatrous tendency on the part of some Christians to diminish God. In order that God may *stand in relationship* with his creatures, he is made one of them, a member of the universe, subject to change and even disappointment and suffering."[11] He deems this mutualist understanding to be a "false and idolatrous picture of God" because it unavoidably considers Him to be "an inhabitant of the universe, existing alongside his creatures."[12] More recently, the Eastern Orthodox scholar David Bentley Hart has insisted that any proposed alternative to the God of classical theism "can never be more than an idol: a god, but not God; a *theos*, but not *ho Theos*; a being, not Being in its transcendent

10. E. L. Mascall, *He Who Is: A Study in Traditional Theism* (London: Longmans, Green, 1943), 96.

11. Herbert McCabe, *God Matters* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987), 18. Emphasis original.

12. McCabe, *God Matters*, 11.

fullness."[13] The reason for these strong objections to mutualist understandings of God is that such a God is inevitably mutable and finite and as such is unworthy of worship. This unhappy verdict is not meant to attack the intentions of theistic mutualists. Many seem to have been unwittingly caught up into the mutualistic way of thinking about God, wholly unaware of its idolatrous implications.

In the chapters that follow, I aim to spotlight the conflict between the classical and mutualist perspectives on God by examining some of the significant doctrinal flashpoints—most notably, divine immutability, simplicity, eternity, and substantial unity. Not all of the theistic mutualists with whom I engage are equally at odds with these various tenets of classical orthodoxy, and indeed, many believe themselves to be in basic agreement with these dogmas. As I hope to make clear, this agreement is often more imagined than real and frequently follows from a misunderstanding of the genuine meaning and implications of the classical doctrines. It is not uncommon nowadays, for instance, to encounter claims that God is both immutable and mutable, both impassible and passible, both simple and complex, both timeless and temporal, and so forth. This newfound proclivity for a dualistic both/and approach to theism is particularly fashionable among modern Calvinist theologians who for various reasons dislike the strictures of classical theism but are unwilling to embrace the more radical position of open theism or some other form of process theism. Arguably, however, such theologians have already embraced a rudimentary form of process theism to the extent that they allow some measure of ontological becoming and dependency in God.

Part of the reason many evangelical theistic mutualists do not recognize that they have already adopted a form of ontological becoming in God is because they have lost sight of what "being" means. They mistakenly assume that "being" indicates merely "nature" or "essence." Rather, it denotes any actuality or "is-ness" whatsoever, that is, any participation in the act of existing (in *esse*, or "to be").[14] If God should not

13. Hart, *Experience of God*, 250.

14. Etienne Gilson contrasts the essentialist understanding of being with its true existential meaning. Philosophy and theology continue to be plagued by ignoring the

be all that He is in and of Himself infinitely and eternally, then He would no longer be pure and simple being but rather becoming, and thus dependent on that which supplies new actuality to Him.

Such a conception of God must not go unchallenged if we are to be true to Holy Scripture and to the faithful explication of Scripture's meaning as it has been handed down to us in the various conciliar statements and Reformed confessions. It is the desire to rehabilitate a robust understanding of God's ontological absoluteness that motivates this volume. For Calvinists in particular, this work is twofold. Negatively, it requires that we identify and abandon those newer doctrinal constructions whereby God's being has been relativized. Positively, it requires the rehabilitation of the catholic orthodoxy of the older Reformed confessions and theologians, particularly with respect to the understanding of God's actuality. The chapters that follow by no means approach the magnitude of this task, but are offered simply as a beginning to that much-needed work.

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deeper existential sense of "being." See *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952). See also Joseph Owens, *An Interpretation of Existence* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce, 1968). For a comprehensive study of being as it would have been understood by Thomas Aquinas and many of the Protestant scholastics who followed him, see John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000).