A Barthian Critique of Schleiermacher’s Doctrine of God: Questioning the Schleiermacher Renaissance

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Abstract
Schleiermacher is an increasingly important resource for contemporary systematic theology, particularly as Barth’s criticisms of Schleiermacher, which were thought to have undermined his dogmatic relevance, are subject to severe criticism. With reference to the doctrine of God, Barth argues that Schleiermacher’s theology generates a “God behind God” and is problematized by Feuerbach. I offer a detailed reading of Schleiermacher’s mature account of the divine being and attributes and suggest in view of this interpretation that a slightly nuanced version of Barth’s critique rightly applies to Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God. I make this argument in dialogue with the many contemporary voices arguing in Schleiermacher’s defense and raise some critical questions for those seeking to retrieve Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God.

Keywords
Barth, divine attributes, doctrine of God, Feuerbach, Schleiermacher

Barth and the Schleiermacher Renaissance
Contemporary systematic theology basks in the glow of the Schleiermacher renaissance. Theologians are increasingly retrieving Schleiermacher, not merely for his views on the constitution of the university, his formative influence upon German Romanticism and Idealism, and his seminal role in the field of hermeneutics, but for his views on various matters central to
Christian systematic theology.\(^1\) Of particular note is the increasing emphasis laid upon Schleiermacher’s continuity with the wider Christian theological tradition.\(^2\) Prior to and even now in the midst of the Schleiermacher renaissance, Schleiermacher’s Anglo reception has been dominated by juxtapositions of Barth and Schleiermacher.\(^3\) For some, the Schleiermacher revival is fueled by the elimination of the antagonism generated by Barth’s criticisms of Schleiermacher. For others, the renaissance is predicated upon the dissolution of Barth’s critiques. As Richard Crouter suggests, “The anti-Schleiermacher revolution of Karl Barth’s theology has run its course. Schleiermacher no longer has to be defined against the Swiss theologian’s ahistorical criticism.”\(^4\) It seems Schleiermacher is an increasingly important resource for dogmatics precisely insofar as his promoters agree that Barth’s criticisms got Schleiermacher wrong.

In what follows, I offer a qualified defense of one of Barth’s central critiques of Schleiermacher. I do not address the breadth of Barth’s evolving conversation

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1. We will give further examples as we proceed, but see, for example, Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015) and vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021); Ruth Jackson Ravenscroft, *The Veiled God* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Linn Marie Tonstad, *God and Difference* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

2. For example, Paul T. Nimmo, “Schleiermacher on Justification: A Departure From the Reformation?” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 66(1), February 2013, pp. 50–73; Janet Martin Soskice, “Being and Love: Schleiermacher, Aquinas and Augustine,” *Modern Theology*, 34(3), July 2018, pp. 480–491; Justin Stratis, *God’s Being Towards Fellowship* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2019); Cory C. Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2020); Daniel Pedersen, “Schleiermacher and Reformed Scholastics on the Divine Attributes,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 17(4), October 2015, pp. 413–431.

3. Cf. B. A. Gerrish, *A Prince of the Church* (London: SCM, 1984), pp. 5–9; James O. Duke and Robert F. Streetman, *Barth and Schleiermacher* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); Matthias Gockel, *Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Matthias Gockel, “On the Way from Schleiermacher to Barth: A Critical Reappraisal of Isaak August Dorner’s Essay on Divine Immutability,” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 53(4), November 2000, pp. 490–510; Paul J. DeHart, “Ter Mundus Accipit Infinitum: The Dogmatic Coordinates of Schleiermacher’s Trinitarian Treatise,” *Neue Zeitschrift Für Systematische Theologie Und Religionsphilosophie*, 52(1), 2010, p. 17; Bruce McCormack, *Orthodox and Modern* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), pp. 63–87; Robert J. Sherman, *The Shift to Modernity* (London: T&T Clark, 2005); Theodore M. Vial, “Friedrich Schleiermacher on the Central Place of Worship in Theology,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 91(1), January 1998, pp. 59–73.

4. Richard Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 14–15.

5. I recognize other points at which Barth’s criticisms of Schleiermacher fail. For example, Barth claims that Schleiermacher fails to interpret the Christian self-consciousness of
with Schleiermacher, but instead outline Barth’s particular concern that by virtue of Schleiermacher’s anthropological method, one never attains to speaking of God’s being or nature, but remains trapped in the “nominalism”—to use Barth’s label—of what God is for us. I begin explicating Barth’s critiques, noting the way he draws in particular on Feuerbach and demonstrating how central this question of “dogmatic nominalism” is if Christian theologians are to speak responsibly of God in modernity. I then situate this issue of dogmatic nominalism within contemporary debates regarding Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God. I proceed to outline the dogmatic methodology underlying the Glaubenslehre before continuing on to summarize Schleiermacher’s treatment of the divine being and attributes across the Glaubenslehre. I offer a new way of understanding the manner in which Schleiermacher’s various treatments of the divine attributes are related (which is a key interpretative question in contemporary discussions of Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God). All the while, I keep in view the question of whether Schleiermacher moves beyond a theologically nominalist description, which speaks merely of what God does for us to speak of who God is. In summary, I argue that Schleiermacher is largely a dogmatic nominalist, but with one rather thin exception. After outlining at length the contours of Schleiermacher’s account of the divine being and attributes, I return to assess the validity of Barth’s criticisms and offer a lightly reformulated and nuanced Barth-inspired critique of Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God.

**Dogmatic Nominalism and Schleiermacher’s Doctrine of God**

In an influential genealogy, Karl Barth identifies Schleiermacher as a key moment in theology’s nominalist degeneration.⁶ According to Barth, theological

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⁶ CD II/1, pp. 327–329; 338; cf. ibid., III/1, p. 12.
or dogmatic nominalism comes in degrees, but in its most extreme form, it implies that “all individual and distinct statements about the being of God have no other value than that of purely subjective ideas and descriptions (conceptus, nomina) to which there is no corresponding reality in God.” Barth suggests that because of Schleiermacher’s commitment to defining God “exhaustively . . . in the concept of causality,” divine attributes do not “denote something distinctive in God but something distinctive in the way we relate our pure feeling of dependence to Him at various stages of our religious self-consciousness.”

Barth worries that for Schleiermacher, when predicating attributes of God, we refer solely to changes in our consciousness which God effects rather than gesturing toward aspects of the divine being or nature. Thus, he concludes that Schleiermacher’s methodology results in an “anthropologising of theology.”

This generates two deleterious results. On the one hand, there is the specter of a “God behind God” or “behind the back of Jesus Christ,” to use T.F. Torrance’s famous phrase. Yet on the other hand, as Barth insists in one of his final statements concerning Schleiermacher, Schleiermacher’s approach to the divine attributes is “badly compromised by Feuerbach.”

Feuerbach himself clearly thinks not. In the first chapter of *The Essence of Christianity*, he argues that “where feeling is held to be the organ of the infinite [as per many readings of Schleiermacher]—the external data of religion lose their objective value.” He concludes ultimately that “a God who . . . exists for me only through my own mental act, such a God is a merely abstract, imaginary, subjective God.”

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7. *CD*, II/1, p. 327.
8. *CD*, II/1, p. 327.
9. Karl Barth, “Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher,” trans. George Hunsinger, *Studies in Religion* 7(2), 1978, p. 125.
10. Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being, Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), p. 24.
11. Barth, “Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher,” p. 130.
12. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1989), p. 207.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
Robert Williams offers a spirited defense of Schleiermacher which goes some way toward dissolving the force of Feuerbach’s objections. According to Williams, Feuerbach’s attempt to reduce religion to anthropology is an application of his wider tendentious and defusible belief that all claims about extra-mental objects can be reduced to human psychology because the only “object” which the human subject can know or intuit is its own nature.\textsuperscript{15} Williams raises a number of objections to this reduction, concluding that Feuerbach fails to demonstrate that God is “merely subjective” for Schleiermacher.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, as Christine Helmer baldly states, for Schleiermacher, “the infinite exists independently of human perception.”\textsuperscript{17} Yet Barth’s “nominalist” worry does not depend upon Feuerbach’s unconvincing reduction of the extent of human knowledge to humanity’s generic nature, nor does he suggest that Schleiermacher denies God’s existence. Rather, as previously outlined, Barth thinks that for Schleiermacher, when we predicate attributes of God we refer to changes in human consciousness which God causes rather than to aspects of the divine nature. What Barth then invites us to notice in his nominalist genealogy, is that if this interpretation is accurate, much of what is theologically troublesome about Feuerbach has already been granted in advance. The dogmatic nominalist accepts that in speaking about God, we are really solely speaking about humanity (i.e. about the effects of the divine upon us) rather than about God’s nature, even if the nominalist nonetheless affirms that God exists in some unknowable, extramundane manner. In short, Barth does not allege that Feuerbach rightly identified some rational necessity which leads to atheism in Schleiermacher’s theological methodology. No, for Barth, Feuerbach exposes what is problematic about Schleiermacher on his own terms by taking his “anthropologising” approach to an extreme. On Barth’s interpretation, for both Schleiermacher and Feuerbach, most of what we predicate of God is not actually about God but concerns human nature and experience. Furthermore, the more one recognizes that what they naively assume to be “about God” is in fact about human experience, the more one may be troubled by the broader challenge of Feuerbach—or Marx or Freud—even if, as Williams argues, much of Feuerbach’s reductive account of human knowledge of God can be challenged. If all that we predicate of God is really about changes in human consciousness, then one may wonder whether claims about God’s existence can likewise be reduced to claims about some aspect of human

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{15} Robert Williams, “Schleiermacher and Feuerbach on the Intentionality of Religious Consciousness,” \textit{The Journal of Religion}, 53(4), 1973, pp. 424–430.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 454.

\textsuperscript{17} Christine Helmer, “Schleiermacher for Lutherans,” \textit{Lutheran Quarterly}, 29, 2015, pp. 23, 167–168.
\end{footnotes}
nature, consciousness or desire. In sum, Barth does not endorse Feuerbach’s criticisms wholesale, nor does he suggest that Schleiermacher denies God’s existence. Rather, he argues that Feuerbach offers a fitting demonstration and example of what is troublesome about Schleiermacher’s dogmatic nominalism on its own terms.

Barth’s key question regarding “dogmatic nominalism”—which was subsequently rearticulated by late 20th-century theologians like Hans Urs von Balthasar,18 Wolfhart Pannenberg,19 and Jürgen Moltmann20—has been recast in various ways in contemporary discussions of Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God. It often surfaces in debates regarding how Schleiermacher’s three treatments of the divine attributes in the Glaubenslehre are related. In the Glaubenslehre, first, Schleiermacher discusses the feeling of absolute dependence as it is abstracted from and presupposed by the determination of the religious self-consciousness by Jesus Christ, under this heading treating the attributes of eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience.21 Second, he considers the determination of the religious self-consciousness by sin, treating divine holiness and justice (and mercy, which is ruled out as a divine attribute, but admitted in some sense as a readiness to remit punishment under the heading of divine justice).22 Third and finally, he considers the religious self-consciousness as determined by grace, treating divine love and wisdom.23

The first two treatments of the divine attributes seem to be bound by strict methodological guides which prohibit the attributes predicated of God from applying to God’s nature. Some allege that this stricture uniformly applies across all three treatments of the divine attributes. Jay Wesley Richards and others24 argue that Schleiermacher consistently follows his dogmatic method and therefore “divine attributes attribute nothing real in or to God, but serve rather as ‘pointers’ to the ‘Whence’ of the divine causality. He has at most an ascriptive, but not a descriptive way of speaking about God.”25 If such an interpretation

18. Hans Urs von Balthasar, Love Alone Is Credible (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004).
19. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Systematic Theology, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: T. & T. Clark, 1998), pp. 363–364.
20. Jürgen Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1981), pp. 11–18.
21. CF, §50-6, pp. 279–335.
22. CF, §79-85, pp. 489–537.
23. CF, §164-169, pp. 1004–1017.
24. Robert Merrihew Adams, “Faith and Religious Knowledge,” in Jacqueline Mariña (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 44–47. Stratis, God’s Being Toward Fellowship, p. 85.
25. Jay Wesley Richards, “Schleiermacher’s Divine Attributes: Their Coherence and Reference,” Encounter, 57(2), 1996, pp. 166–167.
were accurate, it would amount to a complete vindication of Barth’s charge of
dogmatic nominalism. Others allege that Schleiermacher excludes the final
attributes of love and wisdom from the methodological strictures undergirding
the first two sets of divine attributes in a way which is consistent with his dog-
matic methodology. For proponents of this view, for example, James Gordon,
the first two sets of attributes are empty conceptual frames, awaiting the positive
content provided in the final treatment of divine wisdom and love. Gordon
goes so far as to suggest “that Schleiermacher’s general treatment of the divine
attributes in Part I is superseded by his Christian treatment of God’s nature at the
conclusion of Part II.” While still others—even sympathetic readers of
Schleiermacher like Van A. Harvey and Bruce McCormack—allege that while
Schleiermacher excludes love and wisdom from these wider methodological
strictures, he does so inconsistently with his theological methodology.

In what follows, I offer my own interpretation of how Schleiermacher
relates his various treatments of the divine attributes and what this reveals
about his supposed dogmatic nominalism.

Schleiermacher’s Approach to Religion and Dogmatic
Methodology

Before directly analyzing Schleiermacher’s treatment of the divine attributes in
the Glaubenslehre, we briefly examine the wider aims of Schleiermacher’s
approach to religion. Schleiermacher’s dogmatics takes its rise out of the prob-
lems bequeathed to theology by Kant, and additionally consists in a ramified
endeavor to secure theology over against rising criticisms from the extra-dog-
matic sciences. Harvey explicates in short compass Schleiermacher’s solution:

26. James Gordon, “A ‘Glaring Misunderstanding’? Schleiermacher, Barth and the Nature
of Speculative Theology,” International Journal of Systematic Theology, 16(3), July 1,
2014, pp. 313–330.
27. Gordon, “A ‘Glaring Misunderstanding’?” p. 328 (emphasis added).
28. Van A. Harvey, “A Word in Defense of Schleiermacher’s Theological Method,” The
Journal of Religion, 42(3), July 1, 1962, pp. 165–166; Bruce L. McCormack, “Not a
Possible God but the God Who Is: Observations of Friedrich Schleiermacher’s Doctrine
of God,” in G. W. Neven and Bruce L McCormack (eds), The Reality of Faith in Theology
(Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 111–138.
29. Cf. Jacqueline Mariña, “Schleiermacher on the Philosopher’s Stone: The Shaping of
Schleiermacher’s Early Ethics by the Kantian Legacy,” The Journal of Religion, 2, 1999,
pp. 193–215.
30. Dole’s description of Schleiermacher’s “eternal covenant” is a helpful introduction to
the importance of this theme in framing Schleiermacher’s dogmatic methodology; Andrew
C. Dole, Schleiermacher on Religion and the Natural Order (Oxford: Oxford University
Schleiermacher, like Kant, conceived of God as the transcendental ground of knowledge and action and not, properly speaking, an object of knowledge. . . . However, the awareness of this ground would have to be mediated to the self through some other “organ” or “faculty” than reason.  

Schleiermacher identifies God neither as a phenomenal object within the world, conditioned by the causal activities of other beings—which would subject God to the problems of Kant’s fourth antinomy—nor as a postulation of either theoretical or practical reason. Rather, Schleiermacher identifies feeling as a pre-cognitive form of awareness, an immediate consciousness of the self as dependent upon God, which is neither derivative from nor reducible to either speculative or practical reason but serves as the foundation of both and as the “organ” (so to speak) of God-consciousness.

As explicated in §4 and §5 of the *Glaubenslehre*, feeling is not a derivative, marginal, or shifting emotion, but a pre-theoretical awareness of self. Religion concerns a particular modification of feeling, a feeling of absolute and total receptivity or dependence, which cannot “proceed from the effect of some object somehow given to us, for some counteraction to such an object would always take place.” As Andrew Dole explains, Schleiermacher aims to deny “the possibility of God’s being given in experience, on the grounds that the source of absolute dependence could not be internal to the *Zusammenhang* [the inter-connected nature-system of causal interactions] that comprises the sensory realm.” Like Kant, Schleiermacher denies that God could be given to perception in a particular sensible encounter with an object or can be discerned in any object in the world, which would require that God be conditioned by the system of finite causal interactions. Rather, the feeling of absolute dependence is a transcendental condition underlying all particular experiences, actions, or thoughts. It “accompanies all our self-initiated activity, thus also our whole existence. . . . It is the consciousness that our entire self-initiated activity issues from elsewhere.”

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31. Harvey, “A Word in Defence of Schleiermacher’s Theological Method,” p. 157.
32. *CF*, §3.1, 8-10. Pedersen rightly seeks to evaluate Kant’s influence of Schleiermacher *a posteriori*; Pedersen, *The Eternal Covenant*, pp. 57–59.
33. *CF*, §4.3, 24; *GL*, 1:38.
34. Andrew Dole, “What Is ‘Religious Experience’ in Schleiermacher’s Dogmatics, and Why Does It Matter?,” *Journal of Analytic Theology*, 4(1), 2016, p. 50.
35. *CF*, §4.4, pp. 24–27.
36. *CF*, §4.3, p. 24; *GL*, 1:38.
“God” “signifies . . . simply that which is codeterminant in this feeling.”

God is thus the “whence,” the cause of this feeling which underlies theoretical and practical reason and is not to be located or identified with any particular object in the sensible world of causal interactions.

While every individual intuits something of this feeling of absolute dependence, redemption consists in an increasing domination of the self-consciousness by an abiding awareness of the feeling of absolute dependence, through the influence of the perfect God-consciousness of Jesus Christ made present and potent through the Spirit in the context of the church’s ministry. By contrast, sin is “all that has hindered the free development of God-consciousness.”

Despite the brevity of this introduction, let us proceed to consider how Schleiermacher’s approach, grounded in the feeling of absolute dependence, impacts the dogmatic methodology undergirding his account of the knowledge of God and the divine attributes.

For Schleiermacher, a properly non-speculative dogmatics concerns itself solely with reflection upon the “whence” or source of this feeling of absolute dependence, and while such a dogmatics will be expressed didactically, it is not theoretical. At the foundation of any religion, according to Schleiermacher, is an “originative fact” from which the historical phenomena of this religion arises. This original fact, or “revelation,” is an act of divine causal activity aiming at redemption, but revelation does not consist in the communication of information, which would imply that it appeals to humans as “knowing beings” [erkennendes Wesen], that is, to the rational faculty, rather than intuition or feeling, and “in that case revelation itself would be originatively and essentially doctrine” (which Schleiermacher denies). For Schleiermacher, Christian “doctrines” are didactic expressions which communicate something of the feeling which arises in the Christian experience of redemption. On this basis, Schleiermacher rejects knowledge of God, concluding that no religion possesses total truth as if “God would make known how God is in and of Godself.” No causal act of God, even the event of redemption and/or revelation, serves to give knowledge of God, and furthermore, as redemption increases its effect upon an individual, there is no increase in intellectual content—since the “content” of God-consciousness is merely the existential

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37. *CF*, §4.4, p. 26; *GL*, 1:40.
38. cf. *CF*, §11-3, pp. 79–102.
39. *CF*, §66.1, p. 402; *GL*, 1:406.
40. *CF*, §10.Post, p. 75; *GL*, 1:90.
41. *CF*, §10.Post, p. 76; *GL*, 1:90.
42. *CF*, §15.1, pp. 116–117.
43. *CF*, §10.Post, p. 78; *GL*, 1:92.
awareness of absolute dependence upon God. The effect of redemption is not an increasing knowledge of God, but an increasing facility in keeping the feeling of God-consciousness from being overwhelmed by sensible impulses (i.e. sin). Dogmatics, therefore, does not concern theoretical truths, but the setting forth of didactic descriptions of pre-theoretical experience.

As follows from the foregoing considerations, in his discussion of theological method, Schleiermacher famously distinguishes between three types of dogmatic expression: descriptions, first, of human states of mind; second, of divine attributes or modes of action; and third, of the constitution of the world. Schleiermacher reasons that all dogmatic statements which are rightly based on the feeling of absolute dependence are “formulation[s] treating of a distinct state of mind and heart [i.e., the first form of expression]. Consequently, all propositions of faith-doctrine must also be capable of being set forth as formulations expressing such a state.”

He concludes that “description[s] of human states [are] the basic dogmatic form, whereas the second and third forms are permissible only to the extent that they can be explicated on the basis of propositions of the first form.” It is easy to miss the startling breadth of Schleiermacher’s claims. Schleiermacher is not claiming that on the basis of certain states of mind, we can reason to or deduce theoretical truths regarding the constitution of the world or the divine being, attributes, or activities. Rather, Schleiermacher contends that the theologian inevitably employs improper forms of statement that are phrased in the form of theoretical propositions concerning the divine being or the constitution of the world. However, these improper statements really amount to imperfect expressions of the modification of our states of consciousness. If this interpretation were incorrect, Schleiermacher would not suggest that “all propositions that belong to Christian faith-doctrine could be expressed in that basic form [i.e., as descriptions of human mental states], without dispute.” Schleiermacher proceeds, as would follow from this interpretation, saying that “it would also seem, however, that the two other forms [i.e., descriptions of the world and the divine being and attributes] could be entirely shunted aside being viewed as superfluous [überflüssig].” My suggestion that Schleiermacher’s claims about the divine being and activities amount to “improper” forms of expression follows inexorably from his statement about the “superfluousness” or “redundancy” of

44. CF, §34.3, p. 201.
45. CF, §15.1-2, pp. 116–119.
46. CF, §30.1, p. 183; GL, 1:194.
47. CF, §30.2, p. 184; GL, 1:195.
48. CF, §30.3, p. 184; GL, 1:195.
49. CF, §30.3, p. 184; GL, 1:195.
these claims. If, in contrast, on the basis of the alteration of their mental state, the theologian could derive knowledge of the divine being through some sort of speculative or transcendental movement, then this would imply a knowledge of God’s being or activities which could not be reduced to a mere claim about the human mind even if it was derived on the basis of extrapolation from alterations in human consciousness. If claims about the divine being, attributes, or activities can be eliminated without any loss to the proper content of dogmatics, as Schleiermacher insists, this implies that claims which look as if they imply a knowledge of God’s being or attributes and thus that they concern something more than the alternation of human consciousness in fact do not.

This is not merely a methodological matter that is discarded or relativized as the Glaubenslehre unfolds, for Schleiermacher similarly argues in his letters to Dr Lücke—which clarify his intentions for the Glaubenslehre—that dogmatics could one day properly function without statements concerning the divine attributes and constitution of the world.50 For Schleiermacher, a dogmatics that eliminated descriptions of the divine being, attributes, and activities would allow for a dogmatics that was “completely accurate... in reproducing the content of Christian doctrine,”51 but, as Schleiermacher goes on to resignedly admit, a dogmatics proceeding on this purified basis is “at the present time” impossible.52 Such a purified dogmatics was not presently possible, because it would be so unlike both past dogmatics and the present speech of the church that it could not serve to effectively “purify faith-doctrine of alien components,”53 or—as he states in his letters to Lücke—to “rid us of all the scholastic rubbish still cluttering our discipline.”54 Simply stated, Schleiermacher’s dogmatics will be required to engage in a great deal of speech that appears to involve knowledge of the divine being, attributes, and activities to have a shared language from which to critique the doctrinal impropriety that falsely thinks such propositions amount to knowledge.

In sum, for Schleiermacher, we do not postulate, on the basis of God’s causal activity of enlivening our religious consciousness, certain attributes characterizing God’s nature or being in a sort transcendental or speculative procedure.55 All of dogmatics consists in expressions of our feeling of

50. Schleiermacher, On the Glaubenslehre, p. 70.
51. CF, §30.3, p. 184; GL, 1:195.
52. CF, §30.3, p. 185; GL, 1:195.
53. CF, §30.3, p. 185; GL, 1:196.
54. Schleiermacher, On the Glaubenslehre, p. 72.
55. There are transcendental modes of argument in the Glaubenslehre, for example, in the doctrine of creation and Christology, but not deductions from features of the world or human consciousness to divine attributes which apply to God’s nature.
absolute dependence. It involves no claims to knowledge about God’s being or attributes or the constitution of the world.\textsuperscript{56} In fact, it involves no knowledge properly speaking at all, but uses the didactic language associated with knowledge and theoretical thought precisely to undercut prior, improperly speculative ways of speaking about God.

This is a consistent theme across Schleiermacher’s corpus; right from the outset in \textit{On Religion}, Schleiermacher sharply distinguishes the study of religion from both morals and metaphysics. Arguing that most traditional theologies have falsely presumed to do metaphysics because they “aim at knowledge of the nature of the universe and a highest being whose work it is.”\textsuperscript{57} It is only after renouncing all attempts to “know” the Supreme Being that we can rightly see that “Religion’s essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling.” Religion does not build on a foundation of feeling to proceed then to theoretical or practical knowledge. No, it is “opposed to these two in everything.”\textsuperscript{58} This is because, when you feel or intuit something, the proper domain of religion; what you “intuit and perceive is not the nature of things, but their action upon you. What you know or believe about the nature of things lies far beyond the realm of intuition.”\textsuperscript{59} This is the key point, which Schleiermacher expands upon in more detail in the \textit{Glaubenslehre}. Schleiermacher suggests that “feeling” and “intuition” allow us to speak only about “effects” upon our consciousness, but we cannot upon the basis of these effects arrive at any conclusions about the nature of the cause.\textsuperscript{60} As we proceed, we will unearth Schleiermacher’s rationale for these methodological strictures regarding causality, demonstrating their alignment with Schleiermacher’s early modern philosophical context and the way in which they impact his construal of the doctrine of God. Furthermore, I will argue that they are consistently adhered to throughout the \textit{Glaubenslehre}, regardless of whether one “starts” one’s interpretation with the introduction or the conclusion. If Schleiermacher is consistent across the \textit{Glaubenslehre}, as I will

\textsuperscript{56} This fits with Jame Duke and Francis Fiorenza’s reading of Schleiermacher’s \textit{Dialektik}, which argues that God cannot be \textit{known}, but only presupposed as the precognitive identity of thinking and willing with being; Duke and Fiorenza, “Translator’s Introduction,” in Schleiermacher, \textit{On the Glaubenslehre}, 25. Cf. Schleiermacher’s argument that one’s being determined by revelation does not imply any knowledge or ideas, but is an “immediate existential relationship”; \textit{ibid.}, pp. 40–41.

\textsuperscript{57} Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers}, trans. Richard Croter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 20.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 23–24. He carries on to make the same point again, \textit{ibid.}, p. 26.

\textsuperscript{60} See the helpful interpretation in Stratis, \textit{God’s Being Towards Fellowship}, pp. 31–34.
contend he is, then what counts is less where one “begins” in reading him and more whether one does justice to the entirety of the *Glaubenslehre*.\(^{61}\)

**Schleiermacher’s Doctrine of the Divine Being and Attributes**

As follows from this methodology, when Schleiermacher comes to his first section on the divine attributes as they are presupposed by Christian God-consciousness (derived by a process of abstracting from our redeemed God-consciousness that which is universally presupposed by it, rather than by unreconstructed natural theology as some critics allege),\(^{62}\) he concludes that “none of the attributes that we ascribe to God are to designate something particular in God; rather, they are to designate only something particular in the way in which the feeling of absolute dependence is to be referred to God.”\(^{63}\) If it were to express something in God or to “present knowledge of the divine being,” this would give the divine attributes a “speculative” character, and then “each of them would have to express something in God that the other does not express.”\(^{64}\) Thus, Schleiermacher proceeds to reject that the divine attributes denote something distinct in God, but even more, he rejects that they even denote distinct “relations of the divine being to the world.”\(^{65}\) When we speak

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\(^{61}\) Recent readings of Schleiermacher argue that Barthian-inspired critiques allow Schleiermacher’s initial methodological discussions in the *Glaubenslehre* to overdetermine the concrete content of his dogmatics, most fully expressed in the final sections treating redemption in Christ and the trinity. They thus advocate reading the *Glaubenslehre* from “back to front,” “de-emphasizing” his method; cf. Pedersen, *Eternal Covenant*, pp. 17–18, 168-169, and Shelli M. Poe, *Essential Trinitarianism: Schleiermacher as Trinitarian Theologian* (London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2017), p. 165. Or they contend that “virtually all the metaphysical language” in the first part of the *Glaubenslehre* should be viewed as “metaphysically ambiguous and indeterminate”; Williams, *Schleiermacher the Theologian*, p. 161. However, this can result in an opposite error, as Pedersen’s account of divine wisdom, and his corresponding notion of the world as the complete manifestation of the divine nature, speaks of a “knowledge” of the divine nature which is possible on the basis of reflection upon the natural order, without accounting for how this claim coheres with the methodological statements of *CF*, §10 and §15 cited above or the claims in *On Religion*. Pedersen, *Eternal Covenant*, 139. Similarly, we noted Gordon’s claim that the prior treatments of the divine attributes are “superseded” by the later treatments. Gordon, “A ‘Glaring Misunderstanding’?” p. 328. My aim is to interpret the *Glaubenslehre* in its entirety, refusing to undermine either the earlier methodological or the final treatments related to redemption, but to assume, as far as possible, that Schleiermacher is consistent.

\(^{62}\) *CF*, §62.3, p. 384.

\(^{63}\) *CF*, §50, p. 279; *GL*, 1:300.

\(^{64}\) *CF*, §50.2, p. 282; *GL*, 1:302.

\(^{65}\) *CF*, §50.2, p. 282; *GL*, 1:303.
of these attributes, we speak about the manner in which our consciousness is
determined in redemption and what is presupposed by this determination, saying
nothing about the existence of certain attributes in God or causal relations
of God to the world. As Schleiermacher concludes,

taken either individually or in combination, such attributes would also not express
the nature of God in Godself [das Wesen Gottes an sich], just as it is then also the
case that the very nature of anything else can never be known based on what it has
effecte

Schleiermacher—at this crucial moment—again calls upon a foundational
assumption, evinced by both Hume and Kant, that a nature can never be
known on the basis of its effects. As Ebeling states, evincing this same assump-
tion, Schleiermacher “calls upon the general rule that it is not possible to learn
from an effect the nature of that which caused the effect.” This Humean and
Kantian assumption—what Ebeling labels a “general rule,” rightly identifying
the near-unquestioned status this notion attains in early modernity—is what
implies that, as Schleiermacher states, any dogmatic procedure which “presup-
poses a knowing acquaintance with the divine nature . . . would be a purely
speculative one.” Therefore, the divine attributes treated in this section do
not “designate something of a special and different sort in God,” for then each of
these attributes “would also have to be an expression for the divine nature.”
Rather these attributes, because they “relate only [nur] to divine causality . . . denote nothing that is of a real nature in God [nichts reelles in Gott sind].”

Schleiermacher is consistent in this assertion, continually affirming that since
the divine attributes treated in this first section—and in the subsequent section
treating the divine attributes as determined by the consciousness of sin—are

66. CF, §50.3, p. 285; GL, 1:305.
67. For example, David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary
J. Norton (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1.3.6.1, 61.
68. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1998), A11-2/B24-6.
69. Gerhard Ebeling, “Schleiermacher’s Doctrine of the Divine Attributes,” in Robert W.
Funk (ed.), Schleiermacher as Contemporary (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p.
140.
70. CF, §50.3, p. 287; GL, 1:307.
71. CF, §51.2, p. 292 (emphasis added); GL, 1:311-2. This is also because Schleiermacher’s
particular view of divine simplicity excludes contrasting, finite predicates being attrib-
uted to God.
72. CF, §51.1, p. 290 (emphasis added); GL, 1:310.
73. CF, §§83.1-3, pp. 15–21.
didactic descriptions of the determination of our mental states, they speak to what is experienced by us, and thus to the divine causality, but do not allow us to speculate back from this effect to certain features in the divine cause. As he states in concluding the first section on the divine attributes, these attributes “would in no way pass for a description of God’s nature.” Nonetheless, “an activity which does not admit of being thought of under the form of eternal omnipotence [a summation of the first four attributes presupposed by Christian God-consciousness] must not be posited as a divine activity.” In Barthian terms, we might call this a dogmatic nominalism of the highest order.

At this juncture, it is important to address some recent, contrary interpretations. The claims of these paragraphs are insufficiently engaged by the, in many other regards insightful, analyses of Poe and Pedersen. Poe suggests that for Schleiermacher, divine causality is an expression of the nature of God and thus knowledge of divine causality implies knowledge of God’s being, suggesting that while Schleiermacher himself never explicitly makes this identification, the Glaubenslehre “implies it at every turn.” Yet Schleiermacher not only fails to make this identification (as Poe rightly notes), but furthermore in the contexts cited in the previous two paragraphs, he explicitly denies it. Similarly, Pedersen claims that “the investigation of the natural world is the investigation of the divine essence as the investigation of the divine essence’s effects. The inference from divine effects to God as cause is, of course, perfectly traditional.” Such a movement from creaturely effect to divine essential cause is “traditional,” being commonly affirmed by pre-modern Christian theologians indebted to Aristotelian accounts of causality, for whom an effect innately and derivatively resembles its cause. It is similarly affirmed by pre-modern theologians employing Neoplatonic-inspired account of participation, in which God’s effects participate in, and thus imitate or resemble God’s essential being and perfections (and of course these two ways of thinking often

74. They also concern the divine causality in its operation more widely in the world, insofar as this can be ascertained on the basis of transcendental deductions made on the basis of our feeling.

75. CF, §56.Post, p. 335 (emphasis added); GL, 1:356. The German term “activity” (Thätigkeit) only occurs once in this sentence, but the translator adds a second instance to clarify Schleiermacher’s point. Schleiermacher here summarizes his intentions for the first section on the divine attributes, suggesting that he aims not to posit attributes to the divine nature, but to outline the attributes or characteristics of God’s activity and thereby to secure that any activity which is not described in terms of eternal omnipotence will not be mistaken for a “divine one” (auch nicht als eine göttliche darf gesezt werden); GL, 1:356.

76. Poe, Essential Trinitarianism, 25, pp. 81–84.

77. Pedersen, The Eternal Covenant, p. 141; cf. ibid., p. 173.
coincide such as for Thomas Aquinas). But again, Schleiermacher explicitly rejects these traditional assumptions. His views of causality share more in common with Hume and Kant than with Aristotle and Plotinus. It is precisely the rejection of these sorts of views of causality, and the way this was thought by Hume in his Dialogues and Kant in his Critiques to undermine traditional ways of coming to God via his causal relation to creation, which precipitated the modern crisis for the doctrine of God to which Schleiermacher’s theology responds.

In sum, while modern systematic theologians might “think with and beyond Schleiermacher,” adjusting his theology to accord with their intuitions or more traditional views, Schleiermacher himself countenances no attempt to know God’s nature or attributes through tracing back from God’s finite effects to their cause. He is a thoroughly early modern thinker in this regard, evincing prototypical early modern philosophical assumptions in a way that sharply distinguishes him from traditional accounts of God’s being and attributes.

Yet when we arrive at Schleiermacher’s final treatment of the divine attributes of love and wisdom, Schleiermacher makes the startling and seemingly contradictory claim that

insofar as anything true is said of God in what we posit as a divine attribute, the same must also be an expression of the divine nature itself. . . . only love and no other divine attribute can be equated with God in this fashion.

Despite the jarring surprise one feels in stumbling upon this claim following Schleiermacher’s prior accounts of divine attribution, as one considers what redemption, God-consciousness, and love consist in for Schleiermacher, this seemingly contradictory assertion emerges as entirely consonant with prior sections of the Glaubenslehre.

For Schleiermacher, the existence of God in Christ consists in Christ’s pure, vital receptivity to God, as his God-consciousness is not for a moment overwhelmed by the sensuous toward God-forgetfulness. This is—for Schleiermacher—equivalent to “a being of God in him,” as it allows for a reception of the pure actuality of the divine existence. In redemption, God comes to be united with, and thus to exist in the redeemed as well through the mediatorial influence of Christ, made present to the church by his Spirit. Thus, the excitation of our God-consciousness in redemption concerns an

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78. CF, §50.3-51.2, pp. 285–292.
79. CF, §167, p. 1007-1008; GL, 2:503-4.
80. CF, §94.2, p. 576; GL, II 56.
81. CF, §94.2-3, pp. 576–580.
increasing facility in maintaining God-consciousness in every situation, and this “is itself a constant communion with God”82 and an increasing remembrance of the “the union of the divine being with human nature.”83 In sum, the “God-consciousness” of a redeemed person is an existential awareness of God determining one’s consciousness by virtue of God’s union with them. Finally, divine love is merely the disposition underlying “the union of divine being with human nature.”84 Simply stated, “the Supreme Being communicates itself and . . . the essence of divine love consists therein.”85

With these definitions in view, we are able to outline how Schleiermacher has astonishingly succeeded, within the confines of his early modern methodology, of speaking of God’s nature in this single instance of divine love. Even in this final treatment of the divine attributes, he objects to “any concept of God. . . established along a speculative path,” and thus denies that “God would be [sei] eternity, or omnipotence, or the like.”86 Thus, his methodology is not discarded or superseded in this final section, and again by virtue of his Humean and Kantian beliefs about causality, he rejects that any of the previous divine attributes which refer solely to the divine causality are aspects or descriptions of the divine nature. Yet consistent with this methodology, Schleiermacher claims that “only love and no other divine attribute can be equated with God.”87 Love uniquely is equated with the divine nature, because the feeling of absolute dependence is “in and of itself a copositing of God in self-consciousness.”88 If all of dogmatics concerns didactic descriptions of the feeling of absolute dependence which itself concerns God co-existing in or being united with human consciousness, then predicating love of God, which just is a divine disposition toward co-existence or union with another, is the one essential (i.e. applicable to the divine nature) attribute that is identical to a description of our mental state as modified in redemption. Thus, Schleiermacher states, “we find that we have [the consciousness] of divine love directly [unmittelbar] in the consciousness of redemption.”89 It is directly or immediately given in redemption, because to speak of the feeling of absolute dependence is to speak about an existential awareness of the union of God with the consciousness of the redeemed and to speak about God’s love is—nearly

82. *CF*, §62.2, p. 383; *GL*, 1:393.
83. *CF*, §164.2, p. 1001; *GL*, 2:495.
84. *CF*, §165.1, p. 1004; *GL*, 2:499.
85. *CF*, §166.1, p. 1005; *GL*, 2:500.
86. *CF*, §167.1, p. 1008 (Emphasis added); *GL*, 2:504.
87. *CF*, §167.1, p. 1008; *GL*, 2:504.
88. *CF*, §30.1, p. 183; *GL*, 1:194.
89. *CF*, §167.2, p. 1009 (Emphasis added); *GL*, 2:506.
equivalently—to say that God is disposed to be united with the redeemed’s consciousness. Therefore, in this single instance, a description of a mental state is nearly tautological with a description of the divine nature, and thus one can speak of the divine nature without resorting to speculation or the positing of an attribute to a cause on the basis of its effect. This secures Schleiermacher’s consistency across the *Glaubenslehre*, allowing him to speak of God’s nature as united in love with the redeemed, without violating his methodological convictions which deny that knowledge of a nature can be attained on the basis of its effects. The attribution of divine love does not proceed on the basis of the divine causality, but is an “existential” statement regarding the divine presence with and to our consciousness. As Williams states, “for Schleiermacher the problem is not to get beyond feeling...but rather to isolate, describe, and interpret the divine presence through its distinctive mode of givenness.”

Schleiermacher’s tightly defined concept of divine love—which refers solely to a divine disposition for unitive presence with human nature—allows love to be essentially predicated of the divine nature, rather than referred to merely divine causality. Thus, saying “God is love” is a properly dogmatic claim according to Schleiermacher’s methodology outlined in the initial sections of the *Glaubenslehre*, in that it consists solely in a description of our mental state, but is nonetheless and precisely by describing our mental state also a description of the divine nature united to our consciousness.

In conclusion, when Schleiermacher states that “the verse John 1:14 is the basic text for all dogmatics,” this is not a rather general affirmation of a vague Christocentrism, but undergirds his central methodological claim that “dogmatic statements are derivative, whereas the inner state of feelings is

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90. This, *contra* Harvey, “A Word in Defense of Schleiermacher’s Theological Method,” pp. 165–166; McCormack, “Not a Possible God but the God Who Is,” 111-38. Some strategies for reading the *Glaubenslehre* “backwards” or of viewing the initial sections as indeterminate likewise seem to imply implicit inconsistency.
91. Although of course God comes to be united with us by virtue of divine causality.
92. The language of course God comes to be united with us by virtue of divine causality.
93. Williams, “Schleiermacher and Feuerbach on the Intentionality of Religious Consciousness,” 442. Likewise see Williams, *Schleiermacher as Theologian*, p. 37.
94. *CF*, §165.1, p. 1004. This is a major theme of Stratis, *God’s Being Toward Fellowship*, p. 176.
95. The attribute of divine wisdom is then “directly generated” by this description of divine love, in that wisdom is “nothing other than Supreme Being in its absolute...and originally complete self-presentation and communication.” *CF*, §168.1, p. 1010. *GL*, 2:508. Wisdom therefore, merely refers to “the unfolding of divine love”; *CF*, §168.1, p. 1011; *GL*, 2:508.
96. Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre*, p. 59.
original.”97 John’s claim that “Word became flesh” is not merely the center of Christian dogmatics for Schleiermacher, it is in a very real sense the sole first-order theological claim of his dogmatics, in that it is the only statement about God’s nature which can be uttered purely upon the basis of the feeling of absolute dependence. God was in Christ, and by the Spirit, God is in the church, and therefore God is in us.98 This existential relation is all one intuits about God, for the feeling of absolute dependence, is simply equivalent to an awareness of his presence, and God’s disposition for unitive presence just is what it means to say “God is love.”

Barthian Critiques

In this section, I offer a reformulated, nuanced version of Barth’s criticism of Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God. Yet before this, it is important to observe that my interpretation of Schleiermacher is consistent with many of the claims brought forth in the Schleiermacher renaissance against Barthian-inspired objections. In particular, I read the final section on the trinity as a summative copostone99 rather than an appendix to the Glaubenslehre; I see Schleiermacher as a consistent and unyielding anti-speculative, Christocentric theologian, and I reject that the Glaubenslehre’s introduction is an inappropriately foundationalist justification for Christian belief. All of these matters would require significant expansion and nuance, but while I proceed to argue that particular Barthian critiques of Schleiermacher have purchase, this is not a total rejection of the many attempts within the “Schleiermacher renaissance” to vindicate Schleiermacher.

While Schleiermacher’s is not a thoroughgoing anthropomorphic subjectivism, which prohibits all claims about the divine nature, James Gordon, who insists upon the near total innocence of Schleiermacher with regard to Barth’s charges, nonetheless rightly states that “Schleiermacher’s dogmatic propositions are an ‘absolutizing’ of human nature, so to speak, but not of a human nature abstracted from God’s concrete activity in history.”100 While there is an absolutizing of human nature, in that the feeling of absolute dependence is the

97. Schleiermacher, On the Glaubenslehre, 59. cf. §96.3, pp. 589–590.
98. This is the substance of Schleiermacher’s doctrine of the trinity, the cap-stone of his theology. Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, §170-2, pp. 1019–1037; cf. Friedrich Schleiermacher, An Essay on the Trinity: On the Discrepancy between the Sabellian and Athanasian Method of Representing the Doctrine of the Trinity, trans. M. Stuart (Columbus: Beloved Publishing, 2018).
99. CF, §170.1, 1021.
100. Gordon, “A ‘Glaring Misunderstanding?’” pp. 321–322.
only basis upon which we may speak of God, it is not an absolutizing of human nature in the abstract, on the basis of a sort of “pure nature,” but rather human self-consciousness as determined by God in Christ and Spirit. For Gordon, this rules out “a God behind Jesus Christ because [Schleiermacher] sees God’s essence as existing eternally and only in the movement of redeeming love in Jesus Christ.” 101 Gordon’s description is accurate as far as it goes, but does not succeed in finally answering the Barthian criticisms I have outlined.

Schleiermacher’s doctrine of the divine attributes results in a suffocating constriction of what can be claimed about God’s nature according to what is permissible solely as a description of the redeemed’s God-consciousness. This is what Barth fears—in some of his final statements about Schleiermacher—occurs in Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God. He notes that theology is subject to “the narrowness of Schleiermacher’s anthropological horizon . . . [As] Schleiermacher made the Christianly pious person into the criterion and content of his theology.” 102 In his mature engagements with Schleiermacher, Barth recognizes that Schleiermacher is in his “own manner Christocentric,” that his “theological intentions . . . were basically right: sola fide, solus Christus,” 103 and even that Schleiermacher saw “the danger of a theology which is essentially apologetic.” 104 In other words, Barth already articulated and affirmed many of the contemporary criticisms of his reading of Schleiermacher. Yet a remaining problem with Schleiermacher, from Barth’s perspective, is that “His methods consistently went awry.” 105 Gordon is basically right—in an extraordinarily limited sense—to say that there is no God behind the back of Jesus Christ for Schleiermacher. However, all we know about this God is that he is love, which itself is reduced to the claim that he is a co-determinant of, and thus united with human consciousness. 106 This is a significant restriction of what can be known about God, drastically limiting the scope of the doctrine of God and strongly identifying God with God’s economic action toward human consciousness.

To explicate this worry, let us briefly examine another Barth-inspired, “nominalist”-style critique of Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God. Stephen

101. Gordon, “A 'Glaring Misunderstanding?'” p. 323.
102. Barth, “Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher,” p. 127 (emphasis added).
103. Barth in Tice, “Interviews with Karl Barth and Reflections on His Interpretations of Schleiermacher,” in Barth and Schleiermacher, p. 52.
104. Karl Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), p. 431.
105. Barth in Tice, “Interviews with Karl Barth and Reflections on His Interpretations of Schleiermacher,” p. 52.
106. CF, §165.1, p. 1004.
Holmes recounts the development of a relatively broad consensus around “the Thomistic claim, codified in the doctrine of divine simplicity, that God is identical with his attributes.” For this consensus, for something to qualify as a divine attribute, it must be equivalent to the divine nature and thus complete the statement “God is . . . .” Yet, as Holmes proceeds to recount, this synthesis was shattered by Kant and Hume, as the effect of their different philosophies was to question the extent to which humans can speak about things-in-themselves or natures. Holmes identifies Schleiermacher as “the first great figure” to respond to these transformations and concludes that

For Schleiermacher, and for much theology that follows him, a doctrine of the divine attributes is not an answer to the question “Who is God?” so much as an account of our experience of the divine. This shift of the point of reference of the doctrine, from the eternal divine life to the economy, has become endemic in modern theology.

Holmes’s excellent analysis is nearly correct. Schleiermacher agrees with the definition—epitomized in the foregoing Thomistic claim Holmes recounts—that for something to be a genuine divine attribute and thus to complete the proposition “God is . . .,” it must be equivalent to the divine nature, stating, “Insofar as something true is said of God in what we posit as a divine attribute, the same must also be an expression for the divine nature itself.” Yet, as he continues,

Indeed, for the same reason, it would have to be possible then to form similar statements [i.e., statements similar to the claim of 1 John 4:16 that “God is love”], regarding all other divine attributes, if they too are not to be posited as such erroneously. Yet, such statements do not appear in Scripture, nor has it ever been set forth in ecclesial doctrine that God would be “eternity” or “omnipotence” or the like. Moreover, if we could at least venture to say that God is loving omnipotence or omnipotent love, we would still grant that in the one form no less than in the other, only love is being equated with the being or nature of God [nur die Liebe dem Sein oder Wesen Gottes gleichgesetzt wird].

107. Stephen R. Holmes, “Divine Attributes,” in Mapping Modern Theology, ed. Bruce L. McCormack and Kelly M. Kapic (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), p. 49.
108. Holmes, “Divine Attributes,” p. 48.
109. Holmes, “Divine Attributes,” p. 51.
110. Holmes, “Divine Attributes,” p. 52.
111. CF, §167.1, 1007-8; GL II, p. 504. Pedersen’s interpretation of Schleiermacher, in which the natural world is the complete presentation of the divine nature, implies that the only
Schleiermacher speaks of God as “omnipotent love,” because when we speak about God on the basis of our redeemed God-consciousness, we make reference to God’s loving causality, and the union with God established thereby. However, on this basis, we are only enabled to make a single claim about the divine nature, the claim of 1 John 4:16 that “God is love,” whereas in speaking of divine omnipotence—even in saying God’s love is omnipotent—we apply this predicate to the divine causality rather than the divine being or nature. This, because to speak of divine omnipotence is solely a way of guaranteeing that we ourselves—and by transcendental extension finite being as a whole—are “absolutely” rather than only “partially” dependent upon God. 

Thus, in light of the final treatment of the divine attributes in relation to grace (i.e. love and wisdom), Poe is right to contend that the earlier treatment of the divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, and omnipresence are revealed merely as a way of insisting that “redemption is completely a matter of grace.” None of the descriptors of divine causality arise to being divine attributes properly speaking (because as per Schleiermacher’s definition cited above, for something to properly qualify as a divine attribute it must count as “an expression of the divine nature” and only divine love so qualifies). These “attributes” speak of divine effects while predicking nothing of the divine cause (and thus, this is a key example of the sort of improper speech Schleiermacher feels he must engage in to purify dogmatics of its prior “scholastic” missteps). To speak of the omnipotence of God’s redeeming love is not, for Schleiermacher, to say that omnipotence can complete the claim that “God is . . . .” It is a statement about our absolute, rather than partial, feeling of dependence upon God, which does not imply anything about the essential attributes of the “whence” of our feeling. Thus, for Schleiermacher, there is only one divine attribute properly speaking, love. And love is tightly and restrictively defined as the disposition for union with human nature. Thus, while in this single case we can speak about something which refers to the divine nature and completes the statement “God is . . . .,” and thus is a divine attribute, it is nonetheless an attribute which is determined entirely economically, referring solely to God’s disposition.
toward union with human nature and not to, for example, some sort of intra-Trinitarian love or beneficence.

It is crucial to note the unique influence of Schleiermacher’s early modern philosophical context at this point and not to falsely assimilate him to the wider theological tradition. Many contemporary defenses of Schleiermacher maintain that he is not guilty of reducing God to a mere correlate of human consciousness. Rather, they suggest that Schleiermacher merely maintains with rigorous consistency that our awareness of God is mediate and inextricable from history, inter-subjective community, and language. \(^{115}\) Many precursors within the Christian tradition can be found for Schleiermacher’s insistence upon the creatureliness and mediate character of human knowledge of God, though we should note and celebrate those ways in which Schleiermacher is uniquely attentive to the early modern resonances of these claims. However, what is starkly innovative and unique is Schleiermacher’s further suggestion that because of the mediate, creaturely, and historical nature of our predicates, they fail—with the exception of divine love—to apply to the divine nature. Pedersen, for example, misses this, when he suggests that Schleiermacher evinces an approach to divine attribution with sufficient similarity to Medieval and Protestant Scholasticism so as to wholly vindicate him, alongside them, of Barth’s charge of dogmatic nominalism. Pedersen is correct to note that a key line of Medieval and Protestant Scholastic thinking avoids dogmatic nominalism. \(^{116}\) However, it is because these thinkers employ Aristotelian and Neoplatonic-inspired accounts of causality, rather than the Humean and Kantian causal notions we identified in Schleiermacher, that one is—in their case—enabled to know the divine nature on the basis of God’s effects. Thus, for Thomas Aquinas (to take one influential example), the divine effects ad extra allow one to analogously predicate attributes of the divine nature, because God’s effects derivatively and imperfectly resemble his nature. \(^{117}\) This is precisely what is disallowed according to Schleiermacher’s post-Kantian and post-Humean methodology. Despite Thomas’ insistence upon the mediate,

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115. To note one of many possible examples, see Sonderegger’s insightful account of Schleiermacher’s “method of indirectness” in Katherine Sonderegger, “The Doctrine of Creation and the Task of Theology,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 84(2), April 1991, pp. 185–203.

116. As Pedersen notes, Barth misses this; Pedersen, “Schleiermacher and Reformed Scholastics on the Divine Attributes,” pp. 413–431.

117. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: R. & T. Washbourne, 1911), I, q.1, a.7. For a helpful introduction to these issues, see: John F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), pp. 228–239.
creaturely character of our analogical knowledge of God’s positive attributes, he nonetheless affirms that *all* the divine names signify the divine substance, and are predicates substantially of God, although they fall short of a full representation of Him. . . So when we say, “God is good,” the meaning is not, “God is the cause of goodness,” or “God is not evil” but the meaning is, “Whatever good we attribute to creatures, pre-exists in God,” and in a more excellent way.\textsuperscript{118}

In sum, my Barth-inspired worry is not that for Schleiermacher; “there is no (human) concept of God that is not the thought of creature thinking Creator,”\textsuperscript{119} nor is the objection that our awareness of God is, for Schleiermacher, given with rather than “apart from the world.”\textsuperscript{120} Rather, the worry has to do with what Schleiermacher thinks follows upon the mediate, creaturely character of our knowledge. In line with his early modern presuppositions, Schleiermacher concludes that the mediate character of our awareness of God requires a radical reduction and restriction of what can be known about God.\textsuperscript{121}

In sum, Schleiermacher is a dogmatic nominalist with respect to any claim about God except the claim that God is love, which is defined in a highly restrictive manner, referring solely to a divine disposition for union with human nature. The result is that as Sonderegger—channeling Barth—states, Schleiermacher’s grounding of all dogmatic statements in the pious consciousness “severely limits the expanse, the range, and the task of Christian theology. . . [it] means that Christian doctrine can only carry a human face.”\textsuperscript{122} Schleiermacher’s account of divine love we have outlined confirms that, formally at least, he escapes the criticism of Feuerbach, yet the broader charge of dogmatic nominalism leveled by Barth, von Balthasar, Pannenberg, Moltmann, and Holmes, and the corresponding accusation of an “anthropologising of theology,” still apply. All of the divine attributes except divine love are about changes in human consciousness rather than aspects of the divine being, and even this one exception is restrictively defined as a disposition for union with human nature. Furthermore, and as Schleiermacher’s contemporary defenders rightly insist, if Schleiermacher is to

\textsuperscript{118} Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q.4, a.3.
\textsuperscript{119} Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{120} Sonderegger, “The Doctrine of Creation and the Task of Theology,” p. 199.
\textsuperscript{121} Sonderegger herself, after her sensitive and appreciative treatment, argues in a complementary way that Schleiermacher misplaces the unifying center of his dialectical “method of indirectness” in the givenness of God to the pious consciousness rather than in the perfect, triune God as such; Sonderegger, “The Doctrine of Creation and the Task of Theology,” 203. *Cf.* Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, pp. 97–112.
\textsuperscript{122} Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, p. 169.
be evaluated on his own terms, he must be evaluated as a theologian, and a biblical theologian at that, rather than a crypto-philosopher or apologist. In this case, it is important to ask whether his nominalist restriction of what we might claim “God is...” is warranted on biblical grounds. Schleiermacher’s claim, cited previously, that aside from “love,” God is never identified with any other attribute in scripture is tendentious at best. One thinks, for example, of the increasing body of research related to biblical patterns of divine naming and the important function the divine names historically served in the Christian doctrinal tradition. It may be that Schleiermacher’s antipathy toward the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament blocked his access to this line of reflection.

One might wonder why the importance given to the divine naming of Exodus 3:14 in the Christian tradition and throughout the rest of Christian scripture should not lead it to be viewed as a revelation of the divine nature accorded equal status to the claim of 1 John 4:16 (particularly given the link often noted between Exodus 3 and the Johannine “I am” statements)? Jordan Barrett further argues, in a manner consonant with many of the approaches to the divine names cited above, that the multiplicity of terms and names scripture employs to describe God are conceptual expansions of the name, or the two names, from Exodus 3, which serve as a revelation of the divine being.

123. Cf. Christine Helmer, “Schleiermacher’s Exegetical Theology and the New Testament,” in Cambridge Companion to Schleiermacher, pp. 229–247. Williams, Schleiermacher as Theologian, p. 163.

124. Cf., §167.1, 1008.

125. Cf. Janet Martin Soskice, “Athens and Jerusalem, Alexandria and Edessa: Is There a Metaphysics of Scripture?,” International Journal of Systematic Theology, 8(2), April 1, 2006, pp. 149–162; Janet Martin Soskice, “Naming God: A Study in Faith and Reason,” in Paul J Griffiths and Reinhard Hütter (eds), Reason and the Reasons of Faith (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2005), pp. 241–254; R. Kendall Soulen, The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011); David Bentley Hart, “The Offering of Names: Metaphysics, Nihilism, and Analogy,” in Reason and the Reasons of Faith, pp. 255–290; John Webster, “The Holiness and Love of God,” Scottish Journal of Theology, 57(3), August 2004, pp. 249–268.

126. Schleiermacher explains that he intends in the Glaubenslehre to reject “a doctrine of God that takes its colours primarily from the pre-Christian era” (i.e. the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament). Schleiermacher, On the Glaubenslehre, p. 53.

127. cf. Janet Martin Soskice, “Aquinas and Augustine on Creation and God as ‘Eternal Being,’” New Blackfriars, 95(1056), March 2014, pp. 190–207; Michael Allen, “Exodus 3 after the Hellenization Thesis,” Journal of Theological Interpretation, 3(2), 2009, pp. 179–196; Matthew Levering, Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology (Malden: Blackwell Pub., 2004), pp. 47–74.

128. Jordan P. Barrett, Divine Simplicity: A Biblical and Trinitarian Account (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), pp. 138–147.
This is because in the Hebrew Bible, a name is not a mere label, but bears an intimate relation to its bearer, as 1 Samuel says of Nabal, “for as his name is, so is he” (1 Samuel 25:25). This reflects some basic assumptions shared by ancient Israelites with their Canaanite neighbors, as Hebrew Bible scholar Benjamin Sommer explains:

The term “name” in ancient Near Eastern cultures can refer to the essence of any thing and hence can be a cipher for the thing itself. Examples of the identity of God and God’s name in biblical literature abound. The synonymous parallelism of God and God’s name in many poetic texts attests to this identity.\(^{129}\)

He further cites Dean McBride, who argues that various texts from the Hebrew Bible understand the relation between name and bearer via a “nominal realism,” which implies that a “name is consubstantial with the thing named . . . [or] a physical extension of the name bearer, an attribute which when uttered evokes the bearer’s life, essence, and power.”\(^{130}\) For example, consider the continual directions of the Psalmist to “sing praise” or to “exalt” or to “give thanks” to the name of the Lord (Psalm 7:17, 9:2, 18:49, 34:3, 54:6, 74:21, 97:12, 99:3, 103:1, 134:1, 138:2) or even to call on the divine name for aid (Psalm 20:1, 20:7, 75:1, Proverbs 18:10). Lest the Psalmist direct his listeners to idolatrously worship or beseech something which is not itself God, it seems we must recognize that the divine “name” is not at a distance from the divine nature, but merely speaks to God in God’s self-revelation and action (i.e. God’s causality and nature cannot be divorced as per Schleiermacher).\(^{131}\) If this is the case, then identifying love as the sole predicate that scripture identifies with God or the divine nature is unjustifiable. For example, consider some of what is predicated of the divine name in the Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah:

Let them praise thy great and terrible name! Holy is He! (Psalm 99:3, cf. Psalm 111:9)

Thou, O Lord, art enthroned for ever; thy name endures to all generations. (Psalm 102:8)

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. (Proverbs 18:10)

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129. Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 59.

130. Dean McBride, “The Deuteronomic Name Theology,” PhD diss. (Harvard University, 1969), p. 67.

131. Barrett, *Divine Simplicity*, pp. 148–149.
Behold, the name of the Lord comes from far, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke. (Isaiah 30:27)

Our Redeemer—The Lord of hosts is his name—is the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 47:4)

For thus says the high and loft One who inherits eternity, whose name is Holy. (Isaiah 57:15)

When Barth contends that “The biblical unity of all glory with its Lord is the task of the doctrine of God’s perfections,” this amounts to—in his own conceptuality—something very similar to the claim that the revealed name of God is simply God in God’s self-manifestation and action. As Christopher Holmes elucidates, for Barth, “glory is the ‘chief sum’ of the divine perfections because glory describes . . . the self-movement in which God exists and in which he calls the creature to participate. . . . It describes the extent to which God is perfectly himself in his self-externalization.”

The unity of the Lord with God’s glory entails that all that God reveals Godself to be is a proper completion of the proposition “God is . . .,” for, as Barth argues throughout I/1, “God, the Revealer, is identical with His act in revelation and also identical with its effect.” For Barth, the unity of the Lord and divine glory—and the doctrine of the trinity itself—insists that the revelation of God just is God in self-manifestation, which absolutely opposes any relegation of various revealed attributes or aspects of the divine causality to a nonessential status. This flows from an insistence, similar to the approach we outline above by making recourse to the divine names, that

According to Scripture, all the glory of God is concerted, gathered up and unified in God himself as the Lord of glory. While in Holy Scripture God has quite definite attributes and an abundance of perfections, we are never concerned merely with these attributes or perfections as such, but with them as His, and there always directly with Himself.
Barth’s reading of Schleiermacher evolves and is not at all times identical to my own, but his response to Schleiermacher as it concerns the doctrine of God revolves around his insistence that “He Himself is the perfect One in the abundance and variety of these His perfections.”¹³⁷ Our analysis has shown that Schleiermacher’s constriction of what “God is . . .” merely to love, fails to recognize that, as Barth argues, one attribute “include[s] in itself every other and the totality of all others,”¹³⁸ for none of the divine attributes are merely the “objectification of the individual aspects of the religious self-consciousness.”¹³⁹ Rather, for Barth, God’s causality consists in God’s lordly and loving presence to the creature, and thus all the divine attributes make known to us God’s essential being.¹⁴⁰ As Sonderegger argues in a Barthian key, “God just is His own relation to the world.”¹⁴¹

The foregoing is a summary of a revised Barthian critique of Schleiermacher’s doctrine of God. With the main lineaments of this critique in place and with a bit more space, we could press further. For example, Barth sees the “full consequence of [Schleiermacher’s] nominalist doctrine of the divine attributes” in Schleiermacher’s identification of divine omnipotence with divine omnicausality, or stated more simply, in Schleiermacher’s “abandonment of the distinction between what God can do and what he does.”¹⁴² Some of Schleiermacher’s most controversial claims, such as his denial of the possibility of miracles and his collapsing of the extent of divine omnipotence into the worldly nature-system, arise because of Schleiermacher’s nominalist restriction of what we can know of God to the claim that God is lovingly present to our consciousness. Likewise, Barth’s worries regarding Schleiermacher’s doctrine of the trinity are rooted in this same issue. As noted above, Barth, like Schleiermacher, affirms that human knowledge of God is a mediate knowledge given “with the

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¹³⁷.  *CD*, II/1, p. 331 (emphasis added).
¹³⁸.  *CD*, II/1, p. 339.
¹³⁹.  *CD*, II/1, p. 338.
¹⁴⁰.  While Barth is aware of the early modern philosophical reasons for thinking that the divine being cannot be known on the basis of its effects, he nonetheless insists that whatever is rightly said about God in God’s self-manifestation, that is, God’s causality *ad extra*, can be predicated of God’s nature. Evaluating Barth’s own way of explicating this would take us too far afield.
¹⁴¹.  Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 79. None of the foregoing commits me to interpreting Barth’s doctrine of election along the revisionary lines outlined by Bruce McCormack and others. The fact that God *is* his relation to the world need not imply that God could not have been the triune God without this relation so long as one affirms that this relation is—what is in scholastic terms called—a mixed relation. However, discussing these vexed questions would take us too far afield.
¹⁴².  Barth, *CD*, II/1, pp. 530–531.
world,” but for Barth, precisely what we learn of the God of the gospel in this mediate form is that God’s relation to us is gratuitous. Therefore, in experiencing God’s grace as gratuitous, we are enabled from within our creaturely situatedness to affirm by virtue of our experience of divine grace that God is “mighty in Himself, before and beyond all activity in us or any worlds.” If the grace that meets us in Christ is God in Godself acting gratuitously toward us, then we conclude on this basis that the love we meet in God’s mighty acts could exist apart from us and thus the extent of divine power is not exhausted in God’s relation to us. As Barth puts it, returning to the sort of formulation we cited above,

In his works we are concerned with His activity and therefore with Himself. [We are concerned with] the revelation of the particular and proper omnipotence of God, which is not exhausted by His omnicausality, the omnipotence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

It is precisely Schleiermacher’s dogmatic nominalism which causes him to collapse divine omnipotence into God’s acts toward creation and to reformulate the doctrine of the trinity along non-immanent lines. In sum, the root

143. Barth, CD, II/1, 531.
144. Ibid.
145. Barth’s criticism of Schleiermacher’s doctrine of the trinity is sometimes not treated with sufficient seriousness. For example, Shelli Poe objects to Barth’s criticisms of the placement of Schleiermacher’s treatise on the trinity in the closing pages of the Glaubenslehre, citing Barth, who says: “The fact that Schleiermacher can use his doctrine of the Trinity only as the conclusion to his dogmatics and not equally well as its beginning shows that it does not have constitutive significance for him”; CD, I/1, 303. In response, Poe rightly notes Schleiermacher’s statements in On the Glaubenslehre, in which he does not consider a rearrangement of the dogmatic loci inconsistent with his approach; Poe, Essential Trinitarianism, 58. However, while Poe is not entirely incorrect, by focusing on the foregoing hyperbolic statement, the substance of Barth’s critique of Schleiermacher remains unaddressed. Barth’s argument in the context of CD, I/1, 301-4, is that dogmatics is strictly derivative from revelation, and revelation itself is triune in structure. Thus, his worry is that for Schleiermacher, the trinity is a deduction from a more basic fact, that is, God-consciousness, and thus, the trinity does not enjoy the absolute epistemic priority which Barth insists it must. In this regard, Barth seems to understand Schleiermacher rightly, as for Schleiermacher, the first step in adopting his own revised account of the trinity, over against the faulty speculative Trinitarianism of the tradition, is to “become convinced that our faith in the divine that exists in Christ and in the Christian community can find dogmatic expression suitable to it before discussion is also focused on these further definitions that form the doctrine of the Trinity. This independence, however, can never attain clear status if that doctrine is handled before the two main points of faith just mentioned;” CF §172.3, 1035.
of Schleiermacher’s non-immanent doctrine of the trinity, his denial of the possibility of miracles, and his collapse of what God can do into what God actually does, are all rooted in his dogmatic nominalism. While I cannot fully explicate these claims here, we have good reason to think that if our argument thus far is correct in suggesting that Schleiermacher’s dogmatic nominalism is a mistake, then these other Schleiermacherian claims rest upon unstable foundations.  

**Conclusion**

In summation, Schleiermacher is largely a dogmatic nominalist and thus is implicated by the charges leveled by Barth—and likewise by Holmes, von Balthasar, Moltmann, and Pannenberg. For Schleiermacher, the only predicate applicable to God’s nature is the claim that God is love, and even this attribute is reduced to God’s disposition to be unified with human nature. Thus, I conclude that while it should be slightly nuanced, Barth’s diagnosis is largely correct, despite Schleiermacher’s intentions “his methods consistently went awry,” resulting in an “anthropologising of theology.” What can be known about God is drastically truncated by both Schleiermacher’s anthropological method and his early modern assumptions regarding the inability of an effect to reveal its cause. Barth’s emphasis upon the unity of the Lord with divine glory is a salutary check against Schleiermacher’s reduction of the doctrine of God’s being and attributes.

There is much to commend the Schleiermacher renaissance. If it is a broad plea to take Schleiermacher seriously as a theologian rather than prematurely writing him off, then the point is well taken. If it aims to overturn false caricatures or identify the substantial influence of the prior theological tradition upon Schleiermacher’s thought, then who could object? Or, once more, if the hope is to broaden our definition of what it means to be “reformed” so that Schleiermacher can be seen as a central voice within that tradition, then we should—with Barth himself—agree. Nonetheless, many of Schleiermacher’s defenders want to say two things, which I suggest on the basis of the foregoing argument do not easily

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For Schleiermacher, what prevents the trinity from rightly being reformulated along non-speculative lines is a forgetfulness regarding its status as a deduction from the feeling of absolute dependence, since this is what Schleiermacher refers to when speaking of “the divine that exists in Christ and in the Christian community.” Thus Barth is right on the substantive point: even though Schleiermacher could have reordered his treatment of the dogmatic loci, the formal order of treatment in Schleiermacher’s dogmatics is reflective of an epistemic priority afforded to the feeling of absolute dependence.  

146. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for prompting me to address these further issues.
cohere. They insist that Schleiermacher is a thoroughly modern theologian attuned to the challenges for dogmatics which arise in early modern thought. Yet, many want to read Schleiermacher alongside others like Thomas, Calvin, Augustine, and—in a different way—Barth and heartily object to those who see Schleiermacher as ill at ease within this broad tradition. With regard to the doctrine of God, one cannot have it both ways. Schleiermacher is a penetrating, rigorously consistent, thoroughly early modern thinker, but this means, as Gerrish suggests, that Schleiermacher bore a “deep conviction that modern habits of thought demand radical theological change, a thorough overhauling of the meanings traditionally ascribed to Christian language.”

Precisely for this reason, if one is sympathetic to traditional ways of speaking about the divine being and attributes, wanting to contend that, for example, the Old Testament’s and Hebrew Bible’s divine names give us some grip on God’s nature, one will have to subject Schleiermacher himself to thoroughgoing critique and revision. This revision will likely make him more traditional and less characterized by early modern assumptions. In other words, it will make Schleiermacher less distinctively Schleiermacherian. Barth was right, even if it is an increasingly unpopular sentiment:

Until better instructed, I can see no way from Schleiermacher, or from his contemporary epigones, to the chroniclers, prophets, and wise ones of Israel, to

147. It should be added that there is a tendency in contemporary systematic theology to forget that what counted as the deliverances of “modern” philosophy for Schleiermacher and Barth is not identical to our own context. Given the revival of metaphysical views, which see no need to adhere to Kantian strictures on offer in contemporary philosophy, one need not assume that the “common” early modern assumptions of Kant and Hume regarding causality need to be taken for granted in contemporary theology. For example, see the widely cited comments of: Timothy Williamson, The Philosophy of Philosophy (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 18.

148. Gerrish, Prince of the Church, xii.

149. In an excellent article, Soskice constructively employs Schleiermacher alongside Augustine and Aquinas to argue that both “being” and “love” are divine names. Another way of articulating the critique of Schleiermacher which I have offered, one which does not contradict Soskice’s interpretation of Schleiermacher but which nonetheless might raise questions about her neglecting to note this rather significant disagreement between her dialogue partners, is to contend that it is precisely the lack of the name “Being” in addition to “Love,” which constricts Schleiermacher’s doctrine of the divine attributes. If God is being itself, and creation is an act of participation in the being which God is, as Soskice argues following Augustine and Aquinas, then the participation of created effects in their causal source implies that God as cause is essentially revealed in his effects. This is precisely what Schleiermacher denies when he restricts the divine attributes—with the exception of divine love and its unfolding in wisdom—from applying to the divine nature. Soskice, “Being and Love,” 480-491.
those who narrate the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to the word of the apostles—no way to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the Father of Jesus Christ, no way to the great tradition of the Christian church. For the present I can see nothing here but a choice. And for me there can be no question as to how that choice is to be made.\textsuperscript{150}

One might, despite all of this, seek to reconstruct a version of Schleiermacherian theology which moves beyond dogmatic nominalism. This can be a fruitful endeavor, so long as we do not remake Schleiermacher in the image of Barth, Thomas, Calvin, Bavinck, Whitehead, or Spinoza. For, as we have argued, the motivations for Schleiermacher’s dogmatic nominalism are deeply intertwined with his early modern philosophical context, and it is precisely this context which in part makes him so uniquely interesting in the first place.

In the midst of a very different discussion, Denys Turner objects to those who overly assimilate Thomas Aquinas to the image of Barth, saying: “as for Barthians, is not Karl Barth himself quite enough for them? They do not need a Thomas Aquinas reconfigured... in Barth’s image.”\textsuperscript{151} The same danger arises when theologians seek to “rescue” Schleiermacher for the sake of dogmatics. We already have a Thomas. We already have a Barth. Is that not enough for us? Why not let Schleiermacher be Schleiermacher, even if he is rather “liberal”?

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\item \textsuperscript{150} Barth, \textit{Concluding Unscientific Postscript}, pp. 271–272.
\item \textsuperscript{151} Denys Turner, \textit{Faith Reason and the Existence of God} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. xii.
\end{itemize}