John Feinberg reads theology with a philosopher’s eye and writes it with a philosopher’s sensitivity to illogic and incoherence. The special excellence of this long, learned, clear, and thorough exposition of historic Christian belief about God is its harvesting of the past half-century’s brilliant philosophical work banishing muddles from the theological scene. This is the new landmark account of God that Bavinck might have produced had he been able to write his masterful *Reformed Dogmatics* a century later than he did. Feinberg makes the philosophical analyses as palatable as possible, and students who can handle them and lap up extended textual surveys as well will find this book a permanently fruitful and authoritative resource.

— **J. I. Packer**  
Professor of Theology  
Regent College

This is a prodigious study biblically and philosophically of the doctrine of God set in the context of a probing analysis of the concept of God in contemporary thought. Feinberg judicially reconstructs aspects of the classical view of God in a way that proves more faithful than process and openness of God theisms. Arguably, this is the best study of theology proper in print.

— **Bruce Demarest**  
Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation  
Denver Seminary

This book contains some rare combinations: first, an author who is as concerned with conceptual clarification as he is with the absolute truthfulness of the biblical text; second, an argument that avoids the common “either-ors” and contends for the importance of both divine sovereignty and divine solicitude in equal measure; third, an approach that espouses divine determinism and divine temporality. *No One Like Him* takes on the most intractable intellectual challenges of contemporary evangelical theology.

— **Kevin Vanhoozer**  
Research Professor of Systematic Theology  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Few issues in contemporary theology are as complex and challenging as the concept of God. In this major work, Professor John Feinberg skillfully integrates biblical exegesis, historical theology, and philosophy in a carefully argued discussion, resulting in a very impressive reformulation of Christian theism which cannot be ignored by any serious student of theology.

—Harold Netland
Associate Professor of Philosophy of Religion and Missions
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

The foundational doctrine of God has come in for a great deal of discussion of late. In this comprehensive treatment, John Feinberg skillfully draws upon both biblical and philosophical resources to deal with the important issues being discussed. His volume will be of great help to the church.

—Millard J. Erickson
Distinguished Professor of Theology
Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University

A comprehensive, detailed, and fine study on the nature of God that leaves no stone unturned and will leave no reader unaffected.

—David F. Wells
Andrew Mutch Distinguished Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology
Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary
NO ONE LIKE HIM

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

JOHN S. FEINBERG

JOHN S. FEINBERG, GENERAL EDITOR

CROSSWAY BOOKS

A PUBLISHING MINISTRY OF GOOD NEWS PUBLISHERS
WHEATON, ILLINOIS
John Feinberg’s *No One Like Him* is a magisterial work, one that truly deserves to be called a *magnum opus*. Formidable in size, it reveals its author as one of the only—perhaps the only—modern scholar whose work, like that of Carl F. H. Henry, can compare in size, detail, comprehensiveness, and intellectual acuity with the accomplishments of the late Karl Barth, who in turn is perhaps the only contemporary theologian whose work rivals that of the old masters—of Luther and Calvin—in scope. However, there is a serious difference between Henry and Feinberg on the one hand and Karl Barth on the other: Henry and Feinberg are firmly and deliberately in the tradition of what the late Francis A. Schaeffer called “historic Protestantism”; Barth, despite his genuine conservatism and his orthodoxy on many points, really is not. Karl Barth generated his theology in an atmosphere dominated by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century liberalism. Henry and Feinberg work in an age when Protestant liberalism has been deemed passé, superseded by all manner of inventive theologies, and when evangelical theology itself sometimes stands on shaky legs on a slippery slope, willing to compromise with modernity and even with postmodernism as much as possible without falling into the abyss of what Georges Florovsky called “pious atheism,” which is increasingly characteristic of modern and postmodern Protestantism.

Henry and Feinberg address the fundamental question of God and the world, time and eternity, incarnation and atonement, sin and salvation, on the basis of a sure and confident trust in the Holy Scriptures as God’s inerrant and infallible Word, while for the Swiss master, the Bible is only the witness to God’s revelation, the authoritative and essential witness, to be sure, but nevertheless a witness to the Word, not the Word itself. There is a difference between Henry’s magisterial work (*God, Revelation and Authority*) and that of Feinberg in that Henry wrote in a time when evangelicalism was just emerging from the fundamentalist controversies, whereas Feinberg writes a generation later, when the players on the theological field have changed and to some
extent the rules have changed; but the goal of the evangelical theologian is never­
theless to speak the truth—in love, be it understood—but plainly and clearly

to speak the truth.

The fact that he rivals both Karl Barth and Carl F. H. Henry in comple­

teness and erudition, while agreeing with the latter in his fidelity to Scripture as

being divine revelation, not merely testifying to it, makes John Feinberg’s work

a reliable guide for the inquiring Christian reader to a degree that is not always

the case with the author of the ponderous *Kirchliche Dogmatik*.

Feinberg’s work is close to half as large as John Calvin’s *Institutes of the

Christian Religion*, but unlike the great Reformer’s work, which covers the

whole scope of Christian doctrine, John Feinberg limits himself to what is
called special theology, i.e., the doctrine of God. Readers who find Calvin for­

midable and therefore might be put off by this comparison or by the sheer bulk

of Feinberg’s work should note that it is not at all necessary to read it from

cover to cover to derive great benefit from it. Far from being merely another

university or post-graduate level course in the doctrine of God, it is really a

guide to several centuries of Christian thought. Consequently, it is able to serve

as an immensely useful handbook providing accurate and readable informa­
tion about scores of thinkers as diverse as the neo-Platonist Plotinus and the

postmodernist feminist Nancey Murphy.

Feinberg offers a succinct and balanced treatment of speculative and eso­
teric approaches to understanding divine reality, from liberal Christian to mod­
ern pagan, and combines with it an insight into and critique of the efforts of

contemporary thinkers within the evangelical tradition or close to it. He offers

a thorough and nuanced discussion of specific points of controversy among

orthodox Protestant Christians, such as whether God lives in timeless eternity

or endless time. His treatment of God’s eternity as well as of predestination,

foreknowledge, and human freedom is fascinating, although—precisely

because these are and remain *questiones disputatae*—his recommendations for

their solution will not find universal agreement among all of his fellow evan­

gelicals. Because of the massiveness and comprehensiveness of this work, it is

sure to draw friendly as well as unfriendly fire from various quarters, but like

that of Henry, it will doubtless emerge relatively unscarred.

If the dogma of materialistic, naturalistic evolution, of chance and necessity

as the origin of all that is, as the late Nobel prizewinner Jacques Monod and

scores of lesser authorities would have it, cannot be challenged, then Feinberg’s

work is irretrievably superfluous. In fact, however, it is not merely Christian

theologians but scientists and scholars from other fields who are drawing

increasing attention to the flaws in evolutionary dogma. To deal with the doc­

trine of God requires one to deal with the doctrine of his works, and in par­

ticular with creation, and here John Feinberg makes a distinct contribution to

the discussion. His treatment of the various Christian efforts to relate the cre­

ation account in Genesis to the many secular theories that question or deny

intelligent design and divine purpose is thorough and balanced. When he pro­
ceeds from criticism of errors to an attempt to present the truth, reasoning primarily on the basis of the scriptural witness and hermeneutical considerations, he reaches a conclusion that will be appreciated by advocates of a six twenty-four-hour day creation but which will not seem compelling to all upholders of biblical inerrancy.

The doctrines of creation and of the other acts of God, important as they are, are not Feinberg’s primary interest in this volume. Instead, it is the doctrine of the nature and attributes of the infinite-personal God. Here we note a detailed interaction with alternatives to classical orthodoxy from within the Christian community, such as pantheism and process theology, and sometimes even from fellow evangelicals, such as the concept of the openness of God. With respect to the Trinity and the incarnation, Feinberg interacts extensively with interpretations and explanations offered by early church fathers, medieval scholastics, Reformation thinkers, and contemporary figures of various shades. Unwilling to leave the doctrines of the Trinity and of the incarnation entirely in the realm of transcendent mystery as many do, he seeks to go beyond traditional Nicene and Chalcedonian dogma and to make the mysteries as accessible to reverent analysis as can be done.

It is impossible in a few paragraphs or even in dozens of pages, to do justice to John Feinberg’s work, but it is evident that even readers unprepared to follow each of his arguments and fully to endorse each of his conclusions must stand in admiration of his achievement. It is not risky to predict that his No One Like Him will come to be a milestone in evangelical theology.

Harold O. J. Brown
Why another series of works on evangelical systematic theology? This is an especially appropriate question in light of the fact that evangelicals are fully committed to an inspired and inerrant Bible as their final authority for faith and practice. But since neither God nor the Bible change, why is there a need to redo evangelical systematic theology?

Systematic theology is not divine revelation. Theologizing of any sort is a human conceptual enterprise. Thinking that it is equal to biblical revelation misunderstands the nature of both Scripture and theology! Insofar as our theology contains propositions that accurately reflect Scripture or match the world and are consistent with the Bible (in cases where the propositions do not come *per se* from Scripture), our theology is biblically based and correct. But even if all the propositions of a systematic theology are true, that theology would still not be equivalent to biblical revelation! It is still a human conceptualization of God and his relation to the world.

Although this may disturb some who see theology as nothing more than doing careful exegesis over a series of passages, and others who see it as nothing more than biblical theology, those methods of doing theology do not somehow produce a theology that is equivalent to biblical revelation either. Exegesis is a human conceptual enterprise, and so is biblical theology. All the theological disciplines involve human intellectual participation. But human intellect is finite, and hence there is always room for revision of systematic theology as knowledge increases. Though God and his Word do not change, human understanding of his revelation can grow, and our theologies should be reworked to reflect those advances in understanding.

Another reason for evangelicals to rework their theology is the nature of systematic theology as opposed to other theological disciplines. For example, whereas the task of biblical theology is more to describe biblical teaching on whatever topics Scripture addresses, systematics should make a special point to relate its conclusions to the issues of one’s day. This does not mean that the sys-
tematician ignores the topics biblical writers address. Nor does it mean that theologians should warp Scripture to address issues it never intended to address. Rather, it suggests that in addition to expounding what biblical writers teach, the theologian should attempt to take those biblical teachings (along with the biblical mindset) and apply them to issues that are especially confronting the church in the theologian’s own day. For example, 150 years ago, an evangelical theologian doing work on the doctrine of man would likely have discussed issues such as the creation of man and the constituent parts of man’s being. Such a theology might even have included a discussion about human institutions such as marriage, noting in general the respective roles of husbands and wives in marriage. However, it is dubious that there would have been any lengthy discussion with various viewpoints about the respective roles of men and women in marriage, in society, and in the church. But at our point in history and in light of the feminist movement and the issues it has raised even among many conservative Christians, it would be foolish to write a theology of man (or, should we say, a “theology of humanity”) without a thorough discussion of the issue of the roles of men and women in society, the home, and the church.

Because systematic theology attempts to address itself not only to the timeless issues presented in Scripture but also to the current issues of one’s day and culture, each theology will to some extent need to be redone in each generation. Biblical truth does not change from generation to generation, but the issues that confront the church do. A theology that was adequate for a different era and different culture may simply not speak to key issues in a given culture at a given time. Hence, in this series we are reworking evangelical systematic theology, though we do so with the understanding that in future generations there will be room for a revision of theology again.

How, then, do the contributors to this series understand the nature of systematic theology? Systematic theology as done from an evangelical Christian perspective involves study of the person, works, and relationships of God. As evangelicals committed to the full inspiration, inerrancy, and final authority of Scripture, we demand that whatever appears in a systematic theology correspond to the way things are and must not contradict any claim taught in Scripture. Holy Writ is the touchstone of our theology, but we do not limit the source material for systematics to Scripture alone. Hence, whatever information from history, science, philosophy, and the like is relevant to our understanding of God and his relation to our world is fair game for systematics. Depending on the specific interests and expertise of the contributors to this series, their respective volumes will reflect interaction with one or more of these disciplines.

What is the rationale for appealing to other sources than Scripture and other disciplines than the biblical ones? Since God created the universe, there is revelation of God not only in Scripture but in the created order as well. There are many disciplines that study our world, just as does theology. But since the world studied by the non-theological disciplines is the world created by God, any data and conclusions in the so-called secular disciplines that accurately reflect the real
world are also relevant to our understanding of the God who made that world. Hence, in a general sense, since all of creation is God’s work, nothing is outside the realm of theology. The so-called secular disciplines need to be thought of in a theological context, because they are reflecting on the universe God created, just as is the theologian. And, of course, there are many claims in the non-theological disciplines that are generally accepted as true (although this does not mean that every claim in non-theological disciplines is true, or that we are in a position with respect to every proposition to know whether it is true or false). Since this is so, and since all disciplines are in one way or another reflecting on our universe, a universe made by God, any true statement in any discipline should in some way be informative for our understanding of God and his relation to our world. Hence, we have felt it appropriate to incorporate data from outside the Bible in our theological formulations.

As to the specific design of this series, our intention is to address all areas of evangelical theology with a special emphasis on key issues in each area. While other series may be more like a history of doctrine, this series purposes to incorporate insights from Scripture, historical theology, philosophy, etc., in order to produce an up-to-date work in systematic theology. Though all contributors to the series are thoroughly evangelical in their theology, embracing the historical orthodox doctrines of the church, the series as a whole is not meant to be slanted in the direction of one form of evangelical theology. Nonetheless, most of the writers come from a Reformed perspective. Alternate evangelical and non-evangelical options, however, are discussed.

As to style and intended audience, this series is meant to rest on the very best of scholarship while at the same time being understandable to the beginner in theology as well as to the academic theologian. With that in mind, contributors are writing in a clear style, taking care to define whatever technical terms they use.

Finally, we believe that systematic theology is not just for the understanding. It must apply to life, and it must be lived. As Paul wrote to Timothy, God has given divine revelation for many purposes, including ones that necessitate doing theology, but the ultimate reason for giving revelation and for theologians doing theology is that the people of God may be fitted for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17). In light of the need for theology to connect to life, each of the contributors not only formulates doctrines but also explains how those doctrines practically apply to everyday living.

It is our sincerest hope that the work we have done in this series will first glorify and please God, and, secondly, instruct and edify the people of God. May God be pleased to use this series to those ends, and may he richly bless you as you read the fruits of our labors.

John S. Feinberg
General Editor
I must have been crazy to think that I could write a book on the doctrine of God. Still, like the moth drawn to a flame, I keep coming back to this topic. In one way or another, it has been the concern of much of my adult intellectual thought and publications. Of course, the subject is more than worthy of our attention, because nothing could be more important than coming to understand God better and hence worship him more.

But, even more so in the contemporary milieu, this topic has taken on enormously significant proportions. The movements in culture in general and theology in particular during the past century have been phenomenal. The advent and growing entrenchment of the postmodern mindset, not only in our universities but in culture more broadly, have had dramatic implications for our very understanding of who and what God is. Theologians and non-theologians alike are clamoring for a God who is engaged in our lives and responsive to our needs. The remote God of classical Christianity seems irrelevant to our contemporaries. Even Christians broadly in the evangelical community sense a need to replace or at least significantly alter the concept of the classical God.

Originally, I had planned a somewhat standard volume on the doctrine of God, but as I read and reflected on what is happening to God in contemporary thought, I saw that something else was needed. Most of the usual topics for a doctrine of God will be covered, but the whole discussion must now be framed in light of the issues of our times. In short, the question confronting the evangelical theologian is what to do about the classical conception of God that has been handed down through centuries of church history. Process theologians and openness of God advocates encourage us to abandon this God and replace him with their versions of a more responsive God. While I find their complaints about the traditional God very thought provoking, I cannot agree with them that their replacement “Gods” are the answer or that they more accurately reflect biblical revelation about God. Rather than totally abandoning the traditional concept of God, a substantial overhaul and recon-
struction seems more appropriate. In the pages of this book you will see the results of such modifications.

One of the reasons for writing a volume exclusively on the doctrine of God is that it allows one to give more coverage of the doctrine than if one were writing a standard systematic theology. Even so, there are always decisions to make about what to cover and what to omit. Once I decided to address directly the contemporary situation in discussions about God, certain decisions were required. One of the early casualties was a section on angels, Satan, and demons as an extension of the doctrine of creation. Those doctrines will now be covered in another volume in this series along with the doctrine of man. Then, I had originally planned to include a chapter on the names of God, a most worthy topic; but as I saw how long the manuscript was becoming, I had to make another decision. Over at least the last half century there haven’t been many developments with respect to understanding of the divine names, so that seemed a likely candidate for exclusion. Those interested in pursuing that topic can easily do so in various standard evangelical theologies. And, then, as I saw again the need to address in detail the issues surrounding the doctrine of providence, it became evident that I could not also cover every other divine action. Hence, though miraculous intervention in our world is certainly something God can and does do from time to time, I have not addressed that topic as such. In many ways, I feel it is better served in a more general work on apologetics.

In spite of these omissions, I soon realized that what I was doing in this book is not frequently done. There have been many books written solely on divine providence, or on creation, or on the divine attributes. There have not been many written which attempt to cover the whole doctrine of God in one single volume. Over the many years that it has taken to research and write this book, I have periodically thought about how crazy it is to try to do all of this in one book. And yet, by the goodness and grace of God, this work has been completed and it has given me a chance to look holistically at God. It is my hope and prayer that readers will find the structure and strategy of the book helpful and stimulating, regardless of whether they agree with my conclusions.

In doing a project of this sort, the help of others has been invaluable, and they should be acknowledged. First, various colleagues have read and commented on chapters of this book at one stage or another. These include Harold O. J. Brown, Paul Feinberg, Wayne Grudem, and Bruce Ware. Of special significance, however, has been the careful reading and detailed commenting on specific chapters of the manuscript by Kevin Vanhoozer, Willem VanGemeren, and Harold Netland. In particular, Harold Netland has read most of this manuscript in one stage of production or another. Because of suggestions and interaction especially by Harold, Kevin, and Willem, this work has greatly benefited. Whatever errors still remain are attributable to me.

There have also been countless student assistants over the years who have helped me by collecting bibliography for this project or by proofreading various portions of the manuscript. In several cases, these brothers have long since
graduated and are themselves engaged in teaching and writing at various seminaries. Of specific note are Steve Wellum, Gregg Allison, and Adam Co. Other assistants have also helped, but these three were especially significant.

Then, a word of appreciation is in order for the board and administration of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Their gracious granting of sabbaticals during which I wrote most of this book was invaluable. Without their help this book could not have been written. Next, I must also express my gratitude to Crossway Books. Without their original approval of this series, let alone this volume, and their help and encouragement along the way, this work would not have been done. Of special note is the extraordinary competence and care in editing by Bill Deckard. Any academician would be eager to have such an editor. In addition, Crossway’s gracious patience over the years as they have waited for this volume has been greatly appreciated. Finally, a word of thanks to my wife and children for their support and encouragement. There were many times when they gave up time with me so that I could work on this project, and for their sacrifice I am deeply grateful.

It is my hope and prayer that the pages that follow will not only inform but also stimulate you to love, worship, and serve our great God even more! I trust as well that they will help us all recapture a sense of the wonder and grandeur of God. Most of all, I pray that what I have written will be pleasing to God himself and will bring him glory. He is most deserving of all our worship and praise, for there is no one like him!

John S. Feinberg
July 2000
In Isaiah 46 Israel’s God compares himself to the gods of the Babylonians. They are mere idols, but not so the true and living God of Israel. In fact, no nation has a God like Israel’s. In verse 9 God says, “I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me.” No one like the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! No one like the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

But if there is no one like this God, that still does not tell us what he is like. Although it might not seem difficult to describe the God of the Bible, in our day there are various understandings of him. For many centuries of church history the predominant portrait of God has been the one painted by Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. In our time, many theologians are saying that this concept of God is both outmoded and unbiblical. The absolutely immutable, impassible, self-sufficient, sovereign, and omniscient God of the classical Christian tradition, we are told, is too domineering, too austere, and too remote to be at all religiously adequate. This God monopolizes all the power, and refuses to share it with anyone. If his human creatures don’t like this, that is their problem.

Process theologians claim that this classical God is too infected with ancient Greek philosophy; the God of Anselm and Aquinas is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Instead of the classical God, process thinkers propose a more relational and vulnerable God. He is a God who suffers with us and changes as we change. He increases in knowledge as he continually interacts with us and our world. The process God of Whitehead, Hartshorne, and Cobb is no divine monarch who rules with a rod of iron. Rather, he shares his power with his creatures. He won’t force his creatures to do what he wants, but instead lovingly tries to persuade them to do what he deems best. Of course, they can refuse, and if they do, this God won’t violate their freedom.

Process theologians don’t claim to be evangelicals, but they think their
A depiction of God is more attuned to Scripture than that of classical Christian theism. Advocates of what is known as the open view of God agree that the biblical God is much kinder and gentler than the God of classical theism. However, proponents of the open view believe that process thinkers have strayed too far from biblical revelation. The open view of God purports to offer a mediating position between the classical and process views. Espousers of the open view believe they have captured the best insights from the classical and process traditions while formulating their concept of God in a way that more accurately reflects biblical revelation.

There is certainly much to fault in both the classical and process concepts of God. This does not mean, however, that the open view should be accepted as the best alternative. I agree that we need a mediating position between classical and process views of God, but the open view isn’t that position. Hence, in this book I come not to bury God, but to reconstruct him—at least to refashion the idea of God from an evangelical perspective. I don’t delude myself into thinking that all evangelicals will adopt my reconstruction. But, I intend to offer an account of God which is sensitive to process and open view concerns without altogether abandoning the best insights of the classical conception. And I intend to ground that conception in Scripture.

So, what does my model of God look like? Process and open view thinkers seem to believe that a commitment to the classical God’s non-moral attributes (absolute immutability, impassibility, eternity, simplicity, omnipotence, etc.) requires a monarchical God who is distant from, unrelated to, and unconcerned about the world he made, and yet still exercises absolute control over everything that happens in it. Correspondingly, if one holds to God as a sovereign king, it is deemed inevitable that one will adopt the classical package of divine attributes.

Despite such assumptions, there is no entailment between the two. The God I shall describe is indeed a king, but he is the king who cares! I believe that process and open view critiques of the classical God are most persuasive in relation to the classical attributes, but my nuancing of those attributes even differs from their revisions. When it comes to how God relates to and rules over our world, in my judgment process and open view conceptions are least persuasive. The God I present is absolutely sovereign, but he is no tyrant, nor is he the remote and unrelated God of classical theism. He is instead the king who cares!

Indeed, there is no one like God, the king who cares. But though there is no one like him, there is no lack of competitors in our day, even as there were many false gods during biblical times. In order to understand more accurately the distinctness of the Christian God, we must place him alongside the pantheon of pretenders. Hence, the first section of this book is devoted to describing the various models and conceptions of God in the intellectual and spiritual milieu of our day. That will illustrate the issues that are on the minds of our contemporaries as they think about God, and it will help us to see why non-evangelicals and many evangelicals are clamoring for a revisioning of God.
Because the final two parts of the book will be devoted to articulating a specifically Christian conception of God, the first section will emphasize heavily non-Christian and non-evangelical notions of God. This doesn’t mean nothing will be said relevant to the evangelical Christian concept, but only that we must first understand the whole range of views of God in contemporary thought and religion in order best to see that there truly is no one like the biblical God!

In the second section of the book, the discussion will turn directly to the Christian God. Here the focus will be the being and nature of God. In this portion of the book, I shall present my nuancing of the divine attributes. There will be some agreement with process and open view understandings of those attributes, but there will be significant differences as well.

After we have seen who and what the Christian God is, the third section of the book will turn to what God does—his acts. There are many things that God does which are covered in other volumes of this series. For example, God is in the business of saving humans from their lost and hopeless condition of sin, but his actions in redeeming lost humanity are covered in the volume on the cross and salvation. God has also revealed himself in many ways, including Scripture, but the doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and inerrancy are treated in the volume on Scripture. The focus in this volume will be on God’s acts of creation, his decree, and his providential control over our universe. It is on the last two matters that the greatest difference between my views and those of the open view will become apparent. The God I present relates to and cares about his creatures, but he is unquestionably king. He not only has sovereign power, but he uses it in our world—but not so as to eliminate human freedom and dignity. Impossible, you think, to wed divine control with human freedom? Perhaps so for some rigidly deterministic models of God, but not so on the soft deterministic model I shall offer.

Needless to say, the issues under consideration in this volume are both controversial and extremely important for Christian doctrine and practice. Though my intent is to offer a constructive piece of Christian theology, because of the controversy surrounding so much of the doctrine of God in our day, of necessity we cannot entirely escape polemics. My goal, however, is to engage in those debates for the sake of clarifying a biblically accurate and religiously adequate evangelical notion of God. This is no easy task, but we dare not allow the difficulty of the issues to deter us, for too much is at stake for Christian thought and life.
NOTES

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 2
6. See Netland’s description of these religious traditions’ conceptions of ultimate reality in *Dissonant Voices*, chapters 2–3.
7. Here I note that not all theologians use these terms synonymously. As the discussion progresses, I’ll point out differences where appropriate. However, for the most part I shall use terms such as “model,” “metaphor,” “image,” and “motif” to refer to ways of understanding or conceptualizing God’s role and relationships in our universe.
10. Ibid., p. 13.
17. Ibid., pp. 186-189.
18. Ibid., p. 237.
19. Ibid., p. 239.