In the current discussion about the relation between eternity and time, the contributions of Karl Barth have been woefully neglected. An attempt at remedying this has only recently been undertaken. The lacuna in the secondary literature, however, is still lamentable. Some attempts have been made to harmonize Barth’s relating of eternity to time with a philosophical approach, and in so doing miss the radical nature of Barth’s proposal. Even fewer have put their finger on the consistently theological, and, more specifically, christological nature of Barth’s articulation of the eternity/time relation. This thesis is an attempt to show that it is God in Christ himself who is the rapprochement of eternity and time. Furthermore, this harmonization between eternity and time restructures every loci of systematic theology—from revelation to reconciliation.

While this thesis is an exercise in systematic theology and not in historical theology or literary criticism, historical theology and literary criticism nevertheless inform the study throughout. Barth’s theology is understood against the backdrop of the history of Christian reflection on the eternity/time relation and how Barth integrates literary devices with his dialectical reasoning. To that end, this thesis narrows its focus to the Church Dogmatics, and treats it as a literary whole. I consider the Swiss theologian’s magnum opus with some sensitivity to the literary moves he makes. Through these tools, I show how Barth’s proposal provides a radically distinct take on the harmonization of eternity and time in the history of Christian reflection.

Finally, I offer some critical reflections on Barth’s proposal, his Christology, and his theological ontology. Barth, while eschewing the analogy of anti-Christ, nevertheless does not reject the analogy of time as such. While other interpreters have seen this already (e.g., von Balthasar, McCormack, Johnson, et al.), none has developed the way in which time re-structures Barth’s version of the analogy. I show how Barth’s notion of analogy yields what I call an analogy of actual time.