Modern Theology 26:4 October 2010
ISSN 0266-7177 (Print)
ISSN 1468-0025 (Online)

RECONSIDERING BARTH'S REJECTION OF PRZYWARA'S *ANALOGIA ENTIS*

KEITH L. JOHNSON

The pages of *Modern Theology* have become the most recent venue for the decades-long debate about Karl Barth's interpretation of the *analogia entis*. In large part, this debate turns upon the question of whether or not Barth accurately interpreted the theology of Erich Przywara, because it was Przywara's version of the *analogia entis* that originally prompted Barth to label it "the invention of the Antichrist" in *Church Dogmatics* I/1.[1] In a paired set of articles appearing in *Modern Theology* in 2005 and 2006, John Betz issued one of the strongest defenses of Przywara's theology to date, and this defense was built, in part, upon a twofold critique of Barth.[2] First, Betz argued that Barth's rejection of Przywara's *analogia entis* was based upon a "scant understanding of Przywara's doctrine" and that Barth "never grasped what a first reading of the relevant texts should have revealed".[3] Second, he insisted that, without an *analogia entis*, Barth's theology inevitably "teeters between contradiction and identity" and eventually leads to a "complete overpowering of the creature".[4] In an article appearing in *Modern Theology* in 2007, Kenneth Oakes responded to Betz' second criticism by turning to Barth's mature account of the human as covenant partner.[5] In this article, I respond to Betz' first criticism about the accuracy of Barth's interpretation of Przywara's *analogia entis*.

Betz' first criticism is given currency by the clear shift in Barth's tone with respect to the *analogia entis* late in his career. For example, nearly a decade after his initial rejection of the *analogia entis*, Barth publicly admitted that he could be convinced to change his mind about the doctrine. This remark comes in *Church Dogmatics* II/1 while Barth is discussing a pair of essays by Gottlieb Söhngen, who had argued both that the formulation "*analogia entis*

Keith L. Johnson
Wheaton College, Biblical and Theological Studies, 501 College Avenue, Wheaton IL 60187, USA
keith.johnson@wheaton.edu

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

within an *analogia fidei*" represents the true Catholic view and that this formula alleviates Barth's concerns with the doctrine.[6] Barth responds by saying that, if Söhngen's account of is correct, "then naturally I must withdraw my earlier statement that I regard the *analogia entis* as 'the invention of the Antichrist' ".[7] He insists that he is not ready to do so, however, because he is not convinced that Söhngen's position represents the true Catholic view.[8] Yet, after Hans Urs von Balthasar takes up and defends the accuracy of Söhngen's account, Barth seems to be convinced, because he stops criticizing the *analogia entis* altogether.[9] This newfound silence about an issue that once had been so central for him has led many interpreters to conclude that Barth finally realized that he had misunderstood Przywara and, in response, quietly silenced his criticism and changed his position.[10] Such conclusions provide the foundation for Betz' criticisms.

These conclusions, however, stand at odds with Barth's own public accounts of his development with respect to the *analogia entis*. When asked about the issue near the end of his life, Barth admits saying "nasty" things about the *analogia entis*, and he also acknowledges that his views about the role of analogy in theology changed over the course of his career. Even so, he remains firmly committed to his rejection of the *analogia entis*: "I have not changed my mind".[11] Was Barth unwilling to admit his mistake? Did he simply fail to recognize that his theology had developed and changed in the way his interpreters claimed? To put the question more sharply: is it correct to say that Barth rejected Przywara's *analogia entis* because he misinterpreted it, and then at least implicitly retracted his criticism later on? Or is Barth correct to say that he did not make a mistake or implicitly adopt the *analogia entis* into his own theology?

In this article, I will show that, in fact, Barth's self-perception is correct. Contrary to the claims made by Betz and others, Barth did not reject the *analogia entis* because he misinterpreted it. Rather, he rejected it on the basis of an accurate account of its meaning and content provided to him personally by Przywara. Barth also did not change his mind about his rejection the *analogia entis*. While his response to the *analogia entis* did change over time, he never retracted, either explicitly or implicitly, his rejection of it—nor should he have done so. In other words, despite significant developments both in Barth's thought and in Roman Catholic theology in the decades that followed, Barth justly maintained his original rejection of Przywara's *analogia entis*.

The key to defending these claims will be to address the question of the accuracy of Barth's interpretation of Przywara's *analogia entis* and to provide a clear account of his reasons for rejecting it. Answering this question will be the burden of the first and second sections of this article, and they will provide a response to Betz' first criticism. Then, with this response in hand, we will be in a position in the third section to see if Barth, admittedly or not, changed his mind late in his career. Our answer to this question will put us in a position to make the case that Barth's critics cannot simply dismiss

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

Barth's critiques of the *analogia entis* as the product of a now-retracted misunderstanding, but that they must engage Barth's material concerns about the doctrine more directly and seriously. In other words, the table is now set for a true debate over the core doctrinal issues that initially prompted Barth to reject Przywara's doctrine.

I. Barth's Encounter with Przywara

The most important event with respect to Karl Barth's interpretation of the *analogia entis* is Erich Przywara's visit to Barth's seminar on Thomas Aquinas at the University of Münster on February 5–6, 1929. Student protocols from this seminar provide first-hand testimony of both Barth's initial impressions as he discussed Przywara's written account of the *analogia entis* and Przywara's explanation and defense of the *analogia entis* to Barth and his students during his visit.[12] When examined in light of Barth's initial public rejection of the *analogia entis* a few weeks later, it becomes clear that Barth's understanding of the meaning and content of the *analogia entis*, as well as his rejection of it, arise directly from this encounter with Przywara.

Reading Przywara

Barth regularly invited scholars to visit his seminars at the University of Münster, and given Przywara's recognized skill as an interpreter of Catholic theology—as well as his willingness to engage Barth directly—he was an obvious choice for Barth's seminar on Thomas Aquinas.[13] In preparation for Przywara's visit, Barth and his students read the first two parts of *Religionsphilosophie katholischer Theologie*, which offered the most mature presentation of Przywara's thought to date.[14] The book is a rich and complex work, but its thesis is quite simple: the *analogia entis*, as the fundamental basis of the Catholic theory of religion, solves the problem of God that every other philosophy of religion has failed to answer.

The conviction underlying this argument is that every creature's relationship with God follows a similar pattern because everything other than God receives its being from God in the same way. Following Aquinas, Przywara argues that while humans can obtain some knowledge of this relationship through philosophical reflection, they cannot recognize the full extent of it on their own. He illustrates this fact by examining the failure of the philosophical tradition to determine the nature of the relationship between the human consciousness and God without collapsing God into creation or completely divorcing God from creation.[15] Philosophy's failure to find the balance between these two extremes leaves humanity in tension and despair, because humans have no true knowledge of God or their own being. The solution to this problem, clearly, is to discover and articulate the correct pattern of God's relationship with humanity. For Przywara, this solution is found in the Roman Catholic Church, because the Church—as the continuing manifesta-

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

tion of the incarnation within the world—reveals the true pattern of creaturely existence, the *analogia entis*, in its own being and life.

Przywara builds his account of the *analogia entis* upon the foundation of Aquinas' distinction between essence and existence. For Aquinas, of course, God *is* being, and as such, he is utterly distinct from creatures that have their being by participation in his divine being. This distinction manifests itself in the difference between the essence and existence of God and that of the creature.[16] In the creature, essence and existence are not identical because, while essence subsists in the creature, existence is something the creature receives. In contrast, God's essence *is* to be, meaning that God's essence and existence are one and the same.[17] Thus, as Aquinas says, "God alone is being identical with essence, [while] in every creature . . . there must be found its essence or nature on the one hand, and its being on the other, which it acquires from God whose essence is his being".[18] Przywara summarizes this distinction by arguing that, like God, the creature has a unity of essence and existence, but unlike God, the creature's unity is one of "tension" rather than identity. This tension, he says, stems from the fact that the creature's essence is only realized "over or above [its] existence", meaning that it cannot be considered apart from its relationship with God, in whom the creature has its being.[19]

This idea is the key to understanding what Przywara means when he talks about the human existing in an "analogy of being" with God. The human, he argues, is

> similar to God through the possession of a unity of essence and existence, but even in this similarity it is essentially dissimilar to God because, in God, the unity of essence and existence is that of identity, whereas in the creature, the unity of essence and existence is one of tension. Now since the relation of essence and existence is the essence of "being," so God and the creature are in "being" similar and dissimilar—that is, they are analogous to one another: and this is what we mean by *analogia entis*, analogy of being.[20]

For Przywara, the key implication of this analogy is that, because the creature's being can only be understood in light of its relationship with God, the creature's existence itself is a revelation of God. He explains this idea by describing the relationship between God and the creature as "open upwards".[21] This means that, on the one hand, the very fact of the creature's existence testifies to God as its source, and, on the other hand, God is utterly distinct from the creature because the creature remains dependent upon God for its existence at every moment. Or, as Przywara puts it: "God as the pure 'Is' is, on the one side, so inward to the creation that the transient 'is' of the creation is only *from* him and *in* him—and yet on the other side, differentiated from the creation, above it as the pure 'Is', for whom no relationship to anything which is 'becoming' is in any way possible".[22] This construal, as Przywara sees it, stands as the great contribution the *analogia entis* makes to

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

the problem of God relationship with humanity. Unlike all other philosophical attempts to address this problem, the *analogia entis* neither collapses God into creation nor divorces God from it; rather, it demonstrates that every creature's being is a participation in the being of the immanent yet utterly transcendent God who stands in constant relationship with it.[23]

The student protocols from Barth's seminar show that Barth and his students carefully and critically considered this argument as they read the first two parts of Przywara's book, and it is clear from their discussions that they have an accurate grasp of the *analogia entis*. For example, on the second week of their study of the book, a student presented an account of Przywara's description of the *analogia entis* in the text.[24] In her presentation, she works carefully through the distinction Przywara draws between the essence and existence of God and that of the creature, and she points out that, in the *analogia entis*, the dissimilarity between God and the human is due to the difference between the identity of God's essence and existence and the tension of the human's essence and existence. She makes it clear that this tension leads to Przywara's account of the relationship between God and the human as "open upwards" in the *analogia entis*.[25] The student's presentation, in short, reflects Przywara's argument accurately.

As they consider this argument more deeply, however, the students in Barth's seminar begin to raise criticisms, especially about Przywara's starting point. They note that Przywara begins with an examination of the human consciousness and uses it to demonstrate both the failures of modern religious philosophy and the successes of the *analogia entis*.[26] The students worry that, by focusing on the human consciousness, Przywara begins with an abstract concept rather than the concrete reality of the human. Human being, they argue, is determined at every moment by the reality of sin, but Przywara never talks about the sinful human being at all. For him, the pattern of the relationship between God and humanity in the *analogia entis* stems solely from the fact that humans are created by God, and this relationship remains intact despite sin and apart from a second act of grace. The students are concerned that this account of human being is a distortion, because the reality of sin makes it impossible to talk about the human's relationship with God in light of God's act of creation alone. In their view, rather, one must begin with God's revelation in Jesus Christ, since this revelation exposes both the reality of human sin and the human need for reconciliation and grace. Barth's students conclude that, because he ignores the reality of sin, Przywara's description of the human and the *analogia entis* is based upon an ideal picture of human being rather than actual human being.[27]

Przywara's Visit to Barth's Seminar

This criticism goes to the heart of Przywara's proposal, and Przywara addressed it personally during his visit to Barth's seminar the following

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

week.[28] He began his visit on the evening of February 5 by presenting a lengthy lecture on "The Catholic Church Principle". In light of the criticism raised by Barth's class, one aspect of Przywara's argument in this lecture stands out. Przywara explains to Barth's students that one of the distinctions between Protestant and Roman Catholic theology is their divergent portrayal of the nature of God's revelation in history.[29] Roman Catholics, he says, believe that God's revelation occurs in the visible Church, and it does so precisely because the Church functions as the continuing manifestation of the incarnation in the world. As the "creaturely-visible form of God" in history, the Church reveals the pattern of God's relationship to the world as a whole, because every other manifestation of this relationship—including its manifestation in God's relation with human beings in particular—follows this same pattern.[30] This argument points us to how Przywara answers the questions raised by Barth and his students. He believes he is justified in starting with the human consciousness in his book because creaturely existence in general relates to God in the same pattern as God relates to the Church in particular. To start with the human consciousness, therefore, is not to start with the abstract or the ideal; it is to start from the reality that God's act of creation corresponds to God's act "in Christ in the Church".[31] In other words, once one recognizes the *analogia entis* as the pattern of God's relationship with humanity in the Church, one can look elsewhere—including the human consciousness—and recognize the pattern working there as well.

In his discussion with Barth's students the following morning, Przywara defends this idea by appealing to the Catholic principle that "grace does not destroy but supports and perfects nature". In his view, this principle provides the theological basis for understanding how and why the knowledge of God available in the Catholic Church stands in line with the knowledge of God humans can obtain through philosophical reflection upon their own existence.[32] The necessity of God's justifying grace, he says, does not mean that nature is "abolished or dropped" as if sin negates the reality that creatures have their being by participation in God's being.[33] Instead, grace must be seen "doubly"—both as created and uncreated—meaning that God's act of grace in creation cannot ultimately contradict or be opposed to his act of grace in Jesus Christ.[34] For Przywara, the creation of the world is a concrete act of grace in which God reveals himself: "the concrete God," he tells Barth's students, "reveals himself in *this* concrete way".[35] For this reason, we are justified in saying that the knowledge of God available through philosophical reflection on God's revelation in creation—and specifically, through reflection upon human existence and being—stands in line with, and can be perfected and fulfilled by, the knowledge of God available through God's revelation in the Church. "Revelation", he argues, "does not destroy but supports and perfects reason".[36] One cannot come to a full grasp of God's self-revelation by philosophical reflection upon human existence alone, of course, but as one looks back at this existence from the standpoint of God's

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

revelation in the Church, one can recognize that, in fact, this reflection points us to the God who is both in and over human existence.

This answer explains why Przywara felt justified in beginning his book with an examination of the failures of various philosophies of religion to understand the relationship between God and the human consciousness. In his view, the imperfect knowledge provided through philosophy can be perfected by the revealed knowledge found in the Roman Catholic Church—and specifically by the Church's central principle, the *analogia entis*. This means that, for Przywara, we simply cannot dismiss what we know of God on the basis of the act of creation in light of God's revelation to the Church, as if the one cancels out the other. Rather, God's revelation in creation and his revelation in the Church work hand-in-hand, with the latter revelation perfecting the former.[37] Philosophical reflection upon the nature of human existence inevitably leads us to consider humanity's relationship with God; at the same time, the revelation of "God in Christ in the Church" directs the Catholic Church to recognize the *analogia entis* as the pattern of God's relationship with humanity in general.[38] This means that the bridge between philosophical reflection upon human existence, on the one hand, and the revelation of God to the Church, on the other, is found in the fact that God's revelation in creation and his revelation in the Church stand in continuity with one another in the *analogia entis*. The mission of the Roman Catholic Church, therefore, is to share the *analogia entis* with the world by showing the world that it answers the question of the nature of the relationship between God and humanity in a way that the philosophical tradition could not.

To summarize thus far: the student protocols from Barth's Thomas Aquinas seminar show us that Barth and his students read Przywara's book closely and raised strong criticisms of his argument. During his visit, Przywara responds directly to their questions and criticisms, and he does so by providing a detailed and thorough explanation of the *analogia entis*. This explanation not only corresponds to the account of the *analogia entis* Barth and his students encountered in Przywara's book; it stands as a strong and strident defense of it.

II. Barth's Rejection of Przywara's analogia entis

Barth's initial response to Przywara's visit was enthusiastic. In a letter to Eduard Thurneysen shortly after the visit, Barth calls Przywara's lecture "a masterpiece" and notes that Przywara "shone" in his seminar while answering questions. He also writes that Przywara "overwhelmed" him during his personal visits to Barth's home on the evenings of February 5 and 6, where the topic of conversation was very likely the *analogia entis*.[39] Barth's enthusiasm, however, did not last long. In fact, just a few weeks later, Barth issues the first of a series of public criticisms of the *analogia entis*. What causes this change in tone? And does this change occur because Barth misunderstood

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

the *analogia entis*? To answer these questions, we must turn to Barth's lectures on "Fate and Idea in Theology", delivered shortly after Przywara's visit to his seminar, and then to Barth's lectures on "The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life", delivered in October of that same year. It has long been known that Przywara is Barth's silent conversation partner in both of these lectures, and that these lectures represent Barth's first sustained criticism of the *analogia entis* and his initial rejection of it.[40] What has not been known, however, is just how closely Barth's account of the *analogia entis* in these lectures follows Przywara's defense of it during his visit to Barth's seminar. In fact, when these two lectures are read in light of Przywara's visit, it is clear that Barth is responding directly to the account of the *analogia entis* Przywara offered in his book and in Barth's seminar.

For example, in "Fate and Idea in Theology", Barth offers the following summary of the *analogia entis*:

> 'God is'—what does that mean if not that God takes part in being? Then of course the next proposition leads to the idea that God is himself being, the origin and perfection of everything that is. In their classical form, as set forth by Thomas Aquinas, these propositions combine with a third which can logically be regarded as the consequence, namely, everything that is, as such, participates in God. Everything that is exists as mere creature in greatest dissimilarity to the Creator, yet by having being it exists in greatest similarity to the Creator. That is what is meant by *analogia entis*.[41]

It is important to note what Barth does not say here: he does *not* say that God and humans participate in some larger "structure of being" and that an analogy can be drawn between them on the basis of this shared participation.[42] An analogy of this sort would compromise divine transcendence, and Barth clearly recognizes that Przywara's *analogia entis* does not commit this error. Instead, Barth works through Aquinas' logic in the same way that Przywara does in his *Religionsphilosophie*: God *is* being, and everything other than God exists only by participation in God's being. Because creatures exist by participation, they are utterly distinct from God; but because their being is derived from God, they also exist in similarity to him. In other words, Barth's summary description of "what is meant" by *analogia entis* corresponds to Przywara's description of it. Barth uses this account to argue—again, following Przywara—that the *analogia entis* uses the notion that creatures participate in God's being to establish that humans, by virtue of their creation, stand in relationship to God and can thus come to some kind of real, though limited and incomplete, knowledge of God by reflecting upon their own existence as creatures. Barth concludes that this means that "the experience of God" is an "inherent human possibility", even if we can correctly interpret this experience only in light of the perfecting and completing revelation found in the Church.[43]

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

This is the point at which Barth begins to express his worries about the *analogia entis*. He directs his concern to the principle Przywara raised in Barth's seminar: "grace does not destroy, but supports and perfects nature". Przywara's version of the *analogia entis* is true, Barth believes, only if one assumes that God's revelation in Christ confirms and reinforces a "presupposed human capacity . . . given with our existence as such".[44] In other words, one has to assume that what we know about God by reflecting upon our created existence corresponds to, and is fulfilled by, what we know of God in Jesus Christ in the Church. For Barth, however, this assumption is built upon an incorrect account of the nature of divine revelation. When theologians talk about God, he insists, they do not mean "God as such" but "the God of the Christian church, the God revealed in his Word".[45] To talk about God at all, therefore, one must talk about the God who "entered into our own particular mode of being".[46] In other words, Barth believes that divine revelation centers upon Jesus Christ and is governed by him at every moment. Przywara's understanding of divine revelation, however, encompasses and connects both God's act in creation *and* God's act in Jesus Christ. For Barth, this view of revelation is too broad. If Przywara's view were correct, Barth argues, God's act of grace in Christ could be seen as reinforcing or completing knowledge already available to humans by virtue of their creation, as if such knowledge were "given to us in the givenness of history".[47] If this were the case, "God could not be distinguished from a hidden feature of reality as such".[48] Instead, he insists, revelation must be seen as "a revealing"—a new, unique, and specific event where God is the sole actor and over which God has sole control.

Barth's argument on this point stems from his conviction that, in light of sin, humans have no ability to know anything about God or their relationship with God on the basis of God's act of creation alone. Rather, for him, human existence must be "taken up, negated and transformed" by a *new* act distinct from the act of creation.[49] This is why Barth cannot accept Przywara's claim that "revelation does not destroy but supports and perfects reason". For Barth, to talk about human reason at all is to talk about *fallen* human reason. That which we know on the basis of our reason, he argues, leaves us locked in a prison of "distance, alienation and hostility", because our reason is governed at every moment by the fallenness and inwardness of sinful human nature.[50] To know God, therefore, we need a completely new Word. The necessity of this second and distinct Word, because it is addressed to sinners, means that the doctrine central to the knowledge of God is not creation but *justification*.

Barth touches on this theme more directly in his lectures a few months later on "The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life". Barth's explicit target during most of his lectures is Augustine, but behind Augustine stands Przywara, whom Barth labels one of Augustine's "followers in modern times".[51] The problem Barth finds with Augustine and Przywara is, once again, an improper understanding of the relationship between creation and justifica-

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

tion. Barth points out that while Augustine holds to justification by grace through faith, he also insists that a believer's justification must be actualized through good works that are manifest in her life as she progresses in the faith. These good works are visible signs of the inward presence of divine grace and forgiveness. Why is this problematic? Barth thinks it conflates divine action and human action in the Christian life by making God's saving work stand "in continuity with man's created spirit" and its actions.[52] That is, Barth thinks that in Augustine's and Przywara's view, sin is seen merely as a "derangement within the undisturbed continuity of man with God" that can be overcome by an increase in "good intentions" that take the form of moral actions.[53] These actions, of course, are attributed to the work of divine grace, but Barth thinks this is a meaningless attribution, because in reality, God's saving action and human moral action end up standing in continuity with one another "under the prefix of predestination and of grace".[54] This is the problem: Barth believes that God's saving action is not merely supplemental to human action; it is *opposed* to human action. When God acts, he argues, he establishes "a barrier against all that is our own action", and he does so because humans are utterly dead in their sins.[55] Sin is not merely a "disturbance" that exists at one moment but then "can quite as easily be . . . removed again" by an infusion of grace.[56] Rather, Barth says, God's grace "cuts *against* the grain of our existence all through".[57] The sinful human and God exist in an "irreconcilable contradiction" with one another, and there can be no continuity between the actions of one and the actions of the other.[58]

Barth, in short, is drawing the distinction between creation and justification even starker than he had in "Fate and Idea in Theology". Like his students, Barth believes that Przywara's account of the *analogia entis* fails to account for the reality of human sin, because Przywara sees the human relationship with God as a constantly-available feature of human existence that occurs because humans have their created being by participation in God's being. For Przywara, grace must be seen "doubly"—that is, it must be seen both in God's act of creation and in God's act of justification—and this is why he can speak of God's revelation in creation as standing in continuity with the revelation in the Church that fulfills and perfects it. It is also the reason why he believes that what can be known of God by means of philosophical reflection upon created human existence stands in continuity with what is known through divine revelation in the Church. For Barth, however, this construal means that human action stands in continuity with God's saving action, because what the human can know and do naturally is perfected and fulfilled by what God reveals and does in Jesus Christ. For him, grace cannot be seen "doubly"; it must be viewed strictly in terms of God's reconciling act in Christ. God's relationship with humanity, he says, is not a function of "an original endowment" given to the creature in creation, but a "second miracle in addition to the miracle of [the creature's] own existence".[59] This miracle is God's justification of sinners in Jesus Christ.

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

In sum: Barth rejects Przywara's *analogia entis* because he is unwilling to accept the notion that what we can know of God from God's act of creation stands in continuity with what we know of God through God's justifying act in Jesus Christ. This kind of continuity is unacceptable, he believes, because it overlooks the effect of sin. This conclusion stems from Barth's and Przywara's divergent views of the nature of divine revelation. For Przywara, God's revelation in Christ presupposes his revelation in creation, and the former does not cancel out the latter. Conversely, for Barth, revelation is strictly God's Word to sinners in Jesus Christ. Fallen humans do not retain any natural fitness for a relationship with God, nor do they have anything to contribute to it by virtue of their createdness. Rather, Barth says, they will be "made fit by God for God" as God relates to them in his specific, moment-by-moment, revelation in his Word, received by the power of the Holy Spirit.[60] Any relationship humans have with God, therefore, stems from their justification in Christ alone—not the fact that they are creatures who have their being by participation in God's being. The distinction between Barth's and Przywara's views on these points is clear and pronounced. Barth's rejection of Przywara's position is based not upon a misunderstanding of it, as Betz contends; rather, it stems from Barth's recognition that he and Przywara have two very different views of the content and function of divine revelation and grace in light of the reality of human sin.

III. The Nature of Barth's Change of Mind

This account of Barth's rejection of Przywara's *analogia entis* puts us in position to draw two important conclusions regarding the ongoing debate about Barth's interpretation of the *analogia entis*. First, it helps us see that Barth's "change" with respect to the *analogia entis* does not include a withdrawal of his rejection of Przywara's version of it. After the publication of *Church Dogmatics* I/1, Barth's criticism of the *analogia entis* attracted much attention from Roman Catholic theologians, and some of them worried that Barth's criticism had been prompted, at least in part, by the fact that Przywara was not sufficiently clear that the *analogia entis* occurs only within a larger and more specifically theological framework. Indeed, Przywara is not clear on these matters, even in his 1932 book, *Analogia Entis*.[61] Hans Urs von Balthasar, for example, notes that Przywara's work during this period can "seem like a philosophically constructed system," and that it was only in Przywara's "second period"—which took place in the decades *after* Barth publicly rejected Przywara's *analogia entis*—that his version of it "was set out more clearly in all its theological contexts".[62] We see such clarity, for example, in a 1942 essay by Przywara in which he argues that the principle "grace does not destroy but supports and perfects nature" does not, in fact, place grace in continuity with nature in the kinds of ways Barth worried about.[63] But Przywara had not achieved this clarity in 1929. Indeed, based upon what Barth

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

knew from his reading of Przywara's book and his encounter with Przywara in his seminar, it was impossible for him to have known that such a clarification was forthcoming when he issued his initial rejection of the *analogia entis*. In fact, *no* Roman Catholic theologian was talking about the *analogia entis* with this kind of theological clarity in the years preceding Barth's critique of it.

Henri de Lubac's observation that dogmatic disputes with Protestants often put Roman Catholics on guard "against one-sided formulas which, though harmless in the past, can be fraught with danger today" is helpful, because something along these lines occurred in this case.[64] Specifically, Barth's critique of the *analogia entis* prompted Roman Catholic theologians to clarify the meaning and function of the *analogia entis* in ways that were not possible *before* his critique, because it helped them recognize and guard against the kind of unintentional one-sidedness that Przywara and others fell into, at least in their early formulations of the *analogia entis*. We see such clarifications, for example, in Gottlieb Söhngen's argument that the *analogia entis* occurs within an *analogia fidei*. This version of the *analogia entis* departs in content and function from the version Przywara presented to Barth, because, by laying out the theological context of the *analogia entis* more explicitly, it attempts to mitigate the problem found in the type of continuity between creation and justification that prompted Barth to reject Przywara's version. So, when Barth says in *Church Dogmatics* II/1 that if Söhngen is correct, then he must "withdraw" his earlier statements, he is not saying that he was wrong to reject Przywara's version of the *analogia entis*. He still rejects and always would reject this version of it. His statement is an acknowledgment that the version of the *analogia entis* offered by Söhngen is substantively different than the version Przywara presented to him, because it does not have the same kind of problem—namely, the minimization of the effects of sin—that had prompted him to reject Przywara's version.

This is why Barth later called Söhngen's theology the harbinger "of a new Catholic theological learning",[65] and why he says that von Balthasar's theology is a sign of a "Christological renaissance" in Catholic theology.[66] By explicitly placing the *analogia entis* within an overarching *analogia fidei*, they have, in Barth's view, listened to his critique of Przywara's version of the *analogia entis* and offered an alternative, properly theological version of it that begins with God's justifying work in Jesus Christ. This development helps explain why Barth stopped expressing worries about the *analogia entis* late in his career. He did not stop talking about the *analogia entis* because he realized he had made a mistake or because he changed his mind about his rejection of it; he stopped talking about it because the version of the *analogia entis* he rejected in 1929 and again in the preface to *Church Dogmatics* I/1 was not the same version that Söhngen, von Balthasar, or even Przywara himself were defending in the decades that followed.[67]

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

Second, the above account also helps us recognize that, while Barth did move toward an analogical understanding of the relationship between God and creation, this move does not mean that he incorporated a version of Przywara's *analogia entis* into his theology in the years after his rejection of it. As we have seen, Barth rejected Przywara's *analogia entis* in part because it places the knowledge of God that humans have by virtue of their creation in continuity with the knowledge of God they have in and through God's reconciliation of sinners in Jesus Christ. In the years that followed, however, Barth realized that the God-world relation had to be explained in terms of some type of a created analogy, because without such an analogy, it becomes impossible to hold that anything one says about God's relationship to creation has any fixed or stable meaning at all. Or, to put it in the words of one critic, Barth realized that his early formulations had the "illusory security of a theology which unfolds itself apart from the natural order and which, in attempting to recreate everything, appears to find itself in possession of nothing".[68] As late as *Church Dogmatics* II/1, Barth has yet to address this problem, because in this volume, he still rejects the notion of an *intrinsic* analogy between God and the human because he believes it opens the door to the existence of the kind of continuity between God and humanity that prompted him to reject Przywara's *analogia entis*. He thus argues in *CD* II/1 that any analogy must be *extrinsic* to humans—that is, it does not occur on the basis of something *in* the human, but rather, it happens *to* the human in the event of revelation. By *Church Dogmatics* III/1, however, Barth is writing of the human as one whose "being and nature . . . is destined, prepared, and equipped" for God's grace, as one who is "disposed" for this grace,[69] and as one to whom God's "own divine form of life is not alien".[70] In other words, by *CD* III/1, Barth clearly believes that the human as created stands in continuity with the human in grace.

Does this shift in language between *CD* II/1 and *CD* III/1 mean that Barth has incorporated a version of Przywara's *analogia entis* into his own theology, as von Balthasar and others argue?[71] The answer is no, because a critical difference remains between their views. For Przywara, the human as created stands in continuity with the human in grace because God's act in creation exists as the condition of the possibility of God's act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ.[72] This is why what humans can know of God from reflection upon their created nature can be fulfilled and perfected by what they know of God by faith through the revelation given in the Church. Barth rejected this kind of continuity in his lectures of 1929, and he still rejects it in *CD* III/1. The continuity he posits in his mature doctrine of analogy is of a different sort, and the difference arises from the effect of his doctrine of election upon his doctrine of creation. By *CD* III/1, Barth holds that God's covenant of grace in Jesus Christ is the internal basis of creation as such.[73] Creation, therefore, can never been considered apart from God's act of reconciliation—meaning that what humans are intrinsically is not as a function of their creation by God but

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

of God's election of them in Christ.[74] This means that what humans know of God and themselves by means of reflection upon their created nature is not the precondition for the fulfilled and perfected knowledge that they have by means of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, as is the case for Przywara. Rather, because what humans are *internally* is, at every moment in time, a function of the *external*, justifying relation of God to them in Jesus Christ, this relation is something that can be known through the revelation of God's reconciling act in Christ and this revelation alone. In short, in his mature theology, Barth adopts an analogical understanding of God-world relation that leads to continuity between God's act in creation and justification, but this analogy works in reverse from the Roman Catholic one: the human as created stands in continuity with the human in grace precisely because *justification* is the condition of the possibility of creation.[75] This construal does, in fact, leave Barth with a type of an analogy of being, but Barth's analogy of being is substantively distinct from Przywara's version of it. That is, for Barth, "being" itself is determined by God's free and eternal decision to enter into human history in Jesus Christ in order to reconcile sinful humans. Any talk of "being" at all, therefore, and any talk of an "analogy of being" between God and humans, must be based solely upon this act of reconciliation and the human's being "in Christ" that occurs as a result of the justification of his or her sin. Barth's mature version of divine-human continuity, therefore, leaves no room for any knowledge of God apart from the knowledge of humanity's reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ. He does not adopt a version of the analogy that Przywara originally offered, but rather, he adopts the strongest possible rejection of such an analogy, because the structure of Przywara's analogy is reversed in order to account for the problem that initially prompted Barth to reject Przywara's analogy: the problem of human sin. Barth's mature account of divine-human continuity thus stands as the *fulfillment* of his early rejection of Przywara's *analogia entis* rather than a retreat from it.

These conclusions help us see how a precise account of the reasons motivating Barth's rejection of Przywara's *analogia entis* can clear away much of the confusion about his interpretation of the doctrine as well as about the changes and developments in his own view over the course of his career. Specifically, it points us to the fact that the distinctions that propelled both Barth's initial rejection of the *analogia entis* as well as his mature alternative to it stem from his recognition that he and Przywara had very different interpretations of the doctrines of revelation, creation and justification, and that these differences were the same kind of differences that traditionally had divided Protestants from Roman Catholics. Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* was not the result of a misunderstanding, therefore, but the consequence of his recognition that Przywara stood on the other side of a doctrinal fault line that had existed for centuries. Despite developments in his thought in the years that followed his initial critique of Przywara, Barth always remained on the same side of that line. Consequently, any attempt to deal

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

with Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* must address these doctrines and the question of why Barth thought the differences between Przywara's interpretation of them and his own were so crucial. To dismiss Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* as if it were the result of a mere mistake is to fail to recognize why this debate, and these doctrines, matter at all.

NOTES

1 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1, revised edition, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), p. xiii. This sentence, and the reaction it provoked, set the agenda for the debate between Barth and Roman Catholics in the decades that followed.
2 See John R. Betz, "Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (Part One)", *Modern Theology* Vol. 21, no. 3 (July, 2005), pp. 367–411 and "Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (Part Two)", *Modern Theology* Vol. 22, no. 1 (January, 2006), pp. 1–50.
3 John R. Betz, "Beyond the Sublime: The Aesthetics of the Analogy of Being (Part Two)", pp. 3, 11. He concludes that "the solecisms in [Barth's] critique are so numerous (and have been repeated so often) that an entire book would be required to sort them out" (p. 5). This charge is a stronger form of the one issued by Hans Urs von Balthasar, who insisted that if one closely attends to Przywara's thought, "nothing whatever can be found of that ogre that Barth has made of the analogy of being". See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, trans., S.J. Edward T. Oakes, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1992), p. 257. These conclusions have been repeated by David Bentley Hart, who argues that Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* "speaks only of Barth's failure to understand Przywara". See Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), p. 241.
4 Betz, "Beyond the Sublime (Part Two)", p. 6. Von Balthasar also issued this charge, but he argued that Barth himself recognized the problem. As a result, he says, "Barth's attitude gradually changed" so that he eventually had "no difficulty in recognizing and approving the analogy of being . . . within the context of an overarching analogy of faith". Cf., Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, pp.164–165.
5 See Kenneth Oakes, "The Question of Nature and Grace in Karl Barth: Humanity as Creature and as Covenant-Partner", *Modern Theology* Vol. 23 no. 4 (October 2007), pp. 595–616.
6 See Gottlieb Söhngen, "Analogia Fidei: Gottähnlichkeit allein aus Glauben?", *Catholica* Vol. 3, no. 3 (1934), pp. 113–136; and "Analogia Fidei: Die Einheit in der Glaubenswissenschaft." *Catholica* Vol. 3, no. 4 (1934), pp. 176–208. He advances similar arguments later on in "*Analogia entis* oder *analogia fidei*?" in *Wissenschaft und Weisheit*. *Zeitschrift für augustinisch-franziskanische Theologie und Philosophie in der Gegenwart* 9 (1942), pp. 91–100; "Wesen und Akt in der scholastischen Lehre von der *participatio* und *analogia entis*", *Studium Generale* Vol. 8 (1955), and "Analogia Entis in Analogia Fidei", in *Antwort: Karl Barth zum Siebzgsten Geburtstag* (Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag AG, 1956), pp. 266–271.
7 See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. II/1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clair, 1957), p. 82.
8 The reason, Barth says, is that he is "not aware that this particular doctrine of the *analogia entis* is to be found anywhere else in the Roman Catholic Church or that it has ever been adopted in this sense". As we will see below, this statement is correct. See *CD* II/1, pp. 82–83.
9 In fact, Barth does not mention the *analogia entis* in the volumes of *Church Dogmatics* composed after the publication von Balthasar's book.
10 Such a view is articulated by Peter Oh, who argues that Barth eventually recognizes "the shortcoming of the *analogia fidei* and the one-sidedness of his interpretation of the *analogia entis* after being convinced by Hans Urs von Balthasar". See Peter Oh, *Karl Barth's Trinitarian Theology: Study in Karl Barth's Analogical Use of the Trinitarian Relation* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), p. 15.
11 Karl Barth, *Gespräche: 1959–1962*, Gesamtausgabe (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1995), p. 499. Barth offered these remarks at Princeton in 1962. He expressed a similar sentiment in remarks with students from Tübingen in 1964. See Karl Barth, *Gespräche 1964–1968*, Gesamtausgabe (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1997), pp. 88–89.

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

12 These protocols are housed in the Karl Barth Archive in Basel, and they were recently collected, transcribed, and analyzed by Amy E. Marga for her excellent dissertation, "Partners in the Gospel: Karl Barth and Roman Catholicism, 1922–1932" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theology Seminary, 2006). I am grateful to the Karl Barth Archive, and to Professors Marga and Hans Anton Drewes, for access to these protocols and permission to cite them. The protocols will be cited as "Thomas Aquinas Seminar Protocol" and the citations will reflect the page numbers of the manuscript available in the Barth Archiv.
13 Przywara's engagement with Barth consists of several reviews of Barth's books in *Stimmen der Zeit* as well as direct confrontation with Barth in Przywara's constructive pieces. See, for example, his remarks about Barth and his colleagues in "Gott in uns oder über uns?", *Stimmen der Zeit* Vol. 105 (1923), pp. 349–353.
14 See Erich Przywara, *Religionsphilosophie Katholischer Theologie* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1927). An English translation of this volume exists under the title *Polarity: A German Catholic's Interpretation of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935). Przywara's original text was reprinted in his collected writings as *Religionsphilosophie Katholischer Theologie*, Schriften, Vol. II (Eisieldeln: Johannes-Verlag, 1962), pp. 373–511. All citations in this essay are from this 1962 edition.
15 See Przywara, *Religionsphilosophie katholischer Theologie*, pp. 376–399.
16 See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I.44.1: "all beings apart from God are not their own being, but are beings by participation". Thus, while each creature possesses a set of characteristics that are the creature's essence—that in virtue of which the creature is what it is—this essence is altogether different from the creature's existence, because its existence is not something the creature possesses but something it receives from God at every moment.
17 See Thomas on God's simplicity in *ST* I.3.3–4.
18 Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* 1.8.5.1; cited by Gregory P. Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), p. 250.
19 Przywara, *Religionsphilosophie Katholischer Theologie*, p. 403. Przywara's shorthand phrase for this idea is that the creature's essence is an "essence *in-over* existence". This phrase simply means that the creature, as creature, is intrinsically related to and testifies to God, even though God is wholly distinct from it. See also Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, Schriften, Vol. III (Einsiedeln: Johannes-Verlag, 1962), p. 28.
20 Przywara, *Religionsphilosophie Katholischer Theologie*, p. 403. Thus, as Przywara explains, while God's being is "complete", the creature's being is "the riddle of 'becoming'."
21 *Ibid*., p. 400.
22 Przywara, *Religionsphilosophie Katholischer Theologie*, 404. This idea leads Przywara to conclude that "the ultimate unity of the creature is not [in] itself, but [in] That Which is *above* itself". Cf., also Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, pp. 131–132, 171–173.
23 Przywara believes that this idea is best reflected in the statement from the Fourth Lateran Council: "one cannot note any similarity between Creator and creature—however great—that would obviate the need always to note an ever greater dissimilarity". See Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, (St. Louis and London: Herder, 1957), p. 171.
24 "Thomas Aquinas Seminar Protocol," p. 199.
25 "Thomas Aquinas Seminar Protocol," pp. 199–200.
26 "Thomas Aquinas Seminar Protocol," p. 192.
27 "Thomas Aquinas Seminar Protocol," pp. 206–207; cited in Marga, "Partners in the Gospel", p. 230.
28 For a brief account this visit, see Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 182–184. Busch later mentions Przywara's second visit to one of Barth's seminars, this time on "The Problem of Natural Theology," at the University of Bonn in 1931.
29 Erich Przywara, "Das Katholische Kirchenprinzip", *Zwischen den Zeiten* Vol. 7 (1929), pp. 277–278.
30 *Ibid*., pp. 283, 289.
31 *Ibid*., p. 283.
32 "Thomas Aquinas Seminar Protocol," p. 213.
33 *Ibid*.

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

34 *Ibid*., p. 222.
35 *Ibid*., p. 222, emphasis mine.
36 *Ibid*., p. 214; see also p. 221.
37 This is why he says that human consciousness can serve as a "window" through which we can see the self-revelation of God in his relationship to creation; we know that this is the case only because we have eyes to see it once we have the pattern and rhythm of the *analogia entis*. Or, as he explains elsewhere, "Common to [both] 'metaphysics' and 'religion' is the central point of the *analogia entis* and the presupposition of the natural self-revelation of God in his creation". See Przywara, *Religionsphilosophie katholischer Theologie*, p. 442 and "Metaphysik und Religion", *Stimmen der Zeit* Vol. 104 (1923), pp. 137–138.
38 "Thomas Aquinas Seminar Protocol," p. 225.
39 Karl Barth and Eduard Thurneysen, *Karl Barth—Eduard Thurneysen Briefweshsel: 1921–30*, Gesamtausgabe, Vol. V (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1974), p. 652.
40 For example, see Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909–1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 384–391.
41 Karl Barth, "Fate and Idea in Theology", in *The Way of Theology in Karl Barth: Essays and Comments*, ed. H. Martin Rumscheidt, (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986), p. 33.
42 This clarification challenges accounts that point to an argument of this sort as the primary motivation for Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis*. See, for example, Fergus Kerr's description of Barth's position in *After Aquinas: Version of Thomism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp. 35–37.
43 Barth, "Fate and Idea in Theology", p. 9.
44 *Ibid*., p. 38.
45 *Ibid*., p. 35.
46 *Ibid*. This means, Barth says, that "Jesus Christ as the Word of God to us and therefore himself as God is the content of revelation. And also the Holy Spirit, who illumines the Word for us and us for the Word, [and] is himself God, is the content of revelation".
47 *Ibid*., p. 40.
48 *Ibid*.
49 *Ibid*., pp. 39–40.
50 *Ibid*., p. 56.
51 Karl Barth, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis of Ethics*, trans., R. Birch Hoyle, (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 24. While Barth treats Augustine explicitly, he relegates his critique of Przywara to the footnotes. His worry with Augustine centers upon Augustine's remarks in "The Spirit and the Letter" that, despite the "wound" of sin, the Holy Spirit enables humans to "do works of righteousness" that contribute in some way to their justification. See "The Spirit and the Letter", in *The Works of Saint Augustine*, Vol. 23, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Roland J. Teske, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press), pp. 175–184.
52 Barth, *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life*, pp. 3–4.
53 *Ibid*., pp. 23–24.
54 *Ibid*., p. 23.
55 *Ibid*., p. 20.
56 *Ibid*., p. 24.
57 *Ibid*., p. 32.
58 *Ibid*., p. 31.
59 *Ibid*., pp. 5, 11.
60 *Ibid*., p. 7.
61 Przywara's *Analogia Entis*—which was written, in part, with Przywara's experience during his visits to Barth's seminars in 1929 and 1931 in mind—offers a fuller treatment of the doctrine than is found in *Religionsphilosophie katholischer Theologie*. However, because it leaves implicit the theological context for the doctrine that Söhngen, von Balthasar, and Przywara himself would make more explicit later on, it does not offer sufficient reason for Barth to retract or alter his prior criticism of Przywara's doctrine. It is also important to keep in mind that this book was written *after* Barth's initial rejection of the *analogia entis*, and so it is of secondary importance behind *Religionsphilosophie* for understanding Barth's reasons for initially rejecting the *analogia entis* as well as for answering the question of whether or not this rejection was justified. For a thorough treatment of Przywara's *Analogia Entis* in light

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

of Barth's concerns, see Keith L. Johnson, *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), pp. 127–150.

62 Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p. 255.

63 Erich Przywara, "Der Grundsatz '*gratia non destruit, sed supponit et perficit naturam*': Eine Ideengeschichtliche Interpretation," *Scholastik* Vol. 17 (1942), pp. 176–186.

64 Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans., Rosemary Sheed, (New York, NY: Herder & Herder, 1998), p. 26.

65 Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, p. 428.

66 See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), p. 768.

67 Like Söhngen and von Balthasar, Przywara began to incorporate the *analogia fidei* more explicitly into his theology, although he did so by reversing their formula, meaning that for him, the *analogia fidei* exists within the *analogia entis*. Bernhard Gertz notes that this move to "biblical theology" and the *analogia fidei* "became important for Przywara as a way of responding to Barth and Söhngen". This development moves Przywara closer to a correspondence with Barth, because it allows him to talk concretely about creation as part of the one economy of salvation in Jesus Christ. See Bernhard Gertz, *Glaubenswelt als Analogie: Die Theologische Analogielehre Erich Przywaras und ihr Ort in der Auseinandersetzung um die Analogie Fidei* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1969), p. 105. Also see Eberhard Mechels, *Analogie bei Erich Przywara und Karl Barth: Das Verhältnis von Offenbarungstheologie und Metaphysic* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974), pp. 40–63 and 188–199. For an example of Przywara's mature theology, see Erich Przywara, *Alter und Neuer Bund: Theologie der Stunde* (Wien: Verlag Herold, 1956).

68 Richard H. Roberts, *A Theology on Its Way? Essays on Karl Barth* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), p. 64. For a related critique, see Jay Wesley Richards, "Barth on the Divine 'Conscription' of Language", *Heythrop Journal* Vol. 38, no. 3 (1997), pp. 247–266.

69 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), p. 97.

70 *Ibid*., p. 184.

71 Von Balthasar's argument on this point centers upon his claim that Barth's *analogia relationis* presupposes an *analogia entis* between God and the human, because God's act in Jesus Christ presupposes God's prior act in creation. For this reason, von Balthasar argues that Barth's *analogia relationis* "expresses nothing but a relation of being". See von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, pp. 161–167. In one respect, von Balthasar's critique is well founded: it certainly is correct to say that Barth's analogy of relation by necessity includes an analogy of being. However, not every "relation of being"—or analogy of being—is the same, and the mere presence of such an analogy does not indicate that Barth has adopted Przywara's version of it. For Barth, it is impossible to talk about "being" at all outside the context of the covenant of grace, and to talk about it within this covenant is to talk about the being of one man—Jesus Christ—and every human's relationship to him. For a more thorough development of this point with respect to von Balthasar's argument, see Keith L. Johnson, *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), pp. 191–230.

72 Przywara, of course, is simply following the logic of Thomas Aquinas in *ST* I.2.2.ad1: "The existence of God, and similar things which can be known by natural reason, as Romans 1 affirms, are not articles of faith, but preambles to the articles. Faith presupposes natural knowledge as grace presupposes nature, and as perfection presupposes what can be perfected".

73 Barth's reformulation of the doctrine of election in *Church Dogmatics* II/2 leads him to argue that every work of God, including the act of the creation of the world, must be seen in light of God's decision to elect humanity to salvation in Jesus Christ. He says: "Always and from every point of view [God's works] derive from the fact that from and to all eternity God has moved toward man freely and therefore definitively. Always and from every point of view they derive from Jesus Christ, the One who in the will of God was to be, was, is, and will be both very man and very God. Always and from every point of view they are what from all eternity they were necessarily foreordained to be. And that applies to all God's works without exception. There is no such thing as a created nature which has its purpose, being or continuance apart from grace, or which may be know in this purpose, being or countenance except through grace". See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), p. 9. For Barth's development of this theme with respect to the doctrine of creation, see *CD* III/1, pp. 228–329.

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd

74 For more on this idea, see Bruce L. McCormack, *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), pp. 174–179.

75 This is the point von Balthasar did not recognize in his analysis of Barth's doctrine of creation. That is, while he correctly sees that Barth incorporates continuity in his portrayal of God's relationship with humanity, he incorrectly assumes that this continuity exists because "nature is the presupposition for grace". For Barth, however, the order is reversed: God's act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ is the presupposition of creation as such. See von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, p. 165.

© 2010 Blackwell Publishing Ltd