Johannes Andreas Quenstedt's *Analogia Entis*

By John Ehrett[1]

Abstract: *This study analyzes the theory of analogical predication in theological language espoused by Lutheran scholastic theologian Johannes Andreas Quenstedt, with special concern for Quenstedt's treatment of the analogia entis.Over the years, several competing views of Quenstedt's theological metaphysics have emerged. Battista Mondin has argued that Quenstedt's approach acknowledges no natural "ontological" knowledge of God; William Placher, taking precisely the opposite tack, charges Quenstedt with helping introduce a corruptive univocity of being into Western theology; and Robert Preus argues that Quenstedt's account of analogical predication should not be read as carrying ontological weight at all. Against these views, this study extends previous arguments by Karl Barth and Jörg Baur to show that Quenstedt advances a conception of the* analogia entis *that is in substantial continuity with the mainstream of Christian metaphysics in his time, and one that carries notable implications for Lutheran theology in the present day.*

Keywords: *analogia entis*, Lutheranism, Quenstedt, Scholasticism

Introduction

In recent years, confessional Protestant theology has witnessed a resurgence of interest in classical metaphysics, and an increasing willingness to reconsider certain modern assumptions about the fundamental God-world relation.[2] In a striking turn, much of this retrieval has been spearheaded by Presbyterians and Baptists, traditionally "non-sacramental" denominations that Catholic critics of modernity have often accused of undermining the traditional Christian world-picture.[3]

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[2] Some representative examples include James E. Dolezal, *God Without Parts: Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God's Absoluteness* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011); Craig A. Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition: Recovering Trinitarian Classical Theism* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2021); Matthew Barrett, *None Greater: The Undomesticated Attributes of God* (Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2019); Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark eds., *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007).

[3] Cf. Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 41 (denouncing the "Protestant reformers" characterized by a "variegated rejection of sacramentality as it was understood in the Roman church,

The absence of many Lutherans from this conversation is notable, though perhaps unsurprising. Historically, the Lutheran tradition has tended to focus more on the question of God's disposition towards human beings than on God's relation to created beings in the formally metaphysical sense. For some Lutherans, any efforts to consider God according to natural revelation amount to trafficking in a "theology of glory" that illicitly seeks knowledge of God apart from His revelation in Christ, which in turn underpins a "theology of the cross."[4]

However, the Lutheran tradition has not traditionally excluded theological metaphysics altogether. While Martin Luther himself was not a systematic metaphysician in the style of Thomas Aquinas,[5] and the Lutheran confessional writings touch on questions of metaphysical foundations only obliquely,[6] the scholastic tradition that later developed within Lutheranism soon found itself deeply engaged with questions of "first philosophy"—even laying out versions of the *analogia entis*, or analogy of being, that sought to give a reasoned account of the relationship between God's infinite existence and the finite existence of created beings.[7]

One of the foremost Lutheran exponents of the *analogia entis* was Johannes Andreas Quenstedt (1617–88), a leading figure in the "silver age" of Lutheran Orthodoxy and the author of the massive *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum*.[8] Despite its scope and depth, Quenstedt's work is little read today,

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not only with respect to the church's seven sacraments, but also as a comprehensive, biblical view of reality in which the transcendent God manifests himself in and through the natural, material world").

[4] See Christopher D. Jackson, "Luther's Theologian of the Cross and Theologian of Glory Distinction Reconsidered," *Pro Ecclesia* 29, no. 3 (2020): 341–44. Jordan Cooper has recently made a similar argument that this apparent disengagement with metaphysical theology is rooted in twentieth-century developments within Lutheranism, sometimes associated with Gerhard Forde, that largely eschew the "traditional categories of substance and essence" and other metaphysical issues. Jordan Cooper, *Prolegomena: A Defense of the Scholastic Method* (Ithaca, NY: Just and Sinner Publications, 2020), 5–9, 11.

[5] See Sammeli Juntunen, "Luther and Metaphysics: What Is the Structure of Being According to Luther?," in *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 129–31.

[6] See, e.g., *The Augsburg Confession*, trans. William H.T. Dau and G. Friedrich Bente (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), article I (affirming divine simplicity); *The Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration*, trans. William H.T. Dau and G. Friedrich Bente (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), article I, paras. 54–7 (considering whether original sin is a substance or an accident).

[7] For an exploration of one such formulation of the *analogia entis*, in the work of Johann Gerhard, see Jack Kilcrease, "Johann Gerhard's Reception of Thomas Aquinas's *Analogia Entis*," in *Aquinas Among the Protestants*, ed. Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2018), 119–23.

[8] Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 1 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia

likely due to the fact that most of the *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* remains untranslated. That is not to say he has been overlooked, however. Indeed, an unresolved debate presently exists regarding Quenstedt's lengthy account of how theological terms are properly predicated of both God and creatures.

In recent decades, three competing—and mutually inconsistent—interpretations of Quenstedt, all of which contest his relationship to the broader tradition of Christian theological metaphysics, have emerged. In a 1963 study of the doctrine of analogy, Catholic theologian Battista Mondin argues that Luther and John Calvin articulated theologies that functionally destroyed the possibility of a natural human knowledge of God.[9] As a result, Mondin claims, Quenstedt's *analogia entis* is positively ersatz: his account of analogy only superficially reflects a longstanding "Catholic" tradition, merely repeating rhetorical forms devoid of genuine metaphysical substance.[10] For Mondin, Quenstedt's Lutheran convictions necessarily entail that a genuine natural knowledge of God, even in a qualified sense, is impossible.[11] In short, Mondin charges Quenstedt with a kind of functional equivocity in theological speech, a denial that terms as applied to God and creatures have *any* genuine correspondence relation.

Protestant theologian William Placher, in a 1996 intellectual genealogy of conceptions of divine transcendence, charges Quenstedt with almost precisely the opposite error.[12] For Placher, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin—and their theological forerunners—were all committed to a near-absolute apophaticism about the nature of the divine, one centered on the radical difference between God and creation.[13] In Placher's telling, that older conception of divine transcendence was compromised when Cardinal Thomas Cajetan, Jesuit thinker Francisco Suárez, Quenstedt, and Reformed theologian Francis Turretin, among others, sought to develop fuller-orbed accounts of the relationship between divine and creaturely being.[14] In other words, Placher accuses Quenstedt of lapsing into

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Publishing House, 1972), 45–6, 62.

[9] Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), 110.

[10] Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 112.

[11] Notably, Mondin's argument that the Reformation theologians worked a serious rupture in metaphysical theology anticipated similar arguments against the Lutheran tradition that have been raised more recently by John Milbank, albeit in a somewhat opposite direction. See John Milbank, "Reformation 500: Any Cause for Celebration?," *Open Theology* 4 (2018): 618–19 (criticizing Protestant scholastic appropriations of the Thomistic doctrine of analogy).

[12] William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking About God Went Wrong* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 76–7.

[13] Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 2–3, 67, 71.

[14] Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 72–9.

a functional *univocity* in theological speech, where so close a similarity exists between God and creatures that any difference between them is "only a matter of degree."[15]

Lutheran scholar Robert Preus, author of the leading English-language work on the history of Lutheran scholasticism, offers an altogether different reading of Quenstedt's theory of analogy. Specifically, Preus declines to read Quenstedt as making metaphysical claims at all, instead taking his account of analogy to be principally "linguistic and semantic."[16] On this view, to speak of Quenstedt's *analogia entis* as something akin to Aquinas's version of the doctrine—which most, but not all, Thomistic scholars have interpreted as thoroughly ontological in character[17]—is simply to misread Quenstedt, asking a malformed question. To date, the question of how best to read Quenstedt's theory of theological analogy remains unsettled.

This study argues, against Mondin, Placher, and Preus, that Quenstedt's *analogia entis* represents substantially the same metaphysical paradigm as that defended by Thomas Aquinas and expounded by generations of Christian metaphysicians after him, albeit with a slight difference in its overall epistemic orientation. Aquinas lays the thematic accent on God's otherness, while Quenstedt is keener to emphasize God's immanence over against those who would deny any real similarity between divine and creaturely being. This distinction, however, amounts to a difference in rhetorical emphasis rather than metaphysical structure.

This study begins with an analysis of the medieval and early-modern theories of analogy within which Quenstedt worked, before expounding Quenstedt's own theory of theological analogy in the *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*. The study then traces the signal points of correspondence between Quenstedt's account of analogy and the version of the *analogia entis* advanced by Aquinas, and critically evaluates Mondin, Placher, and Preus's interpretations of Quenstedt's metaphysics in turn. Finally, it considers the implications of a deeper understanding of Quenstedt's theory of analogy for the direction of Lutheran theology as a whole.

Medieval and Early Modern Conceptions of Theological Analogy

Theology has always had to reckon with the question of how terms predicated

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[15] Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 77.

[16] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 2, 43–4.

[17] For an overview of recent historical debates on this question, see Francesca Aran Murphy, *God Is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 19–20, 89–93.

of both God and creatures, such as "goodness" and "wisdom," convey meaningful information. Traditionally, the three principal options open to theologians considering this question have been univocal predication, equivocal predication, and analogical predication. Univocal predication entails a one-to-one correspondence between terms as applied to God and creatures: what human beings mean by "love" or "goodness" is essentially the same sort of thing that is meant by theological statements about "God's love" or "God's goodness." Equivocal predication, for its part, contends that no real relationship exists between terms as applied to God and as applied to creatures; any correspondence is merely metaphorical. On this view, what is meant by "God's love" or "God's wisdom" does not properly map onto what is ordinarily meant by terms like "love" and "wisdom." Analogical predication entails that there exists a real relationship between terms like "human love" and "God's love," even if this relationship is not one of precise correspondence between identical referents. This mode of predication is not foreign to ordinary experience: for instance, the adjective "loving" may be predicated of both one's spouse and one's pet, and some genuine similarity plainly exists between the love shown by a spouse and the love demonstrated by a pet, but the character of these two types of love is nevertheless quite distinct.

The question of theological predication becomes perhaps most pressing where the term "being" is concerned. The assertion that *God exists* is the necessary condition for (almost) any theology as such, but Jewish-Christian speech about God has always stressed the vast distance between the character of God's being and that of creaturely being. Over the centuries, many theologians have concluded that univocal and equivocal accounts of divine being are theologically unacceptable, albeit for different reasons. A univocal account of being—in which the term "God exists" means something essentially akin to what is meant by the claim "the President exists"—would treat God as a kind of maximally powerful entity within a single cosmos that transcends both Him and His creatures. As John Milbank puts it, such a view entails that "being" as such "threatens to become greater than God and God [tends] to be idolatrously reduced to the status of a partner with his Creation in causal processes."[18] Conversely, an equivocal account of being—in which the term "God exists" is taken to mean something *wholly* different from what is meant by "the President exists"—entails the conclusion that "when we speak of God we do not know what we are talking about,"[19] such that "statements about God and world become statements about how it

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[18] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), xxiv.

[19] Herbert McCabe, *God Still Matters*, ed. Brian Davies (London: Continuum, 2002), 27.

is appropriate to talk"[20] rather than about metaphysical realities themselves. Christian philosophical theology thus becomes effectively impossible.

Over against these two perceived extremes, the Christian metaphysical tradition running through Thomas Aquinas developed the concept of the *analogia entis*, or the "analogy of being." This concept is an extension of the principle that, in theological speech, "some things are said of God and creatures analogically, and not in a purely equivocal nor in a purely univocal sense."[21] On the analogical view, between God and creatures there exists an infinite and qualitatively meaningful—but not altogether *absolute*—disproportion between the term "being" as applied to God and as applied to creatures. For Aquinas, this position logically follows from the fact that all things proceed ontologically from God as their creator, and so must bear some likeness to their source: "whatever is said of God and creatures, is said according to the relation of a creature to God as its principle and cause, wherein all perfections of things pre-exist excellently."[22] Indeed, Aquinas explains that "we can name God only from creatures," stressing that human knowledge of God's existence and nature inevitably requires prescinding from knowledge of the created order.[23] This position, Aquinas believes, amounts to "a mean between pure equivocation and simple univocation."[24]

According to the *analogia entis* as conceived by Aquinas, God's being is distinguished from creaturely being by virtue of the fact that "God is essential being, whereas other things are beings by participation" (*Deus est ens per essentiam, et alia per participationem*).[25] The very existence of creatures, on this view, is "structurally" derivative of the one God who *is* Being itself (*ipsum esse per se subsistens*).[26] What God is absolutely, creatures possess only in relative measure.

Within the broad conceptual framework of the analogical use of theological language, a number of distinctions and sub-distinctions emerged during the later Middle Ages and thereafter. Most famously, Cardinal Thomas Cajetan proposed a threefold conception of analogy—*analogy of inequality*, *analogy of attribution*, and *analogy of proportionality*.[27] Since this tripartite framework figures prominently in Quenstedt's account of analogy, it is worth tracing the distinc-

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[20] Kathryn Tanner, *God and Transcendence in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1988), 13.

[21] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I.13.5.

[22] Aquinas, *ST* I.13.5.

[23] Aquinas, *ST* I.13.5.

[24] Aquinas, *ST* I.13.5.

[25] Aquinas, *ST* I.4.3.

[26] Aquinas, *ST* I.4.2.

[27] Ralph M. McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy: An Interpretation of St. Thomas* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 3.

tions between these three positions in some detail here.

In an analogy of inequality, two concepts are identified and a correspondence is drawn between them, but there is no unitary "middle term" in which they share; this "middle term" exists in a strictly linguistic, rather than ontological, sense. One might say, for instance, that a dog and a wolf fall under the common concept "canine," and hence bear an analogical relationship one to another. However, unless something like a Platonic account of Forms is stipulated from the outset, the term "canine" does not denominate a distinctive essence; as Ralph McInerny puts it, "the generic concept is not of a nature absolutely one."[28]

Conceived in theological terms, an analogy of inequality would entail that the analogical likeness between the terms *God* and *creature* would be one merely of degree, as both occupy the same ontological plane. James Anderson characterizes such a move as "a kind of thinking that inevitably results in 'anthropomorphism,' which consists essentially in the attempt to conceive of the uncreated as homogeneous with the created, recognizing between these two orders only a distinction of *degree*."[29] Despite its classification as a form of analogy, analogy of inequality appears inevitably to lapse back into a kind of univocity.[30]

In an analogy of attribution, "that to which a term is primarily and intrinsically applied is fittingly called the 'prime analogate'; the items to which it is then referred are termed 'secondary analogates.' "[31] An example serves to illustrate the point: one might say, for instance, that both a man and a collection of medicines are *healthy*. An analogy of attribution between the man and the medicines is present in such a case, and the health of the man is the "prime analogate" to which the health-promoting qualities of the medicines (the "secondary analogates") is related. The medicines are called "healthy" because, and only to the extent that, they serve as adjuncts to the man's health. On this conception, if there *was* no man or other potential recipient to which the medicines could be referred, it would be unintelligible to speak of the medicines as "healthy."

Within the general framework of analogy of attribution, a further distinction may be drawn between *analogy of extrinsic attribution* and *analogy of intrinsic attribution*. The aforementioned man/medicine example constitutes an example of the former, since the medicines' "healthiness" is altogether extrinsic to the man

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[28] McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy*, 5.

[29] James F. Anderson, *Reflections on the Analogy of Being* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1967), 13.

[30] Anderson, *Reflections on the Analogy of Being*, 13. See also Jörg Baur, *Die Vernunft zwischen Ontologie und Evangelium: Eine Untersuchung zur Theologie Johann Andreas Quenstedts* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1962), 42 (interpreting Quenstedt's rejection of analogy of inequality on the grounds that it tends toward univocity).

[31] Anderson, *Reflections on the Analogy of Being*, 15.

whose health "grounds" the entire analogy. An analogy of *intrinsic* attribution, by contrast, could be said to be present if there existed such a discrete reality or essence as "healthiness" in which human beings and medicines might both share. Here, "healthiness" would itself be the prime analogate, present intrinsically in both human beings and medicines in some way, to which the healthiness of human beings and medicines would be referred.[32]

These two conceptions of analogy of attribution produce very different theological outcomes, particularly where the relation of divine and creaturely being is concerned. An analogy of extrinsic attribution, which denies any real presence of the primary analogate "in" the secondary analogates, would seem to entail the conclusion that God alone really exists and creatures do not. Conversely, an analogy of intrinsic attribution, in which the primary analogate is far more intimately related to its secondary analogates, underscores the conclusion that God, as absolute Being, is the immediate causal source of the acts of existence common to creatures.[33]

Last is analogy of proportionality, which Cajetan defends as the proper form of analogy,[34] which remains debated today.[35] McInerny argues that analogy of proportionality tends to affirm a striking indeterminate, but nevertheless still acknowledged, similarity. "For example, to see by corporeal vision and to see intellectually are two uses of 'to see'; they share the common name because, as understanding presents something to the mind, so seeing presents something to the animal."[36] In short, analogy of proportionality can "signify any similarity of relations."[37] From a theological perspective, there is a risk here of slipping into equivocity, of rhetorically acknowledging a similarity between divine and creaturely being without affirming a genuine metaphysical correspondence.

As distinctions grow finer, the lines between these conceptions of analogy become increasingly blurry. To take just one example, Anderson argues that conceiving of God as the primary analogate (Absolute Being, *esse*), to which secondary and finite analogates (beings, *entia*) are referred, runs the risk of collapsing Christian theology into a Spinozistic monism that denies the real existence

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[32] The analogy breaks down here given that "healthiness" cannot coherently be said to be intrinsic to a medicine; the coherence of calling medicines "healthy" is based on the structure of an analogy of extrinsic attribution.

[33] See Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 58–60 (explaining that in an analogy of intrinsic attribution, the primary analogate constitutes "a perfection that pervades each one of [the secondary analogates]").

[34] McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy*, 12.

[35] See, e.g., Milbank, "Reformation 500," 618.

[36] McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy*, 11.

[37] McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy*, 11.

and (metaphysical) freedom of creatures.[38] Plainly, this is an argument against an analogy of extrinsic attribution that would deny any real being to creatures while predicating it of God absolutely. But Anderson goes on to deny any validity to the concept of an analogy of intrinsic attribution, averring that such an analogy merely constitutes an analogy of proportionality by another name.[39]

In an effort to navigate beyond terminological impasses like this one, Erich Przywara—perhaps the most celebrated recent defender of the *analogia entis* as a philosophical principle—conceives of analogy of attribution and analogy of proportionality as two sides of the same coin, where the former emphasizes the possibility of human knowledge of God and the latter emphasizes His radical alterity in relation to creation. " 'Longing' (in the ascending *analogia attributionis)* becomes a 'blinding rapture' (in the *analogia proportionis*) in order to become 'service' (in the descending *analogia attributionis)*."[40] Przywara's translator, John Betz, explains that for Przywara, "[p]roperly understood . . . the *analogia entis* (in the form of the theological analogy) comprises two moments: a *tanta similitudo* expressed in the *analogia attributionis* and a *maior dissimilitudo* expressed in the *analogia proportionalitatis.*"[41] Przywara, for his part, lays the principal accent on analogy of proportionality in order to stress "God as ever more exalted, beyond everything creaturely, ontic or noetic."[42]

Quenstedt's Theory of Theological Analogy

Johannes Andreas Quenstedt was born in 1617 in the town of Quedlinburg.[43] He was the nephew of Johann Gerhard, one of the Lutheran scholastic tradition's best-known authors.[44] Educated at the University of Helmstedt, where he studied under Georg Calixt, and later in Wittenberg, where he was taught by Wilhelm Leyser, he began teaching at the University of Wittenberg and was eventually named a professor in 1660.[45] Quenstedt's seminal work, the *Theologia Didactico-*

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[38] Anderson, *Reflections on the Analogy of Being*, 24–7.

[39] Anderson, *Reflections on the Analogy of Being*, 16–7.

[40] Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics—Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, trans. John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 2014), 235.

[41] John R. Betz, "Translator's Introduction," in Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics—Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, translated by John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 2014), 73.

[42] Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 234.

[43] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 1, 62; Robert Kolb, "Quenstedt, Johann Andreas," in *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 628.

[44] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 1, 62.

[45] Kolb, "Quenstedt, Johann Andreas," 628; Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol.

Polemica sive Systema Theologicum, was published in 1685, shortly before his death in 1688.[46] The volume proved popular enough that it was reprinted on four separate occasions thereafter, in 1691, 1696, 1702 and 1715.[47] Robert Preus writes of the *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* that it was "so big, so complete, so concise and systematic, and so excellent that no later Lutheran ever came close to equalling it."[48] Indeed, Quenstedt has been described—albeit somewhat unflatteringly—as the bookkeeper of orthodox Lutheranism, a moniker that has stuck.[49] Moreover, Quenstedt's achievement did not come at the expense of personal virtue; to the contrary, he was characterized by his contemporaries as a moderate, prudent, mild, and non-avaricious man.[50]

Quenstedt's exposition of his doctrine of analogy is found in chapter eight of the first part of the *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, a chapter which broadly focuses on the essence of God when it is considered in an absolute sense. The question of analogical predication is the first subject Quenstedt considers after the chapter's recitation of 37 "didactic" propositions about the divine essence.[51] Following the model of Aquinas and other scholastics, the "polemical" sections of Quenstedt's treatise take the form of theses advanced for discussion, a number of potential objections to the theses, and responses to those objections drawing on the authority of philosophy as such, other authors in the broadly Western monotheistic heritage, and biblical revelation. Accordingly, Quenstedt's discussion of analogy is shot through with references to sources ranging well beyond the Lutheran tradition.[52]

Quenstedt frames the central question straightforwardly: are *essence*, *sub-*

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[46]Kolb, "Quenstedt, Johann Andreas," 628; Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 1, 62.

[47]Zachary Purvis, "The New Ethicist and the Old Bookkeeper: Isaak Dorner, Johann Quenstedt, and Modern Appropriations of Classical Protestantism," *Journal for the History of Modern Theology/Zeitschrift für neuere Theologiegeschichte* 19 no. 1 (2012): 26; see also Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 1, 62.

[48]Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 1, 62.

[49]See A. Tholuck, *Der Geist des lutherischen Theologen Wittenbergs im Verlaufe des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg und Gotha: Friedrich und Andreas Perthes, 1852), 247; see also Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 77.

[50]Johannes Kunze, "Quenstedt," in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* Vol. 16, ed. Albert Hauck (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1896–1909), 382.

[51]Johannes Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum* (Wittebergae, 1701), I.VIII.II.1.

[52]Cf. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 1, 63 (In general, Quenstedt "quotes church fathers, Luther, the Symbols, predecessors, colleagues, even scholastics and contemporary Catholic and Reformed theologians with remarkable selectivity and economy.").

stance, *spirit* and other attributes predicated of God and creatures univocally, equivocally, or by analogy?[53] He stresses that he is speaking in a strictly technical sense: the relevant matter at hand is whether terms are used of God and creatures in precisely the same way (univocity), or whether there is no real relation between terms predicated of God and creatures (equivocity).[54] As far as analogy is concerned, Quenstedt argues that the relevant question has nothing to do with an analogy of proportion, but of attribution.[55] And beyond that, he draws yet another, further distinction: at issue here is not the propriety of an *analogy of extrinsic attribution*, which Quenstedt contends is quite close to an equivocal account of predication, but an *analogy of intrinsic attribution*.[56] With the contours of the issue so stipulated, Quenstedt advances his formal thesis: that essence, substance, spirit, and other attributes are terms properly predicated analogically between God and creatures.[57] This analogy must take the form of an analogy of intrinsic attribution, in which the relevant attributes at issue are predicated of God *absolutely* and creatures only *dependently*.[58]

Quenstedt begins his exposition of the "Thesis" by pointing out that the concept "univocal" can be ambiguous.[59] Strictly speaking, "univocity" refers to the same term being predicated of things in the same way, without any inequality in the relation.[60] However, Quenstedt explains, the simple fact that the same term or attribute is predicated of two things does not entail that it is predicated of them in the same way. Put another way, two things may share a common term but nevertheless have an unequal relation *to* the term. For Quenstedt, this is ultimately illustrated by the fact that terms are predicated of God absolutely and of creatures only dependently.

All analogies, however, are not the same. Quenstedt next moves to consider Cajetan's threefold account of analogy, which distinguishes between *analogy of inequality, analogy of proportionality*, and *analogy of attribution*.[61] As previously noted, this last can be subdivided into *analogy of extrinsic attribution* and *analogy of intrinsic attribution*. Quenstedt embraces the latter, rejecting the analogy of

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[53] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[54] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[55] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[56] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[57] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[58] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[59] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[60] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1. See also Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* Vol. 1, trans. Theodore Engelder (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 432 n62 (summarizing and expounding Quenstedt's argument in this subsection).
[61] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

inequality as too akin to univocity, and characterizing analogy of proportionality as likewise improper due to its dependence on metaphor.[62] Only analogy of intrinsic attribution, Quenstedt stresses, can properly capture the dependence relation between God and creatures.[63]

Against this account of analogy are set the two poles of univocal and equivocal predication, which Quenstedt outlines in the "Antithesis" of his inquiry. On the side of univocity, Quenstedt places Duns Scotus and other nominalists following him, including William of Ockham and Gabriel Biel.[64] This group, Quenstedt argues, is committed to the claim that terms like *Being*, *Essence*, and *Spirit* are predicated of God and creatures univocally.[65] Quenstedt suggests that these "univocists" are committed to more than a mere "linguistic univocity" in which a single term is used to refer to realities bearing an analogical relationship to one another, but rather are willing to collapse all analogical intervals into the same referential horizon. On the side of equivocity—those who would deny that terms like *Essence*, *Substance*, and *Spirit* are intelligibly applied at all to both God and creatures—Quenstedt places Calvinist theologians Bartholomäus Keckermann and Amandus Polanus, as well as—on the basis of Aquinas's characterization— Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides.[66]

In response to these diverse opponents, Quenstedt defends the doctrine of analogy at greater length. In response to the proponents of univocity, Quenstedt emphasizes that God is substance absolutely and independently, while the creature only exists dependently and by participation (*per participationem*).[67] Since Being depends upon God in creatures, it is not predicated univocally of God and creatures.[68] Rather, the whole being of creatures is dependent upon God—such that univocity, in the strict sense, cannot be maintained.[69]

On the other hand, if terms were to be predicated *equivocally* of God and creatures, then it would follow that creatures are not properly essences and substances in their own right, and that angels and rational souls are not truly and properly spirits.[70] That goes too far for Quenstedt; he stresses that although God is essence and substance in a singular way, creatures nevertheless participate

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[62] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[63] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[64] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[65] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[66] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[67] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[68] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[69] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[70] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

"formally" (*formaliter*) in the definitions of "being" and "essence."[71] And the correspondence between divine and created being is more than merely linguistic: Quenstedt emphasizes that *that in reality which is signified* by the terms "being," "essence," and "substance" properly belongs to created beings as it does to God (albeit clearly in a different sense, though Quenstedt does not reiterate the point here).[72]

Quenstedt is not finished rebutting the advocates of equivocity, however. He emphasizes that if there were no proportion whatsoever between the being of God and the being of creatures, it would be unintelligible to speak of either as having properties at all.[73] Moreover, explicitly citing Aquinas's treatment of the same subject in the *Summa Theologica*, Quenstedt argues that if all language about God were equivocal, nothing could be known at all about God from creatures—a conclusion which stands opposed to both Aristotle and the testimony of the Apostle Paul in Romans 1.[74] And finally, Quenstedt lays out a multi-pronged *reductio ad absurdum*: an equivocal account of predication would seem to entail that (1) God produced "non-beings" in the act of creation, which is conceptually incoherent; (2) creatures, if they were really "non-beings," cannot be referred to God as effects to their cause, which destroys the intelligibility of any dependence relation between God and creature; and (3) in the Incarnation, Christ assumed "non-being" when He assumed human nature, which is also nonsensical.[75]

To conclude his analysis, Quenstedt proceeds to refute various objections that might be raised against his own affirmative position. Some might, for instance, argue that being, as a concept, is inherently univocal. But consistent with his previous claim that univocity—as distinguished from analogy—requires that the same term be predicated of two things equally, Quenstedt argues that where God and creatures are concerned, "Being" and "Essence" are always predicated unequally. This inequality is grounded in the very logic of being itself (*in ipsa ratione essendi*), where God is absolute and independent Being and essence, but the creature only dependently and by participation (*Deus Ens et essentia est absolute et independenter, creatura vero dependenter et per participationem*).[76]

Defenders of equivocal predication, for their parts, might stress the infinite distance between God's essence and the essences of creatures, and the fact that creatures always exist suspended over the abyss of nothingness. Against such

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[71]Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[72]Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[73]Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[74]Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[75]Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.
[76]Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

arguments, Quenstedt reasons that the fact that God's being is infinite does not make the concept of *finite* being correspondingly unintelligible; the beings that constitute creation are plainly intelligible and possess properties, and so genuinely exist, albeit in a relative sense.[77]

Next, Quenstedt considers the relationship of the divine proper name, *YHWH*, to the analogical account of predication and of being that Quenstedt has developed. Quenstedt points out that "Being," taken as a bare term, is inherently underdeterminate; by itself, it can refer to being that is dependent or independent, or finite or infinite. By contrast, the Tetragrammaton directly designates God's distinctive certainty, eternality, immutability, and infinity.[78]

What of the fact that creatures have beginnings and endings? This does not, for Quenstedt, call into question whether creatures genuinely have existence in their own right. Indeed, Quenstedt suggests the question itself is malformed: to speak of creaturely beginnings and endings is to assume that there *are* beings which come into and go out of existence.[79]

Does Quenstedt's method run the risk of elevating "Being" as a master term over and above "God"? Quenstedt responds to this charge by pointing out that, to the extent that God is situated alongside creatures within the horizon of "Being," this conceptual priority of Being is solely a mental operation (*per mentis nostrae operationem*); in reality, nothing can precede God ontologically (*Nihil Deum antecedit, aut antecedere potest*).[80] And in response to those who might try to enlist theologians such as Augustine to call the ontological status of creatures into question, Quenstedt writes that although God alone is essentially being (*solus Deus sit ens per essentiam*), creatures themselves are not nothing by comparison.[81]

In summation, Quenstedt observes that being is attributed to God in a higher, but not equivocal, sense; the bare term "Being" is not a meaningless linguistic descriptor ranging over altogether unrelated referents, but rather reflects a genuine relation of independence and dependence within the concept of Being.[82]

Viewed as a whole, Quenstedt's theory of theological analogy reflects a defined conception of the *analogia entis* that is substantially the same as Aquinas's

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[77] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[78] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1. See also Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* Vol. 1, 385 ("The name Jehovah is that distinctively divine name which denotes the immutable being of God, the absolute essence.").

[79] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[80] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[81] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[82] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

version, though he does not explicitly use the phrase.[83] The linchpin of any

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[83] Notably, in the course of his larger genealogical argument, Placher positions Quenstedt as an intellectual heir of the Jesuit metaphysician Francisco Suárez, describing him as making "almost exactly Suárez's moves" in his approach to analogy. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 77 and n31. In so doing, Placher raises the question of Quenstedt's relationship to Suárez within the larger tradition of Christian metaphysics. That question is particularly important, for present purposes, in view of Étienne Gilson's influential critique of Suárezian metaphysics and its relationship to modernity. See Étienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1952), 98–105. In Gilson's telling, Suárez's chief contribution to the emergence of modern thought was his denial of any "real distinction" between essence (*ens*) and existence (*existentia*)—a distinction between metaphysical principles that, according to Gilson, is critical to Christian philosophical theology. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 98–105. For Gilson, Suarez's failure to respect this distinction ends up encoding a tacit univocity of being within the language of analogy: God is rendered merely the greatest *ens* among other *entia*, rather than the absolute ontological root of all *entia*. See Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 105. Thus, a problem: if Quenstedt is in fact following Suárez, and if Gilson's analysis of Suárez is accepted, then whatever account of analogy Quenstedt is offering diverges from the Thomistic conception. However, Quenstedt's *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* is by no means a philosophical study on the scale of Suárez's project, and a close look at Quenstedt's implicit metaphysical commitments reveals a complex picture.

The most illuminating treatment of this issue comes in Quenstedt's treatment of the divine simplicity. In his didactic proposition on the subject, Quenstedt outlines a number of mereological "compositions" that *are* proper to created beings, but are *not* proper to God (*omnes enim hae compositionis species sunt in hominibus, . . . sunt in angelis, nulla vero earum in Deo reperitur*). Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.I.XI. Among these, Quenstedt lists the distinction of essence and existence (*Non ex essentia et existentia, est enim Deus ens necessarium, de cujus essentia est, necessario esse et existere.*). Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.I.XI; see also Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.5 (*Nec competit Deo compositio Metaphysica ex essentia et existentia*). That being said, in his more extended treatment of divine simplicity later in the text, Quenstedt refers to a distinction between "real" and "conceptual" types of composition, where "real" composition refers to—among other things—the combination of a thing's proper parts, and "conceptual" composition refers to the existence-essence distinction (*[a]d compositionem rationis revocari debet primo ex esse et essentia, seu ex existentia et essentia*). Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.5.

It is easy to read this language of "conceptual" compositions as a straight echo of Suárez's denial of any real essence-existence distinction. However, if the essence-existence distinction does not entail a real distinction in some sense, then how is it that God's being is to be meaningfully distinguished from creaturely being by the *absence* of such a distinction, as Quenstedt contends in both his didactic thesis on divine simplicity and his exposition? Gilson notes Suárez's denial that the essence-existence distinction is "necessarily required to save the distinction between the Creator and his creatures." Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 103–4. By contrast, Quenstedt treats the fact that essence and existence are not distinct in God as a core point of difference between God and creatures. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.I.XI. Put more simply, if the presence of an essence-existence composition within creatures is itself the ground of a genuine difference between creatures and God (in Whom no such composition exists), then in turn the ground of the essence-existence composition in creatures seemingly must be a real distinction between essence and existence. Else, the distinction Quenstedt means to draw between creatures and God on this point would be unintelligible.

This circle can be squared by considering whether Quenstedt is drawing the distinction between

Thomistic *analogia entis* is the unity of God's essence and existence—a unity that is itself the metaphysical denominator of deity.[84] Aquinas and Quenstedt are both committed to this principle. Both Aquinas and Quenstedt use the same formulation—*ens per essentiam*, "essential being"—to characterize the divine essence,[85] and for both Aquinas and Quenstedt, creatures exist as beings only by participation (*per participationem*). To be sure, at one point Quenstedt suggests that the *word* "being" is itself too abstract as a name of God, since it may refer either to infinite or finite being, and displays a preference for the revealed divine name, *Yahweh*, as a designator of God's certain, eternal, immutable, and infinite being.[86] However, this stipulation for proper theological speech does not directly contravene Quenstedt's underlying metaphysical commitment: God is the absolute ontological reality in which creatures participate, and that renders creatures' own existence ultimately relative, though not *nothing*. Indeed, the sixth of Quenstedt's didactic theses on God's essence, which precede his formal analysis of the question of analogy, stipulates that God is *first* conceived

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"real" and "conceptual" forms of *composition* in quite the same way as Suárez distinguishes between "real" and "logical" formulations of the essence-existence *distinction*. "Real" composition, for Quenstedt, is primarily limited to assembly of those parts proper to a thing; "conceptual" composition, in turn, refers to the existence-essence conjunction. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.5. However, the claim that there is no real distinction between essence and existence *as parts* of an existing thing is *not* the same as the claim that there is no real distinction between essence and existence as *principles* of an existing thing. It is, after all, metaphysically proper to state that existence is not a *proper part* of a thing (as Kant's critique of the "ontological argument" for God correctly acknowledged). Cf. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 101. Existence (*esse*) is more intimate to the creature than any of its discrete elements. On balance, the most coherent reading is probably to take Quenstedt as tacitly acknowledging a *real distinction between*, alongside a *conceptual composition of*, essence and existence within created beings—since this alone makes sense of Quenstedt's affirmation that the *lack* of an essence-existence distinction in God meaningfully differentiates God from created beings. Notable here also is Quenstedt's characterization of the essence-existence distinction as a "metaphysical" composition (*compositio Metaphysica ex essentia et existentia*)—a formulation that is absent from Suárez's *Metaphysical Disputations*. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.5.

Finally, this broadly "Thomistic" reading finds further support in Quenstedt's insistence that there is nothing in God except existence and that God is his own existence (*nihil in Deo sit, nisi esse, et Deus sit ipsum esse suum*). Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.5. To the extent that Gilson's principal philosophical concern is to preserve the distinctive "existentiality" of the Christian God over against those (such as Suárez) who would render Him a mere essence (*ens* or *essentia*) among other essences, Quenstedt is not to be faulted on that score. See Étienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1941), 64–6.

[84] See E.L. Mascall, *He Who Is: A Study in Traditional Theism* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), 10–1.

[85] Aquinas, *ST* I.4.3; Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[86] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

as Being, and that this constitutes an insight from which God's other divine attributes—such as unity, simplicity, truth, and goodness—can be derived.[87] Here, Quenstedt follows Aquinas directly.[88]

Przywara's systematic exposition of the *analogia entis* is particularly instructive on this point. Building on Aquinas's reasoning, Przywara characterizes an authentic *analogia entis* as committed to the following five philosophical propositions: (1) the ontological "suspension" of the creature between God and nothingness; (2) a metaphysical relation within the creature characterized by a "pointing ever-beyond-itself"; (3) an orientation of this relation towards transcendence; (4) an apprehension of this relation as a matter of "dynamic antithetics" that defy any unitary conceptualization; and finally, (5) an understanding that this relation ultimately "leads us through and beyond its positive articulation to a negative declaration."[89]

Quenstedt's theory of theological analogy closely tracks Przywara's framework. Quenstedt emphasizes that (1) the creature has a kind of being in itself, albeit an inherently dependent sort; (2) the logical structure of being itself (*ipsa ratione essendi*) entails an inherent inequality between divine and creaturely being, and so the relation of God and creature always points beyond itself; that (3) that God is ontologically "before," and so logically transcendent of, all created things (*Nihil Deum antecedit*), and that (4) the concept of being attributed to God must be conceived in a much higher way (*longe sublimior modus*), albeit not an equivocal one.[90] And Quenstedt affirms, notwithstanding the account of analogy he has developed, that (5) an infinite distance always remains between God and creature (*manet infinita inter Deum et creaturam distantia*).[91] In short, a careful examination of Quenstedt's account of theological predication reveals that Quenstedt adheres to a conception of the *analogia entis* closely paralleling that advanced by Aquinas and defended by the Thomistic tradition following him.[92]

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[87] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.I.VI ("*primo enim omnium concipimus Deum esse Ens, ex entitate colligimus unitatem, simplicitatem, veritatem, bonitatem, etc.*").

[88] See Aquinas, *ST* I.5.2 ("[I]n idea, which is first conceived by the intellect . . . being is prior to goodness").

[89] Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 190–91.

[90] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1

[91] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1

[92] Indeed, the substantial similarity between Quenstedt's *analogia entis* and that put forward by Aquinas lies at the root of Karl Barth's lengthy criticism of Quenstedt in the second volume of the *Church Dogmatics*. See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics Vol. 2: The Doctrine of God, Part I*, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), 237–43. Barth denounces Quenstedt's method on the grounds that "there is not a single reference to God's revelation in the whole *quaestio* in which Quenstedt speaks of [analogy of intrinsic attribution]" such that "in Quenstedt revelation is not nec-

Evaluating Alternative Interpretations of Quenstedt's Analogy Theory

In the last several decades, a number of rival readings of Quenstedt's approach to theological analogy have emerged, each alleging that Quenstedt's approach diverges from the Thomistic metaphysical tradition of the *analogia entis*. Three such interpretations of Quenstedt—advanced by Battista Mondin, William Placher, and Robert Preus, respectively—must be considered and evaluated in turn.

A. *Quenstedt Against Equivocity*

Battista Mondin's critique of Quenstedt's project amounts to the accusation that Quenstedt lapses into a functional equivocity of being. That is to say, Mondin reads Quenstedt's account of theological analogy as the use of a metaphysical grammar that Quenstedt does not actually understand or embrace, and that lacks any real correspondence to ontological realities.[93]

Mondin reaches this conclusion by interpreting the Lutheran theological tradition as necessarily entailing the flat denial of any natural knowledge of God. Mondin attributes to Luther the views that "general, natural knowledge, that which is acquired by the philosopher, does not give us any true knowledge of God," that "[i]n the present situation of man a natural knowledge of God is no longer possible since there is no analogy between man and God, and that even the knowledge of God afforded by revelation cannot go beyond an analogy of external attribution.[94] Mondin ultimately concludes that in Luther, "the image of God in man is so corrupted by sin that a natural knowledge of God becomes impossible forever."[95] Hence, according to Mondin, when Quenstedt considers metaphysical questions he inevitably does so inaptly: Quenstedt deploys the

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essary to make us participants in the truth of God. We are so already, to the extent that we are, already, what God is absolutely." Barth, *Church Dogmatics Vol. 2: The Doctrine of God, Part I*, 239, 241. Barth explains that that "Quenstedt . . . obviously has in mind a relationship between the Creator and the creature which as such can be known even apart from the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ." Barth, *Church Dogmatics Vol. 2: The Doctrine of God, Part I*, 239–40. And according to Barth, an account of analogy that cashes out in a metaphysical relation between absolute and relative being constitutes a "perceptible fellowship . . . between God and man" that improperly neglects the central role of Christology in theology. Barth, *Church Dogmatics Vol. 2: The Doctrine of God, Part I*, 241–2; see also Archie J. Spencer, *The Analogy of Faith: The Quest for God's Speakability* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 229 (following Barth in charging Quenstedt's account of analogy with "forgetful[ness] of the priority of the gospel"). A full treatment of Barth's criticism of the *analogia entis*, and the many responses to that critique, lies beyond the scope of the present study. It is worth noting, however, that it is precisely divine revelation that Quenstedt invokes to justify the plausibility of a natural knowledge of God. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[93] Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 112.

[94] Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 104–5.

[95] Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 110.

language of intrinsic attribution "not very intelligently, i.e. without making the necessary adaptations."[96] While "a Catholic theologian is in a position to interpret the analogy between God and creatures as an analogy of intrinsic attribution," conversely "Quenstedt, as a Protestant theologian, as a disciple of Luther and Calvin, is not."[97] On this view, only an analogy of extrinsic attribution, one that would deny the real existence of the creature, could be deemed genuinely *Lutheran*.[98]

Mondin's argument here rests on a number of misconceptions. Perhaps most significantly, Mondin fails to note the context of Luther's remarks on human knowledge of God: a limited knowledge of God's existence and attributes, which Luther expressly affirmed, is distinct from knowledge of God's salvific purposes towards human beings.[99] Accordingly, Mondin appears to beg the question against Luther; notably, Mondin does *not* read Aquinas's own statements regarding divine incomprehensibility[100] as altogether precluding the possibility of a genuine natural knowledge of God, suggesting that Mondin's characterization of Protestant theology tends to be more polemical than analytical.

In any event, wholly apart from the question of Luther's own views, Quenstedt explicitly adopts Aquinas's argument that a natural knowledge of God is possible: according to both Quenstedt and Aquinas, such knowledge is both a truth of philosophy, as Aristotle demonstrated, and a truth expressed in revelation, as noted in Romans 1.[101] Even if Mondin's reading of Luther as denying any natural knowledge of God is correct, it is certainly a position that Quenstedt himself did not share.

B. *Quenstedt Against Univocity*

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[96] Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 112.

[97] Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, 112.

[98] Paralleling Mondin's argument here, Milbank and Betz both fault Luther, and the Protestant scholastic tradition after him, for allegedly offering a concept of God that would deny the real ontological status of the creature. See Milbank, "Reformation 500," 618 (arguing that in Protestant scholasticism, "even an embrace of the primacy of attribution . . . can conceal an effective adherence to univocity . . . if this is seen in terms of efficient causal instigation by a therefore entirely unknown goodness and truth etc as opposed to a real participatory communication of a formality and a teleology"); Betz, "Translator's Introduction," 51 (criticizing Lutheran theology for allegedly espousing ("a theopanism of 'God alone' (whereby God is or does essentially everything and the creature is or does essentially nothing)"). Quenstedt's actual doctrine of analogy, which affirms the real being of created existents and explicitly advocates for an "analogical-participatory world-view," belies these charges. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, xxvi.

[99] For a careful treatment of Luther's own views on this subject, see Ralph A. Bohlmann, "The Natural Knowledge of God," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 34 (1963): 727–8.

[100] See, e.g., Aquinas, *ST* I.12.7.

[101] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

William Placher charges Quenstedt with precisely the opposite of the error Mondin alleges. For Placher, Quenstedt's mistake is his embrace of a functional univocity of being, one that entails "the domestication of God's transcendence" by employing terms like "being (or goodness, or wisdom) of God and creatures in the same way."[102] For Quenstedt, as interpreted by Placher, "the analogy [between God's being and the being of creatures] seems only a matter of degree: God's being is infinite, creatures' finite."[103]

Placher groups Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin together as theologians who properly acknowledged the infinite mystery of God, before error set in and analogical predication came to "function as a way of explaining just what we do mean" in God-talk, rather than as "offering a series of reminders concerning how we cannot understand what we mean when we speak of God."[104] Placher's argument here is heavily influenced by postliberal theologians such as Kathryn Tanner, who defend an "apophatic or agnostic reading" of the Christian tradition in which "theological statements are not conveying information about God so much as they are suggesting how to talk in circumstances where we do not pretend to understand fully what we are saying."[105] On Placher's account, a functional equivocity regarding theological speech is precisely the appropriate tack; "a dangerous determination to systematize and clarify" the language of theological metaphysics leads into error.[106]

Setting aside the fact that this "grammatical" reading of Aquinas represents a historically idiosyncratic reading of the Thomistic tradition,[107] Placher's interpretation of Quenstedt—as treating the interval between divine and creaturely being as solely a "matter of degree," thereby contributing to the collapse of divine transcendence—misses the mark.[108] Namely, it reads Quenstedt as, in essence, deploying a conception of analogy—analogy of inequality—that Quenstedt explicitly rejects. While Quenstedt does indeed state that God's being is infinite (*Ens, ut est in Deo, sit infinitum*), this claim does not exhaust the metaphysical content of the God-creature relation; creatures exist only by participation (*per participationem*) and the entirety of a creature's being depends upon God (*Nam tota Entitas creaturae dependet a Deo*).[109] In Quenstedt's conception of the *analogia entis*, God

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[102] Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 76–7.

[103] Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 77.

[104] Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 67, 74.

[105] Tanner, *God and Transcendence in Christian Theology*, 12.

[106] Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 74.

[107] See Murphy, *God Is Not a Story*, 303.

[108] Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence*, 77.

[109] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

is not merely the same *kind of thing* as a creature, albeit infinitely exalted; rather, creaturely being is necessarily dependent and participating, while divine being is absolute and participated.[110] There is no conceivable "scale of being" according to which God and creatures might be evaluated as a matter of degree, because God *is* Being by essence (*ens per essentiam*).[111] Accordingly, Placher's reading of Quenstedt lacks substantial support in the actual text.

C. *Quenstedt as Metaphysician*

Robert Preus, perhaps the most influential English-language interpreter of the Lutheran scholastic tradition, argues that Quenstedt's account of theological analogy should not be read as "metaphysical" at all: "The question to which Quenstedt addresses himself is not primarily cognitive . . . or ontological, but linguistic and semantic. . . . Neither is Quenstedt speaking of an ontological question, of our creature relationship to God."[112] Preus's characterization, however, is difficult to reconcile with Quenstedt's insistence that when terms like "being," "essence," and "substance" are predicated commonly of God and creatures, a correspondence exists not merely in name, but also in reality (*non solum nudo nomine, sed etiam quoad rem*).[113] Quenstedt is entirely capable of distinguishing between the linguistic and ontological significations of the terms used in his argument, and he does not limit his theory of analogy to the merely semantic. Moreover, it is difficult to know what to make of Quenstedt's claim that creatures exist by participation if the question of the "creature relationship to God" is not deemed to be part of Quenstedt's analysis.

In keeping with his "linguistic" reading of Quenstedt, Preus interprets Quenstedt's theory of theological analogy as perhaps deliberately stopping short of a full-orbed *analogia entis*: "Can God and man be comprehended under one concept such as being? Quenstedt does not answer the question, nor do the other Lutherans, possibly sensing that the whole use of analogical language in speaking of God will be undermined if the question is answered yes or no."[114] But as has been demonstrated, Quenstedt *does* answer this question. Metaphysically speaking, God does not fall "under" being, since God is always ontologically first (*Nihil Deum antecedit*); to the extent that God is *spoken of* as coming under the concept of being, this is merely a cognitive operation (*per mentis nostrae operationem*).[115]

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[110] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[111] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[112] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 2, 43–4.

[113] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[114] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. 2, 44.

[115] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

This is a procedure that is wholly consistent with Quenstedt's conception of God *as* absolute Being (*primo enim omnium concipimus Deum esse Ens*), the touchstone of the *analogia entis*.[116]

New Directions for Lutheran Philosophy

Quenstedt's *analogia entis*, understood as part of an existing tradition of Christian metaphysics, represents an underexplored direction for Lutheran theology and philosophy more generally. Perhaps most significantly, Quenstedt's account of the *analogia entis* represents a notable counterexample to widespread claims that the Reformation—and the Protestant theology that emerged from it—constituted a rejection of the Western philosophical and metaphysical tradition up to that point.[117] Lutherans need not read Luther's attacks on "reason"— challenges to the dominant synergistic theologies of his day—as broadsides against philosophical theology as such; Quenstedt, Gerhard, and other Lutheran scholastics certainly did not reject such projects.

A rediscovery of Quenstedt's formulation of the *analogia entis* also carries with it implications for currents internal to Lutheran theology. Likewise advancing a narrative of decline, proponents of the "New Finnish Interpretation of Luther" have argued that the ontological dimensions of Luther's original theology were sacrificed during the process of confessionalization, which produced a strictly forensic account of justification and severed Lutheran theology from its initial metaphysical underpinnings.[118] Paradoxically, however, Quenstedt proves to be a *more* thoroughly metaphysical thinker than Luther; to name just one example, unambiguously participationist language is difficult to identify in Luther's works,[119] but participation is explicitly taught in Quenstedt's account of analogy.[120] Accordingly, theologians keen to draw out ontological themes in the Lutheran tradition—themes that have often been downplayed in Lutheran

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[116] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.I.VI. See also Baur, *Die Vernunft zwischen Ontologie und Evangelium*, 42 (agreeing with this reading of Quenstedt).

[117] See, e.g., Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation*, 41.

[118] See, e.g., Simo Peura, "Christ as Favor and Gift (donum): The Challenge of Luther's Understanding of Justification" in *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 42–8.

[119] See, e.g., Dennis Bielfeldt, "Response to Sammeli Juntunen, 'Luther and Metaphysics,'" in *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 164–5 ("The preference Luther expresses for Plato over Aristotle in the *Heidelberg Disputation* is made to carry too much weight [by Finnish School proponents] in suggesting that all of created, natural being (*esse naturae*) itself participates in God.").

[120] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

thought[121]—may benefit from reconsidering the scholastics.

Finally, a notable feature of Quenstedt's *analogia entis* is its difference in epistemic emphasis as compared to some other presentations of the doctrine. As previously noted, Quenstedt understands appropriate theological analogy to be an analogy of intrinsic attribution, rather than analogy of proportionality.[122] Przywara, conversely, treats analogy of attribution and analogy of proportionality as two movements within the same ontological "structure," but tends to emphasize the latter as better securing God's transcendence by stressing His absolute differentiation (*maior dissimilitudo*) from creation.[123] One might therefore say that Quenstedt's emphasis on analogy of attribution is more oriented towards acknowledging God's immanent presence within created reality. Such a construal is supported by the amount of space Quenstedt devotes to rebutting advocates of equivocity in theological predication: for Quenstedt, denying the meaningfulness of speech about God seems to pose more of a problem than stressing the actuality of the metaphysical relation between God and creatures.[124] This preference on Quenstedt's part is theologically notable. In a modern milieu widely characterized by "disenchantment"—a loss of the sense "that God is there, acting in the cosmos, founding and sustaining societies, acting as a bulwark against evil," in a world that "testifie[s] to divine purpose and action"[125]— Quenstedt's analogy of intrinsic attribution more strongly emphasizes divine proximity than an analogy of proportionality emphasizing God's distance from creation. As far as his *analogia entis* is concerned, modern "disenchantment" is never a matter of divine absence, but merely of forgetfulness.

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[121] Bielfeldt, "Response to Sammeli Juntunen," 163.

[122] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[123] Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 234.

[124] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, I.VIII.II.1.

[125] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), 25–6.