

BARTH AFTER KANT?

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Reflecting upon the theology of Karl Barth, Bruce McCormack makes the following summation: "All of his efforts in theology may be considered, from one point of view, as an attempt to overcome Kant by means of Kant; not retreating behind him and seeking to go around him, but going through him."¹ In one sense, McCormack is simply rehearsing a longstanding recognition that Barth's theology does not evolve in a vacuum.² In another sense, McCormack is echoing Barth's own comments on Kant's importance for his early thought in his autobiographical sketches,³ letters,⁴ and even more explicitly in his 1930 lectures on Kant published in his *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*.⁵ Interestingly, however, little attention has been paid to these latter lectures on Protestant history in the secondary literature.⁶ As John Webster notes, "in large part, this is because his work as a dogmatist has usually been read and discussed in isolation from the texts in which he engages other fields of theological enquiry."⁷ Here, we are confronted with one of the paradoxes of Barthian scholarship. On the one hand, there is the recognition of Barth's engagement and indebtedness to philosophers such as Kant. On the other, there is the perception that the result of this engagement was a profoundly anti-philosophical theological purity. Such is the case with McCormack, whose own interpretation of Barth's work appropriates a controversial disposition towards philosophical inquiry in what he refers to as Barth's critical realism. "'Critical realism' here has the significance of a witness to the mystery of the divine action in revelation."⁸ In McCormack's view, after 1916, Barth's theology is marked by this critical realism, i.e. a realism that takes Kant's idealism seriously. In this sense, Barth affirmed the limits Kant placed upon human subjectivity insofar as this justified his attempt to consistently begin his theology with the "objectively real

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'self-presupposing divine subjectivity' in revelation."⁹ Here, in brief, we are introduced to the a-metaphysical Barth in McCormack's work, an interpretation which regards Barth's early engagement with Kant as the point at which he set out on a stable and purely theological trajectory devoid of philosophical grounding.

McCormack's account therefore echoes others which link Barth's early engagement with Kant to an anti-philosophical or strictly a-metaphysical theological turn. For instance, Simon Fisher's excellent study of the early Neo-Kantian influences upon Barth's reception of Kant concludes with an affirmation of Bonhoeffer's critique. That is, Barth's early theology did in fact "fulfil all the criteria for revelatory positivism."¹⁰ Fisher reasons that for Barth's early theology, God was understood as "the given, now being self-evidentially real and self-authenticating, [and] was credited with such an overwhelming degree of reality that every other reality was utterly relativized."¹¹ So too, Merold Westphal discusses Barth's early critical attitude towards metaphysics at work in his 1920 lecture, "Biblical Insights, Questions and Vistas."¹² Here, Westphal interprets Barth in a complementary way to Martin Heidegger's later critiques of onto-theology. "I would never attempt to think the essence of God by means of Being,"¹³ Heidegger quips in a 1951 seminar. By 1956 Heidegger boldly dared Christian theology "to take seriously the word of the apostle and thus also the conception of philosophy as foolishness,"¹⁴ thus cementing his interpretation of St. Paul as progenitor of his own project. Barth therefore fits neatly into a list of theologians working in Heidegger's wake today, such as John Caputo, Westphal himself,¹⁵ as well as Jean-Luc Marion's *God without Being*,¹⁶ and, more recently, Alain Badiou's anti-philosophical Paul as the founder of western universalism.¹⁷

In sum, Barth's early appropriation of Kant has been linked to an a-metaphysical perception of Barth's theology which began around the time of his work on Romans¹⁸ and persists thereafter, thus making Barth's later 1930¹⁹ lecture on Kant seem irrelevant.²⁰ This narrative of Barth's intellectual development increasingly insulates his later theology from its continued philosophical interests over the 1920s and 30s, which not only underwrites Webster's suggestion that Barth's history lectures have been overlooked in the secondary literature,²¹ but, so too, it obfuscates Barth's relation to Heidegger's notion of Christian theology as post-ontological anti-philosophy. This explains the temptation to depict Barth either as a forerunner to Heidegger²² or in the onto-theological terms of Heidegger.²³ Although Barth himself makes it clear that he viewed the 1920s as his "apprenticeship"²⁴ and that at two crucial periods in his development he had to say the same thing in a totally new way, here again, little attention has been paid to Kant's contribution to the second of these two shifts.²⁵ Hence, although commentators such as Westphal, Fisher and McCormack have developed keen interest in Kant's influence upon Barth's early work, even engaging Barth's Neo-Kantian context in great detail, my contention is that Barth's later interpretation of

Kant is of crucial importance for understanding his ultimate influence upon Barth's mature thought. My aim in what follows then is to refigure the relationship between Barth's early appropriation and critique of Kant, and the more onto-theological issues at stake in his later Protestant history lecture. In so doing, we can begin to discern in Barth, an increasingly controversial concern, not to abandon or disregard the metaphysical questions of being, but rather, to face them all the more rigorously.

Returning to Kant

Barth's reception of Kant cannot be understood without some recollection of the "fulfilment of Kant's prophecy that in a hundred years his philosophy would come into its own."²⁶ The Neo-Kantianism of Marburg philosophers like Hermann Cohen, as well as their influence upon his theological contemporaries such as Wilhelm Herrmann, provided prominent examples of the limits German idealism had reached in Barth's day. After the collapse of the Hegelian system,²⁷ "what was seen in Kant . . . was the model of a well-founded philosophical method, in close contact with science and thus credible . . . , but also the departure point for a return to the idealist and subjectivist conception of reality and knowledge, which met with scientific support."²⁸ Although the call "back to Kant" was sounded in 1865 by Otto Liebmann,²⁹ and was taken up in a host of different ways,³⁰ Hermann Cohen's work in Marburg stands out not only in recognition of its quality, but because of our interest in Barth who studied under Wilhelm Herrmann. Herrmann's theology sought to articulate itself in response to Cohen and this provides a crucial link between Barth, a student of Herrmann, and Marburg Neo-Kantianism more generally.³¹ Cohen, like most Marburg Neo-Kantians, recognized in Kant a radical epistemological critique designed to set scientific knowledge upon firm ground. But Cohen found new insight in the mathematical sciences and began to develop a transcendental logic whereby human reason gained a generative power, or logical activity (*Tätigkeit*). This allowed Cohen to do away with the givenness of a sensory exteriority.³² When Cohen's *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis*³³ "appeared in 1902 'the given' was completely expelled from epistemology."³⁴ In Cohen's words, "thinking itself is the goal and object [*Gegenstand*] of its activity. This activity does not switch gear and attach itself to a thing, it does not come from anything external to itself."³⁵ Rather, objects of knowledge were generated in pure thought. Here the object (*Gegenstand*) is caught up in a process of objectification (*Objectivierung*) according to laws of thought.³⁶ "The object, in short, is generated according to a law as thought follows its path (*Richtung*) to knowledge and executes its task (*Aufgabe*)."³⁷ Thus cognition functioned in an analogous way to mathematical problem solving.³⁸ As a problem or task (*Aufgabe*) arises, one's cognitive powers are called into operation (*Ursprung*). "The problem is then tackled by investigating relations between various mathematically

expressed values."³⁹ From this point the mind is then able to work out a solution through mathematically controlled steps, in what was referred to as "*Erzeugung* (generation or production)."⁴⁰ Here a question arises concerning the purely mental nature of reason. As Ernst Cassirer will say, "Thought does not reproduce an outward reality; it is the foundation and very core of reality . . . there is no being, no objectivity, no 'nature of things' *that does not originate in thought*."⁴¹ What was to distinguish such an account of cognition from phantasm?⁴² Crucial to Cohen's logical calculus was the law of thought, or more appropriately how Cohen came to say, "Law is reality [*die Realität*], which means reality is to be conceived of as an abstract thought, as a sign of value for valid knowledge, and nothing more."⁴³ Thus Cohen is able to guard against reason's capacity for phantasm in order to resolve the inconsistency in Kant's relation between noumena and phenomena by demonstrating the activity of the mind in engaging phenomenon as problems to be solved. "Being, he suggested, achieves existence by becoming thought, and the two are held together by a dynamic, never-ending, process of knowing."⁴⁴ The idea of the thing-in-itself was therefore abandoned outright and the creative potential of the knower embraced all the more fully.

What Cohen's thought amounted to was, firstly, that the intuition no longer had need of the empirical sensory world as such. Its creative capacities overcame this obstacle. But this gave rise to the question concerning the human being. "The object, generated from principles by the logical activity (*Tätigkeit*) of thought, becomes an objectified content of thought for 'consciousness.'"⁴⁵ And it is here, at this point where thought has to come to terms with itself, with its consciousness, where a more pervasive concern arises. "A corollary of Cohen's attempt to purify epistemology from all external factors is that the subject of the knowing process described is not to be confused with any existing individual. His subject is . . . the 'ideal epistemological subject.'"⁴⁶ If there was no external world which impacted the senses as such, and if knowledge really was a matter of the creative potential of the knower's logical calculus, then the ground of this subject becomes all the more acutely recognized as a problem. In Kant himself, this problem was left dormant by his attempts to maintain the noumenal "as if" it were a real condition for the knowing subject, as a possibility of its ability to know. As such, ideas like God, Freedom and Immortality were understood as practical necessities to the moral life, not entities in themselves. But their necessity remained ambiguous, and that status was what was lost as Cohen reduced cognition to a mental calculus. The subject no longer existed in a concrete way in any one individual. Rather, "All that belongs to the body, to the particularity of the self is excluded. What remains is consciousness pure and simple, which has no more reality than a mathematical point."⁴⁷ What results of this exposition of Cohen's transcendental logic *is this point*, and the concomitant problem it raised to recover a more concrete basis for the human knower. It is not as if Cohen was not acutely aware of the problem himself, and he

attempted to deal with it explicitly in his later work *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism*. Here, he attempted to recover the concrete individual via I-Thou relations and an exploration of religion's relation to the ethical knower.⁴⁸ It was in this turn to an ethical grounding that Barth finds his initial agreement with his teacher Wilhelm Herrmann.

Herrmann was one of the first theologians to capture Barth's early imagination as a student in Berlin, where Barth dreamed of going to Marburg to study with him. As Barth recalls in his 1925 lecture "The Principles of Dogmatics According to Wilhelm Herrmann," "The day twenty years ago in Berlin when I first read his *Ethik* I remember as if it were today. . . . I can say that on that day I believe my own deep interest in theology began."⁴⁹ In this lecture Barth draws attention to Herrmann's engagement with the Marburg Neo-Kantianism of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp,⁵⁰ who both delimited religion as a subset of ethics.⁵¹ Barth specifically comments on Herrmann's need to shore up a barrier against "the conception of Kant that ethics, moral idealism or moral earnestness would be the path leading directly to religion."⁵² For his part, Herrmann sets out to respond to the Neo-Kantians by articulating the parameters of an autonomous religious consciousness. Importantly for Barth's early understanding of this problem, Herrmann's response was deeply invested in the theology of Ritschl.

With Ritschl, the solution to the intertwining of Kant's critique of metaphysics and theology was a radical separation of theology from metaphysics. Theology has to do with the spiritual, and whatever metaphysics is about, it does not adequately apprehend what is proper to theological reflection alone.⁵³ Although in many ways Ritschl was one of the early progenitors of the break between theology and metaphysics after Kant, he nonetheless left a series of ambiguities which would require further clarification.⁵⁴ It is in this space that Herrmann would step in both as an early follower of Ritschl as well as a key inspiration for his ideas.⁵⁵ One of the key ways in which he did so was to take on the philosophical rigor of the Neo-Kantians in a way which Barth explicitly cites. "True religion carries in itself the energy of the moral purpose. It is inextricably bound to the moral will and it will itself be the moral will; but it is neither begotten by it (Kant), nor identical with it (Cohen), nor is it the objectless emotion which accompanies it (Natorp). It has also its own root and its own life."⁵⁶ It is on this basis, this religious mode of consciousness, that Herrmann would establish his theological program.

Barth's early understanding of Kant was deeply shaped by this a-metaphysical impulse towards a pure religious consciousness. It is this pure religious consciousness of Herrmann which Barth rejects in favor of a more radical affirmation of the otherness of God in both editions of his *Römerbrief*. It is in this sense that Barth likely meant "God is God," in his early work.⁵⁷ As Eberhard Busch notes, this dictum was probably not even invented by Barth, but rather "he took it from the religious socialism of Ragaz and Kutter to which he had a good deal of affinity at the time."⁵⁸ Busch goes

on to note the possibility of “a subterranean connection to the Dadaists who, in the intellectually explosive Zürich of 1916, were pounding away at reality with their secret nonsense word-games, such as ‘Dada is Dada’ in order to discern new relations in reality.”⁵⁹ Barth’s early “God is God” is therefore indicative of his relationship to a broader desire to properly understand the limits of the Kantian subject. As Busch notes, “God is God means: God is *unknown, hidden, deus absconditus*,”⁶⁰ and early critics were quick to pick up on Barth’s emphasis upon the unknowability and total otherness of God in Barth’s *Römerbriefe*. For instance, “the Lutheran Paul Althaus wrote that Barth substituted the revealed God, *deus revelatus*, by a nonrevealed God, *deus absconditus*, substituted ‘theology of revelation’ by a ‘theology of the unknown God.’”⁶¹ There is every indication that Barth recognized this criticism with some agreement. As he says in his later 1956 “The Humanity of God,” “We viewed this ‘wholly other’ in isolation, abstracted and absolutised, and set it over against man . . . in such a fashion that it continually showed greater similarity to the deity of the God of the philosophers than to the deity of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”⁶² Hence, Fisher is likely right in his analysis of Barth’s early critique of Neo-Kantianism in terms of a self-authenticating given,⁶³ neatly summed up in Barth’s summation “God is God.” Fisher is helpful, then, not only for pointing up Barth’s awareness and engagement with Neo-Kantianism, but for demonstrating the way in which Barth framed the very problem Kant raised in terms of the possibility of a religious consciousness (Herrmann) as well as a given-ness beyond the subject, a subject which had been reduced to a mathematical point. Furthermore, it was this context which raised the a-metaphysical mode in which Barth would attempt to think divine and human being after this time, an a-metaphysical mode corrupted precisely by the “is” within Barth’s “God is God,” a corruption he would struggle with in both the *Göttingen Dogmatics* and *Die christliche Dogmatik* alike over the 1920s.⁶⁴

Barth was one of a number of prominent philosophers and theologians raising questions about the “priestly” philosophy of Cohen in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Figures such as Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber could be noted here,⁶⁵ along with Barth’s own dialectical theologian contemporaries, Rudolf Bultmann and Emil Brunner, in their interest in the crisis in idealism at this time. So too, Heidegger’s role in this context is particularly illustrative. Two years after the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927,⁶⁶ Heidegger published his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.⁶⁷ Heidegger sought to get beyond the divide between Marburg and Heidelberg Neo-Kantianism, the former emphasizing Kant’s first *Critique* as a theory of knowledge, and the latter his second *Critique* and the primacy of ethics.⁶⁸ Although Heidegger sides with Marburg’s view that the first *Critique* “holds a central position in Kant’s writings . . . he contests the claim that it is primarily a treatise on epistemology.”⁶⁹ Heidegger begins his interpretation of Kant’s first *Critique*, with the claim that what follows will be “a laying of the

ground of metaphysics . . . and thus of placing the problem of metaphysics before us as a fundamental ontology."⁷⁰ Thus, Heidegger sought to clarify his own approach to phenomenology, and the meaning of Being outlined within *Being and Time*,⁷¹ precisely through a clarification of the metaphysically charged problematic of Kant's first *Critique*.

In sum, the "crisis" in German idealism opened doors for new approaches to clarifying if not rectifying Kant's legacy over the 1920s. Our contention, therefore, is that it was these radicalizations of Kant that stood as the background to Barth's development and his need to further clarify his own project in 1930. Indeed, Barth explicitly links Heidegger to his later break with Bultmann. As Barth reflects, "When (roughly since 1929) Brunner suddenly began to proclaim openly 'the other task of theology,' the 'point of contact' etc., I made it known that whatever might happen I could and would not agree with this."⁷² At the heart of this disagreement about a "point of contact" was an onto-theological qualification that Barth would try to articulate in his later 1934 "No!" to Brunner's "Nature and Grace."⁷³ And preceding this "No!" the 1932 first volume of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, explicitly cited this interconnection between Heidegger's radical ontology and Bultmann's attempt to "find in it the ontologically existential [*existenzial*] possibility of the existential [*existenziellen*] event of faith."⁷⁴ We do not have the space to address the contours of Barth's precise qualification here, but rather simply note that it was an onto-theological problem that was at stake. The suggestion that Barth's break with Bultmann was later exaggerated by Barth, or can be dismissed as a "personality quirk,"⁷⁵ therefore needs to be challenged precisely in order to address what was at stake in the diverse interpretations of Kant that were debated towards the end of the 1920s. These debates would have raised anew in Barth's mind the problem of Kantian metaphysics and his ability to say "God is God." In this sense, Fisher is correct to uncover an early post-metaphysical or positivist mode of theological development consistent with his teacher Herrmann. However, by understanding this problem in this way, we can begin to contrast a later justification which became necessary for Barth's project, namely, his continued thinking through of the being of the human subject and its relation to the being of God. It is this latter justification which arises in Barth's later lecture on Kant, precisely at the point at which Barth himself cites a crucial shift in his theological development in the early 1930s.

What emerges then as a question for us here is the degree to which we can discern in Barth's later lecture on Kant that a shift has taken place in Barth's approach and thinking to the central metaphysical problem Kant raised. Barth is aware that there is a need to think more deeply about the ontological given-ness of the knowing subject, as recognized in his critique of Hermann. So, too, he has suggested an ontological riddle in his "God is God," which created the impression among his critics that his theology did not provide an ontological basis for *us*, insofar as it left God too withdrawn and hidden.

What we must now explore is the degree to which Barth interrogated the limits Kant set upon knowledge, and the degree to which these limits needed to be more fully overcome in his own project. In brief, could Barth continue to say *God is God* after 1930?

Barth's Later Kant

In his last semester in Munster before leaving for his new professorial position at Bonn in March, 1930, Barth revised his lectures on Protestant history from their first presentation in 1926.⁷⁶ "The lectures now had a different form. He no longer began with Schleiermacher, but prefaced the discussion of him with studies of Lessing, Kant, Herder, Novalis and Hegel."⁷⁷ Kant surely stands as one of the key philosophical voices Barth eventually felt he had overcome in his quest for a theological beginning point which he sought to establish over the 1920s. In his lecture, however, Barth does not go into a detailed account of the entirety of Kant's thought. Rather he focuses on the particular theological implications Kant's thought brought to bear. To do so, he traces the interrelationship between Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and his *Critique of Practical Reason*. Crucially, it is in relation to these two critiques that Barth pays careful attention to the ontological implications of Kant's thought, and the possibility for speaking of being theologically. Barth's focus upon the limits Kant set for the human subject have an onto-theological interest which we will take care to note in what follows.

After Kant, knowledge of things-in-themselves (*Dinge an sich*) was relativized by the human subject's constitution of intuition (*Anschauung*) and the categories of the understanding (*Verstand*). In Kant's words,

This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus, who, when he did not make good progress in the explanation of the celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves around the observer, tried to see if he might not have greater success if he made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest. Now in metaphysics we can try in a similar way regarding the intuition of objects.⁷⁸

Barth's lecture bears out the logic of this Copernican turn. For Kant, because "empirical knowledge is not knowledge of ideas and knowledge of ideas is not empirical knowledge,"⁷⁹ whatever we mean by scientific knowledge does not mean an actual knowledge of a thing in itself. Rather, what Kant proposes is that "empirical knowledge is constituted by intuition . . . and the Understanding, the two forms of knowledge peculiar to human reason."⁸⁰ The object of these two forms of knowing is what remains as an "as if" as the object must be given to the parameters of our reason. Though we cannot speak of this object with any final certainty, it nonetheless remains "given to us under the forms of space and time, so that its existence [*Dasein*] and characteristics [*Sosein*] become to us intuitively evident."⁸¹ He goes on,

We comprehend however, its existence and characteristics [*es wird uns aber als daseiend und soseiend begreiflich*] by means of the Categories or forms of the *Understanding* which correspond to the forms of intuition (forms of space and time). By means of the Categories of the *Understanding* we attempt to think what we have intuited. Genuine empirical knowledge is achieved when there is a concrete unity of intuition and concepts. This is what corresponds to the transcendental act of apperception that is to what underlies this achievement, the synthetic *a priori* determining principle of our reason. Only empirical knowledge is genuine theoretical, rational knowledge, that is, knowledge of what exists [*Seienden*]. For only in the *unity* of intuition and conceptions is there knowledge of what exists [*Seienden*].⁸²

Our cognition, our knowledge of the phenomenal, faces a hidden possibility of the noumenal which we posit beyond the phenomenal "as if" it were real *a priori*. What is open to us, however, is not its existence as such but the possibility of its existence.

Before Kant, Barth says, the Enlightenment "was the absolute and boundless self-affirmation of reason, which, as such an affirmation, was ultimately bound to be uncertain of itself."⁸³ After Kant, however, "it is now at all events a relative and bounded self-affirmation of reason, critical and now for the first time sure of itself, to the extent that it possesses these qualities. That is what is new in Kant."⁸⁴ Kant's critique of the boundlessness of reason therefore stabilizes the insecurity and uncertainty which characterized Enlightenment reason. It is this affirmation of reason that Barth is so interested in. For the affirmation comes at the clear limits of reason and here we can discern Barth's interest in theology as a science. For Barth, science is understood as a phenomenally bound enterprise properly set in its place in the realm of created human being under heaven. To speak beyond the limits of reason is mere speculation, and is to inevitably remain caught in an anthropological mire. With reference to Kant's first *Critique*, then, Barth refers to what came to be known as pure rational knowledge. As Barth describes it, "By pure rational knowledge Kant means that necessary knowledge which refers not to what is, but to an object that transcends all experience, to what must be and only in this sense 'is.'"⁸⁵ When we therefore refer to a thing as it is, in pure rational knowledge, we do not affirm it as it is, but as it must be. "It is clearly in the realm of this knowledge of ideas, the realm of metaphysics, that there take place all the reason's misconceptions and deceptions about itself."⁸⁶ It is this scepticism which Barth is so interested in.

Barth is singling out Kant's understanding of human noetic capacity in a way that foreshadows Kant's attempt "to clarify and lay the foundations for this knowledge of ideas, and to provide in this sense a criticism of it."⁸⁷ And here Barth points out expressly that "that is why Kant gave its distinctive title to the, as he intended, popular compendium with which he at once followed

up the longer work: *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics which can possibly pretend to be a science.*"⁸⁸ After Kant's critique, how might metaphysical categories be understood scientifically? For Kant, "God, Freedom and Immortality are not objects of our knowledge."⁸⁹ As theoretical knowledge, there is no way to correspond these concepts with our intuition because they do not appear before us as such. "This was also, and particularly, true of theology. From now on theology would no longer be able to formulate tenets, no matter on what foundation it might base them, without having acquired a clear conception of the method of reason, which it also uses in the construction of its tenets."⁹⁰ For Kant, any metaphysics which maintains a purely theoretical knowledge of its concepts is radically critiqued, and here a longer citation of Barth's comments on these matters is illuminating.

Metaphysics—metaphysical cosmology, psychology and theology—is impossible if one understands by it a theoretical knowledge of objects, the concepts of which must be devoid of corresponding intuitions. . . . All theoretical proofs and disproofs of God's existence, for example, fail equally, since the propositions, 'God exists [*Gott ist*]' and 'God does not exist [*Gott ist nicht*],' can express in their theoretical meaning only the illusion of knowledge and not knowledge. . . . In fact to speak of existence or non-existence [*Sein oder Nichtsein*] is per se not to speak of God.⁹¹

If God is to be spoken of at all, therefore, such speech will have to find a newfound ontological justification. This is why, however, it is important to keep in mind that Kant wanted to create a true metaphysics, or a means by which theoretical knowledge of ideas like God can be truly known. Thus the question which Barth asks Kant is how he in fact attempted to refound metaphysics on his newfound surety? What is the *real* basis upon which *we* speak when we speak of the existence of God?

For Barth, the key to Kant's understanding of metaphysics is to recognize that Kant's theoretical pure reason is in fact a practical reason. "According to Kant knowledge of pure reason is also and in particular true knowledge by reason, however necessary it is to all empirical knowledge."⁹² God, Freedom, and Immortality become what Barth calls pre-suppositions [*Voraussetzung*]-"Kant's word for these, not a very happy choice linguistically, was 'postulates [*Postulaten*].'"⁹³ As Barth interprets it, "ideas which transcend every experience and yet for their own part comprise all empirical knowledge are *true*."⁹⁴ Barth goes on to note that the truth of the idea of God, Freedom and Immortality "is practical truth, truth, that is, which is perceived in the form of such pre-suppositions . . . which are accomplished in the moral act."⁹⁵ The proof of God theoretically is impossible, but the proof of God "as a demonstration of the presupposition that is assumed in deciding to accept the commandment of the inscrutable Law-giver. . . . It must be brought forward as a moral proof of God."⁹⁶ Barth therefore discerns that Kant's God is in fact limited when understood as a moral regulative idea, but Barth affirms that God can only be

known at the limits of Kant's criticism of human knowledge. Barth agrees with Kant therefore in a way similar to his assessment of Feuerbach,⁹⁷ namely, both recognized the limits of human knowledge of metaphysical and theological reality.

Kant himself had critiqued anthropocentric theology in his *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*.⁹⁸ By accepting this critique in Kant, however, Barth is simultaneously accepting the intersection of theology and metaphysics insofar as both depend upon the same justification (to use Kant's critical terms). But, and this is the crucial point, Barth discerns in Kant the means by which practical justifications can be made for valid and true knowledge. Two lines of inquiry therefore arise for Barth: 1) whether in fact Kant understood the true limits of the human subject, and 2) whether the ambiguity of Kant's relation to the given-ness of the human as a limited being warranted a theological clarification. Barth asks these questions of Kant as follows: "Does Kant after all perhaps know what justification is, in the sense of the Reformation?"⁹⁹ Although this may appear to be a purely theological question, we must take care to note its metaphysical gravity. If Barth can unhinge theology from Kant's moral justifications, if he can show these justifications to be inadequate, then he opens the door to alternatives. It is these alternative justifications that Barth's own theological project would build upon.

The truth of God, for Kant, ultimately resides in the subject's necessity for a Law-giver, a judge. The necessary transcendental quality of this God creates the condition for its truth—which in Barth's view means that the truth of God must reside somehow already within the human subject. "Kant finds himself in agreement with Augustine's teaching that the knowledge of God is a recollection of a notion of God which has already dwelt within our reason beforehand, because it has always been within us from the very beginning."¹⁰⁰ Barth takes this further, however, to note an intermingling of re-interpretations that Kant's understanding of grace evinces. Kant is as such not only Augustinian but also Pelagian to the extent that he prioritizes the virtuous act over the reception of grace. As Barth points out in Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, "The right course is not to proceed from the receiving of grace to virtue, but rather from virtue to the receiving of grace."¹⁰¹ Barth is here clearly creating distance between Kant's teaching and Reformed and Lutheran theology. As Barth argues, "we must be well on our guard against the desire to re-interpret Kant . . . as if what he said and meant were at bottom the same as what Luther and Calvin said and meant."¹⁰² But Barth is also taking an opportunity to form a polemical critique of what he considers to be Kant's Pelagian tendencies. In this sense, Barth's assessment of Kant's "non-reformatory doctrine of grace" functions as an attempt to return Kant to his Lutheran upbringing¹⁰³ in an almost chastising manner. In Barth's eyes, Kant's understanding of justification is an example of how Kant contradicts the limits his philosophy rightly sets upon the human being. By

returning Kant to the Reformation, therefore, Barth enacts a critique of his philosophy and demonstrates the reason why theology will inevitably challenge Kantianism precisely at its metaphysical justifications. As Barth says, "Where else is a doctrine of salvation to end, which is intended to be anthropology and nothing but anthropology, even if it does have as its background a metaphysics with an ethical foundation . . . ?"¹⁰⁴

In response to Kant's philosophy of religion, Barth offers three theological possibilities, and here we are introduced to the distance Barth now sees between himself and his Marburg inheritance. Each accounts for the main paths previously taken, as well as delineating the contours of Barth's own approach. The first is to "take the Kantian premise just as it is as its standpoint."¹⁰⁵ This option "looked to execute the Kantian programme"¹⁰⁶ by looking for those gaps in his thinking that would open up a new freedom for theology after Kant. Barth identifies the "so-called rationalist theologians of the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth,"¹⁰⁷ but goes on to note the later development of this response to Kant's teaching in Albrecht Ritschl and his pupil, Wilhelm Herrmann. Thus Barth singles out his teacher from Marburg as one who, although "different after all from that of Kant himself,"¹⁰⁸ accepted the Kantian premise as it was. Barth's dissatisfaction with this mode of theology is voiced in the second response to Kant's premises. As Barth says, "secondly, theology—now convinced that the Kantian premise should not be accepted just as it is—can, while it indeed affirms it [a Kantian premise] in what concerns method, subject it to an immanent critique."¹⁰⁹ The champion of this option is Barth's lifelong dialogue partner, Friedrich Schleiermacher. Barth highlights "the capacity of feeling, as Schleiermacher put it, or that of 'resentiment,' as de Wette preferred to express it, linking up with philosophers Jacobi and Fries."¹¹⁰ This second possibility was designed to correct the way Kant framed the problem (i.e. how religion could be understood in terms of reason alone) by opening it to alternative religious capacities of the human subject. Barth argues that this correction in Kant, however, led to a change in the theological programme "which became characteristic of the stamp of theology in the nineteenth century, and in particular, of the so-called conservative or positive theology, just as much as of the so-called liberal theology of this century."¹¹¹ As such this second possibility too receives a negative conclusion.

Thus, the first two responses Barth offers, in fact turn out to be non-options. And here Barth concludes rather negatively:

Both these first possibilities have it in common that theology desires in principle to keep to the Kantian terms for peace, and to enter into negotiations, merely, with their dictator, whether it be upon the conditions he has laid down for their execution, or upon the actual terms for peace themselves. It is in pursuing these two lines of development that

nineteenth-century theology is destined to be the direct continuation of the theology of the Enlightenment.¹¹²

In other words, Barth's first two options lead to a third, and I believe this is where his theology ultimately ended up in response to Kant at this time. Here, theology can question "not only the application of the Kantian conception of the problem, but that conception itself, and therefore the autocracy and its competence to judge human reason in relation to the religious problem."¹¹³ Given that the first two options are being rejected here, we must be careful to note the radicality of Barth's third option. When he offers the possibility "of a God who is not identical with the quintessence of human reason, with the 'god in ourselves,'"¹¹⁴ he is not simply challenging the theological projects which engaged Kant in the past. Rather, he is challenging the ontological insularity of Kant's knowing subject in a way which had not been taken as a genuine option before.

This third possibility would, in a word, consist in theology resigning itself to stand on its own feet in relation to philosophy, in theology recognizing the point of departure for its method in revelation, just as decidedly as philosophy sees its point of departure in reason, and in theology, conducting, therefore, a dialogue with philosophy, and not, wrapping itself up in the mantle of philosophy, a quasi-philosophical monologue.¹¹⁵

Barth's theology therefore contends with Kant precisely at the borders between theology and philosophy. Barth calls theology to stand in the ground that Kant claimed for the philosopher, where Kant "did in effect intrude upon theological matters as a philosopher."¹¹⁶ After Kant, philosophy now took responsibility for the credible justifications for speaking about God (theology) in a way which Barth recognized as transgressing his own intentions. As such, it becomes impossible to re-establish these boundaries without winning back the ground Kant claimed for philosophy with a credible articulation of the theological task. For Barth, theology will always be pushing back upon Kantian philosophy, calling it to live up to its own critical standards. So long as Kant's project remained dominant, the theologian will always demand dialogue with the philosopher. It is in this sense, therefore, that it becomes impossible to speak of Barth's theology as simply anti-philosophical.

When Barth critiques the way theology becomes limited by Kantian metaphysics, he is in fact enacting a critique of onto-theology. This is why Barth's critique of Kant's Pelagianism is in fact raising a question concerning the way human being becomes a condition for God's being. When Barth delineates the flaws in Kant's form of anthropocentrism, when he asserts Kant's transgression of his own critical philosophy, he simultaneously maps the contours of the genuine theological possibilities which can avail themselves after him.

It is on this basis that the previous attempts failed insofar as they were unable to articulate a critical exteriority, i.e. an articulation of God's being which did not collapse into human being. This is precisely why Barth argues that Kant's critique of the ontological proof of God misses the mark in his *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*.¹¹⁷ Barth's "God is God" contained a radical theological alterity which encapsulated an ontological kernel that challenged Barth to take Kant's philosophy seriously.

Although Barth condemns Kant's biblical hermeneutics,¹¹⁸ it is precisely as biblical theology that Barth demarcates the potential for a theology robust enough to respond to Kantian philosophy of religion. Barth's problem with Kant's hermeneutics was that they did not recognize adequately the limits of human knowledge. But it is precisely in Kant's affirmation of biblical theology, "which limits philosophical theology,"¹¹⁹ that Barth will find an inkling towards his own theological project. Barth is quite clear that he is not attempting to "deduce a philosophy of religion from the philosophy of Kant, other than that with which he himself thought he should and could crown his work in the field of theology."¹²⁰ This explains why he is willing to accept Kant's "possibility of a theology which would be *different* from the philosophical theology he himself was propounding."¹²¹ Hence, Barth goes on to demonstrate that Kant himself left open a third possibility, although beyond the scope of Kant's own philosophy. Kant calls this theological possibility "biblical theology" and he wants to form for it "a definite distinct idea as befits its own peculiar nature."¹²² And what is the justification for this unique discipline? "The existence of the Church which has its foundation in the Bible."¹²³ In Barth's view Kantian philosophy is therefore open to the idea that after reason "has established in religion those things which it is fitted to establish as such, [it] 'must await the arrival of everything else, which must be added beyond its capacity, without reason being permitted to know in what it consists, from the supernatural helping hand from heaven.'"¹²⁴ However, we must not miss the irony with which Barth interprets Kant at this point in his argument.¹²⁵

At this juncture in his lecture, Barth has already undertaken a massive critique of the moral justifications of Kant's attempt to re-establish metaphysics insofar as it could be understood as the justification for God by the merits of reason alone. He is therefore no stranger to the idea that Kant may in fact have been writing about the "supernatural helping hand" while simultaneously laughing up his sleeve as he did so.¹²⁶ Barth is acutely aware of the historical context in which Kant navigated the political favour of Friedrich Wilhelm II whose policies on religion differed greatly from the previous monarch's "tolerant (and anticlerical) treatment of religion within the Prussian state."¹²⁷ Barth is clearly *not* affirming the radical divide between philosophy and theology that Kant espouses. Barth in fact laments that "there was apparently no one among Kant's theological contemporaries who had the insight, the courage and the humour expressly to draw the great man's

attentions, in all respect, to the mutual quality of this relationship."¹²⁸ And here we must not miss that it is in fact a relationship that Barth intends to evince in his third option. But Barth is far from dismissive of Kant's mockery of the theological discipline. Rather he hears something "very significant, even though we reserve in every respect our right to object to his formulations. Or is it not the case that the philosophy of pure reason has said something very significant to the theologian in telling him in all succinctness that '*The biblical theologian proves that God exists by means of the fact that he has spoken in the Bible.*'"¹²⁹

Barth after Kant

My aim throughout this article has been to explicate the manner in which Kant influenced Barth's theological project. More specifically, I sought to uncover how Barth's particular reception of Kant festered beyond Barth's break with his Marburg teachers indicated at an early point in his commentary on Romans. My explication of Barth's later lecture on Kant sought to emphasize the manner in which the "is" in Barth's early "God is God" continued to haunt him precisely at the point at which he recognized the need to think the being of God much more radically and carefully than he had done in his second *Römerbrief*. On the one hand, Kant reconfigures knowledge in such a way that the human subject can now be discussed credibly as the limit of knowledge. But, on the other, Kant's reestablishment of practical reason leaves him caught within the limits of that subjectivity, limits felt all the more acutely in the mathematical calculus of Neo-Kantianism. As Barth emphasized in his later commentary on Kant, metaphysical veracity was not only its aim but it was its ultimate basis as well. Kant's practical reason never escapes its anthropological basis, and in this sense, this failure undermined his entire project. Hence, Barth affirms the limits of knowledge, but he will go on to argue for the possibility that theology may yet recover the ground Kant's philosophy claimed for itself. This possibility, however, depended upon Barth's ability to confidently say God exists. If he failed to do so, then his theological project was finished before it began, and it is in this sense that we can see how clearly Barth began to understand the onto-theological nature of Kant's critique precisely insofar as Kantian epistemology intertwined the thinking subject's existence and God's.

Furthermore, Barth's later interpretation of Kant should not be divorced from Hermann Cohen and other Marburg Neo-Kantians whose systems "rested upon . . . the identity of thinking and being."¹³⁰ This context is crucial when considering Barth's relation to Heidegger's later post-ontological project. As we have seen, Barth would agree with the premise of Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, and the metaphysical aims of Kant's first *Critique*. Furthermore, Barth seems to have recognized earlier than the later Heidegger that insofar as Kant's God was justified as an idea necessary for

morality, whatever Kant said of theology would inevitably be an onto-theology. This is precisely why Barth is so drawn to the open-ended nature of Kant's comments upon "the God who exists precisely by means of the fact that he has spoken in the Bible."¹³¹ Barth's response to Kant will henceforth have to critique Kant precisely at this point where ontology and theology collide and it is in this sense that Barth will have to justify and clarify the "is" in his statement "God is God." In sum, after Kant, there could be no talk of any theology without an equally carefully worked out account of metaphysics. Barth's great insight, however, was to push Kant's conclusions, to press him at the point of his claim on the justification he offered for metaphysics and, as such, theology as well. Barth's predecessors had sought to escape Kant's critique by developing a pre-conscious religious feeling (Schleiermacher), maintaining Kant's moral justification in terms of I-thou relations (Cohen), or later quarantining ontology from theology altogether (Heidegger). Although Barth does not delineate his own solution in his history lectures, he does clearly point the way he would travel, a pathway we can discern in his book on Anselm, which explicitly sets out to extricate Anselm's manner of proving from Kant's critique, and in his *Church Dogmatics*, which much more confidently affirms the being of God.¹³² As Barth will put it in the opening pages of volume I.1, "the question of truth [*Wahrheit*], with which theology is concerned throughout, is the question as to the agreement of the Church's distinctive talk about God with the being of the Church [*Sein der Kirche*] . . . namely, Jesus Christ."¹³³ It is in this light that we can discern in Barth's own mind how this future theology was in fact an attempt to go beyond Kant's metaphysics by becoming more critical than Kant himself. What this amounted to was that for Barth, our ability to say "God is God" utterly depends on a radical overthrow of Kant's claim that "to speak of existence or non-existence is *per se* not to speak of God."¹³⁴ It is only as we understand that when Barth critiques Kant's understanding of theology as a radically quarantined discipline from philosophy he is in fact doing so because he discerns in Kant's philosophy a series of profound onto-theological mistakes that can only be rectified by a more full-bodied affirmation of being by theology itself—God really *is* God. Of course, Barth did not think this "is" to its conclusions in his lecture on Kant. Rather, his emphases upon the onto-theological nature of Kant's thinking only enhance our understanding of the development of his work at this time.

NOTES

- 1 Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909–1936* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 465–466.
- 2 This point is noted and taken up in McCormack's work, but he rightly cites Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt, *Theologie und Sozialismus: das Beispiel Karl Barths*, *Gesellschaft und Theologie*. Abt.: Systematische Beiträge, Nr. 7 (München: Kaiser, 1972). See also, Friedrich-

- Wilhelm Marquardt, "Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth," in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, ed. George Hunsinger, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976), which was the beginning in a sea-change of Barth interpretation, carried through in others, such as: Timothy Gorringer, *Karl Barth: Against Hegemony* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999); Nigel Biggar, *The Hastening That Waits: Karl Barth's Ethics*, Oxford studies in theological ethics (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993); John Webster, *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); John Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth's Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).
- 3 "I myself had worked through the whole of Kant before I made my pilgrimage to Marburg! That is really where I came from: first I studied Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, and then I went twice through the *Critique of Pure Reason* almost with a toothcomb. At that time we thought that it was the way one had to begin theology." Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* (London: SCM Press, 1976), pp. 44–45, quoted from Barth's autobiographical texts (Autobiographical sketch) *Fakultätsalbum der Evangelisch-theologischen Fakultät Münster*, 1927.
 - 4 Karl Barth and Eduard Thurneysen, *Revolutionary Theology in the Making: Barth-Thurneysen Correspondence, 1914–1925* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 37–38.
 - 5 Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background & History*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, (London: SCM Press, 2001), pp. 252ff/237ff. For the German edition, which we will be citing here, see Karl Barth, *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert: Ihre Vorgeschichte und ihre Geschichte* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1947).
 - 6 A rare exception to this can be found in Neil B. Macdonald, *Karl Barth and the Strange New World of the Bible* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2000), pp. 115–126 and 239–246. Although Macdonald does spend some time explicating Barth's interpretation of Kant in this latter lecture, he does not pay sufficient attention to the particular difference between Kant's earlier and later influence upon Barth, and, in like manner, he fails to note the ontological nature of this influence, which I will be arguing for below.
 - 7 John Webster, *Barth's Earlier Theology* (London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), p. 92.
 - 8 McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 464.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, p. 67, citing; Ingrid Spieckermann, *Gotteserkenntnis: ein Beitrag zur Grundfrage der neuen Theologie Karl Barths* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1985), pp. 72–82. For further comment see also Timothy Stanley, "Before Analogy: Recovering Barth's Ontological Development," *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 90, no. 1029 (September, 2009), pp. 577–601; pp. 596ff.
 - 10 Simon Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?: Barth's Earliest Theology and the Marburg School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 335. As we will note below, Fisher's account is more nuanced than an attribution of Barth's thought as anti-philosophical. However, he does affirm a post-metaphysical tone in Barth's early work consistent with the other commentators listed here.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, p. 334.
 - 12 Merold Westphal, *Transcendence and Self-Transcendence: On God and the Soul* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 145. For Barth's comment on metaphysics see, Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, trans. Douglas Horton, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), p. 68.
 - 13 Martin Heidegger, "The Reply to the Third Question at the Seminar in Zürich, 1951," in *God without Being: Hors-texte*, ed. Jean-Luc Marion, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 61–62, from *Aussprache mit Martin Heidegger* an 06/X1/1951, privately issued edition by the Vortragsausschuss der Studentenschaft der Universität Zürich (Zurich, 1952). It is important to note that Heidegger's use of Being [*Sein*] in his reply, implies the ontological difference he had been developing in his work. This most explicitly comes through in his essay "The Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics." Here, Heidegger will go on to critique the way in which being and beings are interrelated with each other in Hegel's thought. Rather, for Heidegger, "we think of Being rigorously only when we think of it in its difference [*Differenz*] with beings, and of beings in their difference [*Differenz*] with Being." Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 62; the German can be found in this same book on page 129.

- 14 Martin Heidegger, "The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics," in *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 276/GS379.
- 15 For just a few examples of some of the key issues and contributors, cf. Mark A. Wrathall, *Religion after Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Being, Subjectivity, Otherness: The Idols of God," in *Questioning God*, ed. John D. Caputo, Mark Dooley, and Michael J. Scanlon, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001); John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987); John D. Caputo, "Introduction: Who Comes after the God of Metaphysics?," in *The Religious*, ed. John D. Caputo, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002); Merold Westphal, *Postmodern Philosophy and Christian Thought* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999); Merold Westphal, *Transcendence and Self-Transcendence: On God and the Soul* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004); Merold Westphal, *Overcoming Onto-theology: Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2001).
- 16 Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-texte* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Or, as Marion described his task in an earlier book, theology's task is to describe how the "destruction of onto-theology's conceptual idols . . . clear a space for the 'icon,' that is, a space for the 'negative theophany.'" Jean-Luc Marion, *The Idol and Distance: Five Studies* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2001), p. xviii. In response to the idol of ontologically corrupted theology, Marion answers with the infinite distance of the icon. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 17 Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 47. For critical engagement with this cf. John D. Caputo and Linda Alcoff, *St. Paul among the Philosophers* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), pp. 1ff.
- 18 Barth and Thurneysen, *Revolutionary Theology in the Making*, pp. 37–38.
- 19 Busch, *Karl Barth*, p. 169.
- 20 Although McCormack recognizes a few metaphysical moments in Barth's theology, he typically refers to them as "a moment in what was otherwise an antimetaphysical mode of reflection." Bruce L. McCormack, "Karl Barth's Historicized Christology: Just How 'Chalcedonian' Is It?," in *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), p. 212. The moment in question in this particular reference is *Church Dogmatics* I.1 and 1.2.
- 21 Here again, Bruce McCormack's periodization of Barth's intellectual development is the pinnacle example: *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 14. For a brief explication and summary of his position in contrast to Hans Urs von Balthasar's alternative approach see also, Stanley, "Before Analogy: Recovering Barth's Ontological Development."
- 22 Westphal, *Transcendence and Self-Transcendence*, p. 145.
- 23 Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 102. Although Ward's account is far more sophisticated and generous, the subsuming of Barth's categories under Heidegger's is also assumed in John Milbank's references to Marion's work as "Heideggerian Barthianism." John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 37. This dismissal of Barth's thought echoes his claim that Barth is simply an inadequate and incomplete response to Kant in a footnote to the introduction to *Radical Orthodoxy*. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 33 n1. For another account of what is at stake between Barth and Milbank see, Neil Ormerod, "Milbank and Barth: A Catholic Perspective," in *Karl Barth—A Future for Postmodern Theology?*, ed. Christiana Mostert and Geoff Thompson, (Adelaide: Australian Theological Forum, 2000).
- 24 Busch, *Karl Barth*, p. 193.
- 25 Barth situates the first change between the first and second editions of his *Römerbrief*. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, second edition, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 2. The second change was with his book on Anselm in 1931 between his *Christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf* (1927) and his *Church Dogmatics* (1932). Karl Barth, *How I Changed My Mind* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 43.

- 26 Lewis White Beck, "Neo-Kantianism," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), pp. 468–469.
- 27 This collapse is often noted in commentary on the Neo-Kantian movement when explaining why the return to Kant came to prominence. See for instance, Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, pp. 7ff, and p. 62n2. See also Thomas E. Willey, *Back to Kant: The Revival of Kantianism in German Social and Historical Thought, 1860–1914* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1978), p. 24.
- 28 Andrea Poma, *The Critical Philosophy of Hermann Cohen* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 3.
- 29 Otto Liebmann, *Kant und die epigonen* (Stuttgart: C. Schober, 1865). "Liebmann's 'Also muss auf Kant zurückgegangen werden' served as a battle-cry. Philosophers who felt that philosophy should once again be established on a firm critical footing rallied to the defence of the *a priori*." Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 9.
- 30 "Neo-Kantianism is a term used to designate a group of somewhat similar movements that prevailed in Germany between 1870 and 1920 but had little in common beyond a strong reaction against irrationalism and speculative naturalism and a conviction that philosophy could be a 'science' only if it returned to the method and spirit of Kant. These movements were the fulfilment of Kant's prophecy that in a hundred years his philosophy would come into its own." Beck, "Neo-Kantianism," pp. 468–469. Beck goes on to list five different forms of Neo-Kantianism: Metaphysical (Liebmann and Riehl), Marburg (Cohen and Natorp), Goettingen (Nelson and Fries), Heidelberg (which led to Windelband and Rickert in Baden), and Sociological (Dilthey and Simmel).
- 31 See, Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, pp. 1–3. See also Busch, *Karl Barth*, pp. 44ff., 56, 59.
- 32 Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism* (New York, NY: F. Ungar Pub. Co., 1972), p. 6.
- 33 Hermann Cohen, *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1902).
- 34 Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 37.
- 35 Cohen, *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis*, p. 29; I have quoted Fisher's translation here at Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 38.
- 36 Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 45.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 38 "The Marburgers postulated an analogy between the operations involved in solving a problem with the aid of calculus and the ideal workings of the cognitive mind. Those who want to search for an exact correspondence between some example of problem-solving with calculus will do so in vain. Like all forms of analogical reasoning, the relation between the two terms involves dissimilarity as well as similarity, but hardly anywhere in Marburg philosophy is there a detailed comparison between the two. Effort was rather expended upon constructing their method and then attempting to make it work in the realm of epistemology." *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Ernst Cassirer, "Hermann Cohen 1848–1918," *Social Research* Vol.10 (1943), p. 226.
- 42 Hermann Cohen, *Kants begründung der Ethik* (Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1877), p. 20.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 21, translation cited in Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 44.
- 44 Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 22.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- 46 McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 44 citing; Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 47.
- 47 Joseph M. Bochenski, *Contemporary European Philosophy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1956), p. 92.
- 48 Cohen expresses the problem as follows: "The peculiar character of religion, though it remains unshakably connected to ethics, will only then be fulfilled, when the correlation of God and man assumes a more intimate significance for man as an individual and as an I." Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, p. 166.
- 49 Karl Barth, "The Principles of Dogmatics According to Wilhelm Herrmann (1925)," in *Theology and Church: Shorter Writings, 1920–1928* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 238.

- 50 For more on the relationship between Cohen and Herrmann see, William Kluback, "Friendship without Communication: Wilhelm Herrmann and Hermann Cohen," in *The Idea of Humanity: Hermann Cohen's Legacy to Philosophy and Theology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987).
- 51 It should be noted that Cohen's position was at times more nuanced than the position being presented here in Barth. Andrea Poma, *Yearning for Form and Other Essays on Hermann Cohen's Thought* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), pp. 175–176.
- 52 Barth, "The Principles of Dogmatics According to Wilhelm Herrmann (1925)," p. 244.
- 53 Albrecht Ritschl, "Theology and Metaphysics," in *Three Essays* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 155.
- 54 Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 126.
- 55 McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, p. 51. As McCormack notes, "it was Herrmann who, even more forcibly than Ritschl, made it his goal to exclude every last vestige of metaphysics from theology."
- 56 Barth, "The Principles of Dogmatics According to Wilhelm Herrmann (1925)," p. 245, citing Herrmann's *Ges. Aufs.* pp. 133, 140, 381.
- 57 Barth employs this statement as early as a sermon on Genesis 15:6 in 1916 and in both editions of his *Römerbrief* in 1919 and 1922 respectively. Eberhard Busch, "God is God: The Meaning of a Controversial Formula and the Fundamental Problem of Speaking about God," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, Vol. 7, no. 2 (1986), pp. 101–113; p. 101.
- 58 Busch is quick to point out that he has not, however, found any such statement in Ragaz's work. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
- 59 *Ibid.* Graham Ward also notes Barth's relation to Dadaism during this time. Ward emphasizes the interconnection between the anti-historicism of Dadaism and Barth's theology during the 1920s. Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology*, p. 57. See also Friedrich Gogarten, "Historicism," in *The Beginnings of Dialectic Theology*, ed. James McConkey Robinson and Jürgen Moltmann, (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1968), p. 343.
- 60 Busch, "God is God: The Meaning of a Controversial Formula and the Fundamental Problem of Speaking about God," p. 107.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- 62 Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God* (London: Collins, 1967), pp. 44–45.
- 63 Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, pp 334ff.
- 64 In the *Göttingen Dogmatics* Barth will note how any attempt to reflect upon the Word of God in and of itself "confuses dogmatics with a metaphysics that has become impossible since Kant." Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion*, ed. Hannelotte Reiffen, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p. 10. In terms of *Die christliche Dogmatik*, Barth went even further in his desire to erase the category of being from his account of God. This was Barth's own flirtation with a "non-ontological." This is a term adopted by Hans Frei, who notes that "Barth's much more radical realism in this volume is non-ontological. He tried, at that time, to speak of God as one who is related to his creation as absolute origin [*Ursprung*]." Hans W. Frei, "The Doctrine of Revelation in the Thought of Karl Barth 1909–1922" (Doctoral Dissertation, Yale, 1956), p. 189. As Barth will say in the opening paragraph, "There are Christian dogmatics, because there is Christian speech [*Es gibt Christliche Dogmatik, weil es Christliche Rede gibt*]." Karl Barth, *Die christliche Dogmatik im Entwurf*, ed. Gerhard Sauter, (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1927), p. 1.
- 65 As Ely Gordon has recently commented regarding Rosenzweig's relation to this context, "The crisis of confidence in idealism's powers was felt most dramatically among that younger generation of thinkers who came of age just before the First World War. For many of them, German and German Jewish alike, the collapse of the older, academic style of philosophy was heralded as a great victory. The turn to religion seemed to promise a new breakthrough, a reinvigoration of the philosophical discipline." Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), p. xxviii.
- 66 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1962).
- 67 Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997).

- 68 Calvin O. Schrag, "Heidegger and Cassirer on Kant," *Kant-Studien: Philosophische Zeitschrift der Kant-Gesellschaft*, Vol. 58, no. 1 (1967), pp. 87–100; p. 87.
- 69 Ibid. Cf. William Blattner, "Laying the Ground for Metaphysics: Heidegger's Appropriation of Kant," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 150.
- 70 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, p. 1. This was a point he drove home in his famous debate with Ernst Cassirer at Davos between March 17 and April 5, 1929. In a translated transcript of the *Protokoll* on the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Cassirer-Heidegger," recorded by Ritter and Bolnow, Heidegger says, "Kant is concerned with 'being as such' and not with any single and limited area of being. What I want to show is that his *Analytic* is not an ontology of nature, conceived as the object of the natural sciences, but a general ontology, *i.e.*, a critically established *metaphysica generalis*." Carl H. Hamburg, "A Cassirer-Heidegger Seminar," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol.25, no. 2 (1964), p. 215. For further summaries of these debates cf. Michael Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2000), p. 1; Dennis A. Lynch, "Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger: The Davos Debate," *Kant-Studien*, Vol.81, no. 3 (1990), pp. 360–370. Wayne Cristaudo, "Heidegger and Cassirer: Being, Knowing and Politics," *Kant-Studien*, Vol.82, no. 4 (1991), pp. 469–483.
- 71 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1962), p. 23.
- 72 Karl Barth, "No! Answer to Emil Brunner," in *Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace" by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the Reply "No!" by Dr. Karl Barth*, ed. Peter Fraenkel, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), p. 71.
- 73 As Barth says, "What he calls the purely formal side of humanity is evidently full of material. And the material is the capacity for a sinless knowledge of sin, the capacity to do on earth subjectively, *per analogiam*, what God does in heaven *per essentiam!*" Karl Barth, "No! Answer to Emil Brunner," in *Natural Theology*, p. 121.
- 74 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromiley, vol. I.1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1962), I.1, p. 37/KD36.
- 75 McCormack, Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology, p. 442.
- 76 Busch, *Karl Barth*, p. 169.
- 77 Ibid., p. 197.
- 78 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. bxxvi.
- 79 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 260/244.
- 80 Ibid.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Ibid., p. 258/242.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Ibid., p. 259/243.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid., p. 260/243.
- 88 Ibid., p. 260/244.
- 89 Ibid., p. 261.
- 90 Ibid., p. 259/243.
- 91 Ibid., p. 261/245.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Ibid., p. 263/246.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Ibid., p. 263/247.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Two of the most important of which can be found in Barth, "Ludwig Feuerbach (1920)." And Karl Barth, "Feuerbach," in *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, not to mention his redress of his critique of Feuerbach in CD IV.2 and IV.3. For an evaluation of the differences between his early and later critiques of Feuerbach see John Glasse, "Barth on Feuerbach," *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 57, no. 2 (April, 1964), pp. 69–96. And the rejoinder to this essay, Manfred H. Vogel, "The Barth-Feuerbach Confrontation," *The*

- Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 59, no. 1 (January, 1966), pp. 27–52; in particular see pp. 39ff for Vogel's analysis of Barth's later critique of Feuerbach.
- 98 Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (London: Open Court Pub. Co., 1960), pp. 156–157.
- 99 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 285/266.
- 100 *Ibid.*, p. 268/251.
- 101 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 289/270, citing Immanuel Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, second edition (1794), p. 314.
- 102 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 289/270–271.
- 103 Allen W. Wood, "Rational Theology, Moral Faith, and Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. Paul Guyer, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 395.
- 104 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 289/270. Barth's critique of the way Kant's philosophy of religion collapses into the exact form of anthropocentrism he sought to avoid is a questionable one, it nonetheless bears witness to the way Kant was mediated to Barth from his teachers. Even today, Kantian scholars tend to acknowledge and debate the ambiguities in the way Kant understood the relationship between our perception of things and things in and of themselves. For a discussion of the contemporary debate of Kant's transcendental aesthetic see Parsons, who investigates Kant's view of "space and time as *a priori* intuitions and as forms of outer and inner intuition respectively." Charles Parsons, "The Transcendental Aesthetic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. Paul Guyer, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 62, cf. pp. 80ff.
- 105 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 292/272.
- 106 *Ibid.*
- 107 *Ibid.*, p. 292/273.
- 108 *Ibid.*
- 109 *Ibid.*
- 110 *Ibid.*
- 111 *Ibid.*
- 112 *Ibid.*
- 113 *Ibid.*, pp. 292–293/273.
- 114 *Ibid.*, p. 293/273.
- 115 *Ibid.*, p. 293/274.
- 116 *Ibid.*, p. 294/275.
- 117 Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (London: SCM Press, 1960), p. 171; Karl Barth, *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1981), p. 174. Cf. Timothy Stanley, "Returning Barth to Anselm," *Modern Theology*, Vol.24, no. 3 (July, 2008), pp. 413–437; pp. 425ff.
- 118 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 273/255–256, citing; Kant, *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, pp. 114 and 91 respectively.
- 119 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 294/274.
- 120 *Ibid.*, p. 294/275.
- 121 *Ibid.*
- 122 *Ibid.*
- 123 *Ibid.*
- 124 *Ibid.*, p. 295/275.
- 125 This is an irony decidedly missed in Milbank's interpretation of Barth on this point. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy: Suspending the Material* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 33 n.1.
- 126 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 298/278.
- 127 Wood, "Rational Theology, Moral Faith, and Religion," p. 396. See also Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 298/278.
- 128 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 297/277.
- 129 *Ibid.*, p. 298/278.
- 130 Fisher, *Revelatory Positivism?*, p. 22.
- 131 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 298/278.
- 132 Further explication of the ontological nature of this development see, Timothy Stanley, *Protestant Metaphysics after Karl Barth and Martin Heidegger* (London: SCM Press / Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), pp. 160ff.

- 133 Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 1.1, p. 4; Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, vol. I.1 (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1964), p. 2. Barth becomes more explicit in later volumes; cf. "In the preceding chapter we have already had to resist the threatened absorption of the doctrine of God into a doctrine of being [*Seinslehre*]; and we shall have to do this again. Yet we must not yield to a revulsion against the idea of being as such, which for some time had a part in modern Protestant theology." *Church Dogmatics*. II.1, p. 260/KD291.
- 134 Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 261.