

# Pannenberg's Quest for the Proleptic Jesus

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## MODERN APPROACHES TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF FAITH AND HISTORY

The nineteenth century "Quest for the Historical Jesus" (Schweitzer) attempted to get behind the dogma of the Church to discover who Jesus really was. The efforts of the old liberal quest yielded a picture of the historical Jesus that was stripped of all kerygmatic accretion. Such de-husked presentations revealed a kernel that often made the Jesus of history the reflection of modern historiographical and theological constructs.

Martin Kähler, in responding to the rise of quest theology, wrote *The So-called Jesus of History and the Biblical, Historic Christ* (1896). In this work he distinguished between the Jesus of historical research and the biblically revealed, historic Christ. Basic to Kähler's critique of the Lives of Jesus school was his suspicion of a hidden Ebionitism at work in their de-dogmatization. Kähler, as the father of kerygma theology, sought to safeguard the Jesus of biblical revelation from the whims of historical research. In doing so, he chose to differentiate between historical facts and historic events, between outer and inner history. Such bifurcation was the natural result of a neo-Kantian dichotomy between fact and value which found its roots in Lessing and Kierkegaard.

Although holding to historical rootage for the kerygma in Jesus Christ, Kähler emphasized the message of Christ to be ultimately decisive. What was a tenuous relationship in Kähler became dissolved into the preaching of Christ in the teaching of the foremost kerygma theologian--Rudolph Bultmann. Historical bases for his demythologized kerygma were negligible at best. The past became subsumed by the present, just as the future became the vehicle by which the individual was confronted with the eschatological decision of the present.

Bultmann not only signalled the end of the quest but also served as the catalyst for the new quest in the mid-twentieth century. Ernst Käsemann (1953) was the first of Bultmann's students to recognize the fallacy of

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removing the kerygma from its historical bearings in Jesus. In 1956, Günther Bornkamm, another Bultmannian, wrote a book on this very subject: *Jesus of Nazareth*. He was to be followed by others, but stands out as the only figure in the Bultmannian school who wrote a full length treatise on the relationship of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.

*Jesus of Nazareth* reveals Bornkamm's desire to find history in the kerygma and kerygma in that history. He views the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith as inseparable, although the former is cautiously approached by way of form-critical methodology. As an attempt in doing "Christology from below," this work fails to overcome the hiatus between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, by failing to take the resurrection of Jesus Christ seriously as a historical event. It is difficult to understand how it is possible to bridge the gulf between fact and value if the interpretive key is not given equal access to both sides of the dichotomy.

#### PANNENBERG'S "SOLUTION"

##### *Fact-Value Dichotomy*

A reaction to the kerygma theology of the Bultmannian school is evidenced in the writings of Wolfhart Pannenberg. Redemptive history contains both the fact of God's revelation and the meaning of the event. Pannenberg sympathizes with the attempts of Käehler to safeguard the gospel from historicism, but vehemently disagrees with the total separation of the historical Jesus from the Christ of faith evident in later kerygma theology.<sup>1</sup> For him, historical verification is not a crutch, but the integrating feature of his theology as a whole.

Pannenberg rejects the subject-object antithesis as presented by Kant and views the bifurcation of fact and value as a false dichotomy.

The distinction...between the facts of Jesus' history and their meaning as revelation, which allegedly only faith can find in them, is widespread....Under the influence of positivism and of neo-Kantianism, scholars have come to distinguish more sharply between the facts on the one hand and their evaluation or significance on the other hand. Most radically of all, Rudolph Bultmann carries out this distinction by relegating the early Christian Easter message totally to the significance side....Such a splitting up of historical consciousness into a detection of facts and an evaluation of them is intolerable to Christian faith, not only because the message of the resurrection of Jesus and of God's revelation in him necessarily becomes merely subjective interpretation, but also because it is the reflection of an outmoded and questionable historical method. It is based on the futile aim of the positivist historians to ascertain bare facts without meaning in history.<sup>2</sup>

He insists on holding together fact and value. There is unity between facts and their meaning. "Every event, if not artificially taken out of context, brings its own meaning for each particular inquirer, brings it with its context, which of course is always a context of tradition."<sup>3</sup>

Pannenberg decries the bifurcation of fact and meaning inherent in the positivistic understanding of the historical method. Fact and meaning, history and kerygma are integrally related. The kerygma must be rooted in the historical Jesus, for the kerygma expresses the meaning inherent in the events of his life, death and resurrection. "All meaning has its criterion in the fact in which it inheres."<sup>4</sup> He reacts to the theology of the Word (Barth and Bultmann), believing that it has allowed the historical-critical method to be taken hostage by positivism. Revelation is not given in or through history, but as history. Events and interpretations, facts and meanings must be viewed together in their original historical context.

The whole problem is already contained in this distinction. Is not the "revelatory value" related to the "fact" as something added from the outside? Does not this argument accept all too uncritically the neo-Kantian distinction between being and value? Does not the meaning of an event belong to the event itself insofar as it is to be understood only within its own historical context [*Geschenhenszusammenhang*]?<sup>5</sup>

The "historical docetism" inherent in both existential theology (Gogarten and Bultmann) and the tradition of redemptive history--*Heilsgeschichte* (Kähler and Barth), is rejected by Pannenberg. Both of these schools depreciate real history.

Their common starting point is to be seen in the fact that critical-historical investigation as the scientific verification of events did not seem to leave any more room for redemptive events. Therefore the theology of redemptive history fled into a harbor supposedly safe from the critical-historical flood tide, the harbor of a suprahistory--or with Barth, of pre-history. For the same reason the theology of existence withdrew from the meaningless and godless course of "objective" history to the experience of the significance of history in the "historicity" of the individual.<sup>6</sup>

But neither is the historical-critical method without its problems. Pannenberg denies that anyone engaged in historical research is free of presuppositions. Proponents of the historical-critical method are far less objective than they think, being governed by positivistic presuppositions.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to both kerygma theology and historicism, he stresses the historical character of redemptive events, believing that "history is the most comprehensive horizon of Christian theology."<sup>8</sup>

*Revelation as History*

Pannenberg seeks to overcome the distinction between *Historie* and *Geschichte* by way of universal history. Borrowing the construct from Dilthey and its modifications in Heidegger, Pannenberg seeks to show that all of history is an indirect revelation of God. Together with modern theology, he agrees that revelation is not the communication of supernatural truths about God. Rather, it is the self-disclosure of God himself. In response to the Enlightenment's attack on revelation as the inspired words and doctrines of Scripture, German idealism had redefined revelation as the self-revelation of God. Pannenberg does not disagree with the understanding of revelation as the self-disclosure of God. What he does object to is the notion of a direct self-communication of God. Revelation is an indirect self-revelation of God reflected in history. The historical activity of God is the means of his self-disclosure.

For Pannenberg, only the totality of history is the self-manifestation of God. The notion of universal history as the indirect self-revelation of God is nothing new, being found in the thought of Schleiermacher, Schelling and Hegel. The problem with the concept of universal history, however, is the lack of significance the Christ event has for those who view all of history as revelatory. What is new in Pannenberg's understanding of universal history is that it avoids relativizing the Christ event by emphasizing the eschatological role of Jesus as the proleptic<sup>9</sup> presence of the end of history.

It is precisely this understanding of history as something whose totality is given by the fact that its end has become accessible in a provisional and anticipatory way that is to be gathered today from the history of Jesus in its relationship to the Israelite-Jewish tradition. Hegel was unable to see this because the eschatological character of the message of Jesus remained hidden to him....<sup>10</sup>

If the totality of history is the self-revelation of God, then the end of history alone reveals the meaning of the whole. For Pannenberg, Jesus is the anticipation of the final end of universal history.<sup>11</sup>

Pannenberg holds that particular events cannot be understood apart from the universal scope of history. "It is the horizon of world history which first makes it possible to appreciate the full significance of an individual event."<sup>12</sup>

It is the particularity of the 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....For history receives its wholeness for the first time precisely by the fact that the end of history--which had occurred in an anticipatory form in the claim and fate of Jesus--comes into view.<sup>13</sup>

Thus God reveals himself in the history of Jesus. But more than this, Pannenberg maintains that "the God who constitutes history has himself fully entered the process of history in his revelation."<sup>14</sup>

### *Historical Probabilities*

Pannenberg reacts to the self-authenticating Word in dialectical theology, emphasizing instead the historical bases of revelation. The revelatory meaning of the activity of God in history is not understood only by faith, but is inherent in the activity itself. "The events in which God demonstrates his deity are self-evident as they stand within the framework of their own history."<sup>15</sup> Thus, he rejects the dichotomy between event and interpretation. The results achieved by the use of historical evidence are, at most, probabilities. Probable knowledge, however, is the basis of all human decisions and commitments.

We must see that this difficulty--the difficulty of building final convictions on chance historical facts and of basing eternal blessedness on a history which can at best only be ascertained with some degree of probability--is a basic problem of the Christian faith. It is impossible to evade it in any way at all without losing sight of Christianity's fundamental connection with the historical figure of Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

What can be known of the historical Jesus? Pannenberg believes that "certain important events and facts can be determined with sufficient probability [to] be viewed as historical." Included in these are Jesus' death and resurrection.<sup>17</sup> Religious faith is based on probabilities, not certainties.<sup>18</sup> Faith is risk-taking on the basis of reasonable probabilities. Provisionality<sup>19</sup> is the basis of Pannenberg's Christology from below. In fact, his view of reality is marked by an awareness of provisionality, an openness to the future. Even though existence is tentative, it must be embraced as the only existence possible.<sup>20</sup>

### *Faith and Reason*

What is essential for Pannenberg's conception of faith is its future orientation. The past and present are the domains of reason; the future belongs to faith. Faith is defined in terms of truth in the revelation of God in universal history, that is, in the future which has been revealed in the events of Jesus' destiny. Reason provides the basis for such faith. The self-revelation of God in Christ can be comprehended by reason and responded to by faith. Revelation is not separated from the historical process. In fact, for Pannenberg there is one historical reality, the self-revelation of God to man. The meaning of this universal history is only known at the end of history. Since the end gives meaning to the historical process, one must remain open

to the future. In Jesus' resurrection, this future end is manifest in the present, thus giving meaning to the present historical process and calling forth hope in the future consummation of universal history.<sup>21</sup>

Pannenberg argues against an either/or relationship of faith and knowledge. They are "co-essential dimensions of the act of a total person." Both are necessary for recognizing God's revelation in Christ, although the emphasis is clearly on the role of reason.

One cannot really know of God's revelation in Jesus Christ without believing. But faith does not take the place of knowledge. On the contrary, it has its basis in an event which is a matter for knowing and which becomes known to us only by more or less adequate information. To be able to have Christian faith one must at least presuppose that the message about Jesus Christ is true....The knowledge of Jesus' history, including his resurrection from the dead, is the basis of faith.... Knowledge is not a stage beyond faith, but leads into faith....<sup>22</sup>

Such an emphasis on the rationality of faith leaves little room for mystery.<sup>23</sup> Pannenberg, however, is concerned to define faith as something more than a subjective way of knowing. Christian faith is not to be equated with a "pious subjectivity" that makes up for historical uncertainty concerning the life of Jesus.

Faith is not something like a compensation of subjective conviction to make up for defective knowledge....But faith is actually trust in God's promise, and this trust is not rendered superfluous by knowledge of this promise; on the contrary, it is made possible for the first time.<sup>24</sup>

Pannenberg thus reacts to the attempt to drive revelation from the experience of faith rather than from reason's knowledge of history.

But the act of faith or trust presupposes a knowledge of the trustworthiness of the partner. Without such well-founded knowledge faith would be blind gullibility, credulity, or even superstition. For much too long a time faith has been misunderstood to be subjectivity's fortress into which Christianity could retreat from the attacks of scientific knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

Pannenberg's position on the objective, historical content of revelation must be viewed as a reaction to the loss of history in kerygma theology and the escape to suprahistoricality in *Heilsgeschichte* theology.

We see that Christian faith builds its hope on the truth of an event which occurred in the far-distant past. Therefore everything naturally depends on our having a knowledge, an exact and reliable knowledge, of these events. Faith cannot replace that knowledge. It would have to be reckless and desperate faith which attempted to guarantee the reality of its ground from its own resources.<sup>26</sup>

This over-reaction reduces the apprehension of revelation to historical reason and historico-scientific methodology, failing to realize the importance and place of personal faith and the Holy Spirit in the mediation and reception of divine revelation.<sup>27</sup>

Reason alone is needed for perceiving historical facts. Thus, revelation, as God's activity in history, does not require special illumination. Neither faith nor the Holy Spirit enhance the revelatory content of the historical facts. He is convinced that the doctrine of the Spirit has been misused as "a fig leaf to protect the nakedness of the Christian tradition from the questionings of modern critical thinking."<sup>28</sup> Neither does faith lead to understanding, but rather, rational knowledge is the presupposition of faith. Pannenberg avoids positivistic historicism by insisting on keeping historical facts in the context of their tradition (*Überlieferungsgeschichte*).<sup>29</sup>

What then is the role of faith? For Pannenberg, faith is trust or confidence (*fiducia*) in the knowledge of Jesus' history, including his resurrection from the dead.... Faith not only involves presupposing that certain historical events took place as the New Testament records them, but it also involves hope, that is, trust in the promise of God and his future.<sup>30</sup> Knowledge of God's revelation in history is future-oriented, since it can only be ascertained in the light of the anticipation of the end of history. Faith does not add to the knowledge of revelation, but it is still important for Pannenberg.

The fact that the demonstration of the deity of the God of Israel in the life-history of Jesus is a matter of insight and knowledge, does not render faith superfluous. People do of course say that what they know for a fact, they do not need to believe any more. But statements of that kind are superficial in this matter. For faith involves the participation of the believer himself in the reality in which he believes, and this cannot be replaced by any knowledge. Moreover, faith always has to do with the future. The believer attaches his own future to what he has come to recognize. Precisely for that reason faith cannot be its own basis. Faith as pure risk would be blind credulity. Trustful belief needs a ground on which to build.<sup>31</sup>

For Pannenberg reason provides the objective certainty necessary for faith. It is obvious that reason is necessary to perceive historical facts, but Pannenberg

fails to see the role of faith or the Spirit as necessary in the hermeneutical process.

The crux of the issue of the relationship of faith and knowledge in Pannenberg's thought has to do with the mediation of faith. Is faith mediated through historical events, or is it mediated in the crisis of personal decision? Pannenberg has opted for the former, against the tide of much of modern theology, by refusing to allow faith to add anything to the certainty of the truth of revelatory history.<sup>32</sup> This is most clearly evident in Pannenberg's view of Jesus' resurrection. If the resurrection cannot be spoken of as a historical event that can be investigated by historical methodology, it ceases to be relevant and takes on a mythological character. Pannenberg firmly upholds the historicity of Jesus' resurrection, not from a confessional stance, but based on the historical evidence. Against those who seek to find existential meaning in the resurrection outside of history, he believes that the relevance of the resurrection is based solely on the historical reality of the event itself.

Trust in the promised resurrection to life is certainly opposed to what we human beings experience in ourselves (cf. Rom 4:19 ff.), but that trust is not a frivolously accepted risk or a blind readiness to believe authority in view of the witness of the apostles, but is grounded on Jesus' resurrection which has already occurred.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Christology From Below*

Pannenberg rejects Christology "from above," with its emphasis on the divinity of Jesus and the centrality of the incarnation, as expressed in traditional Christian theology and powerfully reasserted by Karl Barth. Rather, Pannenberg advocates a Christology "from below," being more interested in how Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ than in how Christ is Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>34</sup> Christology from above presupposes the doctrine of the Trinity, and thus, the divinity of Jesus. He rejects the methodology of doing Christology from above, for one would have to stand in the position of God himself in order to follow the way of God's Son into the world.

Christology must begin with the man Jesus, its first question has to be about his relationship to God. Every statement about Jesus taken independently from his relationship to God could result only in a crass distortion of reality. The modernistic presentation of Jesus at the height of the quest of the historical Jesus offers enough examples of this....The specific element in the Christological question about Jesus is that it does not begin with some preliminary aspect of his deeds and words or of his effect on men, but with his relation to God as it is expressed in the whole of his activity on earth.<sup>35</sup>



In seeking to present the deity of Christ without violating his true humanity, Pannenberg attempts to formulate his Christology in terms arising from the historical situation of Jesus' mission.<sup>36</sup> Thus, instead of starting with the incarnation and divinity of Christ, the historical Jesus is the basis of his Christology.<sup>37</sup> More specifically, Pannenberg views the resurrection of Jesus as the main focus of Christology, and seeks to approach it as a historical event within the matrix of the historical process ("from below"). The historical facticity of the resurrection is the only proper basis for Christian faith.<sup>38</sup>

By emphasizing the revelation of God through the Jesus of history, Pannenberg employs the Hebraic concept of understanding the revelation of God through the activity of the divine in the historical process. Rather than starting with philosophical presuppositions about God, he maintains that God can only be known through his historical activity with people.<sup>39</sup> The incarnation, according to Pannenberg, is an emphasis that was a result of Hellenistic cultural influence upon Christianity. He sees a shift away from a "from below" to a "from above" approach in the early church; away from an emphasis on eschatology, to that of epiphany.<sup>40</sup>

### *Resurrection*

Most attempts to do Christology from below try to substantiate Jesus' unity with God by his pre-Easter claim to authority, not by his resurrection. In contrast, Pannenberg finds a "proleptic element in Jesus' claim to authority."<sup>41</sup> The resurrection of Christ is viewed as the "eschatological self-revelation of God."

Now the history of the whole is only visible when one stands at its end. Until then, the future always remains as something beyond calculation. And, only in the sense that the perfection of history has already been inaugurated in Jesus Christ is God finally and fully revealed in the fate of Jesus. With the resurrection of Jesus, the end of history has already occurred....the end of the world will be on a cosmic scale what has already happened in Jesus.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, the resurrection of Jesus not only reveals God, but serves as the *telos* of history. "In Jesus' history, the God whom Jesus revealed is the infinite God. However, this revelation does not happen as the annihilation of the finite but as its effusive fulfillment."<sup>43</sup> God's revelation in Jesus is open to the future, but at the same time, this event is final. "The history of Jesus, precisely in the form of mere anticipation, is the final revelation of God."<sup>44</sup>

Jesus' importance is measured by his proleptic eschatology. He revealed the coming Kingdom of God in his life, death and resurrection. "Jesus is the final revelation of God to the extent that his ministry and his history have eschatological character."<sup>45</sup> The expectation of the fulfillment of God's Kingdom on earth is the focal point of the revelation in Jesus. This revelation

is not without a background and context. Jesus shared with Judaism a common religious heritage and hope. His authority grows out of a message that had its roots in the history of Israel. In Jesus' proclamation, however, the revelation of the one true God was not only complete, but also was made available to the Gentile world.

The presupposed Jewish knowledge of God was recast by the appearance of Jesus. Only then for the first time was the God of the Jews revealing himself as the God he really is. And the Greeks' quest for God was revised and corrected when it found its answer in Christianity.

Jesus of Nazareth is the final revelation of God because the End of history appeared in him. It did so both in his eschatological message and in his resurrection from the dead. However, he can be understood to be God's final revelation only in connection with the whole of history as mediated by the history of Israel. He is God's revelation in the fact that all history receives its due light from him.<sup>46</sup>

The significance of Jesus' resurrection is set forth by Pannenberg in a series of propositions:

1. If Jesus has been raised, then the end of the world has begun.
2. If Jesus has been raised, this for a Jew can only mean that God himself has confirmed the pre-Easter activity of Jesus.
3. Through his resurrection from the dead, Jesus moved so close to the Son of Man that the insight became obvious: the Son of Man is none other than the man Jesus who will come again.
4. If Jesus, having been raised from the dead, is ascended to God and if thereby the end of the world has begun, then God is ultimately revealed in Jesus.
5. The transition to the Gentile mission is motivated by the eschatological resurrection of the crucified One.
6. What the early Christian tradition transmitted as the words of the risen Jesus is to be understood in terms of its content as the explication of the significance inherent in the resurrection itself.<sup>47</sup>

Thus, for Pannenberg, the resurrection of Jesus is "absolutely decisive for any Christian proclamation and for the Christian faith itself."<sup>48</sup>

What does Pannenberg mean by the term "resurrection"? He prefers to understand it metaphorically. "To speak about the resurrection of the dead is not comparable to speaking about any random circumstance that can be identified empirically at anytime. Here we are dealing with a metaphor."<sup>49</sup>

Evidently something had happened to the witnesses of the appearances of the Risen One for which their language had no other word than that used to characterize the eschatological expectation, i.e., resurrection from the dead. This expression is a metaphor. It suggests the idea of being awakened and arising from sleep. Hence Jewish traditions often join mention of the future resurrection of the dead with the metaphorical description of death as sleep. It is important to notice this metaphorical meaning of our talk about the resurrection, though of course not of the thing itself....The most we can really know is whether or not Easter witnesses were confronted by a reality which we too can comprehend only in terms of that parabolic word of eschatological expectation: resurrection from the dead.<sup>50</sup>

This metaphorical understanding is found in Judeo-Christian hope and not in Greek speculation. Pannenberg discusses the two concepts of life beyond death in our western culture: the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul and the Jewish-Christian hope of a resurrection of the dead. He finds problems, however, with the Greek concept.

Here a person cannot talk about hope in the genuine sense. The person who believes in the immortality of the soul does not look for something new in the future, but thinks he is able to preserve a kernel of his present human existence as something that cannot perish.<sup>51</sup>

The Greek idea of immortality is based on a distinction between body and soul. Pannenberg maintains that modern anthropology has abolished this distinction between body and soul as two completely different realms of reality.<sup>52</sup>

Although grounded in Jewish apocalyptic hope,<sup>53</sup> the resurrection of Jesus opens the future in a radically new way. His rising from the dead has universal implications.

Jesus' new reality, which appeared to the disciples at Easter, remains incomprehensible for us, as it was for them. We also are able to describe it only by the metaphor with which Jesus' disciples spoke about it: it is like rising from sleep, but now to a new life. Yet, by knowing ourselves to be bound to Jesus, we can already be certain that someday we will also participate in this new reality, which has appeared in him.<sup>54</sup>

Pannenberg is quick to recognize the fact, however, that the universal implications of Jesus' resurrection are subject to certain historical presuppositions:

If one assumes that the dead cannot rise, that any event of this type can never happen, the result will be such a strong prejudice against the truth of the early Christian message of Jesus' resurrection, that the more precise quality of the particular testimonies will not be taken into consideration in forming a general judgment. Only if the expectation of the future general resurrection of all men from death, whether for life or for judgment, makes sense in itself, only if it also expresses the truth for us, will it then be meaningful to put the question of Jesus' resurrection as a question of historical importance.<sup>55</sup>

The historical resurrection of Jesus is foundational to Pannenberg's Christology. "Jesus' resurrection is the basis for the perception of his divinity."<sup>56</sup> This stands in contrast to much Christology from below, in that it presumes the historicity of the resurrection, leading to Easter faith.

The possibility of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection has been opposed on the grounds that the resurrection of a dead person...violates the laws of nature. Therefore, resurrection as a historical event is impossible.<sup>57</sup>

Who is to say that the only things that can happen are the things which are by nature already fully and completely comprehensible? Is not even our everyday reality more complex than a picture of reality so empty of mystery would like to admit? One often hears the objection that a historian who reckoned with possibilities of this kind would come into conflict with natural sciences. Curiously enough this objection is seldom raised by scientists nowadays, and least of all by physicists; it is most often heard on the lips of theologians, or even historians. In these quarters a dogmatic view of the natural sciences is evidently still widespread which is no longer held by the sciences themselves.<sup>58</sup>

Why does Pannenberg take such a strong stance for the historical resurrection of Jesus? A major impetus comes from his desire to safeguard the objective basis of Christian faith.

If no arguments could be marshalled in its favor which would allow it to seem credible, then the assertion that Jesus is risen would be the expression of irresponsible subjectivism or blind faith in authority. But the cause of the Christian faith does not rest on such shaky ground. On the contrary, the historical claim, which is already contained in the assertion that Jesus is risen, is a tenable one on

objective examination, even in the context of our present experience of reality. The distance of the present world from the eschatological future of God does not exclude the real appearance of that future in our present world. And it is on this that the Christian faith has always insisted throughout history.<sup>59</sup>

For Pannenberg, it is inappropriate to find a fact/value dichotomy in the resurrection of Jesus. Meaning inheres in the historical facticity of the Easter event.

Only when the original unity of event and meaning is grasped may the question of the historicity of Jesus resurrection be properly raised again. For the event here in question can only be expressed in the language of apocalyptic expectation by the metaphorical phrase, resurrection from the dead, but nevertheless it was experienced as a concrete occurrence from without, not simply as a subjective experience. Therefore, even modern historians must at least examine it as eternal occurrence....The early Christian proclamation only unfolded the inherent meaning of Jesus' history in the language and the conceptualization of the time and the particular hearer. Sometimes it succeeded very well in expressing it, sometimes not. But it did not invent a meaning that was not already there.<sup>60</sup>

In addition to his critique of the distinction between *Geschichte* and *Historie*, Pannenberg calls into question the basic historiographical distinction between fact and value, event and meaning. God, as Lord of history, cannot be restricted to some special sphere of history (i.e., *Heilsgeschichte*). This critique is most evident in his handling of the resurrection of Jesus. Pannenberg insists that certainty about the resurrection does not come from the decision of faith. Faith is based on the certainty, which must come from outside faith. Just because first-hand proof is no longer attainable, at least eyewitness historical proof is available to us. Thus, the resurrection of Jesus does not emerge in a historical vacuum. Three elements make the resurrection of Jesus an historical event:

1. A context in Jewish apocalypticism,
2. An ontological analysis of natural human longing, and
3. An adequate metaphorical expression of the reality of the resurrection.<sup>61</sup>

The historicity of the resurrection is not affected by its metaphorical character.

Please understand me correctly: Only the *name* we give to this event is symbolic, metaphorical, but not the reality of the event itself. The latter is so absolutely unique that we have no other name for this than

the metaphorical expression of the apocalyptic expectation. In this sense, the resurrection of Jesus is an historical event, an event that really happened at that time.<sup>62</sup>

In fact, the Easter event provides the hermeneutical key for Pannenberg's Christology. "Thus, Jesus is the final revelation of God and, therefore, he himself is God. This doctrine adds nothing essential to the events of the resurrection of Jesus; it only makes clear the inner meaning of that event."<sup>63</sup>

In refutation of positivism,<sup>64</sup> with its closed system of natural causes and effects, Pannenberg argues for the historicity of Jesus' resurrection. The evidence points beyond reasonable doubt to the historical reality of the Easter event. Pannenberg believes that the rise of historical criticism and modern canons of historicity have been influential in displacing the resurrection of Jesus from its central position in Christian teaching and proclamation. The Easter event cannot be torn from the fabric of Christian history without destroying that history itself.<sup>65</sup>

There are many scholars today who think that the resurrection of Jesus cannot be an historical fact. There are all too few analogies to an event of this kind; it is all too unusual for the historian to be able to assume it as a fact. Only faith, it is claimed, can venture to take such an unusual fact into consideration. But...faith cannot guarantee the certainty of past events. These happenings must be assumed and in fact assumed as historically certain. Christian faith would be in a bad state if the resurrection of Jesus were not really an historical fact....There is no sort of knowledge [e.g. "super-history" or salvation history] of past events which by-passes historical knowledge. Only because Jesus' resurrection is an historical fact has faith in the God who raised him a stable foundation.<sup>66</sup>

Fundamental to Pannenberg's understanding of the historical significance of Jesus' resurrection is the concept of proleptic eschatology. "With the resurrection of Jesus, what for all other men is still to come has been realized."<sup>67</sup> Viewing the resurrection as proleptic event, Pannenberg underscores the ontological priority of the future. The future does not stand in opposition to the past and present. There is continuity between past, present and future, in that through the release of past events by the future, the future can be anticipated. History has purpose, and continuity is given to past and present by the future. The coming Kingdom is that future reality that interprets the past and present proleptically.<sup>68</sup> The proclamation of the Kingdom and its confirmation in Jesus' resurrection are events of the past that proleptically point to the future. Thus, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the paradigmatic proleptic event of the past that serves as a promise of the future.<sup>69</sup>

Pannenberg perceives Jesus' proclamation of the imminent Kingdom of God as the key to Christian theology. In stressing the present impact of the imminent future, Pannenberg differs with Bultmann, Dodd and others, who exaggerate the difference to the degree of dismissing the futurity of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' message. "Jesus indeed spoke of the presence of the Kingdom of God, but always in terms of the presence of God's *coming* Kingdom. Futurity is fundamental for Jesus' message." The "now" of the Kingdom is informed by the "not yet." Thus, the present is viewed as an effect of the future, rather than viewing the past and present as the cause of the future.<sup>70</sup>

Key to this view of proleptic eschatology is Jesus' role as the proclaimer of the Kingdom.

Jesus summoned his hearers to turn, heart and soul, toward God's near future, toward his near reign. He made the final salvation of each man depend upon accepting or refusing that appeal....Jesus did not make this appeal for decision unveiledly for himself, but only indirectly. He made it primarily for his eschatological message of God's near reign.<sup>71</sup>

The message of Jesus announces the "proleptic reality" of God's future Kingdom, partially realized in the present.

Thus the future and the presence of the reign are intertwined in the ministry of Jesus. But the future remains future. There is no "realized eschatology," as if the future had faded out. The presence of God's reign in Jesus was founded...only in the exclusiveness in Jesus' pointing to the *future* of God....The present reality of the reign of God, thus mediated by the exclusiveness of Jesus' eschatological message, is to be considered a proleptic reality.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, in the resurrection of Jesus, the end of history has been realized in the present. "The resurrection of Jesus was to be spoken of in close connection at least with the destiny of all mankind. The general human destiny has occurred in Jesus...." The eschatological resurrection of the dead is previewed in the Easter event. The presence of this "ultimate reality" is evidence of the nearness of God's salvation, and the fulfillment of the "general eschatological hope." As the "final revelation of God," the resurrection of Jesus is decisive for all history, especially in its openness to the future.<sup>73</sup>

Jesus of Nazareth is the final revelation of God because the End of history appeared in him. It did so both in his eschatological message and in his resurrection from the dead. However, he can be understood to be God's final revelation only in connection with the

whole of history as mediated by the history of Israel. He is God's revelation in the fact that all history receives its due light from him.<sup>74</sup>

Pannenberg's conception of history is marked by "pure openness" to the future based on the "historical uniqueness of the saving event" in Jesus. Human beings are "caught up in that movement of concrete history...[which] runs from the first Adam to the new Adam."<sup>75</sup> Pannenberg's "biblical-apocalyptic conception of history" is grounded upon an anthropological assumption that belies his attempt to do Christology from below.

Does not the biblical conception of universal history...presuppose the apocalyptic expectation of a general future resurrection of the dead? We have seen that this expectation forms the sole background against which the resurrection of Jesus can be seen in its full significance as the irruption of the consummation of all history. But is not an expectation of this kind--which must be counted among the anthropological presuppositions of Christian faith--too much to demand of 20th century man? I think that modern research into human nature has made it easier to see how reasonable the truth of that expectation is. Man's openness to the world, can be understood today only in terms of the expectation of a resurrection of the dead...Then the resurrection of Jesus ceases to appear as an unintelligible, although historically attested miracle. It then becomes intelligible again as the irruption of the consummation of history, which for us is still to come but in Jesus has already happened.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, Pannenberg views the Easter event in the light of a general anthropological observation that human existence cannot be totally comprehended within finite mortal dimensions. Man is a being who is open to the future and who hopes for a future fulfillment beyond death. Openness to an apocalyptic view of reality is not only essential to an understanding of Christian faith,<sup>77</sup> but shares in common with modern thought a phenomenology of hope.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, belief in the possibility of a future resurrection requires an openness to a view of reality that does not exclude such an event.<sup>79</sup>

"Revelation is not completely comprehended in the beginning, but at the end of the revealing history."<sup>80</sup> Only at the end of history is there a final self-revelation of God. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, however, the eschatological consummation is already proleptically present. This claim is based on Pannenberg's reading of the teaching and fate of Jesus in their Jewish apocalyptic milieu. Jesus' resurrection, however, is ultimately decisive for Pannenberg, for in this event, the anticipated revelation of God is made manifest within the historical process. The resurrection of Jesus is the interpretive key to the meaning of history.



What it means that in the person of Jesus the end of history is already anticipated can itself be understood only within the apocalyptic concept of history. Thus the historical framework remains intact. History is by no means abolished. On the contrary, an understanding of history as a whole is made possible for the first time because the end of history is already present.<sup>81</sup>

In line with the historical consciousness of Israel, Pannenberg maintains that history results from the dynamic tension between promise and fulfillment.

Within the reality characterized by the constantly creative work of God, history arises because God makes promises and fulfills these promises. History is event so suspended in tension between promise and fulfillment that through the promise it is irreversibly pointed toward the goal of future fulfillment.<sup>82</sup>

The Old and New Testaments are connected by the historical consciousness that binds the eschatological community of Jesus Christ to ancient Israel through the concept of promise and fulfillment. In fact, Pannenberg claims that "historical experience of reality is preserved only in the biblical understanding of history, in the biblical faith in the promise."<sup>83</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Pannenberg's theology of history seeks to overcome the Christological fact/value dichotomy by emphasizing the historical Jesus as the basis for the Christ of faith. History and faith must be viewed as interpenetrating realities, for what is true theologically cannot, at the same time, be historically false. Pannenberg's conviction that it is reasonable to believe in the resurrection as a real, bodily event is grounded in the recognition of the importance of the late Jewish apocalyptic understanding of man as future oriented, and the primacy of history as the fundamental category for revelation. It is thus appropriate to see his understanding of history as centering on a theology of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Pannenberg takes seriously the historical character of the resurrection, and his views of faith, history and the theology of history all flow from his interpretation of the resurrection. He argues for historical foundations for Easter faith, calling for an openness to a provisional, yet reliable knowledge as the basis for faith in Jesus' resurrection. The essence of faith is not risk, but trust in historical probabilities. In the case of the Easter event, the historical proofs are not irrefutable; however, neither is the historical actuality of Jesus' resurrection without reliable evidence.<sup>84</sup>

Pannenberg's Christology is based on a view of the retroactive power of the resurrection (*rückwirkende Kraft*).<sup>85</sup> This means that Jesus is essentially

one with God on the basis of the resurrection event, and that his earthly existence is united to God by this event. The resurrection is both the ontological and epistemological basis for Pannenberg's Christology. God is in history, and historical method can make him known. Thus, revelation is reformulated to mean that God can be discovered in history if the right historical method is employed. In this regard, Pannenberg betrays a subjectivism that is not based on experience but on historical method.<sup>86</sup>

The core of Pannenberg's theological method is found in his stress on the universal character of revelation. On this basis, he believes he has overcome the *Historie-Geschichte* distinction of the Bultmannian and post-Bultmannian positions. This has often been represented as a shift from Kantian transcendentalism to a Hegelian objectivism based on a reflection on the whole of reality as history. Pannenberg, however, attempts to maintain the importance of particularity within the universality of God's revelation, as well as the ontological priority of the future.<sup>87</sup>

In insisting, however, that historical knowledge of God's revelation in Jesus must precede faith and therefore does not presuppose faith, Pannenberg's epistemology is suspect. Does not his appeal to man's openness to the future involve faith in and knowledge of the God of the future? Is it not faith's hope that creates this openness? Perhaps one should ask whether Pannenberg's anthropological presupposition is as self-evident as he thinks it is. Even if we concede that it is, what is the basis for accepting the Jewish-Christian apocalyptic construct as the appropriate paradigm for understanding such future hope?<sup>88</sup>

The Christ event in the historical Jesus provides all of history with its interpretive key.<sup>89</sup> All of reality must be viewed in relation to this one unique occurrence in history. The historical resurrection of Jesus Christ provides the anticipation of the end, in that the end of history has come into the midst of history. This emphasis on the significance of Jesus for universal history, however, fails to do justice to his works and teachings. Pannenberg's Hegelian idealism moves from the particular to the universal without examining the meaning of the particular. His proleptic eschatology leaves little room for dealing with the significance of the historical Jesus for the present. What is significant for Pannenberg's Christology from below is the historical resurrection of Jesus, viewed as proleptic reality.<sup>90</sup>

Pannenberg is committed to a "theology of reason" defined as an "eschatologically oriented ontology."<sup>91</sup> God has revealed the structure of all reality in his self-revelation through Jesus Christ. In him is the anticipated end by which all reality hangs together. Reality is found in Jesus. The value of Pannenberg's theology of history can be discerned in its development of the insights of two influential thinkers. First, he is indebted to Karl Barth for the perception that theology is a function of revelation, and that it must be Christocentric. He, however, disagrees with Barth's understanding that the cognitive aspect of revelation always remains with God. Pannenberg asserts

that the cognitive aspect of revelation lies with man. Second, he is indebted to Hegel (et al.) for the concept of universal history as the self-disclosure of God. History is the self-revelation of God. In history God makes himself known. In Hegel's thinking, however, it is not clear whether Jesus Christ is unique or final, or only one other event in the historical process. In contrast, Pannenberg insists on the centrality of the history of Jesus for universal history.

Pannenberg emphasizes objective history over against the perceived devaluation of such in both the kerygmatic and *Heilsgeschichte* interpretations of history. Barth's emphasis on suprahistory or prehistory, and Bultmann's stress on the inwardness of existential historicity, both locate the event of revelation in the Word rather than in history. By contrast, Pannenberg seeks to verify the redemptive events by historical science, finding the locus of revelation in the works of God in history.<sup>92</sup> What is crucial in Pannenberg's understanding of the end of history anticipated in the person of Jesus, is the dialectic between the apocalyptic expectation of resurrection and the proleptic occurrence of the finality of history in the resurrection of Jesus. Jewish apocalypticism should not be dehistoricized or demythologized, but must be viewed as essential to an understanding of the eschatological significance of the Christ event.<sup>93</sup> In emphasizing the coming Kingdom of God as the overarching truth about reality, Pannenberg rightly seeks to reckon with the role of apocalyptic in Jesus' teaching. Christology, therefore, must be viewed in the context of the coming Kingdom of God.<sup>94</sup>

## Notes

1. The idea that Christology must take its starting point from the Christ of faith has become very influential since Martin Kähler and his book, *The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ* (1892). Pannenberg agrees with Kähler insofar as the latter protests against setting the figure and message of Jesus in opposition to the apostolic preaching in such a way that no sort of continuity between the two would exist any longer. Although positing continuity, however, Kähler held that knowledge of Jesus is necessarily conditioned by what the community of faith believed. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, trans. by L. Wilkins and D. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), pp. 22-23.

2. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," *Theology as History*, vol. 3, *New Frontiers in Theology*, ed. J. M. Robinson and J. B. Cobb, Jr. (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 126-27. Cf. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 132-133.

3. Pannenberg, "Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 127.

4. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 149; cf. Fred H. Klooster, "Historical Method

and the Resurrection in Pannenberg's Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 11, no. 1 (1976): 28ff.

5. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions In Theology*, vol. 1, trans. by George Kehm (Philadelphia: Fortress Press: 1970) p. 86. Cf. Iain G. Nicol, "Facts and Meanings: Wolfhart Pannenberg's Theology as History and the Role of the Historical-Critical Method," *Religious Studies* 12, no. 2 (1976): 130.

6. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 1, p. 16; cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Redemptive Event and History," *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. by Claus Westermann (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 314.

7. Klooster, "Historical Method and the Resurrection," pp. 14, 18-19.

8. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 1, p. 15.

9. "Prolepsis" is a technical term in Pannenberg's theology to refer to the anticipatory nature of reality. Ultimate truth is only knowable at the end of the historical process. Along the way, knowledge of the truth is only provisional, to be verified at the end of history. Thus, Pannenberg's notion of truth presupposes a proleptic view of reality.

10. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 1, p. 135.

11. Carl Braaten, "The Current Controversy On Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," *Journal of Religion*, 45, no. 3 (1965): 227-228.

12. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 1, p. 69.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

15. Wolfhart Pannenberg, ed., *Revelation as History*, trans. by D. Granskou (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 155. Cf. Clark H. Pinnock, "Pannenberg's Theology: Reasonable Happenings in History," *Christianity Today*, Nov. 5, 1976, p. 21.

16. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *The Apostle's Creed: In The Light of Today's Questions*, trans. by M. Kohl (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 46.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

18. Pannenberg distinguishes between historical certainty and the certainty of faith. "Historical research can never achieve definitive certainty in its results, but only greater or less probability....But certainty of faith, on the other hand, depends on the peculiarity of a particular historical event, namely, the history of Jesus....The certainty of faith consists in the completeness of trust, which in turn is grounded in the eschatological meaning of the history of Jesus." Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Response to the Discussion" in Robinson and Cobb, eds., *Theology as History*, p.273.

19. "Theology has to deal with presupposition of faith, with the truth and reliability (already presupposed in the act of faith) of the 'object' on which faith depends. Of course it can do this only in a provisional way" (Ibid., p. 271).
20. R. J. Neuhaus, "Wolfhart Pannenberg: Profile of a Theologian" in Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 19-20.
21. See Pannenberg, "Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 128-130; *Jesus--God and Man*, pp. 12ff.; cf. Don Olive, *Wolfhart Pannenberg* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1973), pp. 38-39, 45-46, 96.
22. Pannenberg, "Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 128-129.
23. See William Hamilton, "The Character of Pannenberg's Theology," *Theology as History*, vol. 3, *New Frontiers in Theology*, ed by J. M. Robinson and J. B. Cobb, Jr. (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 195-196.
24. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 1, p. 36.
25. Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus," pp. 130-131.
26. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Faith and Reality*, trans by John Maxwell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), p. 69.
27. See Braaten, "Current Controversy on Revelation," pp. 234-235; Pinnock, "Pannenberg's Theology," p. 19-20.
28. Pannenberg, *Apostle's Creed*, p. 131; cf. Stanley Grenz, "Reasonable Christianity: Wolfhart Pannenberg Turns Sixty," *Christianity Today*, September, 1988, pp. 22-23.
29. See Braaten, "Current Controversy on Revelation," pp. 228-229.
30. Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth:" pp. 128-130; *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, pp. 46-47; *What Is Man? Contemporary Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans by Duane Priebe, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), pp. 29, 32. Cf. Hamilton, "Character of Pannenberg's Theology," pp. 188-189.
31. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Faith and Reality*, p. 65.
32. See Braaten, "Current Controversy on Revelation," p. 231.
33. Pannenberg, *Faith and Reality*, p. 66.
34. Christology "from above" starts with the divinity of Christ. Christology "from below" starts with the humanity of Christ, and derives knowledge of his divinity through his humanity.

35. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 36. Cf. Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 124.

36. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 1, p. 26; cf. Clark Pinnock, "No-Nonsense Theology: Pinnock Reviews Pannenberg," *Christianity Today* 21, p. 219.

37. Pannenberg's Christology from below assumes some a priori truth. Not all would agree with what he allows as part of the historical Jesus. E.g. "He says 'Jesus of Nazareth' inadvisedly...for he shows no disposition to limit the discussion to the historical man of Nazareth but means the whole of what most of us would call 'Jesus Christ'" (William Hamilton, "The Character of Pannenberg's Theology," p. 166).

38. See Pannenberg: *Jesus--God and Man*, pp. 33-37.

39. Kenneth Heinitz, "Pannenberg: Theology 'From Below' and the Virgin Birth," *Lutheran Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1976): 173-174.

40. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 69; cf. Heinitz, "Theology 'from Below,'" pp. 176 ff.

41. Pannenberg, "Jesus' Resurrection as the Ground of his Unity With God" in *Jesus-God and Man*, pp. 53 ff.

42. Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, pp. 142-143.

43. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, p. 39.

44. Pannenberg, "Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 131.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 125.

47. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, pp. 66-73.

48. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Did Jesus Really Rise From the Dead?" *Dialog* 4 (Spring 1965): 128.

49. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 74. Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans by M. J. O'Connell (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1985), pp. 129-130.

50. Pannenberg, "Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 115.

51. Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, p. 45.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

53. "The concept of the resurrection of the dead was probably adopted from the Persians. However, that could only happen because this concept converged with the requirements of the history of traditions in Israel itself" (Ibid., p. 52). Pannenberg identifies this hope with Jewish apocalyptic expectation in *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, pp. 130-131.

54. Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, p. 53.

55. Pannenberg, "Did Jesus Really Rise From the Dead?" p. 131.

56. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 108.

57. Ibid., p. 98.

58. Pannenberg, *Apostles' Creed*, p. 110. Cf. Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, p. 135: "General laws do not make possible an absolutely certain prediction about the possibility or impossibility of single events, except in the case where all possible conditions can be taken into account. This might be possible in an experiment, but not in the process of the world as a whole."

59. Pannenberg, *Apostles' Creed*, pp. 114-115.

60. Pannenberg, "Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 127-128.

61. Cf. Hamilton, "Character of Pannenberg's Theology," pp. 181-183. Hamilton concurs with Pannenberg's judgment on the separation of the resurrection event from its meaning: "Historical method has three main elements: context, ontology, and language. It is brought to a particular event, it tests that event, tests its level of probability, examines the witnesses if any, and in the encounter between method and event, the label 'historical' is conferred. Historical means event and meaning, and the two cannot be sundered. Historical method finds the resurrection event to be historical and revelatory, together, in the same process and at the same time" (p. 184).

62. Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, p. 135.

63. Ibid.

64. See R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 132-33, for critical discussion of positivistic interpretation of history which Pannenberg affirms in *Theology as History*, p. 127, n. 24.

65. See Richard R. Niebuhr, *Resurrection and Historical Reason: a Study of Theological Method* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), pp. 1, 3. "In isolation, the resurrection stands before our minds as the most questionable of all events. But when we see it in its relationship to the rest of our history, when we see its effectiveness in molding and interpreting that history, then we must acknowledge it to be the most concrete of the events in the New Testament" (pp. 103-104). Pannenberg affirms Niebuhr's view of the Easter event in *Theology as History*, p. 114, n. 8.

66. Pannenberg, *Faith and Reality*, pp. 71-73.

67. Pannenberg, "Did Jesus Really Rise From the Dead?" p. 135.

68. The future is that which gives meaning to all reality, and takes precedence over present reality. For Pannenberg, the Kingdom of God is the future of present reality. The end of history is present in every moment of history, and every moment of history is an anticipation of the future. Thus, the end of history gives meaning to the historical process, because the end has decisive meaning in itself and is proleptically present at every stage of development. See Ronald D. Pasquariello, "Pannenberg's Philosophical Foundations," *Journal of Religion* 56, no. 4, (1976): 338-347.

69. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, pp. 22, 25, 30.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

71. Pannenberg, "Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 110. For further discussion of functional Christology see Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, pp. 212, 217.

72. Pannenberg, "The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," p. 113.

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 116-117, 124, 131.

74. *Ibid.*, p.125.

75. Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, pp. 498-500.

76. Pannenberg, *Faith and Reality*, pp. 76-77.

77. Pannenberg insists that apocalyptic history is essential to Christianity: "If the apocalyptic expectation should be totally excluded from the realm of possibility for us, then the early Christian faith in Christ is also excluded" (Pannenberg, *Jesus-- God and Man*, p. 82.

78. Cf. Nicol, "Facts and Meanings," pp. 129-139. "Openness to the future, and the hopeful expectation of life's unlimited fulfillment beyond death are thus elements which belong to the essential structure of human existence....It is only in the light of this anthropological fact, that the question of the resurrection of Jesus as a historical fact may be sensibly posed and treated with the historical seriousness which it deserves....The late-Jewish and early Christian framework of apocalyptic, with its hope of the resurrection from death of all men, is now seen to have its permanent and enduring validity precisely in relation to this general anthropological fact of man's openness to the future and his hope of unlimited fulfillment" (pp. 134-135).

79. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, pp. 83-88; cf. Frank Tupper, *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 150.



80. Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, p. 131.
81. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 1, p. 36.
82. Ibid., p. 18.
83. Ibid., pp. 25, 33.
84. Cf. Tupper, *Theology of Pannenberg*, pp. 159-160.
85. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 135.
86. Cf. William Hamilton, "The Character of Pannenberg's Theology," pp. 177-178, 188.
87. In this regard he prefers the "Platonist" label to that of the "Hegelian." Wolfhart Pannenberg's verbal response to the panel on "The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg: American Appraisals," (a seminar in Chicago, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, November 19, 1988).
88. Cf. Nicol, "Facts and Meanings," pp. 134-136.
89. In stressing the resurrection of Jesus as pivotal for the theology of history, Pannenberg implicitly undermines the significance of the cross. He does not view the death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice, but rather, as a conflict with Law and an identification with humankind in the death experience through vicarious representation. See Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, pp. 246-251, 260-266, 268-269; *Apostles' Creed*, pp. 83-86, 88-89, 114-115. Cf. Tupper, *Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, pp. 160 ff.
90. Cf. Kendrick Grobel, "Revelation and Resurrection," in Robinson and Cobb, *Theology as History*, p. 166.
91. Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*. p. 12.
92. Pannenberg views Christ, as the Word, to be the locus of God's revelation in history, as well as the content and unifying factor of Scripture. Although treating the Bible as a historical source, he denies its divine inspiration and authority. Pannenberg repudiates biblical infallibility because of critical difficulties with the text of Scripture. See *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol. 1, pp. 1-14, 194, 198.
93. Braaten, "Current Controversy on Revelation," pp. 226, 228.
94. Cf. Pinnock, "No-Nonsense Theology: Pinnock Reviews Pannenberg," pp. 218-220.

