

THE DEBATE BETWEEN KARL BARTH AND  
ERICH PRZYWARA: A NEW EVALUATION  
OF PROTESTANT AND ROMAN  
CATHOLIC DIFFERENCES

I. INTRODUCTION: THE BEGINNING OF THE DEBATE

THE recurrent, bitter debates between Protestant and Roman Catholic apologists have seldom been productive of new insight. The long standing controversy which has divided Christendom into two opposed and warring camps has reduced the margin of new creative effort and dissipated the spiritual strength of both confessions. A notable exception to the usual pattern of partisan theological debate occurred in the discussions between the Protestant theologian, Karl Barth, and the German Jesuit, Erich Przywara.<sup>1</sup> The exchanges between these two confessional spokesmen have been regarded as the most important single commentary in this century on Protestant-Roman Catholic differences.<sup>2</sup> Neither Barth nor Przywara allowed himself to be limited to an exclusively negative, defensive interpretation of his opponent's ideas. Indeed, their respective interpretations show an unusually sympathetic appreciation for the other's position. A large agreement and common understanding developed from their exchange of views in spite of their acknowledged confessional differences. Moreover, we cannot explain the contribution of each to his own Church apart from his meeting with the leading member of the opposing ecclesiastical party. Contemporary Protestant and Roman Catholic apologetics have depended in large measure on the interpretation of religion which was developed in their discussions.<sup>3</sup>

In the past, a number of different ideas have been accepted as fundamental to the Protestant or Roman Catholic position. The debate between Protestants and Roman Catholics has centered on the nature of the Church, justification by faith, synergism, or the primacy of Scripture. It has also included such secondary questions as the invocation of saints and purgatory. The lines of difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism were established even before the death of Luther in the Melancthon-Cajetan controversies. The discussions between Barth and Przywara represent a new approach to many of the traditional differences between the two confessions.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it reflects a number of changes which have taken place in both Churches in the last hundred years. In particular, both parties take note of the official dominance of Thomistic philosophy over all other types of Roman Catholic interpretation as well as the decline of scholastic Lutheranism in Germany and Scandinavia.

Barth's interpretation of Roman Catholicism does not conform to the tradition of post-Reformation Protestant apologetics and must be distinguished from that of most other Protestant theologians. His appraisal of the different Christian confessions diverges radically from most post-Reformation evaluations. Barth's new and unique judgments about the Roman Catholic religious claims date from his first exchanges with Przywara. Their discussions began in the early period of Barth's career. Przywara was already established as a leading spokesman of Catholicism in Germany when Barth's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans was first published in 1918. It was this work which first brought Barth to the attention of the religious public. Barth had not expected the widespread acclaim, much less the controversy, which his commentary aroused. He compared himself to an unsuspecting citizen in a church steeple who

quite by accident had pulled the bell rope, not at all intending the clamor which his action evoked.<sup>5</sup> However, in spite of the wide reading of his book, Barth complained that only a very few persons really understood his ideas. He insisted that less than a dozen of his critics appraised his position correctly. Barth included Przywara's name in the list of select reviewers and added that this Roman Catholic philosopher of religion had recognized the fundamentally Protestant character of his exposition.<sup>6</sup> Barth's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans was the first occasion of the exchanges about Protestant-Roman Catholic differences which continued for a period of more than twenty years. Barth acknowledges that Przywara's pointed criticism compelled him to modify his appraisal of Roman Catholicism. More particularly, however, it forced him to a fundamental re-evaluation of his own Protestant position.

The new interpretation of Protestant-Roman Catholic differences in these discussions was significantly influenced by the existential philosophy of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. Although Barth has later disavowed Kierkegaard's philosophy of religion, he none the less acknowledges that his dialectical theology was dependent in large measure on the ideas of this Danish thinker.<sup>7</sup> In his early works, Barth attempted to formulate a new existential theology. Przywara's interest in the existentialism of Kierkegaard is reflected in his *Das Geheimnis Kierkegaards*.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Przywara has been a personal friend of Martin Heidegger ever since their early association together as students in a Jesuit school in Austria. Przywara was significantly influenced by Heidegger's ideas even in his unsuccessful attempts to reconvert Heidegger to Roman Catholicism.

It is important to note that Barth and Przywara develop their respective apologetics on very broad historical bases.

Neither limits his interpretation to any one type of Protestant or Roman Catholic theology. Barth emphasizes that it is the task of Protestant theology to clarify the essential insights of all the Reformers, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Melancthon, as they bear on contemporary religious problems. Specifically, Protestant theology must be reformulated in view of the claims which Roman Catholic philosophy and theology have made subsequent to the Council of Trent and more particularly since the Vatican Council of 1870.<sup>9</sup> Przywara argues that Catholic philosophy of religion must attempt a new synthesis of natural and revealed truth in the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas.<sup>10</sup> He refuses to be bound by the letter of strict Thomism. Instead, he looks for a fresh interpretation which will be authentically Catholic but none the less relevant to contemporary discussion.

Barth and Przywara agree that the essential claims of Christian theism, as distinguished from other positions, derive from its particular understanding of the uniqueness and otherness of God. Both believe in a personal God whose knowledge and being transcend all existence in the world. Moreover, they argue that we cannot describe God's relation to the world exhaustively or encompass his essential character and being. Their respective interpretations are distinguished from non-theistic views by their acceptance of the Christian religious claims about the transcendence of God. They agree that the essential requirement of theistic interpretation is that it establish a descriptive reference which will make explicit that God transcends the world. Przywara finds that the idea of transcendence requires an analogy of being, the *analogia entis*; he argues that the *analogia entis* is implicit in all types of Catholic philosophy and theology.<sup>11</sup> Barth accepts only an analogy of faith, the *analogia fidei*, and emphasizes that this type of analogy is

definitive of the essential truth claims of the Protestant position. Neither Barth nor Przywara attempts to discuss their disagreements generally, but rather treat them as particular problems of Christian faith and knowledge. Their respective expositions are particularly valuable in understanding the Protestant and Roman Catholic positions because each seeks to formulate an interpretation of religion which will do justice to the classical insights of his own tradition.

Traditionally, the *analogia entis* has signified that there is a relation of similarity between God and creation. "Analogy" is a more affirmative term than either "image" or "likeness" and implies that this relation can be identified specifically and described clearly. There is a bond of being which makes it possible to formulate a limited description of God's attributes and character. The analogous relation between God and the world is not one of identity or of complete difference but one of similarity and dissimilarity. Moreover, our knowledge is never exhaustive but none the less authentic knowledge.

The essential question of the debate between Barth and Przywara is the *analogia entis*. Barth writes: "I regard the *analogia entis* as the invention of Antichrist, and think that because of it one cannot become Catholic. Whereupon I at the same time allow myself to regard all other possible reasons for not becoming Catholic, as shortsighted and lacking in seriousness."<sup>12</sup> In short, Przywara accepts, Barth rejects, the *analogia entis*. Barth argues that the *analogia fidei* is alone compatible with Christian religious claims.<sup>13</sup> Both men agree that the *analogia entis* is determinative of the fundamental differences as between the Roman Catholic and Protestant interpretations of Scripture, sacramental grace, the relation of faith and works in salvation as well as religious authority. In effect, they establish a new point of reference for the

appraisal of the apologetics of the different Churches in their divergent interpretations of analogy.

The *analogia entis* has not been an exclusively Roman Catholic idea but appears in Protestant theology as well. It is accepted in the writings of Calvin and Luther and is indeed the basis of their respective doctrines of man's natural knowledge of God.<sup>14</sup> However, it has been developed most extensively by the Thomistic theologians, Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, and has been carefully defined in the tradition of post-scholastic Catholic theology.<sup>15</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas makes only brief reference to the *analogia entis* in his *Summas*, but later interpreters have argued that it is presupposed in his claims for man's natural knowledge of God as well as by his appraisal of faith and reason.<sup>16</sup> Przywara acknowledges the contribution of this scholarship to Catholic doctrinal interpretation and apologetics. However, he believes that the *analogia entis* is not limited to Thomistic theology, but is the determinative principle of all types of Roman Catholic philosophy and theology. Barth accepts Przywara's claim that the *analogia entis* is common to all schools of Catholic interpretation. Moreover, he believes that the Protestant theologian is obliged to reject this idea outright in his restatement of the Reformation critique of Roman Catholicism, particularly in view of contemporary problems and discussion. He is emphatic that it does not belong properly to any authentically Protestant theology.<sup>17</sup>

## II. BARTH'S POSITION: THE *Analogia Fidei*

Even in his rejection of the *analogia entis*, Barth insists that Christian theology presupposes an authentic religious knowledge which is both "direct" and certain.<sup>18</sup> He asserts that the validation of its religious insights is possible in the

last analysis only from Christian faith. Barth's position is essentially fideistic and confessional. He argues that a comprehensive appraisal of the truth claims of Christian experience can be established only from a perspective of faith. An authentically Protestant interpretation must make clear that Christian religious experience is *sui generis* and uniquely self-validating. Accordingly, the truth claims of the *analogia fidei* are fundamentally existential. Barth limits himself to accepting the *analogia fidei* because he believes that the relation between God and man can be known only in faith. We may not proceed from our general experience in the world to religion. On the contrary, our relation to the Deity may be known only from its own self-authenticating character; it is independent of other non-religious knowledge.

The *analogia fidei*, according to Barth, makes explicit that Christian religious experience is not only subjective and personal but essentially objective, inasmuch as it is an experience and knowledge of the Word of God. From this knowledge of the Word of God, Protestant theology makes claims to an authentic although not exhaustive apprehension of God's purposes and being. It is the task of Protestant theology to establish within its own carefully circumscribed limits, this fundamentally unique relation of correspondence between the divine Logos and the human logos, the Word of God and the word of man. Such a relation is necessarily an analogical one; by reason of its uniqueness, it can be described only from the *analogia fidei*. Barth emphasizes that the *analogia fidei* does not depend on any particular cosmology for its validation; it may not be confirmed from any judgment about nature, much less from its agreement with the accepted ideals of any given cultural epoch. He wishes to make doubly clear that the correspondence between man and God which is made explicit in the *analogia*

*fidei* is not a reformulation or expansion of our natural knowledge. It is rather a fundamentally new relation of grace which can be known only from the new perspectives it establishes as illuminating, transforming power.<sup>19</sup> Christian religious knowledge is dependent upon grace and indeed derives its essential meaning and truth from a new existence in faith.

Barth's position is essentially a theological existentialism even though he rejects all identification of his ideas with existential philosophy.<sup>20</sup> Barth agrees with Kierkegaard that our knowledge of reality is always partial and incomplete. He argues that we cannot encompass the fundamental problems of existence abstractly or interpret them from an absolute which transcends history. Barth describes his own systematic interpretation as a confessional theology and argues that we have no speculative perspective which enables us to stand apart from our commitments of faith. He is saved from skepticism by an affirmation of faith; his position is existential in its claim that we have an experience of the authentically real in personal existence, even though we do not apprehend reality in its fullness.

This existential interpretation of faith agrees in the main with the doctrine of the Protestant Reformers.<sup>21</sup> Barth emphasizes that religious truth has its fundamental ontological basis in the initiative and will of the Deity. He is characteristically Protestant in arguing that Christian theology is not a deductive inquiry. Barth affirms that faith has its basis in a new type of existence which is constituted only by the sovereign activity of the deity. The human person cannot command the divine grace which is prerequisite to authentic religious knowledge. The *analogia fidei* transcends the subject-object relationship of man's natural knowledge of the world and his own self. It is dependent on a relation between



the human spirit and the divine or Holy Spirit.<sup>22</sup> Although this relation is fundamentally analogous, it has its basis in actuality and not in speculation. Barth rejects all claims for a general analogical structure of thought or being and allows only that there may be an analogical relationship within a theological perspective. As a Protestant theologian, he is more concerned to do justice to the contingencies of faith than to establish a comprehensive interpretative perspective or synthesis. His theological existentialism parallels Luther's "justification by faith." Barth argues that the full dimensions of history and personal living cannot be encompassed in a philosophical synthesis or theological summa! Philosophical inquiry in the end only makes evident the inharmonious, conflicting character of existence in the world.

### III. PRZYWARA'S INTERPRETATION OF THE *Analogia Entis*

Przywara's apology for the *analogia entis* as a principle of synthesis which is essentially Catholic developed from his disagreements with the forthright Protestantism of Barth. He formulated a comprehensive philosophy of Catholicism in justification of his interpretation of religion. He based this philosophy on a careful analysis of the main types of Catholic interpretation and piety, Augustinian, Thomistic, Scotist and Molinist. Przywara acknowledges that these different schools of Catholic thought must be distinguished from each other, but none the less claims that they have a common unity in Catholic thought and life.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, he finds that all of the major types of Catholic philosophy and theology presuppose a uniquely Catholic view of the immanence and transcendence of God in relation to the world.

This uniquely Catholic understanding of immanence and transcendence has its basis in an analogy interpretation of reality and being. The analogy of being implies that God is

present in the world in his immanence and yet transcends it in the mystery and depths of his being. The *analogia entis* is indeed implicit in the Catholic philosophical and religious consciousness and makes it clear that immanence and transcendence are always experienced together and are never absolutely distinct from each other. The experience of the immanence and transcendence of being is ultimately an essential unity. Reformation theology, on the other hand, destroys this essential unity by its radical emphasis on the divine transcendence.<sup>24</sup> Przywara argues that Protestant theology has not been able to explain God's relation to the world or to relate the immanence and transcendence of the divine being. Catholic philosophy, however, has demonstrated that religious truth need not be limited to fideistic affirmation as in so much of Protestantism. It claims an authentic knowledge of divine being even though its understanding of the full mystery of this being is not exhaustive. In short, Przywara argues that we are not justified in treating man's relation to the absolute as an exclusively theological problem as in so much of Protestant theology. Indeed, the entire tradition of Catholic philosophy, patristic, scholastic and post-scholastic makes clear that the immanence and transcendence of God's power and being in relation to the world may be most appropriately described in an analogical metaphysics.

Przywara acknowledges that the Thomistic interpretations of the *analogia entis* have been premised on Aristotelian philosophy. Their apology for the Roman Catholic doctrine of the natural knowledge of God presupposes Aristotelian logic and metaphysics. Much of this Thomistic apologetics is narrowly scholastic and in the main unconcerned with the problems of modern philosophy. Przywara believes that we may begin from the contingency and finitude of the world as it has been described in the main types of theistic philosophy.

He points out that the contemporary existentialists have emphasized that man's existence in the world is not self-complete. He finds that the existentialists have re-established an authentic philosophical concern in their new actualism.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, he agrees with their conviction about the contingency and incompleteness of existence but concludes that they have given it a one-sided and exaggerated interpretation. Przywara insists, as against the existentialists, that the affirmation of contingency may not be made the ultimate basis of philosophy or metaphysics. In the last analysis, the existentialists find it necessary to affirm that reality opens downward rather than "over out" to a transcendent reality and ground of being.<sup>26</sup> In short, they reject the *analogia entis* but have no substitute for it as an essential principle of explanation. According to Przywara, modern existential philosophy is in effect a denial of the *analogia entis* on the grounds that we have no knowledge of an ultimately transcendent reality.

#### IV. PRZYWARA'S REPLY TO BARTH

Barth's theology conforms more closely to the existentialism of Kierkegaard and must be distinguished from the philosophy of the nontheistic existentialists. Indeed, the first premise of Barth's position is the radical transcendence of God. Przywara agrees with Barth's affirmation of God's transcendent reality but refuses his claim that the transcendence of God may be known only from the point of view of faith. He is doubly explicit that Protestant fideism is in essence a denial of an authentic intellectual knowledge of being in its analogical relationship. He believes that Catholic apologetics must be directed as much against Protestant fideism as against non-Catholic philosophy, inasmuch as both deny the essential claims of the *analogia entis*.

Przywara argues further that the *analogia entis* is the only adequate explanation of the self-transcending character of thought and reality in the world. He agrees with the existentialist claim that the transcendence of being is the fundamental concern of metaphysics. He insists, moreover, that an adequate explanation of reality must relate the immanence and transcendence of being in a comprehensive synthesis; this is possible only from the *analogia entis*. Heidegger's disavowal of Roman Catholicism required his rejection of this principle. However, Heidegger's explanation that being turns back upon itself is not an adequate explanation of reality even as contingent. Catholic philosophy, on the other hand, presupposes that creation "opens out" to the creative and sustaining power of God and not downward to nothingness. It is positively rather than negatively analogous. Przywara points out that an essentially negative doctrine of nature is common to the Protestant theology of Barth and the agnosticism or atheism of Heidegger.<sup>27</sup>

Catholicism is distinguished from Protestantism, according to Przywara, as fundamentally cosmological in orientation. Its first concern is to establish the knowledge of religious truth "through nature." In short, Catholic philosophy and theology both presuppose that there is an authentic natural knowledge of God. The metaphysical claims of all types of Catholic interpretation have their first basis in this natural knowledge. Catholic theology accepts the world of creation and seeks to demonstrate that Catholic religious truth does not destroy but rather fulfills the demands of an authentic knowledge of the world and man's own person. The uniquely Catholic understanding of the immanence and transcendence of being is vindicated in the exemplification of a harmonious, indeed analogical relationship between nature and grace.<sup>28</sup> Catholicism as much as Reformation Protestantism claims a

particular knowledge of God from special revelation. However, it emphasizes that revelation and grace have an essential continuity with nature in the intrinsic orderliness of being.<sup>29</sup> This position has its basis in the Christian doctrine of creation which affirms that the deity himself is the ultimate source of all truth, both natural and supernatural. Przywara argues that the Catholic understanding of the essential continuity between nature and grace makes possible a more inclusive ontology and cosmology than in Protestant theology. Indeed, it leads to an authentic concern for intellectual synthesis which distinguishes the Catholic philosophies of religion from the major types of Protestant interpretation. It is Przywara's apologetic claim that the Catholic understanding of the immanence and transcendence of God makes possible a uniquely inclusive perspective of interpretation and evaluation. The *analogia entis* alone is appropriate to the immanent contingencies and the transcendent mystery of being.

Przywara finds that Catholic philosophy and theology show a singularly balanced appreciation of the immanence and transcendence of being. He charges that non-Catholic philosophies have no ultimately valid basis for affirming the transcendence of God and hence cannot relate God and the world.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the Protestant theologies which reject the metaphysics of theism are demonstrably defective in their doctrine of nature and perennially confuse immanence and transcendence.<sup>31</sup> The *analogia entis* makes it possible for Catholic interpreters to avoid the immanentism which regards nature and the world as self-contained as well as the fideism which affirms the transcendence of God as apart from all rational understanding. In short, Przywara believes that authentic knowledge of God is possible only from the *analogia entis*. His essentially eclectic philosophy of Catholicism is reinforced by his own deep mysticism.<sup>32</sup> He

urges that piety should increase and not circumscribe the extent and depth of philosophical inquiry. Przywara's interpretation is authentically philosophical and not dogmatic, inasmuch as he believes that the philosophy of religion requires the critical examination of the widest possible range of thought and experience.<sup>33</sup> His appreciation of the unity of reality in spite of all diversity leads him to give priority to balanced synthesis.

The fundamentally Catholic character of Przywara's interpretation is made clear from Barth's rejection of all types of the *analogia entis*. Barth argues that the divine transcendence precludes any essential delimitation of God's character or being in a metaphysics of theism. He repeats his emphatic "Nein" against all "natural knowledge" of God on the grounds that grace is radically distinct from nature.<sup>34</sup> Barth insists that our limited, fallible knowledge of the world of natural being is not an adequate basis for the Christian religious claims about the ultimate judgment and mercy of God.<sup>35</sup> He will allow that grace fulfills nature only in that it shows the negligible and indeed mistaken truth of our "natural" ideas about the divine grace and forgiveness. The experience of the Word of God establishes radically new centers of meaning in actuality which can be known only from grace. The Christian theologian bears witness to a transcendent reality which he does not possess but can only affirm in faith.

#### V. THE FUNDAMENTAL POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

The discussions between Barth and Przywara have made it clear that a fundamentally different interpretation of analogy is presupposed by the respective Protestant and Roman Catholic versions of Christian doctrine. The *analogia entis* leads to a characteristically Roman Catholic view of religion, the *analogia fidei* to the Protestant position. Barth and

Przywara base their reappraisal of the traditional Protestant-Roman Catholic differences on the idea of analogy. They agree that it is primary to the respective Roman Catholic and Protestant theories of religious knowledge as well as to the exposition of the specific religious claims of particular Roman Catholic or Protestant theologies.

The basic significance of the *analogia entis* for all types of Catholic thought is clarified in Przywara's exposition of the particular doctrinal claims of Catholic theology. Przywara premises his philosophy of religion on a particularly Roman Catholic interpretation of the Incarnation. He argues that the Incarnation establishes an abiding and continuing relation in history between man and God. It is indeed impossible to know the truth of the Incarnation apart from its continuation and fulfillment in the life and authority of the visible Church.<sup>36</sup> Przywara explains that the Incarnation presupposes an analogical unity between the human and the divine in Jesus Christ. As God was in Christ, even so God is in the Church which indeed has a historical and super-historical character as the continuation of the Incarnation. The Catholic doctrinal interpretation must make explicit the immanence and transcendence of deity in history. The *analogia entis* has significant implications for the Catholic view of salvation as well as for the Catholic doctrine of religious community. Catholic synergism, the doctrine of the cooperation of man and God in salvation, as well as sacramentalism and mystical piety follow from the *analogia entis*.

In his exposition of the *analogia fidei*, Barth argues that the Incarnation can be understood only from the new relation of faith which it creates. It is not to be explained metaphysically as a union of the natural and supernatural, but only as the intrusion of divine grace.<sup>37</sup> In short, Barth claims that the Incarnation is exclusively a work of grace and can be appre-

hended only in faith. Barth's doctrine of the divine transcendence is normative for his interpretation of the Church. He argues that the efficacy of the Incarnation is established from the divine initiative in history; as the manifestation of the divine truth, it is not subject to visible human control. Moreover, the Protestant *analogia fidei* makes clear that the Church cannot be identified with any particular historical body.<sup>38</sup> The Church as the "creation of grace" has no "naturally" definable limits and is not subject to visible, human control. We know it finally only from the apprehension in faith of the divine promise. Barth believes that all efforts to distinguish between natural grace or the grace of creation and supernatural grace lead to a fundamental misunderstanding of the essential theocentric reference of Christian theology.

Barth, in his rejection of the *analogia entis*, wishes to make doubly clear the unique character of faith. On the other hand, Przywara accepts the *analogia entis* because he believes that a synthesis of nature and grace or reason and faith is valuable and indeed indispensable to Christian theism. Przywara argues that the doctrine of creation is normative for the Christian understanding of nature.<sup>39</sup> The theistic affirmation that God is the ground of being and the ultimate source of life and the world implies a religiously valid doctrine of nature and reason as well as of faith. Barth argues that a theological doctrine of nature only serves to confuse the fundamental problem of the Christian understanding of the essential character of grace. Przywara replies that we may affirm that there is meaningful religious knowledge only when we have established the basic categories of such knowledge in nature and reason. He believes that religious truth is implicitly metaphysical in character. Barth insists that we may not circumscribe faith in any historical relationship. In particular,



he denies that there is any established relation between God and man in the visible Church. Przywara, on the other hand, holds that his interpretation of analogy makes clear the fundamental context of Catholic devotion and authority. He finds that the acceptance of the *analogia entis* leads in the end to the acknowledgment of the doctrinal teaching office of the Church. The Church itself is both historical and super-historical and may not be explained in its true character apart from an analogy of being between God and man in both creation and redemption. Barth replies that the claim of the Roman Catholic Church to divine authority in history is as much "Antichrist" today as in the time of the Reformation.<sup>40</sup> Barth believes that the Protestant confession must reject this claim in its most fundamental bases in the analogy of being.

#### VI. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE DEBATE

This discussion between these two leading spokesmen of the Churches has led to a new appraisal of Protestant-Catholic differences on the basis of religious epistemology rather than from particular doctrinal controversies. Moreover, it makes explicit certain fundamental types of motivation and interest in Christian theology. Przywara emphasizes that Catholic piety and reflection alike have been characteristically motivated to attempt to establish a synthesis of nature and grace. Catholicism presupposes that there is a common *logos* of philosophical knowledge and religious insight. Accordingly, it seeks the most comprehensive metaphysical knowledge of the ontological unity of being. Protestantism typically interprets more radically the unique perspective of faith and emphasizes the indispensability of grace to religious knowledge. It gives priority to discontinuity and "existential" dependence in faith. Characteristically, it rejects in principle any final synthesis of nature and grace.

The debate between Barth and Przywara demonstrates that such an exchange of views can be a valuable corrective against the extremes of either position. It is true that each party to the discussion speaks for the particular claims of his own Church; however, each in the end finds it necessary to interpret the ideas of his own confession very broadly. Przywara argues from the full tradition of his Church in attempting to justify a broadly Catholic philosophical and theological context for his exposition. We have noted that he includes many ideas which do not derive directly from Thomism.<sup>41</sup> Many of the criticisms which the Protestant Reformers directed against Roman Catholicism are not applicable to his position because he does not formulate an Aristotelian scholastic theology. In interpreting the *analogia entis* broadly as basic to all types of Catholic thought, Przywara makes it the framework for the explication of the speculative and devotional principles of his tradition. In this way he is able to make explicit that philosophical and religious insights are intimately related in Catholic devotion and reflection. It is clear that his Catholic apologetic has been clarified and chastened by his study of Protestant theology as well as by his interest in post-scholastic philosophy.<sup>42</sup> Barth's recognition of the importance of analogy for Christian theology dates from his controversy with Przywara. His own doctrine of the *analogia fidei* was developed as a counterpart to Przywara's position. Barth is not narrowly Protestant in his interpretation, but includes patristic, scholastic and modern ideas in his theology. He intends to encompass the whole Christian tradition in his position. Barth's earlier thought, as represented particularly by his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, is fundamentally negative and dialectical. In the later volumes of his *Dogmatik* his position is more positive in his affirmation of the *analogia fidei*.

The discussions between Barth and Przywara did not consider the general historical and cultural differences which contribute to Protestant-Catholic disagreement. Both theologians were intent on justifying the fundamental convictions of their respective confessions. However, an inclusive philosophy of religion cannot ignore the nontheological factors which contribute to different perspectives of evaluation. It need not treat nature and reason as exclusively theological concepts. Indeed, in their wider significance, nature and reason are both fundamental to the widest "catholic" perspectives in the evaluation of confessional differences. Although a phenomenology or typology of religion may be unable to validate the truth claims of a particular type of piety, it can none the less point out similarities in different positions. The discussions between Barth and Przywara are of particular importance for the philosophy of religion because they clarify some of the distinctive emphases of Protestant and Roman Catholic religious experience. Przywara makes clear the perennial emphasis of Catholicism on continuity, rational synthesis and metaphysical knowledge. Barth is spokesman for the Protestant counter emphasis on discontinuity, actualism and faith. We may not ignore either type of orientation in our appraisal of confessional differences. The discussions between Barth and Przywara are of importance by reason of the singular consistency with which both attempt to identify the respective claims of Protestant and Roman Catholic piety.

NIELS C. NIELSEN, JR.

#### NOTES

1. Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I/1, VIII, 178. Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis* (1932) VI.
2. Cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Karl Barth, Darstellung und Deutung Seiner Theologie* (Köln, 1951). This work is an extended study of Barth's theology by a Roman Catholic.

3. Cf. W. J. Aalders, "De Analogia Entis in Het Geding," *Mededeelingen Der Koninklijke Akademie, Van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde, Deel 83, Serie A, No. 2, 31-82.*
4. James Collins describes Przywara as follows: "Przywara, an editor of *Stimmen der Zeit*, was a leader in the Catholic Movement which arose after the first World War in an effort to resolve the conflict between the factions of reaction and compromise which had dominated the religious scene since the political unification of Germany. In common with many English Catholics this new movement maintained that while the 'state of siege' was over we were still suffering from a 'siege mentality.'" (*Thought*, XVII, 123). "As Przywara saw it, the task facing Catholic philosophers of religion was to embrace in one comprehensive system the metaphysical foundation developed by the Scholastics and the modern scientific and psychological superstructure." (*Ibid.*, 121).
5. Barth's comments on his reviewers and critics are included in the prefaces of the successive editions of his commentary. Cf. Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief* (Zürich, 1947).
6. Barth mentions Przywara in the preface to the fourth edition of his commentary.
7. Barth, *Dogmatik*, I/1, 19.
8. München, 1929.
9. Barth wrote in criticism of Emil Brunner's Protestant theology as follows: "If we really wish to maintain the Reformers' position over against Roman Catholicism and Neo-Protestantism, we are not in a position today to repeat the statements of Luther and Calvin without at the same time making them more pointed than they themselves did. This applies also to the doctrine of grace, e.g. in the definition of the relation between justification and sanctification." *Nein* (tr. P. Fraenkel, London, 1946).
10. Przywara, "Die Problematik der Neuscholastik," *Kant-Studien*, XXXIII, 73-98.
11. Przywara comments in *Religionsphilosophie Katholischer Theologie* (München, 1927), 24: "Here lies the decisive foundation, from which proceeds the Catholic solution of the religious problem of the relationship between essence and existence. For the *analogia entis* knits all that is creaturely together into a total likeness to Deity, and yet to such a likeness as in its ultimate essence is in a condition of *potentia oboedientialis* (to use an old theological expression), i.e. a condition of the tool in the hand of the artificer. Deity is He who is beyond all comparison the ever Greater."
12. Barth, *Dogmatik*, I/1, VIII-IX.
13. *Ibid.*, I/1, 460, 480.

14. Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God according to the Teaching of the Reformation* (1939), 8-9: "It is well known that the sixteenth century was not able to see that so clearly as we must see it today after the developments of the last four hundred years. The Reformers occasionally made a guarded and conditional use of the possibility of 'Natural Theology' (as e.g. Calvin in the first chapters of his Institutes), but they made occasionally also an unguarded and unconditional use of it (as did e.g. Luther and Calvin in their teaching on the Law)—that, however, in no way alters the principle, that the revival of the gospel by Luther and Calvin consisted in their desire to see both the church and human salvation founded on the Word of God alone, on God's *revelation in Jesus Christ*, as it is attested in the Scripture, and on faith in that Word."
15. Cf. Pedro Descoqs S.J., *Praelectiones Theologiae Naturalis* (Paris, 1932-37).
16. Gerald B. Phelan, *St. Thomas and Analogy* (Milwaukee, 1943).
17. Barth, *Dogmatik*, I/1, 204: "The fact of the Word of God in no respect nor yet in the very slightest degree receives its worth and validity from a presupposition which we apply to it; its truth for us, like its truth in itself, is based purely upon itself. The procedure in theology therefore is to base self-certainty upon God-certainty and so to begin with God-certainty without waiting for this beginning to be legitimised by self-certainty. By the making of this beginning—and only by the making of it!"
18. Edouard Burnier, *Bible et Théologie* (Lausanne, 1943), 117-181.
19. Barth, *Dogmatik*, III/1, 1: "The insight that man is indebted to God's work of creation for his being and nature, as well as for all reality that is different from God himself, is realized only in the reception of and in response to the divine act of self-witnessing, i.e., only in faith in Jesus Christ: in that knowledge of the unity of Creator and creature which is actualized in him and in that life in the present which is mediated through him, under the law of the Creator and in the experience of his goodness toward the creature."
20. *Ibid.*, I/1, 19.
21. Barth, *Nein* (tr. Fraenkel), 101.
22. Barth, *Dogmatik*, I/1, 257, 474.
23. Przywara, *Religionsphilosophie Katholischer Theologie*, 83: "This typical doctrine of the *analogia entis* has now left us the legacy of a double formula for its prevalence: (1) that of Augustine in which the accent is upon 'God as all'; (2) that of Aquinas in which the emphasis rests upon 'the creature as real.' Common to both is the one *analogia entis*, as we have previously outlined in all its consequences. But this *analogia entis*, by virtue

of its bi-polarity, admits of two forms of accentuation: (1) *That which lays stress upon the relative likeness existing between Deity and creation.* Hence arises, as it were, a hierarchy of grades reaching up to God, from inanimate matter to pure spirit, in which this likeness is ever more increasing, till finally in an ultimate mystical height of exaltation God is, as it were, the Crown and Goal of the cosmos (the so-called *argumentum ex gradibus* is thus the augustinian foundation *par excellence* for belief in God. (2) *That in which the emphasis rests upon the relative unlikeness between Deity and creation.* Here all creatures are by virtue of their createdness kept at a distance from God, and the hierarchy of grades in creation is a relative one enclosed in a unity apart by itself, in which it primarily testifies to God as its Creator, who is 'separate' from, and 'other' than, 'all which is external to Him or can be thought of as though eternal,' as the Vatican decree puts it."

24. Cf. Przywara, "Reformatorsche Perspektiven," *Stimmen der Zeit*, CXXVII, 416-419.
25. Przywara, *Augustinus, Die Gestalt als Gefüge* (Leipzig, 1934), 72-97.
26. Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 73.
27. *Ibid.*, 29.
28. *Ibid.*, 51.
29. Przywara, "Metaphysik und Religion," *Stimmen der Zeit*, CIV, 137-138: "Common to 'metaphysics' and 'religion' is the central point of the *analogia entis* and the presupposition of the natural self-revelation of God in his creation, so that on the one hand metaphysics bears within itself an element of religion (the presupposition of the self-revelation of God) as on the other hand religion contains an element of metaphysics (the criterion for recognition of the *analogia entis*)."
30. Cf. Przywara, *Kant Heute* (München, 1930), 86-90.
31. Przywara, "Reformatorsche Perspektiven," *Stimmen der Zeit*, CXXVII, 416: "The introduction above all makes alarmingly clear the either-or which German Protestantism has gotten into through dialectical theology. Either it becomes the reason for sinning under which all nature stands until executed to the point of the radical—and then ends in an existential atheism, indeed anti-theism of nature. Or one looks then for a 'hint toward God' in nature,—and then the Catholic doctrine of the natural knowledge of God is the consequence and with it the Catholic relationship among nature and revelation and grace."
32. Przywara's devotional works include, *Christus Lebt in Mir* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1929), *Crucis Mysterium* (Paderborn, 1939), *Ge bete in die Zeit* (Vienna, 1946), *Nuptiae Agni* (Nürnberg, 1948).

33. Przywara, *Was Ist Gott?* (Nürnberg, 1947). This work combines philosophical and mystical theology.
34. Barth, *Dogmatik*, I/2, 355.
35. Does not Barth's position have important similarities to the voluntarism of Duns Scotus? Both theologians conclude that the most significant religious knowledge derives primarily from faith. However, Przywara claims Scotus for Catholic theology on the grounds that Scotistic theology presupposes the *analogia entis* even in its voluntarism.
36. Przywara, "Neue Theologie? Das Problem katholischer Theologie," *Stimmen der Zeit*, CXI, 432: "In contrast to this it is the all determining for the Catholic interpretation of faith, that in the act of faith itself the moment of the visible juridical Church enters. 'God in the visible juridical Church,' this important matter, which for all Catholic interpretation expresses fully for the first time the essence of Catholic faith. . . ."
37. Barth, *Dogmatik*, I/2, 323: "The point of view, in which one has to orient oneself in this matter, in order to remain in the *analogia fidei*, and not to fall into untheological thought, is the Christological one of the Incarnation of the Word as the assumption of flesh. As the unity of God and man in Jesus Christ is the unity of a perfected event, so also the unity of the divine revelation and human religion [is] that of an . . . event."
38. *Ibid.*, I/2, 640-641: "The decision for an obedient church as against a church of self-rule becomes now however factually demanding there-through and inexorable, that the Christian church in its own proper being cannot remember, that it cannot at all live out of its own most proper being without seeing itself confronted with its Lord, who is present to her, but as her real lord is present in actuality and therefore with his own proper authority transcending her own authority."
39. Przywara, "Der Grundsatz 'Gratia non destruit, sed supponit et perficit naturam,'" *Scholastik*, XVII, 178-186.
40. Barth, *Dogmatik*, I/1, VIII.
41. Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, V-VI.
42. *Ibid.*, VII-VIII.