

FUTURITY AND CREATION:

Explorations in the Eschatological

Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg

A Thesis

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in Theology

by

Brian John Walsh

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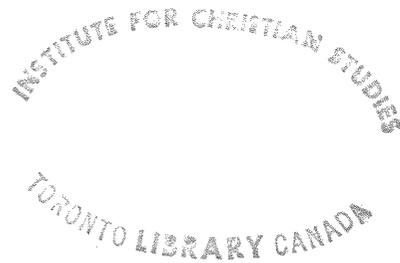


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Preface

In 1976 I embarked upon a course of study in the Master of Philosophy program at the Institute for Christian Studies. I chose this institution for graduate studies, because as a Christian, with certain academic gifts, I wanted to develop my theoretical capabilities with both the freedom and guidance of a uniquely Christian institution, committed to bringing every thought into subjection to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). As a junior member in philosophical theology, my specific interest was directed to eschatology. Not being very impressed with either the way in which eschatology has often been appended as an after-thought in the last chapters of systematic theologies, nor with the 'crystal ball gazing'¹ of dispensationalistic evangelical eschatology, I desired to come to more fully understand the place of eschatology within the whole of theology, the nature of Christian hope, and the relationship between eschatology and one's view of the world. In the first term of my studies at I.C.S., I read a number of books by the American theologian Carl E. Braaten.² Braaten identifies himself with the new movement in theology which attempts to take seriously the uniquely apocalyptic nature of biblical Christianity. This new theology, which has been called the 'theology of hope', 'theology of history', 'futuristic theology' and 'eschatological theology', attempts to turn back the 'de-eschatologization' of Christian faith which has been characteristic of contemporary theology.³ It became clear to me from reading Braaten, that one of the most important figures in this new theological movement was the German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg.

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After some exploratory reading in Pannenberg I decided, with the encouragement of my mentor James Olthuis, to devote my two years at I.C.S. to a detailed study of the totality of his translated works. Pannenberg's theology was concerned with the very problem that I was interested in, and I felt that I could benefit greatly from such an indepth study of one theologian. Pannenberg's thought certainly has the depth itself to merit such analysis. My first paper was a discussion and beginning criticism of Pannenberg's philosophy of science.⁴ I then wrote on his theological anthropology, and this study more than any other sets the stage for this thesis. In Pannenberg's anthropology I began to grasp the structural pattern of his thought.⁵ Finally, in my second year, I wrote on the theme for which Pannenberg is most famous, his theology of history and view of faith. My hypothesis concerning the structural pattern of Pannenberg's theology was confirmed in this paper, and although it was not explicitly presented except in a diagramatic appendix, it was implicit throughout the presentation and criticism of Pannenberg's position.⁶ This thesis represents a culmination point in this process of reflection.

The more general interests in the meaning of eschatology for Christian discipleship have, in the course of my studies, been limited to a specialized analysis of some of the central aspects of the thought of one 'eschatological' theologian. By engaging in this kind of reflection I think that I have both sharpened my intellectual tools of academic research and gained some insight

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into fruitful avenues to investigate in answer to the general question of the place of Christian hope in the tasks we take up in God's kingdom.

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to my colleagues at the Institute for Christian Studies for their continual support and encouragement throughout this project. Two junior members that deserve special mention are Terry Tollefson and John Valk. The senior members in theology, James Olthuis and George Vandervelde have given me unmeasureable assistance in the writing and rewriting of the thesis. The manuscript was typed in the midst of a heat wave by Hieke Malcolm and Lynda Kosowan Hines. To Hieke and Lynda I offer my deepest thanks. Finally, I would also like to express my appreciation to two people who encouraged me at a crucial point in my life to develop my academic gifts, my mother, Jean Walsh, and my friend, Arthur Dixon. To them I gratefully dedicate this thesis.

Chapter one: The Task of Theology in the Modern Era: Some Introductory Comments

A. Pannenberg: the man and theologian

In the "Vorwort" to his Grundfragen systematischer Theologie,
Wolfhart Pannenberg says,

The insights obtained by Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer into the eschatological determinant of the message of Jesus and of early Christian faith signify a great task for theological thought - a task which demands a thorough reshaping of our whole understanding of reality. Furthermore, the validity of this understanding must be decided on the basis of the key problems of ontology, epistemology, anthropology, and the philosophy of history. 1

A theology which is to be faithful to the renewed insight into the apocalyptic context and nature of early Christianity must, says Pannenberg, be comprehensive in its scope. Pannenberg's eschatologically oriented theology is a 'program'² for a foundational reworking of not only theology and theology's self-understanding, but for a new view of the totality of reality. Philip Hefner writes,

The intellectual task that Pannenberg has set for himself is a monumental one, namely, to construct a fundamental system of thought in which the primary ontological principle is futurity. 3

And Richard J. Neuhaus writes that Pannenberg's interest in eschatology is not limited to a mere "accenting of a neglected aspect of the Christian tradition, nor is he merely suggesting that the concept of the future should have priority in theological thought." Pannenberg's intention is more encompassing than that: "He argues for a new understanding of the structure of reality."⁴

In order to comprehend why Pannenberg undertakes such a restructuring of theology it is helpful to understand something of his personal biography.⁵ Born in 1928, the son of a German civil servant, Pannenberg was baptized into the Lutheran church, but was not raised in a devoutly Christian home. In effect, his upbringing was secular middle class, where the Christianity of the church had little influence. His school work was good, but not outstanding. During the last years of the Third Reich he, together with all German teenage boys, was engaged in the last desperate attempts to save Germany. Undoubtedly this left him with a very bad taste in his mouth for any form of nationalism, as evidenced in some of his later writings on politics.⁶ After the war he began his university studies in Berlin and then Gottingen (with N. Hartmann). But most significantly, during this time, in the midst of philosophical study, Pannenberg came, by means of rational reflection, to an affirmation of Christian faith. With his new found faith, Pannenberg went to Basel in 1950 to study with Karl Barth. For reasons which will become more evident throughout this thesis, Pannenberg studied with Barth for only one year. The rational road which led the young Pannenberg to Christianity could not end with what he considered to be the irrationalism and subjectivism of the theology of the Word. From 1951 to 1958 Pannenberg was both a student and an instructor at the University of Heidelberg. At Heidelberg, with the encouragement of Professors Hans von Campenhausen, Gerhard von Rad and Gunther Bronkamm, and in the air of excitement that was generated by the 'New Quest' for the historical Jesus, Pannenberg joined with a circle of other graduate students

(including Rolf and Trutz Rendtorff, Klaus Koch, Ulrich Wilkens, Dietrich Rossler and Martin Elze) to discuss the meaning and relation of apocalypticism, history and revelation. The publication of Offenbarung als Geschichte in 1961, and the advent of the 'theology of history' overagainst the 'theology of the Word' is now well known theological history.⁷ Since leaving Heidelberg in 1958, Pannenberg has held chairs in systematic theology at Wuppertal (1958-1961), Mainz (1961-1968) and Munich (1968 to present). During these years his fame has grown with his publications. Writing major works on Christology (Jesus-God and Man, 1964), the philosophy of science (Theology and the Philosophy of Science, 1973) and numerous articles and shorter books on hermeneutics, philosophy and theology, anthropology, God talk, eschatology, the apostles creed and atheism (to name a few subjects), Pannenberg has established himself as a theologian whom Langdon Gilkey describes as "unparalleled in the contemporary non-catholic world." Gilkey goes on to say in his review article of Pannenberg's Basic Questions in Theology:

. . . for originality of vision and insight, breadth of learning, and for consistency and power of constructive thinking across the whole range of theological issues, Professor Pannenberg stands alone in our protestant generation. 8

Not all of Pannenberg's colleagues in the theological fraternity are so kind, but none disputes the comprehensive scope of his thought. We do well to remember the decidedly intellectual character of his coming to Christian faith when we attempt to understand Pannenberg's unceasing desire to both ground Christian theology in rational reflection, and to demonstrate the power of Christianity to illuminate our understanding of the world. Neuhaus

says it well in the concluding words of his profile of Pannenberg:

Wolfhart Pannenberg is a modern man and a rational man before he is a Christian man. . . . He contends that he is a Christian because he is a modern and rational man. He presents the case with lucidity and intellectual courage. It demands examination and response. 9

This thesis is primarily an examination of the basic structure of Pannenberg's eschatological understanding of reality and the recurring pattern in his thought. My topic is futurity and creation, and will include an examination of the central elements of Pannenberg's view of being and the ontological priority of the future. I will analyze the place of God in relation to the future and creation. The question of ontology and the question of meaning cannot be separated, so I will also discuss Pannenberg's hermeneutics and philosophy of knowledge. In Pannenberg's thought, moreover, the questions of being and meaning inescapably lead to the problem of God and religious language; therefore we will address these matters as well. Finally, any reconsideration of the structure of reality which calls itself Christian must seriously consider the place of Jesus Christ in creation and the eschatological reconciliation of creation. Therefore, elements of Pannenberg's Christology will also be examined. So then the chapters of the thesis will be:

God and the Ontological Priority of the Future
Meaning and Confessing, and
Prolepsis and Jesus Christ.

But before we can give attention to these chapters it is necessary that we first understand both the historical context within which Pannenberg does his theology and the contours of his view of the nature of the theological enterprise. After we have done this we will see why Pannenberg includes within his theological

work the analysis of ontology, hermeneutics, epistemology, anthropology, etc.

B. Theology in the Modern Era: the shift to anthropology

For Pannenberg, the period of Western history which is of most importance and challenge to the 'modern' theologian is the period known as the Enlightenment. The classical definition of the Enlightenment remains Immanuel Kant's:

Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere aude! 'Have courage to use your own reason!' - that is the motto of the Enlightenment. 10

It did not take long before modern man identified the source of his oppressive tutelage as the religious tradition of the Christian church, and recognized faith as the greatest threat to Sapere aude! The Enlightenment provides the impetus for the most severe and dangerous attack on theology in the history of Christianity. In the context of the disputation of the essential contents of Christian revelation, Pannenberg says that theology can follow only one of two possible courses. Theology may retreat into what he calls a 'positivist' position, which is a fideistic appeal to divine revelation. The implication of such a retreat, however, is that theology "will lose any hope of intellectual legitimation for its claim rather than proving it in a situation in which it has been challenged by the claims of other religions and beliefs." The other option, according to Pannenberg, is that "the theology practised within the Christian tradition may see its role as Christian theology as (sic) to make the superiority of Christianity

to other systems of belief the explicit object of investigation and proof in a theology of religions."¹¹ If we could call the former option a 'positivistic-revelational' position, then the latter option could be identified as an 'apologetic' position. Obviously, the thrust of Pannenberg's theology is apologetic, driven by his passion to give a reason for his faith.¹²

The heart of the Enlightenment attack on Christianity was the rejection of the traditional cosmological and ontological arguments for the existence of God which had always played a prologomenal role in theology. Once the assumption of a first cause of the universe, and Unmoved Mover, was proven to be unfounded by the introduction of the law of inertia (which revealed that bodies tend to move on their own accord without any necessary outside influence),¹³ the only possible conclusion was that cosmological arguments lost all claim to apodeitic certainty, and "the approach to the idea of God via knowledge of nature was totally closed."¹⁴

This did not mean that the road for theology was totally closed, however. Corresponding with the Renaissance rediscovery of man as the self-positing subject was an anthropocentric turn in theology. Pannenberg explains:

Man, rather than the world, now became the basis for certainty about God. Although the postulate of a first cause of the world was no longer needed, the idea of God remained necessary as the basis of man's understanding of himself in relation to his world. 15

According to Pannenberg, post-Enlightenment theology "has been guided by the apprehension that there is no assured way of leading from nature to God, and therefore the whole burden of the proof of faith in God falls upon the understanding of man, upon anthro-

pology."¹⁶

A parallel historical development, however, is that contemporary atheist criticism has also taken an anthropological turn in its claim that religion is merely an alienated product of the human consciousness. The battle lines were clearly drawn by Feuerbach, who, Pannenberg claims, unmasked idealism's notion of the absolute ego or spirit as "a fantastic projection of the nature of man into an imaginary heaven."¹⁷ Therefore, he concluded that "the divine being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man"¹⁸ Atheist arguments have never turned back from this position since Feuerbach. The predominant accusation is still that religion is based upon an illusion. Pannenberg does not believe that this atheist challenge has ever been sufficiently answered by Christian theology.¹⁹ Therefore, his own position begins with the insistence that a theology which is to take its apologetic task seriously must answer the atheist theory of religion on the same ground on which the atheist chooses to fight, viz., the field of anthropology, "or more precisely that of the status of religious concerns and topics with regard to the nature of man."²⁰ For Pannenberg, the contemporary context necessitates that "theological anthropology . . . has the status of a form of fundamental theology",²¹ for, as he says elsewhere: "The most general foundations of systematic theology will therefore have to come from anthropology."²² In other words, if theology cannot sufficiently demonstrate in anthropological terms the necessity of religious life and expression, then it has no foundation for its further reflection. Pannenberg's What is Man?,

written early in his academic career (1962, but the research was done as early as 1959),²³ is his attempt to lay such a foundation. Summarily stated, Pannenberg argues that the essential characteristic of the structure of man's being is his 'openness to and beyond the world' (Weltoffenheit). Man is the creature who questions beyond his present experience of the world and beyond every horizon which opens to him. It follows from this that man's needs (different from the animals) are infinite and limitless; because man is never satisfied, he is the infinitely dependent being. This anthropological question of man's Weltoffenheit, inescapably leads, says Pannenberg, to the question of God. Man's infinite dependence "presupposes something outside of himself that is beyond every experience of the world"; that is to say, that man presupposes something beyond the finite, a vis-a-vis upon which he is dependent.²⁴ This vis-a-vis is God, the goal of man's striving and the fulfillment of his destiny (Bestimmung).²⁵ Through further analysis of the relationship between security and trust, hope beyond death, the questionableness of human experience, the relation of individual to society, etc., Pannenberg builds the anthropological foundation for his continued theological reflection.²⁶

Although Pannenberg places anthropology in a prolegomenal position for theology in response to the shift of both theology and atheism in the post-Enlightenment period, he does not want to follow the anthropocentric route of subjectivism that he feels to be characteristic of neo-orthodoxy. Therefore, he also acknowledges the limits of anthropology for theology. Anthropology is only the first step in the theological defense in the modern era;

it is the demonstration of the religious dimension of man's being, but not a comprehensive and compelling proof of the reality of God. Anthropological considerations can take us no farther than the assertion that ". . . when man's being is fully aware, man is conscious that he is dependent upon a reality which surpasses and sustains everything finite" ²⁷ The argument, however, must go beyond anthropology because the decision about the reality of God is made in the context of reality as a whole. Pannenberg says that it is only when statements about God have points of contact with extra-subjective reality that we can assume that we are not trapped in a subjective illusion. ²⁸ It is the very nature of theology that it cannot remain limited to anthropology, but must engage in a theological analysis of reality as a whole. The following quote presents Pannenberg's position on theology and anthropology most succinctly:

Anthropological arguments from the problems raised by man's self-understanding do not alone provide us with a sufficiently firm idea of what is meant by postulating God as reality. Such a postulate carries conviction only if, and to the extent that, the idea of God derived from consideration of human experience illuminates experience of the world Access to the idea of God, however, is no longer possible directly from the world, but only through man's self-understanding and his relation to the world. ²⁹ (*italics are his*)

Theological anthropology is therefore fundamental for modern theology, but it is also limited. We will now present the broader contours of Pannenberg's view of the theological enterprise.

C. Theology, God and Reality

When post-Kantian theology shifted its focus to anthropology, it also followed Kant's insistence that theological assertions could only have 'practical' validity, and that theology was, there-

fore, a practical science. Historically, a practical science was always a 'positive' science because, in its attempt to follow practical ends, it would presuppose an authority base outside of itself. Positive theology, which has as its goal the training of the clergy, presupposes the authority of the scriptures.³⁰ The question which was raised by Fichte in 1807 and Paul de Lagarde in 1873, however, was whether theology really could be considered a science if it follows the canon of revelation rather than the canons of rationality.³¹ The crisis of theology's scientific credibility was an inevitable ramification of the Enlightenment.

Pannenberg is in basic agreement with the criticism of the positivity of theology as a form of fideistic authoritarianism. An appeal to the authority of revelation which cannot satisfy our reason of its legitimacy is, according to Pannenberg, a subjectivistic and irrational venture of faith which is unable to give theology a firm scientific grounding from which it can answer its critics.³² Such a position, which Pannenberg charges Barth with,³³ retreats from the real challenge facing theology today. Pannenberg is not prepared to engage in such a retreat. Rather, he insists that theology is both a science and, moreover, that it is the science of God.

Theology can escape from the weakness of positivity, and thereby maintain its scientific status, only if it proceeds, like all science, by means of hypothesis.³⁴ The scientific task of theology is to investigate God as a 'problem' not a 'dogma', and to "examine the validity of the thesis of faith as a hypothesis."³⁵ This, however, raises the further question of how God can be the 'object' of theological science. Clearly God is not present to

human experience as one object among others, but Pannenberg contends that the reality of God is co-given to experience in other objects and is therefore accessible to theological reflection not directly, but only indirectly. Therefore, if theology is to be the science of God, it must "direct its attention to this indirect way in which the divine reality is co-given, to the 'traces' of the divine mystery in the things of the world and in our own lives."³⁶ In this case, the necessary question that is important for the development of Pannenberg's enquiry into the foundation of theological science is,

. . . in what objects of experience is God - as a problem - indirectly co-given, and what objects of experience can therefore be considered as possible traces of God? The only possible answer is: all objects If 'God' is to be understood as the all-determining reality, everything must be shown to be determined by this reality and to be ultimately unintelligible without it. 37
(italics are his)

Not only can we only speak of God as a problem, we can also only speak of him as the problem of the all-determining reality. If God is not the all-determining reality, that is, if he is not the Creator, then we are not really dealing with God at all. Although Pannenberg acknowledges that, after the demise of natural theology, the knowledge of God is no longer deducible from the world, he nevertheless contends that the truth of such knowledge "still depends on the power which emanates from it to illumine and elucidate the whole of man's experience."³⁸ Therefore, the test of any religion, including Christianity, must be whether the deity confessed in that religion can be manifest as the all-determining reality:

If God's being God means that he is the origin of everything real, and that without him there is nothing at

all, then without him nothing real can be understood in depth, either; it can at most be superficially described It is the breadth of total experience of every and all reality which provides the field where we have to enquire whether the divine nature of the God of the Bible can stand up to verification" 39

And elsewhere he says,

Every experience of the reality of the unknown God has to be verified by the understanding of the world and of human existence in the world it discloses It must be shown how the whole of reality, and thus also the reality of man, is more fully disclosed from the God of the Bible than from any other source. Only in this manner can the assertion that the biblical God is the true God be verified. 40

We see here that theological assertions must be verifiable, but that the mode of verification must be consistent with the indirectness of the assertions. Consequently, assertions about a divine reality must be tested by "their implications for the understanding of finite reality."⁴¹ The ultimate question for any religion is whether it continues to integrate and illuminate the experience of reality for its adherents. Does the religious tradition have the ability to accommodate and assimilate within itself both new experiences of reality and the elements of truth which appear in other religions?⁴² In summary, Pannenberg says that theological statements, like any statements which refer to the totality of reality (as in philosophy), can only be 'proven' if they "give the complex of meaning of all experience of reality a more subtle and more convincing interpretation than other (statements)."⁴³

It has become evident in the course of this chapter that for Pannenberg, theology must respond to its critics by proving its scientific status. Not only is theology a science, it is, moreover, the science of God, and therefore a science which has the totality of reality as its realm of investigation. Theology

is a universal science.

The universality of theology is inavoidably bound up with the fact that it speaks of God. The word 'God' is used meaningfully only if one means by it the power that determines everything that exists It belongs to the task of theology to understand all being (alles Seienden) in relation to God, so that without God they simply could not be understood. That is what constitutes theology's universality. 44

Pannenberg's view of theology as the science of God is the basis for the comprehensiveness of his own theological work. Pannenberg's theology involves, as we have seen, an anthropology, but even more basic than anthropology, it has an ontology. If the proof of religion is in its integrating and illuminating power for the whole of reality, then a theology which attempts to take its apologetic task to heart will of necessity attempt to formulate an ontology which is informed by the religious tradition. In our next chapter we will consider the 'implications' of the Christian tradition for a view of being, as it is developed by Pannenberg.

Chapter two: God and the Ontological
 Priority of the Future

In chapter one we saw that Pannenberg comes full circle from an acknowledgment of the bankruptcy of traditional natural theology to an insistence that theology must be the science of God as the all-determining reality, and thus all of reality comes under its scrutiny. Although Pannenberg is not willing to revive natural theology, he nevertheless claims that a surrendering of the universality of theology amounts to a surrendering of its scientific status and a limitation of Christianity to a subjective venture of faith.¹

We also have seen that anthropology functions as a fundamental theology for Pannenberg, but cannot alone supply theology with an adequate foundation. It is interesting to note that when Pannenberg discusses the weakness of Troeltsch's 'psychological' argument against the Feuerbachian critique of religion, he says that a " . . . philosophical anthropology worked out within the framework of a general ontology is needed" in order to answer Feuerbach.² (emphasis added.) An ontology is necessary because it must be established that only in the light of the God of the Christian faith can all being (not just man's being) be understood in its true depth. In this light, it is significant that in the 'Foreword to the first German Edition' of Jesus - God and Man, Pannenberg says that the Christological discussions of that book "point at every step to ontological

and epistemological implications that need their own comprehensive discussion" and articulation in an "eschatologically oriented ontology" and "theology of reason."³ And again at the end of Jesus - God and Man, on the very last page of the 'Postscript', he argues that the "eschatological logic" of the history of Jesus necessitates the postulation of an "eschatological ontology." His final sentence reads, "Without entering into that task (i.e. of an eschatological ontology) it would be scarcely possible to think about Jesus' particular history as the revelation of the all-determining power and rule of God in the world."⁴

Whereas chapter four will deal more specifically with Pannenberg's Christology, and chapter three with his epistemology, this chapter is an investigation of the basic contours of the eschatological ontology which he postulates. We will begin with discussing why Pannenberg's ontology is an 'eschatological' one.

A. Apocalyptic and Creation

In chapter one we noted that Pannenberg's formative years at Heidelberg were the same years that the 'New Quest' for the historical Jesus was capturing the European theological imagination. The 'New Quest' was initiated in 1953 by Ernst Kasemann's lecture 'The Problem of the Historical Jesus.'⁵ The Bultmannian dualism between kerygma and history was profoundly challenged when Bultmann's own students began to see that faith can only have integrity if there is a continuity between the kerygmatic Christ and the historical Jesus. Seven years later, in 1960, Kasemann published the article 'The Beginnings of Christian

Theology', in which one of the results of the 'New Quest' was the historical observation that, "Apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology."⁶ It is not that no one ever knew of the significance of apocalyptic before, indeed Schweitzer and Weiss brought this to the fore at the end of the 'Old Quest' for the historical Jesus. What happened at that time, however, was that theologians were somewhat embarrassed by apocalypticism and either ignored it or demythologized it. The 'Old Quest' came to an end partially because it was concluded that Jesus, born in apocalyptic soil as he was, would not be able to survive if he was transplanted in the twentieth century. Apocalyptic became what A. D. Galloway calls, in a review of Pannenberg and Moltmann, "an unmanageable problem-child" for modern theologians. What Galloway considers unique and radical about Pannenberg and Moltmann is that they both "take this unwanted child of faith unhesitatingly into the bosom of their theology."⁷ Braaten says, with his characteristic journalistic flair, that the theology of the church became what it is "by getting rid of its mother - apocalypticism - and accepting Hellenism as its godfather."⁸ Pannenberg's ontology is, as we shall see, an attempt to rectify that fundamental error in the history of Christian thought. In his article 'Theology and the Kingdom of God', Pannenberg speaks of the rediscovery of apocalyptic by Weiss and Schweitzer as a shift from an ethical view of the kingdom of God which is typical of nineteenth century theological liberalism, to an eschatological understanding of the kingdom, and then comments that contemporary theology "has yet to digest this radical change"⁹ We will presently see

how far-reaching the consequences of this change actually are in Pannenberg's theology.

For Pannenberg there is a close connection between the re-discovery of apocalyptic and the development of a theology of history as is evidenced in the beginning sentences of his epochal 1959 article 'Redemptive Event and History':

History is the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology. All theological questions and answers are meaningful only within the framework of the history which God has with his whole creation - the history moving toward a future still hidden from the world but already revealed in Jesus Christ. 10

Whereas one would perhaps think that an interest in apocalyptic would lead one out of history into an eternal eschaton, in actuality, the opposite is the case for Pannenberg. Apocalyptic arises out of the study of history and, in turn, heightens the interest in history as theology's most comprehensive horizon. Overagainst the 'theology of the Word', Pannenberg claims (under the influence of his teacher Gerhard von Rad)¹¹ that in Israel faith was grounded not so much in what God said but in what he did, not so much in word as in deed. This is the heart of Pannenberg's doctrine of indirect revelation. God does not reveal himself directly by means of theophany or verbal revelation, but indirectly by means of his historical acts.¹² The central act in Israel's history was God's liberation of Israel from Egypt. In this act, God proves himself to be their God by intervening in history on their behalf. (Cf. Exodus 14:31.)

We see here that Pannenberg began his attack upon the 'theology of the Word' by a rethinking of the very basis of kerygmatic theology, viz., the doctrine of revelation. God's revelation is

indirect in his historical deeds. Pannenberg notices, however, that as the history of Israel progressed, it was not single events which reveal Yahweh, but a whole complex of events such as the choosing of Abraham, the exodus, occupation of the land, judgement in exile, the return, etc. He says,

The power to manifest Yahweh's deity is, in fact, not attributed only to this or that individual event, but is increasingly ascribed to whole patterns of events.

13

As Israel came to fuller consciousness of the uniqueness of Yahweh, as not just their own tribal god but the creator of the universe, the scope of the pattern of events which bear witness to him became correspondingly universal. Yahweh is the Lord of the nations as well! This historical development within Israel's self-consciousness came to completion after the exile with the rise of apocalypticism which,

. . . described the whole of world history with the whole course of its events, as the work of Yahweh. But Yahweh is to be demonstrated as the one sole God who affects everything without exception only by all history in its totality, and only right at its end. 14

We see here the meaning of that rather odd Pannenbergian phrase 'revelation as history'. Revelation cannot be found merely in history, but, more correctly, revelation must be spoken of as history, because it is the totality of history which finally reveals Yahweh. Since history is not yet complete, the corollary insight of apocalypticism is that Yahweh's deity can only be ultimately established in the time which apocalyptic literature refers to, viz., the eschaton. So then, Pannenberg's second dogmatic thesis on the doctrine of revelation reads, "Revelation is not comprehended completely in the beginning, but at the end

of revealing history."¹⁵ And he later on comments, "It is at the end of this chain of world events that God can for the first time be revealed with finality as the one true God."¹⁶

The apocalyptic vision of the whole of history as God's revelation, however, has implications more far-reaching than just a different view of revelation. Pannenberg says that Israel "not only discovered history as a particular sphere of reality; it finally drew the whole of creation into history. History is reality in its totality."¹⁷ One arrives at a conception of creation by means of an understanding of the creator. For apocalypticism, God is the creator of the world who is always able to produce something new and intervene unexpectedly in the course of his creation. So then, commenting on the first article of the apostles' creed, Pannenberg says,

The understanding of reality which corresponds to the biblical idea of God can be characterized as a historical one. The world does not, in this view, take the form of a timeless order in which, in spite of all variation in appearances, the same thing goes on happening again and again. On the contrary: something new is always happening - something which has never been before, something without precedent, in spite of all similarity between individual events. This ever-new and surprising feature of events is . . . the really characteristic thing about the world and man's existence. 18

It is characteristic of ancient mythical and Greek thought to understand reality as a static and timeless order, whereas the biblical view of creation arises out of the biblical experience of the free and living God, always active in his creation. Therefore, Pannenberg not only speaks of revelation as history, but also of reality as history.

In our discussion of the doctrine of revelation we saw that a

view of revelation as history will necessarily give prominence to the eschaton, to the end of history in which revelation is complete and final. It follows then that the eschaton must have a significant place in a view of reality as history. According to Pannenberg, the early adoption of the 'Hellenistic god-father' (to borrow from Braaten), meant that the creator was seen as the ground of this present world and that creation was essentially static, based upon unchangeable structures of order. The 'Hellenization' of Christian theology lost sight of the biblical conviction that creation is still underway to its proper reality and that the proper fulfillment and essence of creation will be ultimately decided simultaneously with the final eschaton in which both God and creation will be revealed. For Pannenberg, "the creation occurs from the side of the end."¹⁹ In Jesus - God and Man, Pannenberg draws the implication of Jesus' proclamation of the nearness of the Kingdom for our view of creation as follows,

Creation is not to be understood as an act that happened one time, ages ago, the results of which involve us in the present. Rather, the creation of all things, even including things that belong to the past, takes place out of the ultimate future, from the eschaton, insofar as only from the perspective of the end are all things what they truly are. For their real significance becomes clear only when it becomes apparent what will ultimately become of them. 20

Here we have the basis of Pannenberg's reversal in ontology. He is not merely saying that a 'telos' is operative in reality, and that the present is in movement to the future. A teleological theology still gives primacy to the present, out of which the future is created. For Pannenberg, the meaning of Jesus' preaching of the power of the kingdom is that the kingdom, which is an

eschatological reality, has an imperative claim on the present.²¹ Pannenberg should also not be superficially confused with the futuristic philosophy of Ernst Bloch. For Bloch, in the tradition of Feuerbach and Freud, the future hope is the projection of present wishes into the future. In opposition to this, and in clarification of his own position, Pannenberg says, in his contribution to the Bloch festschrift,

The primacy of the future and its novelty are guaranteed only when the coming kingdom is ontologically grounded in itself and does not owe its future merely to the present wishes and strivings of man. When the coming kingdom is designated in biblical terms as the kingdom of God, that is out of concern for the ontological primacy of the future of the kingdom over all present realities 22 (emphasis added.)

Pannenberg's argument is simply that if the God of the coming kingdom is the same as the creator of heaven and earth, then Christian thought must be reorientated to a conception of the ontological priority of the future. The future is not the effect of the present, but conversely the present is an effect of the future. According to Pannenberg, this position is a radical departure from traditional ontology in the Western tradition. A discussion of the relation between law, order and reality as history could best illustrate this.

B. Law, Order and Reality as History

As soon as one begins to speak of reality as history, accentuating thereby the processive and dynamic nature of the creation, then one will have to deal with the question of normativity, law, order, sameness and continuity in creation. Pannenberg is well aware of this problem and his answer to it recurs throughout his writings. We have seen that he distinguishes the biblical-Hebrew

view of reality from the Greek and mythical conceptions, and will now investigate more closely the differences that Pannenberg identifies.

Pannenberg ascribes Israel's unique self-understanding within the ancient Near East to her historical consciousness. He says that all of the other ancient religions were 'mythical' and saw "the world as a cosmic order, rooted in the order of the gods themselves, of which the myths give an account." He goes on to say, "For these religions earthly events are meaningful only in so far as the eternal divine order is reflected in them."²³ Meaning could not be found in the incessant changes of temporal reality itself, but only in the participation in the pretemporal archetypal event which was reported in the myth. In 'Redemptive Event and History', Pannenberg says, "Man saves himself from the threat of the constant change of history in the security of the changeless mythical primal reality which is reflected in the circular course of earthly history."²⁴ The uniqueness of Israel in this context is self-evident. Israel experiences her God and the meaning of life precisely in her history. As we have seen, history is where God meets his people and leads them to shalom. Israel does not look back to a pretemporal, mythical paradise, says Pannenberg, but forward to the fulfillment of God's promises in the temporal future. An archetypal 'world order' was completely incompatible with the apocalyptic future which always brought the new and unexpected. Simply stated, "Israel understood reality as history, not as a reflection of archetypal relations reported in myths."²⁵

This contrast of 'myth' and 'history' is also the major factor distinguishing Greek from Hebrew thought. Pannenberg does not, however, simply offer a blanket condemnation of the early church's interaction with Greek thought. Indeed, he contends in his sixth dogmatic thesis on revelation that the very universality of the eschatological self-vindication of God in Christ necessitated an interaction of Greek and Hebrew-Christian thought.²⁶ If the God of the coming kingdom really is the God of the nations, then the nations must come to recognize him as their own God as well. Hence, Pannenberg says that the conflict between early Christianity and the Greek philosophical conception of God is not merely caused by external proximity, but "is also grounded in the biblical witness to God as the universal God, pertinent not only to Israel but to all peoples."²⁷ The very basis of Christian theological involvement with Greek philosophy is the apologetic insistence that the God of Israel is the true God sought by Greek philosophy, and therefore Pannenberg calls for a re-evaluation of the negative judgement of the so-called 'Hellenization' of theology which has been in vogue in protestant theology since Ritschl.

Pannenberg does not, however, advocate a total acceptance of Platonism, nor defend the possibility of such a total synthesis for the early Christians, precisely because Platonism has its origin in Olympian mythical religion. Pannenberg says,

The guiding idea of the Greek concept of God was that of the origin of everything presently in existence. Accordingly, philosophy could construct its concept of God by inference back from the world. 28 (emphasis added.)

The operative phrase here is 'presently in existence'. For Greek

philosophy, and medieval onto-theology,²⁹ God could be inferred from reality because "God was the hidden background to all things who manifested himself in the inviolable order of the world."³⁰ God was the basis of the order of present reality, and that reality was seen as a timeless order in which the same goes on and on. In theology which has been truly Hellenized the unchangeable structures of order in the world correspond to the notion of God's immutability. God doesn't change and neither does the order of creation.³¹ This view of the universe undoubtedly is influential in the more static and fixed social order and hierarchy of the middle ages. Apart from the fact that such a static view of reality is no longer conceivable after the advent of modern science, Pannenberg argues that such a cosmology also comes into conflict with the Hebrew view of the world. In Revelation as History he says that,

. . . in the context of the history of thought, the Greek cosmos offered only a narrow conception of reality that was open to man's experience. The biblical experience of reality as history is more inclusive, since the contingency of the real event is included in this conception. Experience of reality as history is superior to that connected with the contemplation of the cosmos. ³² (emphasis added.)

In another article he says that God does not relate in a necessary way to the world, but rather, freedom characterizes the relation. "God, as the origin, is never merely the invisible ground of present reality, but the free, creative source of the ever new and unforeseen."³³ Because God relates freely as the origin of the new and unforeseen, reality is not an unchangeable cosmos, but a dynamic process, a history.

As this point I will introduce some terms that help to

clarify the distinctive ontologies that we are dealing with in this contrast between Greek and Hebrew thought. Pannenberg claims that Greek thought is characterized by a depreciation of temporality and contingency, and an emphasis on the unchangeability of the structured order of reality. I find it helpful to identify this kind of ontology as 'structuralism'. Not to be confused with the contemporary movement in philosophy and literary criticism, structuralism is here used to describe an emphasis on the fixed, abiding structure of reality. Structuralistic thought analyzes reality primarily in terms of its static structure or order, thereby not taking very seriously into account the temporal, contingent and changing character of reality.³⁴ Indeed, structuralism understands change and development simply in terms of living up to or failing to live up to a pre-determined structure of reality.³⁵ It seems that the characteristics of structuralism (at least as I am using the term in this context) accurately describe what Pannenberg finds so objectionable in Greek thought.³⁶ It is also interesting to note Pannenberg's use of the word 'cosmos' in description of Greek thought. Cosmology emphasizes universal structures and fixed orders.³⁷

If Pannenberg is opposed to structuralism, then how would we characterize his own thought and that which he identifies as a biblical view of the world? Since reality is history and is in constant contingent process, we could call Pannenberg's thought 'historicism' or 'process' thought. The problem with these designations, however, is that both terms have been used to identify two contemporary intellectual movements, both of which

have been influential in Pannenberg's thought (especially historicism), but from which Pannenberg decisively distinguishes himself as well. Clearly Pannenberg's thought is of the same type as historicism and process philosophy and theology, so then what is needed at this point, is a more general term which could encompass all thought that emphasizes process and history overagainst Greek cosmology. Such a general term which could designate the opposite of structuralism is 'geneticism'. A geneticistic ontology and pattern of thought places the emphasis on the provisionality, temporality and constant change and flux of life. Different from structuralism, geneticism sees change at the essence of life, not merely on the surface. Indeed, anything that seems to be a fixed structure or abiding norm is explained as a provisional reality which reflects a certain stage in the ongoing, genetic flow of the cosmos. This emphasis on provisional structures and changing orders also means that geneticism is concerned not with cosmology, but cosmogony - the bringing forth of the world, rather than the logos or lawful order of the world.³⁸

The geneticistic character of Pannenberg's thought is especially evident in the way in which he views law, order and constancy in creation. Law, says Pannenberg can only be discussed within the context of change and contingency in reality as history. In Apostles' Creed he says, "Laws can only be observed through contingent happenings, as relatively constant processes in the stream of events, where no single happening repeats a previous one." Because the world is not a statically

ordered structure, but a unique course of events in time, Pannenberg concludes that all observed regularities only take place on the surface of events. Indeed, the similarities in events which are described in the formulae of law "only come into being at a particular time themselves; and the validity of natural laws too is therefore dependent on time" Therefore, "the relative constancy of the course of natural events is then in itself a contingent fact."³⁹ Reality cannot be explained by laws because law demands repeatability, whereas reality is actually an irreversible, unrepeatable and unparalleled course of events.

My use of the term 'geneticism' to describe Pannenberg's thought is further justified by his own appreciation of the 'historico-genetic' model for historical explanation as developed by A.C. Danto and W. Dray. In response to the deductive-nomological approach in historiography, Danto and Dray insist that the bringing of the events of history under general laws can never do justice to the contingency, uniqueness and particularity of the events.⁴⁰ What is true here in historical method is necessarily also the case for Pannenberg in the study of all reality because reality is history. So then, in his more general philosophy of science he rejects what he calls the 'nomothetic structuralism' of Popper and Hempel which sees science as the discovery of universal structural laws, because such an approach "is unable to explain the individual particularity of historical processes"⁴¹ In this section of his Theology and the Philosophy Science he again raises his objection to the repeatability which is presupposed in all structuralism. Reality, as a

contingent sequence of events ". . . is formed by the temporal succession of events each of which is an individual. The form of the succession itself is also unique and historical." He concludes that such sequences and individual events are ". . . unrepeatable in their specific facticity."⁴² Therefore a nomothetic and structuralistic approach to reality will always fall short of an adequate explanation of reality as history. And this is not only valid for the discipline known as history, but for all disciplines.⁴³ Pannenberg's affinity with ideographic, individualizing philosophy of science is consistent with the over-all geneticistic thrust of his ontology. Such an approach makes the contingently particular and individual the object of science rather than the regularities that structural laws attempt to grasp.

The question which still needs to be answered, however, is, what ontological reality does structuralistic analysis appeal to? Even if one rejects the adequacy of analysis in terms of structural laws because reality is characterized as history, the constancy and continuity of patterns of reality still must be accounted for. We have already seen that, different from Greek thought, Pannenberg claims that the biblical God relates freely (and therefore contingently) to his creation, and not necessarily (as obtains with any notion of the order of the cosmos.) God's contingency is also the basis of Pannenberg's view of the nature of the constancy and order that is experienced in creation. He says,

The notion of unchanging structures grasps only that which is superficial in the phenomenon of

the enduring: it abstracts from the depth dimension, from the roots of duration itself in contingent occurrence - a connection which comes to the fore in the essence of fidelity. 44

Pannenberg answers the question of the unity of the sequence of contingent events that constitute reality by speaking of God's faithfulness. The God of the covenant does not abandon the work of his hands.

Against the background of the contingency, which determines the unique course of events as a whole, the existing inter-relationships of natural law appear as an expression of the divine will towards constancy, the utterance of a divine faithfulness which alone makes existence in this world possible for us. 45

In his article 'The Biblical Understanding of Reality' he explains his position:

. . . in the biblical understanding of reality as history, the laws of nature also have a place and are regarded not simply as the ultimate reality and as absolutely unchangeable, but as the free ordinances of the faithfulness of God, who keeps the world in being through them. 46 (emphasis added.)

There may be 'order' and even 'ordinances', but they are free and expressive of God's faithfulness. God is not, however, necessarily bound to a cosmic order. This distinction is absolutely essential for Pannenberg.

The traditional doctrine of the immutability of God fails to make this distinction because of its dualism of true and immutable being above derived being which is in the process of becoming. According to Pannenberg, immutability is wholly unknown in the biblical witness, although the constancy which the doctrine attempts to describe certainly is biblical. He says,

But immutability says too little, since God not only immovably establishes and maintains present reality in its lawful course, but has within himself an infinite plentitude of ever new possibilities in the realization of which he manifests the freedom of his divine essence. 47 (emphasis added.)

God's faithfulness to his creation is always a free, temporal decision, and therefore this faithfulness "takes place in new and surprising ways."⁴⁸ Faithfulness must be historically affirmed and therefore its expression is historically contingent. God's transcendent freedom is the origin of the contingency of the world as well as being the ground of the unity and endurance of the world. The origin of contingency and continuity is both free and faithful.⁴⁹

How then does all of this relate to the eschatological character of Pannenberg's theology? Although this question will return later in this chapter, some discussion of it is merited presently as well. For Pannenberg, faithfulness is a dynamic conception, with a future orientation. We know that someone is faithful only after the fact, not before. We wait for the final evidence of faithfulness and that is only available at the end of reality as history. Man's trust in the faithfulness of God in relation to his creation is not to be directed towards the ordered cosmos of the natural world, but is rather oriented to ". . . God's sovereign freedom to act in history and to determine the future."⁵⁰ What then is this future? It is both the ultimate revelation of God and the revelation of creation. Pannenberg says,

All creatures of nature appear in a contingent movement which is not simply external and accidental, but

constitutive of their nature, and they are brought into the light of an eschatological future. 51

We see here that the relation of creation and the eschaton discussed earlier comes again to the fore. If you want to know the 'order' of creation, says Pannenberg, then you must wait until the end of history to see what endures and what does not.

God creates the world in the light of its latter end, because it is only the end which decides the meaning of the things and beings with which we have to do in the present. All the chances of history therefore devolve upon any given present from their ultimate future, which is, as it were, the 'place' of divine creation. 52

The divine future thus being the place of creation, it follows that the observed continuity of creation is not conceived of as teleological or evolutionary, wherein the continuity runs from the past through the present to the future, but rather, continuity must be understood in the opposite direction. The present sheds light on the past and the ultimate future sheds light on the whole of reality. This is Pannenberg's ontological notion of retrospection. If the coherence of contingent events is grounded in the faithfulness of the free God, then continuity doesn't have to be something enduring from the past into the present, but can be seen in terms of a constant re-establishment of the continuity of reality by means of a "backward-reaching incorporation of the contingently new into what has been"53

. . . the continuity of nature is no longer understood as the irresistible dynamic of the already existing pushing forward, but as the building of bridges to the past that save the past from getting lost. 54

Pannenberg's point is that the continuity of events is always visible only in retrospect and that the coherence of reality

". . . does not exist at all without such glances back to the past from a given, provisional end." This indicates to us that the unity of creation is only constituted from the standpoint of God's eschatological future.⁵⁵

Now that we have seen some of the basic contours of Pannenberg's ontology which gives priority to the future we will proceed to a discussion of the implications of this ontological reversal for his conception of God.

C. The Being of God

In the history of theology after the introduction of Greek conceptions, the ideas of God as the universal principle of the cosmos, and as the Lord of history always remained inharmoniously alongside each other. Eventually the former came to prominence and theology of history faded into obscurity. Consequently, traditional Christian ontology saw God as an omniscient, omnipotent and existent being. The ontological implications of the priority of the future found in the New Testament for God's mode of being were never sufficiently worked out. With the rise of the freedom ideal of Renaissance and Enlightenment man,⁵⁶ it became evident that a conflict was to arise in relation to this conception of God. Pannenberg states the problem succinctly: "An almighty and omniscient being thought of as existing at the beginning of all temporal processes excludes freedom within the realm of his creation."⁵⁷ To be the all-determining reality and to have 'existence' as the mode of his being makes God into a deterministic origin of reality, thereby denying freedom. But Pannenberg adds that real freedom is the ability to go beyond what exists and therefore it would also supersede an existent God. Such a God

would be no God at all because he, in effect, would not be the all-determining reality because "the reality of freedom, of human subjectivity, would remain outside of his grasp." That being the case, it follows that "the biblical idea of omnipotence is in irreconcilable conflict with the understanding of God as an existent being."⁵⁸

Pannenberg claims that the only way out of this problem is to conceive of God's being in the light of the ontological priority of the future. God can be real and the source of freedom, yet not existent, only if his being is seen as being futural, "for what belongs to the future is not yet existent, and yet it already determines present experience . . . ," since reality as history is determined by the future.⁵⁹ (emphasis added) The future is real and powerful, although it does not yet exist. Freedom and future belong together because freedom consists of possibilities not yet realized. God is implicit as the origin of freedom because God is the power of the future, he is the ultimate future and there is no future beyond him. Indeed, he is pure freedom because freedom is to have one's future in oneself and not determined by another.⁶⁰ Therefore freedom cannot find its basis in a reality that already exists, but only in the reality which reveals to freedom its future, viz., the coming God. Simply stated,

God as an extant being is a contradiction of terms
If there is sense in conceiving of God as the origin of freedom, that experience has itself the character of anticipation and is not a statement about a being within the objective world of present reality. 61

So then, God exists as the power of the future and not as an object presently at hand, one being among others, nor as "the quiescent background of all beings, the timeless being underlying all

objects."⁶² As the power of the future, God does not rob man of his freedom but ". . . frees man from his ties to what presently exists in order to liberate him for his future and give him freedom."⁶³

Pannenberg addresses the problem of the being of God in another way by relating it to the futurity of his Lordship. He observes that God's being cannot be conceived apart from his rule. Only the power which rules all of reality can be God, and ". . . if there are finite things, then to have power over them is intrinsic to God's nature. The deity of God is his rule."⁶⁴ In the biblical tradition the rule of God is manifest in the coming of the kingdom, thus the being of God and the being of the kingdom are one. God reveals himself to be God in the establishment of his kingdom. But the kingdom is 'coming', it does not yet exist, but will exist in the future. Pannenberg concludes,

Thus it is necessary to say that, in a restricted but important sense, God does not yet exist. Since his rule and his being are inseparable, God's being is still in the process of coming to be. Considering this, God should not be mistaken for an objectified being presently existing in its fulness. ⁶⁵

Pannenberg's point, consistent with the geneticism mentioned above, is that God's being is subject to becoming and is not finished and complete. This problem of God's becoming has, of course, always been raised when theologians discussed the incarnation. Does change occur in God when he is incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth? In Jesus-God and Man, Pannenberg deals with this problem at length and concludes that, "The maker himself is changed by the production and shaping of another being. The change cannot be held remote from God's inner being." But he adds that such change "does not necessarily affect his (i.e. God's) identity."⁶⁶

The question is, how does God's sameness and his becoming relate? He says that ". . . what newly flashes into view from time to time in the divine life can be understood at the same time as having always been true in God's eternity."⁶⁷ (emphasis added) A similar problem arises in the doctrine of revelation. Because God is ultimately manifest at the end of history, he does have a history. Yahweh becomes the God of all mankind in the course of history and finally at the end. Yet, at the same time, Pannenberg claims that the essence of God, revealed at the end and therefore presupposing the course of history, is nevertheless from everlasting to everlasting the same.⁶⁸ How can this be? In 'Theology and the Kingdom of God' he says,

The very essence of God implies time. Only in the future of his kingdom come will the statement "God exists" prove to be definitely true. But then it will be clear that the statement was always true. In this impending power the coming God was already the future of the remotest past. ⁶⁹

What Pannenberg is saying here (and the context is a correction of Whitehead and Hartshorne), is that God, as the power of the future, was present in every past as the one who he is in his futurity. From the viewpoint of our finite present, the future is not yet decided, but from God's eternity in the ultimate future, ". . . what turns out to be true in the future will then be evident as having been true all along He was in the past the same one whom he will manifest himself to be in the future."⁷⁰ So then, while rejecting an existent God for the God of the future who has a history in time, Pannenberg nevertheless maintains the sameness of God in contrast to Whitehead's notion of development in God.

In summary, we see that Pannenberg's system allows for both process and stability in God's being, both historicity and sameness. A similar conception is operative when he says in his article, 'On Historical and Theological Hermeneutic';

The God who constitutes history has himself fully entered the process of history in his revelation. But he has done so in such a way that precisely as he is here transmitted in the process of a tradition, he is at the same time the future of this history, the coming God who remains distinct from, or better, who is always distinguishing himself in a new way from what happens in history. 71 (emphasis added)

God both enters into the process of history and actively distinguishes himself from that process. In our next subsection on the relation of the finite and the infinite we will come to a fuller understanding of how this apparent contradiction functions in the totality of Pannenberg's ontology.

D. The Finite/Infinite Relation

In Pannenberg's theology the relation between the finite and infinite is intimately connected to the appearance/being and openness/closedness relations within the context of an ontology which gives priority to the future. Beginning with the relation of appearance and being, we will work towards the finite/infinite relation.

(1) Appearance/Essence

Traditionally, some philosophers have made a distinction between the appearance of a thing to an observer and the thing itself. Although what appears before us definitely exists before us, what it is in and of itself is thought to be something more than its appearance; the appearance points to a being (undoubtedly its own) which transcends it. Greek philosophy characteristically separated

appearance and being. Consequently, the precedence of self-sufficient ideas or substances (being or essence) reposing themselves over the phenomenal reality of sense experience (appearances or existence) became a dominant motif in Western philosophical reflection.⁷² The following dualism arose:

being or essence
appearance or existence

Pannenberg credits Hegel as being the first person to attempt to overthrow this dualism. Hegel insists upon a reciprocity of essence and appearance in his statement, "Essence must appear. . . . Essence is thus not behind or beyond appearance, but existence is appearance by virtue of the fact that it is essence which exists."⁷³ Pannenberg says that this was a step in the right direction, but that Hegel still maintains the ontological precedence of essence over appearance because appearance is still grounded in that which is different from it, viz., essence. Add on top of this that Hegel's 'essence' is really the same as his 'idea', which is a timeless, logical structure, then it becomes evident that Hegel is really not that different from Greek philosophy, and that appearance is again reduced to the non-essential.

Pannenberg finds a more profitable direction in the philosophy of Heinrich Barth. According to H. Barth, appearanceness is the fundamental characteristic of being itself and therefore any notion of a non-appearing being is unthinkable. A view of appearing as existing can simultaneously comprehend both the act of coming-into-appearance and the 'something' that appears.⁷⁴ But, says Pannenberg, although this is a good step, the problem of a distinc-

tion between appearing and being returns when we consider the activity of interpretation:

Interpretation can take place only by going beyond the event that gives rise to the interpretation. Insofar as this is true, the 'something' that appears cannot be thought of as totally exhausted in the act of appearing. . . . In going beyond the event in the process of its interpretation, a difference arises anew (and in a new sense) between appearance and being, between appearance and essence. 75

Hence it could still be said that the eidos transcends its individual appearances and that no one appearance can exhaust its eidos, but that each appearance is only a partial realization of the eidos appearing in it. So then it follows that appearance and essence clearly belong together (contrary to traditional dualism) but that nevertheless a distinction must be somehow recognized (contrary to a simplistic monism).

Pannenberg suggests that the theological problem of the presence and futurity (already/not yet) of the reign of God in the life and teachings of Jesus is analogous to, and can shed light on, the problem of essence and appearance. In the ministry of Jesus the future reign of God became a power determining the present. God's kingdom is futural, it is yet to come, but wherever men and women commit themselves in obedience to that coming reign, the kingdom is unconditionally operative in the present. Therefore the presence and futurity of the kingdom are not in conflict, but the former is derived from the latter and is in fact an anticipation in the present of the eschatological future. The relation of this to the appearance/essence question is clear. What is 'essential' to Christ is the future kingdom to which he always pointed, but which, nevertheless appears in his total obedience to his essential

calling. In Christ, appearance and essential presence are one.⁷⁶

The central ontological question that this mode of reflection gives rise to is;

Does the connection of identity and difference in the relation of being (or essence) and appearance have something to do with the temporality of this relation? And does that which appears in the appearance thereby present itself in the mode of futurity? 77

Traditional ontology, bound to a static view of being and rooted in mythical and structuralistic thought, has never been able to answer this question affirmatively. Pannenberg, however, claims that an eschatological ontology can see appearing reality as the arrival of the future. He says, "the future wills to become present; it tends toward its arrival in a permanent present."⁷⁸

Finite reality is, by definition, inconclusive and a process of history. Being and temporality are intimately related and lead to the conclusion that reality is incomplete and therefore oriented to the future wherein completion occurs. Consequently, it is impossible to think of the essence of reality apart from its future. Pannenberg claims that the already/not yet dialectic of the Christ event "involves a matter of universal ontological relevance." Contrasting Greek and biblical thought, he says,

. . . for thought that does not proceed from a concept of essence that transcends time, for which the essence of a thing is not what persists in the succession of change, for which, rather, the future is open in the sense that it will bring unpredictably new things that nothing can resist as absolutely unchangeable -- for such thought only the future decides what something is. Then the essence of a man, of a situation, or even of the world in general is not yet to be perceived from what is now visible. Only the future will decide it. 79

To say that it is only the eschatological future which will disclose the essence of any given thing is to say that the sequence of temporal events actually contributes to the identity or essence

of things. This explains the significance of the 'not yet' for ontology, but what is the place of the 'already'? In his article 'Future and Unity', Pannenberg says, "The eschatological future is identical with the essence of things, just as the future of God's kingdom is his eternal life and power."⁸⁰ Therefore, just as the eschatological future is in secrecy and mystery already present, and God rules the world from the hiddenness of heaven, so also the essence of reality or appearances is already present, but it is hidden. Is this then a true future? Pannenberg says it is because "the essence of things did not yet break the surface. It has not yet been brought forth. And yet it is the essence of things past and present."⁸¹ Later, in the same article, he says, "The essential future participates in eternity and therefore constitutes the depth of reality, the mystery of the present."⁸²

That Pannenberg relates essence to eternity is very significant because his view of eternity sheds light on the actual relation of the eschatological future to the actual present, (which is analogous to the infinite/finite relation). Whereas Greek philosophy identifies eternity with the non-temporal order of the cosmos, Pannenberg understands eternity in terms of 'compresence'. The following passage from What is Man? elucidates this:

The truth of time lies beyond the self-centredness of our experience of time as past, present, and future. The truth of time is the concurrence of all events in an eternal present. Eternity, then, does not stand in contrast to time as something that is completely different. Eternity creates no other content than time. However, eternity is the truth of time, which remains hidden in the flux of time. Eternity is the unity of all time, but as such it simultaneously is something that exceeds our experience of time. . . . Only God can be thought of as not being confined to the flow of time. Therefore, eternity is God's time. That means, however, that God is present to every time. His action and power

extend to everything past and future as to something that, for him, is present." 83 (emphasis added)

To recapitulate: eternity is the eternal present, which nevertheless lies beyond temporality. Although eternity is 'now', it is not yet evident because it remains hidden in the flux of present time. In my judgment, the phrase 'the truth of time' is referring to the same matter as the word 'essence'. Therefore, the essence of reality, which is decided by the future is nevertheless already present, hidden in the eternal depth of present reality. So then, Pannenberg's futuristic ontology ends up rejecting a simple linear sequence of time, where the essence of reality would have no existence at all until the end, in favour of a more complex notion of the hidden presence of the future essence of reality. Consequently, what is revealed in the future is materially identical with present life, except that the future reveals the essence of reality which is presently real, but mysteriously hidden.⁸⁴

The incompleteness of reality and revelation of essence in the future is intimately connected in Pannenberg's thought to his notion of Weltoffenheit, or openness to and beyond the world as an ontological structure of man's being. An anthropological interlude will therefore aid us in our exposition.⁸⁵

(ii) Closedness/Openness

Man's openness to the world finds its first expression in his culture forming. Different from the animals, man does not experience the world as primordially ready-to-hand, nor will he accept the limitations of his immediate environment. Being open to the world, he forms his own environment, using the world

as the material for the formation of culture. Man's openness, however, is never satisfied with its own constructs either. Therefore he is driven completely into the open, beyond the world and his picture of the world at any given time. He leaves his own constructions behind "as mere transitional points in his striving," as "stages along a path to an unknown goal."⁸⁶ Ultimately, man's openness is directed to the revelation of his own essence, which corresponds to his destiny (Bestimmung).⁸⁷ In What is Man?, Pannenberg reasons that man's infinite openness beyond all finite reality makes man the infinitely dependent being; the being who finds no rest in his finitude. Pannenberg then follows this with the argument (noted briefly in chapter one of this thesis), that man's infinite dependence "presupposes something outside of himself that is beyond every experience of the world"; namely, something beyond the finite, an infinite vis-a-vis upon which man is dependent. This dependence upon the infinite is itself infinite because man never possesses his destiny, but must always seek it in God who is never at his disposal, nor ever surpassable.⁸⁸

At this point we should note again the geneticistic character of Pannenberg's eschatological thought. Man, and for that matter, all of reality,⁸⁹ is in a never ending process of self-transcendence. He says that ". . . in all his experience of finite reality . . . (man) . . . at the same time, in one form or another, reaches beyond its finitude and in this way is expectant of the infinite mystery present in it."⁹⁰ What is at stake here is nothing less than man's destiny, the wholeness of his being. This is the theme of all religion. Indeed, for Pannenberg the question of man's open self-transcendence and the question of his salvation

are inseparable. Human life is caught in the tension between openness beyond the world and his own centredness and egocentricity. The former tendency is to break out into the open and welcome the infinity of the future, whereas the latter tends toward self-enclosurement and closedness to the future. The essence of sin is to become comfortable in that which is not the ultimate, but only provisional (as in all idolatry). Sin is the limitation of one's horizon to the finite, thereby ignoring the infinite depth of reality. For man, self-assertion or closedness to the future amounts to a betrayal of "his destiny to exist in full openness toward what is to be. . . ." ⁹¹ Simply stated, man is not to let things run on their natural course, but is to move them beyond the given to the not yet given. Pannenberg says,

When man fails to pursue his humanity beyond the given, sin comes to expression, that centering on the self which keeps the self and the world in their given forms. 92

But it should be noted that for Pannenberg, sin is not merely a 'directional' matter. It is not simply that man chooses to be open or closed to the future. Rather, constitutive to the structure of all existence, whether we are speaking of man or the most minute organism, is the tension of openness and closedness. Pannenberg identifies a fundamental ontological contradiction here. Speaking of organisms he says,

. . . every organic body, whether it is animal or plant simultaneously lives within itself and outside itself. To live simultaneously within itself and outside itself certainly involves a contradiction. But it is a contradiction that really exists in life. All life, even human life, as we have seen, is carried out within this tension. 93

The simultaneity of openness and closedness is a simultaneity of future and present, infinite and finite, salvation and damnation.

This contradiction is, according to Pannenberg, an ontological given. Indeed, in another article he speaks of the "antagonistic structure of the world" on the account of its "finitude." Because the world is not yet finished, man is to daily "step beyond the given toward the divine future which has not yet appeared, which will prepare a final end to these antagonisms."⁹⁴ With this background of ontological contradictions and the antagonistic structure of the world, we can now piece together the finite/infinite relation in Pannenberg's theology.

(iii) Finite/Infinite

When Pannenberg speaks of the finite/infinite relation, just as when he speaks of the temporality/eternity relation, he is essentially referring to the relation of God and the world. Consequently it is not surprising that a similar line of argument appears here as the argument above in the subsection on the being of God. There we saw that God both participates in the process of reality as history and actively distinguishes himself from that process. This is also evident in his response to William Hamilton's criticism that he simply identifies God with the process of history:

Theology of history does not in any case, in my view, mean any such 'identification of God with the process of history itself.' The very historicity of all that is real means rather that the power working in every moment separates what is actual (as the finite) from itself, casts it off from itself, in that it passes on to the bringing forth of the new, hitherto not present events. 95 (emphasis added)

The casting off of the finite is indispensable to the futurity of God's being. Only by separating himself from the actual can he bring the future potential into being: "In relation to past and present, God is constantly bringing himself back into his own escha-

tological futurity."⁹⁶ Indeed, it could be said that in the coming into being of any finite reality, the infinite future releases from itself the finite which had hitherto been hidden. "The future lets go of itself to bring into being our present."⁹⁷ In this sense, the finite can only be the finite if the infinite future from whence it comes separates, or 'pushes away' the finite from itself.

This dialectic of separation of the finite from the infinite is continuous in the process of reality because new reality only comes about with the collapse of the old. Pannenberg therefore speaks of a negative and a positive mediation of the finite and infinite:

History is . . . the ongoing collapse of the existing reality which is enclosed in its own 'immanence' (because centred on itself). The power of the infinite is active and present in this collapse of the finite. Thus the infinite expresses itself in the first place negatively. But because the finite lives not by clinging to itself, but only in transformation of itself - in contradiction of itself and its tendency to cling to itself - insofar the power of the infinite expresses itself also positively, as reconciliation and preservation of the finite in the midst of its collapse. 98
(emphasis added)

The mediation is, in the first place, negative precisely because of the centredness and closedness constitutive of finite reality, which was discussed earlier. The finite must collapse both so that the process can continue and so that finitude can ultimately find its destiny in the infinite. The ontological priority of the future necessitates the overcoming of the finite because it is present, because the finite is not the infinite. God is the ultimate future and pushes away all finite futures as inadequate and incomplete. Remember that appearance is merely an anticipation

of essence. The ultimate future is ". . . the power of contradiction to the present, and releases forces to overcome it."⁹⁹ We see here that for Pannenberg, finitude (which is characteristic of all creatureliness) is identified with temporality and centredness, as opposed to eternity and openness. This also explains why the revelation of the essence of reality, which is the revelation of God, must be reserved for the end of reality as history. God is veiled at the beginning of history, and only at the end is the veil taken away. He says,

Men could not endure a nonmediated confrontation with the actuality of God. To do so they would have to be something other than creatures who seek their way by orientation to finite things. Man can approach God only through the world of finitude. Through the veil of the finite, men become aware of the infinite God. Therefore their perspective is always one-sided and distorted. But at the end of the veiled way revelation from God can occur, the self-unveiling of the God already provisionally known through all the obscurities of the veiling. The self-unveiling of God, however, is salvation to mankind because only in God's proximity, in community with God, does human existence find its fulfillment. 100

Finitude is a veiling of the infinite, therefore it is only at the end of finitude (= the end of history) that unveiling can take place. It seems here that salvation is actually a release from finitude and that closedness to the future is constitutive to finitude. This is borne out by the fact that later in the same article Pannenberg speaks of God as ". . . the redeemer from the transitoriness which dominates this present world." He says,

Once the world is understood as history, the origin of the All, who is the End of history, becomes, as that End, the author of a salvation which lifts man above the transitoriness of the present. 101

This view of finitude and temporality not only elucidates the negative mediation of the finite/infinite relation, it also

points to the positive mediation as well. We have seen that the infinite reconciles and preserves the finite in the midst of its collapse. The infinite future does not just confront and run counter to the present world, it also holds a promise for the future of the world. A promise means a positive relation of the future to the present, of the infinite to the finite, and an affirmation of the present and bringing of the finite into a closer image of its true destiny.¹⁰² That God and the infinite future are one and the same is evident in Pannenberg's contention that ". . . the salvation that God promises is God himself." The eschatological future of the world is God's future, the ultimate future. God and his promise are the same. That is why the consummation of creation is spoken of as the 'glorification' of creation: creation participates in God's glory. To participate in glory, man must leave behind what he already is and the given state of the world. He must lose his life in order to find it, he must go outside of his finitude to the infinite.¹⁰³

It should be noted, however, that just as sin is seen as constitutive to finitude, thereby necessitating a negative mediation, so also the positive mediation and redemption are seen in the very structure of reality. Against all dualism, and in appreciation of Teilhard de Chardin, Pannenberg says that the "dynamics of reconciliation are not something secondary to the creative activity of God, but unconditional, creative, and reconciling love characterizes the activity of the creator himself. . . ." ¹⁰⁴ Because love is the motive of God's creative activity, and because the structure of reality is contradictory and antagonistic, Pannenberg can say that, "Reconciliation is a constitutive aspect of creation."¹⁰⁵

The eschaton will see not only the reconciliation of all schisms and conflicts within finite reality (such as the conflict between ego and world, or culture and nature),¹⁰⁶ but also the unity of the finite and the infinite, by the consummation of the former in the latter.

Pannenberg's view of the finite/infinite relation within the context of a geneticistic ontology which gives priority to the future is summed up well in the following quote from Jesus-God and Man:

Everything is what it is only in transition to something other than itself; nothing exists for itself. Every particularity possesses its truth in its limit, through which it is not only independent but is also taken up into a greater whole. Through giving up its particularity, everything is mediated with the whole and, transcending its finitude, with God, who nevertheless wanted this particularity to exist within the whole of his creation. 107

Although this quote anticipates our discussion of Pannenberg's notion of the 'whole' or 'totality of reality' in our next chapter, it also sums up some of the complexity of Pannenberg's ontology as it has been elucidated thus far. The most complex notion here is the juxtaposition of the desire of God to create the particular and the finite, and the structural need for finitude to give up its particularity and to be taken up into the infinite. It also seems to be the case that these are simultaneous motions - that which is finite is 'also' taken up into the whole, or the infinite. This was also the case with the openness/closedness relation. Or we could recall the matter of the eternal essence of all appearances which can be simultaneously reserved for the eschatological future and be presently hidden in the depth of the eternal flux of time now. There is also the contradiction involved

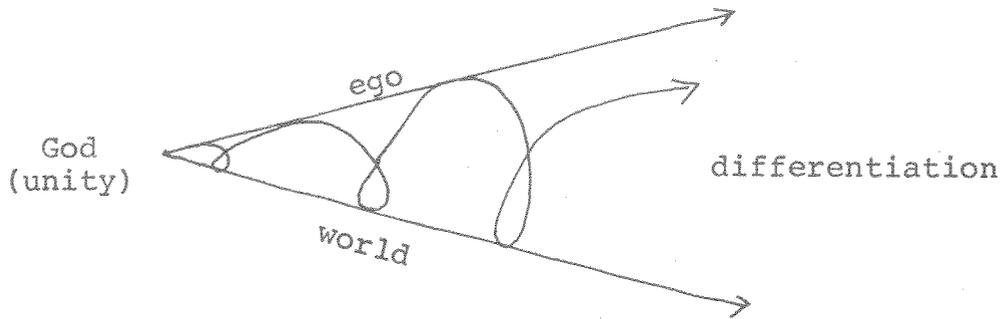
in the simultaneous positive and negative mediation of the infinite and finite. Earlier in this chapter I introduced the term geneticism to aid our understanding; now I will depart from my exposition again in order to introduce some further categories as heuristic tools to help clarify the structure of Pannenberg's ontology.

It is important that we begin by taking serious account of Pannenberg's rejection of dualistic ontology. He struggles to explain these complex relations of the finite and infinite, appearance and essence, and centredness and openness in a way which takes account of diversity in terms of a fundamental and basic unity. Dualism, however, attempts to take account of unity in terms of a fundamental and basic diversity or duality. Pannenberg rejects dualism in the same manner as he rejects structuralism - it has Greek and not biblical origins. Accordingly he insists that God's action in history is not somehow added "vertically from above" to the history of the finite (as in dualism), as if it were really superfluous to that history. Rather, he says;

In truth the history of a finite being means in every way its crisis, and self-assertion, failure, and transforming preservation are aspects of such crisis and overcoming of the finite. Only because the infinite reality, which as personal can be called God, is present and active in the history of the finite, can one speak of a revelation of God in history. For it is thereby concretely shown that the finite is not left to itself. Hence it is misleading to say that history reveals God. For history is not a subject which subsists overagainst God. In its very idea, history is constituted by the active presence of the infinite God. . . . 108 (emphasis added)

Pannenberg's language here is decisively anti-dualistic. The infinite is not dualistically separated from the finite, nor does the finite exist independent from the infinite. Rather, history

is constituted by the continuous activity of the infinite in the collapse and overcoming of the finite. Pannenberg's thought is here characteristically 'monistic'. Beginning with an original unity in the eschatological infinite and a oneness of essence of all temporal appearances, he then attempts to account for diversity. Indeed, it is characteristic of all monisms to explain diversity in terms of a differentiating oneness and to see the goal of life as a transcendence of this diversity to be re-integrated with the underlying and original oneness. Because monism tends to consider the original unity more perfect and the derived and differentiated less perfect, the realization of the original unity is set forth as the only way to restore wholeness and experience salvation.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, the problem for the monist isn't how to relate two ontologically distinct realities (as in dualism), but in how to experientially realize the unity that is, within a reality which doesn't seem unified. This is evident in Pannenberg's eschatological anthropology. God is the unifying origin and goal of the creation which has been differentiated into two bifurcations - the ego and the world. The movement of the ego is open beyond the world, in order to find its destiny in the unity of God, but nevertheless uses the world in this process as the material for its culture forming, which is a necessary stage toward its destiny. Yet even other creatures (which come under the 'world' bifurcation) are in process beyond themselves to their eschatological future. We could, therefore schematize this 'geneticistic monism' as follows:¹¹⁰



Arising out of an original unity there is a differentiation of the world and the ego. Both are in process beyond themselves to the future, wherein they seek to regain their unity. Although Pannenberg does not discuss the relation of the world to the ego, the relation of the ego to the world is the ego using the world as material for its culture. That the process is an attempted return to unity from differentiation is, again, characteristic of monism. We notice, however, the weakness of the diagram, viz., the arrows are actually moving away from unity to further differentiation. How can a geneticistic monism really regain or attain unity within such an ontological framework? We clearly need to modify our diagram, and this can be done by being more precise as to the exact kind of monism that we are dealing with in Pannenberg's ontology.

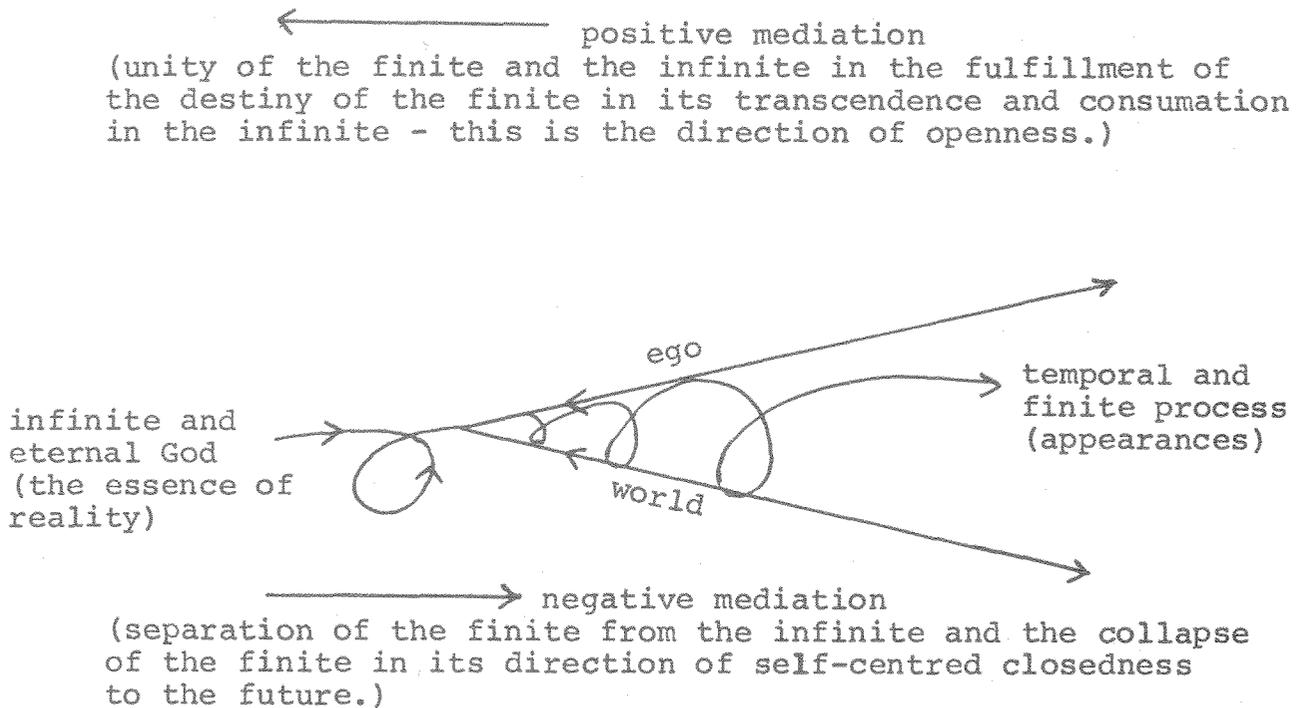
We have seen that Pannenberg speaks of the antagonistic or contradictory structure of reality. The infinite is in contradiction with the finite, and openness is in contradiction with self-assertion and centredness. Creation is both going away from and coming into unity. The infinite is both negatively mediated in the collapse of the finite and the separating of the finite from itself, and simultaneously positively mediated as the promised

fulfillment of the destiny of the finite. There is therefore a simultaneous process of differentiation and a process in the opposite direction toward unity. This two directional monism could be aptly identified as a 'contradictory monism'. D.H. Th. Vollenhoven, who is the first to coin this term, says of contradictory monism the following:

According to this conception...the all-encompassing occurring (gebeuren) is the simultaneous becoming and begoing (worden en ontworden) of the world out and into the ruling (beheersende) beginning. Becoming and begoing are contraries. The world is the unity of the two, the coincidental oppositorium.... 111

He goes on to say that this unity is a 'hidden' unity knowable only to those who penetrate it to its depth.

There are, for Pannenberg, two directions in reality: one is the direction of temporality and differentiation, and the other is the direction of eternity and unity. The direction of temporality is finitude and is invalidated and contradicted by the infinite (which is eternal) even as the infinite is the ground and origin of the finite.¹¹² The contradiction of the infinite and finite is, however also a hidden harmony to be revealed only at the end of the process of finite history. Pannenberg can maintain this position precisely because the Origin of all reality (or the all-determining reality) is at the same time the End of reality. We could diagram this two directional, contradictory monistic ontology as follows:



Notice that the arrows in this diagram go in two directions simultaneously. Because of the ontological priority of the future, the movement from the origin to the future is, contradictorily, a movement to the origin. The infinite God, who is the power of the future 'pushes finitude away' from himself, thereby constituting it as the temporal and finite. But, Pannenberg says,

God in his powerful future separates something new from himself and affirms it as a separate entity, thus, at the same time relating it forward to himself.
13 (emphasis added.)

Here we have the other direction and the positive mediation of the infinite to the finite. In the very collapse of the finite, God is leading the finite beyond its finitude to its infinite destiny, and thereby leading it to a 'return' to its origins. This 'return' however, is actually a moving forward to the eschaton

which is the origin of creation. The 'flip' in the diagram is to help attain visually the concept of two directions, of the infinite turning into the finite and vice versa. In the flip we hope to visually suggest the dynamics of the contradictory harmony of the finite and infinite, yet still maintain their distinctiveness.

It is my opinion that the schema of contradictory monism helps elucidate the totality of Pannenberg's complex theology, especially in those places where he seems to be contradicting himself.¹¹⁴ An interesting example which illustrates his contradictory monistic ontology is his discussion of the relation between the Spirit and creation.

E. Spirit and Creation

Pannenberg is unequivocally opposed to the traditional spirit/matter dualism which effectively limits the Holy Spirit to a matter of Christian piety and subjective experience. He claims that the appeal to the Spirit is often used as an immunity tactic to make up for what the Christian proclamation lacks in power of conviction. He asks,

And has the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit not been misused and discredited because it has been used as a fig-leaf to protect the nakedness of the Christian tradition from the questionings of modern critical thinking? 115

Not only is this use of the Spirit a betrayal of theology's scientific credibility, it also betrays the biblical heritage which portrays the Holy Spirit as the origin of all life.

(See Ps. 104:29f, Gen. 1:2, 2:7.) Therefore, Pannenberg speaks of a need for "...a new understanding of the Spirit in relation to the biblical statements about his role in creation, and in

regard to the possible contribution of a doctrine of the Spirit to a theology of nature."¹¹⁶

In modern theology, according to Pannenberg, there have been two major attempts to escape from the 'subjectivist impasse' in understanding the Spirit: Paul Tillich's discussion of life and spirit in his Systematic Theology and Teilhard de Chardin's spiritual evolutionism. What is instructive for our purposes in analyzing Pannenberg's contradictory monistic ontology is that although Pannenberg has certain affinities with Teilhard's processive theology, he nevertheless has a critique of this theology which makes him more favourably disposed towards Tillich than one would perhaps first think. Let me briefly present the argument from his article 'The Spirit of Life'.

For Tillich, spirit is the dimension of life which functions as the 'power of animation' for the other dimensions of life. The human spirit is, however, distinct from the divine Spirit, and only "by ecstatic activity can the human spirit share in divine spirit...."¹¹⁷ Teilhard shares Tillich's emphasis on the animating power of life and self-transcendence, but there are differences. In the first place, Teilhard makes no distinction between divine and human spirit, there is only one Spirit and therefore, "...the created spirit can be seen only as participation in the dynamics of the one spirit which animates the whole process of evolution."¹¹⁸ The second major difference is that Teilhard refuses to speak of spirit as a dimension of life, but rather as the spiritual interior of every material phenomenon. This is where Teilhard's notion of 'energy' is operative. He combines "the spiritual interior of natural

phenomena with the energy determining natural processes," therefore, "all energy is spiritual."¹¹⁹ Of course, Teilhard is not referring here merely to the 'tangential' energy studied by physicists, but rather to the 'radial' energy which is apparent in the self-transcendence of phenomena. Radial energy is spiritual energy.

Pannenberg responds to Teilhard's notion of radial energy by a discussion of the recent investigation into energy 'fields'. According to this conception, energy is "the fundamental autonomous reality which transcends the body through which it manifests itself. Energy conceived as a field is a reality which can be thought of autonomously and not only as an attribute of a body as its subject."¹²⁰ The problem with Teilhard's position, according to Pannenberg, is that his notion of energy as the spiritual interior of bodies comes into conflict with his conception of spirit as a transcendent principle which exceeds all reality. Indeed, this is the fundamental ambiguity that permeates Teilhard's thought; "the ambiguity of his explanation of the ultimate mover of the evolutionary process: point Omega or self-evolving beings".¹²¹ According to Teilhard's view of energy as interior of bodies, it must be the latter and Pannenberg claims that point Omega is reduced to a mere extrapolation of tendencies inherent in the evolutionary process. Consequently, Teilhard's desire to see the Omega, or the goal of creation as its true creative source (much like the ontological priority of the future) is in fundamental conflict with his view of the energy of self-evolving beings. An alternative view of energy, viz., energy fields, which transcend bodies and has priority over them could have given the Omega point the prominence which

Teilhard wanted it to have. Pannenberg says,

If Teilhard had seen the nature of energy in terms of field, he would have made more consistent and convincing his central intuition of the world as a process of creative unification through a spiritual dynamics at work in it.

Then the question would be how the universal field of cosmic energy and the finite entities through which it manifests itself, relate. Pannenberg continues,

These finite things participate in the universal field of cosmic energy only by simultaneously transcending themselves, as if in ecstasy, and the degree to which they are capable of such ecstatic experience is the extent of their spirituality.

We see here that Pannenberg opts for Tillich's view of ecstasy as more than just a peculiarity of Christian experience, but as a "basic trait of all finite reality...."¹²²

Our discussion earlier in this chapter of Pannenberg's view of 'openness beyond the world' and the self-transcendence of all organic bodies therefore returns to us here in our analysis of the relation between the Spirit and creation. According to Pannenberg, it is the nature of all organic life to live in an environment and to transform that environment into a means of self-realization: "in that sense every organism exists in a movement beyond itself. Again we see that life is essentially ecstatic...."¹²³ Therefore, man's openness beyond the world is not unique in the creation, but is rather a new stage in the self-transcendence of all of life. Ecstasy is a basic structural element of all of life because "...everything living only acquires present fulfillment of life by rising above itself," and again, "...everything living lives through participation in a reality which supersedes it and which escapes final fixation by its openness towards what is ahead."¹²⁴ The question is, what is

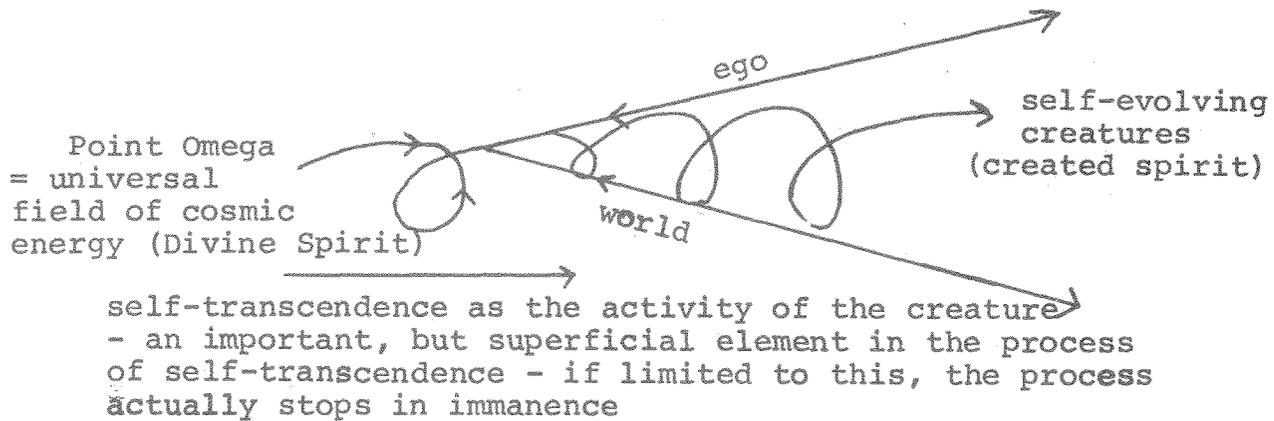
that reality which every living thing participates in and is open toward? Pannenberg's answer is that this reality is the Spirit, which is itself the cosmic energy field determining the evolutionary process (animating all of life), and manifest in the self-transcendence of creatures. The Spirit thus produces the existence of creatures and is their final fulfilment (Omega point). Well then, how does Pannenberg answer his initial question of Teilhard, viz., is the self-transcendence of life the effect of the Omega or the result of self-evolving beings? He says,

The self-transcendence of life is conceived of both as an activity of the creature and as the effect of a power which takes the living being above its limits and preserves that being through its life. 125

In other words, one cannot speak of the Spirit as the origin and consummation of life if self-transcendence could be immanentistically explained in terms of the autonomous activity of the living creature. The only way to be able to speak of the Spirit then is to appeal to the theory of energy fields and argue, as Pannenberg does, that the matter is much more complex and requires a dual definition, a both/and. Pannenberg can argue this way and side with Tillich, precisely because of his contradictory monistic ontology.

We could diagram his position on the Spirit and creation as follows:

←
self-transcendence as the effect of the Spirit - in this direction the Spirit leads the creature ecstatically beyond itself to participation in the Omega



To match Pannenberg's 'dual definition' of self-transcendence there are again two directions, the one is the limited direction of self-evolving creatures and the other is the truly ecstatic movement instigated by the Spirit in which the creature participates in the Omega or the universal field of cosmic energy. To tie into our previous diagram, the latter direction is that of infinitude while the former is that of finitude. The Spirit is active in creation as its destiny or eschatological future. The direction of self-transcendence of self-evolving creatures is, like the forming of culture, an important step in the ecstatic structure of reality, but it is always limited, superseded and even contradicted by the other direction, of ecstasy, which the Spirit leads creation. One should also note that Pannenberg's concern to distinguish, but in a non-dualistic way, the infinite from the finite and God from the creature which manifests itself

here in his acceptance of Tillich's distinction (over against Teilhard) between divine and human spirit, is also accounted for in the diagram. Creatures have their life as functions of an energy field which transcends them and leads them to self-transcendence in order to more fully participate in the energy field. Although all organisms are active in this self-transcendence, man is the most spiritual creature because he is conscious of his self transcendence and ecstasy.

Chapter three: Meaning and Confessing:
 implications of Pannenberg's
 eschatological ontology for his
 philosophy of knowledge

A. The Question of Meaning

The ontological question of 'essence' discussed in chapter two is inseparable from the question of 'meaning' dealt with in philosophy of knowledge and hermeneutics. When one arrives at the essence of a thing or event, one has also thereby come to understand what that thing or event means. If one understands its meaning, however, then the 'truth' of and about the thing or event also becomes evident. We will, therefore begin this section on meaning by first briefly discussing Pannenberg's view of truth, especially as it has been formulated in his 1962 article 'What is Truth?'

In chapter two we also saw that Pannenberg sharply distinguishes the Hebrew view of reality as history from the structuralistic essence/appearances dualism of traditional Greek cosmology. These fundamental ontological differences arise in epistemology as well. The Greek word for truth -- 'aletheia' -- means unconcealedness, or to let something be seen as it really is. For the Greek, truth lies behind and beyond the flux of sense-appearances, and only the logos-informed reason can uncover it. Truth, like essence, is timeless, immutable and not subject to becoming. The Hebrew notion of truth (emeth), however, carries with it the idea of faithfulness, something which occurs again and again in time and is only finally proven at the end. Just as the Hebrew

refuses to view true being as timeless, so also he refuses to have a conception of truth which is a-historical. Aletheia does not happen, emeth does, again and again. Truth for the Hebrew is not something disclosed once and for all now to cogitative comprehension, but rather, it "always proves itself for the first time through the future". Therefore, the truth "is accessible now only by trusting anticipation of the still-outstanding proof...."¹

For Greek thought, truth could be 'objective' because, after all, it was 'there' to be unconcealed. According to the Hebrew world-view, however, truth was historical, and if anything it was 'not yet there' and consequently tends toward a more 'subjective' view of truth. Pannenberg points out that in the intellectual history of the West there has been an increasing subjectivization of truth which came to a new height with the historicization of truth in romanticism and the historicism of the nineteenth century. Truth can no longer be separated from its historically diverse forms, and "...unity of truth can now only be thought of as the history of truth, meaning in effect that truth has a history and that its essence is the process of this history."² Pannenberg acknowledges that Hegel is the first to really understand truth as a process, as a history. Commenting on Hegel's statement in The Phenomenology of Mind, "The truth is the whole", Pannenberg says,

That which makes this whole into a whole can become visible only at the end. All preliminary stages will be driven beyond themselves by their inner contradictions. They will first find their truth beyond themselves. 3

Although Pannenberg is often critical of Hegel, he suggests that the Hegelian view of truth is biblical in two ways: first, the

truth is not seen as the timeless and unchangeable, but as a "process that runs its course and maintains itself through change", and secondly, "the unity of the process, which is full of contradictions while it is under way, will become visible, along with every individual moment in it, only from the standpoint of the end. What a thing is, is first decided by its future, by what becomes of it."⁴ This elucidates what Hegel meant by 'the truth is the whole'; because the whole is not perceivable until the end, the whole and the end are inseparable. Just as truth is only known in terms of the whole, so also meaning is intimately related to the whole as well.

Just as the category of the whole is central to Pannenberg's apocalyptic view of revelation -- it is the whole of history which finally reveals Yahweh, not individual events -- so also is it the heart of his view of meaning. It is interesting to note that the rise of historicism and the historicalization of truth runs parallel to the rise of the science of hermeneutics. The question of the meaning of a text became problematic once the historical distance of the text from the reader was explicitly acknowledged. The relationship between part and whole became the key to unlocking the meaning of the text. A text must be interpreted primarily in terms of the context within which it was written. It is a part of the whole of an author's oeuvre, which is part of his life, which occurs within the wider context of his historical culture, which has its place in the totality of the history of human culture. We notice here that the meaning of a text is understood in terms of its place as a part of a whole and that the part/whole relation is of universal applicability because every event or

thing in life only finds its meaning in terms of its relation to the whole of life. Therefore, Wilhelm Dilthey (among others) expanded the task of hermeneutics beyond the question of the meaning of texts to the question of meaning in general. Dilthey said, "The category of meaning designates the relation rooted in life itself, of parts to the whole."⁵ For example, the meaning of an individual event in my life today can only be fully perceived when the whole of my life is known. It could be that it seems very important now, but that in the context of the whole it will be relatively insignificant. The opposite could also be the case. Quoting again from Dilthey:

One would have to wait for the end of a life and, in the hour of death, survey the whole and ascertain the relation between the whole and the parts. One would have to wait for the end of history to have all the material necessary to determine its meaning. ⁶

The problem which arises here, however, is that the whole, or the end is not yet available to us.⁷ Dilthey therefore came to the historicistic conclusion that all assertions of meaning are relative. Pannenberg suggests that an opposite conclusion would be more in keeping with Dilthey's own insights, viz., that "every assertion of meaning rests upon a fore-conception of the final future, in the light of which the true meaning of every individual event first becomes expressible in a valid way." Pannenberg continues his argument:

Only from such a fore-conception of a final future and thus of the still unfinished wholeness of reality, is it possible to assign to an individual event or being - be it present or past - its definitive meaning by saying what it is. Thus, when someone names a thing and says, "This is a rose", or "This is a dog," he always does so from the standpoint of an implicit fore-conception of the final future, and of the totality of reality that will first be constituted by the final

future. For every individual has its definitive meaning only within this whole. 8

Let us investigate this further.

Dilthey had the same problems as Hegel, they both lost sight of the horizon of the future and the ontological priority of the future.⁹ Indeed, it is precisely Heidegger's strength, says Pannenberg, that he sees that the nexuses of meaning are constituted from the side of the future. Heidegger says, "The character of 'having been' arises, in a certain way from the future."¹⁰ Although Pannenberg is critical of Heidegger's limitation of anticipation to a being-unto-death, by insisting that wholeness is beyond death and therefore anticipation is ultimately for a resurrection of the dead, he nevertheless is appreciative of the basic point of Being and Time, as he understands it. Pannenberg generalizes Heidegger's position:

...statements expressing essences (Wesensaussagen) and, indeed, all designations of essential contents (Sachbenennungen) whatever, depend upon anticipations of a future that has not yet appeared. Far from designating only what is on hand at present, language names the essence of what appears by an anticipation of its future. 11

The unity of this approach to the knowing of meaning with Pannenberg's ontology is clear. If all of reality exists out of the ontological priority of the future and therefore is oriented toward the future, then it follows that any statement about the meaning of a thing is an anticipation of that thing's ultimate future. Indeed, Pannenberg distinguishes himself from Hegel's emphasis on Begriff (idea or concept) by saying that what is present in the appearances of a thing "is essentially a fore-conception (Vorgriff) to its future."¹² The distinction between Vorgriff and Begriff is very important to post-Hegelian philosophy

according to Pannenberg. Hegel knew that the meaning of the part was only knowable in terms of the whole, and therefore he attempted to come to a 'concept' of the whole. Such a concept, however, is impossible without doing injustice to the whole because the whole is ~~not~~ yet complete, it is still in process and therefore cannot be captured in a concept. According to Pannenberg, Vorgriff still attempts to understand the whole but recognizes its own provisionality:

A form of thought that understands itself as a mere fore-conception of the truth does not have the truth in itself but is rather the process that strives beyond itself toward it. This process can be maintained only on the presupposition that existing being itself is not what it is, i.e., has not yet attained its own essence. 13

Once we have acknowledged the anticipatory and processive character of all thought, however, we must ask how it is possible within this process to ever actually 'know', how can a foreconception ever be confirmed? Pannenberg's answer to this question is the same as his answer to the question of the verification of the hypothesis of God as the all-determining reality, which was recounted in chapter one of this thesis. The confirmation of the anticipatory hypothesis of God is the same as the confirmation of any foreconception, viz., by its illuminating and integrative power - proof by implication. The anticipation of the whole "...must confirm itself by the extent to which it is able to provide an actual integration of the moments of human existence." The whole is the integration of the parts. Elsewhere, Pannenberg says that hypotheses, which are explicated anticipations of the totality of meaning, must be judged "by their ability to integrate individual perceived meanings into their contexts of meaning."¹⁵ Indeed, it is this struggle for confirmation

of the fore-conception by the realization of the whole which is anticipated that drives the hermeneutical process and keeps it alive. Just as all anticipations of wholeness necessarily include within themselves the need and possibility of confirmation, so the opposite could also occur, viz., that the limits of an anticipation's integrative power becomes evident. In such a situation, "a new anticipation, superseding the first, is required."¹⁶

This process is itself infinite because of the limitations of all finite anticipations vis-a-vis the infinite totality of meaning. As each anticipation is superseded because of its narrowness, the hermeneutical process will advance to ever new stages, characterized by a new understanding of reality as a whole:

Since every such understanding of the whole rests on an anticipation, however, it bears an internal contradiction which will drive it beyond itself again, insofar as it reaches out to the whole and yet presents itself as a mere anticipation, thus showing that it is not the whole. ¹⁷ (emphasis added.)

This 'internal contradiction' refers to the same state of affairs as the negative mediation of the infinite/finite relation. It is also the driving force of the constant process of postulating anticipations and their downfall. Each anticipation of the whole is negated in the light of the whole because of its provisionality. Since no anticipation is equal to the whole one must continually transcend each anticipation along the way and reach beyond, by means of a new anticipation, to the whole. This is the quest for meaning.¹⁸

Our discussion thus far of Pannenberg's view of meaning and the part/whole relation led us to a conception which we have already seen to be parallel to the category of the whole, viz., the 'totality of meaning'. This notion is of such significance

in Pannenberg's ontology, philosophy of knowledge and hermeneutics that it merits a separate discussion of its own.

B. The Question of the Totality of Meaning

Just as all thought is anticipatory of ultimate meaning which is revealed at the end when the whole is complete, so also is all thinking allied with unity and totality. Both philosophy and theology (and in a limited way, all sciences) have as their express task the discernment of meaning or essence of things, processes and events. But the discernment of specific meanings presupposes a totality of meaning. Explaining his own view of contextual meaning, in which no perception of meaning is autonomous but always stands in the context of the whole, Pannenberg says, "Every specialized meaning depends on a final all-embracing totality of meaning in which all individual meanings are linked to form a semantic whole."¹⁹ Indeed, a totality of meaning, similar to Gadamer's 'unexpressed horizon of meaning' or Polanyi's 'tacit coefficient of speech', is implicitly invoked in every experience of particular meaning:

The immanent analysis of the perception of meaning... can easily show that all perception of individual meanings has as an implicit component the assumption of a totality of meaning, by reference to which the individual perception first receives its determinate meaning. 20

Such an implicit totality of meaning (which can become explicated in the form of hypotheses) is also the key to understanding the meaning of actions and of societies and their values. One experiences one's life within an implicit context of a totality of meaning which informs the decisions and actions which are taken. The totality of meaning is prior to action, but is not left

unaffected by the action. Like the whole, it changes in the process. Following Luhmann, Pannenberg speaks of this context of a totality of meaning as a 'world-view' and even as the 'spirit' of a culture.²¹

More specifically, however, we must ask: what is this totality of meaning? How can we describe it? Pannenberg says that the totality of meaning,

...must not simply be conceived as an already existent unity and totality, nor merely as the abstract unity of the universal, but must be understood as the unity of meaning which simultaneously comprehends and transcends that which is.²² (emphasis added.)

It is interesting to note here that the simultaneity of transcendence and comprehension which was found in Pannenberg's view of God and the infinite discussed in chapter two of this thesis, returns in his view of the totality of meaning. The similarities continue. The totality of meaning is also not a secondary and extrinsic principle of integration for a primary and prior diversity of experience, but rather it is, like the infinite, "the whole unit of meaning which in any given case already constitutes the significance of the individual and the particular."²³ Also similar to Pannenberg's view of the infinite God, the totality of meaning, although interchangeable with the 'totality of reality', is not to be understood as the totality of that which is presently existent. Just as reality as a whole is incomplete and even God is still in the process of becoming, so also the totality of meaning is not a static entity somewhere, but is an ever-changing horizon of meaning. In this sense the totality of meaning does not yet exist! Therefore, Pannenberg concludes,

Consequently the totality which thinking experience cannot grasp as long as it is concerned with truth, even

with regard to the individual and particular, is attainable only as a totality of meaning which apprehends in anticipation, in a still incomplete and contradictory reality, a wholeness of meaning which is not yet realized in all the relationships of meaning within that reality.
24 (emphasis added.)

What is unique about the totality of meaning is that even though it does not yet exist at any point as a totality, it is indispensable to human perception of particular meaning and unity. Therefore, as an anticipation, "...it can only be imagined by transcending what exists at any point."²⁵

Another important characteristic of the totality of meaning is that in revealing the meaning of creation it also consummates and brings about the unity of creation. When we anticipate the meaning or essence of reality, we are thereby anticipating the 'unifying unity' of reality. Once one understands that the totality of meaning is futural and yet to be revealed, one comes to an awareness "of the dependence of the structural unity of life, in the sense of that of the totality of meaning of the individual life, on its eschatological future...."²⁶ On the theme of unity, Pannenberg says:

Everything is a unity to the extent it is at all. Unity is equally fundamental for gnoseology as for ontology, for knowing as for being. The drive to unity and synthesis permeates the dynamics of reason. We perceive things only as we discover unity in plurality. Everything that is, and everything conceivable, is by its very existence or conception 'one'....The quest for the ultimate unity which integrates and thus unifies everything is the question reaching for God....For us, too, the way in which we test any concept of God is by asking whether it can account for the unity of all reality. 27

We see here that the very nature of human knowing is a struggle for unity, just as it is a struggle to perceive the totality of meaning. It has also become clear to us that the question of unity

and the question of the totality of meaning are, in Pannenberg's thought, not only related to, but indeed the same as the question reaching for God. Let us investigate this relation further.

We noted above that although the totality of meaning, or the whole, is not synonymous with the totality of presently existing reality, it is nevertheless interchangeable with Pannenberg's phrase 'the totality of reality' as that is geneticistically understood. For Pannenberg, the totality of reality, like the totality of meaning is incomplete and yet to be revealed. Their mutual interchangeability is presupposed throughout his writings. The totality of reality is the whole and the whole is the totality of meaning.²⁸ Once this is established, however, the question is: what is the relation between God as the all-determining reality (see chapter one of this thesis) and the totality of reality which is a totality of meaning? Although Pannenberg does, on occasion explicitly attempt to maintain a distinction between God and the totality of reality, it seems that their similarity is more prevalent in his thought than their distinctiveness. For example, in 'Analogy and Doxology', he says in a footnote that "God is not interchangeable with the totality of reality....", even though within the same article he appears to actually use the terms interchangeably.²⁹ Perhaps Pannenberg is referring here to the 'totality of reality' in a closed and static sense, and clearly the dynamic God of history cannot be so structuralistically limited. But in Theology and the Philosophy of Science he speaks of the idea of God as the all-determining reality as, in fact, "correlative" to the totality of finite reality which is incomplete and unavailable.³⁰ This correlation

is especially evident in the discernment of meaning. The implicit presence of an anticipated totality of meaning which is operative in all assertions of meaning is also characteristic of all theological statements about God. Pannenberg says that the reality of God must be shown to be "implicit, as the all-determining reality, in all finite reality, and in particular in the contexts of meaning of all events and states of affairs, which are made explicit in the anticipatory experiences of the totality of reality."³¹ The correlation here is unmistakable. Indeed, the anticipatory character of the totality of reality has profound implications for the way in which humans experience the reality of God:

The reality of God is always present only in subjective anticipations of the totality of reality, in models of the totality of meaning presupposed in all particular experience. 32 (italics are his.)

In this quote we see that 'totality of reality' and 'totality of meaning' are clearly interrelated terms and that in the anticipation of totality implicit in all experience, God himself is anticipated.

Another way to approach this relation of God and the totality of meaning/reality is to raise again the issue referred to earlier of unity and totality. We have seen that for Pannenberg, the unity of reality is only manifest in the totality of reality. This being the case, we could test our assertion of Pannenberg's correlation of God and totality by investigating the relation of God and unity. In the tradition of European philosophy, Pannenberg identifies the task of philosophy as the study of the being of what is, that is, what is common to all existing things. This question, however, leads philosophy to the ultimate question of

what it is that unifies all that is. The question of the unifying unity of all reality is, according to Pannenberg, the theological question -- the question of God.³³ Pannenberg says that "...God is not thought of as God at all if he is not thought of as the unity which unites all that is." And later on, showing the intimate relationship between theology and philosophy he says,

...when any theology seriously takes up the task of thinking of God, which means thinking of him as the unity which unites all that is, then it is already involved in the question of the relationship between unity and diversity in the constitution of every concrete and real existent. 34

God must be understood as the unifying unity of reality. He is the very basis for unity.

In his article 'Toward a Theology of Law', Pannenberg connects man's quest for meaning with his quest for unity. Man experiences the totality of the existent world around him as not having a unity in itself. He says of this existent world,

It is not in itself a whole, for the given world becomes a unity only in the light of that which is not given, that which man seeks for the sake of his humanity. 35 (emphasis added.)

That which is 'not given' is the unknown God who himself constitutes the unity of reality and, indeed constitutes the world as a whole. Again we see that just as God is not a totality existent here and now, so also the unity of the world is only manifest in the future -- it is not yet.³⁶ The correlation of Pannenberg's language concerning God, totality of meaning and reality, and unity has therefore become abundantly clear to us. Perhaps the most striking reference in Pannenberg's writing on this matter is in his Apostles' Creed where he includes within his understanding of totality and God, all of reality, including the reality of

sin. He says,

The unity of God corresponds only to the totality of reality -- reality, moreover, in its not yet concluded process. It is a unity of meaning in which all experience, even the negative experience of want, suffering, guilt and absurdity finds its place, since the unity of meaning goes beyond what is already in existence, though also embracing what is present and what has been. 37

The question of sin will be discussed in our next chapter, but what is important about this quote for our present purposes is the clear correspondence of language in Pannenberg's use of the terms and concepts that we have been analysing.

Having presented thus far in this chapter Pannenberg's view of meaning as it is related to the totality of meaning and God, there is one more topic which needs further discussion, viz., the nature of confession and how one speaks of God. That this is relevant to our discussion of meaning should be by now self-evident. We have already seen how Pannenberg follows Luhmann's idea that the anticipated totality of meaning which is dominant in a group or culture constitutes the 'world-view' or 'spirit' of such a group. It is interesting to note that this is also how Pannenberg defines religion. Religion is concerned with the totality of the meaning of life. The ultimate meaning that philosophy is driven towards cannot be grasped by philosophy, but can only be 'religiously apprehended'.³⁸

The totality of meaning implicitly and tacitly assumed in everyday life in any apprehension of the significance of individual things, actions or events is made explicit in religious experience and in the religions consciousness, in such a way, moreover, that the individual phenomenon is experienced as a manifestation of the totality of meaning. 39

Religious language and religious experience is, therefore, merely an explicit experience, or better, a conscious explication of the

depth of meaning, or totality of meaning which is operative in all of life and in every perception of particular meaning. This explication is religious precisely because of the correlation of the totality of meaning and God. Let us therefore conclude this chapter with a discussion of Pannenberg's philosophy of knowledge as it relates to the confessing of ultimate meaning -- speaking of God.

C. The Question of Doxological Language

Pannenberg's thought insists (rightly, I think) that all epistemology is dependent upon a prior ontology or theory of reality.⁴⁰ This is especially evident in his use of the traditional theological term 'analogy'. Because Pannenberg rejects (as we have seen in chapter two) the traditional notion of God as the first cause of the universe, who can therefore be grasped by analogous, causal inference, he also comes to a very different view of the place of analogy in speech about God. One speaks about God in analogical language not because the world somehow stands in analogical relation to God, where being is considered a lower emanation from the divine archetype, as was held by Neoplatonism and 13th century scholasticism. Pannenberg rejects such a position as being structuralistic and dualistic,⁴¹ failing thereby to understand that reality is history. Pannenberg speaks of analogical language because of his view of reality and revelation as history. Historical revelation is indirect revelation:

The constitutive factor behind the assertion that all speech about God is analogical and involves a transference of meaning is simply the indirectness of divine disclosure. 42

The point is simply that because God is not directly experienceable, as in a theophany, but is only known through his acts in

history, God can only be spoken of in an indirect manner, viz., "by speaking about whatever worldly being it is through which the reality of God manifests itself. Thus, one speaks of God by speaking about something else, but in such a way that this other being is viewed in its relation to the reality of God."⁴³ In other words, just as it is impossible for a finite creature to experience a direct confrontation with God, so also it is impossible for such a creature to speak of God in direct language. One always must use words which have been formed in creaturely context, which are then transferred in meaning to refer to God. This very transference bears witness to the indirectness of such language.

The question regarding the uniqueness of confessional language has to do with the nature of language which engages in such a transference of meaning. Pannenberg follows Edmund Schlink in describing such language as 'doxological'. Analogy, in this context, is useful and even a necessary, but subordinate element in confessional language and thought. Analogy gives us language to use, but "the intention of such thought and speech transcends the structure of analogy."⁴⁴ Indeed, the intention of analogy (viz., the inferring of attributes of God indirectly from his deeds in history), is very different from the intent of doxology. Doxological language designates something beyond the actual historical deed, namely, God himself. Doxology is rooted in adoration and praise:

In the act of adoration...the one who brings his praise sacrifices his 'I' and thereby, at the same time, the conceptual univocity of his speech.

He continues to say that in doxological statements,

...the otherwise usual sense of the human word is surrendered in its being used to praise God. To be sure, we speak of God's righteousness. But we thereby release this word from the manipulation of our thought, and must learn ever anew from the reality of God what the word 'righteousness' properly means. In the act of adoration, our words are transferred to the sublime infinity of God. They are thereby set in contrast to their ordinary meaning. 45 (emphasis added)

This 'surrender', 'release' and 'transfer' of ordinary language to the adoration of God is the essence of the transfer of meaning referred to above. When we use words in adoration of God, they are "...released from our disposal" and "handed over to God himself"; they are "sacrificed by the adoration of God" and undergo a change of content which is impossible for us to comprehend. Doxological language opens itself "unreservedly to the infinity of God".⁴⁶ Pannenberg quotes Schlink appreciatively:

Doxological statements are final statements, beyond which nothing more can be said by man -- statements in which the believer presents himself, his word, the logical consistency of his thought, to God as an offering of praise.

Pannenberg acknowledges that when human conceptualization is sacrificed in such adoration and yet "designations and relations drawn from the finite realm" are necessarily used to praise the infinite God, "contradictory conceptions inevitably result".⁴⁷

In accord with his emphasis on the historicity of God's revelation to man, Pannenberg goes on to insist that "the occasion for doxological speech about God is a specific experience of a divine act."⁴⁸ The question then would be, which events are acts of God which then occasion doxological language? Since God is the all-determining reality, it follows that all events, some with more or less clarity, can be understood in their true depth as acts of God. An event such as the parting of the Red Sea,

however, seems to lead one more naturally to doxological language than does an event like winning a baseball game.⁴⁹ Pannenberg identifies acts of God with the experience of totality and unity analyzed earlier in this chapter:

...in the moment in which we grasp, by means of a single event, the totality of the reality in which we live and around which our lives circulate, there we experience a work of God in the individual event. This happens when and to the extent that we are able to think of the unity of all reality and of our own existence only on the basis of a presupposition that transcends everything we find before us or within us, and which we name God or the divine.... 50

To describe such a particular experience in its full depth and its relation to the totality of reality and God requires, says Pannenberg, another language -- doxological language. Ordinary language which would simply name the event as taken by itself must be superseded by another way of speaking in order to assert an event to be an act of God.⁵¹ In fact, precisely because of modern man's self-centred orientation to dominate the world and resistance to give up his controlling conceptualization, he overlooks the depth dimension unlocked by doxology. Modern man cannot trust or have faith because he insists on maintaining his own mastery of the world.⁵²

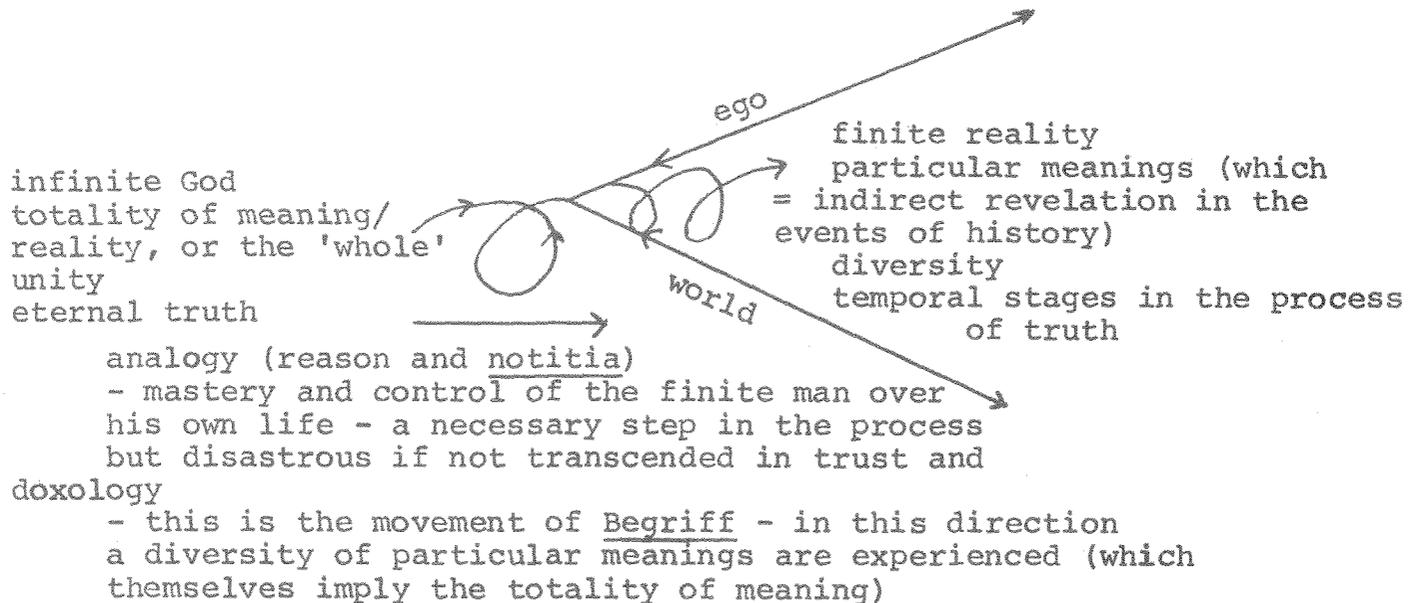
We see here that doxological language is faith-language, and it would be instructive for us to briefly note that the relation of doxology and analogy is essentially the same as that of faith and reason or the faith and history relation. Just as doxological language is occasioned by historical events and dependent upon analogy, so also faith must be grounded in knowledge gained from historical experience. Using reformation terminology, Pannenberg says that fiducia (faith or trust) must be grounded by means of

notitia and assensus (knowledge and assent). This order is constitutive to the 'logic of faith'.⁵³ The primary way in which man acquires knowledge is by an open rational investigation of the historical events under examination. But just as there is an important distinction between analogy and doxology, so also faith is not simply reduced to reason or knowledge for Pannenberg. Indeed, they are structurally very different. Reason and historical knowledge can only claim for itself a high level of probability, while faith is a matter of certainty. So then, Pannenberg distinguishes "between historical certainty and certainty of faith", which "lie on different levels".⁵⁴ The first level is, like analogy, necessary as a stepping stone to the higher level, but is therefore also transcended. Analogy leads to doxology, as history leads to faith. What actually happens is that by understanding the depth meaning of an event (such as the Christ-event), one is drawn into the movement which is faith. The same events which are the occasion for doxology are the events which draw men to their only appropriate response -- trustful surrender.⁵⁵ In such faith, the believer actually transcends his rational picture of the event and in this trusting self-surrender is open to more fully know the universal meaning that he only glimpsed in his historical knowledge.⁵⁶ So then, although notitia is an essential basis for fiducia, it is only in the sacrifice of the 'I', which is constitutive to trust, that man can truly relate to God who constitutes the totality of meaning. And we have seen from our discussion of doxology that this even means the offering of the language of analogy (or notitia) to be sacrificed and transferred beyond its ordinary meaning to find its ultimate meaning in God.

It is interesting to note that the two-directionality of Pannenberg's ontology is somewhat parallel to this duality and interdependence of analogy and doxology, and notitia and fiducia. The one is necessary for the other, but is also thereby transcended. Indeed, we have seen throughout this chapter a number of parallels between Pannenberg's ontology and his more epistemological reflections. For example, the ontological question of essence is inseparable from the hermeneutical problem of meaning, reality as history is the foundation for the historicity of truth, the infinite and eternal God discussed in chapter two receives a new focus in the analysis of the totality of reality/meaning, and the finite and temporal process of appearances is the same as the reality of parts or particular experiences of meaning. The question of unity and diversity which is ontologically a matter of the infinite and the finite returned in this chapter with the correlation of unity with totality and God. With all of these parallels, the next question would be whether the analysis of Pannenberg's ontology as a contradictory monism is also helpful in questions of hermeneutics and philosophy of knowledge. I think that it is. Let me offer the following diagram as a helpful way to understand some of the relations discussed in this paper:

←
doxology (fiducia and trust)

- surrender and sacrifice of the finite to the infinite
- this is the direction of the certainty of faith and is the same as the movement of Vorgriff
- in this direction the unity of meaning in the totality of meaning is explicitly anticipated



We see in this diagram that the finite arises out of the infinite and is therefore also revelatory, but in an indirect way, of the infinite. The particular diversity of meanings (notice the plurality) implicitly anticipate the totality of meaning for their own definitive meaning. The totality of meaning therefore constitutes the unity of meaning, the whole within which the parts have their place. Man first comes to know meaning (and revelation) by rational investigation of these particular meaningful events. He can then speak analogically of God's revelation. But no matter how essential analogy and notitia may be, it must always lead beyond itself to doxology and fiducia. If man limits himself to the direction of analogy he closes himself to trust by asserting his own mastery and control over creation. This amounts to a

closedness to the future and God, and a blindness to the totality of meaning implicit in all particular meaning. Therefore, the direction of doxology, based as it is upon the other direction, of analogy, is, like the positive mediation of the finite/infinite relation, an ecstatic surrender of the 'I' of the finite to the infinite. In this direction the implicit totality of meaning is anticipatorily explicated. Pannenberg says that it is not the former direction of knowledge, but the latter direction of faith that secures salvation.⁵⁷

It should, however, be noted that doxological language is anticipatory and therefore provisional. 'Doxa' refers to the glory of God which is only revealed definitively at the end. Consequently, "all worshipful speech about God anticipates his ultimate revelation". The provisionality of doxological speech is bound to its anticipatory character because it is always uttered in faith and hope of fulfillment. Indeed, we should recall that the 'internal contradiction' which drives all anticipations beyond themselves because they are always negated by their inadequacy to represent the whole, holds also for doxology. We would do well, therefore, to ask whether provisionality has the last word. Can we ever really be certain in the present of our anticipations of the whole, or are we simply left with an infinite process of postulating anticipations and their inevitable downfall? Pannenberg answers this question by introducing an important distinction between broken and partial anticipations and unbroken and pure anticipations. In the former, their finitude is clearly distinct from the infinite reality they are anticipating. This kind of anticipation is found in the anticipatory structure of all reality and speech, including doxology. Such anticipations

correspond to what Pannenberg calls partial revelations -- they are diverse parts which anticipate the unity of the whole. An unbroken or pure anticipation, however, is different because in it the eschatological reality which is anticipated actually pre-appears. This kind of anticipation is a prolepsis of the end. Pannenberg speaks of such an anticipation in singular terms because it only has, and only can, happen once -- in Jesus Christ. Pannenberg says that he sees "the distinctiveness of the history of Jesus, which establishes its finality as the revelation of God, in the fact that it is itself the event uniting and reconciling all other events to the whole."⁵⁹ (emphasis added.) Whereas all other anticipations can be superseded because they do not measure up to the whole, this anticipation is final and certain. We will investigate the place of Christ in Pannenberg's system of ontology and philosophy of knowledge in the next chapter.

Chapter four: Prolepsis and Jesus Christ

In chapter one we saw that Pannenberg understands theology to be the science of God who is the all-determining reality -- theology is therefore a universal science. To engage in a universal science is to study the totality of being, hence, theology must establish the indispensability of God for an ontology which analyzes being in its true depth. Pannenberg's view of God and the ontological priority of the future was, therefore, our theme in chapter two. Chapter three explicated some of the implications of Pannenberg's ontology for the hermeneutical/epistemological question of meaning. Just as the essence of being is eschatological, so also meaning is only known anticipatorily in the totality of meaning. Doxological language is the way in which we can relate to the totality of reality which is constituted by God. In chapters two and three we saw, in short, that Pannenberg understands both being and knowing as essentially anticipatory of the totality of reality and meaning. This anticipatory structure is also the heart of the dynamic or processive nature of being and knowing. All pre-appearances of the ultimate are necessarily superseded in time by other pre-appearances because as one pre-appearance or anticipation is negated as a consequence of its temporality and lack of universality, a new one, built upon the former, arises. The question which remains to be answered in this chapter is whether there is within this infinite process any place of certainty. Or to use Pannenberg's words, the question is whether there has been "...an experience of a pre-appearance

of the ultimate which has so far not been superseded and which is at least not involved in any inherent necessity of being superseded." Such a pre-appearance which would not be superseded would, in effect, be "the definitive arrival-in-pre-appearance (Zum-Vorscheingekommensein) of the ultimate."¹ Such a definitive pre-appearance is not only necessary for correct knowledge of God, but for the knowledge of the whole of reality, including one's own personal reality. We are dealing here with a question of revelation in the broadest sense. Has God revealed himself in history, in a particular occurrence which has an unsurpassable and universal significance? For Pannenberg this is a profoundly Christological question. If Pannenberg is going to do theology in the universal and all-inclusive way we have outlined throughout this thesis, then the "Christian" character of his theology must be decided by the place given to Christ within the totality of reality. The biblical question, 'What think ye of Christ?' (Matt. 22:42) must be answered in the context of the ontological and hermeneutical reflection that Pannenberg's theology engages in. In this chapter we will conclude our exposition of Pannenberg's theology with a discussion of some relevant aspects of his Christology.

A. Christ as the Prolepsis of the End

Pannenberg's formulation of the Christological question is, "to what extent have ultimate reality and truth so appeared in the public ministry and destiny of Jesus that as yet no new experiences have surpassed it...?"² For Pannenberg, the Christ, in order to be the Christ, must be the appearance of ultimate reality and truth. In order to understand how Jesus of Nazareth

is the Christ, one must understand the peculiar eschatological character of his historical appearance.

The rise of apocalypticism in Israel (discussed in chapter two) also forms the horizon of the ministry of Jesus. The apocalyptic expectation of the coming reign of God was the basis of Jesus' own message. His message was a proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom, the dawning of the "ultimate future of the world through which the totality of the world and its history would become manifest."³ This, however, would not, in itself, justify speaking of Jesus as the Christ. As a man who proclaims the coming kingdom, he would only be an apocalyptic. We would, therefore, still be limited to a mere pre-cognition of the end, yet another anticipation, not a pre-appearance or pre-realization of the future reign. It is the amazing nearness of the kingdom in Jesus' proclamation which marks him out as unique. His message seems to say that the kingdom is so close that if you reject him and do not follow him in faithful trust, then you are rejecting the kingdom. In other words, the very end that is anticipated in apocalyptic is about to occur in his very person.

The next question, however, is, how do we know when the end pre-occurs? What kind of event signifies the eschatological reality? According to Jewish apocalyptic the future reign of God entails a re-ordering of human society, a bringing of mankind to its true destination of full community. Consequently, the coming kingdom, a perfected society, was inescapably bound to the anticipated resurrection of the dead. Not only does the individual seek ultimate meaning beyond the grave, but a future perfect society can only be a comprehensive fulfillment of human

destiny if it includes individuals of previous generations.⁴ The end and consummation of history is identified by the general resurrection of the dead. The resurrection of the dead is the ultimate revelation of God which completes history, reveals the final essence of reality and brings salvation. It is the occurrence of the eschaton. It happened in Jesus Christ! Pannenberg says, "The universal revelation of the deity of God is not yet realized in the history of Israel, but first in the fate of Jesus of Nazareth, insofar as the end of all events is anticipated in his fate," he is saying that in Jesus' resurrection the end has already occurred. Indeed, "the end of the world will be on a cosmic scale what has already happened in Jesus".⁵ Jesus is the proleptic manifestation of the eschaton. By 'prolepsis' Pannenberg means the pre-appearance of the ultimate reality in time.⁶ In the resurrection of Jesus the eschatological future became a reality for the first time -- as a pre-occurrence. Within the context of the history of transmission of Hebrew traditions, the only possible meaning of the resurrection of Jesus is that the end of the world begins with Jesus and that he must therefore be the eschatological Son of Man, the ultimate revelation of God.⁷

An integral element of Pannenberg's view of the proleptic revelation of God in Christ is that this revelation is unsurpassable. This is obviously a necessary implication of the 'ultimate' character of such a revelation. A prolepsis of the nature of Christ's resurrection cannot be superseded by any future events precisely because in Christ the end of all things has occurred. The revelation of God in Christ is therefore definitive.⁸ This

does not mean, however, that there is no longer a future or that the future is closed because it has already occurred in Christ. Rather, the very proleptic structure of his revelation points beyond itself to a further event which is still futural, viz., the general resurrection of the dead. Just as Jesus in his ministry always pointed beyond himself to God and the primacy of the kingdom, his very resurrection also points beyond itself to the resurrection of all men. We see here that the already/not yet dialectic characterizes even Jesus' resurrection.

Pannenberg says, "the final determination of creation, life out of death, which already appeared in Jesus through his resurrection from the dead, has not yet made its appearance in us."⁹ But because it has occurred in him we can have faith that it will also be the fulfillment of our destiny.

The proleptic structure of the Christ event is also evident in Jesus' proclamation of his own unique relation to the coming kingdom. Such a claim has a proleptic structure because it anticipates a confirmation that is to come in the future. The claim cannot be accepted on its own value, it needs verification. Likewise, his claim that survival or destruction in the coming judgment by the Son of Man would be decided by one's present relation to himself could only be verified when that judgment actually occurred, viz., at the general resurrection of the dead.¹⁰ However, inasmuch as this event has already happened in this one man, Pannenberg contends that his pre-Easter claim is confirmed. Moreover, Pannenberg insists that without the Easter event Jesus would not have been the Christ. We know who Jesus really is only by viewing his ministry from the perspective of its end, his

resurrection. This is, of course, consistent with Pannenberg's ontology of the future -- one knows the essence of a thing only by knowing, or anticipating, its ultimate future. The principle of retroactivity discussed in chapter two is just as valid in discussion of Jesus of Nazareth as it is of any other creature. Pannenberg says, that

...it is not a special case that Jesus' essence is established retroactively from the perspective of the end of his life, from his resurrection, not only for our knowledge but in its being. 11

Only by his resurrection is it decided that in reality Jesus is one with God and that he retroactively was one with God previously. Consequently, Pannenberg says that just as the pre-Easter claim is an anticipation of the Easter event, so also the Easter event which establishes Jesus' unity with God, "...comes into force retroactively from the perspective of this event for the claim to authority in the activity of the earthly Jesus."¹²

The proleptic character of Jesus' life and destiny inevitably leads us to the question of the unity of Jesus with God. That Pannenberg's thought should proceed in such a way is itself not surprising. Since the revelation of God is in the eschaton (God being the power of the future) then clearly a proleptic pre-appearance of the end will be in unity with God. If Jesus was the final revelation of God because of his resurrection then it follows that Jesus belongs to the very idea of God and is himself one with God.¹³ Although there have been an assortment of Christological formulations of the divinity of Jesus and his unity with God,¹⁴ Pannenberg prefers to think of Jesus as the revelational presence of God. Inherent in the concept of God's self-revelation is the idea that the Revealer and what is revealed

are identical: "Thus to speak of a self-revelation of God in the Christ event means that the Christ event, that Jesus belongs to the essence of God himself."¹⁵ A self-revelation is only truly a self-revelation if "the medium through which God makes himself known is not something alien to himself, brings with it no dimming of the divine light," as is present in all veiled and finite anticipations, "but, on the contrary, results in a knowledge of the divinity of God for the first time". Christ is that singular and definitive self-revelation. Therefore, "the essence of God is not accessible at all without Jesus Christ."¹⁶

Traditionally, Christ's divinity and the unity of his 'two natures' has been conceived in terms of the doctrine of the incarnation. While Pannenberg acknowledges the reality that the incarnational doctrine is attempting to explain, he nevertheless faults this approach for taking its starting point in an eternal unity of the Father and the Son and then moves from Christ's divinity to his manifestation as a man. Pannenberg considers this 'theology from above', as he calls it, to be illegitimate. He contends that the only way that a finite theologian can properly understand Christ's divinity is via his humanity and the events of his life, most notably the resurrection. This is a Christology 'from below'. While the doctrine of the incarnation may express the unity of God and man in Jesus, such a unity is only established on the basis of the resurrection. The retroactive validity of the resurrection makes the formulation of a doctrine of the incarnation both necessary and possible, but it is his historical fate that teaches us that Jesus is God. This is where all subsequent theological formulations must begin.¹⁷

Having insisted that Christology must proceed from below, however, Pannenberg acknowledges that the incarnational question of how the divinity of God can be united with the man Jesus, without sacrificing either, still must be addressed. Pannenberg's view of God as eternally the same and yet simultaneously in a constant process of becoming is central to his position on this matter. Because eternity and time are not mutually exclusive, Pannenberg can speak of a dialectic of divine self-differentiation in which God can create what is different from himself and yet maintain both his own eternal identity and become one with that which has been differentiated.¹⁸ The incarnation is therefore seen as such a divine self-differentiation wherein the eternal God becomes one with a temporal being -- Jesus. An added dimension to this dialectic is that it is also valid to speak of the unity of God and Jesus as having always been true in God's eternity. Pannenberg says, "What is true in God's eternity is decided with retroactive validity only from the perspective of what occurs temporally with the import of the ultimate."¹⁹ There is no event which could supersede in ultimate importance the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. So then we see that the unity of God and Christ is decided retroactively by the resurrection, not only for Jesus' human existence, but for God's eternity as well. A proleptic revelation of the ultimate with such power can only mean that Christ has always been one with God and is therefore a manifestation of the dialectic of divine self-differentiation.

Pannenberg also contends that light is shed upon the question of the 'two natures' of Christ by this line of reasoning 'from below'. Jesus' divinity is dialectically identical with his

humanity. Jesus is the Son of God precisely in his particular humanity because the history of this particular man is of ultimate import. In this man the eschaton has appeared. Pannenberg elaborates on this dialectic:

Thus Jesus' identity with the eternal Son of God is dialectical: the understanding of this man, in his humanity changed into its opposite, leads to the confession of his eternal divinity. Conversely, anything said about an eternal Son of God can be sufficiently established only by recourse to the particularity of this man, to his unity with God. The synthesis of this dialectic, the unity of God and man in Christ, emerges fully only in the history of his existence. 20

Jesus is of one essence with the Father in his personal differentiation from the Father. But in being differentiated he also is of one essence with man. He is the Son of God because both God's essence and the essence of man are integrated into a dialectical unity in his person, as has been verified by his resurrection. The highest expression of this man's unity with God, however, is his "exaltation to participation in God's Lordship."²²

B. Christ as Lord and Mediator of Creation

In his exposition of the phrase in the Apostles' Creed, 'God's only Son, our Lord', Pannenberg says that the designation 'Son of God' refers to Jesus' relationship with the Father (God's Son), while the title 'Lord' refers to Jesus' relation to the world (our Lord).²³ In discussing Pannenberg's view of Christ as the proleptic pre-appearance of the eschaton we saw that the revelation is one with the Revealer and therefore Jesus is the Son of God. What remains for us to consider is his Lordship, or how the Son of God relates to the world, to creation. We shall see that 'Lord' and 'Mediator' are intimately related terms for Pannenberg, both given a uniquely eschatological reinter-

pretation.

It is clear that Jesus' unity with God and his Lordship are inseparable for Pannenberg: "Shown to be the Son of God by his dedication to the Father, Jesus is the eschatological ruler toward whom all things are, so that all things are also through him."²⁴ In light of Pannenberg's eschatological ontology, the meaning of this sentence is clear. Remember that for Pannenberg the essence of things will be decided only in the ultimate future and that in coherence with this view of essence he speaks of creation as happening from the end. This eschatological view of creation means that the Lordship of Christ and his mediation of creation take on a radically new meaning. Rather than speaking of Christ as the timeless and primordial Logos which originates and orders the cosmos, Pannenberg insists that we understand the Logos at the end, not the beginning of history. The mediator of creation is therefore the 'eschatological ruler': "The statement that all things and beings are created through Jesus Christ means that the eschaton that has appeared beforehand in Jesus represents the time and point from which the creation took place."²⁵ Insofar as Jesus is the proleptic end of all things and all things owe their being to the end which finally determines their nature and essence, Jesus is the mediator of creation. All creatures tend toward him because by their very ontological make-up they anticipate the end which has pre-appeared in him. Because Jesus by his resurrection is the incarnation of the eschatological reality, the ultimate realization of God's will for humanity and creation can be expected from him. Such a realization amounts to a manifestation of the essence of man and creation.²⁶ Indeed, the intimate ontological relation for Pannenberg between being and the eschatological future means that the anticipation of all things toward Jesus as their escha-

tological summation is identical with their creation through him:

Every creature receives through him as the eschatological judge its ultimate illumination, its ultimate place, its ultimate definition in the context of the whole of creation. The essence of all events and figures is to be ultimately defined in the light of him because their essence is defined on the basis of their orientation to him. To that extent, creation of all things is mediated through Jesus. 27

In Jesus, God's eternal act of creation, which is entirely unfolded for the first time in the eschaton, is proleptically manifest. In Jesus, creation and consummation are one. Consequently, only from him and through him do all things have their essential nature.²⁸ We can assert Jesus' deity and Lordship only if the ultimate meaning, goal and origin of all things is revealed in him.²⁹

We should notice here that the question of particular meaning in the context of the whole discussed earlier has a bearing upon Pannenberg's view of Christ's mediatorship of creation. Just as the essence of a particular creature is determined only by its relation to the whole, so is essence related by Pannenberg to Jesus who illuminates the meaning of the particular in the context of the whole. What is ontologically and hermeneutically spoken of as the whole can be Christologically spoken of as Jesus' proleptic revelation precisely because of the correlation of God and the whole discussed in chapter three above. To be the proleptic revelation of God implies a proleptic manifestation of the whole. One cannot have the former without the latter. A proleptic event is a particular experience of reality as a whole. It is a revelatory occurrence "...from which a total understanding of reality is disclosed...."³⁰ Inasmuch as all events ontologically relate to the whole, it follows that the Christ-event will therefore have an irreplaceable role in that relation:

It is the particularity of this event of Jesus that through it for the first time the totality of reality was constituted as a whole, whereas all other occurrences have a relation to the whole of reality only through their relation to this unique occurrence. 31

Just as God relates to the finite revelationally by becoming finite in Christ, so also the finite relates to the infinite via Christ. In this sense Christ unites and reconciles the finite particular to the infinite whole. In mediating this relation of the part to the whole, Christ makes our own lives 'whole' by revealing to us our ultimate meaning and destiny.³²

As Mediator of creation, Christ brings 'wholeness' precisely because in him a perfect expression of man's destiny first appears: "As God's revelation, Jesus is at the same time the revelation of human nature, of the destiny of man."³³ (italics are his) Here we understand the universal significance of the particularity of Jesus, his soteriological power, viz., that in him "man's destiny as man has appeared for the first time in an individual and thus has become accessible to all others only through this individual."³⁴ The salvation that is found in Christ is nothing other than the fulfillment of the ultimate destiny toward which man is aimed -- herein is wholeness of life, the realization of man's essence. Contemporary anthropology speaks of man's ultimate destiny in terms of his openness beyond the momentary horizon of the world. As we have seen in chapter two, Pannenberg understands this Weltoffenheit to find its proper fulfillment only in a self-transcending openness to God. In Jesus, man's destiny to such openness is fulfilled:

The openness to God that belongs to the structure of human existence as such...and that finds its fulfillment only when human existence is personally integrated in dependence upon God is fulfilled in Jesus by the

divine confirmation of his eschatological message through his resurrection from the dead. It is fulfilled in all other men only through their historically mediated relation to and community with Jesus of Nazareth. 35

The openness which is constitutive to the structure of man's existence is only fulfilled in the resurrection because only in the resurrection does man fully realize his openness to God. Man's destiny to openness compels him to think of life beyond the grave. Indeed if man's openness is only fulfilled beyond death, then we could say that man's ultimate destiny is to be raised from the dead to new life. This has been fulfilled in Jesus. Pannenberg says that all of man's hopes are fulfilled in Jesus because through his resurrection from the dead "the true man, the real human being that is the destiny of us all", has appeared in him.³⁶

If Jesus is the fulfillment and Mediator of human destiny and the perfect Lord of humanity then he must also be sinless. Sin is to live in contradiction to one's destiny. Since man's essence is to be disclosed in the future, his destiny is to be open to the future. Therefore, sin is the opposite of openness, viz., closedness to the future. Man in his egocentric self-assertion closes himself to the future and consequently betrays his own destiny of openness. The 'wages of sin are death' precisely because in his self-centredness man closes himself to his ultimate destiny in the resurrection of the dead.³⁷ Therefore, we can only assert that Jesus was sinless if he lived his life in total harmony with his destiny, and this is established for us retroactively by his resurrection. Because Jesus rose from the dead we know that he lived in total openness beyond death and is therefore the righteous one, a sinless man.³⁸

As the perfect fulfillment of human destiny, the summation

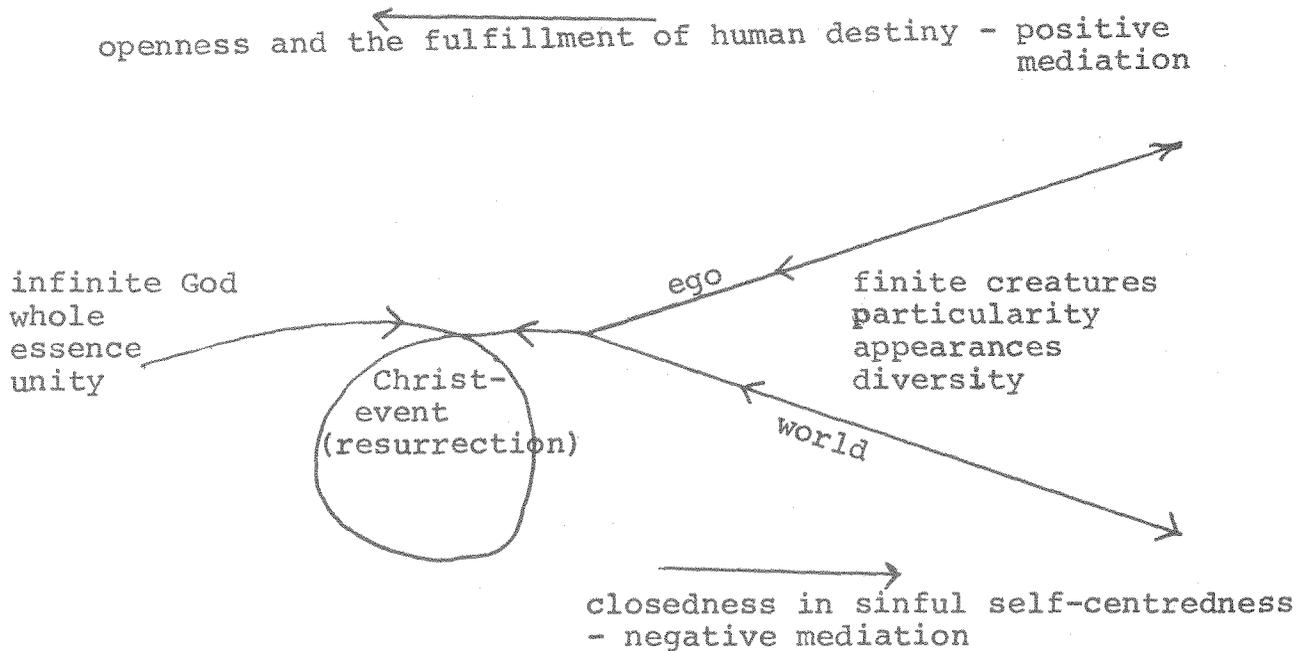
of humanity is included in Jesus' Lordship. Because he reveals and constitutes wholeness, Jesus' place in history has universal significance. Indeed, "all human history is ordered toward him."³⁹ And since all of reality is history tending towards its goal, Pannenberg says that, "Everything is predestined toward Jesus, and he is predestined to the summation of the whole."⁴⁰ The goal of history is, for Pannenberg, the unity of reality. Reality is the process of striving to attain unity, to attain reconciliation. This unity is only arrived at in the end, and therefore Christ as the prolepsis of the end is the eschatological summation of the world process to a unity. He is the goal of history which gathers history into a whole: "Only from the perspective of the Christ-event as eschatological event is human history to be understood as a unity."⁴¹

Christ's Lordship is manifest precisely in his consummation of all reality into its essential unity. To illuminate the essence of reality and to bring creation to its ultimate goal of unity are the same -- the essence of reality is its unity. However, just as essence already exists in God's eternity but is yet to break the surface of our present reality, so also is the already/not yet dialectic operative in the question of unity and Christ's Lordship. The world is consummated in Christ and Christ is one with God, yet the world also waits for its consummation and unity. Christ's Lordship, and therefore the consummation of unity is presently 'hidden' and yet to be revealed at the full dawning of the kingdom of God: "It is reality for the time being only in heaven, in a hidden, if superior mode."⁴² Christ presently rules from the eschaton, out of God's eternity and therefore the unity of history already exists, hidden in

God's eternity as well. What is hidden, however, will be unveiled and this unveiling is the eschatological revelation, the salvation of man.⁴³ Salvation is the fulfillment of man's destiny, his ultimate self-transcendence wherein the finite 'I' gives up its particularity to be taken up into the infinite 'Thou' -- the whole. Through Jesus man is reconciled to God and mediated to sonship.⁴⁴ The unity which Pannenberg speaks of is no less than man's unity with God, the fulfillment of his destiny -- reconciliation. Pannenberg makes no distinction between Christ's mediation of creation and his mediation of redemption -- creation and recreation ultimately coalesce.

We began this chapter with the question of the place of Christ in Pannenberg's eschatological ontology and hermeneutic, and it has become clear that the Christ-event has an essential place in Pannenberg's thought. The relations of finite/infinite, part/whole, closedness/openness, appearance/essence, and unity/diversity discussed in chapters two and three have all returned in our discussion of Christology. We have seen that Christ's Lordship and mediation of creation are intimately related to the ontological priority of the future and also that the ontological principle of retroactivity is just as valid for discerning the meaning of the Christ-event as it is for all other finite reality. The re-appearance of all of these relations and categories bears witness to the unity and integrality of all the elements of Pannenberg's complex thought. This also raises the question, however, of whether the description of Pannenberg's thought as a geneticistic contradictory monism can also be helpful in our understanding of his Christology. If our analysis has been help-

ful in elucidating his ontology and hermeneutic, then the final test would be its applicability to his Christology. I suggest that Pannenberg's Christology plays an integral (indeed, integrating!) role in his contradictory monistic ontology and offer the following diagram and explanation:



Having elucidated in previous diagrams all of the other elements of this contradictory monism, what remains for us is to further discuss the significance of the 'flip' in the diagram. In chapter two we said that the flip is intended to visually suggest both the dynamic of two directions and the contradictory harmony of the two sides of the diagram, the finite and infinite, part and whole, etc. The flip is therefore the place of radical conversion. the changing of one thing into its opposite. Indeed, we could say that everything 'converges' at the point of the flip. An example of this is the notion of the dialectical identity of Jesus with the Son of God. We have seen that Pannenberg says

that the understanding of the particular finite man Jesus turns into its opposite in the confession of his divinity. And conversely, all speech about the divinity of the infinite Son of God is only possible by recourse to the particularity of the man Jesus. In the history of this man, especially in his resurrection, God and man are dialectically united. The infinite changes into its opposite, and vice versa. That which is contradictory comes into harmony in Jesus, who is God and man. We have also seen that the relation of part and whole also converge in Jesus because his particularity is of universal significance when understood in its depth. Indeed, in him we have a definitive prolepsis of the whole, and our relation to the whole is possible only in relation to Christ. In Christ, reality is constituted as a whole and therefore he also reveals to us the ultimate essence and meaning of our particular appearance. The diagram visualizes this by depicting the only route from finite particularity to unity and reconciliation with the infinite whole (which is the essence of reality) as being via Christ. The Christ-event is, therefore, the convergence of the finite/infinite, part/whole, essence/appearance and even unity/diversity.

The unity which the world strives for is a reality in Christ (though presently hidden) because he was perfectly (sinlessly) open to his destiny. The direction of Weltoffenheit is fully manifest in Jesus, and therefore his destiny is fulfilled in his own resurrection. Yet Christ also experiences the opposite direction of negative mediation and judgment in his life. He is negated in his sacrifice and rejection by God. The consequence of the direction of closedness and self-centredness is death. Christ experiences death as the "punishment suffered in our place

for the blasphemous existence of humanity."⁴⁵ However, in sacrificially giving up his life, he gains it. By surrendering his finitude in total dedication to the God of the coming kingdom he demonstrates his own openness beyond death. God confirms his sinlessness by raising him from the dead. The destiny of all men to be raised from the dead is now attainable in relation to Christ. That is why the direction in the diagram of openness and fulfillment of destiny leads to Christ. This is also the heart of Pannenberg's view of Christ's mediation of creation. Creation occurs out of the future and Christ is the unsurpassable proleptic pre-appearance of the eschaton, therefore all creatures are through him and to him. This is also evident within the diagram. Christ is both the ultimate origin and goal of creation.

We have seen, therefore, that Christ's role in Pannenberg's thought is pivotal. In answer to the question, what does your ontology think of Christ?, Pannenberg's answer would be that without Christ his whole view of reality would collapse. In one sense we could say that 'everything' happens in Christ. He is both God and man, infinite and finite. He experiences fully both directions of positive and negative mediation, unity and separation. He is a particular man in the midst of a diversity of men, yet his humanity is of universal significance as a prolepsis of the whole, and is the summation of mankind. He is a present occurrence of the ultimate future. Pannenberg contends that Christian theology must prove its worth by its integrative power over all of reality. A theology of God as the all-determining reality must take into account all of reality, and a man who is to be the Son of God must be the source of illumination of all

reality. Pannenberg's Christology is an attempt to demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of the all-determining reality. He says that in the early period of Christianity, the ascription of Lordship to Jesus "signified the claim of the proclamation of Christ to universal, all-embracing truth -- truth which proves itself by its capacity for absorbing all other truth into itself."⁴⁶ We have seen throughout this thesis that the passion of Pannenberg's thought is to make this claim a reality for twentieth century Christianity.

Concluding Reflections

The primary purpose of this thesis has been to examine some central elements of Pannenberg's eschatological theology. Our theme has been futurity and creation, the shape of an eschatologically oriented ontology, philosophy of knowledge and Christology. I have suggested that one can discern a recurring pattern to Pannenberg's thought and that that pattern can be described and diagrammed as a geneticistic contradictory monism. In essence, that is the conclusion of this thesis. The viability of the conclusion must be decided in terms of its explanatory power in the actual explication of Pannenberg's theology. I propose to conclude not by restating my interpretive hypothesis, but by offering my first reflections on some of the elements of Pannenberg's theology that have been discussed throughout the body of the paper.

The first response to Pannenberg's theological project must be admiration. Pannenberg has the courage not only to confront the dominant theological perspective of his time, but also to engage atheist criticism of theology in open debate. His conviction of the truthfulness of the gospel leaves him no other option. Because theology is a universal science for Pannenberg, he also attempts (with much success) to understand contemporary movements in the social sciences and philosophy as they relate to his theological task. This constant cross-fertilization makes for an exciting and dynamic theological perspective. Pannenberg's courage is also evident in his eschatologicalization of theology.

His claim that eschatology opens the door to renewed insights in theology, ontology, hermeneutics and anthropology is worthy of much discussion and debate. It seems to me that such foundational insights as the apocalyptic roots of Christianity, the inherent movement of creation to the eschaton, the anticipatory character of all knowledge and man's openness to the future will prove to be indispensable to further Christian reflection. There are, however, certain problem areas in Pannenberg's theology which also merit further attention. Perhaps some of these problems will prove to be just as foundational as the insights just mentioned.

A. The Problem of Evil

Both Tupper¹ and Berkouwer² suggest that Pannenberg has not, as of yet, sufficiently dealt with the problem of evil in creation. This, I surmise, is not merely a matter of insufficient attention to the problem, but points to a difficulty inherent in Pannenberg's system. If the very ontological structure of reality is a contradiction between openness and closedness, hasn't evil become an inevitable and unavoidable component of reality? Although Pannenberg maintains that sin occurs only when man closes himself in self-centredness to his infinite destiny, he nevertheless acknowledges that such centredness is constitutive to all creaturely being. He therefore concludes that "sin is something that belongs to man's givenness". Man's responsibility in this situation is to have "the courage to accept the conditions of one's own existence in the light of one's knowledge of man's true destiny, and to accept these conditions as something that must be overcome."³ In contrast with traditional theology which has understood sin as moral perversion, Pannenberg says that,

...sin appears as a fundamental structural element in the constitution of human existence. The point at issue is not primarily individual faults; it is rather the faulty foundation of our existence as a whole.... 4

Because sin and evil are structural necessities in reality, then the most that can be asked of man is courage. The biblical call to repentance seems to be undercut if man is not fully responsible for sin.⁵

Pannenberg structuralizes sin. The problem is not merely man's disobedience, but much deeper than that, we have seen that there is fault at the very foundation of his existence. Indeed, this was evident in chapter two where we saw that Pannenberg speaks of the antagonistic structure of the world on account of its very finitude. The finite is 'pushed away' and 'cast off' from the infinite. The finite is, in its very creation, already in antagonism with the infinite. This is the faulty foundation. The relation between the finite and infinite is negatively mediated both because the finite is a 'be-going', or a going away from the infinite, and because the infinite is active in the collapse of the finite. It seems that no matter how much Pannenberg wants to affirm the world of finitude, his ontology really demands a negation of finitude simply because it is not infinite. Pannenberg seems to identify finitude and its movement of control and self-assertion with sin. I also contend that his position on positive mediation does not, in the end, really resolve the problem. One wonders whether the infinite really 'preserves' the finite in the midst of its collapse or whether the finite is actually subsumed in the infinite. After all, if finitude is a 'veiling' of the infinite, and the eschaton is the unveiling of the infinite, then what really happens to the finite? If man can endure an un-

veiling of God at the eschaton which he could not endure in his finitude, what could this possibly mean except that man merges with the infinite? And if temporality is constitutive to finitude, and salvation lifts man out of transitoriness and temporality, would this not entail ceasing to be finite? Is that what glorification really is? Can Pannenberg really maintain, therefore, his desire to affirm finitude? Isn't even the so-called 'positive' mediation actually a negation and invalidation of the finite because it leads the finite beyond its finitude? If finitude is creationally good, then why does it need to be transcended?⁶ Can the God of the future really offer us hope if the destiny that he leads us to negates our very finitude? Does modern man really hope to become one with the infinite and leave his finitude behind?

Perhaps Pannenberg's interest in apocalypticism has led to this negativistic view of reality. Both Moltmann⁷ and Braaten⁸ say that the essence of apocalypticism is its dualism of two aeonic powers. There is a "dialectical differentiation of all reality into this present evil age and the blessed one to come". The new world is mediated through the negation of the old. Consequently, "negativity is the midwife of creativity".⁹ Traditional theology interpreted this in terms of an above and below dualism. The above is the new age (the realm of grace) and the below is the old age (the realm of nature). Pannenberg rejects all dualism, but accepts apocalypticism, so he, in effect, turns the dualism monistically on its side and contradictorily speaks of the eschatological future in contrast with the temporal past and present, the infinite and finite, God and man.¹⁰ The dualism is gone, but

the apocalyptic negation of the creaturely world lingers on. My contention is that the root problem of Pannenberg's theology is his identification of creation and the fall.¹¹ This identification, which has become evident in our discussion of the finite/infinite relation, is also apparent in Pannenberg's view of reconciliation. "Reconciliation is a constitutive aspect of creation" because creation is, by merit of its very creatureliness, fallen.¹² Hence, reconciliation becomes an ontological necessity. Because diversity and differentiation are intrinsic to finitude it is understandable, therefore, that Pannenberg views reconciliation as a return (or move forward) to unity, to oneness. The finite is diverse and estranged until it transcends its finitude and is unified with the infinite.¹³ This is the heart of Pannenberg's contradiction: the particular creature is created by God not to be validly a particular creature, but to give up its particularity in order to become one with the whole. Sin is ontologized by being identified with man's very finite creatureliness.¹⁴

I wonder whether a more helpful approach to this problem is to maintain the biblical distinction between creation and the fall, and understand the creation to be good in its very finitude, and fallenness to be a misdirection of response on the part of man. Not wishing to ignore or deny the complexity of the problem of evil, I nevertheless would suggest that an understanding of the covenantal relation of God and creation, and man's subsequent break of the covenant is a more fruitful path to follow than Pannenberg's ontologizing of sin. Evil, I am convinced, cannot be biblically understood as a dialectic of finite and infinite,

closedness and openness, existence and essence, temporality and eternity, or particularity and totality. Such a dialectical approach misses the biblical point that creatureliness is good when lived in covenantal obedience and deathly bad when, and only when, it is lived in disobedience. There may be an historical 'givenness' to sin, but it is not an ontological necessity.¹⁵ This would also mean that we can justifiably speak of redemption, restoration and recreation in our theology. Eschatological salvation is not an a-historical return to a primordial state, but it is a re-establishment of an 'original' relationship between God and creation in terms of where creation would have been normatively led had there not been a fall. A clear understanding of the biblical theme of creation, fall and redemption would appear to be the only way in which we can both affirm finite creatureliness and understand the anti-creational perversity of evil in the world.

B. The Question of God

Another problem which deserves further attention is the ambiguity of Pannenberg's discussion of the existence of God. For example, Pannenberg contends that God cannot 'exist' because that would threaten creaturely freedom, and yet he will exist when his rule is complete. Will this mean that freedom will cease to be when God's being is complete at the eschaton? Or is God's existence always not yet, and always futural? If this is the case, then one must ask whether the eschaton ever finally occurs, or does it always remain as the eternally hidden depth dimension of our present life? A related question is how it is possible that God's being exists when his rule is complete, yet the dawning

of the eschaton is actually the abolition of the distinction between the ruler and the ruled.¹⁶ Either the eschaton will never occur and God will never exist, or when it does occur everything will be God.¹⁷ Isn't this also the logical implication of the transcendence of the finite to the infinite? If the finite loses its finitude and, in effect, becomes one with the infinite, then the infinite is everything! This gives some credibility to the description of Pannenberg's theology as a 'panentheism'.¹⁸ The viability of the God/man distinction therefore seems to be problematic within the structure of thought.¹⁹ Indeed, such ambiguity is constitutive to contradictory monism. Perhaps Pannenberg would answer that in the resurrection we all come into the dialectical unity of God and man, as did Christ.

C. The Place of Christ

This leads me to another concern, viz., the place of Christ in Pannenberg's theology. We have seen in chapter four that Pannenberg has no problem with placing Christ in the context of his whole ontology. Indeed, Christ is the 'linch-pin' of Pannenberg's whole contradictory monistic ontology. This, however, gives a certain ontological 'necessity' to the Christ-event which overlooks the freedom of God's gracious offering of his Son which is characteristic of the biblical witness. This sense of necessity is understandable in the light of Pannenberg's identification of creation and fall. A mediator of creation is ontologically necessary because the structure of creation is fallen and therefore is ontologically a process of reconciliation. Different from Pannenberg, however, I would contend that the element of grace is only possible if man really is responsible for his own

fallen state and Christ comes to restore mankind (even though judgment is deserved) to its original covenantal relationship.

D. The Problem of Order

Another problem which should be raised is Pannenberg's geneticistic view of the 'order' of reality. Although his emphasis on the free faithfulness of God being expressed in the lawful regularities of creation is helpful, we must ask what the implications of his contention that such ordinances will come to an end would be.²⁰ If the ordinances will come to an end, how will we creationally experience the constancy of God's faithfulness? And what kind of creation would we have if the very order of creation is taken away? Is Pannenberg saying that the eschatological reality will be without order? While the Bible clearly does not advocate a static, structuralistic view of reality, it is questionable whether Pannenberg's geneticism, with its ultimate abolition of constant order is compatible with the biblical world-view. Perhaps a more biblically fruitful approach to this question of order is to understand the lawful patterns of orderly creation as responses to the ordering, directing and creative Word of God.²¹ The creation is a dynamic and temporal response to God's Word which calls it into being. Without the Word, there is no creation. This also leads us to a different interpretation of the meaning of God's so-called 'new' acts in history. God's intervention in history is to lead his people from disobedience to obedience to the Word which gives them life. Failing to account for the creative power of the Word in this fashion, Pannenberg's Christology is also unable to do justice to the biblical correlation of the Son of God and the Word which 'was in the beginning' (John 1).

Christ integrates life because he is the healing and shalom-bringing Word of life. Christ is proleptic revelation because he manifests in his person the fulfillment of the Word in the present as it will be fulfilled in the full dawning of the kingdom. In total subjection to the Word of God, man finds his life and freedom, while disobedience means death and bondage because it is disobedience to the very Word which gives us life. The Word affirms finite subjectivity and judges all disobedience which is man's attempt to ignore the Word of God and be his own 'pseudo-word'.

E. The Autonomy of Reason

My final criticism is of the self-avowed 'rational' character of Pannenberg's theology. We saw in chapter one that the passion of Pannenberg's theological enterprise is to give a rational account of his faith in response to the Enlightenment attack upon theology. Although all theologies must take such an apologetic task seriously, I suggest that Pannenberg has been so preoccupied with 'out-enlightening' the Enlightenment that he has, in many respects, uncritically accepted certain aspects of Enlightenment thought which could be more adequately responded to by a more penetrating critique. Such a critique would also be more conducive to the apologetic task at hand. We have already seen that Pannenberg has uncritically accepted the order/freedom antithesis common to modern humanism without sufficiently bringing it under the scrutiny of a biblical world-view, and now we must consider his endorsement of the Enlightenment's concern with rationality.²²

According to Pannenberg, the primary post-Enlightenment question for theology is the question of authority. In opposition

to all epistemological dualisms wherein religious knowledge is unrelated to rational knowledge and theology is grounded in authoritative revelation, Pannenberg contends that only what can convince us of its reasonableness can be deemed authoritative. To be authoritative is to be reasonable! Faith must be grounded in knowledge, it can never be self-grounding.²³ Consequently, there is no safe shelter for theology, it must be answerable to the questions of all other sciences, most notably philosophy. That theology must be open to both interdisciplinary critique and discussion with other faith perspectives is, for me, beyond question, and Pannenberg is to be commended for making this a reality in his own theology. My question, however, is whether Pannenberg takes sufficient account of his own insight into the religious character of all human reflection. Pannenberg has admirably proven that implicit in all assertions (especially theoretical assertions) is a fore-conception of the totality of reality. I am impressed by the striking similarity within Pannenberg's own thought between a fore-conception and religious faith. Both are directed toward the horizon of the future in an anticipatory way. Both include an attitude of trust. Would this not mean, therefore, that one's implicit, religious vision of life is integrally involved in all assertions? And doesn't this suggest to us that rationality itself is never autonomous in regard to an ultimate religious perspective? This clearly makes Pannenberg's emphasis on the rational basis of theology questionable. An analysis of the religious character of the modern humanist commitment to an autonomous reason is not totally foreign to Pannenberg's theology, but it is not sufficiently developed either. Such a critique would apologetically speak to the very heart of modern man's false

faith in reason.²⁴ Pannenberg's zeal for investigating the rational basis of faith could well be redirected to an investigation of the religious basis of reason.²⁵ To use Pannenberg's language, reason doesn't just end in doxology, doxology is also the beginning of reason.

Pannenberg's own theology is committed to rationality. I suggest that that 'commitment' to reason should be more fully understood in its religious depth. I am, however, convinced that Pannenberg's theology is also committed to Jesus Christ. We began chapter two on ontology by noticing that Pannenberg's ontology is an explication of the implications of his faith in Jesus Christ as the proleptic revelation of God. The same is true of his anthropology and hermeneutic. I would urge Pannenberg to more fully and openly acknowledge that his theology is rooted in his faith in Jesus Christ and then do battle with his opponents in an openness that acknowledges that what is at stake is conflicting faiths. I am convinced, as is Pannenberg, that faith in Jesus Christ will prove to be the victor.

Abbreviations

AC	Apostles' Creed
BQ (1&2)	Basic Questions in Theology (volumes 1 and 2)
FR	Faith and Reality
Idea	The Idea of God and Human Freedom
J-G&M	Jesus - God and Man
RaH	Revelation as History
TaH	Theology as History (ed. by J.M. Robinson and J.B. Cobb Jr.)
TKG	Theology and the Kingdom of God
TPS	Theology and the Philosophy of Science
WIM?	What is Man?

FOOTNOTESPreface

1. Cf. the criticism of the 'crystal ball polishers' in, Stephen Travis, The Jesus Hope, (Downers Grove, Inter Varsity Press, 1976), chapter 7.
2. Eschatology and Ethics, (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1974), Christ and Counter Christ: Apocalyptic Themes in Theology and Culture, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1972), and The Future of God, (New York, Harper and Row, 1969).
3. Eschatology and Ethics, p.8.
4. An Exposition of Part One of Wolfhart Pannenberg's 'Theology and the Philosophy of Science', (unpublished mss., ICS Interdisciplinary Seminar, 1976/77.)
5. A Study of Wolfhart Pannenberg's Theological Anthropology, (unpub. mss., ICS Theology Seminar, 1976/77.)
6. History and the Certainty of Faith in Wolfhart Pannenberg's Theology of History, (unpub. mss., ICS Theology Seminar, 1977/78.) In my second year I also wrote a review of Pannenberg's Faith and Reality and Human Nature, Election and History, in Themelios, 4, #1, (Sept., 1978), pp. 42-43.

Chapter One

1. p. 6, n. 2, Translated and cited by E.F. Tupper, The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, pp. 43-44.
2. Many commentators have spoken of Pannenberg's 'program'. See G.H. Kehm, 'Pannenberg's Theological Program', Perspective, 9, (Fall, 1968), pp. 245-266, H. Burhenn, 'Pannenberg's Doctrine of God', Scottish Journal of Theology, 28, #6, (Dec., 1975), pp. 535-549, (especially p. 535), and R.T. Osborn, 'Pannenberg's Program', Canadian Journal of Theology, 13, #2, (1967), pp. 109-122.
3. Quoted by R.J. Neuhaus, 'Wolfhart Pannenberg: Profile of a Theologian', in TKG, p. 12.
4. Ibid.
5. For fuller biographical information, see R.J. Neuhaus, op. cit., E.F. Tupper, op. cit., pp. 21-27, and R.K. Wilken, 'Who is

Wolfhart Pannenberg?', Dialog, 4, (Spring '65), pp. 140-142.

6. See Human Nature, Election and History, and 'The nation and human race', and 'Christian Morality and political issues', in FR, pp. 105-138.

7. For further discussion of Pannenberg's theology of history, see James Robinson, 'Revelation as Word and as History', TaH, Claude Geffre, 'From Theologies of the Word to the Theology of History', chapter 4, in A New Age in Theology, and G.C. Berkouwer's discussion of Pannenberg in A Half Century of Theology, pp. 125-133, 163-177.

8. In Perspective, 14, (Spring, 1973), p. 34.

9. Op cit., p. 50.

10. 'What is Enlightenment?', in On History, ed. by L.W. Beck, translated by L.W. Beck, R.E. Anchor and E.L. Fackenheim, The Library of Liberal Arts, New York, (Bobbs-Merril, 1963), p. 3. David Tracy engages in a theological program similar to that of Pannenberg, in attempting to write theology which is faithful to both the Christian tradition and the 'modernity' of the contemporary theologian. He describes the 'crisis' of the Christian theologian in the modern world as follows: "The forces for demystification of the Western religious world-view were set loose by the Enlightenment's demand for freedom from oppressive authorities and freedom for autonomous, critical, rational thought." Blessed Rage for Order, (New York, Seabury Press), pp. 4-5.

11. TPS, p. 323.

12. Undoubtedly, Pannenberg considers himself to be heeding the injunction in 1 Peter 3:15 to "make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account of the hope that is in you...."

13. See 'Our Life in God's Hands?', FR, p. 6, and TPS, p. 306.

14. AC, p. 22.

15. TPS, p. 306.

16. 'Anthropology and the Question of God', Idea, p. 82.

17. 'The Question of God', BQ2, p. 202. Cf. 'Speaking of God in the face of Atheist Criticism', Idea, pp. 105f, 'Anthropology . . .', Idea, pp. 86ff, and 'Toward a Theology of the History of Religions', BQ2, pp. 96-100.

18. Quoted by Pannenberg in 'Types of Atheism and their Theological Significance', BQ2, p. 187.

19. Although Pannenberg explicitly discusses the inadequacy of Troeltsch's response in 'Toward a Theology of the History of Religions',

BQ2, pp. 190ff, and also criticizes Ritschl and Hermann in "types of Atheism", BQ2, pp. 192-194, his major critique is of Barth. Pannenberg claims that Barth's appropriation of Feuerbach's critique of religion and consequent reversal in theology from its emphasis on man to an insistence of the priority of God and his revelation, actually amounts to a most extreme example of anthropocentric subjectivism. See 'Anthropology', Idea, pp. 87-88, and TPS, pp. 266-273.

20. 'Anthropology', Idea, p. 88.

21. Ibid, p. 90. Cf. p. 93.

22. TPS, p. 422. Cf. pp. 368, 371.

23. 'Author's Preface', p. ix.

24. WiM?, p. 10.

25. Bestimmung is an important term for Pannenberg's anthropology, and is usually translated simply as 'destiny' (as in D.A. Priebe's translation of WiM?.) Dale Lasky's free translation of Bestimmung as 'the meaning of man's humanity' is closer to Pannenberg's meaning, but too cumbersome. (See Lasky's translation of 'Toward a Theology of Law', in the Anglican Theological Review, 55, #4, (Oct. '73), p. 408, n. 23.) Peter Hodgson's comments on Bestimmung in his review of J-G&M are also helpful. See Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 36, #4, (Dec. '68), p. 384.

26. Pannenberg's anthropological approach can also be found in 'Toward a Theology of the History of Religions', BQ2, pp. 102-104, 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., (whole article), J-G&M, pp. 83-88, 'The Question of God', BQ2, pp. 216ff, 'Man - the Image of God?', FR, pp. 39-49, and Human Nature, Election and History, pp. 13-41.

27. 'Anthropology', Idea, p. 95. Cf. AC, p. 25, and 'Toward a Theology of the History of Religions', BQ2, p. 102.

28. Cf. Pannenberg's criticism of Bultmann's limitation of theology to the theme of subjective self-understanding in 'Faith and Reason', BQ2, p. 52, TPS, pp. 170-177, and 'Christian Theology and Philosophical Criticism', Idea, p. 123.

29. TPS, p. 309.

30. For Pannenberg's view of the history and characteristics of positive theology see TPS, pp. 242-250.

31. See TPS, p. 259.

32. See 'Faith and Reason', BQ2, p. 52.

33. Cf. Pannenberg's discussion of the Scholze/Barth debate

in TPS, pp. 269-276. On p. 273 Pannenberg clearly accepts the Enlightenment view of authority in opposition to the 'positivity' of Barth's theology. He concludes, "If proof through rational enquiry is ruled out in advance, but for some reason or other we still want to hold the Christian tradition, nothing remains but the wholly uninsured venture of faith. We should not then conceal from ourselves that this risk is pre-eminently a 'postulate' of our consciousness, which must control its own content." (Cf. n. 20 above)

34. TPS, p. 300. Pannenberg's epistemology is here influenced by Popper's investigations into the philosophy of science and the nature of hypothesis. See, TPS, pp. 35-43, 70.

35. TPS, p. 296. Cf. Human Nature, Election and History, pp. 87-88.

36. TPS, p. 301. For further explication of Pannenberg's view of indirect revelation see, RaH, pp. 3-21, 125-131.

37. TPS, p. 302.

38. AC, p. 25. Cf. TPS, pp. 315-316, 358-371, and 'Toward a Theology of the History of Religions', BQ2, pp. 89-90.

39. AC, pp. 34-35.

40. 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., p. 412.

41. TPS, p. 332. Although Pannenberg agrees with the logical positivism that all assertions must be, by definition, verifiable, he nevertheless is critical of logical positivist verification theory for having a too limited view of verification and failing to see that corresponding to different kinds of assertions are different kinds of verification. See, TPS, pp. 35ff, 50ff, 275, 334-336.

42. TPS, p. 336. Cf. WiM?, chapter 10.

43. TPS, p. 343. For a good summary of Pannenberg's position on the substantiation of theological statements see his list of conditions in TPS, pp. 344-345.

44. 'The Crisis of the Scripture Principle', BQ1, p. 1.

Chapter Two

1. On whether Pannenberg revives a 'natural theology', see the first section of J. Klapwijk's article, 'Geloof en rede in de theologie van Troeltsch en Pannenberg', in Vrede met de Rede?, ed. by, J. Klapwijk, S. Griffion, and G. Groenewoud, (Assen, Van Gorcum, 1976.)

2. 'Types of Atheism', BQ2, p. 190. Cf. p. 195, where Pannenberg says that Nietzsche's 'metaphysics of the will' can only be overcome "by means of a more radical inquiry into being."
3. J-G&M, p. 12.
4. J-G&M, p. 410.
5. Essays on New Testament Themes, Studies in Biblical Theology, 41, (London, SCM Press, 1965.)
6. Journal for Theology and the Church, ed. by R.W. Funk, (entitled Apocalypticism), with Kasemann on this point, he does offer some criticism of this article in J-G&M, pp. 61ff.
7. 'The New Hegelians', review of Hope and Planning, by J. Moltmann and BQ1&2 by W. Pannenberg, in Religious Studies, 8, pp. 367-371, (1972), p. 369.
8. Christ and Counter-Christ, op. cit., p. 5.
9. TKG, p. 52. Cf. 'The God of Hope', BQ2, p. 23.
10. BQ1, p. 15.
11. See 'Kerygma and History', BQ1, pp. 88ff.
12. See thesis 1 in RaH, p. 125.
13. 'How is God Revealed to Us?', FR, p. 56.
14. Ibid, p. 57. For further discussion of the historical rise of apocalypticism see RaH, pp. 127, 132, 'Redemptive Event . . .', BQ1, pp. 18-20, and 'The Biblical Understanding of Reality', FR, pp. 14f. For criticism of Pannenberg's use of the apocalyptic motif see J. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, pp. 133f, L. Steiger, 'Revelation-History and Theological Reason', in Journal for Theology and the Church, ed. by R.W. Funk, 4, (entitled, History and Hermeneutic), p. 97, and I.G. Nicol, 'Facts and Meanings', Religious Studies, 12, #2, (June, 1976), pp. 134-139.
15. RaH, p. 131.
16. RaH, p. 133.
17. 'Redemptive Event', BQ1, p. 21.
18. AC, p. 37. Cf. 'The Biblical Understanding of Reality', FR, pp. 9-11, 15.

19. See 'Analogy and Doxology', BQ1, p. 237, and RaH, p. 141. The matter of order and contingency will be dealt with in the next subsection of chapter two.

20. J-G&M, p. 230. Cf. AC, p. 39.

21. For Pannenberg's rejection of 'teleological' theology see 'Response to the Discussion', TaH, p. 261, n. 72, and 'Redemptive Event', BQ1, pp. 42-43.

22. 'The God of Hope', BQ2, pp. 239-240.

23. 'Jesus' History and Ours', FR, p. 74.

24. BQ1, p. 17. Pannenberg is here dependent upon Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return, tr. by W.R. Trask, Bollingen Series, 46, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1954.)

25. 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., p. 401. Cf. also 'Towards a Theology of the History of Religions', BQ2, pp. 107-110.

26. RaH, pp. 149-152.

27. 'The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God as a Dogmatic Problem of Early Christian Theology', BQ2, p. 134. Cf. A.D. Galloway's discussion of Pannenberg's view of the relation of Greek and Hebrew thought in Wolfhart Pannenberg, chapter 6.

28. Ibid, pp. 137-138.

29. See 'Types of Atheism', BQ2, p. 195.

30. 'The Biblical Understanding of Reality', FR, p. 10.

31. See 'The Appropriation', BQ2, pp. 159ff.

32. RaH, p. 141.

33. 'The Appropriation', BQ2, p. 138.

34. I am indebted here to the tradition of philosophical historiography identified with the Dutch philosopher D. H. Th. Vollenhoven, formerly of the Free University of Amsterdam. For a description of Vollenhoven's method and specifically his use of the term 'structuralism' see C.G. Seerveld, 'Biblical Wisdom Underneath Vollenhoven's Categories for Philosophical Historiography', in The Idea of a Christian Philosophy, ed. by K.A. Bril, H. Hart and J. Klapwijk, (Toronto, Wedge Publishing, 1973), pp. 127-143, (esp. p. 137) Further work on Vollenhoven's method has also been done by J. H. Olthuis and A. H. DeGraaff in their Models of Man in Theology and Psychology, I.C.S. unpub. mss., 1978.

35. See J.H. Olthuis, op. cit., p. 18.

36. Vollenhoven also speaks of 'mythical' thought which could well correspond to what Pannenberg refers to as mythical, and would help us in distinguishing Greek structuralism from its mythical heritage. See C.G. Seerveld, 'Biblical Wisdom', op. cit., p. 137.

37. In the tradition of Vollenhoven an emphasis on cosmology to the neglect of genetic-process is always identified with structuralism. See J.H. Olthuis, op. cit., p. 19.

38. See J. H. Olthuis, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

39. AC, p. 41. Cf. 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., pp. 398ff. where Pannenberg argues against Brunner's et al. Ordnungstheologie that all laws are historically shaped. See also E.F. Tupper's discussion of this matter in The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, op. cit., pp. 218-230.

40. TPS, pp. 143-150. Cf. Pannenberg's rejection of the 'omnipotence of analogy' in historical method because the principle of analogy denies the contingency of historical events. 'Redemptive Event', BQ1, pp. 43-53 and 'Response to the Discussion', TaH, pp. 264f. See also T. Peters, 'The use of Analogy in Historical Method', The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 35, #4, (October, 1973), pp. 475-482.

41. TPS, p. 62.

42. TPS, p. 64.

43. TPS, p. 66. Cf. J-G&M, p. 395, where Pannenberg says, "Because the total process of the world is a unique and irreversible course of events, even contemporary natural science does not speak of this total process as the test case of law embracing the whole, but speaks of a history of nature." See also 'The Crisis of the Scripture Principle', BQ1, p. 12.

44. 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., p. 401.

45. AC, p. 43.

46. FR, p. 19. Cf. WiM?, p. 144.

47. 'The Appropriation', BQ2, p. 161.

48. AC, p. 38. Cf. J-G&M, p. 311, where Pannenberg says that God's faithfulness is not a matter of "static neutrality".

49. See 'Redemptive Event', BQ1, p. 75.

50. 'The Biblical Understanding of Reality', FR, p. 19.
51. 'Toward a Theology of Law,' op. cit., p. 404. Cf. 'The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth', TaH, p. 132.
52. AC, p. 39.
53. 'Redemptive Event', BQ1, p. 76. Cf. 'What is Truth?', BQ2, pp. 9f.
54. TKG, p. 67.
55. AC, p. 42. The notion of retrospection is connected to the use of 'retroactivity' in Pannenberg's Christology. See J-G&M, pp. 135-138, 141, 322, 324, 363.
56. I am indebted here to Herman Dooyeweerd's analysis of the freedom/nature polarity of modern humanist thought. See A New Critique of Theoretical Thought, tr. by D.H. Freeman and W.S. Young, (Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1953), vol. 1, pp. 188-450, In the Twilight of Western Thought, (New Jersey, The Craig Press, 1972), pp. 45-51, and Transcendental Problems of Philosophic Thought, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1948), pp. 73-75.
57. 'Speaking', Idea, p. 108. Pannenberg also says on this page, "If the eternity of God is thought of as the unlimited continuance of a being which has existed from the first, then the omnipotence and omniscient providence of this God must have established everything that takes place in the universe in all its details from the very first. In this case there is no room for genuine freedom on the part of any creature."
58. Ibid., p. 109. Cf. 'The God of Hope', BQ2, p. 241.
59. Ibid., p. 110.
60. See TKG, p. 63. Cf. Pannenberg's answer to Hegel's view of freedom: "The only serious alternative to the mode of conception which Hegel applied to the concept of freedom is to understand the nature of God itself on the basis of the absolute future of freedom, instead of thinking of it the other way around as underlying his faculty of freedom. It is only possible to think of freedom as the future of freedom, if it is not to be subject to the necessity of the nature of a prior being." And in footnote 93 on the same page he says, "Here absolute future belongs to the essence of Freedom, because absolute freedom cannot have any future outside itself and is therefore its own future." 'The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel', Idea, p. 174.
61. 'Can Christianity do without an Eschatology?', in The Christian Hope, ed. by G.B. Caird, (London, S.P.C.K., 1970), p. 32.

62. 'The God of Hope', BQ2, p. 242. By this Pannenberg intends to distinguish himself from the theological ontology of Tillich. Earlier in this article he says that ". . . references to the ground of being, the hidden depth and power that permeates all finite reality . . . are hardly able by themselves . . . to justify continuing to use the heavily weighted vocable 'God'." p. 236.

63. Ibid, pp. 243-244. The analysis of God's 'existence' is also related to Pannenberg's answer to the atheist criticism of the 'personhood' of God. Rather than concede that speaking of God as a person is an anthropomorphism, Pannenberg contends that the very contingency and freedom of God's acts, together with his essential non-manipulability (because you can't manipulate that which does not yet exist) justifies speaking of him as a person. A person is not an object at the disposal of another person, but a creatively free agent. Man only experiences himself as personal because he first experiences God as such. See AC, pp. 27-29, TKG, p. 57, 'Analogy and Doxology', BQ1, pp. 232-233, 'The Question of God', BQ2, pp. 231ff, 'The God of Hope', BQ2, pp. 237, 245ff, J-G&M, pp. 181f, 'Man-the Image of God', FR, pp. 42ff, and 'The Appropriation', BQ2, pp. 138f, 180f.

64. TKG, p. 55.

65. TKG, p. 56. Cf. 'The God of Hope', BQ2, p. 242. For further discussion of Pannenberg's view of God's 'existence' see, L. Gilkey, 'Pannenberg's Basic Questions in Theology: A Review Article', Perspective 14, (Spring '73), pp. 49-51, and H. Burhenn, 'Pannenberg's Doctrine of God', op. cit., pp. 539-541, 547.

66. J-G&M, p. 320.

67. J-G&M, p. 321.

68. See RaH, pp. 133-134.

69. TKG, p. 62.

70. TKG, p. 63.

71. BQ1, p. 158.

72. 'Appearance as the Arrival of the Future', TKG, pp. 128-129. The dualism referred to here is the same as the form/matter motif of Greek thought identified by H. Dooyeweerd. See A New Critique, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 25-67, vol. 2, pp. 10-57, vol. 3, pp. 7-15.

73. Quoted by Pannenberg, 'Appearance', TKG, p. 129.

74. Ibid, p. 131.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid, p. 135.

77. Ibid, p. 136. According to H. Obayashi the temporalizing of the question of essence does not go far enough. For Obayashi any discussion of essence, even at the end of history in the eschaton, does not look at reality in its radical historicness and has therefore not been adequately dehellenized. See his 'A Critique of Pannenberg's Eschatology', Studies in Religion, 1, #3, (1921), pp. 192-193, and 'Pannenberg and Troeltsch: History and Religion', Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 38, (Dec., '70), pp. 401ff.

78. 'Appearance', TKG, p. 143.

79. J-G&M, p. 136. Cf. 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., p. 411. The relation between future, essence and meaning will be further discussed in chapter three.

80. 'Future and Unity', in Hope and the Future of Man, ed. by E.H. Cousins, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1972), p. 72.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid, p. 74.

83. WiM?, p. 74.

84. See AC, pp. 121 and 174, and 'Can Christianity?', op. cit., p. 33. The logic of the argument here is the same as in subsection three on God's sameness and the process of being.

85. The following exposition is primarily based on WiM?, chapters one and two.

86. WiM?, p. 9.

87. Cf. J-G&M, p. 231.

88. WiM?, p. 10. Man's openness is also evident in what modern philosophy and theology call the 'questionableness' of existence. Man can always transcend his present situation by inquiring beyond himself, and then questioning beyond all provisional answers. Pannenberg observes that when man inquires into and beyond the world he is "in the last analysis asking about himself, about his own destination", or destiny. See 'The Question of God', BQ2, pp. 201ff. For further documentation of the endlessness of Pannenberg's view of Weltoffenheit, see J-G&M, p. 85 where he says, "Now it belongs to the structure of human existence to press on, even beyond death, that search for one's destiny, which never comes to an end."

89. This will be more fully discussed in the subsection on the Spirit and creation.

90. 'Toward a Theology of the History of Religions', BQ2, p. 104.

91. TKG, p. 69. Cf. J-G&M, pp. 270, 353, 361f.

92. 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., p. 420.

93. WiM?, pp. 56-57. Cf. Pannenberg's statement in AC, p. 164: "Thus sin appears as a fundamental structural element in the constitution of human existence. The point at issue is not primarily individual faults; it is rather the faulty foundation of our existence as a whole, which merely finds expression in this or that mistaken attitude or concrete fault."

94. 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., p. 420.

95. 'Response' TaH, p. 250. Hamilton's criticisms are in his 'The Character of Pannenberg's Theology', TaH, pp. 184ff.

96. TKG, p. 62.

97. TKG, p. 59.

98. 'Response' TaH, p. 252. Cf. R.D. Pasquariello, 'Pannenberg's Philosophical Foundations', Journal of Religion, 56, #4, (Oct. 76), pp. 341-344, 346-347.

99. 'The God of Hope', BQ2, p. 243. Cf. 'Future and Unity', op. cit., p. 61.

100. 'The Revelation of God', TaH, p. 118.

101. Ibid, pp. 132-133.

102. See 'Future and Unity', op. cit., pp. 61f. Also see 'The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel', Idea, pp. 160ff, where Pannenberg criticizes Hegel for limiting the finite/infinite relation to a negative mediation.

103. See 'The God of Hope', BQ2, pp. 248f, and J-G&M, p. 396.

104. 'Future and Unity', op. cit., p. 63.

105. TKG, p. 60. Cf. 'The God of Hope', BQ2, p. 249.

106. See WiM?, chapters 2 and 5.

107. J-G&M, pp. 395-396.

108. 'Response', TaH, p. 253.

109. See J. H. Olthuis, Models of Man, op. cit., pp. 16-17, and Robert Jenson also says that "Pannenberg develops a monistic view of history and proclamation" Quoted by Tupper, in The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, op. cit., p. 276. And Tupper himself says that there is credibility in the description of Pannenberg's thought as a 'historical monism' (p. 301)

110. In my A Study of Wolfhart Pannenberg's Theological Anthropology, op. cit., I offer a more detailed diagram and discussion of Pannenberg's anthropology which takes further account of the ego/world relation and the place of imagination, language, material and spiritual culture in man's mastery over the world.

111. Hoofdlijnen der logica, (Kampen, J.H. Kok, 1948), p. 13. This small section was translated by my friend and colleague Peter Enneson. For further discussion of contradictory monism, especially in the thought of Heraclitus, Eckhart, Machiavelli and Cassirer, see C.G. Seerveld, 'The Pedagogical Strength of a Christian Methodology in Philosophical Historiography', Social Theory and Practice, Koers, Jaargang 40, #'s 4, 5 and 6, (1975), pp. 269-313.

112. See J.H. Olthuis, Models of Man, op. cit., pp. 28-30.

113. TKG, p. 70.

114. For example, Hamilton's suggestion that Pannenberg simply identifies God with the process of history has much validity, but he mistakes Pannenberg's thought for a simplistic monism in which God is subsumed in the process (as in pantheism). (Cf. n. 95 above) Hamilton would come closer to a viable critique of Pannenberg on this issue if he were to understand the contradictory monistic structure of Pannenberg's thought. By accepting, as an ontological given, the contradiction of the infinite viewed as the end of the finite, yet the infinite always remaining distinct from the finite, the contradictory monist attempts to maintain the God/creation distinction. We see, therefore, that there is an ambiguity, or contradiction inherent in Pannenberg's theology. We will return to this problem in subsection B of the conclusions.

115. AC, p. 131.

116. 'The Spirit of Life', FR, p. 26. This is the same article which appeared in Theology, vol. 75 (1972), pp. 8-21 under the title 'The Doctrine of the Spirit and the Task of a Theology of Nature'.

117. Ibid, p. 27. Cf. Pannenberg's 'Working of the Spirit in the Creation and the People of God', in Spirit, Faith and Church, ed. by A. Dulles and C. Braaten, (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1970), p. 18.

118. Ibid, p. 28.

119. Ibid, p. 29.

120. Ibid, pp. 29-30. Cf. Pannenberg's statement, ". . . . a field of energy is not a function of occurrences but, to the contrary, the occurrences are functions of the field." 'A Liberal Logos Christology: the Christology of John Cobb', tr. by D.P. Polk, in John Cobb's Theology in Process, ed. by D.R. Griffin and T.J.J. Altizer, (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1977), p. 148, n. 13. See also 'The Working of the Spirit', op. cit., p. 18.

121. Ibid, p. 30.

122. Ibid, p. 31. Cf. E.F. Tupper, The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, op. cit., pp. 236-238.

123. Ibid, p. 33.

124. AC, p. 135.

125. 'The Spirit of Life', FR, p. 35.

126. Paul Tillich's theology is also a contradictory monism, as has been argued by Terry R. Tollefson in, Paul Tillich: his Anthropology as Key to the Structure of his Thought, unpub. M.Phil. thesis, (Toronto, I.C.S., 1977)

Chapter Three

1. 'What is Truth?', BQ2, p. 7. Cf. R.D. Pasquariello, 'Pannenberg's Philosophical', op. cit., pp. 339-340.

2. Ibid, pp. 20-21. Cf. 'Hermeneutics and Universal History', BQ1, p. 131.

3. Ibid, p. 21. Pannenberg goes on to say that Hegel's logic is a "series of stages in which . . . the higher stage is constitutive of the preceding insofar as it synthesizes into a unity the contradictions of the preceding one, and thus contains the provisional whole of the entire dialectical path that had been traversed up to that point."

4. Ibid, p. 22.

5. Quoted by Pannenberg in 'On Historical and Theological Hermeneutic', BQ1, p. 162. See also 'Eschatology and the Experience of Meaning', Idea, pp. 200ff.

6. Ibid, p. 163. In TPS, Pannenberg contrasts this 'contextual' view of meaning which he attributes to Dilthey and to (interestingly enough !) Wittgenstein's language game theory, with the positivist referential theory of meaning (Frege) and the phenomenological

intentionality theory (Husserl.) pp. 206-216)

7. Dilthey did attempt to comprehend the whole via the parts, but Pannenberg notes that only a prior "knowledge of the whole can make clear what significance the parts really deserve." Ibid, p. 164. Cf. TPS, pp. 78-79, 162.

8. 'Faith and Reason', BQ2, p. 62.

9. In TPS, Pannenberg speaks of Troeltsch's superiority over Dilthey and says that if Dilthey had included in his thought "the future-oriented tendencies introduced into the historical processes as a result of the concern with purposes and values in individual behaviour" then he would have been led like Troeltsch, "to the problematic concept of a common final goal", p. 108. Hegel's system of the absolute idea suffers from the weakness of taking itself too seriously and having illusions of finality and completeness. By failing to understand the provisionality of his own system, Hegel is guilty of overleaping "the irreducible finitude of experience," and is thereby closed to the future. 'Hermeneutic and Universal History', BQ1, p. 134.

10. Quoted by Pannenberg (from Being and Time, p. 309), in 'On Historical and Theological Hermeneutic', BQ1, p. 166.

11. Ibid, p. 168. Cf. TPS, p. 162.

12. Ibid, p. 169. Cf. Braaten's discussion of Lonergan and his appeal for a move beyond mere 'insight' into 'foresight'. Eschatology and Ethics, op. cit., pp. 28-33.

13. Ibid, p. 172. Cf. Pannenberg's discussion of 'historical reason' overagainst other notions of reason such as the Aristotelian-Thomistic a prioristic form of reason, in 'Faith and Reason', BQ2, pp. 55ff.

14. Ibid, p. 169. Cf. TPS, p. 345.

15. TPS, p. 196. The same would also be true of Pannenberg's conception of 'universal history'. Any 'pre-concept' of universal history within which one ultimately determines the meaning of particular events in history, would be confirmed by whether or not it really could integrate and illuminate the historical events. If such a preconcept (or fore-conception) does not illuminate, but obscures the actualities of history, then ". . . we are summoned to produce ever better projections of universal history." 'Hermeneutic and Universal History', BQ1, p. 134. Cf. 'Redemptive Event . . .', BQ1, pp. 70f, 78.

16. 'On Historical and Theological Hermeneutic', BQ1, p. 170. Cf. TPS, p. 198.

17. Ibid, p. 158.

18. The hermeneutical process here described is similar to Gadamer's notion of the 'fusion of horizons'. For Gadamer there is an infinite process of postulating horizons of higher universality which can comprise and comprehend the horizon of the interpreter and the text. Such a horizon, like a fore-conception, is not static, but dynamic. Horizons change when the interpreter builds a new, more comprehensive horizon, thereby moving beyond the limits of his prior horizon. The test for any such formulated horizon of understanding is the same as the test of a fore-conception, viz. whether it can integratively include within itself the elements of past and present horizons. The major difference between Pannenberg and Gadamer, however, is that Gadamer does not project a total understanding of reality as the consequence of his description of understanding as a fusion of horizons. He does not postulate a whole, or a universal history, even though Pannenberg suggests that it is a natural consequence of his thought. See 'Hermeneutic and Universal History', BQ1, pp. 96-136 and TPS, pp. 163-165, 186f. The best discussion of the relation between Pannenberg and Gadamer in English is Ted Peters' article, 'Truth in History: Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Pannenberg's Apologetic Method', in Journal of Religion, 55, #1, (Jan. 75), pp. 36-56. One could also compare this process with Kuhn's paradigm postulation and modification. See TPS, pp. 56-57, 66, 335.

19. TPS, p. 216. Cf. 'Foreword', BQ1, p. xvii.

20. TPS, pp. 200-201. See also p. 217, n. 433.

21. TPS, pp. 84-103 (especially 101-102), 433f.

22. 'Christian Theology and Philosophical Criticism', Idea, p. 132.

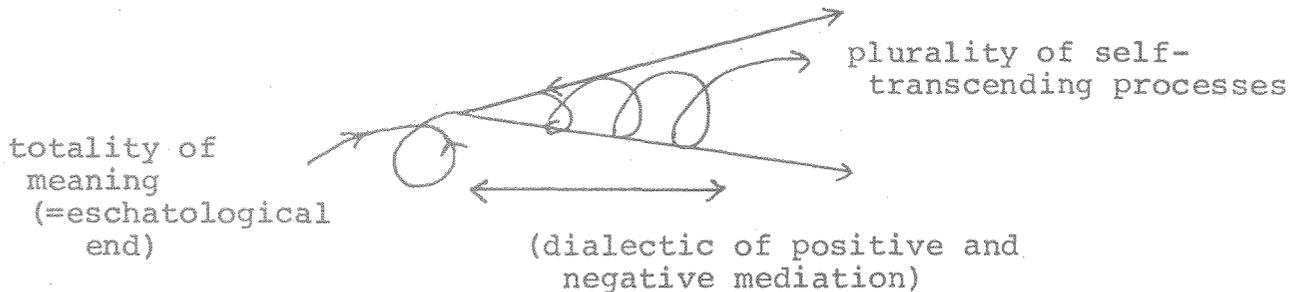
23. Ibid.

24. Ibid, p. 133.

25. TPS, p. 310. Cf. WiM?, pp. 23-29, where Pannenberg relates human imagination to the reception of divine inspiration. See also 'Response', TaH, p. 242 and TPS, pp. 343f.

26. TPS, p. 162. It is instructive to pay attention to the Sauter/Pannenberg debate recorded in TPS, pp. 291-292. Sauter says that Pannenberg's emphasis on the end of history which reveals the unity of history results in history becoming a 'closed system' because there is then no movement beyond that point. Pannenberg's response is to say that history is not a closed unity, but is rather "the simultaneous growth of a plurality of processes which transcend themselves in their movement towards an open future and struggle with each other in an effort at unity" (p. 291.) Sauter's point is that Pannenberg (and Moltmann) actually are in danger of

a total 'attribution of meaning' and rejection of the provisionalness of reality in their talk of the final meaning which the future can give. Pannenberg's response is to acknowledge that the totality of meaning is never found in history. But this is not really to the point of Sauter's criticism. It seems to me that he is simply saying that if there is an end, then there is an end - how then can the future be truly open? Pannenberg's system can have both an infinite openness and an eschatological end, or totality of meaning precisely because it is a contradictory monism. Diagramming his position as follows helps clarify the situation:



Depending on which direction things are going, one can speak of both a totality of meaning and an infinite process at the same time. Sauter says that this is a contradiction. He is absolutely right - only more specifically, a contradictory monism. See also 'Response', TaH, pp. 260-263, n. 72.

27. TKG, p. 60.

28. See especially TPS, pp. 310-311, where Pannenberg speaks of the ". . . . anticipatory character of the totality of reality as a totality of meaning" (emphasis added.)

29. BQ1, p. 230, n. 29. An example of Pannenberg using the terms interchangeably would be on p. 232, where he is talking about God's personhood. He says,

Whether we can also understand the divine ground of the totality of reality as a person is another question. Its solution depends upon whether for us this totality, as it expresses itself in individual events, is in principle manipulable or not.

The divine ground of the totality and the totality which expresses itself seem to be one and the same. Indeed, Pannenberg's argument for the personhood of God is always based on God's non-manipulableness, yet here he speaks of the 'totality' as being non-manipulable. (See chapter two, n. 63 of this thesis.) The only reasonable conclusion therefore is that Pannenberg does indeed use the terms interchangeably here. Similarly, in WiM? he speaks of man's dependence on the 'whole' of reality and his relation to the 'whole' as being characterized as 'trust', and then in the same chapter says that God is the object of trust. pp. 28ff.

30. TPS, p. 309. In n. 615 on this page, Pannenberg says that such a correlation has 'limited validity' because God must be thought of as independent of any correlate which might constrain his freedom. Clearly a correlate to the totality of reality which, like God, is still in the process of becoming, yet also operative and powerful in the present, is no such constraint upon his freedom. Cf. p. 284, where he says that ". . . discourse about God as the all-determining reality correspond to the theme of the semantic whole" See also T. Peters, 'Truth in History . . .', op. cit., p. 54.

31. TPS, p. 330. Cf. p. 338, where he says, "The presence of the all-determining reality in a historical phenomenon can be investigated only through an analysis of the totality of meaning implicit in the phenomenon."

32. TPS, p. 310.

33. See TPS, pp. 303-304, 'Christian Theology and Philosophical Criticism', Idea, pp. 129-130, and WIM?, pp. 61f.

34. 'Christian Theology', Idea, p. 130.

35. 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., p. 411.

36. Cf. 'Christian Theology', Idea, p. 131. For further reference to God as the basis for unity see TPS, p. 313, 336, and 'What is Truth?', BQ2, p. 27.

37. AC, pp. 35-36.

38. 'Christian Theology', Idea, p. 142. Cf. TPS, pp. 311-313 (including n. 616 where Pannenberg dialogues on the definition of religion with Lukmann, Blackstone, Ferre, Trillhaas and Schleiermacher.)

39. 'Eschatology', Idea, p. 205. Pannenberg also speaks (in TPS, p. 333) of theological assertions as 'third order hypotheses'. Theological statements are hypotheses concerning the truth or untruth of constructions of religious awareness, which are themselves merely explications of an implicit awareness of the totality of meaning in ordinary experience. Therefore, the first order of hypothesis is the implicit anticipation of the totality of meaning in everyday life, the second order is the religious explication of what is implicit, and the third order is the theological hypothesis on the religious explication.

40. See, for example, TPS, p. 303, where Pannenberg contends that even the epistemologically oriented philosophical systems of the modern era (the best example of which is, of course, Kant), actually presuppose an ontology. The priority of ontology over

epistemology in Pannenberg's thought should also be noted as a corrective to the conception wrongly held by both Ted Peters and Langdon Gilkey that for Pannenberg the future is open only epistemologically, while closed ontologically. I contend that it is only because of Pannenberg's notion of the ontological priority of the future, which entails an openness of being (Weltoffenheit) that there is a corresponding epistemological openness. See T. Peters, 'Truth in History', op. cit., p. 50, n. 54, and L. Gilkey, 'Pannenberg's', op. cit., p. 46. (Also cf. the Sauter/Pannenberg debate, n. 26 above.) Lothar Steiger's observation that Pannenberg's theses on the doctrine of revelation (in RaH) begin with a view of reality (theses 1 and 2) and then proceed to the question of knowledge (theses 3-7) coincides with my position on this matter. See 'Revelation-history and Theological Reason', in History and Hermeneutic, op. cit., p. 87.

41. These are my terms, not Pannenberg's.

42. 'Analogy and Doxology', BQ1, p. 213. Cf. RaH, pp. 14-16, 125-131.

43. Ibid, p. 212.

44. Ibid, p. 226.

45. Ibid, pp. 216-217. Cf. 'What is a Dogmatic Statement?', BQ1, p. 205.

46. Ibid, pp. 217-218.

47. J-G&M, pp. 184-185. On pp. 186-187 Pannenberg clearly distinguishes doxology from 'myth'.

48. 'Analogy and Doxology', BQ1, p. 228. For further discussion of the historicity of revelation and the historical basis for faith, see H. G. Harder and W. T. Stevenson, 'The Continuity of History and Faith in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg', Journal of Religion, 51 #1, (1971), pp. 34-56, F. H. Klooster, 'Historical Method and the Resurrection in Pannenberg's Theology', Calvin Theological Journal, 11 #1, (April '76), pp. 5-33, I.G. Nicol, 'Facts and Meanings: Wolfhart Pannenberg's Theology as History and the Role of the Historical Critical Method', op. cit., and L. Steiger, 'Revelation-History and Theological Reason', in History and Hermeneutic, op. cit.

49. Of course some pietistic athletes may well disagree with me here. Perhaps they see more clearly all acts as acts of God.

50. 'Analogy and Doxology', BQ1, p. 229. Cf. 'What is a Dogmatic Statement?', BQ1, p. 199, where Pannenberg says that a

dogmatic statement formulates the universal meaning of the historically unique.

51. Ibid, p. 230.

52. Ibid, Cf. Pannenberg's discussion of the dialectic of trust (faith) and security (control and domination) in WiM?, pp. 14-40.

53. 'Insight and Faith', BQ2, p. 32.

54. 'Response', TaH, p. 273. Cf. 'Redemptive Event', BQ1, pp. 55, n. 98 and 65.

55. See 'The Revelation of God', TaH, p. 130.

56. See 'What is a Dogmatic Statement?', BQ1, p. 199 and RaH, pp. 138-139. For further discussion on faith and trust see AC, pp. 3-12.

57. RaH, p. 139.

58. 'Analogy and Doxology', BQ1, p. 237.

59. 'Response', TaH, pp. 240-241. See also pp. 262-263.

Chapter Four

1. 'On Historical and Theological Hermeneutic', BQ1, p. 173.

2. Ibid, p. 175.

3. Ibid, p. 176. Cf. 'The Revelation of God', TaH, pp. 103ff, and 'The God of Hope', BQ2, pp. 246ff.

4. Ibid. Cf. WiM?, pp. 41-53.

5. RaH, pp. 139, 142.

6. 'The Revelation of God', TaH, p. 117. Cf. AC, pp. 96-115.

7. Cf. J-G&M, pp. 66-74. For Pannenberg's argument for the actual historicity of the resurrection see J-G&M, pp. 88-106.

8. See 'How is God Revealed to Us?', FR, pp. 57-60.

9. 'Divine Revelation and Modern History'. FR, p. 91. See also 'Jesus' History and Ours', FR, p. 75, 'What is Truth?', BQ2, p. 24, 'Toward a Theology of the History of Religions', BQ2, pp. 114f, J-G&M, p. 243, 'Analogy and Doxology', BQ1, p. 135.

10. See J-G&M, pp. 58-66.
11. Ibid, p. 136.
12. Ibid, p. 137. Cf. p. 307.
13. See 'The Revelation of God', TaH, p. 125.
14. Pannenberg lists four options other than his own, in J-G&M, pp. 115-126.
15. Ibid, p. 129.
16. Ibid, pp. 129-130.
17. Ibid, pp. 321-323.
18. Ibid, pp. 320-321. Pannenberg's view of God and eternity were dealt with more fully in subsections C and D(i) of chapter two of this thesis.
19. Ibid, p. 321.
20. Ibid, p. 343.
21. Ibid, p. 344.
22. Ibid, p. 365.
23. AC, p. 70.
24. J-G&M, p. 365.
25. Ibid, p. 169. For further discussion of Pannenberg's view of Christ as the mediator of creation see E.F. Tupper, The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, op. cit., pp. 183-185.
26. See J-G&M, pp. 230f, 367, and AC, p. 65.
27. J-G&M, p. 391.
28. Ibid, p. 392. Cf. 1 Cor. 8:6.
29. See 'What is a Dogmatic Statement?', BQ1, p. 200.
30. J-G&M, p. 131. Cf. p. 185. In 'Analogy and Doxology' Pannenberg says that we experience the work of God ". . . in the moment in which we grasp, by means of a single event, the totality of the reality in which we live and around which our lives circulate", BQ1, p. 229.

31. 'Kerygma and History', BQ1, p. 94, n. 20.

32. AC, p. 58. In 'On Historical and Theological Hermeneutic', Pannenberg also speaks of the ultimacy revealed in Jesus as generating an impulse "toward the integration of all realms of life." This is in accord with his view of the verification of religious language by its integrative power discussed in chapter one. The particular only finds its integration in the whole, therefore integration and 'wholeness' are one and the same. BQ1, p. 157. See also pp. 173, 180, and WiM?, p. 149.

33. J-G&M, p. 191. I have here used Peter Hodgson's correction of the Wilkins and Priebe translation. The English text translated "des menschlichen Wesens den Bestimmung des Menschen" as "of the human nature and of the destiny of man," whereas Hodgson suggests "of human nature, of the destiny of man" as more appropriate. See Hodgson's review of J-G&M, 'Pannenberg on Jesus', Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 36, #4, (Dec. '68), pp. 383-384.

34. Ibid, p. 190.

35. Ibid, p. 348. Cf. WiM?, pp. 61f.

36. Ibid, p. 205. Cf. pp. 192f, 199f, 231f, 344f, and 373.

37. Ibid, p. 262. Cf. TKG, p. 68, 'Toward a Theology of Law', op. cit., p. 420, AC, pp. 160-169, and J-G&M, pp. 265, 352f, and 361f.

38. J-G&M, pp. 354-364.

39. Ibid, p. 381.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid, p. 388. Cf. pp. 391, 395. Pannenberg's view of God and unity was also discussed in chapter three, section B above.

42. Ibid, p. 367. Cf. pp. 368, 370, AC, pp. 121ff, and 'Future and Unity', op. cit., pp. 72f.

43. 'The Revelation of God', TaH, p. 118.

44. See J-G&M, pp. 395-396, 'The God of Hope', BQ2, p. 249, and AC, p. 125.

45. J-G&M, p. 245. (This reference is italicized in the original.)

46. AC, p. 70. Cf. 'What is Truth?', BQ2, p. 27, where Pannenberg says that "the unity of truth is constituted only by the proleptic revelation of God in Jesus Christ."

Critical Conclusions

1. The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, op. cit., pp. 300-301.
2. A Half Century of Theology, op. cit., p. 177.
3. WIM?, p. 65.
4. AC, p. 164. In his 'Postscript' to Tupper's book, Pannenberg says that in WIM? he identified sin "as a basic component in the structure of the human organism and behavior, having the character of self-centredness which is inescapable "though super-sedable in human life." (p. 304.) He then goes on to say that he was prepared to be charged with Flacianism which identifies sin with the nature of man, but that such a charge was fortunately never laid. Pannenberg does not, however, explain why this is fortunate, nor does he explain why it would be inaccurate if laid. I am not prepared to label Pannenberg a Flacian, but I do note that the pessimism of Flacius' view of total depravity is similar to Pannenberg's inevitable contradiction in the very warp and woof of life. On Flacius, cf. G.C. Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God, translated by D.W. Jellema, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1962), pp. 130-137.
5. Seerveld says that contradictory monism denies ". . . the possibility of repentance and sanctified action among men into a generally unattached, deeply energetic, give-your-guts fervour of heroic activity." 'The Pedagogical Strength', op. cit., p. 300.
6. Harder and Stevenson are getting at a similar point when they complain that man's historical activity is constantly being overshadowed by the real force of history, viz., God. The validity of man's finite activity is brought into question by Pannenberg's emphasis on God's activity. See 'The Continuity of History and Faith', op. cit., pp. 53-55. Also cf. Obayashi, 'Pannenberg and Troeltsch', op. cit., p. 404.
7. Theology of Hope, op. cit., pp. 133-134.
8. Christ and Counter Christ, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
9. Ibid, p. 9.
10. Obayashi makes a similar point on a different subject by claiming that Pannenberg has taken the Platonic essence/existence dualism which is cosmological, and dealt with it horizontally in a framework of historical time. 'Future and Responsibility', op. cit., p. 193. Cf. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, op. cit., p. 84.
11. This identification is common to much contemporary theology. Cf. Braaten's rejection of the doctrine of the fall

because it makes the history of grace into restoration of a pre-established condition rather than a process to a totally new state. Future of God, op. cit., pp. 44ff. The clearest exponent of the identification of creation and fallenness is Paul Tillich, however. His view of essence and existence is structurally the same as Pannenberg's viz., contradictory monism. He says that the move from essence to existence is fallenness: "Creation and the Fall coincide in so far as there is no point in time and space in which created goodness was actualized and had existence Actualized creation and estranged existence are identical Creation is good in its essential character. If actualized, it falls into universal estrangement through freedom and destiny." Systematic Theology, vol. 2, (University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 44.

12. TKG, p. 60.

13. Cf. 'Future and Unity', op. cit., pp. 63-65. Tupper's defense of Pannenberg against Williams' criticism that all finite reality will be absorbed into the One, is to assert that Pannenberg maintains that a plurality of essences will remain. Tupper can only appeal to a secondary source to justify his claim, however, and therefore we cannot accept his answer to be authoritatively the same as Pannenberg's. See The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, op. cit., p. 289 (including note 98.)

14. I find Seerveld's comments on the contradictory monistic theology Eckhart relevant to my analysis of the place of evil in Pannenberg's contradictory monism. Seerveld says, "Sin is not something historically subsequent to creation that can be rectified and healed: for Eckhart, evil is a furtive feature of creatureliness somehow, so that it becomes either/or between Godhood and creation for man." 'The Pedagogical Strength', op. cit., p. 282. (Cf. p. 300.)

15. Cf. H. Dooyeweerd's discussion of what he calls the biblical 'ground motive' of creation, fall and redemption, in his New Critique, vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 173-175. He rightly says that ". . . the revelation of the fall does not in any way mean the recognition of an antithetical principle of origin which is opposed to the Creator, sin cannot be thought of as standing in dialectical relation to creation." (p. 175.)

16. Cf. TKG, pp. 55f with AC, p. 125.

17. Again the comparison with Eckhart is appealing. Eckhart says that "God is neither a being nor intelligent and he does not know this or that. God is free of every thing and therefore he is everything." Quoted by Seerveld, 'The Pedagogical Strength', op. cit., p. 279. We should also recall that for Pannenberg, the unity of God corresponds to the totality of reality, in which everything finds its place, including the negative experiences of want, suffering, guilt and absurdity. In other words, 'evil' is included in the 'everything'. See AC, pp. 35-36.

18. See Tupper, The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, op. cit., p. 297. Although M.E. Brinkmann's dissertation on Pannenberg only came to my attention after I had completed my writing, I notice that in one of his accompanying theses he also suggests that Pannenberg is a panentheist. See Het God En Mensbegrip in de Theologie Van Wolfhart Pannenberg, (Kampen, J. H. Kok, 1979.)

19. Cf. W. Royce Clark, 'Christian Images of Fulfillment: Healing Within Anticipation', Religion in Life, 46, #2, (Summer, 1977), pp. 194f.

20. See 'The Biblical Understanding of Reality', FR, p. 19, and WiM?, p. 144.

21. For biblical references to the creative significance of the Word of God, cf. Gen. 1, Pss. 33:6-9, 119:89-96, 147, 148, John 1:1-5, Col. 1:15-20, and Heb. 1:1-3, 11:3.

22. I am not here suggesting that Pannenberg simply accepts the Enlightenment perspective on reason with no questions at all. I am aware of the criticisms in 'Faith and Reason', BQ2, of both Aristotelian and Enlightenment views of reason. My contention is that these criticisms do not actually go far enough in order to be an adequate Christian apologetic. It is interesting to note that both Gilkey and Cobb speak of Pannenberg's 'rationalism'. See L. Gilkey, 'Pannenberg's Basic Questions in Theology', op. cit., p. 34, and J. Cobb's review of J-G&M, op. cit., p. 193.

23. In the conclusions of my History and the Certainty of Faith in Wolfhart Pannenberg's Theology of History, op. cit., I criticize Pannenberg's notion of the historical grounding of faith, and show that faith is already operative in the very way in which Pannenberg looks at the historical event. Especially helpful in this respect is Iain Nicol's article, 'Facts and Meanings', op. cit.

24. In 'Insight and Faith', BQ2, p. 29, Pannenberg acknowledges the biblical identification of knowledge and faith but does not work out some of the implications for contemporary theology. It appears to me to be fruitful to reflect upon the biblical teaching that true knowledge begins with the fear of the Lord. To know and believe are intimately related and if one's belief is rooted in an idol then one's knowledge becomes foolishness. The religious nature of knowledge is here accentuated in a way which is fundamentally foreign to most Western thought. Theology is therefore in a position to offer a corrective to the autonomy of theoretical thought which has become an idol to Western man since the Renaissance.

25. Pannenberg's question to Barth whether faith becomes a mere 'postulate' of our consciousness, could also be asked of the acceptance of the authority of reason. Why do we believe in

reason? Because it is rational! Clearly this is a self-authenticating tautology which is only possible if one accepts reason by a prior faith commitment. See TPS, p. 273.

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