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DIVINITY COMPROMISED
A STUDY OF DIVINE ACCOMMODATION
IN THE THOUGHT OF JOHN CALVIN

by

JON BALSERAK

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PREFACE

Divine accommodation in John Calvin's thought has yet to receive the attention it deserves. To date it has not been the subject of a monograph-length treatment in any language (this study is the first) and the number of journal articles and book chapters devoted solely to it is small. The present work will, it is hoped, help to fill this lacuna in research on the topic, but additional research is undoubtedly still needed.

Its title probably deserves a comment. The use of the word *compromised* is intended to raise the question of the extent of accommodation's penetration into Calvin's doctrine of God. It aims to suggest the idea that Calvin's thinking on accommodation might possess qualities which push against traditional thinking on the divine attributes. The idea was first suggested by E. David Willis. The present study will aim to expand upon it.

This monograph owes much to the efforts of Emeritus Professor of Patristic and Reformed Christianity, David F. Wright, who, as supervisor, colleague and friend, has offered assistance to me on innumerable occasions and has also demonstrated a level of scholarly excellence in his own work that has been enormously instructive and encouraging. Thanks are also due to a host of others. Thanks must be expressed to Professor Tony Lane, who offered very helpful criticisms of two earlier versions of this work and whose kindness has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated. Thanks are also due to Buccleuch and Greyfriars Free Church of Scotland, whose love has been a regular source of strength (particularly Alex MacDonald and Bob Akroyd); to the theology department of the University of Birmingham (particularly Professor David Parker and Dr Philip Burton, whose friendship and counsel have been extremely helpful to me); to New Hope, P.C.A. (Fairfax, Virginia, U.S.A.); to my family (to whom I owe a huge debt of gratitude in so many ways); to Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III and Dr. W. Duncan Rankin (both of whom were enormously kind to me during my time in Mississippi), and to Dr Charles R. Vogan Jr. My wife has been the most wonderful friend, encouragement, teacher and companion to me; it is to her that this study is dedicated. If I can achieve in my lifetime what she has already achieved, I will be happy.

This work contains shortcomings which are, unfortunately, all too apparent. Nonetheless it is an honest attempt to grapple with a concept in Calvin which is worth coming to terms with. May it serve the scholarly community of those who study the Reformation and Calvin, Christians and any who have an interest in the Genevan's writings, and ultimately the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

J.B.

Edinburgh, Scotland

21 February 2006 (the feast day of Saint Paterius)