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GOD WITHOUT MEASURE:
WORKING PAPERS IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Volume I

GOD AND THE WORKS OF GOD

T&T CLARK THEOLOGY

JOHN WEBSTER

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Working Papers in Christian Theology

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Volume I: God and the Works of God

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Introduction

Chapter 1

Omnia . . . pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei. On the Matter of Christian Theology

The essays in this volume are working papers which explore a range of topics in Christian doctrine: God, creation, providence, Christ, salvation and the church. They have a common conception of the matter of Christian theology, and of the way in which that matter governs the order of a presentation of Christian truth, as well as the placement and proportion of its constituent elements.

I

Christian theology is a work of regenerate intelligence, awakened and illuminated by divine instruction to consider a twofold object. This object is, first, God in himself in the unsurpassable perfection of his inner being and work as Father, Son and Spirit and in his outer operations, and, second and by derivation, all other things relative to him. Christian divinity is characterized both by the scope of its matter – it aims at a comprehensive treatment of God and creatures – and by the material order of that treatment, in which theology proper precedes and governs economy. All things have their origin in a single transcendent animating source; a system of theology is so to be arranged that the source, the process of derivation and the derivatives may in due order become objects of contemplative and practical attention.

This conception of theology's matter and arrangement may be amplified from three post-Reformation treatments of Christian doctrine. The first is a compact late sixteenth-century account of theological prolegomena, Franciscus Junius's *De theologia vera* (1594). Towards the end of the work, Junius proposes that coming to understand the nature of theology requires reflection upon its causes, both 'the internal and essential causes of theology'[1] which establish its essence, and its external causes – the efficient cause by which it is generated and the final cause

1. F. Junius, *A Treatise on True Theology* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), p. 177.

by which it is directed to its end. The idiom of causality serves to indicate that the object and ends of theological intelligence are not established or moved by unformed creaturely intellect; they are, rather, first presented to theological intelligence *ab extra*, so that theological intelligence is not simply spontaneous but is a human work within the domain of creatureliness, grace and divine teaching.

This reference to the objective is deepened in Junius's definition of the material cause of theology. 'The material cause of this theology consists of divine matters: of course God, and whatsoever topics have been arranged with respect to him, as was proper for instruction to be given concerning the nature, works, and law of God himself.'[2] The 'divine things' which are the given matter of theology, that is, are of two sorts: 'We want divine things . . . to be understood as those things that are really and truly divine. Or, if they pertain to the nature of the created world, they nevertheless are in some fashion ordered with respect to God.'[3] Put differently, theology's matter is either '"God" in its direct case', or that which 'is an oblique case, "of God", "for God", "toward God", or "by God"'.[4] And so – the echo of Aquinas is unmistakeable – 'all things . . . are treated in this sacred theology with respect to God, as though of the proper object which is discussed in theology. Because either it is God himself that is the subject, or things that are ordered with respect to God, as to the universal principle and end of those things.'[5] In sum: theology is a distinct and unified science by virtue of its single complex object: God and all things studied under the formality of being relative to God.

The way in which such a definition of the matter of theology shapes the topics of Christian doctrine and the order in which they are presented may be observed in more detail in a text from just over a quarter century after Junius, the *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, based on a cycle of public disputations held at the Leiden faculty from 1620 to 1624.[6] The sixth disputation is an extended presentation of the content of the Christian doctrine of God and its place in relation to the other elements of Christian doctrine.

An opening move in the disputation sets its direction. God is the principal topic of Christian doctrine from which what is said about all other matters is drawn. In *sacrosancta theologia*, 'God is treated not only as the principle upon which it is constructed and the source of our knowledge of it but also as the subject and the foremost primary locus of theology from which all others flow forth, by which they are held together, and to which they should be directed.'[7] Teaching about God is not one of a series of theological topics, but *primus ac primarius theologiae . . . locus a qui reliqui fluunt*.

2. Junius, *A Treatise on True Theology*, p. 177.
3. Junius, *A Treatise on True Theology*, p. 178.
4. Junius, *A Treatise on True Theology*, p. 178.
5. Junius, *A Treatise on True Theology*, p. 178.
6. *Synopsis purioris theologiae/Synopsis of a purer theology*, vol. 1: Disputations 1–23, D. te Velde, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
7. *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, Disputation 6, §1 (p. 151).

As it proceeds to set out the content of the Christian doctrine of God, the disputation arranges the material in what may initially appear an unsatisfactory sequence: 'the revelation of the one essence by means of various attributes; the enumeration of the divine persons; and the revelation of his deeds.'[8] The sequence may appear unsatisfactory because it seems more natural to accord priority to God's triune identity manifest in his works in time, and to answer the question *quid sit Deus?* only after fashioning an answer to the question *quis sit Deus?* by attending to God's enactment of his life in relation to creatures. For the *Synopsis*, by contrast, the most natural course of Christian teaching is from immanent to transitive: the nature of God determined from his names and attributes; the divine persons and their relations; the outer works of God. In arranging the material in this way, there is, of course, no suggestion of the material priority of *de Deo uno* over *de Deo trino*: that the simple divine essence and the divine triunity are equiprimordial is beyond question. Further, that the subordination of economy to theology proper entails no inattention to God's transitive works or to created things can readily be seen from the way in which the disputation's treatment of God *in se* moves seamlessly from a presentation of the divine essence and attributes (§§20–30) and God's internal acts (life, intellect and will, §§31–5) to talk of God's 'emanating potency, that is, the power that concerns and is practiced upon things that are outside of him'.[9] This, in turn, is followed by material on the divine dominion (§38) and God's 'good affections' (§39) such as gentleness, generosity and mercy (§40) which demonstrate his 'ardent will towards us, and its power and effect in creatures'.[10] Because – and only because – these divine affections, powers and effects are inseparable from the divine essence, they *establish* the economy. The irreversible succession of topics – from God's simplicity to his creative, providential, reconciling and perfecting acts – preserves both the deduced or non-primitive character of theology's subordinate *res* and its proper dignity, by referring it to theology's first object.

Much the same may be observed in Johann Friedrich König's *Theologia positiva acroamatica* (1664), a much-used Lutheran textbook of dogmatics.[11] As with the *Synopsis*, the material moves from the divine quiddity to the divine energies in order to indicate the scope and sequence of Christian teaching. A treatment of the divine essence is accomplished by surveying God's attributes in two parts: consideration of the attributes *absolute et in sese*, and consideration of them *respectum ad operationem*. Only after contemplation of God's absolute attributes (perfection, majesty, unity, simplicity) is theology able to come to an understanding of those attributes '*quae ad ἐνέργειαν referuntur*',[12] such as the divine intellect and

8. *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, Disputation 6, §18 (p. 161).

9. *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, Disputation 6, §36 (p. 175).

10. *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, Disputation 6, §39 (p. 177).

11. J. F. König, *Theologia positiva acroamatica*, A. Stegmann, ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

12. König, *Theologia positiva acroamatica* I §§ 56–74 (pp. 54–8).

the divine will, along with God's love, grace, mercy, patience, holiness and justice. Reflection on the divine properties is led to a double knowledge: of God's wholly realized life, and of the *principium agendi* of his operations. Yet even here König pauses: he does not proceed directly to God's outer works, but turns first to description of God relatively considered (that is, the divine processions, §§75–92) and only then moves to discuss the divine operations, schematized as, first, *ad intra* acts and, second and finally, the *opera ad extra* (§§142–57).

Why insert all these layers between God in himself and God's temporal acts? In order to characterize the agent of these acts, and so to come to understand and give due weight to both the acts themselves and their objects. God's outer works are most fully understood as loving and purposive when set against the background of his utter sufficiency – against the fact that no external operation or relation can constitute or augment his life, which is already infinitely replete. Once this is grasped, the nature of creaturely being begins to disclose itself as pure benefit, intelligible only as God is known and loved in his inherent completeness.

The essays which follow are worked examples of this conception of theology, two further extensions of which, one material and one formal, are to be noted.

The material extension is that, like faith, theology is oriented chiefly to invisible things, 'things that are unseen' (2 Cor. 4.18). '[T]he first principles of this science', Aquinas notes, are 'the articles of faith, and faith is about God';[13] and faith is 'the conviction of things not seen' (Heb. 11.1). Commenting on that verse from Hebrews, John Owen notes that one of the chief differentiating features of the exercise of Christian faith and intellect is an inclination towards *invisibilia*. 'The peculiar and specifical nature of faith whereby it is differenced from all other powers, acts and graces of the mind, lies in this, that it makes a life on things invisible. It is not only conversant about them, but mixeth itself with them, making them the spiritual nourishment of the soul . . . The glory of our religion is that it depends on, and is resolved into, invisible things. They are far more excellent and glorious than anything that sense can behold or reason discover'.[14]

If this is so, then the matter of revelation (*revelata*) is not simply identical with the form or medium of revelation (*modus revelationis*). Revelation is not an historical quantity *tout court*, even – especially – in the hypostatic union and the Son's temporal exercise of his offices. There is, of course, historical form which theological reflection may not pass over; but that form has not only an unforgettable density but also a finality, and therefore an instrumental character, such that spiritual intelligence may not terminate there. Revelation beckons theological intelligence to consider the cause of revelation, and to receive it as an embassy of that which cannot be resolved into or exhausted by historical manifestation. Each act and word of the incarnate one has force only because he has come down.

13. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Thomas Gilby et al, ed. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964–81; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Ia.1.7 resp.

14. J. Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* [1684], in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 24 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1862), p. 11.

Theology is a science of history only insofar as it views history under the double determination of creation and redemption. The long process of naturalization of the various elements of the Christian religion – ecclesial, scriptural, moral – encourages us to envisage church, Scripture and holiness as only historical magnitudes, and to envisage theological inquiry as an instance of religious sociology or literary and historical studies. But, by virtue of its *terminus a quo* and its *terminus ad quem*, the object of theology belongs to a different ontological order: the order of baptism and regeneration, instituted by Christ at the Father's behest and temporally actual by the Spirit's awakening and animating power.

The second extension concerns theological systematization. Arranging a system of Christian doctrine is a complex art, requiring well-formed judgements about the content and proportions of each element of the system, as well as attention to their sequence and relations when gathered together as a whole. Though the essays are only fragments, they share a conception of the body of theology in which dogmatics considers God absolutely and relatively before moving to treat all the other elements. This formal disposition of doctrines corresponds to the material order in the expository sequence, and also, by reproducing in intelligence the movement of creatures from God to perfection, participates in that same movement.

This arrangement is, in part, intended to ensure comprehensiveness and due proportion, and to avoid the elision of one or other element. It also reflects the placement of the various elements in relation to one another. Relations of derivation are of especial material significance: ecclesiology takes its rise in teaching about divine election, Christ and the Spirit, for example. But as well as setting the elements in the correct causal sequence, a scripturally-sensitive system of Christian teaching will need to be alert to the coherence of the elements, as well as to the ways in which they interlace, exposition of one sometimes anticipating what comes later or recalling what has already been said. Further, some doctrines (the doctrines of the Trinity and creation, for example) not only occupy their proper place but are also distributed throughout the system, forming other doctrines by which they are in turn illuminated.

II

Such an ordering of theology and economy, absolute and relative, does not command wide assent. This may be because the habit of thought which it instantiates – reduction of elements to their founding principles, *scire per causas* – is judged to be void of explanatory power, since causal relations have their rise in the schematizing and categorizing activity of the human intellect. God *in se* is simply beyond the horizon of human knowledge. Further, a wide variety of modern doctrinal projects are animated by convictions about the irreducibility of teaching about *deus revelatus*: God is who he is in his (outer) works, and those works arrest the attention of theological intelligence with such critical force that it is by them that the *differentia* of the Christian confession are to be identified. Persuasion of

this may gain strength from other features: a certain historical and kerygmatic density in the presentation of God's acts, along with a vivid sense of the temporally unfolding character of the relation between God and creatures; Christological maximalism; impatience with metaphysics, and determined opposition to any *rapprochement* between Christian teaching about God and 'theism' or 'natural religion'.

The coherence of God himself and God in his revelatory acts is, however, best articulated, not by making the economy *id quo maius cogitari nequit*, but by indicating the continuous identity of the acting subject in God's inner and outer works. That, in turn, can best be accomplished by first contemplating the infinite depth of God in himself, out of which his temporal acts arise. The divine agent of revelatory acts is not fully understood if the phenomenality of those acts is treated as something primordial, a wholly sufficient presentation of the agent. God's outer works bear a surplus within themselves; they refer back to the divine agent who exceeds them.

Most of the essays which follow try in one way or another to address problems which may arise if the order of theology and economy is disturbed. One set of problems concerns the doctrine of God. Theologies which accord primacy to economy may come to treat God and created things as paired, parts which together make a whole and which are constituted by their mutual relations. This may become especially prominent if attention to God's outer acts is thought to license talk of God as some sort of magnified historical agent acting on the same plane as other such agents; the gospels, and especially their passion narratives, are sometimes read in this fashion. But Christian teaching about divine simplicity and creation *ex nihilo* points in a different direction. God and creatures are incommensurable, and God's presence and action in time does not entail that his relation to creatures is a real relation. In the course of a lengthy exposition of Psalm 130.4, John Owen comments that 'God being absolutely perfect and absolutely self-sufficient, was eternally glorious, and satisfied with and in his own holy excellencies and perfections, before and without the creation of all or anything by the putting forth of his almighty power . . . God could have omitted all this great work without the least impeachment of his glory. Not one holy property of his nature would have been diminished or abated in its eternal glory by that omission.'[15] Again: God's 'doing things . . . cannot intend any addition or accruement thereby of any new real good unto himself'.[16] A later Reformed theologian stumbled upon the thought when he picked up Kierkegaard's phrase about the '"infinite qualitative distinction" between time and eternity'.[17] Barth continued: 'The relation between such a God and such a man, and between such a man and such a God, is . . . the

15. J. Owen, *A Practical Exposition Upon Psalm CXXX* [1668], in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 6 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), p. 482.

16. Owen, *A Practical Exposition Upon Psalm CXXX*, p. 482.

17. K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 10.

theme of the Bible';[18] and it is a relation whose significance is 'immeasurable'.[19] Any such affirmation, of course, must be cleared of abstraction (Barth never intended it as abstract). But abstraction is checked, not by thinking of God as historical agent, but by a well-formed doctrine of God's immanent triune plenitude and bliss, to which creation adds nothing and from which it takes nothing away.

A second set of problems which these essays raise concerns the way in which the economy is understood. The economy is the domain of the divine missions. But those missions remain opaque unless immediately referred to the divine being and the divine processions. Knowledge of the character and ends of God's temporal works follows from knowledge of their origin in the eternal nature and personal properties of their agent. Moreover, the history of creation in which those missions take place may only be understood *sub ratione Dei*, out of its origin in God's wisdom, will and power. *Ignorato vel negato trinitatis mysterio tota salutis οικονομία ignoratur vel negatur*.[20] The history of creation is not a given; it has its being *ex nihilo*, and to study any one of its features it is necessary first to study the one by whom it comes to be. Barth again: '"Everything transitory" is only a parable; that even the objects of the biblical world of apprehension belong to the passing; that they are meant to serve and not to rule, to signify and not to be, the Bible, at any rate, leaves us in no doubt. Last *things*, as such, are not *last* things, however great and significant they may be. He only speaks of *last* things who would speak of the *end* of all things, of their end understood plainly and fundamentally, of a reality so radically superior to all things, that the existence of all things would be utterly and entirely *based* upon it alone, and thus, in speaking of their end, he would in truth be speaking of nothing else than their beginning. And when he speaks of history-end and time-end, he is only speaking of the *end* of history and the *end* of time. But once more of its end, understood thus fundamentally, thus plainly, of a reality so radically superior to all happening and all temporality, that in speaking of the finiteness of history and the finiteness of time, he is also speaking of that upon which all time and all happening is *based*. The end of history must for him be synonymous with the pre-history, the limits of time of which he speaks must be the limits of all and every time and thus necessarily the *origin* of time.'[21]

III

Two cautions should be registered.

First, the primacy of theology proper should not be so inordinately emphasized that the proper glory of God's works of nature and grace is diminished. Failure to

18. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 10.

19. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 10.

20. J. Gerhard, *Loci theologici* [1625] (Berlin: Schlawitz, 1863), III.1.7.

21. K. Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1933), pp. 109f.

give due consideration to God's outer works and God's creatures is failure to direct the mind to the full scope of the doctrine of God.

The counter to this over-extension of theology proper is not, however, a correspondingly inordinate enlargement of the economy, but closer specification of teaching about God in himself. As one who is entirely self-sufficient, God is perfect goodness, and so it is fitting to his nature to act with benevolence, willing and creating other realities. This, too, is part of his intrinsic worth: 'Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created.' (Rev. 4.11). God is good, and so establishes that which is not himself. In his perfection, God orders and institutes the creaturely condition, placing it beyond contest and, by providence and redemption, causing it to attain its proper perfection. 'The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed, he is girded with strength. Yea, the world is established; it shall never be moved; thy throne is established from of old; thou art from everlasting.' (Ps. 93.1f.)

Second, talk of God *in se* may demonstrate immoderate confidence in the reach of created intellect, and neglect the fact that in creaturely knowledge of God there is always layer upon layer of tradition, custom, construction, categorization, schematization, desire. One attraction of varieties of theological idealism is their acknowledgement that God is not available to human intelligence apart from intellectual forms, attitudes and practices which may occlude as much as mediate transcendent objects.

Theological science best takes stock of this element of its condition by recalling its ectypal character, that is, its sheer difference from the archetypal knowledge which God has of himself and all things. In doing this, however, theology not merely acknowledges its limitations but also recalls its place in the domain of divine instruction. Idealism counters intellectual pretension by identifying the restrictions which are imposed on theology by the obscuring effects of the mind's operations and the will's uses of the mind's matter. Talk of theological science as ectypal acknowledges the restrictions but places them within the sphere of God's communicative and saving causality. The limitations of the intellect, rendered vicious by the fall, do not sever created intellect's natural connection to God, or place it beyond the reach of providence, regeneration and revelation. Theological science is a graced enterprise: not perfected, but mortified and vivified, caught up in the Spirit's work of sanctification, its deficiencies sufficiently repaired so that fulfilment of its vocation to know God can be a matter of prayerful confidence in divine instruction.

Part I

God in Himself

Chapter 2

Life in and of Himself

I

What Christian doctrine has to say about the attributes of God is shaped by the church's confession of the Holy Trinity. When it inquires into divine aseity, therefore, theology is not asking 'what must be true of a god?', but a rather more unwieldy question: 'Who is the God, the enactment of whose utter sufficiency as Father, Son and Holy Spirit issues in his creative, reconciling and perfecting works towards his creatures?' A Christian theology of the divine attributes is a conceptual schema for indicating the identity of the God of the Christian confession. God's identity is, further, to be considered both with respect to its unfathomable depth in itself and with respect to his enactment of a wholly gracious turn to creatures. That is, a theology of God's attributes attempts to indicate his immanent and his relative perfection. Within such an account, the concept of aseity has two dimensions. First, it indicates the glory and plenitude of the life of the Holy Trinity in its self-existent and self-moving originality, its underived fullness. In every respect, God is of himself God. Second, it indicates that God's originality and fullness constitute the ground of his self-communication. He is one who, out of nothing other than his own self-sufficiency, brings creatures into being, sustains and reconciles them, and brings them to perfection in fellowship with himself. A theology of God's aseity is an indication of the one who is and acts *thus*, who is the object of the church's knowledge, love and fear, and whose praise is the church's chief employment.

The concept of aseity tries to indicate God's identity; it is not a definition of God but a gesture towards God's objective and self-expressive being. The task of the concept is not to establish conditions for conceivability but rather to have rational dealings with the God who is, and is self-communicative, anterior to rational work on our part. God is objective and expressive being, presenting himself to us and making himself perceptible, intelligible and nameable (this is part of the meaning of 'revelation'). Consequently, in theology aseity is a positive or material concept, determined by the particular form of God's self-expressive perfection. Its content is grasped as regenerate intelligence, prompted by divine instruction, considers God absolutely and relatively, in his inner being and his outer works. Because of this, theology will not over-invest in whatever generic sense may be attached to the

concept of aseity (or of any of the other divine attributes). This, not because of intellectual sectarianism, a desire to segregate theological use in an absolute way from all other speech about deity – after all, aseity, like nearly all Christian theological concepts, is a borrowed term with a wider currency. Rather, theology is simply concerned to ensure that its talk of aseity concentrates on that which is proper to *this one*.

All this is simply an application of the rule which is basic to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity: *Deus non est in genere*. Concepts developed in articulating the Christian doctrine of God, including the concept of aseity, are fitting insofar as they correspond to the particular being of the triune God in his self-moved self-presentation. A further extension of this rule is that in theological usage aseity is not primarily a comparative or contrastive concept. That is, the content of the term cannot be determined simply by analysis of the difference between God and contingent creatures. Although the contrast between divine self-existence and creaturely contingency is a corollary of the concept of God's aseity, disorder threatens when that contrast is allowed to expand and fill the concept completely. The point is worth pausing over, especially because the modern career of notions of aseity and self-existence has been quite deeply marked by comparative interpretations, particularly by theologians and philosophers with heavy investments in natural religion and its theological derivatives.

That there can be a relatively uncontroversial appeal to the 'contrastive' aspects of divine aseity, and that such appeal has a long history in Christian theology, is beyond dispute. This way of filling out the content of aseity is used to best effect when deployed in an informal, non-fundamental way, simply for the purposes of explication and elucidation, and not as a guide to the entire scope of the concept. Consider two passages from Augustine:

> See, heaven and earth exist, they cry aloud that they are made, for they suffer change and variation. But in anything which is not made and yet is, there is nothing which previously was not present. To be what was once not the case is to be subject to change and variation. They also cry aloud that they have not made themselves: 'The manner of our existence shows that we are made. For before we came to be, we did not exist to be able to make ourselves.' And the voice with which they speak is self-evidence. You, Lord, who are beautiful, made them for they are beautiful. You are good, for they are good. You are, for they are. Yet they are not beautiful or good or possessed of being in the sense that you their Maker are. In comparison with you they are deficient in beauty and goodness and being.[1]

1. *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), XI.4.6.

> God exists in the supreme sense, and the original sense, of the word. He is altogether unchangeable, and it is he who could say with full authority 'I am who I am'.[2]

The changeless dignity and beauty of God's uncreated being, because it 'exists in the supreme sense', are ultimately beyond comparison. They can also be glimpsed by contrast with what is 'made': 'you are, for they are'. Yet there is no sense that God's supreme, self-existent being somehow requires this contrast with the creaturely, as a kind of backcloth without which its splendour could not be seen. God simply *is*, originally, authoritatively and incomparably, and no creature can say, as does God, 'I am who I am'. Something of the same pattern of thought can be found in Anselm:

> You alone then, Lord, are what you are and you are who you are . . . And what began [to exist] from non-existence, and can be thought not to exist, and returns to non-existence unless it subsists through some other; and what has had a past existence but does not now exist, and a future existence but does not yet exist – such a thing does not exist in a strict and absolute sense. But you are what you are, for whatever you are at any time or in any way this you are wholly and forever.[3]

> He alone has of himself all that he has, while other things have nothing of themselves. And other things, having nothing of themselves, have their only reality from him.[4]

Once again, the contrast of divine self-existence and creaturely contingency is informal, simply a corollary of the fundamental affirmation about the being of God: 'You alone . . . Lord are what you are and you are who you are' (the echo of Exod. 3.14 is not to be missed). God's aseity is not a mirror image of contingency; rather, in both Augustine and Anselm it is an aspect of the divine *solus*, the irreducible uniqueness and incommensurability of God.

A compromise of this proper attention to the divine identity occurs whenever an abstract contrast between self-existent and created being is allowed too commanding a role in determining the notion of aseity. When this takes place, aseity transmutes into a reverse concept to contingency. This is in large part because the derivation of the concept of aseity shifts. No longer arising in the context of explicating the perfect, self-expressive being of God, it emerges instead out of a consideration of the nature of contingent reality. Moreover, the content of the notion of aseity begins to be altered accordingly. It is no longer a (doxological)

2. *On Christian Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), I.xxxii.

3. *Proslogion*, in B. Davies, G. R. Evans, ed., *Anselm of Canterbury. The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), XXII.

4. *On the Fall of the Devil*, in *Anselm of Canterbury. The Major Works*, I.