

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the background and writings of Juan de Valdés. Valdessian research has steadily clarified key aspects of his biography and writings. The gradually-uncovered complexity of Valdés' background and writings has demonstrated the necessity to recognize an eclecticism in his thought. Valdés' eclecticism, however, has not yet been analyzed in depth in light of the different religious currents in which he participated and the different sources that he quoted. In addition to this need, previous research has often focused on Valdés' theological affiliation rather than on his personal message and emphasis. This research evaluates his personal thought and contribution to his Christian environment. Accordingly, the task of this research is twofold. Part I analyzes the religious currents of Valdés's background in order to discard inaccurate associations. Parts II and III explore Valdés' writings, considering his concepts, terms, emphases and omissions, in order to evaluate his relation to the influences received and his personal message and contribution to Christian thought. Part II focuses on the immediate Spanish background of Valdés' *Dialogue on Christian Doctrine* and its teachings, with particular attention to his own thought and his use of Erasmus' and Luther's writings. Part III considers Valdés' literary production in Naples, analyzing his teachings in light of his background. The conclusion of this research is that Valdés adopted influences and borrowed terms from his background and environment as long as they served his own message and emphasis. He redefined what he adopted, and he explicitly disagreed with the influences that he received and the sources he used. As to his thought and personal contribution, the axis of Valdés' message was the experience of entering the kingdom of God. His spiritual advice, his theological reflection, and his biblical hermeneutics were structured according to his own experience of being brought to God. Marked by Pedro R. Alcaraz, influenced by Spanish Erasmianism, and adopting a Lutheran soteriology, Valdés defended a sovereign God-intervention that changed man's disposition and brought him into a committed love-relationship with God.