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TRINITY AND ESCHATOLOGY: THE HISTORICAL BEING OF GOD
IN THE THEOLOGY OF WOLPHART PANNEMBERG

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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ABSTRACT

TRINITY AND ESCHATOLOGY: THE HISTORICAL BEING OF GOD IN THE THEOLOGY OF WOLFHART PANNENBERG

Attempting to provide a revision of the Christian doctrine of God, Wolfhart Pannenberg combines eschatological and trinitarian motifs to express God's transcendence and historical relatedness to the world. The result is what may be called "eschatological panentheism." The concept of God as the "future of the world," while a powerful metaphor for divine transcendence, fails ultimately to satisfy the demand of Christian faith for a God absolutely independent of the world for his full actuality. In Pannenberg's panentheism, God's deity is "at stake" in history and will only be fully realized in the eschatological consummation of the totality of reality. History is the process of the self-realization of God through anticipatory unities which represent the immanence of the future. Jesus Christ is the supreme anticipation of God's future in that in him the eschatological unity of God and man is proleptically realized. The Holy Spirit is the anticipatory self-transcendence of man toward his future unity with all reality and is therefore himself the presence of God's future. Since God's deity is his Kingdom, the unity of all reality, Jesus and the Spirit belong to God's eternal essence insofar as they are crucial
to the accomplishment of that eschatological unity.

In this eschatological and trinitarian panentheism, the world, or God's relation to it, is imported into the actuality of God as a "negative moment." Pannenberg's ontology represents God as the "truly Infinite" which attains absoluteness through a dynamic, dialectical process of positing and overcoming finite reality in himself. The underlying structure of this concept of the God-world relation is Hegelian. From the standpoint of Christian theism, this fails to account for the transcendent freedom of God in creation and redemption of the world which depends on an irreducible distinction between them. Instead of an activity of grace, God's redemption is conceived as a speculative necessity within God himself. A major factor in this idea of God is Pannenberg's quantitative notion of infinity which needs to be corrected by a qualitative concept of finite and infinite being in order to allow for their mutual reality-indistinction.
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INTRODUCTION

Outside the charmed circle of theological specialists the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg is not yet widely known. Unlike such illustrious modern theologians as Paul Tillich, Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Barth, he has not published anything for "popular" consumption. He has purposely aimed to influence professional, academic theologians rather than lay Christians and their pastors. He believes that his thought will eventually have a greater influence by changing patterns of thought among theological teachers and writers than by becoming a short-lived example of "newsstand" or "paperback" theology. For the sake of the reader not familiar with Pannenberg's theological contribution, then, an attempt will be made to locate him on the "theological map" in relation to the history of Christian thought.

Wolfhart Pannenberg was born in 1928 in Stettin, Germany (now in Poland). His father was a civil servant and he received a normal education in the public schools. Little is known of his youth except what he has revealed to friends and what he has written in a brief autobiographical article in Christian Century. There he recounts a mystical experience during the closing days of the Second World War which played a role in his decision for theology as his life's vocation.1 After the war, he entered the University of Berlin, but moved to Göttingen in 1948 to study
philosophy with Nicholai Hartmann. During these two years of study, he gradually came to believe that philosophy alone could not answer the most profound questions of human life. He turned to the study of Christian theology through an "intellectual conversion." According to his friend, Richard John Neuhaus, "It is in fact hard to imagine a more emphatically intellectual path to Christian affirmation than the one travelled by the young Pannenberg." 

After a period of theological study with the great Swiss theologian Karl Barth and with his colleague at Basel, Karl Jaspers, Pannenberg moved to Heidelberg where he earned the doctorate in 1953. While studying there he formed an "Arbeitskreise" of young theologians which came to be known as the "Pannenberg circle." These men had in common a profound disillusionment with the prevailing mood of theology in post-war Europe which, they believed, tended to divorce Christian faith from reason and from history. The influence of the Old Testament scholar Gerhard von Rad was important in the work of this circle. The members of this group published articles which Pannenberg edited into the volume which catapulted him into the center of theological attention: Offenbarung als Geschichte (Revelation as History). In direct contrast to the emphasis on the transcendence and supernatural quality of divine revelation as "Word" in Barthian thought, Pannenberg and his colleagues argued for recognition of history itself as the self-revealing activity of God. For Pannenberg, "...it is in history itself that
divine revelation takes place, and not in some strange Word arriving from some alien place and cutting across the fabric of history."  

From 1955 until 1958 Pannenberg lectured at Heidelberg, primarily on nineteenth-century theology. During this time he became intensely interested in the work of the German idealist philosopher G. W. F. Hegel whose idea of universal history as the self-revelation of Absolute Spirit undoubtedly influenced his own theology. From 1958 until 1961 Pannenberg taught at the church seminary at Wuppertal where his colleague was Jürgen Moltmann, founder and chief theorist of the so-called "Theology of Hope." From 1961 until 1968 he taught at the University of Mainz. During this period he published several major works including Grundzüge der Christologie which was published in English under the title Jesus—God and Man. This book, American theologian Peter Hodgson says, "may prove to be the most important work in Christology since the great studies by Dorner and Ritschl in the nineteenth century."  

In 1968 Pannenberg moved to his present position as professor of systematic theology at Ludwig-Maximilians Universität in Munich. There he is also chairman of the Ecumenical Institute of the Protestant Faculty and holds regular ecumenical seminars with the Catholic Faculty. His major contribution during these years since 1968 has been Theology and the Philosophy of Science in which he addresses the question of whether Christian theology has a place among
the sciences in the modern university.

Pannenberg has made a more favorable impression on theologians in America than in his own country, where he is quite controversial. He makes yearly trips to the United States, lecturing in many major universities and theological seminaries. In 1963 he was guest professor at the University of Chicago. During the school year 1966-1967 he was guest professor at Harvard and Claremont. He is widely acknowledged by American theologians as one of the most creative minds in contemporary theology. In 1976, *Time* magazine published an article on Pannenberg calling him one of two acknowledged "theological stars" in the current generation. In the article, Pannenberg's own consciousness of being rejected by many of his German colleagues is revealed in his statement that "I am not the most popular theologian in Germany. I am found guilty for referring to reason."  

Placing Pannenberg on the theological "map" is a formidable task. He resists simple classification under any "school" of Christian theology. However, he is clearly a modern representative of that "family" of Christian theologians which seeks in any age or culture to correlate faith and reason, revelation and secular philosophy. In his book *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, Etienne Gilson delineates two broad families of Christian theologians: one which stresses the primacy of faith and finds its chief representative in the early Latin father Tertullian, and one
which stresses the reasonableness of theology and finds its chief (though not most extreme) representative in St. Augustine. As with any such rubric, Gilson's is too simple to include many of the most creative minds of Christian history. However, for purposes of identifying a given theologian's basic propensities it is a helpful distinction.

The first family, Gilson says, is made up of those theologians for whom revelation is given to men as a substitute for all other knowledge, including science, ethics and metaphysics. In its most extreme form, this family of theologians rejects all attempts to harmonize faith and reason. Christian theology is based entirely on self-sufficient revelation and to allow unenlightened, secular philosophy any role in knowledge of God is to betray the autonomy of God's sovereign self-communication. Gilson designates this attitude the "Tertullian family" after the church father who asked

What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from the porch of Solomon (Acts 3:5) who had himself taught that the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart. (Wisd. 1:1) Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectic composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the gospel! With our faith, we desire no further belief. For this is our palmary faith, that there is nothing which we ought to believe besides.

Following Tertullian's lead, this family of theologians sets Christian faith and divine revelation over against mere human "opinion" (natural reason) and calls for a sacrifice of the intellect, if necessary, in favor of fideistic belief.
Representatives of this family may be found in every era of Christian thought. Gilson mentions St. Bernard of Clairveaux as a leading opponent of rational theology and the use of secular philosophy by Christians in the Middle Ages. Bernard was an outspoken critic of the scholasticism of Peter Abelard and argued that the Holy Spirit, not reason, must be the Christian theologian's teacher. The "spiritual Franciscans" of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries followed Tertullian's example also in criticizing all attempts to combine worldly philosophy with divine revelation and the mystical ascent of the soul to God. One of their poets even put the Tertullianic spirit into verse:

Plato and Socrates may contend
And all the breath in their bodies spend,
Arguing without an end --
What's it all to me?
Only a pure and simple mind
Straight to heaven its way doth find;
Greets the King--while far behind
Lags the world's philosophy.13

Outstanding partisans of this family in Christian history include Pascal, Kierkegaard, Jacobi, Kähler, the early Barth and many of the "neoorthodox" or "dialectical" theologians of the "Word of God" in the mid-twentieth century. In opposition to speculative theologians of his day, Pascal argued that "The heart has reasons the reason knows not of" and that the "God of the philosophers is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."14 Kierkegaard believed that in matters of man's knowledge of God, "truth is subjectivity" and the rational, speculative intellect must follow the inwardness of experience rather than vice versa.15 Paradox,
antinomy and mystery are all the norm rather than the exception in theology because of the inadequacy of the mind to God and the absolute noetic, as well as ontic, transcendence of God.

Contemporary representatives of the Tertullian family find an ally in the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant who demonstrated the limitation of theoretical reason to the "phenomenal realm" (realm of empirical experience) and then said that with regard to knowledge of God he had had to destroy reason in order to make room for faith.16 The elimination of all speculative or metaphysical considerations from Christian theology and its restriction to the realm of "practical reason" (value judgments), became a hallmark of post-Kantian Protestant theology. Even Barth's theology borrowed heavily from Kantian negativism in its total rejection of natural theology or metaphysical theism.17 Barth considered Kant's emphasis on the finitude of human reason an ally in his own campaign to rest theological knowledge solely on divine revelation.

Gilson notes the existence of another family of Christian thought which, he says, is "much more enlightened than the first one, and whose untiring efforts to blend religious faith with rational speculations have achieved really important results."18 To one degree or another, members of this second family have emphasized the fundamental agreement of natural reason and revealed truth and therefore of secular philosophy and Christian theology. Early
representatives of this family include several of the "Apologists," such as Justin Martyr who referred to Socrates as a "Christian before Christ." Clement of Alexandria and Origen belong within this second family because both sought to unite Greek philosophy with Christian reflection on God.

Gilson chooses St. Augustine as the paradigm of this family and calls it the "Augustinian family." In spite of all their diversity, its representatives have consistently opposed any absolute divorce of faith and reason and have at least declared that true Christian faith leads to rational understanding. Some outstanding examples of this approach in pre-scholastic Christian theology are Boethius, author of The Consolation of Philosophy, who attempted to construct a complete harmony of Christian theology and Greek philosophy; John Scotus Erigena, for whom "true philosophy is true religion and true religion is true philosophy;" and Anselm of Canterbury who attempted to provide irrefutable proof of every major Christian doctrine and who coined the phrase which Gilson considers the motto of the Augustinian family: "credo ut intelligam" (I believe in order to understand). 19

For most Augustinians, up to and including Anselm, the philosophy of Plato (sometimes as revised by Plotinus) formed the basis for the rational explication of faith. During the scholastic period of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the philosophy of Aristotle came largely to dominate Christian rationalism. Most of these scholastic
theologians would be representatives of the Augustinian family as Gilson describes it. After the high Middle Ages, major members of the Augustinian family include many rationalist, speculative theologians such as Nicholas of Cusa, who revived some of the Neo-Platonism of earlier ages; Malebranche; Gioberti and G. W. F. Hegel. In reaction to Kant's stress on the finitude of human reason, Hegel asserted a fundamental unity of finite and infinite reason which makes rational knowledge of God possible.\(^{20}\) His idealism is an extreme form of the Augustinian belief in a "Logos" of reason common to God and man. Whereas most Augustinian theologians emphasized man's partial, finite participation in the rational Logos and therefore admitted the necessity of faith, Hegel seems to have posited the absolute infinity of reason. In "Thought" man is elevated above everything finite. "God exists essentially in Thought."\(^{21}\) Hegel went so far as to confine knowledge of God entirely to the sphere of reason (Vernunft).\(^{22}\) Christian belief, he argued, could only claim objectivity insofar as it is based on proofs of reason and not on feeling, emotion or will. For him, only if the God of Christian theology is the God of speculative reason is he the "truly Infinite," the Absolute.\(^{23}\) This is because reason itself is that which unites God and man and only reason, which is the divine in man, is capable of grasping the infinite unity of reality.

Quentin Lauer points out the affinity of Hegel's view with what Gilson has designated the Augustinian family:
What Hegel has done -- and it would seem, quite consciously -- is to insert his own thinking into the tradition of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Anselm, and Spinoza, all of whom saw human rational thinking as somehow divine and oriented to the divine. Thought reveals itself as infinite activity, and infinite activity is seen to be activity of the infinite. 24

This delineation of two broad families of Christian theologians has been given for the purpose of helping to "locate" Wolfhart Pannenberg's theology on the "map" of Christian thought. He is perhaps the most extreme representative of the Augustinian family currently available. In many respects, as will be pointed out throughout this study, he revives the rationalist, speculative idealism of Hegel and is heir to the ontologically-oriented theologies of Origen, Erigena, Nicholas of Cusa and of Cusa's modern disciple, Paul Tillich. He stands firmly within this "left wing" of the Augustinian tradition, always striving to harmonize the "God of the philosophers" with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Ultimately, he reasons, there can be no conflict between what sound metaphysical thinking discovers and what revelation reveals. In fact, departing somewhat from the mainstream of Augustinian thought, Pannenberg seems to give priority to universal reason, making faith derive from knowledge rather than vice versa. Instead of the axiom "I believe in order that I may understand" (Anselm), his would be "I understand in order that I may believe." This has brought him into direct conflict with the majority of contemporary Protestant theologians who are neo-Kantian and tend to follow Barth and Bultmann
in divorcing faith from reason, setting them in fairly independent, autonomous spheres. An example of this divorce is the theology of Emil Brunner who says that "The idea of God of faith is only gained in the sphere of faith, not in that of metaphysical, neutral thinking.... True theological thought should never leave the dimension of revelation...."25

In opposition to what he considers the subjectivizing and privatizing of Christian belief in this theology of the "Word of God," Pannenberg avers that

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.... Nevertheless, the promise on which it is based must...be certain from the standpoint of reason to the degree of certainty that may reasonably be expected in relation to such things.26

To some, Pannenberg's emphasis on the reasonableness of theology ignores a time-honored emphasis of Reformation theology: the "testimonium internum Spiritus Sancti" (internal testimony of the Holy Spirit). Both Luther and Calvin taught that without this illuminating experience, one is utterly unable to grasp the truth of divine revelation. To those who decry the loss of the dimension of the Holy Spirit in his epistemology, Pannenberg says that

An otherwise unconvincing message cannot attain the power to convince simply by appealing to the Holy Spirit. The fact that the one who is convinced by the message confesses that this apprehension was affected in him by the Holy Spirit must not be misunderstood as if the Spirit were taken to be the criterion of the truth of the message. On the contrary, it is much more the assurance that one is speaking in the power of the Holy Spirit that is itself in need of a criterion for its credibility....27

Pannenberg's outspoken insistence on the rationality
of Christian theology must be understood in relation to his involvement in the dispute between faculties of theology and the other "sciences" (Wissenschaf ten) in the German universities. During the reorganization of the universities during the nineteen-sixties and seventies, certain spokesmen for university faculties asserted that since theology is not a "science" in the proper sense of the word, it ought not to be taught in the university. Pannenberg sees this attack as directly related to the fideistic approach to theological epistemology taken by the Theology of the Word of God (neo-orthodoxy). In *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, Pannenberg sets forth his comprehensive account of the relation between faith and reason, revelation and philosophical knowledge, claiming that theology is also a science in that it investigates the claims of historic religions and modern ideologies to be revelations of the true nature of reality. The objective element in this science is the test of coherence by which all rational truth-claims must be judged: "The...claims of a religion...may be regarded as hypotheses to be tested by the full range of currently accessible experience. They are to be judged by their ability to integrate the complexity of modern experience into the religion."28 He readily admits that this means even Christian theology must treat God as a "problem," as a hypothesis to be verified, rather than as a presupposed datum of revealed knowledge. It must remain open to the counter-claims of atheism and must be willing to adjust its own
results in light of the new discoveries and advances in all areas of culture and knowledge.

How this rationalist approach to Christian theology works itself out in Pannenberg's doctrine of God will be a major concern of this study. As will be seen, he is concerned to take into consideration the intellectual efforts of modern atheists in reformulating the Christian concept of God. He is very closely in touch with the philosophies of such non-Christians as Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Feuerbach, Ernst Bloch and Jean-Paul Sartre and he discovers in their writings much that is helpful in theology as the "science of God." In this respect, Pannenberg follows closely in the footsteps of the ancient Christian "Apologists" who attempted to appropriate "pagan" truth in the service of making Christian doctrine acceptable to educated and intellectual persons of their world.
Endnotes to Introduction


6 As quoted in Neuhaus, p. 11.


9 Ibid., p. 65.

10 Etienne Gilson, Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938).

11 Ibid., p. 65.

12 Tertullian, On Prescription Against Heretics, Chapter VII, as quoted in Gilson, ibid., pp. 9-10.


18. Gilson, p. 15.  


21. Ibid., p. 132.  
22. Ibid., pp. 136-137.


CHAPTER I

ESCHATOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY

1. Pannenberg's Intellectual Task

Although Wolfhart Pannenberg considers himself first and foremost a Christian theologian, he stands in the tradition of Christian thought which believes, contrary to the trend of twentieth-century Protestant theology, that there is a fundamental unity of theology and philosophy. Therefore, he is as much a philosophical as a dogmatic theologian. It is his opinion that theology and philosophy approach the same subject matter from different perspectives, but with a unified method of scientific (wissenschaftlich) reasoning. He is committed to the axiom that truth is one and that neither theology nor philosophy possesses "privileged" information which is not generally accessible to critical reason.

So strongly does he assert the unity of philosophy and theology that at times he seems almost to equate them. His definition of "philosophy" would clearly be rejected by many modern philosophers, especially of the "analytical" school. Pannenberg sees the basic task of philosophy as that of discovering the unity of reality: "Philosophical enquiry is not concerned with this or that being in its particularity, or with one area of reality which can be separated from others; it is concerned with the being of beings, or in other
words with reality in general."\textsuperscript{1} Even transcendental philosophy (e.g., Kant), he argues, is always concerned with reality as a whole, even if it remains unthematized. Thus, in conscious opposition to most modern epistemologically-oriented philosophies, Pannenberg sees \textit{ontology} as the inescapable ultimate task of philosophy.

Pannenberg believes that this ontological task of philosophy inevitably brings it into touch with theology, which he defines as the "science of God" as the "all-determining reality." At this point, with the question of the unity which unifies all reality, philosophy reaches the question of God, the question of the nature of the reality which ultimately determines all things.\textsuperscript{2} This remains an ultimate question for philosophy, however. It may stop short of asking or seeking an answer to this question and still remain philosophy, even though the question arises every time philosophy inquires into the universality of something. The question of God arises especially intensely in philosophical anthropology, which Pannenberg believes is the modern equivalent of natural theology in that reference to some idea of the divine is inescapable in the study of man.\textsuperscript{3}

Theology's main task is also the study of the unity of reality, but from the perspective of the reality of God thematically recognized as the power that unifies reality into a whole. Theology is not a non-philosophical task, then, but relates to the implicit question of philosophical inquiry as the explicit search for the identity of the ulti-
mate basis for the unity of reality in any particular concep-
tion. Its task is primarily that of rational investigation
of the claims of historic religions to be revelations of this
power behind the unity of reality which theology calls "God."

Pannenberg's magnum opus, *Theology and the Philosophy
of Science*, is his attempt to defend this close relation be-
tween philosophical and theological disciplines. His critics
argue, with some justification, that it represents a serious
confusion of the two sciences and perhaps even an elevation
of philosophy as rational ontology to a position dominant
over theology. Certainly he attempts to establish the
closest possible relation. His formal definition of theol-
ogy, which would be rejected by most modern Protestant theo-
logians, scarcely provides any ground for a qualitative dis-
tinction between it and philosophy (as he understands it: as
ontology). According to him, theology is "the study of the
totality of the real from the point of view of the reality
which ultimately determines it both as a whole and in its
parts." This makes clear that in his view theology has the
closest possible link to general ontology.

Pannenberg's definition of theology raises certain
questions concerning the uniqueness of theology as a disci-
pline which are bound to worry Christian theologians: What
can theology say that philosophy cannot say itself? What
role does special revelation, as a source of knowledge, play
in such a discipline? The philosopher may also have cause
for concern about the integrity of his discipline in this
scheme, however. While Pannenberg's view of the relation between theology and philosophy may be seen as a reduction of the former to the latter, the opposite may also be argued. It seems at times that with Hegel Pannenberg considers philosophy to be essentially theological when it follows its method and object of research consistently. In Hegel, Absolute Spirit, as the Concept of concepts, is the transcendental condition for all agreement between knowledge and reality and for the ultimate unity of reality itself. Therefore, philosophy has as its ultimate term (horizon, goal) the idea of God, providing that Absolute Spirit can be understood as God as Hegel often insisted.  

Similarly, for Pannenberg, theology is the ultimate goal of all truly philosophical reasoning in that it is the rational investigation of philosophy's true object: God, the reality that determines everything in its unity with everything else. Very few philosophers or Protestant theologians would consent to such a radical identification of these two disciplines today. For Pannenberg, however, the public nature of theology as a science (Wissenschaft) is at stake in this.

The task of Pannenberg's doctrine of God is to demonstrate the essential unity between properly developed ontological principles of being and the totality of reality and the Christian conception of God. That is, he believes it necessary and possible to show, in a provisional way, that the God revealed in the history of Israel and in the ministry
and destiny of Jesus Christ is the "all-determining reality" (alles-bestimmende Wirklichkeit) which is the source and ground of the unity of reality. It is not the purpose of this study to determine the validity of this claim, nor to analyze his method of proving it. Rather, the purpose here will be critically to analyze Pannenberg's developed concept of God, especially in relation to his transcendence "over" the world. Pannenberg's peculiar contribution to modern theological reflection on God is his concept of futurity. According to Philip Hefner, one of Pannenberg's most incisive critics, "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."7 The nature and consequences of this principle of futurity for Pannenberg's doctrine of God will be the major focus of concern throughout this study.

Before delving into Pannenberg's doctrine of God, this first chapter will attempt to show the "roots" of his peculiar theistic conception in hermeneutics and general ontology. Here, explicit biblical and Christian theological considerations will somewhat artificially be set aside in order to isolate Pannenberg's philosophical presuppositions and concerns.

2. The Futurity of Meaning

One mode of entrance into Pannenberg's distinctive doctrine of God is through his hermeneutics. Although he
which stresses the reasonableness of theology and finds its chief (though not most extreme) representative in St. Augustine. As with any such rubric, Gilson's is too simple to include many of the most creative minds of Christian history. However, for purposes of identifying a given theologian's basic propensities it is a helpful distinction.

The first family, Gilson says, is made up of those theologians for whom revelation is given to men as a substitute for all other knowledge, including science, ethics and metaphysics. In its most extreme form, this family of theologians rejects all attempts to harmonize faith and reason. Christian theology is based entirely on self-sufficient revelation and to allow unenlightened, secular philosophy any role in knowledge of God is to betray the autonomy of God's sovereign self-communication. Gilson designates this attitude the "Tertullian family" after the Father who asked

What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from the porch of Solomon (Acts 3:5) who had himself taught that the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart. (Wisd. 1:1) Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectic composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the gospel! With our faith, we desire no further belief. For this is our palmary faith, that there is nothing which we ought to believe besides.

Following Tertullian's lead, this family of theologians sets Christian faith and divine revelation over against mere human "opinion" (natural reason) and calls for a sacrifice of the intellect, if necessary, in favor of fideistic belief.
explicitly claims that the "structure" of Jesus' message of the Kingdom of God and his resurrection form the real bases for his eschatological orientation in theology, there is ample evidence in his writings on hermeneutics that the real key to such fundamental concepts as futurity, unity and anticipation may lie in his dual concern to do justice to the seemingly irreconcilable notions of objective, absolute truth and meaning and the historicity and relativity of all reality. The attempt will be made here to elucidate his use of the idea of "anticipation" (Vorgriff) of the future to mediate these contrary commitments in the sphere of hermeneutical theory. Due to limitations of space and the restricted nature of this study, it will not be possible to present an analysis and critique of the entire scope of Pannenberg's hermeneutics. The aim here will be limited to explaining how he arrives at an "eschatological ontology" from a theory of meaning.

In his discussion of hermeneutics, Pannenberg seeks to go beyond the science of "interpreting texts" and treat it as the "science of understanding as such." Following Wilhelm Dilthey, he sees hermeneutics, so defined, as the basis of all the modern human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) and as inseparably linked with ontology, as will be shown later. The key question in hermeneutics is How does something mean? What is the meaning of meaning? That is, what is the basis and condition under which any event or experience can be said to mean something? Through a phenomenologi-
cal analysis of the experience of meaning, Fannenberg concludes that meaning in any particular event or experience whatever depends on universal history itself as its transcendental condition.

He arrives at this conclusion by drawing upon Dilthey's argument that all meaning, whether in texts or in life, is context-dependent. Dilthey attempted to show that all life experience is a matter of a relationship between part and whole. That is, human experience always apprehends the particular and individual only in connection with a wider context in which it means something. "Meaningfulness fundamentally grows out of the relation of part to whole that is grounded in the nature of lived experience."9 "Meaning" is not something which can be dispensed with, because it is "the encompassing fundamental category under which life become \[sic\] graspable."10 Yet, neither can it be grasped in any event of experience taken in isolation. Rather, it is historical, in that it constantly traverses the temporal relationship between parts of experience in history and encompassing contexts of historical experience within which alone the parts take on definite meaning. Thus, for Dilthey, life experiences take on meaning only in reference to some whole of which they are a part. "Meaning and meaningfulness, then, are contextual; they are part of the situation."11

Dilthey refers to the structure of sentences to illustrate this dependence on the whole for the meaning of "parts." In a sentence, he says, the sense of the whole
determines the meaning and function of the parts. The indeterminateness of the individual words is changed into a fixed and meaningful pattern by the context (Zussammenhang) of the whole sentence. Pannenberg draws upon this illustration to point toward the contextual basis of meaning in all communication:

Thus words "signify" something, but what they signify is always established in any individual case by their "use in language", that is, in the context of the sentence. Sentences mean something; not only in themselves, however, but also and at the same time as elements in the wider context of a text or utterance which in itself represents a larger totality of meaning, and in its turn points towards larger structures of meaning in which the position and importance of an utterance or text (its meaning) can vary greatly.  

Following Dilthey, Pannenberg opts for a contextual theory of hermeneutics, then, which stresses the dominant role of the whole over the part. This is in open contrast to the non-contextualism of Gottlob Frege and the logical "atomism" of his disciple B. Russell. In this view, individual words are "signs" which each signify something in and of themselves and thereby lend meaning and significance to sentences and larger contexts. Pannenberg rejects this "referential" view of meaning, however, on the basis that it defines "meaning" as "subjective intention of the speaker" and therefore fails to take into account the different intentions of the speaker, the person addressed and the interpreter. There is no simple correspondence between words and objects, as this view assumes, which Wittgenstein realized when he gave up the atomism of his mentor Russell in favor of
a contextual theory of meaning in his later writings. Pannenberg is convinced that "meaning" is contextually dependent in life as well as in texts and utterances. Dilthey related the whole-part structure of meaning to the life experience of persons in which each and every event contributes to the meaning of the whole life, but may also be altered in its significance for the life by subsequent events. "An event or experience can so alter our lives that what was formerly meaningful becomes meaningless and an apparently unimportant past experience may take on meaning in retrospect." Thus, each moment of a person's life is dependent for its ultimate meaning on the entire context of his life which comes to totality only at death. The last moment of life, then, is determinative of the meaning of the individual experiences and events in it in that "Only in the last moment of a life can the balance of its meaning be struck, and so it can be done only for a moment, or by another who retraces that life." In order to determine the ultimate meaning of any particular life experience, Dilthey concluded,

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 its parts. One would have to wait for the end of history to have all the material necessary to determine its meaning.

The last sentence in the above quotation reveals that Dilthey recognized the necessity of universal history itself as the ultimate context of every historical experience within
which it finds its meaning. Pannenberg finds this deduction of universal history as the fundamental a priori for meaning in particulars to be a major contribution of Dilthey's. He quotes Dilthey approvingly: "...basically, there can be no other history than universal history because the meaning of the individual itself is determined only from the standpoint of the whole." On the basis of Dilthey's analysis of meaning, then, Pannenberg deduces that universal history itself is the totality of meaning which determines (bestimmt) the meaning and significance of any event and therefore is the key category for hermeneutics.

Pannenberg is dissatisfied with the conclusion which Dilthey drew from this, however. According to Dilthey, meaning and experience are radically temporal and therefore no such totality is ever already extant (vorhanden). From this Dilthey concluded that every meaning in history is relative. Dilthey is noted as "the father of modern conceptions of historicality." In reaction against Hegel's presumption of the identity between his own philosophy and the end of universal history, Dilthey recognized a plurality of equally valid worldviews. Man, he argued, is the "not-yet-determined animal" (borrowing a phrase from Nietzsche). The totality of man's nature was only a history for Dilthey, and for him man is whatever he becomes in and through history. Likewise, meaning itself always stands in a horizontal context that stretches into the past and into the future. The futurity of universal history, which Dilthey believed necessary on the
basis of man's historicality, meant that all is relative: "It is in no way possible to go back behind the relativity of historical consciousness.... The type 'man' dissolves and changes in the process of history." 22

Pannenberg believes that Dilthey's correct insight into the necessity of universal history for meaning leads him unnecessarily into the impasse of relativism. This is because he could not conceive of universal history as truly historical (future) and yet as accessible. The "inaccessibility of the whole of history," Pannenberg says, "leads [Dilthey] to the impasse of relativism." 23 However, given Dilthey's twin concepts of the whole/part structure of meaning and the openness of history, both of which Pannenberg accepts, how might relativism be avoided? Hegel had avoided it by conceiving universal history as already concluded and able to be surveyed in its totality. Pannenberg vigorously rejects any return to Hegel's "realized" universal history as an abrogation of the hard-won recognition of historicity in modern historical consciousness. In his search for the absolute, Pannenberg says, Hegel prematurely identified his own standpoint in thought with universal history itself—and thus with the present existence (Vorhandensein) of the totality of reality. This, he argues, is incongruent with the "fundamental modern experience of continuous change" which is inescapable since the emergence of historical consciousness. 24 Of course, Hegel had himself affirmed the essentially historic nature of reality in his phenomenology of the Absolute as
self-alienating and self-returning Spirit. For him, universal history is the history of man's elevation (Erhebung) to the infinite through the dialectical process of becoming. Pannenberg applauds Hegel for recognizing the historicity of truth itself in this history of the Absolute. However, he argues, Hegel allowed his passion for the unity of truth to mislead him into understanding his own position as the end of history, thus effectively excluding future truth from his system. Pannenberg charges that Hegel lost the horizon of the future in this way and radically contemporized eschatology. By identifying a particular perspective (his own) with the whole of truth and meaning, Pannenberg declares, Hegel "overleaped the irreducible finitude of experience." The contingency and openness of experience and history were then cut off.

For Pannenberg, then, the solution to Dilthey's dilemma of relativism cannot be a return to the realized eschatology implied in Hegel's theory of the presence of universal history. Yet, he believes, if absolute relativism is to be avoided, as it must for the sake of knowledge, there must be some way to conceive of the unity of truth and meaning now. Clearly he has set for himself a difficult, if not impossible, task of thought: How to develop a conception of universal history as the totality of meaning which, in contrast to Hegel, would preserve the finitude of human experience and the openness of the future and, in contrast to Dilthey, avoid sheer relativism. He admits:
The task thus formulated might seem like that of squaring the circle, since the totality of history could only come into view from the perspective of its end, so that there would then be just as little need to speak of a further future as there would be to speak of the finitude of human experience. However, he avers, both Hegel and Dilthey were wrong in thinking that the totality which can only come at the end had to be presently existing in order for there to be provisional knowledge of it.

Pannenberg discovers what he believes to be the key to the solution of this problem in Martin Heidegger's concept of "anticipation" as elaborated in Being and Time. Heidegger consciously appropriated Dilthey's idea of the historicality of human existence in his own phenomenology of Dasein as "being-in-the-world." He accepts Dilthey's argument that the death of the individual is constitutive of that life's wholeness and thus of its meaningfulness. "Death is Dasein's ownmost possibility. Being towards this possibility discloses to Dasein its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, in which its very Being is the issue." Only in death, then, can the utmost potentiality of a person's existence be realized and therefore authentic existence is, for Heidegger, always a being-towards-death. For him this involves the possibility of "anticipation" (Vorlaufen) of this potentiality as a pre-grasping of this wholeness beforehand. In such anticipation, one does not merely occasionally "look away" from the possible to the actual, but "leaps away from the possible and gets a foothold in the actual."
[i.e., "anticipation"], the possible is drawn into the actual, arising out of the actual and returning to it."\textsuperscript{33} So, in relation to Dilthey's insight into the constitutive significance of death as the "whole" of life, Heidegger says that "anticipation [of death] includes the possibility of taking the whole of Dasein in advance in an existentiell manner...."\textsuperscript{34}

Here Pannenberg discovers what he believes to be the solution to the "impasse of relativism" into which Dilthey's correct insight into the constitutive significance of the whole for the part lands. Unlike Dilthey, Heidegger does not have to await the hour of death to achieve wholeness, "but instead knows of the specifically human possibility of anticipating one's future death and thereby attaining the wholeness of human existence."\textsuperscript{35} According to Pannenberg, Heidegger took a step beyond Dilthey by recognizing that nexus of life and meaning are constituted by the future and that the wholeness of that future, upon which every detail depends, can already be present in the phenomenon of "anticipation" of death.

However, Pannenberg wishes to go beyond Heidegger and affirm that death is not man's "utmost possibility." Death does not round out man's existence as a whole, as Heidegger supposed, but only the wholeness of mankind itself in its ultimate destination. "The question about the wholeness of human being can find a satisfactory answer only when it is directed beyond death toward the participation of the indi-
individual in the destination of mankind as such."³⁶ The reason for this is that no individual life can be totally abstracted from the life of humanity. A life's "meaning" can only be determined, Pannenberg says, in the light of an ultimate future because events after one's death can alter the significance of his own contributions to his society, nation and mankind in general. In contrast to Heidegger, then, Pannenberg believes that anticipation of wholeness can and must be extended beyond anticipation of one's own death to include anticipation of the totality of meaning which belongs to universal history itself:

The essential future of the individual, on which depends the ultimate decision concerning the meaning of his life and the significance of the individual elements in this life, cannot therefore be separated from the essential future of mankind as a whole.³⁷

Thus, Pannenberg believes that he has discovered in Heidegger's concept of anticipation a possible solution to the problem of relativism which would seem to be unavoidable if one affirms with Dilthey the historicity of human existence. Yet, Pannenberg does not want to "swamp" relativity in history in Hegelian-like absoluteness so that history would once again be closed off from contingency and openness to a still outstanding future. Rather, he says, anticipation is to be understood as the "presence of the whole...in the midst of unlimited historical relativity."³⁸ With such a statement Pannenberg would seem indeed to be attempting to "square the circle." It makes unequivocally clear, however, the inten-
tion behind the concept of anticipation which will be seen to be so crucial throughout his entire thought: to mediate absoluteness and relativity, totality and provisionality, and ultimately, infinite and finite being. 39

The meaning of the category "anticipation" will be a central concern of this entire study, especially as it relates to the way Pannenberg conceives the God-world relation. Here it will be possible only to begin an analysis of it in relation to his theory of meaning. For Pannenberg, the meaning of anything at all—short of the end of history itself—is an anticipation of the ultimate future unity which alone can define the meaning of any event with final validity. Relativity remains in that since wholeness can only be anticipated, all formulations of meaning, including propositions about essences ("what" something is), are essentially provisional and supercedable. 40 Even the question of "truth" is essentially dependent on the unity of the world, which is future, and therefore must remain historical and provisional. 41 In the phenomenon of anticipation, Pannenberg says, the whole can be present in this relative way, thus doing justice to the finite character of human thought (in contrast to Hegel). In this sense, "anticipation" is merely subjective "fore-conception" and not the whole itself:

With the establishment of the point that all concepts of wholeness as well as all statements expressive of essence depend upon thought's foreconception of a not-yet-present wholeness of truth, post-Hegelian philosophy, with its insistence on the finitude of human thought, would receive its due without thereby surrendering the theme of wholeness or even that
of absolute being.\textsuperscript{42}

Thus, anticipation is not the absolute itself. It is never the truth or the meaning itself, but strives beyond itself in preapprehension of it.

Yet, Pannenberg wants also to say that anticipation is the vehicle for the present accessibility of the future totality which does not presently exist. Therefore, it is not merely a subjective pre-conception of what the totality might be. He often includes in the concept of anticipation the phenomenon of objective \textit{pre-appearance} of that future totality in a finite, provisional form. The irreducible duality of anticipation in Pannenberg's thought appears in this cryptic statement:

Every such anticipation is conditioned by its standpoint, bound to its location in history. To this extent, it is a mere anticipation, and not the whole itself. Nevertheless, to the extent that it is an anticipation, it is the \textit{presence of the whole constituted by the future.}\textsuperscript{43}

The inner logic of such an assertion would seem to be dialectical in much the same way that, for Hegel, the individual, finite spirit both "is" and "is not" the infinite, Absolute Spirit.\textsuperscript{44} It is difficult to see how Pannenberg can consistently affirm both these things about anticipation of the future, without resorting to dialectic or paradox.

The problem of ambiguity in his notion of anticipation is especially acute when he insists on the objective nature of anticipation as "proleptic" appearance of the totality which is still future. He holds that it belongs to
the nature of anticipation that the thing it "pre-conceives" (the future totality of meaning) allows itself to be "pre-
given" "not indeed as something which is merely future, but
rather in the way in which the future-ultimate (das Zukunft-
tig-Endgültig) is the truth of everything present and past,
and is thus already present itself." Here Pannenberg has
leaped from the concept of a subjective pre-apprehension of
the totality of meaning to an entirely different phenomenon:
a metaphysical "pre-givenness" of the totality in objective
prolepsis of the future. The leap is necessary if the im-
passe of relativism is to be overcome, for all a "fore-con-
ception" can be is a subjective, and therefore provisional,
vision of the future. Once he has introduced into anticipa-
tion the element of objective pre-appearance, however, how
does it avoid the opposite danger of absolutism? Pannenberg
denies that it signals a return to absolutism (such as is im-
plied in Hegel's philosophy of a presently existing totality)
because the coming ultimate which pre-appears is not, he
says, a "primordially perfect archetype." He posits a
"distance" between the fore-conception and the ultimate fu-
ture totality which is not something "presently on hand."

On the one hand Pannenberg wants to say that the fu-
ture ultimate which is the ground of all meaning is not
merely a projection of human wishing and planning. He must
say so if he is to overcome Dilthey's impasse of relativism.
The future ultimate somehow impinges on the present without
destroying the finitude, contingency and openness of particu-
lar events in history. The means by which the future impinges on the present is anticipation. On the other hand, however, Pannenberg wishes to say that this anticipatory presence of the future ultimate is not the ultimate itself in that it is supercedable and provisional. It is a mere fore-conception which must be discarded in favor of a more adequate appearance of the ultimate totality of meaning in the temporal course of traditions-history:

Since every such understanding of the whole rests on an anticipation...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. 47

One is hard pressed, in view of such strong statements, to say what it can mean when Pannenberg also insists that this pre-conception of the future whole is also a pre-appearance of the whole.

In order to support his view that anticipation as a category can transcend the traditional impasse of absolute vs. relative in hermeneutics, Pannenberg refers to its confirmation in the "peculiar anticipatory structure of the ministry and destiny of Jesus of Nazareth." It is this, he says, which actually forms the basis of his own insight into the reality of anticipation of the future. 48 According to him, Jesus' proclamation was characterized by the "already—not yet" structure of the reality of the Kingdom of God. Conviction of the nearness of the coming reign of God, as something future yet already penetrating into the present,
constituted the basis of Jesus' message. The Kingdom of God was proclaimed by Jesus as the ultimate future of the world through which the totality of the world and its history would become manifest, or present. In Jesus' own ministry, this future reign of God, Pannenberg says, did not remain a "distant beyond," but rather became a power determining the present without thereby losing its futurity. A more complete analysis of the "proleptic" structure of Jesus' ministry in Pannenberg's thought must await the chapter on Christology. Here it can only be noted that the resurrection of Jesus is seen by Pannenberg as the paradigm of the anticipatory realization of the ultimate future.

He finds in Jesus' resurrection the pre-appearance of the ultimate destiny of mankind in this one individual. Yet, even in Jesus, this event remains only an anticipation of the end and not the end itself. Whether it is the pre-appearance of the end event of history awaits confirmation by the general resurrection of the dead—if indeed it turns out that, as Christians believe, such is the ultimate destiny of mankind. The relativistic import of this qualification is greatly weakened, however, when Pannenberg states that

Its difference from the eschatological future of the general resurrection is nevertheless only a quantitative, not a qualitative one. For in the resurrection of Jesus, the eschatological reality itself became an event that occurred in him in advance.

By "quantitative" it must be assumed that Pannenberg means the future ultimate event happened only to Jesus and not to
all men as it will in the resurrection. Is this "distance" between present anticipation and future totality sufficient to preserve the essential contingency and openness of history which is so important to Pannenberg? Must not a "qualitative" distinction be maintained between the future totality and present anticipation if historicity is to be taken as seriously as Pannenberg elsewhere does? Yet, the objective pre-appearance of the end of history in the fate of Jesus is exactly what provides the key to overcoming sheer relativism in history.

That Pannenberg perceives in the ministry and resurrection of Jesus the paradigm for understanding anticipation in general as the key to hermeneutical problems is made clear when he says:

It is just this, at first sight so seemingly alien, basically apocalyptic characteristic of the ministry and destiny of Jesus that, by means of its anticipatory structure, can become the key to solving the fundamental question facing philosophical reflection in the problematic post-Hegelian situation in which we still seem to be involved. It is possible to find in the history of Jesus an answer to the question of how "the whole" of reality and its meaning can be conceived without compromising the provisionality and historical relativity of all thought, as well as the openness to the future on the part of the thinker who knows himself to be only on the way and not yet at the goal. 52

The "problematic post-Hegelian situation" for which anticipation is the answer is the modern conviction of the finitude of thought and the radical openness of history, combined with the metaphysical longing for unity and wholeness which alone can provide meaning. It is Pannenberg's convic-
tion that this dual demand of the modern situation can only be met by regarding the totality of history (and therefore meaning) as itself a history.\textsuperscript{53}

Since the emergence of historical consciousness, the unity of all reality is conceivable only as a history. The unity of truth is still possible only as a historical process, and can be known only from the end of this process.\textsuperscript{54}

To leave the situation there, however, would signal a relapse into Dilthey's impasse of relativism. Therefore, along with the historicity of reality, truth and meaning, Pannenberg proposes that history is not aimless or totally structureless, but is dialectically related to its end as something already made present, though only provisionally.

Pannenberg's concept of anticipation in hermeneutics raises many serious questions, some of which have already been mentioned. It is not possible here to discuss all of these in detail. Some must be raised only as problems and left for others to probe more deeply. For instance, is it possible to justify Pannenberg's use of Heidegger's concept of anticipation of death as the basis for his own concept of proleptic pre-appearance of the end of history? In his analysis of Heidegger's thought, Werner Brock translates anticipation more literally, based on the actual word used by the German philosopher: "\textit{Vorlaufen.}" For him, this means a "running forward in thought" which is, he says, an "existential envisaging" of the whole of \textit{Dasein}.\textsuperscript{55} "It does not aim at bringing something 'real' into one's control, but approaches it in its potentiality most closely."\textsuperscript{56} It may be
that what Heidegger meant by *Vorlauf* approximates Pannenberg's "anticipation" when it is used to mean "forecon-
ception." As has been seen, however, that does not exhaust
the meaning of the concept since he uses it also to mean an
objective "prolepsis" or "preappearance" of the future in the
present. Whether Heidegger's concept can be made to bear the
weight of this usage is questionable.

Pannenberg is correct in his understanding of
Heidegger's analysis of human *Dasein* as temporally consti-
tuted existentially toward the future as the locus of its own
wholeness. However, it is doubtful whether Heidegger's no-
tion of anticipation as authentic Being-toward-death can be
appropriated as proleptic accessibility of universal history.
Heidegger's concept is intimately related to such character-
istics of authentic *Dasein* as anxiety, resoluteness and free-
dom-for-death. In other words, it is not simply anticipa-
tion of any wholeness, but is the intrinsically *individual*
phenomenon of authentic "thinking about" one's own death as
"wanting-to-have-a-conscience." Heidegger says that the
idea of anticipation as potentiality-for-Being-a-whole does
not arise as a theoretical or methodological question "ar-
sing from the endeavor to have the whole of *Dasein* completely
'given'," as seems to be the case with Pannenberg, but from
the character of "resoluteness" in authentic *Dasein*.

Another problem which arises in view of Pannenberg's
strong emphasis on *wholeness* as necessary for meaning is
whether this is proven or is merely an a priori assertion.
The conviction that meaning can be given only in view of a universal context of experience is hardly unanimous even in contextualist hermeneutical theories. Borrowing heavily on Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein*, Rudolf Bultmann vigorously opposed any dependence on universal history for reference to meaning in the individual life. For him, meaning does not lie in universal history, but in one's own personal history (*Geschichtlichkeit*). In conscious opposition to hermeneutical theories based on universal history, he advises,

> Always in your present lies the meaning in history, and you cannot see it as a spectator but only in your responsible decisions. In every moment slumbers the possibility of being the eschatological moment. You must awaken it.⑥0

Whether or not Bultmann is right is not the issue here. What is apparent is that he also discovers meaning, but without reference to universal history.

One of the most influential theories of meaning in modern philosophy is the limited contextualism of Wittgenstein's theory of "language games." According to Wittgenstein, and his followers such as Peter Winch and D. Z. Phillips, meaning does indeed depend on contexts, but as specific, historical "forms of life" which are irreducible contexts of language and experience and give rise to autonomous semantic nexuses. Meaning, then, is dependent on the use or function of a word, action or event within the form of life. Each form of life gives rise to a unique "universe of discourse" which obviates the need to appeal to any universal context of events such as universal history. While the
Wittgensteinian thesis may destroy the possibility of universal meaning which transcends forms of life, it does account for meaning short of universal history. 61

A theological account of meaning which draws heavily on the Wittgensteinian form of contextualism has been developed by the Swedish theologian Anders Nygren in his Meaning and Method. He considers it possible to discover meaning in independent pre-suppositional contexts which seem to be fundamental worldviews. 62

In short, then, it seems difficult to verify the absolute necessity or future existence of a "totality of meaning" as universal history on the basis of hermeneutics. Harvey White, a critic of Pannenberg's, concludes that

...because there is no possible falsifying instance for the totality thesis, and because the fact of meaningfulness (and meaningfulness) can be accounted for in terms of limited contexts, and because one need not appeal to transcending totalities of meaning to account for limited contexts of meaning, the thesis of a totality of meaning must remain an a priori. 63

That Pannenberg's thesis of a totality of meaning as a condition for meaning at all is a pre-philosophic a priori does not invalidate it. It does call into question the necessity of resorting to such tortuous concepts as futurity and anticipation, however.

Pannenberg rejects the alternatives to his own view of universal history discussed above as relativistic and despairing of any objective meaning in history. However, as has been seen, he also argues for the historicity of the to-
tality of meaning and truth as an irreducible feature of its unity. A vicious ambiguity seems to plague his primary thesis at just this point. First, how does he determine the historicity of meaning and truth? A major method is by appeal to the plurality of worldviews in which it is not presently possible to decide which is correct with any absolute rational certainty. That is, the "totality of meaning" in its ultimate form is presently debatable. He says:

It is not possible, on the basis of our knowledge of truth in our age, to reject out of hand earlier conceptions of reality as simply untrue, since experience teaches that even what is accepted as true today will already have changed tomorrow. It is impossible, he argues, rationally to separate the truth from its historically diverse forms, so that it is questionable whether truth is to be found at all. On the basis of the "historical multiplicity of pictures of truth" and rational thought's inability to determine the absolute truth of any one of them, he deduces the objective historicity of truth itself as a process which is still incomplete. Here he would seem to fall into a confusion of incomplete knowledge with incomplete reality. Does it necessarily follow that because man is unable to achieve a consensus of absolute rational certainty with regard to the nature of the unity of truth and meaning that no such unity presently exists? It follows only if one assumes a peculiar correspondence of truth with human thought so that the historicness of thought conditions truth. "Truth" (and also meaning) then becomes identical with "apprehension of truth."
Underlying this correspondence between thought and objective truth would seem to be something similar to Hegel's ontological identification of thought and being. Insofar as thought is truly rational, it is the "lifting up" (Erhebung) of human spirit to the infinite Concept (Begriff) which is the essence of rationality and reality itself. Yet also, insofar as finite human thinking does not grasp the unity of the Concept in reality, it represents a self-alienation (Selbst-Entäußerung) of the Concept itself which is a moment of negativity to be overcome in its dialectical history. For Hegel, then, the unity of (human) thought and being itself is both a negative and a positive unity. It is negative in that thought's inadequacy to the totality of the Absolute represents a moment of negativity in the Absolute itself, so that "truth," which resides in the totality of the Concept, has a history through time.\textsuperscript{65}

For Hegel, then, the "historicity" of truth and meaning lies in the fact of finite error out of which truth must emerge: "what is other than idea, that is, error, is a necessary moment of truth, in that truth is only as emerging from non-truth, and the emergence is its own doing, its activity as self-manifesting concept and idea."\textsuperscript{66} While Pannenberg strongly disagrees with Hegel's assumption of the completion of this process in his own standpoint in history, he acknowledges his own fundamental agreement with the concept of the historicity of the unity of truth itself implied in Hegel's dialectic: "Since Hegel...the question of the
unity of truth has not been posed again with a comparable depth." Pannenberg affirms, with Hegel, that because the unity of truth is full of contradictions as long as history is under way, it "will become visible along with the true meaning of every individual moment in it, only from the standpoint of its end." Pannenberg's insistence on the futurity of the whole itself makes clear that "visible" here means not only "known" but also "present." In other words, the historicity and futurity of truth itself is an ontological reality because it is a gnoseological reality. Although this will become clearer in the next section, concerning "eschatological ontology," it will be helpful to point out this connection between thought and reality in Pannenberg's theory of the futurity of meaning here briefly.

That a fundamental unity of thought and reality is presupposed by Pannenberg is revealed in his brief discussion of the anticipatory structure of "statements of essences" (Wesensaussagen). According to him, "If language names the essences of things, then it obviously says more than what is already present in them." He takes this to mean that language itself adequately reflects the incompleteness and openness to the future of reality itself. Only in anticipation of its future, he says, is it possible adequately to state what something is, because "What a thing is, is first decided by its future, by what becomes of it." What "appears" in it as its true essence is a fore-conception of its future---what it will be defined, or determined to be in relation to the
totality of meaning in the completion of universal history. Here there is clearly presupposed by Pannenberg a unity of thought and reality: "...the anticipatory character of naming essences implies a peculiar form of agreement between thought and being which again emerges in concrete substantiveness only in the form of anticipations whose final truth remains a theme of eschatology." 71

The question again arises: Is it true that because it is not possible definitively to exhaust the true meaning of any event or entity in thought and language that its very essence ("what" it really is) is indeterminate and therefore future? This seems to be Pannenberg's assumption--and a very important assumption for his whole system of thought, as will become clearer at each stage of this analysis. For present purposes, it is sufficient to note that the historicity of meaning and truth, upon which so much of his hermeneutics depends, is largely based on an assumed correspondence between thought and reality which those who do not share in Hegelian idealism would find questionable.

The central concept of Pannenberg's hermeneutic has been shown to be "anticipation." By means of this concept, he attempts to mediate the seemingly insuperable conflict between the relativity of meaning and the totality of meaning, to which he is equally committed. Now it must be asked whether this concept can perform the task he has assigned it. Can anticipation, as conceived by Pannenberg, overcome the "impasse of relativism" by making the future totality of mean-
ing somehow "accessible" withoutmitigating its futurity and historicity?

Due to the fundamental ambiguity which plagues the idea, it seems that it cannot. As noted already, Pannenberg assigns two quite diverse and ultimately irreconcilable definitions to it, depending on which pole he wishes to stress: relativity or absoluteness. When he wishes to stress the historicity and openness of meaning for the future, he most often uses anticipation in the sense of "foreconception": the phenomenon of perceiving every event and experience in view of an imagined or predicted pattern of the whole of history as it will turn out to be in the end. In this sense, it has the connotation of a fundamental worldview or "picture" of reality in its unity.

Quite a different nuance creeps into the notion when he attempts to account for objective meaning in the present, however. Then he seems most often to use anticipation to denote the phenomenon of an actual preappearance of the future totality in the course of history itself. This is especially clear in the case of Jesus, whose resurrection Pannenberg considers an "unsurpassable" anticipation of the end of history as proleptic fulfillment of the destiny of mankind. It is not easy to see how this can be harmonized with his insistence on the "openness" of history for a truly indeterminate future. Pannenberg would seem to be caught on the horns of a dilemma and it is not apparent that anticipation can free him from it.
This fundamental ambiguity in the concept of anticipation reflects a deep ambivalence in Pannenberg himself. On the one hand, he wishes to affirm the totality of reality as the ground of objective meaning in the realm of finite existence. On the other hand, he wishes to affirm the partiality, provisionality and relativity of everything in history because he believes that this alone protects contingency. His appropriation of the concept of anticipation of the future is the fundamental motif by which he attempts to bring both concerns together within hermeneutics, ontology and theology. That he is unsuccessful in each area is a major point of this study.

3. The Futurity of Being

For Pannenberg, hermeneutics and ontology are closely related. The "futurity of meaning" and its accessibility in anticipation, he says, "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."\(^{73}\) This implies, he says, "eschatological ontology," the futurity of being itself. "Being is itself to be thought of from the side of the future, instead of as the abstract, most universal something in the background of all reality."\(^{74}\) It is not clear what ontology would consider being this way. However, Pannenberg proposes to reconceive being itself eschatologically, in a manner strictly analogous to the eschatological structure of the "totality of meaning" explored in the last section.

Pannenberg seldom discusses formal ontological
categories such as being, essence and existence in any systematic way. What he does say is most often expressed in such enigmatic and inchoate sentences as those quoted above with little or no elaboration. Such epigrammatic statements beg for further elucidation. An attempt will be made here to draw out some of the basic implications of Pannenberg's metaphysical musings in order to show that, to the extent they can be understood at all, they point toward the same goal and intention just discovered in his hermeneutics: to mediate two radically divergent ontologies with the aid of the categories of "futurity" and "anticipation."

The two statements quoted above express a fundamental ontological principle of Pannenberg's: the futurity of essence and being (which seem to be identical concepts). This is based, however, on an even more fundamental ontological principle: "The highest degree of reality is found at the level at which there is a complete unity of all the reality that can be experienced by us." Pannenberg stresses the unity of being in an almost monistic way. Just as individual events and experiences in history depend on a totality of meaning for their significance, so particular entities in existence depend upon the unity of being for their reality. They are "something real" only insofar as they are related beyond themselves to a greater whole of reality. Contextual hermeneutics, then, becomes contextual ontology with the same result: the priority of the whole over the parts.

In terms of classical metaphysics, Pannenberg's
ontological principle places him squarely on the side of, the priority of the "one" over the "many." If "reality" (or "being") is attached to unity and totality, the question naturally arises concerning the ontological status of the particular and individual entities. Given his almost monistic stress on unity, it may legitimately be asked how he can do justice to the undeniable variety and multiplicity in contingent history. If the true "essence" of a thing is what it is determined to be in relation to the all-encompassing whole of reality, how is a Platonic denigration of the phenomenal world as mere "appearance" or a Spinozistic determinism to be avoided? How can real significance be attached to the future and to the decisions of finite, particular entities in history?

Pannenberg believes that the significance of the individual and contingent reality must not be sacrificed for the sake of the totality which alone makes the individual and contingent intelligible. The only way in which both may receive their due in metaphysics is to conceive the totality of reality, and therefore also of "essence" and "being itself," as future—as not-yet-presently-existing (noch nicht vorhanden):

...the basic error of all previous metaphysics is not simply the fact that it tried to think of reality as a whole. The very first steps in thought are always concerned with identity, with wholeness, and therefore cannot persist in a merely negative dialectic. But the harm was done by thinking of the whole of everything real as already existent. The corresponding form of thought was that of a closed system. But systems which put forward a claim to total and final knowledge reveal
their untruth, if nowhere else, in the fact that reality as a whole is not yet complete, and is still in the process of becoming.76

If the finitude of human experience and the inconstancy of social and political arrangements are to be recognized, he argues, the totality of reality, and thus of being itself, must not be regarded as already complete in itself, after the manner of the "cosmos" of Greek thought, but must be understood as historically existing in the future and having a history in time. "Being and time must be considered in their intimate relationship to one another, and the processes which belong to everything that is are never definitively concluded."77 "Therefore the unity of all things should not be understood in terms of an eternal cosmos but as something to be achieved by a process of reconciling previous schisms and contradictions.78 Yet, only if there is such a unity can there be any determination of meaning and order in reality. If it is to be intelligible, reality cannot simply be James' "bloomin', buzzin', confusion." Therefore, Pannenberg avers, the future itself must be recognized as the substance of things in that it "decides" the essence of things "now."

The question still remains, if "reality" belongs to the future unity of reality, what of reality in the present? For Pannenberg, the ultimate unity of the future is provisionally anticipated in every real unity which emerges out of contradiction in the present. "At present, a being is 'something,' a unity in itself, only by anticipation of its
unifying future." 79 Every present unity of reality is provisional and anticipatory and derives its status as a reality from its negation of its own separate individuality by allowing itself to be inserted into a larger context of unity. "Each preliminary integration among events and that from which they eventuated emerges as an anticipation of an ultimate unity." 80 Since the future alone decides the specific meaning and essence of an entity, then, it has being presently only by virtue of anticipating its unifying future by "losing" itself in unities beyond itself. Thus, the being of beings, their true reality, is always "beyond" them as their unifying future and "in" them as their provisional unity with the rest of reality in anticipation of the final unity of the future. No presently existing unity is identical with the absolute unity of all reality, but every unity anticipates it to one degree or another.

Thus, for Pannenberg, "anticipation" is ontologized into a category of being. It may be interpreted as the ability of the individual entity to transcend its narrow self towards unity with the rest of reality. It may also be interpreted as the actual presence of the future totality of reality in the provisional unities of history. Both will be seen to be intended connotations of anticipation in Pannenberg's ontology. As in hermeneutics, the primary function of anticipation in this ontology is to account for the present accessibility of what is still future, thus allowing for contingency and "becoming" in reality while preserving "being"
and absoluteness. Whether anticipation as an ontological category can fulfill this function is open to serious doubt. Before deciding that, however, it will be helpful to investigate more thoroughly the use of anticipation in ontology through an analysis of its use in the problem of the relation between "existence" and "essence."

Nowhere in his writings does Pannenberg discuss this problem more fully than in his essay "Appearance as the Arrival of the Future." The problem of the relation between essence and existence, he says, is rooted in the phenomenon of "appearance" (Erscheinung). In attempting to interpret and describe the true nature of things, he argues, one inevitably differentiates between what something is in and for itself and the way it appears to him. In traditional metaphysics, it has generally been recognized that "What appears to me is precisely that which is, in and for itself, something more than it is as it presently appears to me." That is, the experience of continual change and vast variety in the world points toward an ambiguity: "On the one hand, appearance and existence mean the same thing. But on the other hand, appearance, taken literally, points to a being transcending it." How is this ambiguity to be reconciled? Pannenberg points out that in the history of metaphysical thought there has been a tendency to emphasize the reality of one aspect of the relation—either the appearance itself or that which transcends it—to the exclusion of the other. What he is referring to is, of course, the traditional debate
between "realism" and "nominalism" in its many forms.

Pannenberg finds the epitome of one pole of this controversy in the Greek tradition stemming from Plato and Parmenides which tended to separate essence (eidos) as true being from its appearance in existence and assign ontological priority to it. The whole Platonic tradition, he says, has located true being in the realm of eternal, timeless essences and has relegated appearance, or phenomenal reality, to the sphere of the relatively unreal because it is characterized by change and becoming. In this view, then, "appearance" is deceptive of true reality and ultimately superfluous to true being. Even Aristotle tended to separate essence and appearance by identifying essence as the basic, unchanging identity underlying the changes in something. Since "relation" implies change, Aristotle considered substance to be what is in and for itself apart from relation to other things. Thus, essence stood in tension with relation and in turn, therefore, with accidents. This separation and tension between essence as true being and existence as its appearance and the consequent "precedence of self-sufficient ideas or substances reposing in themselves over the phenomenal reality of sense experience, remained a dominant motif of the history of thought" for centuries.85

In this brief analysis, Pannenberg attempts to point out what he perceives as the main weakness of the traditional essentialism86 of Greek-inspired metaphysics: neglect of the individual, existing entity in its phenomenal appearance and
reservation of "true reality" to the timeless, self-sufficient and immutable realm of essences. Elsewhere he has expressed what he believes to be the effect of such a timeless essentialism: due to their obsession with timeless essences as the permanent structure of the cosmos, the Greeks "lived with their backs to the future and regarded what was new in history or purely fortuitous as without essential reality."\textsuperscript{87} Such an ontology could not do justice, he says, to the particular and contingent events of history, nor to the freedom of man to transcend every state of affairs.

Of course Pannenberg is not alone in his criticism of the Greek identification of true being with the transcendent, timeless realm of essences. Etienne Gilson, the Thomist philosopher, also criticizes both Plato and Aristotle for impugning the ontological status of existence:

However we look at it, there is something wrong in a doctrine in which the supremely real is such through that which exhibits an almost complete lack of reality. This is what is bound to happen to any realism which stops at the level of substance; not the individuals, but their species, then becomes the true being and the true reality.\textsuperscript{88}

Gilson does not find the correct alternative to be nominalism, and neither does Pannenberg. While he may not be speaking only of an explicit nominalism, he turns from criticism of realism as essentialism to the modern tendency in the opposite extreme to stress the true reality of appearance to the exclusion of essences. This has manifested itself especially in Kant's phenomenalism, he says, which leads to thinking of appearance as the fundamental characteristic
of being itself.⁸⁹ Pannenberg finds the supreme example of this modern tendency to collapse essence into existence in the extreme Kantianism of Heinrich Barth.⁹⁰ Barth reversed the traditional relation of eidos and appearance and allowed real being only to appearance. There is, then, no non-appearing being-in-itself and the appearing existent has ontological priority over all notions of essence. Pannenberg sees this view as related to most modern phenomenology and empiricism also. It is basically a nominalistic point of view which reduces essences to mere universals. Pannenberg credits this ontology with taking seriously the contingency and historicity of events and experience, which are absolutely essential for any modern ontology. However, he says, it also presents serious problems, because "the something that appears cannot be thought of as totally exhausted in the act of appearing. It is precisely and only for this reason that the characterization of the existing as appearance can be justified."⁹¹

Once again, Pannenberg turns to what is an epistemological and hermeneutical situation to support an ontological conclusion. To "interpret" any individual event, he argues, is to say that something appears here which appears not only here but elsewhere as well. "By virtue of this generality... the eidos transcends the individual appearance in which it is encountered."⁹² Thus, some account of universals is unavoidable in intelligible interpretation of appearance. But has Pannenberg here established the necessity of more than
universals? Cannot "interpretation" in the sense he means be accomplished by means of the linguistic convention of generalizations? In any case, he thinks not. He believes that in interpretation, "the individual appearance always presents itself as only a partial realization of the possibilities of the eidos appearing in it." 93

The conclusion Pannenberg draws from this history of metaphysical theory is that neither the Greek separation of true being from appearance (realism), nor the modern identification of them (nominalism) can be sustained:

So far we have seen that neither the separation of true being and appearance nor the thesis of their identity can be maintained without turning into the respective opposite. From the separation of idea and appearance, or essence and appearance, we are directed to the fact that they belong together. But with the assertion of the identity of the appearance and the existence of the appearing something, the difference between appearance and essence breaks out anew, because the interpretation of that something which appears unavoidably goes beyond the event of its isolated appearance. 94

What Pannenberg is searching for is a concept to bridge the gap between two ontologies -- one which recognizes a realm of true being "beyond" the individually existing entities which appear in them as their true essence, and one which gives ontological priority or at least parity to the appearing particular entities in history. Generally speaking, the former ontology stresses the formal, structural and time-less nature of true being and the latter stresses dynamics, "becoming" and contingency in reality. Brian Walsh has designated these two views of being "structuralist" and "geneticist" respectively. 95 Pannenberg cannot tolerate a static
realism, even though it has the advantage of providing for intelligibility in reality. Neither can he tolerate a structureless nominalism even though it has the advantage of allowing for contingency and historicity in reality. Therefore, he suggests that the unity of identity and difference in the relation of essence and appearance be recognized as having to do with the temporality of that relation. He believes that the problem can be solved by regarding that which appears (essence) in the appearance (existence) as presenting itself there in the mode of futurity.96 This, of course, is the phenomenon of "anticipation."

Pannenberg discovers precedent for his idea of the futurity of essence throughout the history of philosophy, including Plato and Aristotle themselves. Plato's concept of the "Good" as the essence of essences, he says, contained an element of futurity in that it is always hoped for. It is the essential future of visible, existent entities as what they strive after in their moral efforts. Pannenberg says that for Plato,

...the good as the sought after, essential future was just as much connected to present things as it was different from them. Insofar as the good as idea could be viewed in what was present, the arrival of its essential future was therein experienced.97

It would seem that he is here grasping at straws to find support for the futurity of essences in Plato. In the first place, Plato conceived of the "Good" as beyond essence.98 Secondly, like the other essences, it was understood as timeless and eternally perfect. It could only be considered "fu-
ture" in the most metaphorical of senses, for instance, as the "end" of all the soul's actions.99

Pannenberg finds a hint at the futuristic element in essence in Aristotle also. For him, the essence of a thing, its ousia, was the goal (telos) of its movement. "Thus, the yet unattained goal is present in an anticipatory way in the moved as entelechy, and this indwelling of the goal effects the movement toward the goal."100 Pannenberg sees this doctrine of entelechy as a positive step toward relating essence and existence in such a way that essence is the true future of that which exists, entering it and drawing it toward itself. However, he admits that Aristotle did not grasp the true temporality of this relation because he interpreted entelechy as teleology, as the already present "germ" out of which the goal unfolds itself.101 Aristotle, he says, was also caught in the spell of timelessness of being because he posited the goal of the movement as already existing somewhere, even if only as potentiality. For Pannenberg, this is the ontological heresy which effectively destroys contingency and novelty in reality. Of Aristotle's idea of essence he says "if the movement brings forth nothing except what is already actual somewhere else, then nothing new can arise."102 While Aristotle may be faulted for considering essences as potentialities more real than actual existing things,103 it is strange to hear Pannenberg faulting him for considering potentialities as "actual." The distinction between "potency" and "act" was Aristotle's solution to the problem of novelty,
not a denial of it.

Pannenberg wishes to take up the hints at the temporal character of the essence-existence relation in Plato and Aristotle and draw them out to as-yet-unrealized conclusions:

...if the appearance were to be understood as something that happens out of the essential future of that which appears, then its interpretation with reference to that which appears would only be possible by an anticipation of the future, as this anticipation characterizes the creative subjectivity of the imagination.\textsuperscript{104}

Thus, "appearance" may be understood as the "arrival" of the essential future of the existing thing in its present through the phenomenon of anticipation. In this way, Pannenberg believes, justice may be done to both truths: the identity and difference of essence and existence. On the other hand, essence belongs to the totality of reality which alone "decides" the ultimate nature of everything that exists and thus transcends the appearance of that existing thing. On the other hand, essence, as belonging to the totality of reality, is already present in the appearance proleptically, so that the existing entity which appears is also "real." Of such anticipation he says,

Every such anticipation is conditioned by its standpoint, bound to its location in history. To this extent, it is a mere anticipation, and not the whole itself. Nevertheless, to the extent that it is an anticipation, it is the presence of the whole constituted by the future.\textsuperscript{105}

Thus, "essence" is not to be regarded, with Plato and the entire essentialist tradition as the timelessly given universal which then necessarily denigrates the indi-
vidual and particular as well as the contingent in reality:

There is much to be said in favor of orienting philosophical thinking to that which always is. Above all, one may point to the possibility of forming general concepts and of making general structural statements that can be applied to the most diverse individuals and to changing situations. And yet, against this view is the truth that such a position, which sees in the appearance only a timeless universal, will inevitably underestimate or totally fail to recognize the importance for our experience of reality of the contingently new, of the individual and of time.\(^{106}\)

Clearly, Pannenberg intends essence in anticipation to be provisional and relative. In this sense, it is a product of the "creative subjectivity of the imagination"—a presentiment or foreconception of the future state of reality which will determine the ultimate nature of everything. Such an anticipation, he cautions, remains in itself ambiguous because it can misrepresent the essential future as well as grasp it.\(^{107}\) In fact, in fear of a relapse into timeless essentialism, Pannenberg seems momentarily to fall into nominalism when he says that "it seems more appropriate to consider the universal as a human construction, which indeed proves itself useful by its ability to grasp a reality that is probably of quite another character, since it is conditioned by contingency and time."\(^{108}\) Here "anticipation" in its ontological reference seems to amount to little more than the synthesizing function of human imagination as it reaches out to discover, or create, unity in diversity. In some contexts he is adamant in his view that essences are not finished constituents of a cosmos but belong to the future
totality of reality which is only accessible in the subjec-
tivity of human experience in the form of anticipation.\textsuperscript{109}

It does not seem possible upon closer inspection, however, that this is all that he means by the anticipatory presence of essences. It is perhaps what he means when he uses it to safeguard the pure historicity, contingency and openness of being for the future. Just as in his hermeneu-
tics "anticipation" seems to have two distinct and radically opposed connotations—-one which applies when he wishes to stress absoluteness and one which applies when he wishes to stress relativity—-so it seems to have two very different definitions in ontology: one which applies when he wishes to stress contingency and historical becoming and one which applies when he wishes to stress structure and absoluteness in being.

The latter meaning of anticipation brings Pannenberg into harmony with the Platonic tradition, which he certainly does not wish to discard in favor of a sheer nominalism or a metaphysic of pure becoming (as will be seen more clearly in the final chapter). In this case, "anticipation" becomes the objective preappearance of the whole of reality and of essence in the presently existing entity. This becomes espe-
cially clear in his debate with the process metaphysic of A. N. Whitehead which he considers too preoccupied with the category of becoming. Against this, Pannenberg asserts that as problematic as the traditional concept of essence may have become, it cannot be dispensed with altogether.\textsuperscript{110} It may
seem that Pannenberg would be in basic agreement with the temporality and freedom for the future implied in Whitehead's evolutionary model of the universe, but he rejects the ontological principle which states that actual entities are the only reasons for anything. Nor does he find helpful Whitehead's notion of "eternal objects" as a substitute for essences because they are merely potentials and have no reality apart from actual entities:

...I cannot regard a series of truly only momentary events as anything but an abstract quantification of actual events; and a quantitative model of an event, must, remarkably enough, be supplemented by the assumption of a Platonic sphere of essences which are mere possibilities and which, in order to be realized, must enter into a process conceived of in abstract quantitative terms.

Essences, then, must be something "more" than mere potentials and reality itself must be something "more" than merely quantitative. Apparently, he does not believe that Whitehead's eternal objects provide sufficient structure and order in being, although that is precisely what Whitehead intended for them to do. Pannenberg's objection is that they are absolutely abstract apart from actualization in actual entities, and therefore cannot truly function as determining and ordering realities. Therefore, in spite of Whitehead's "Platonic" (meaning timeless?) sphere of potentialities (eternal objects), his cosmos lacks depth and structure and therefore falls into sheer quantitative becoming. Of course, Pannenberg does not here take into account the metaphysical function of God in Whitehead's ontology. Following
the ontological principle consistently, Whitehead affirms that "Everything must be somewhere; and here 'somewhere' means 'some actual entity'." Accordingly, the general potentiality of the universe (eternal objects) must be somewhere since it is relevant to future actual entities. This "somewhere" he says, is the one non-temporal actual entity, God. The eternal objects are eternally realized "conceptually" in the primordial nature of God and apart from this realization, there would be no metaphysical stability and order in actual entities. In view of this role of God in Whitehead's metaphysics, it would seem that Pannenberg may have misunderstood the nature of eternal objects.

Pannenberg is unwilling to dispense with the notion of essence. The eschatological future, he says, is the locus of the true essence of everything because it is the ultimate future which will make the final decision as to what everything is.

That future then becomes the substance of things about which it decides; it cannot be merely something external to them. On the other hand, it is not simply identical with the essence that is determined by it.

Pannenberg means that the true nature of existent things, while dependent on the processes of time and becoming, is present in the future which is anticipated by the existing thing. For example, the true essence of humanity is hidden in the eschatological future, because only then will it be decided what mankind is in a definitive way. However, that future determination (essence) is anticipated now in man's
eschatological hope. On the one hand, as mere anticipation, the eschatological hope of man leaves open the question of what specific events the future of man will bring. On the other hand, as anticipation it participates in the goal of the future because "the future essence already penetrates into the present." Pannenberg does not explain how the determinative structures of being and reality can be the product of the processes of history and penetrate already into the present out of the future. Both truths are clearly implied in his ontology, however:

The future essence, which contains the true destiny of present reality, participates in eternity and therefore constitutes the depths of reality, the secret of what is present. It is only because the future essence is already present in a hidden manner that it can be anticipated and can even now draw our personal life into its identity, even though the course that our life is taking still remains open. A future without eternity dwindles away in meaningless change....

Pannenberg admits that bringing together being and time, essence and existence in time, involves a "paradox of present and future." The importance of this paradox for Pannenberg's view of the relation of God and the world will be a major focus of this entire study. Here it is seen to be the key to his idea of essence and existence. The question which arises is, can a modern "rational ontology" be based entirely on a paradox? Can both things which Pannenberg wishes to affirm about essence and being be held together within a single ontological system without that system breaking apart into two mutually contradictory views of reality?
In his passion for historicity and the openness of the future for contingent events, Pannenberg makes the fundamental structures of being themselves (essences) dependent on the outcome of history's contingent course:

...the being of things must not be understood in a timeless manner; it is dependent on the process of time. Similarly,...the structures of being should not be thought of as timeless, but must be understood as being constituted by the historical process and especially by its outcome.\textsuperscript{121}

However, this would have the effect of emptying the present of determinability, intelligibility and meaning. Therefore, he has recourse to the notion of "anticipation of the future" as the vehicle of the future's present accessibility in contingent history. The tension does not yet appear when anticipation is defined only as human subjectivity's "pre-grasp" of the future essence of things in its unifying imagination. However, since this phenomenon alone would not afford the degree of structure and intelligibility necessary for an ordered world, Pannenberg often includes the notion of the future's objective, proleptic pre-appearance in the present, which approximates a return to a Platonic essentialism.

Clearly Pannenberg wishes to have ontology both ways and believes that anticipation makes that possible. Equally clearly, he is forced to resort to two definitions of anticipation in order to bridge the gap between essence-as-future and the presence of essential structures of being; and to a paradox in order to combine the historicity of being itself and the power of the future over the present. With regard to
universals, the result is a bewildering juxtaposition in a single ontological scheme of Platonic-like realism and existentialist nominalism. One can select passages in which Pannenberg equally affirms the reality of essences which transcend individual existing entities and the absence of any presently existing determinative structures of being. This ambiguity in his fundamental ontology will be examined critically in the final chapter of this study also. Here it is sufficient to note that, as in hermeneutics, the motifs of futurity and anticipation, while intended to mediate two different fundamental views of meaning and reality, fall into obscurity in that they represent a simple juxtaposition of contradictory ontological commitments.

Pannenberg's conception of being, including the essence of things, raises some difficult questions beyond the ambiguity noted above. For instance, if ultimate reality is the unity of reality which, as the essence of everything which "appears," does not yet exist, does this not imply the curious phenomenon of a "most real" reality which does not exist? This is exactly the problem with what Gilson calls "essentialism" which he finds to be the bane of ontology from Plato through Hegel. Commenting on Duns Scotus' ontology, in which "existence" is a mere modality of essence, he says: "When concepts, instead of being made in the image of reality, begin to make reality in their own image, there is something rotten in the kingdom of metaphysics."122 One suspects that the same might be said of the notion of the
"futurity of being."

Another question which arises in view of Pannenberg's ontology concerns the "transcendence" of being itself. Is futurity an adequate model of transcendence? When taken literally, instead of metaphorically, is it any less prey to ludicrous distortion than spatial models of transcendence? Is not being itself, as future, dependent on the processes of history and thus itself conditioned? Some of these questions will be discussed in more depth and detail in future chapters when an attempt is made to demonstrate the deleterious effect this ontology has on the Christian doctrines of God's transcendency and gracious redemption of the world.

This study is concerned primarily with Pannenberg's theism—especially that relationship between God and the world implied in his eschatologically-oriented theology. A more complete and thorough critique of his pre-theological ontology would be valuable, but what this chapter has aimed at is simply the explication of the major themes and problems associated with it as a basis for engaging his doctrine of God in critical debate. In the next chapter, this critical task will begin with the effort to show that the "futurity of God," like the futurity of meaning and being, is a concept intended to mediate contrasting ideas of God. Pannenberg wishes to combine "being" and "becoming" in God himself. The "paradox of future and present" will emerge again as the fundamental basis of this attempt.
Endnotes to Chapter I

1 Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 303.

2 Ibid., pp. 303-304.


4 Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 313.

5 Ibid., p. 303.

6 Quentin Lauer argues that "Absolute Spirit" is the equivalent of "God" in Hegel's system: Lauer, *Hegel's Concept of God*, p. 164.

7 Quoted by Neuhaus, p. 12.


10 Ibid. 11 Palmer, p. 118.


14 Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, pp. 211-212. Wittgenstein originally held to a form of logical atomism which is reflected in his early work *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. In his later philosophy of language he turned to limited contextualism, as reflected in his theory of "language games" in *Philosophical Investigations*.

15 Palmer, p. 118.

17 Ibid, p. 106.

18 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:162.


21 Ibid., p. 117.


23 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:164.


26 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:22.

27 Ibid. 28 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:134.

29 Pannenberg seems to think that Hegel's "sin" was merely that of pridefully identifying his own standpoint in philosophy with the totality of reality—the Absolute itself. Other than this presumption, however, Pannenberg seems to consider Hegel's basic account of the unity of truth, meaning and reality as a history as correct. Many of Hegel's critics, however, find his "neglect of the particular and contingent" to be part and parcel of his entire system of Absolute Idealism, and not just a result of his realised eschatology.

30 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:135. 31 Ibid.


33 Ibid., p. 306 34 Ibid., p. 309.

35 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:164.

36 Ibid., p. 167.

Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:171.

Pannenberg explicitly refers to this mediatory function of the concept of anticipation in a comment on Ernst Troeltsch who, he says, lacked this concept to mediate the absolute and the relative. Then he says: "There is at no time a sheer separation between the absolute and the relative. We have proofs at every moment that the truth we have is truth only by anticipating that it will finally prove true." ("A Theological Conversation with Wolfhart Pannenberg," Dialog, 11 (Autumn, 1972), p. 295).

Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:169.

On the subject of "truth" as historical see the article "What is Truth?" in Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:1-27.

Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:172.

Ibid., p. 171, emphasis added.

Lauer, p. 190.

Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:175. Ibid.

Ibid., p. 158. Ibid., p. 174.

Ibid., p. 176. Ibid., p. 179.

Ibid. Also, Pannenberg says, "...in the destiny of Jesus the end of history occurred in advance in a way which is no longer qualitatively different from its proper reality." (Ibid., p. 181)

Ibid., p. 181.

In the article "What is Truth?" Pannenberg attempts to find support for his view of the historicity of truth in the Bible. Relying largely on the work of Hans von Soden, he argues that for the Israelites, "truth," as "Emeth" was not a timeless state of affairs, but was the faithfulness of God in his historical activity. "Thus, in the Israelitic sense, truth is 'reality (which) is regarded as history...not something that in some way or another lies under or behind things and is discovered by penetrating into their interior depths" (Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:3). He contrasts this understanding of truth, which allows for history, contingency and the future, with the Greek concept of truth as "Aletheia" which represents it as timeless:
"One cannot say of aletheia that it happens, in the sense of the Israelitic idea of truth. ...Indeed, it is always identical with itself as that which is hidden behind the flux of sense-appearances, and which only the logos-informed reason can uncover" (Ibid., pp. 4-5). Pannenberg clearly favors the "Israelitic view" as interpreted by von Soden because it allows for change while finding stability in the faithfulness of God. Unfortunately, he does not distinguish clearly between that "stability" and timelessness.

54 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:27 and 20-21.


56 Ibid., p. 61.

57 That this is the case is supported by the fact that Rudolf Bultmann appropriates Heidegger's concept of anticipation in support of his own hermeneutical principle of "preunderstanding." See Rudolf Bultmann, History and Eschatology (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), p. 113.

58 Heidegger, Being and Time, pp. 350-358.

59 Ibid., p. 357. 60 Bultmann, pp. 154-155.


62 Nygren, Meaning and Method, passim.


64 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:20.

65 This is a brief and necessarily truncated account of Hegel's view of the correspondence of thought and being. The primary source for this is Hegel's Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences which receives a detailed exposition in Lauer, pp. 57-128.

66 Lauer, p. 113.

67 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:23.
68 Ibid., p. 22.
69 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:168.
70 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:22.
71 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 1:169.
72 Ibid., p. 175.  73 Ibid., p. 172.
74 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:246.
76 Pannenberg, Idea of God, p. 133.
77 Ibid., p. 131.
78 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 60.
79 Ibid.  80 Ibid., p. 66.  81 Ibid., pp. 127-143.
82 Pannenberg's use of "appearance" (Erscheinung) in this essay is quite ambiguous. For the most part he seems to use it in the neutral sense of sensible phenomena, that is, what is experienced empirically in the world.
83 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 127.
84 Ibid., p. 128.  85 Ibid., p. 129.
86 Following E. Gilson, "essentialism" is used here to designate views which imply the "existential neutrality" of essences. See Etienne Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1952), passim.
87 Pannenberg, Faith and Reality, p. 18.
88 Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, p. 48.
89 It is interesting to note that Gilson disagrees with Pannenberg's analysis of Kant. Whereas Pannenberg sees Kant's phenomenalism as a type of nominalism, in that it identifies essence with appearance, Gilson sees it as a type of essentialism: "Even in the Critique of Pure Reason it remains true to say that existence can be added to or subtracted from the concept of any object without altering it in the least" (Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, p. 129).
90. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, p. 130.
91. Ibid., p. 131. 92. Ibid. 93. Ibid., p. 132
94. Ibid.
97. Ibid., p. 138.
99. Ibid., p. 237.
100. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, p. 139.
101. Ibid. 102. Ibid.
107. Ibid. 108. Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid., p. 27.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid., p. 192.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid., p. 191.
121 Ibid., p. 190
122 Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, p. 96.
CHAPTER II

THE FUTURITY OF GOD

One of Pannenberg's most controversial ideas is the identification of the "power of the future" which unites reality into a totality with the Christian God. He holds the closest possible relationship to obtain between the future totality which is anticipated in present experience and God:

Since the individual man relates himself to the still outstanding wholeness of his own existence, he relates himself to the whole of the world and its history. In this way he also always relates himself to God as the mysterious power that constitutes this--absent--wholeness.\(^1\)

As will be seen, this theme of God's futurity is the model by which Pannenberg attempts to reinterpret the transcendence of God for contemporary man for whom the God of the "primordial past," even if redefined metaphysically as the "ground of being," is the sanctifier of present world systems and the destroyer of man's freedom. How successful this redefinition of God's transcendence in terms of futurity is will be a major concern of this entire study of Pannenberg's revisionist theism. This chapter will attempt simply to present the meaning of the "futurity of God" and analyze it critically as a model for God's transcendence.

Pannenberg's intention is to develop a modern Christian doctrine of God which will draw upon biblical themes and motifs to demonstrate that the God of the Israelites and
of Jesus Christ is relevant to modern man's deepest questions and needs. He does not intend merely to present a philosophical theism, although he believes that the biblical doctrine of God, when rightly interpreted, does speak philosophically and not just kerygmatically. Often when writing about a contemporary philosophical issue that seems to present serious problems for belief in God today, he will attempt to show that the solution lies in the Old Testament idea of God as the one who reveals himself in the history of his promises for the future or in Jesus' proclamation of the coming reign of God which determines the present from the future. As noted in the first chapter, he believes that the "peculiar anticipatory structure of the ministry and destiny of Jesus" provides a powerful model for resolving conflicts in hermeneutics and ontology. While he is not a biblical literalist and freely employs critical methods of biblical scholarship, Pannenberg is concerned with biblical theology in his modern reformulation of the doctrine of God and believes that the concept of God as the "power of the future" is biblically based and a Christian model for understanding God today.

It is just this concern for sound biblical theology combined with contemporary reformulation of doctrine in dialogue with modern thought which makes Pannenberg's theological contribution creative, stimulating and appealing to a wide audience of intellectuals today. He is in touch with the major concerns of science, sociology and political theory
and attempts to integrate them into his theological reflection while remaining faithful to the basic tenets of Christian belief. Christian theology, he believes, must be in dialogue with modern culture and must present its claims rationally. He has engaged Marxism and atheism in debate over the meaning of human existence and has attempted to present a profoundly Christian anthropology which is at the same time philosophically defensible. He has recovered the category of eschatology for Christian theology, utilizing it to bring the Christian idea of God's Kingdom into touch with the basic human hope for a better future. He has defended the Christian belief in bodily resurrection as the destiny of the individual on the basis of a rigorously philosophical anthropology. In these and many other areas Pannenberg has proven himself to be a modern Christian theologian to be reckoned with. This writer can think of no living Protestant theologian who better represents the "revisionist" model of theological methodology set forth by David Tracy in his *Blessed Rage for Order*. 4 Nevertheless, even a "revisionist" theologian, insofar as he calls himself "Christian," must be faithful to the most basic and fundamental concerns of a biblical Christian worldview and is to be corrected and criticized when he fails sufficiently to allow biblical categories to transform contemporary modes of thought.

A major point of this study of Pannenberg's doctrine of God is that it is fundamentally incompatible with certain basic concerns of Christian theism, broadly defined. He is
not interested in conforming his theology to any particular, narrow definition of "orthodoxy" and it is not the intention here to fault him for that. However, insofar as he claims that his revision in theism remains faithful to or even re-discovers truly Christian belief in God, he leaves himself open to criticism where it conflicts with fundamental, non-negotiable elements of such belief. Of course, it is difficult to determine what these elements are without referring to some creedal standard of orthodoxy or to some consensus among Christian theologians. In light of the present pluralistic situation, either one of these would be problematic as a highest court of appeal for setting standards and criteria for what may count as "Christian" theism.

In his study of divine transcendence in contemporary Christian theology, David Cairns reflects upon this difficulty which faces anyone who wishes to go beyond interpretation of modern theologies to criticism. He argues that one can only proceed from his own "ultimate loyalty" as a "governing pattern" of belief about what is most basic to Christian thought about God and the world. Once one knows where his ultimate loyalty lies, he cautions however, one cannot simply override all discussion by saying without further thought "The Bible teaches," or "Christians believe." Since his approach to such critical inquiry is accepted as the basis and pattern for dealing with Pannenberg's theology here it is worthwhile to quote Cairns at some length:
We are given into our hands no principle which will enable us to approach any theological work, for example the ontological theology of Paul Tillich, or the personalist theology of Emil Brunner, and decide off the cuff what is true and what is false. We are left with the often intensely difficult task of considering every theology that claims to be a faithful interpretation of the biblical faith, and reflecting long and carefully as to whether this theology is what it claims to be. In that inquiry we must be guided by our assessment of what is merely time-bound in the biblical records, and what is central and essential to the life of the Christian faith.⁵

It is the conviction of this writer that the transcendence of the Christian God cannot be sustained apart from an adequate account of his personal and ontological freedom vis-a-vis the world. While it is conceded that much contemporary Christian theology does not see this as the basic concern in the doctrine of God, this writer agrees with the tradition of Christian thought which recognizes a fundamental link between God's absolute freedom in relation to the world and all other major doctrines including the "gratuity of grace." That is, if God's creative and redemptive activity in the world, however conceived, is to be the expression of his personal love and grace, it must be a freely chosen activity and not one imposed on him by inner or outer necessity. This implies that while God may have real relations with the created world and even undergo a freely chosen history with it in covenant, promise and fulfillment, God and the world must be seen as ontologically distinct or else the meaning of the relation as one of gracious commitment is lost.⁶

This requires what Austin Farrer has called the
"prior actuality of God" in his relation with the world and its processes. That is, the world or God's relation to it must form no part of the actuality of God himself. God must not be dependent on the world or his relation to it in order to attain his full actuality or deity. This is admittedly a great problem for ontological thought which seeks unity in being. Speculative ontology almost inevitably seeks some way to include the reality of the world within God in order to avoid the dualism in being which, under an abstract and speculative definition of "infinity," would finitize God as well as the world. However, such an inclusion, or any implied blurring of the ontological boundaries between God and the world, presents an insuperable obstacle to conceiving God as truly gracious in his relation to man and the world. This has been a major barrier to Christian theology's acceptance of the onto-theology of G. W. F. Hegel even though it represented one of history's most ambitious attempts to establish the "truth" of Christian belief on philosophical grounds. His axiom that "Without a world, God is not God" can be read, within the total context of his system, as a betrayal of the freedom of God's grace in creation, revelation and redemption.

A similar reservation must be expressed with regard to a more contemporary challenge to the freedom of God's grace in the process theism of A. N. Whitehead which has so influenced Christian thought today. Certainly Whitehead
wished to preserve God's transcendence to the world, but that transcendence did not include God's freedom vis-a-vis the world in a way this writer considers adequate. When he states that "It is as true to say that God creates the world, as that the world creates God" he is speaking in the first instance of God's "primordial" nature and in the second of God's "consequent" nature. Nevertheless, there is unavoidably implied here a reciprocal relation of actuality and dependence between God and the world. Pannenberg himself objects to this way of depicting God's relation to the world: "Whitehead conceives of God and the world in mutual interdependence...and that is unifiable with no concept of creation." Furthermore, one might add, it seriously dilutes the idea of God's free interaction with his creation which is essential to a specifically Christian view of God.

In spite of Pannenberg's explicit disavowal of any reciprocal relation between God and the world, as in process theism, his own model of God's transcendence, based on futurity, implies a mutual interdependence of God and the world. Although it will require a lengthy and detailed discussion of his writing on God to demonstrate this, this chapter will begin by exposing the inner logic of this model and arguing that while it is not carried through consistently it does imply a certain dependence of God on the process of history. The main burden of this argument will be borne by subsequent chapters and especially the final one. Therefore,
the critical conclusion reached here must remain tentative and anticipatory of the final outcome of the entire argument.

1. God as Future

The concept of God as future is one which appears repeatedly throughout Pannenberg's writings on theology, ethics and philosophy. It is almost impossible to escape it, yet it is also often left as an enigmatic assertion which can only leave the reader puzzled. What is Pannenberg trying to say with such seemingly paradoxical statements as "God in his very being is the future of the world" and "God is in himself the power of the future"? He believes that he is expressing the biblical view of God's transcendence, freedom and lordship over all finite systems and partial realities of the world. He also believes that he is opening up a way of conceiving the being of God which will free Christian theism from the reproach of the "atheism of human freedom" and at the same time bring it into greater conformity with the mission and message of Jesus.

The notion of God which Pannenberg finds no longer possible or useful is one which models the being of God on the analogy of everything else that exists. Nothing that presently exists, whether an entity ("a being") or a social system or even the impersonal "ground" or "depth" of being itself is absolute and non-superseded. "For everything that already exists, all beings, can be fundamentally called into question and superseded." Only a being who has "fu-
turity as a quality of being" (*Seinsbeschaffenheit*), Pannenberg avers, could possibly be God, the "all-determining reality" (*alles-bestimmende Wirklichkeit*), without contradicting the freedom of man to transcend every present state of affairs or itself be contradicted by being transcended by man's freedom and openness to the new future.\(^{16}\)

Thus, the openness of history and its contingency once again come to the fore as determinative themes for Pannenberg. As in his hermeneutics and ontology, he is concerned not to close off the future to any possibility whatever, but to recognize the capability of the future to contradict any and every presently existing state of affairs. Although he sees this as a biblical concern, especially of the apocalyptic tradition, he finds it also to be an inescapable presupposition of modern life which has been expressed especially powerfully by the atheism of human freedom represented by Sartre, Bloch and the Frankfurt School of social philosophy. Modern speech about God, he argues, must come to terms with the radical freedom of man which has replaced the regularity of the natural order as the basis for atheism's critique of traditional theism.\(^{17}\) The modern battleground in the struggle between atheism and theism, he believes, is anthropology and the atheism of freedom has something to teach Christian belief in God which will help it to be more Christian.

Pannenberg argues that the atheists, such as Sartre, are correct when they say that the traditional concept of an
omniscient, omnipotent God who exists eternally unavoidably leaves no room for the genuine freedom of any creature. 18 This is shown also in the history of theism's struggles over divine foreknowledge and predestination which, he says, prove that an antinomy to human freedom exists in traditional Christian theism. Since God is conceived as "already existing" he argues, theism cannot escape the conclusion that his providence must have established the course of everything in the universe in all its detail from the beginning which robs man of freedom, history of contingency and implicates God in the world's evil. 19

Clearly, Pannenberg excludes the possibility of any self-limitation of God in relation to the world such as is often referred to in Christian theism. He assumes, somewhat arbitrarily, that if God existed already, the totality of reality itself would be a completed unity, determined in every detail. He accuses traditional theism of objectifying God by resting on an ontology which compared God to an "existent thing." His own problem with the "existence" of God, however, may be seen as a too-facile reliance on an assumption that God could not "exist" without overwhelming human freedom and historical contingency. It would seem that the problem which largely governs Pannenberg's objection here is one entirely of his own making. In the last chapter it was seen that he believes the contingency of reality depends on the totality of reality being future—-not presently existing anywhere complete in itself (though able to be antici-
pated). As a theologian, he believes that the power which unifies reality into a totality is God, the "all-determining reality." It would seem to be a significant leap of thought, demanding detailed explanation, to argue that because the totality of reality does not presently exist, "it will also seem blasphemous to think of God as an existent being; as the unity who, while he is an existent being himself, unites the world." If God were to be thought of in this way, he says, it could only be at the cost of human freedom. Here he is assuming that if God exists, then the totality of reality also exists. As will be seen, this is exactly his view in that God and the unity of reality are intimately related, if not identified, in his thought. In any case, it would appear to be circular reasoning to argue that because the totality of reality does not presently exist (a debatable point in itself) the power that unifies reality does not exist either unless one implicitly identifies them in some way.

The same confusion of thought seems to underlie his assertion that if God already existed he could not be God because he could then be surpassed by man's freedom which can "overstep" every presently existing state of affairs.

An existent being acting with omnipotence and omniscience would make freedom impossible. But such a being would also not be God, because it could not be the reality which determines everything, for the reality of freedom, of human subjectivity, would remain outside its grasp.

This is to assume that if God existed he would have to have already determined everything which is to confuse creation
and providence with determinism, a view which speculative thought may find necessary, but is nearly always resisted by Christian theism.

Pannenberg believes that in its critique of traditional theism for the sake of human freedom, atheism has assisted theology in being more clear about its own subject—about the reality of God who is no longer to be confused with an existent being.\textsuperscript{22} It may legitimately be asked whether Pannenberg has not capitulated to atheism at this point. As will be seen, he has not espoused atheism and he does bring criticism to bear on it. However, it does seem that he has too easily accepted the modern illusion of man's unrestricted freedom. Of course, by "freedom," he does not mean merely the atheistic "principle of autonomy" which he says produces only an "empty, formal freedom."\textsuperscript{23} Rather, he means man's essential \textit{Weltoffenheit} by which he is capable of stepping over every attempt to fit him into some permanently established order and of transcending every status quo.\textsuperscript{24}

Without in any way detracting from the legitimate concern for man's true, limited ability to achieve the new, one must ask whether Pannenberg is not being romantic and naively optimistic about man's capabilities. The other side of the real progress and accomplishment of the new by man is the remarkable sameness and imprisonment to the past which man experiences. It is not true that there is nothing new under the sun, but neither is it true that man is fundamentally capable of freeing himself from every past and
permanently setting aside every condition into which he is thrown by existence. The monotony of evil is as great a phenomenon of experience in history as is progress.

In spite of this unwarranted optimism, Pannenberg's debate with atheism on anthropological grounds remains one of his most vital contributions. He does not simply adopt atheism's godless autonomy of man, but addresses to it the question of the ground of freedom. He finds atheism's answers insufficient on anthropological grounds. Man's freedom he argues, is not grounded in his immanent, finite nature, nor can it be grounded in any apotheosis of man's spirit such as Feuerbach attempted. Unfortunately, it is impossible here to give a detailed account of Pannenberg's anthropology. It is one of his most profound contributions to contemporary theology. He discovers in the Weltoffenheit and freedom of man in self-transcending ec-centricity ontological structures of man's being which, he argues, presuppose an infinity transcending man: "...the modern metaphysics of man's subjectivity is conceivable only on the presupposition of God." This, he finds, presents a new possibility for Christian theism in the inability of atheism to account for man's freedom. Man's freedom cannot present a new "proof" of God, but can, as a question, find an adequate answer in the God who does not "exist" but is the power of the future and as such the ground and basis of human freedom. Theology can then address to atheism the question of God as the question
about the being that must always be presupposed by man as the actual ground of the possibility of his freedom in relation to the existing world (i.e., what already exists at hand). 27

If theology is to take advantage of this opportunity and avoid the antinomy to man's freedom implied in the already-existing God of theism, Pannenberg says, it must turn to the future as the locus of the personal power which grounds man's freedom. Has not theology already had to give up the idea of a God who exists, however? Pannenberg avers that there is an alternative way of conceiving God, the "all-determining reality," which does greater justice to his personhood and freedom:

The future in particular seems to offer an alternative to an understanding of the real which is concentrated entirely upon what is existent. For what belongs to the future is not yet existent, and yet already determines present experience....28

In a truly astonishing aphorism he states that "the future is real, although it does not yet exist." 29 Thus, he has not capitulated to atheism, but is attempting to allow atheism's legitimate concerns creatively to redefine the being of God for Christian theology. He will go on to argue that the future itself can be understood as a personal power active in the present and that it presents an especially appropriate way for modern Christian doctrine to conceive the reality of God. For the moment, however, it is necessary to stop briefly to analyze this idea that the future is real, although it does not yet exist.

It is important to come to some understanding of what
Pannenberg means by this because he will say in another context that "God does not yet exist." There it will be essential to know that in his eschatological ontology, what is "real" is not restricted to what presently exists. It should be apparent that the term "exist" in this sense has a technical ontological use which is different from ordinary use. "Exist" is most often used in familiar parlance to describe the real as distinguished from the merely possible or absolutely unreal. "Exists" in this sense is roughly equivalent in meaning to "is." Pannenberg's use cannot be restricted to this normal use. A philosophical use of "exist" which is roughly equivalent to its use in ordinary speech is that of Thomism in which to exist is to be and vice versa. In this view, "existence" is the act by which anything that is real has being. The realm of the real and the realm of the existent are then strictly coterminous. There is nothing in this view which is "real" but does not exist. This cannot be the meaning of "exist" as used by Pannenberg in reference to the future and God. When he says that they do not yet exist, he is not excluding some reality from them, but attempting to express the kind of reality which they have—which is not "existence."

This is admittedly a highly peculiar use of language. There is another view of "existence," however, which also sets it in opposition to the truly real. Paul Tillich is expressing this when he denies that being itself (God) can be said to "exist." This has aroused great controversy among
theological critics who assume the ordinary or Thomistic identification of existence with reality, sometimes leading even to the false charge of atheism against Tillich. Adrian Thatcher is correct when he points out that Tillich's use of "existence" is radically different from its use in Thomism or in ordinary language. For Tillich, as for Meister Eckhart and others in the Platonic and neo-Platonic tradition (including Augustine), God alone is "being" in the true sense. Everything else is partly being and partly non-being (me on). "Existence" designates that ontological middle plane between being and sheer nothingness which is occupied by finite beings. Tillich adapts this tradition's use of "existence" as the realm of finitude to modern existentialist concepts and, following Kierkegaard, defines "existence" as the realm of estrangement and non-being. For Tillich, then, the truly "real," which is being itself, is beyond the split between essence and existence and therefore cannot be said to "exist" in this technical sense of the term.

Although there are profound differences between Tillich's and Pannenberg's ontologies, Tillich's technical use of "exist" can help illuminate Pannenberg's assertion that the future, though "real," does not yet exist. It is impossible to understand this odd assertion apart from Pannenberg's general ontology which was discussed in the last chapter. The future, as the locus of the totality of reality, "determines" the present and is a power already impinging on the
present in anticipation. The future totality does not presently exist, however, since there is no absolute unity in reality yet. In this sense, "existence" is the sphere of what is present and therefore "not yet" unified. Whatever "exists" is not most real because the highest level of reality is unity and that is still future. As was seen, however, Pannenberg is not content to leave the future vague or indefinite and provides the conceptuality of prolepsis by which the real future is effective in the present.

For Pannenberg, then, the scope of the real is not limited to or identical with what exists at the present moment because the future, though not existent at the present moment is already effective in it.\(^{37}\) Whatever presently exists can, in man's transcending freedom be passed over and nullified. Only the absolute future, toward which man is oriented in his freedom, cannot be passed over, but ultimately determines everything and is already effective in anticipation.

The question which arises here is whether this distinction really solves the problem of human freedom, as Pannenberg seems to believe. If the future, as the locus of the "all-determining reality" is not presently existent, but nevertheless "real" (effective), how does it leave room for the freedom of man after all? If it is already real, which means "effective," what is it effecting? According to Pannenberg, it is making possible man's freedom by contradicting presently existing totalities, to which man tends to be-
come attached, and opening up new possibilities for man in his future.\textsuperscript{38} Thus, in contrast to the presently existing God of theism, the power of the future, though itself absolute, forms the basis of man's ability to transcend every present situation.

Pannenberg suggests, then, that modern Christian theism turn to this future as the basis of a new understanding of God which will both avoid the conflict with human freedom implied in the traditional notion of God and answer the need of atheism for a ground of man's freedom in orientation to the future. In contrast to older forms of atheism such as Feuerbach and Nietzsche which tended to infinitize man or deny transcendence altogether, Pannenberg sees new possibilities for dialogue between Christian belief in God and atheism in the newer "atheism of empty transcendence" as exemplified above all in Ernst Bloch in that "its negation is directed only against the traditional concept of God. What God might be beyond what this concept portrays remains an open question."\textsuperscript{39}

Pannenberg attempts to utilize the eschatological motif of the Kingdom of God to correlate the power of the future in Bloch's secularized eschatology with his own vision of God as future. He believes that, as Bloch himself has realized, the God of the Old Testament prophets is the God of history who lives in the future of his promises, who leads history into a new future and who is the God of the coming
messianic Kingdom. The "messianic line" of Israelitic religion which Bloch traces in his *Das Princip Hoffnung* is seen by Pannenberg as a true apprehension of the radically future-oriented nature of biblical belief in God which finds its high point in Jesus' eschatological understanding of reality. Although Bloch is mistaken in his positive assessment of the secularization of this eschatological orientation, Pannenberg believes that Christian theology should thank Bloch for helping it to recover the central biblical category of eschatology. "He has recovered the biblical tradition's eschatological mode of thought as a theme for philosophical reflection and also for Christian theology." Pannenberg sees Bloch as basically on the right track when he assigns ontological priority to the coming utopia which contradicts all present social realities—including Feuerbach's deified human nature. However, he finds entirely inadequate Bloch's exclusion of the "God hypostasis" from this future utopia. Bloch is right insofar as the "God hypostasis" he excludes is one tied to the past or present which would be a contradiction to human freedom and the novelty of the future. In this sense, Pannenberg argues, Bloch's atheism is to be accepted:

The criticism of the ordinary way of thinking of the "transcendent" God as a self-contained being alongside other beings still stands. A God conceived as a thing at hand, even as a thingified person, or a "reified hypostasis," is no longer credible.

Some of the reasons for this have already been noted. In any case, Bloch is right, according to Pannenberg, in his
atheistic rejection of the God who presently exists.

What Bloch has not recognized sufficiently, Pannenberg argues, is that the utopia he envisions as the transcendent ground of present hope cannot be an "empty future" but must be filled with personal content and only the promising God of the Bible can fill it. The future is not an "empty category" or a "number of finite events about to happen."^{46} Above all, it is not a product of man's wishes or of tendencies latent in the process of history, as Bloch seems to say in his esoteric Marxism. If it were a product of man's wishes, it could easily collapse into the triviality of a self-satisfied present in that the psychology of man as he now is could become its criterion.^{47} If it is the product of potencies and latencies in the dialectical process of human social life, as Bloch says, how does this reconcile with the emphasis on the novelty of the future?

If the future is already laid out in these potencies and latent aspects of the historical process—in our case, in the wishes and hopes of man—then it cannot arrive with the suddenness and underivability of something whose novelty essentially transcends everything that was or is.^{48}

According to Pannenberg, then, Bloch is not radical enough in his view of the primacy of the future because he has not recognized that the coming future is the Kingdom of God. Only if the coming Kingdom is ontologically grounded in itself and does not owe its future to the present wishes and strivings of man can its primacy and novelty be guaranteed.^{49} The coming Kingdom must then be designated in biblical terms
the Kingdom of God out of concern for its primacy over all psychological states of man. Otherwise, Pannenberg warns, the Feuerbachian deification of man cannot be avoided after all and that is something Bloch wishes to avoid in his emphasis on the transcendence of the future. Even Bloch attached a "numinous" quality to the future kingdom or utopia which he envisioned, Pannenberg points out. If taken consistently, then, Bloch's own eschatological ontology leads to the idea of God in spite of its weakness for present tendencies latent in the process. With the help of Bloch, he says, Christian theology can now recognize God as a God "with futurity as a quality of being." 

Pannenberg's critique of Bloch's secularized philosophy of the eschatological Kingdom of God is a positive contribution in the contemporary debate between Christian theology and atheism. He has correctly shown that the atheism of "empty transcendence" implicitly presupposes God, however hidden the presupposition may be. On the other hand, it may legitimately be asked whether Pannenberg has now "futurized" God à la Bloch, or deified Bloch's secular vision of the future. Much will depend on whether it is really possible consistently to confine the transcendence of the Christian God to the transcendence of the utopian future. Therefore, final judgment on this question must be reserved until it is determined whether Pannenberg accomplishes this and, if so, what results it has for the freedom of God vis-à-vis the world.
There is no question that the "power of the future" can serve as a powerful and dramatic metaphor for the surpassing transcendence of God over all attempts of man to absolutize finite states of social and political organization. The biblical theme of the Kingdom of God has been used effectively in contemporary theology to warn against such idolizations (e.g., Reinhold Neibuhr) and to the extent that this is Pannenberg's intention it is laudable. Even to speak of futurity as a "quality of being" (Seinsbeschaffenheit) of God has justification in the light of man's tendency to enshrine the past or presently existing states of affairs. In spite of his emphasis on the supra-temporal eternity of God, even Barth felt it necessary to place special emphasis on eschatology: "If Christianity be not altogether thoroughgoing eschatology, there remains in it no relation whatever with Christ."52 In his doctrine of God Barth spoke of the "post-temporality of God" as the future beyond all historically conditioned realities.53

Yet there remain dangers in identifying God's transcendence too exclusively with his futurity. The past and present may then form the subjects of a new demonology, a distinct tendency in "futurism" as an ideology. The immanence of God may be negated so that God is so transcendent as the non-manipulable future that he is unable to be conceived as present and thus is absent from the past and present. Finally, since the future as the end of history is inevitably
thought of as somehow at least partially determined by man's historical decisions, if indeed his freedom is conceived radically, God himself must be at least partly conditioned by the processes of history if he is defined as the "future of the world."\(^{54}\) This definition itself implies that the world, or God's temporal relation to it, forms some part of the actuality of God.

Having appropriated Bloch's idea of the power of the utopian future as a model for the mode of being of God himself, Pannenberg seeks to support it on the basis of the message and ministry of Jesus. He argues that this very idea of God as future is to be found in the identification which Jesus made between God's deity, or being, and his Kingdom. To establish this identity Pannenberg searches Jesus' teaching and discovers the central aspect there to be the future Kingdom of God. This has been lost in contemporary theology, he claims, even though it is a clear exegetical fact, due to the embarrassment over the apocalyptic elements of this expectation as rediscovered by J. Weiss and A. Schweitzer.\(^{55}\) Therefore, it has become fashionable to demythologize eschatology in Jesus' proclamation and de-temporalize its futurity. Under the influence of Bultmann and C. H. Dodd Jesus' message of the Kingdom of God was emptied of its futurity and made a symbol for the eschatological "deed of God" in Jesus himself which opens new possibilities for human existence.\(^{56}\) While Pannenberg admits an element of "realized
eschatology" in Jesus' teaching, he avers that the "presence of the Kingdom" was always meant by Jesus in terms of the presence of God's coming Kingdom. "Futurity is fundamental for Jesus' message."57 He goes so far as to say that "In Jesus' message it is only as future that God is present."58

Much of Pannenberg's doctrine of God's futurity rests on this exclusiveness of the future which is supposed to characterize Jesus' message. How far can this exclusiveness be sustained by a study of Jesus' teaching? Unfortunately, Pannenberg does not engage in any detailed exegesis or theological examination of the structure of Jesus' teaching to support his conclusion. It remains largely an assertion, supported by references to the researches of Weiss, Schweitzer and others. Insofar as he stresses the eschatological nature of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God, he is largely supported by the consensus of modern New Testament scholarship. Bultmann argued that the dominant concept of Jesus' message was the Reign of God as an eschatological reality already making itself felt, or "dawning."59 Norman Perrin also finds the "authentic" sayings of Jesus ringing with eschatological import, although he argues that the "future" of the Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed is not to be understood exclusively chronologically.60

J. Jeremias discovers the Basileia tou Theou to be the central theme of the public proclamation of Jesus and argues that it cannot be understood any way but as future
from Jesus' own words. Yet, as future, the Kingdom is already dawning in Jesus' own activity.\textsuperscript{61} All these researchers point out the essential two-sidedness of the eschatology of Jesus' proclamation: the Kingdom of God is not yet, but also already. Günther Bornkamm says that there is a "remarkable tension" between such sayings of Jesus as speak of the Kingdom of God as future and such as announce its arrival now, in the present.\textsuperscript{62} He argues that this tension cannot be reduced to a mere chronological one, but is inherent in the decision-character of the response called for by Jesus' proclamation. Neither side of the tension may be reduced to the other: "God's future is God's call to the present, and the present is the time of decision in the light of God's future."\textsuperscript{63} While there is no question, then, of Jesus merely preaching a realized eschatology (C. H. Dodd), neither was he an apocalypticist who referred only to the future as the locus of God's activity.\textsuperscript{64} It may be, then, that Pannenberg has not done justice to the other side of the futurity of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' message, although as will be seen, he attempts to account for a certain element of realized eschatology with reference to anticipation and prolepsis of the future.

Believing he has established that Jesus' proclamation was solely occupied with the futurity of the Kingdom of God, Pannenberg asks how the idea of God is affected by this message. Jesus did not develop the implications of his escha-
tological message for the idea of God because God's being was not an issue between Jesus and his followers or adversaries. The issue was God's character and the Law. However, Pannenberg says, the situation changed when the early Christian community encountered Greek philosophy. One of Pannenberg's fundamental theses with regard to the doctrine of God is that early Christian thought too easily appropriated the Greek philosophical theology in which the mode of God's being was derived from the rational search for the true nature of the arché of the cosmos. While there were undeniable elements of similarity between Judeo-Christian belief in God and the idea of the arché in Middle Platonism, many of the Apologists failed to be sufficiently critical of the ontology of Greek thought about God and thereby lost the eschatological and historical dimension of God and his activity in concern for such characteristics of the world-ground as timelessness, immutability and propertylessness. While the Apologists and other early Christian theologians cannot be faulted for linking up with those areas of Greek thought about God which expressed the biblical concept, theology today must push on to the basic elements of the philosophical idea of God and transform these in the critical light of the biblical idea of God. This was a task only partly accomplished by the early church Fathers, Pannenberg says: 

It remains a task for the Christian doctrine of God to show that the otherness of God as well as his unity cannot really be conceived within the philosophical formulation of the question, but can be comprehended only as the unity of the Father with
the Son and the Spirit, so that the revelation of the triune God is what brings the philosophical question to a genuine fulfillment for the first time.68

The significance of the Trinity for this reformulation will be considered in the next two chapters. Here it is to be noted that Pannenberg believes the otherness of God was not adequately formulated when he was conceived along the lines of Greek philosophical theology as the arché because he then became tied to the timeless order of the cosmos and could not really be understood as the personal Lord who stands over against the cosmic order (i.e., the systems of the world as well as nature) and who acts in history to bring about the totally new and unexpected. Traditional Christian theism translated the Greek idea of the arché of the world into a doctrine of God as the "highest spiritual being over the world" and thereby failed to discover the true implications of Jesus' message for the idea of God.69 Today, in the face of the modern disrepute into which the idea of a highest spiritual being ruling the world has fallen, he argues, it is necessary for Christians to rethink their idea of God and the message of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God is the best place to begin.

Pannenberg discovers the "futurity of God" in what he considers a fundamental axiom derivable from Jesus' eschatological message: "God's being is his rule."70 This is a crucial assertion for all of Pannenberg's theology and needs to be explored in some detail. First, it will be remembered,
he claimed the exclusively futural nature of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' message, a questionable claim to be sure. When linked with this assertion of an equation, or identity, between God's rule and his being, the general direction of this viewpoint is clear: God's being must be as exclusively future as his rule. This is to be his answer to the disrepute into which the idea of God as the already existing highest spiritual being ruling the world has fallen: God as the "all-determining reality" is not such a being in Jesus' message or for modern, post-theistic Christian belief, but is the future of his rule, the hidden Kingdom coming to the world out of its future. Pannenberg nowhere attempts to defend his assertion that in Jesus' message God's being and his rule are identical. He simply assumes it as axiomatic. Whether it is an equation derivable from Jesus' teaching or an assertion derived from Pannenberg's own ontology of future unity and read into Jesus' message is open to serious question. In any case, it is a fundamental principle of Pannenberg's eschatological theism.

God's being and his very existence cannot be conceived apart from his rule over the world, Pannenberg avers. "Or, to put it in the language of the philosophy of religion, the being of the gods is their power. To believe in one god means to believe that one power dominates all."

71 If one presupposes that "dominate" here means to exercise full power over, to determine everything in its absolute unity, then the present disunity of reality renders questionable the exist-
ence of such a power. Pannenberg does not seem to consider as possible options such notions as God's self-limiting rule or God's power as revealed in powerless love which allows "room" for the resistance of an other. Following what he believes to be Jesus' identification of God's being with his rule as a visible, manifest dominion unifying everything, and the axiom of the gods' deity being their power, he makes an absolute equation between God's being and his manifest and unresisted unification of reality under his authority. In Barth's terms, he takes "too seriously" the resistance of man to God as a kind of ontological limit or condition on God's very being.

In order to avoid such a limitation of God, Pannenberg says that the equation does not mean that God could not be God apart from the existence of finite beings, "for God certainly can do without anyone or anything else." Nevertheless, he seriously qualifies this affirmation of God's transcendent freedom by adding that the equation of God's being and his rule does mean that "if there are finite beings, then to have power over them is intrinsic to God's nature. The deity of God is his rule." God's absolute lordship is not inessential to his deity; he is God only in the accomplishment of his lordship over the world. Furthermore, his lordship, which is intrinsic to his deity, must be "visible":

...his deity will be revealed only when the kingdom comes, since only then will his lordship be visible. But are God's revelation of his deity and his deity
itself separable from each other? The God of the Bible is God only in that he proves himself as God.77

Thus, not only does Pannenberg equate God's deity with his rule, but also with the visible manifestation of that rule over the world. God's deity and his self-revelation belong together also. Traditionally, Christian theology has distinguished between God's "hidden" rule and his visible lordship, a distinction Pannenberg appears in this context to reject.78 Also, theology has most often allowed for a hiddenness of God in the world due to man's sin and for the sake of man's freedom. Here Pannenberg overturns these principles of theology and appears to accept the noetic absence of God's rule in the world as proof of his ontic absence as an existing being. He states that God's self-proof, or self-manifestation of his lordship to the world is a matter of the future and therefore God is not yet, but is yet to be.79

The confusion of human thought and being itself which was noted in the first chapter as a hidden assumption in Pannenberg's ontology reappears here as the basis for the equation of God's very being (his "deity") with his revealed rulership over all reality. This will be clearer later when he allows the "questionableness" (Strittigkeit) of God's deity in history to be an ontological fact about God himself. This is anticipated already here when he allows the hiddenness of God in the world to be a condition on his actual lordship and deity. This seems to be one of the weakest points in his argument for the futurity of God and it is a
critical one for that argument. One may agree with Pannenberg that God's deity is bound up with his lordship without concluding that God's being and deity are future and not yet existent. Indeed, this writer finds it difficult to conceive of God as truly "divine" apart from his ability to exercise absolute control over his creation, in spite of the claims of process theism. This was already expressed as a part of fundamental Christian theism as involving God's freedom vis-a-vis the world as the essence of his transcendence. However, God's deity-as-lordship may be hidden in the world where he chooses not to exercise his dominating power without that in any way mitigating his deity.

Pannenberg goes further than this and argues that God's deity-as-lordship must be manifest, revealed, in order really to be what it is. This is his key assertion in respect to God's futurity and it is impossible to sustain bibli- cally (cf. Romans 1) or rationally apart from an assumed unity of thought and being such as one finds in Hegel's philosophy. For Hegel, God is not God without the world because Self-consciousness comes to itself out of "self-othering" and overcoming the negativity of the otherness in a reconciling process of the Aufhebung of the self and its other--i.e., in finite human thought--through the "negation of the negation" of finite thought's inadequacy to the Absolute. 80 Thus, for Hegel, self-manifestation is essential to Absolute Spirit: "God as Spirit is essentially this very self-revelation...This is his concept, his essential
characteristic." For Pannenberg, as for Hegel, history itself is the process of God's self-manifestation which is only complete at the end. For both, the subject-object antithesis in religious knowledge is rejected in favor of a dialectical unity of man's knowledge of God (or lack of it) and God's own being. If this is rejected in favor of the subject-object antithesis, which alone serves to protect God's full freedom in relation to the world, Pannenberg's equation of God's deity with his being-manifest as Lord is seriously undermined.

For Pannenberg, then, God is only God in the execution and revelation of his lordship and this is something future. This means the confirmation of what was already discovered to be true of the future is true also of the being of God:

Thus it is necessary to say that, in a restricted but important sense, God does not yet exist. Since his rule and 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 fullness.

What can be deduced about Pannenberg's doctrine of God from such a statement? As already seen, he does not mean that God is not, or is not real. Rather, he is real in the way the future is powerful and effective over the present, because the future decides what will emerge out of what exists in the present.

Does not the above statement also imply that as future, as still in the process of "coming to be," God is being "decided" by what is emerging out of the present? The
direction of causality itself should indicate that this is the case, although Pannenberg cautions that "The laws of causality have their own overwhelming significance, but do not plumb the depths of reality's foundation." Still, it would seem intuitively to be the case that if something is in the process of coming to be, it is being completed in time. Some development and becoming would seem to be involved in God's own life, then, as process theology asserts. Is Pannenberg espousing a process view of God? On this side of his thought about God he does seem to be, at least in the sense that God is somehow dependent on his relation with the world in order fully to come to himself, a theme of Hegel's also.

Pannenberg enters into dialogue and debate with Whitehead's process metaphysic of God at several points in his writing. A fuller comparison and contrast between their views will be made later. For now it must be said that one finds it difficult, on the basis of what Pannenberg has said so far, to show any fundamental disagreement between his view and the general emphasis on "becoming" in Whitehead's idea of God. In Whitehead's ontology, God is "future" in the sense that he is ever developing along with the world in his intimate relation with its processes in his concrete, "consequent nature." Pannenberg gives Whitehead (and Charles Hartshorne) credit for incorporating time into the idea of God, for "The very essence of God implies time." With process theology he says that

It is true that, from the viewpoint of our finite
present, the future is not yet decided. Therefore, the movement of time contributes to deciding what the definite truth is going to be, also with regard to the essence of God. 88

On the basis of these agreements with process theology, the conclusion can hardly be avoided that for Pannenberg, as for Whitehead and Hartshorne, God is developing along with the world in mutual interdependence with it. That he has some other view of God's relation with the world in mind, however, is shown by his explicit rejection of any idea of "development" in God: "...we cannot agree when Whitehead suggests that the futurity of God's Kingdom implies a development in God."89 One could, of course, debate whether Whitehead intended to imply a "development" in God. Certainly he attempted to account for God's stability and permanency of character with his concept of God's "primordial nature." However, as already seen, Pannenberg defines God as the "all-determining reality," a definition impossible for Whitehead who saw "creativity" as a principle distinct from God.90 It would seem, then, that the contrast runs deeper than merely a failure on Pannenberg's part to grasp the non-temporal and absolute nature of God's primordial aspect in Whitehead's thought. Rather, Pannenberg rejects any and all incompleteness or development in God such as would imply a process "greater" than God to which he is subject, something definitely implied in Whitehead's philosophy.

In contrast to his assertion about God's "not-yet-being," or "futurity," and his essence being decided by the
movement of time, Pannenberg reasserts powerful futurity as the mode of God's transcendence in a paradoxical or dialectical way. In distinction from Whitehead, he says, "what turns out to be true in the future will then be evident as having been true all along. This applies to God as well as to every finite reality."91 What distinguishes his argument from Whitehead's, he says, is the ontological priority of the future as this is evident in the idea of God as the one who is coming.92 The two sides of Pannenberg's doctrine are uneasily juxtaposed in this pithy statement: "Only in the future of his Kingdom will the statement 'God exists' prove to be definitely true. But then it will be clear that the statement was always true."93

On the one hand, then, Pannenberg seems to affirm a real history of God in relation to the world. The "futurity" of God can, on the basis of many of his explicit statements, mean nothing less than a genuine "becoming" of God in his establishment of his rule within history. However, his explicit rejection of the evolutionary model of Whitehead shows that his view of God's futurity cannot be understood as a form of process theology—as though God were evolving along with the world in a wider process of organic interdependence. Is it possible, then, that his meaning may be understood more easily in analogy to Hegel's dialectical process of Being as dynamic Spirit in self-differentiating becoming? In any case, Pannenberg seems to think of "becoming" as in God rather than of God as in the grip of "becoming."
On the other hand, Pannenberg seems to take back with one hand what he has just given with the other. If it will be clear in the future that it "was always true" that God existed (i.e., that God was always God), what does this do to his passion for human freedom, self-transcendence and the openness of history? He falls back at this critical point on traditional theism in order to save the deity of God. He clearly is attempting to combine "becoming" and "being" or historicity and eternity in God. The question is whether he has discovered in "futurity" a coherent ontological rubric for uniting them or whether he simply asserts mutually contradictory things about God, relying on paradox to hold them together. The same ambiguity which was discovered in his hermeneutic and ontology seems to plague his doctrine of God at this point.

Pannenberg has much to say about God's "futurity." Indeed, it is the center of his entire doctrine of God and he attempts to reconceive almost every aspect of Christian theism in relation to it. He believes that it is better suited to express the personality of God than is traditional theism which, being tied largely to the idea of the arché or world-ground, has difficulty conceiving God as acting in history in new or unexpected ways. Two characteristics of God which Pannenberg believes receive especially enlightening reformulation from the idea of God as the future of the world are creativity and eternity. The next section of this chapter
will attempt to show what effect this has on these attributes and will examine Pannenberg's conception of them in relation to God's transcendence and freedom and in relation to the paradox implied in his entire theology of God.

2. God as Eternal Creator

According to Pannenberg, reflection on God as the power of the future leads to a new idea of creation "oriented not toward a primeval event in the past but toward the eschatological future." A theme constantly reappearing in his work is that of eschatological creation. The power of the future to determine (bestimmen) the essence of everything has already been seen as a key aspect of his theology. It also forms a major foundation of his notion of God's powerful creativity in the world from the future. In attempting to understand his doctrine of God in relation to the world, it will be helpful to consider in some detail his concept of creation from the future and then ask whether this provides any aid in evaluating his idea of God's transcendence.

Pannenberg rejects certain traditional concepts of creation which have been prevalent in Christian theism. Ernst Bloch, he says, unfortunately rejected the idea of a creator God in favor of the power of the future as a still unrealized consummation. For him, the idea of the creator God was an expression of a "mythology of an opulent past." Bloch was mistaken in thinking that this primeval occurrence is the only possible concept of creation compatible with
belief in God. In fact, Pannenberg argues, the power of the future is itself the true biblical model of God's powerful creativity in the world:

Certainly one cannot deny the strong influence of such mythological conceptions of the primordial age upon the thinking of the biblical accounts of creation. But the God of the coming Kingdom had to become the occasion for an eschatological reversal of the idea of creation as soon as he was recognized—as happened in the message of Jesus—as the one who by the future of his lordship is alone powerful over the present world and decisive for its meaning, its essence.97

In Jesus' message of the coming Kingdom of God, then, Pannenberg finds creation and the eschatological future coming together in a most intimate way. "Far from creation being at one end of the time spectrum and eschatology at the other, creation and eschatology are partners in the formation of reality."98

With Bloch, Pannenberg rejects the traditional idea which connects God's creative activity with the past. Whatever "creation" is, it is an activity which the future exercises on the present and past, not vice versa. From this alone it should be apparent that it does not mean God's "causal" activity in establishing an order of finite, dependent beings which is the "world" whether at a moment in the past or continuously. "Creation" is for Pannenberg something God does with the world from its future, not primarily his act of bringing a world into existence in the first place. He shows little or no interest in the traditional Judeo-Christian idea of creatio ex nihilo.99

In his study of the appropriation of philosophical
concepts of God in early Christianity, Pannenberg discovers that the idea of God as the arché, or world-ground, in Greek philosophical theology exercised profound influence on the Christian doctrine of God's creativity. The procedure of determining the nature of God by inference from the order of the cosmos, typical of the search for the true nature of the divine arché in Greek philosophy, remained dominant in early Christian natural theology even though it had the effect of binding God to the order of the world. This, he says, accorded ill with the Christian concern for God's personhood and freedom, because the cosmos was seen as the expression of God's own rational nature, thereby confining God to this order and ruling out new and unexpected acts of God. God's function in the world was then unhappily exhausted in being the origin of the reality encountered in normal experience.¹⁰ Pannenberg finds a great host of problems in this procedure, but pertinent here is his rejection of this as a model of God's creative activity. According to him, the realities of contingency and novelty forbid making God the world-ground or confining his creativity to being the "cause" or origin of the world.

It may legitimately be asked whether Pannenberg is really rejecting the traditional Christian idea of creation or only setting up a "straw man" in order to knock it down. His objections to traditional Christian theistic belief in creation seem to center around two specific charges: that it somehow "ties" God to this order of the world, ruling out new
acts of God, and that it somehow sanctions the present state of affairs in reality, since God is the "cause" of everything. His objections may apply to certain theological tendencies in Christian thought, such as the theology of F. Schleiermacher who considered God's relation to the world as universal causal action which seemed to rule out special, unique acts of God in history or any real role for human causal action in transcending the given state of reality. In his study of God's creativity in Christian thought, however, Langdon Gilkey explicitly denies such a view as typical of the Christian idea of creation: "In this faith...the consistency and order of the universe is not founded, as in philosophy, on the invariability and necessity of God's relation to the world." In other words, God, as the origin of the world and ultimate "cause" of its contingent events, does not imply any ontological "bondage" of God to the established order of creation, nor does it necessarily imply a lack of freedom for the new, since most Christian views of creation would recognize it as a continuous activity, not confined to the past. Certainly Pannenberg is correct in rejecting the model of God's creativity which would exhaust it in being the primordial arché of the cosmos, but that is not the only model for conceiving God as the ultimate cause or ground of the world's existence. Gilkey argues that essential to the Christian doctrine of God as Creator is his absolute freedom over creation at every moment, so that he may act within the arena of historical time in new events:
For, as the free transcendent Creator of the world, God is not a determined part of the system of the world, confined to the invariable relations of the world's structure. Rather he is free over His own creation, which thereby becomes an instrument in His hands and can be both judged and redeemed by His saving will.103

If God's creative action toward the world is not to be conceived as a primordial act of the origin of the world, how does Pannenberg suggest it is to be understood? For him, "creation" is the future's unifying, reconciling and determining power over everything past and present. As already seen in the study of his eschatological ontology, the future is "determinative" of the present in the sense that what the present truly is is only decided by the future. "The future decides the specific meaning, the essence, of everything by revealing what it really was and is."104 The future does this by unifying everything into a totality of reality which is its true meaning and being. Thus, every entity in its individuality is ultimately "determined" in relation to a unity beyond itself—and the future creates unity now by drawing the present into provisional, anticipatory unities, canceling whatever contradicts unity. In this way, the future "gives" being to entities: by providing their unity with all reality.

Clearly implied in this view of reality is a dialectical process of interaction between present and future in which "creation" takes place. Creation is the establishment of unities in the present "unifying the world's scattered events."105 At present, a being is a "something," a unity in
itself, only by anticipation of its unifying future. How
does this process of anticipatory unification take place?
Through a process of the future's powerful reconciliation of
existing schisms and contradictions among existing entities
and events. "Reconciliation is a constitutive aspect of
creation." 106 Creation, then, is the establishment of new
existence in the sense of unity beyond the discord and dis-
harmony of presently existing structures (or anti-structures)
of reality. In creation, God "grants new existence in spite
of the self-asserting arrogance of that which already is." 107

The establishment of unity through negation of the
negative which this view of creation presupposes is strongly
reminiscent of Hegel's dialectical process of creation as
the self-differentiating and self-realizing history of the
Absolute (God). 108 In Hegel's view, insofar as anything is
not the absolute totality of reality, it represents a "nega-
tion" or contradiction in the history of the Absolute's de-
velopment which must be overcome. The contradiction is over-
come in a unity which transcends the opposition while pre-
serving the entity ("Aufhebung"). So long as there exists an
opposition between thesis and antithesis, creation is incom-
plete. Creation is the process in which the synthesis of
opposing realities reaches higher and higher degrees of per-
fection until the ultimate synthesis between finite and infi-
nite realities is attained. "Creation," then, is not so much
the establishment of a reality "other" than God (although
this is a stage in creation according to Hegel) as it is the
Aufhebung of this otherness in ultimate reconciliation. Hegel has various names for this process: "process of negation," "Versöhnung" and "process of Power." Whatever it is called, it is the essence of God's creative power in the world.

The syllogistic structure of Pannenberg's doctrine of creation-as-reconciliation is unmistakable: creation is the establishment of syntheses of reality in reconciliation of opposites by the power of the absolute synthesis of the future. "Each preliminary integration [synthesis] of events and that from which they eventuated emerges as an anticipation of an ultimate unity."¹⁰⁹ He even goes so far as to designate this "anticipatory" function in organic life as its "soul" and "being."¹¹⁰ The future, then, is a creative force or impulse present in existing entities as their very life-force which pulls them out of existing forms into more complex, unified forms of existence which anticipate their true being—the ultimate unity of all reality.

A major point of this thesis is that Pannenberg's doctrine of God's relation to the world fails sufficiently to account for the freedom of God in transcendent non-dependence. If it is correct that his idea of creation is structurally similar to Hegel's in that it conceives of God's creative activity as the Aufhebung of the difference between opposites, this critical conclusion is largely justified. If creation is the cancellation of all contrarieties or disunities in reality, then the ultimate synthesis which creation
must achieve would be the unity of God and the world. Pannenberg hints at this in his discussion of Bloch's utopian vision as an ultimate unity of God and man, a vision which he sees as truly "Christian." Implied in this is the idea that God's Kingdom, his very deity, is dependent on the achievement of this ultimate synthesis as the cancellation of the last disunity between God and man. Of course, he cautions that the unity of God and man which is the goal of the messianic line of God's promises to Israel and in Jesus Christ is not a "tensionless homogeneity." Nevertheless, insofar as God is constrained to "save" (create) the world in order to establish his own deity, the implication remains that the world in its Erhebung to God belongs to God's own actuality. The result of this would be a loss of the transcendence of God as defined at the beginning of this chapter. It is not claimed yet that this conclusion is proven. However, it would seem that Pannenberg's conception of creation is consistent with this conclusion and vice versa. The argument will be developed more fully in the final chapter of this study.

Pannenberg's speculative, dialectical vision of creation displays influence from many different cosmologies including Hegel's to which it owes its distinctly dialectical flavor; Bergson's, to which it owes its identification of "life" with the transcendent evolutionary impulse toward complexity (soul vital); Whitehead's, to which it owes its emphasis on the social nature of all reality and on novelty;
and Bloch's, to which it owes the priority of the future as the power from which the present emerges. In common with these, Pannenberg's view of creation is processive and unifying—in Whitehead's words, God does not so much create as save the world. Pannenberg agrees with Whitehead that "precisely the process of redemption, in its own right, is to be thought of as creation."

This interpretation of creation, which is integrally related to all of Pannenberg's doctrine of God as the power of the future, raises some questions which point toward possible deficiencies in his idea of God's transcendence. Can "creation" be exhausted in "reconciliation" as the process of unification? According to Gilkey, it cannot: "Creation does not unite given finite elements; it originates those elements." The question of original causality simply will not go away and any theology remains inadequate, from a Christian theistic point of view, which does not somehow refer to God as the ultimate cause of the existence of finite things. Gilkey sees the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo as the only real guard against the twin dangers of metaphysical dualism or pantheism, both of which are incompatible with God's transcendence. Pannenberg does not explicitly reject creatio ex nihilo, but it plays no role in his doctrine of God's creative activity, perhaps because he wishes to avoid the idea of God as the "world-ground." Some account of God as the ground of the world's existence, however, would seem to be necessary if one wished to avoid a dualism or pantheism.
and assert God's absolute freedom in transcendence vis-a-vis the world.

Does not speaking of God as the cause of the world annihilate finite freedom and contingency? British philosopher Keith Ward points out that it does only if one assumes that as the ultimate cause God must determine the nature and direction of everything, an assumption not necessarily implied in the Christian doctrine of creation: "if God is free and almighty, he can bring into being creatures which are free, and therefore not sufficiently determined in all their acts by him or anything else."117 This implies the possibility of a divine self-limitation in relation to creatures which is not philosophically or theologically impossible, Ward says, unless one assumes a rigid aseity and immutability which, apart from Aristotelian rationalism, are not necessary attributes of the creator.118

The transcendence of Pannenberg's creator from the future, then, is insufficiently developed in that he is not the source of the world's existence, but only the reconciler of its scattered, chaotic events. His "otherness" is admittedly expressed in the idea of his being the "power of contradiction" who releases forces to overcome the presently existing.119 However, his freedom in transcendence is not adequately expressed here either since it seems that this is something he must do in order to establish his own deity. This theme will be taken up again later.

Another problem which arises from Pannenberg's notion
of creation-as-unification from the future is its apparent incompatibility with the actual observable course of events in the world. It seems to be dependent on a long-discredited and naively optimistic view of inevitable progress rooted in the cosmic optimism of Hegel and the nineteenth-century philosophers who attempted to combine Hegelian philosophy with Darwinian evolutionism (e.g., Alexander, Bergson, Drummond, and much later, Teilhard de Chardin). On the biological level, viewed from a macrocosmic perspective of millions of years, it may be empirically true that disorder has tended teleologically toward greater order and complexity. E. R. Tennant has presented a profound and cogent argument for the existence of God based on the scientific evidence for such progress in nature. However, if Pannenberg's view of creation as stemming from the future is true, not only biological reality, but social reality ought to display some general movement from chaos and contradiction toward unity. Can an account of universal history be given today which could demonstrate such a tendency? Provided such is possible at all, would it not rather show a general drift toward chaos and social disorder in the light of twentieth-century events? It seems to this writer that such an optimistic universal history of the dialectical progress of Absolute reality as was once given by Hegel in his Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte could not be possible today. The unity of the future which is supposed to be the ground of being is less evident in what feeble unities may be
discovered today than one hundred years ago. This would seem to indicate the "pull of the future" is not creation, but its opposite. This writer's intention is not to play Schopenhauer to Pannenberg's Hegel, but only to point out that it is highly ambiguous whether the future of world history holds greater order and unity or disorder and chaos.

It was noted earlier that in spite of elements in Pannenberg's doctrine of God's futurity which would seem to bring it into relation with the emphasis on "becoming" in Whitehead's process theism, he emphasizes the eternality of God in a way which is incompatible with that philosophy. While it is true, he says, that time belongs to the very essence of God and what the future of God will be is not yet decided, when the future arrives it will be seen that God was always who he is in his powerful futurity. Thus, in distinction from all views of God which would bring him unequivocally within the temporal process, Pannenberg looks to the "futurity" of God to provide a new model for understanding God's eternity.

Pannenberg sees "eternity" understood as "futurity" as fundamentally different from traditional conceptions of eternity which have been dominant in Christian theism and as better able to express God's relation to the world as it is reflected in Jesus' ministry and message. The futurity of God, he says, implies his eternity:

But it is one thing to conceive eternity as timelessness or as the endless endurance of something that existed since the beginning of time, and quite another
to think of it as the power of the future over every present.\textsuperscript{121}

He wishes to reject the idea of God's "timelessness" and yet preserve a concept of his eternity by developing the notion that the future is powerful in relation to each past and present moment. While it is true that Jesus' identification of God's being with his rule requires recognition of futurity as the special mode of God's transcendent being, he says, this does not involve any "removal" of God to the distant future, for as the future of every present, God is immediately present to it:

\dots now the futurity of God in the message of Jesus does not mean that God is not yet present. Rather, as the coming one he determines the present, and we may indeed say that just so the futurity of God has also already determined every present which is for us already past.\textsuperscript{122}

As already seen, this "determining power" of the future is its creative power as well. Now Pannenberg wishes to show that the future is "eternal" in this creative function in that it is always confronting what presently exists with its true determination. Thus as future, God is not absent.

The model of eternity based on futurity is not the same as that based on the timelessness of the world-ground, Pannenberg argues. The timelessness of God was not derived from the biblical picture of God as the one who acts powerfully in history, but from the Platonic antipathy toward change and becoming in reality. Since time could not be conceived apart from the separation of past, present and future, God as the unchanging world-ground could have no relations
with it without being changed by it. This timelessness of God entered into Christian theology through both the Platonic and neo-Platonic strands of tradition (Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius) and through the Aristotelian ontology of medieval scholasticism (Thomas Aquinas). Pannenberg argues that the result has been a forced separation of God from historical reality so that it became impossible to take seriously the biblical statements and assertions regarding God's historical activity. Timelessness and immutability, he says, have repeatedly forced the concept of God into an unbridgeable distance from the contingent changes of historical reality in which the salvation of men is decided, and the assertions of faith regarding God's historical acts of salvation were purchased only at the expense of violating the strict sense of these attributes.123

Pannenberg's discomfort with the idea of God's timelessness and the sheer immutability implied in it is certainly shared by many contemporary Christian theists. It has been widely recognized that severe logical difficulties plague any attempt to combine the idea of a God who acts in history with absolute timelessness in the sense of indifference to time. This whole question is one of the thorniest in philosophical theology and cannot be discussed in detail here. However, it is helpful to point out that Pannenberg is not alone in his rejection of the interpretation of God's eternity as timelessness. Such diverse Christian thinkers as Nelson Pike, Karl Barth, Oscar Cullmann and Paul Tillich also reject it from their doctrines of God as incompatible with the Christian concept of God as living.124 These
theologians present alternative interpretations of God's eternity which focus on a more positive assessment of time than was possible for Greek-inspired ontology. This is what Pannenberg also wishes to do and he believes that the idea of eternity as powerful futurity provides the best conceptuality for synthesizing time and eternity.

The future, Pannenberg claims, provides an understanding of eternity which, unlike the Greek concept of an everlasting present without change, does not omit the temporal dynamics from the idea of eternity.\textsuperscript{125} "The God of the coming Kingdom must be called eternal because he is not only the future of our present but has been also the future of every past age."\textsuperscript{126} The futurity of God implies his eternity because he is the one future which has always been and always is the single future immediately confronting every moment of temporal reality in hope and anticipation. Because it is the powerful future which determines every present in its depth, the future is not to be seen simply as the other "end" of a spatially-conceived time spectrum. For Pannenberg, such spatial notions of time (temporal atomism) are part of the problem of understanding eternity as futurity. For him, time is not merely "fleetingness" of moments, but also duration. There is a "temporal thickness" inherent in time in which past, present and future "overlap" and the future itself is the power of this dynamic interpenetration of the "times."\textsuperscript{127}

For the absolute future, Pannenberg avers, there is
a "compresence" of every past in a single, unified present. As the absolute future, God is "gleichzeitig" or equally present to all times—not in the static sense of mere extension through time, but in the dynamic sense of powerful lordship over time. There is no "time" which is further removed from God's power than another, because all are immediately present to him.

How does this conception differ from the traditional idea of God's relation to time as that of the eternal Now? According to Boethius and many Christian thinkers following him, God experiences the past, present and future of time as a non-temporal, absolute "present" or "eternal Now." Nelson Pike showed that Boethius' and Anselm's concept reduces logically to timelessness. In fact, Boethius himself believed that he was faithfully interpreting Plato's idea of eternity with his concept of God as existing in a totally comprehensive "Now" without extension or location in time. At times it seems that Pannenborg is saying something similar to this, although it would appear to contradict his commitment to the reality of time even for God. He would correct Boethius, however, by saying that God's Gleichzeitigkeit does not mean that God does not experience the past as past. Rather, what is separated as past, present and future in the fleetingness of time as experienced by finite beings is not separated for God in his powerful futurity, but is com-present in his experience in the sense that no "time" is outside his experience and determining influence. As absolute future,
he has no future beyond himself, and every past is a "past" of which he is and was its immediate future. What Pannenberg believes this view achieves is a notion of eternity which does not demolish time and which preserves the reality of change, even for God. "Eternity [thus interpreted as absolute futurity] is not the antithesis of change."\textsuperscript{131} It is, however, the healing of the divisions separating past, present and future, not in a timeless "Now," but in the eschaton. "The eschaton is eternity in the fullest sense, and this is the mode of God's being in the coming Kingdom."\textsuperscript{132}

There is something paradoxical about Pannenberg's concept of eternity as futurity. On the one hand, it is intended to make room for change and becoming in God himself, and on the other to preserve God's sovereign transcendence over the temporal sequence as the one who is always powerfully present. This apparent paradox comes to expression in the statement partially quoted earlier in relation to Pannenberg's disagreement with Whitehead:

It is true that, from the viewpoint of our finite present, the future is not yet decided. Therefore, the movement of time contributes to deciding what the definite truth is going to be, also with regard to the essence of God. But—and here is the difference from Whitehead—what turns out to be true in the future will then be evident as having been true all along. This applies to God as well as to every finite reality. God was present in every past moment as the one who he is in his futurity. He was in the past the same one he will manifest himself to be in the future.\textsuperscript{133}

What is missing in Whitehead's account of God, Pannenberg says, is his eternity. "A future without eternity
dwindles away in meaningless change...."134 Pannenberg wishes strongly to reaffirm the absoluteness of God against any mode of thinking which would reduce him to sheer relativity and becoming. In this he is to be commended and his idea of God's powerful futurity recognized as a model of divine transcendence worth of serious consideration. However, in light of his almost vehement rejection of traditional theism, one must take just as seriously the other side of his affirmation of God's eternity which brings him back to something similar to process theology.135

In spite of his assertion of the ontological priority of eternity as absolute futurity, Pannenberg equally avers that eternity is not what it will be independently of the events which time brings forth. "The essence of God, though the same from eternity, has a history in time."136 This brief sentence expresses succinctly the doctrine of God which Pannenberg seeks to develop through the category of futurity. The com-presence of time in the absolute future of God and the powerful presence of the future to every time must not be interpreted, he says, in the sense that what will be true in the eternity of God is totally independent of what happens in the process of time and whether it ends in the Kingdom of God. Being-as-future is not timeless, but is dependent on the process of time.137 Temporal history, he avers, is of decisive importance for God himself.138 God's deity is dependent on history ending in his Kingdom being revealed:

The future revelation of the rule of God does not
only reveal what is already decided even without this happening. It rather finally decides for the first time that from eternity God was the all-determining reality.\textsuperscript{139}

Otherwise, freedom and contingency would be impossible to conceive, and the time and history in which human decision and responsibility take place would be emptied of all reality. The only conclusion it is possible to draw from this is that eternity is somehow dependent upon time as well as vice versa.

Pannenberg admits that this results in a "paradox" of present and future as the fundamental interdependence of time and eternity.\textsuperscript{140} What turns out to be true in the future, including the deity of God himself, will then be seen as having been true all along. In its powerful occurrence, the future eschaton establishes itself \textit{retroactively} as the truth and depth of all reality. Indeed, the future truth of God's rule, though yet awaiting final establishment, is already present in a "hidden" way.\textsuperscript{141} In the anticipatory power of the presence of the future, "the presence of eternity announces itself in time,"\textsuperscript{142} though in a way "hidden" to everyday observation. As will be seen in the next chapter, Pannenberg considers Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit present in the church to be just such "hidden" but comprehensible appearances of eternity in time. Yet, he adds, what is true in the future and present in anticipatory concealment depends on how history goes: "What is true in God's eternity is decided with retrospective validity only from the perspective of
what occurs temporally with the import of the ultimate.\textsuperscript{143}

This paradox rests on an "overlapping" or "interweaving" (Verschränkung) of future and present which is an attempt to overcome the Platonic antithesis of timeless eternity and temporal becoming.\textsuperscript{144} The impression of a mutual interdependence, or causal reciprocity, between God's eternal essence and the temporal flow of history can hardly be escaped, in spite of Pannenberg's desire to emphasize God's freedom and transcendence. Eternity, in this conceptuality, becomes dependent upon time, and history, insofar as it is still incomplete, forms a limit to God's own deity. Pannenberg resists all talk of an "incomplete" God, but there is that in his theology which inexorably leads to the conclusion that God cannot fulfill, realize or complete himself without history. If God's own deity and essence, however strongly identified with eternity, are even partly dependent on the processes of history, his absolute freedom vis-a-vis the world, which was earlier identified as a fundamental aspect of his transcendence from a Christian point of view, is brought into question. That this is a serious problem for Pannenberg's theology will be demonstrated in greater detail in the final chapter where it will be argued that his view of God is decidedly "panentheistic." The point here is simply to show that in spite of the "paradox" of future and present, time and eternity, by which he attempts to do justice equally to God's transcendent being and temporal becoming, the shadow of divine dependence on the world, or
history, cannot be dismissed.

3. God and Paradox

As will be apparent throughout this study of Pannenberg's doctrine of God, the "paradoxical interweaving" of time and eternity, as present and future, is a major motif of his theology. The future, as the locus of the coincidence of time and eternity, is "zeitubergreifende" (time-overlapping), and is thus not simply absent from the uncertain flow of temporal history. It actually forms the depth dimension of present time and can become proleptically present beforehand, although in "hidden" ways. This aspect of the future is not so radically different from Barth's concept of God's "supra-temporality," as already noted. For Barth, as for Pannenberg, God's eternity is not anti-temporal, but is "healed time" in which past, present and future are held together and not allowed to fall into the separation they have for finite beings. When Pannenberg affirms the other side of the paradox, however, he loses all touch with Barth and comes close to Whitehead or even Teilhard. The future, though "eternal," has a history in time in which it is dependent for its ultimate outcome on the contingent decisions and actions of finite, temporal entities. The vision becomes reversed here, and instead of the future "determining" the present, the past and present are endowed with the responsibility of "filling up" eternity. The tension between the two poles of this paradox is so severe as
to threaten to fall into sheer contradiction. Some explanation of Pannenberg's view of the role of paradox in theology is necessary before proceeding since this paradox is so fundamental to his whole doctrine of God's relation to the world.

It may seem strange to find Pannenberg affirming a paradox at the center of his theological system. He is not noted for retreating into mystery or paradox to "escape" problems in theology. It is in fact just such "retreat" which he finds so damaging in the "dialectical" theologians of the Barthian tradition. He has repeatedly called for a rational approach to theology which does not rely on special pleading based on private insights or decisions of faith for establishing truth claims. In the tradition of Hegel, Pannenberg has attempted to bring together, as far as possible, faith and reason, Christian belief and philosophical truth.

How does it happen, then, that he invokes paradox at this crucial point in his theology? While he is highly critical of the "irrationalism" which he sees as characteristic of much of contemporary Protestant theology, he does not espouse a sheer rationalism which would attempt to reduce every doctrine to a syllogism. While he does not revel in theological absurdity or approve a hasty retreat into the privacy of faith or the security of authority in theology, neither does he assume that one can probe the mysteries of the absolute without encountering the limits of finite
thought and expression. When these limits are reached what results is paradox and "doxological" speech.

In his seminal work on Christology, Jesus—God and Man, Pannenberg admits that the concept of "prolepsis" of the future, which plays such a major role in his theology, is itself paradoxical.\textsuperscript{147} Such paradoxical expressions, he says, "can be tolerated only when one perceives the necessity of their emergence from the circumstances of the proleptic appearance of the eschaton...."\textsuperscript{148} "Paradox" in this sense, he cautions, does not mean sheer, irreducible contradiction:

The word "paradox" does not mean here as in Kierkegaard, a contradiction that thought cannot supersede. The assumption of such a contradiction misunderstands the nature of thought, which transcends a contradiction in the act of establishing that the contradiction exists. Paradox means something that is contrary to appearance (doxa), by exceeding its capacity.\textsuperscript{149}

Thus, to speak of the end of everything as already present is contrary to the apparent literal sense.\textsuperscript{150} "Nevertheless, this way of speaking is justified, and only then is it meaningful."\textsuperscript{151}

Paradox, then is not an absolute and final contradiction in the sense of an antinomy of thought or an absurdity. Rather, it is an apparent contradiction which is made necessary by the processes of thought themselves and which is open toward future reconciliation of the apparently conflicting elements. An "absolutely not synthesizable paradox," Pannenberg concludes, must be judged as meaningless.
There must be a "logical mediation" of the logical contradiction residing in the paradoxical assertion itself in order for it to be justified.\textsuperscript{152} Such a logical mediation may be seen in the necessity of the paradoxical assertion itself. That is, in showing why theology arrives at this apparently contradictory statement which is at the same time true, the resolution of the tension is already anticipated. As long as the "why" of the necessity of the assertion is clear, then the anticipation of the ultimate resolution of the contradiction in a hidden unity is already present.\textsuperscript{153}

Thus,

Even if this hidden unity in and behind the contradiction can never be expressed exhaustively and conclusively, neither does it remain even logically a mere contradiction...to the extent that a justification is sought for the fact and the reason that in the matter under consideration a paradoxical assertion is unavoidable and meaningful.\textsuperscript{154}

For Pannenberg, then, there is no disgrace or scandal in theological paradoxes so long as they are not considered final, or as assertions of the irrationality of theology itself. In fact, the claim to absolute transcendence of all paradoxes in an investigation of ultimate realities would not be evidence of a supreme rationality, but of the hybris of finitude which cannot accept being finite. While paradox must not be a quick and easy shelter for theology, it must be allowed its proper place. This understanding of the role of paradox in theology is consistent with that of Paul Tillich. In his \textit{Systematic Theology} Tillich allows for the necessity of paradox in theological dialectics
and argues that it in no way violates theology's logical rationality. The "logic" appropriate to the infinite is not the static, formal logic of Aristotelian ontology, but dialectical logic which "follows the movement of thought or the movement of reality through yes and no, but...describes it in logically correct terms." The reality and activity of God, Tillich says, transcends, but does not destroy, finite reason:

Paradox points to the fact that in God's acting finite reason is superseded but not annihilated; it expresses this fact in terms which are not logically contradictory but which are supposed to point beyond the realm in which finite reason is applicable.

Paradox, then, does not mean sheer contradiction but something which is "against the opinion" of finite reason. For Tillich, as for Pannenberg, paradox has its logical place in theology.

Where Pannenberg goes beyond Tillich is in asserting that a "proper" paradox is one which always anticipates its resolution in the future. Given sufficient time and the right insights and new knowledge, even the most intractable paradox might be overcome by discovering the key to its hidden unity. To borrow a somewhat lame analogy from natural science, light must be treated as both particles and waves because it displays characteristics of both—that is, it "appears" to be both. This is presently a paradox, but it is expected that one day it will be resolved. Likewise, in investigating the nature of God in relation to the world,
Pannenberg has found it necessary to say that the future is the hidden essence of things already, but is still future, and that God's essence is "eternal" but has a history in time. He believes that new insights into the nature of time and space may someday throw light on this apparently contradictory assertion. In this regard he suggests that the solution may lie in a "distortion of the usual form of chronological sequence in analogy to the curvature of space according to the theory of relativity."^{159} Such a suggestion may seem fanciful, but it serves to show that he does not mean that the "paradox of present and future" is a dead-end of thought, but is the best model, given present limitations of knowledge, for understanding the relationship between God and the world of time.

Pannenberg's confidence in the soundness of this paradox in his rational theology appears to rest on a faith in the eventual resolution of all necessary contradictory truths in a higher synthesis. The conflict between the two poles will be aufgehoben in a higher unity which will supersede and at the same time preserve the truth of both. Contradiction, or paradox, is then to be seen with Hegel as a natural and necessary aspect of the finite stage of reality, but only as the form of "appearance" of ultimate truth in incomplete history.^{160} This trust in future synthesis seems to rest on the same optimistic belief in unity and progress which was noted earlier as underlying Pannenberg's doctrine of creation from the future. It also rests on the belief
that what is necessary for thought is necessary for reality also. Pannenberg's entire doctrine of God's futurity would seem to rest on the confidence that the contrarieties in it will eventually be sublated (aufgehoben) in the coincidence of time and eternity, thought and being, in the eschaton. In E. Gilson's apt phrase about Hegel, however, "Abstract contradiction is none the less abstract for having been 'sublated'."
Endnotes to Chapter II


2. Ibid., pp. 246-248.


8. Some Hegel interpreters have debated whether he intended to defend the truth of the Christian faith. Throughout his book *Hegel's Concept of God*, Quentin Lauer argues that he did.


13. Ibid., p. 63.
17 Ibid., pp. 105ff.  
18 Ibid., pp. 108ff.
19 Ibid., p. 108; and Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Vom Nutzen der Eschatologie für die christliche Theologie," *Kerygma und Dogma*, 25 (1979), 94-95.
21 Ibid., p. 109.  
22 Ibid., p. 110.
23 Ibid., p. 140.
25 Ibid., p. 191.  
26 Ibid.  
27 Ibid., p. 196.
29 Ibid.
30 Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, p. 56.
40 Ibid., p. 237.
Ernst Eloch, Das Princip Hoffnung (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1959).

Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:237; and Theology and the Kingdom of God, pp. 51-71.

Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:238. 

Ibid., p. 241.

Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 56.

Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:239. 

Ibid.

Ibid., pp. 239-240. 

Ibid., p. 241.

Ibid., p. 242.


Barth, Doctrine of God, CD 2/1, pp. 629ff.

Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 61: "God in his very being is the future of the world."

Ibid., p. 52. 

Ibid. 

Ibid., p. 54.

Ibid., p. 68.


Ibid., p. 93. 

Ibid., p. 91.

Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 55.

Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:119-183.
67 Ibid., p. 139. 68 Ibid., pp. 181-182.
69 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 55.
70 Ibid. 71 Ibid.
72 God's rule in the world involving self-limitation for the sake of creaturely freedom is a major motif in the theology of Emil Brunner. See Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God, passim.
73 The "powerlessness" of God is a theme of the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and has recently been developed further by several European theologians including Hendrikus Berkhof, Christian Faith, trans., Sierd Woudstra (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979).
74 "Only the god who proves himself master over all is true" (Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 55).
75 Ibid. 76 Ibid.
77 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:242.
79 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:242. Pannenberg puts this in the form of a question. However, in view of the context, it is clear he accepts this as a principle.
80 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 1:182-210 ("The Conception of Religion").
81 Lauer, pp. 137ff. and 312ff.
82 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:240.
83 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 56.
84 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:242.
85 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 67.
86 On Whitehead's view of God's "consequent nature" see: Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 529ff. "Neither God, nor the world, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the world, is the instrument of novelty
for the other. In every respect God and the world move conversely to each other in respect to their process. ... The consequent nature of God is the fulfillment of his experience by his reception of the multiple freedom of actuality into the harmony of his own actualization" (Process and Reality, pp. 529-530).

87 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 62.
88 Ibid., pp. 62-63.
89 Ibid., p. 62.

91 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 63.
92 Ibid. 93 Ibid., p. 62.
94 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:180ff.
95 Ibid., p. 243. 96 Ibid. 97 Ibid.
98 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 60.
99 In his article on the appropriation of the (Greek) philosophical idea of God as a dogmatic problem in early Christian theology, Pannenberg discusses creatio ex nihilo as a major breakthrough in early Christian thought. However, he does not endorse it or make it a principle of his own doctrine of creation. See Basic Questions, 2:142ff.

100 Ibid., p. 125.

102 Gilkey, p. 114. 103 Ibid.
104 Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God, p. 60.
105 Ibid., p. 61.
106 Ibid., p. 60. Also: "The creativity of genuine love is the power of the future overcoming present and past. Again, we see love as synthesis, and reconciliation as a constitutive aspect of creation" (ibid., p. 65).
107 Ibid.


109 Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, p. 66.

110 Ibid., p. 67.


112 Ibid.

113 Ernst Bloch, *Zur Ontologie des Noch-Nichts Seins* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1961), p. 1628. "The real genesis is not at the beginning, but at the end" (ibid.).


115 Quoted by Pannenberg in "A Liberal Logos Christology," p. 147.

116 Gilkey, p. 52.


118 Ibid., pp. 84ff.


121 Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, 2:244.


124 Nelson Pike, *God and Timelessness* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970). This is an analysis of the concept of divine timelessness from a linguistic point of view. The author argues quite cogently that it is a logically fallacious concept if God is understood as in any way active in history. Also: Barth, *The Doctrine of God*, "The theological concept of eternity must be set free from the Babylonian captivity of an abstract opposite to the concept of time"
(p. 611). Also: Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, trans., F. V. Filson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950); and Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, "Eternity is neither timelessness nor the endlessness of time... rather it means the power of embracing all periods of time. ... Eternity is the transcendent unity of the dissected moments of... time" (1:274). Although Tillich does not expressly identify God as the power of the future, he seems to consider the future to have the power to transform the past: "The potentialities which will become actual in the future determine not only the future but also the past. The past becomes something different through everything new which happens" (1:276).


126 Ibid., p. 62.

127 Pannenberg's concept of time is heavily indebted to the phenomenologies of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Bergson. An excellent study of the concept of the "coinherence of past, present and future" in these and other Western philosophers is contained in H. Ganse Little, *Decision and Responsibility: A Wrinkle in Time* (Tallahasee: American Academy of Religion, 1974). Utilizing the insights of these philosophers, Little attempts to map the "anatomy of time" on the basis of a phenomenology of the structure of historicity which belongs to all human consciousness and activity. In contrast to what Heidegger calls the "vulgar conception of time" Little finds human existence to be characterized by the peculiar overlapping of past, present and future. Time, he says, must not be seen as a series of "external and reified instances placed linearly end to end. In such a form, the temporalization process would stand as punctiliar and flat, having no density, horizon or depth" (p. 33). Human decision and responsibility clearly indicate an "overlapping of the horizons of lived temporality" in which the "future-reaching-into-the-present-becoming-past" is the structural basis of the thrust of decision-for (p. 63). In distinction from Pannenberg, however, Little finds the past as having as much significance for the present as the future. The present is always pregnant with a past also.


130 Pike, p. 15.
Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, p. 63.

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Ibid., p. 64.  
Ibid., pp. 62-63.


Ibid., p. 174.


Ibid.

See the article "Insight and Faith" in Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, 2:28-45.


Ibid.  
Ibid.  
Ibid.  
Ibid.

Ibid., footnote 97.  
Ibid., p. 158.

Ibid.  
Tillich, 1:56ff.  
Ibid.

Ibid., p. 57.  
Ibid.


Grisez, pp. 193ff.  
Gilson, *Being*, p. 147.
CHAPTER III
GOD AND JESUS: THE BASIS OF TRIUNITY

The fundamental structure of Pannenberg's doctrine of God's historical being has already emerged in the discussion of the preceding chapter. Based on Jesus' message of the coming Kingdom of God he announced a "fundamental revision in theism" in which God is no longer to be conceived on the model of things which already exist, but is to be understood as the "power of the future." This is a conception of God's transcendence which he believes allows for both "being" and "becoming" in God. Some of the problems of this idea of God's transcendence, from a Christian theistic point of view, were noted in the last chapter, especially the facts that it fails sufficiently to account for God's true freedom vis-a-vis the world and it depends heavily on a paradox in order to explain God's "eternity" and avoid falling into sheer becoming. The relation of God to the world in this theology has been seen as temporally structured. The "paradoxical interweaving" of future and present implied in the notions of powerful futurity, prolepsis, anticipation and contingency has been shown to be a fundamental motif for Pannenberg's revisionist theism which ineluctably involves a certain reciprocal relation between God and the world. It was also seen that Pannenberg's idea of the "becoming" of
God in relation to the world is conceived more along the lines of Hegel's dialectical process than Whitehead's evolutionary model.

These conclusions were reached without explicit reference to Pannenberg's Christology or doctrine of the Trinity. They are implications of his eschatological theism itself. However, the temporal relation of God to the world becomes clearer in his view of Jesus' relation to God and the doctrine of God's triunity derived from it which is for him the key conceptuality for understanding God as "historical" in relation to the world. In this chapter and the next, an attempt will be made to show that both of these doctrines reflect the same paradox noted in the first two chapters and that they infer a dependence of God on the world which is incompatible with the Christian idea of God's free and gracious lordship over creation. The conclusion to be reached in these chapters is that although Pannenberg attempts to incorporate these traditional Christian themes into his eschatological theism, the result is a distortion of both which violates their traditional Christian forms. Most importantly, it will be shown that the interdependence between God and the world implied in his formulation of these doctrines involves an identification of God's innertrinitarian life with the history of the world such that God would not be Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one being apart from the processes of salvation-history. Once these conclusions are reached, if they are correct interpretations of his
theology, the thesis that Pannenberg's eschatological theism includes the world in God's own being as a constitutive moment will be largely proven.

Pannenberg has devoted a large part of his theological career to research and writing on the person of Christ. His first major work to be published was *Grundzüge der Christologie* (1964) which was translated as *Jesus--God and Man*.¹ This volume has become a classic of mid-twentieth century Christology and it is by it that Pannenberg is best known. In this work he attempts to explicate a view of the person of Jesus Christ based on eschatological ontology which will be a faithful reinterpretation of the "original" Christian belief in Jesus as God's decisive act of self-revelation in history. His analysis of the history and development of Christology is among the best to be found, and his critique of various Christological models is eminently helpful. As will be seen, the strong affirmation of Jesus' ontological divinity distinguishes this work from most recent Christologies which tend to stress Jesus' "functional" or existential divinity. Pannenberg rejects an exclusively soteriological approach, arguing that only if Jesus is somehow "divine" can he save and that it is wrong to base Jesus' divinity on his saving quality.²

The "futurity of God" plays a central role in this reconceptualization of the doctrine of Jesus' divinity, and one of the aims of this chapter will be to point out this feature and attempt to discover what idea of God is involved
in it. That is, what does the "divinity" of Jesus, as understood by Pannenberg, mean for God himself? What view of God's relation to the world is implied in it?

1. Jesus as God's Self-Revelation

According to Pannenberg, a proper Christology must begin "from below." That is, in order to discover the truth about Jesus and his significance one must not begin by presupposing the incarnation of God in him and then attempt to explain how he was at once both God and man. That, he says, was the mistake of most incarnational Christologies of the past. He states the difference between these two approaches by saying that Christology "from above" places at the beginning and center of reflection about Jesus the concept of incarnation and proceeds to a discussion of Jesus' historical, human actuality. A Christology "from below," on the other hand, begins with the historical, human actuality of Jesus and attempts to discover from his message and fate what relation, if any, he had to God.³

The method of doing Christology "from above" came into theology through the second-century Apologists and was determinative for the further history of Christology, especially in the Alexandrian school. The method "from below" was the more primitive approach which led the first-century Christians to confess faith in Jesus as the "Son of God," Pannenberg argues.⁴ The approach from above has been championed in recent theology above all by Karl Barth, in that
he presupposed the doctrine of the Trinity and saw the basic problem of Christology as explaining how the Second Person of the eternal Trinity (the "Logos") assumed human nature.

Pannenberg presents three reasons why the approach from above is not feasible for Christology today. First, such an approach presupposes Jesus' divinity instead of showing how Jesus' appearance in history led to recognition of his divinity. Second, such a method fails to account for the "determinative significance inherent in the distinctive features of the real, historical man, Jesus of Nazareth." That is, no "determinative significance" can accrue to the historical particularity of Jesus in this approach because it finds its starting point in the divine Logos in him, not in his concrete humanity. The contingent, historical and human reality of Jesus is then "swallowed up" in his divinity. It should be noted that this particular criticism of Christology from above applies not only to a method, but seems to be aimed at any "incarnational" Christology whatever. Third, such a Christology, Pannenberg avers, ignores the problem of historical relativity. It is impossible for anyone to "leap" out of his own historically conditioned situation and view from God's perspective the way of God's Son into the world. Only by beginning with the historical man Jesus can the question of his divinity find an answer for man who is locked in history.

What Pannenberg seems to require with this method "from below" is that Jesus' uniqueness, his "divinity," be
discernible in some aspect of his concrete, historical hu-
manity. This would presuppose, however, that history and
humanity as such be open to the divine. Certain of Pannen-
berg's critics have correctly pointed out the necessary con-
fusion of "below" and "above" required by this method and
have argued that there really is no way to achieve a full
doctrine of Jesus' divinity based strictly on his humanity
unless the divinity can somehow be located in the humanity.
The methods from below and above mutually complement and
presuppose rather than exclude one another. 8

Pannenberg discovers the basis and beginning of
Christology in the insight, based on Jesus' human activity
and fate, that in him God revealed himself in a unique and
unsurpassable way. 9 This is not something which can be
proven by a "personal encounter" with Christ today, or by
appeal to the authority of creeds or confessions, but only
by investigation of the nature of Jesus' history. If it is
shown that God has revealed himself in this event of Jesus
Christ, Pannenberg argues, the conclusion of his special
relationship with God will be substantially proven. For all
his divergence from Barth, Pannenberg gives him credit for
having recognized that the concept of "self-revelation" is
the key to the divinity of Jesus Christ. "The demonstration
of the connection of Jesus' divinity with the concept of
revelation constitutes one of Barth's greatest theological
contributions." 10 The link between "self-revelation" and
"divinity" lies in the modern recognition, largely derived
from Barth, but going back to Hegel, that "revelation" is not primarily communication of truths, but is essentially God's "self-disclosure." Although it has yet to be shown whether Jesus is and was God's self-revelation in this sense, Pannenberg argues that whatever medium would be the vehicle of such self-disclosure would belong to God's own essence and would thereby be "divine." This follows from an analysis of the phenomenon of "self-revelation" itself. First, as Barth showed, the concept of self-revelation includes the fact that there can be only one such revelation. A plurality of them would abrogate the character of "self-disclosure" since if God reveals himself, such an event is by definition unsurpassable and unique. There may be other manifestations of a partial nature, but not more than one "self-disclosure." 

This argument would seem to be a particularly debatable one. Why could not God "reveal" some aspect or truth of himself at one time and another at another time? The argument arbitrarily rules out partial, progressive divine revelation, presupposing that a self-disclosure of God must be full and complete, something not evidently contained in the concept itself. Pannenberg's acceptance of this axiom seems to be based largely on his view of revelation-as-history in which he argues that only at the end of history, when universal history is complete, is God fully revealed. Thus, God's "self" is something determined as future in relation to the partial stages of history which can at best
only manifest God in partial and broken ways. Pannenberg relates this eschatological concept of revelation-as-universal-history to the Old Testament apocalyptic expectations which saw the knowledge of Yahweh as the goal and purpose of God's activity throughout history:

The more all happenings were perceived in Israel as a single great historical unity, the more the full knowledge of Yahweh became an event that would be possible only at the end of all happenings. Yahweh would complete the entire course of world events, world history, in order that man might thereby know his divinity. Only at the end of history is he ultimately revealed from his deeds as the one God who accomplishes everything.14

For Pannenberg, then, "self-revelation" is exclusively eschatological and therefore exclusively singular. If it were not singular, then there would be a possible history beyond the event of God's powerful unification of all things and God would not yet be the all-determining reality since his lordship and deity would not yet be established and revealed. "Self-revelation" is for Pannenberg, then, bound up with the accomplishment of God's deity as something future.

The result of these considerations is that whatever would be God's self-revelation in history would be the presence proleptically of God's future deity and lordship. Only to the extent that it brings the end of all things into the present could an event be God's unique, singular self-revelation.15 Furthermore, whatever event could be determined as this proleptic happening of the ultimate end of history would be God's self-revelation and therefore "divine."
What would that mean for such an event? Pannenberg argues that contained in the notion of "self-revelation" is the idea that the revealer and what is revealed are identical. "God is as much the subject, the author of his self-revelation as he is its content."\textsuperscript{16} This means, he says, that whatever would be the medium, the vehicle of God's self-revelation would have to belong to the essence of God himself and this means it could not be something "alien" to God. "That happens when the distinction of the revealing medium from God himself disappears with the coming of a more precise understanding."\textsuperscript{17} This is a particularly revealing statement in relation to Pannenberg's over-all ontology and doctrine of God. It will be remembered that the future is the locus of the "totality of reality" as also, and by consequence, of the power that unifies reality into a totality. Now Pannenberg has affirmed that the revelation of God's "glory," his "self-revelation," takes place eschatologically in this event of the completion of his acts in history. Does this mean, then, that God and the "totality of reality" which reveals him are identical? In any case, he affirms somewhat arbitrarily that whatever is the "medium" of God's self-revelation, present or future, is no longer "distinct from God." Also, whatever would be such a medium in history would necessarily have to be an anticipation or prolepsis of the future as a unique pre-appearance of the totality of reality.

It is just as such a medium of God's singular, unique
self-revelation that Pannenberg defines Jesus' significance as more than mere man. If Jesus can be so understood, he argues, then this provides a model for understanding his divinity which overcomes the dichotomy between the presence of God in him as "mere appearance" (functional) and as "substantial" (ontological). It unites functional and essential unity with God, thus doing justice to the concerns of the traditional, patristic idea of Jesus' divinity and to the modern idea of Jesus as the appearance of God "for us," neither of which is adequate when taken alone. The question which arises, however, is whether this model of "revelational presence" can adequately express the central Christian idea of incarnation, or whether it expresses a fundamentally different model of Jesus' relation to God, even if it still contains a notion of "substantial" union with God.

All the foregoing discussion presupposes that Jesus can be understood as the unique, singular self-revelation of God and therefore as in this sense divine. This, however, is what is debatable for a Christology from below and must be demonstrated and not assumed. Can Jesus of Nazareth be understood as God's self-revelation in the sense delineated above? Pannenberg considers several different bases for such a claim. Traditionally, Jesus' claims to authority have been appealed to to support it. He rejects this as too ambiguous to decide the question. Jesus' claim to be the Son of Man and even his claim to be the object of decision for men's eschatological fate remained questionable during
Jesus' lifetime and became especially so in his death. All of his claims, Pannenberg avers, required confirmation from beyond himself. Jesus so tied his own message and personal mission to the eschatological event of God's reign that only in and through the occurrence of that event could his claims be verified. In and of themselves, neither his prophetic claims, nor his life of total dedication to the Kingdom of God could justify calling him God's self-revelation. At best they "anticipated" a future confirmation by God.

Pannenberg does not wish cavalierly to dismiss Jesus' earthly life and works as unimportant for his divinity, as will be seen. However, it would seem that based on his eschatological ontology he would have to take the position he does: namely, that Jesus' person and activity remained ambiguous during his life-time. This is because the final decision about any historical event is never given until the eschaton. Whether Jesus was indeed the one sent from God and in whom God was present in self-revealing activity awaited future proof in order to be "true." Is this indeed the case, apart from the strictures of a prior ontological framework that forces it to be the case? Did Jesus understand himself in this manner? Whatever sayings or deeds of Jesus one might mention that would seem to contradict it would be dismissed by Pannenberg as themselves mere anticipations of a future confirmation. It is clear, however, that certain strands of the gospel tradition understood Jesus' earthly life and activity as already confirmed by God.
in events preceding his birth and ministry. Of course, these may be considered legendary or mythical. However, Pannenberg stands against a majority of scholarly opinion in New Testament studies when he adamantly denies that Jesus' claims to authority were understood as already legitimated in and with Jesus' ministry itself. According to him, the whole of Jesus' work remained aimed at a future verification of his claim to authority.

In determining whether Jesus was God's self-revelation, then, Pannenberg says that everything depends on the possible connection between Jesus' claims and a confirmation of them by God. Can some event in his life and fate be understood as such an ultimate confirmation? Pannenberg believes that Jesus' resurrection from the dead does represent such a confirmation and verification and seals Jesus Christ in the whole of his life as belonging to God's essence as his definitive eschatological self-revelation. He places great emphasis on the historicity of Jesus' resurrection and goes to great lengths to establish it as an actual event in world history. It is impossible here even briefly to survey the apologetic he has produced on this subject, let alone the controversy it has aroused. Here it must suffice to show what significance he attaches to this event which happened to Jesus.

If indeed Jesus has been raised from the dead, Pannenberg claims, the significance of this is inherent in the event itself. It requires no revelatory interpretation
or personal encounter with Christ, nor even "faith" in order to discern the meaning of this event. This is, of course, highly controversial and debatable. Contrary to the tendency to allow a distinction between events and their "meanings" in contemporary existentialist hermeneutics (e.g., Bultmann), Pannenberg holds to a theory of "one-event-one-meaning" which is closely related to his view of reality as universal history. For him, every event takes place within a particular "traditions-historical context" within which it takes on its own, inherent meaning.\(^{25}\) In contradiction of the trend of most contemporary theology, Pannenberg says

> It is simply not the case that one can take uninterpreted, established facts and then subsequently ascribe to them this or that meaning as one wishes, so that one could, for instance, also place a revelatory meaning on the list next to other equally possible meanings. On the contrary, events always bring their original meaning along with them from the context to which they have been assigned by their having happened.\(^{26}\)

The tradition-historical context of Jesus' resurrection, he argues, was the Jewish apocalyptic expectation of an imminent end of history in the form of a general resurrection of the dead. It is within this expectation as the horizon of meaning within which it was understood by all who experienced it that the resurrection must be interpreted and was interpreted by the earliest Christians.\(^{27}\) This is shown by the fact that they grasped the resurrection as the basis for faith in Jesus as the Christ: "Why the man Jesus can be the ultimate revelation of God, why in him and only in him God is supposed to have appeared, remains incomprehensible apart from the
horizon of the apocalyptic expectation."28

Pannenberg's defense of the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus and his interpretation of it as the pre-occurrence of the general resurrection stands as one of his most stimulating and controversial theses in contemporary theology. No other theologian has made the resurrection as central to Christian theology as he has. However, it is doubtful whether his argument for the inherent significance of the resurrection can be sustained. For him, the meaning of history is essentially perspicuous to rational determination. The only hinderance to a complete comprehension of history is its incompleteness. Nevertheless, there is always a rational interpretation of events which, though open to possible future falsification, grasps the events' inherent meaning more fully and correctly than any other. In the case of Jesus' resurrection, this rational interpretation is that it was the "beginning" of the general resurrection of the dead which will unite mankind in the eschaton. Contrary to Pannenberg, one may wish to hold that this event, being unique and "supernatural" held a "revelatory moment" which is not immediately perspicuous except to the "eyes of faith." Certainly this is how some of the early Christian tradition understood it since it is reported in the Gospel of Matthew that when Jesus "appeared" to certain disciples after his death "some doubted."29 Pannenberg's assertion of the rational perspicuity of the inherent significance of this event would seem to reflect his own optimism of the adequacy
of human reason to the divine.\textsuperscript{30}

If Jesus has been raised from the dead, as Pannenberg believes history attests, what significance does this have for understanding his person? Pannenberg lists and expounds six points which summarize the most important elements of the "immediate inherent significance of Jesus' resurrection."\textsuperscript{31} Only three of these are directly pertinent to the present discussion. First, if Jesus has been raised, the end of the world has begun. Pannenberg claims that those who experienced it immediately and instinctively interpreted it in this way. The resurrection of the dead was expected at the end of the world. If Jesus, who proclaimed this end event in connection with himself has been raised from the dead, then the end of history has arrived in him. Thus, for Pannenberg, he must now be understood as the appearance of a unique "prolepsis" of the end, since the end is still future.

Second, if Jesus has been raised, this could only mean that God himself has confirmed the pre-Easter activity and claims of Jesus. Only God could produce such an event, and those who experienced it understood that by giving Jesus victory over death he was vindicating him before the world that had condemned him as a blasphemer.

Finally, if Jesus has been raised from the dead and if thereby the end of the world has begun, then God is ultimately revealed in him. This is the key step in Pannenberg's deduction of Jesus' divinity: "Only because the end of the
world is already present in Jesus' resurrection is God himself revealed in him." As already noted, the end of the world as the "totality of reality" is for Pannenberg the locus of God's self-revelation. If that totality of all reality under God's lordship "happens" beforehand, that proleptic event would also be God's self-revelation. Pannenberg attempts to connect the resurrection of Jesus with the still-outstanding totality of reality for modern man through an analysis of the human orientation toward the future as implicit hope for bodily existence. Man today can also understand Jesus' resurrection as God's self-revelation and as the end pre-appearing because he too hopes for and expects a corporate destiny of mankind analogous to the apocalyptic expectation of Jesus' contemporaries.

Jesus' resurrection, then, is the event in his life which can be designated the self-revelation of God in him and recognized as what establishes him, in distinction from other men, as "divine." It is not his birth which shows this, nor his baptism or miracles or death, according to Pannenberg. Only with his resurrection from the dead, as the occurrence of the end of history in him, can it definitely be stated who Jesus was and is in relation to God. As with all reality, then, Jesus' life is illumined from the end "backwards." What and who Jesus was in relation to God during his earthly way was only determined by its end.

The significance of Jesus' resurrection, as delineated above, raises the question of Jesus' relationship to
God—his divinity—during his pre-Easter life. If Jesus is God's self-revelation only through his resurrection, was his unity with God only established at the end of his life? Does this mean, then, that Jesus was "adopted" by God at his resurrection so that from then on he was divine? These are crucial questions for Pannenberg's Christology and ones with which he wrestles strenuously. For him, the clue to recognizing Jesus as God's unique and decisive eschatological self-revelation during all of his existence lies in the nature of futurity as eternity which involves the paradox of future and present noted in the last chapter as the key motif for Pannenberg's idea of God's relation to the world. An attempt will be made here to see how this works out in his Christology.

Pannenberg denies that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the beginning of his unique relationship to God in an adoptionistic sense. Acknowledging the problem his emphasis on the resurrection raises, he asks, "If Jesus is God's revelation through a particular event in his life, then did he only become one with God after this event or was he one with God from the very beginning?" He rejects the "either-or" situation implied in the question and appeals to the nature of the resurrection as "retroactive confirmation" to attempt to show how Jesus was one with God before his resurrection because of his resurrection. The resurrection, he admits, did not merely "show" for the first time who Jesus really was all along apart from it. It was not merely a
noetic confirmation, but also the ontological establishment of Jesus' divinity. Apart from it, he says, it would not be true that God was one with this man. "That is true from all eternity because of Jesus' resurrection." Pannenberg's idea of the divinity of Jesus from the resurrection "backwards" closely parallels his concept of the eternity of the future as delineated in the last chapter. In a typically paradoxical statement he says:

Had Jesus not been raised from the dead, it would have been decided that he had not been one with God previously. But through his resurrection it is decided, not only so far as our knowledge is concerned, but with respect to reality, that Jesus is one with God and retroactively that he was already one with God previously.

It is difficult to explain such a statement as anything but self-contradictory. Clearly Pannenberg wishes to avoid the adoptionist conclusion to which his emphasis on the constitutive significance of the resurrection for Jesus' divinity seems to lead. Thus, by appeal to the "retroactive" power of the future, as the unity of the end of Jesus' earthly way with the end of history itself, he attempts to escape it just as he appealed to the "eternity" of the future as God's Gleichzeitigkeit to avoid process and development in God himself. In his Christology, Pannenberg seeks to relate Jesus' divinity-as-resurrection to the traditional idea of incarnation. The "confirmatory power" of the resurrection, he says, means that through the resurrection God took Jesus into his eternity uniting his entire existence with his own eternal essence. With this concept he wishes
to include the doctrine of incarnation in his model of divine presence in Jesus based on self-revelation without including what he sees as the problems raised by traditional incarnational Christology. What he achieves in the process is a paradoxical assertion of Jesus' union with God which raises the man Jesus to Godhood, but leaves unexpressed the true intention of traditional, orthodox Christology—to state the "descent" of God to man in Christ, however symbolically or mythologically. In other words, no matter how strongly Pannenberg asserts the eternal validity of the bond or union between God and Jesus established by the resurrection, this conceptuality is fundamentally different from the idea of incarnation because at best it can only express an elevation of man to God or an ideal union of God and man fulfilled in the man Jesus, not a gracious condescension of God in becoming man. Archbishop William Temple argued in Christus Veritas that a Christology can only be considered incarnational if it somehow brings to expression God manifested in the conditions of humanity and does not merely picture a man exalted to the conditions of Godhood:

We may say, then, without any hesitation that Christ is not a man exalted to perfect participation in the Divine Nature or Life; He is God, manifest under the conditions of humanity. The first disciples had to approach by gradual stages the realization of what lay beyond the human life and was finding expression in and through it; that was the order of discovery; but it is not the order of reality.37

That Pannenberg considers his concept of Jesus' divinity to be incarnational is made clear in his article
"Dogmatische Erwägungen zur Auferstehung Jesu." 38 There he specifically equates resurrection with incarnation, calling the latter the "exegesis" of the former. This new interpretation of incarnation, he says, gives it a new "justification" and "concreteness." 39 That Jesus was one with God by virtue of this event in his life does not imply adoptionism, he claims, because as the divine confirmation of Jesus' claim to authority, the resurrection decides [entscheidet] with retroactive power that Jesus has always been the Son of God. 40 The incarnation is now to be understood as the "unity of the resurrected one with the earthly one." 41 This is a most interesting idea of "incarnation." What it claims is that because Jesus was "glorified" as the resurrected one and thereby unified with God's own life, his earlier, earthly life became one with God from its beginning on. 42

The incarnation, then, is not the unity of the Logos asarkos with the human nature of Jesus so that Jesus becomes the human expression of the Logos ensarkos, but is the unity of the resurrected and exalted man Jesus with the whole of his earthly, pre-Easter life, so that already during his life he was anticipatorily the risen and exalted Son of God. The incarnation, then, was not an event taking place at the beginning of Jesus' human life, but an event happening from the end of it and working backwards upon the whole of his life. With the exception of this peculiar claim of retroactive enforcement, it is difficult to see how this view
differs significantly from a very strong Christological adoptionism. Clearly Pannenberg does not intend it to be such, but that cannot prevent the present criticism. In contrast to the conception of incarnation held by the Christian creeds and confessions of East and West since the church fathers, Pannenberg's resurrection-Christology denies any distinction, conceptually or ontologically, between the Logos asarkos and the Logos ensarkos. This distinction was and is essential to any view which is truly incarnational. The conviction of the early Christian fathers was that in Jesus the preexistent, eternal Logos of God (asarkos) became ensarkos. One may wish to reject this as an incorrect view of the significance of Jesus, as many modern Christian theologians do, but without it it would seem mistaken to call a Christology incarnational however "high" an estimate of Jesus is may contain. The result of Pannenberg's revision in Christology is that there is no Logos in God apart from the man Jesus. Thus, Jesus is not divine because there is in God an eternal self-expressive Word or "Son" who became man, but there is one in God because Jesus became this through his resurrection. This is certainly a very "high" estimate of Jesus, but it cannot be called an incarnational Christology.

Pannenberg's Christology may be understood as an attempt to overcome the antithesis between incarnational and adoptionist Christologies by incorporating elements in both. With adoptionism he implies that there is no Son of God
before or apart from Jesus: "How the divine Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity, would be thought of apart from the incarnation and thus apart from the man Jesus completely escapes our imagination."\(^{44}\) A major concern of this Christology is to hold together Jesus and the eternal, divine Son of God as a single being. With incarnational Christology, he avers that Jesus' union with God, though effected by his resurrection, is true in God's eternity and therefore from the beginning of his earthly way.\(^{45}\) He cannot have it both ways, however, without the paradox of future and present which largely diminishes the real originality and viability of his Christology. Also, as already argued, the "union of Jesus with God," however eternal, does not necessarily amount to incarnation as he seems to think.

Pannenberg's entire Christology is built around the concept of Jesus' unity with God as God's unique self-revelation. What sort of relation is this? What are the implications of this relation for Jesus and for God himself? These questions will be considered in the next sections.

2. Jesus' Unity with God

According to Pannenberg, the resurrection of Jesus established a relationship between him and God which is eternally valid. What relationship is this? As already seen, he considers the resurrection as the ontological confirmation of Jesus' pre-Easter life and ministry which
implied an anticipatory claim to a certain unique relation to God. Thus, the resurrection validated for eternity the relationship between Jesus and God which already characterized Jesus' earthly life, though only anticipatorily. It did not impose a new character on Jesus' life in relation to God, but confirmed his unity with God as "true."\(^{46}\)

The divinity of Jesus, then, is understood as unity with God and Pannenberg interprets this as dynamic personal union of Jesus as "Son" with God as his "Father." This relationship, he says, was not imposed heteronomously on Jesus by the resurrection without already being there. This would necessarily violate the human contribution of Jesus to his unique relation with God. In fact, this historically contingent, human-personal contribution of Jesus to his own unity with God is precisely what Pannenberg finds lacking in traditional incarnational Christology, but accounted for in his own resurrection-Christology. What Jesus was and is "for eternity" as decided by his resurrection, is not true apart from his earthly human relation to God as his Father, but because of it. Thus, for Pannenberg, there is a certain reciprocity between Jesus' historical "becoming" in relation to God (his human response to God) and God's own eternal essence as including Jesus' union with him.

What characterized Jesus' earthly life in relation to God? Pannenberg finds two aspects which were constitutive of his whole personal existence as forming the basis of his relation to God as Son. The first was his absolute
self-dedication to God as his Father which constituted his very person in its depth. Jesus, Pannenberg argues, was totally consumed by his dedication to the future of God's Kingdom: "Jesus' whole activity...is dedication to God and his will that aims at the establishment of his Kingdom."47 Even Jesus' death may be seen in this light—as ultimate self-sacrifice in dedication to God's rule.48 This self-dedication to the other who is God cannot be seen merely as one aspect of Jesus' life, but rather "penetrates, surpasses, and envelopes all expressions and elements of his existence...."49 In and through this dedication, Jesus won his unique personhood because the essence of "persons," Pannenberg claims, is not self-enclosed identity, but being-for-another. Only in an "other" and in dedication to an other can one become fully personal. Since in the case of Jesus the other through whom he won his personal existence was God, his very person was constituted by God in such an intensity that he could be called the "Son of God."

Pannenberg credits Hegel with providing this insight into the nature of personhood as achieved only in dedication to an other.50 For Hegel, it is the character of "person" to supersede its isolation, separatedness, through dedication:

Inasmuch as I act rightly toward another, I consider him as identical with myself. In friendship and love I give up my abstract personality, and in this way win it back as concrete personality. It is just this winning back of personality by the act of absorption, by the being absorbed into the other, which constitutes the true nature of personality.51

Pannenberg regards this as the clue to understanding
Jesus' personal and "essential" unity with God since "such personal community is at the same time essential community" and "To be submerged in the 'Thou' means at the same time... participation in his being." If this is true, it would seem that real "personhood" would always involve loss of distinctive individual identity and absorption into the other. Hegel's discussion of personhood in this sense comes in the context of his relating the innertrinitarian life of God to the dialectical movement of the Concept (Begriff). In both, he says, the "moment" of particularity, though essential to the totality's realization, is negated (aufgehoben) in absolute universality. He is attempting to explain on this basis how two (or three) can be one--in thought or in the reality of God himself. His solution is drawn directly from the logic of the "Idea": the two or three are only momentary appearances of the One in its dialectical self-movement toward absoluteness and universality:

...the solution is contained in the fact that there is only one person, and this threefold personality, this personality which is consequently posited merely as a vanishing moment, expresses the truth that the antithesis is an absolute one, and is not to be taken as an inferior antithesis, and that it is just exactly when it has got to this point it abolishes itself. It is, in short, the nature or character of what we mean by person or subject to abolish its isolation, its separatedness.

The result for the doctrine of the Trinity would seem to be modalistic at best. What is pertinent here is to ask whether Pannenberg really wishes to appropriate this idea of "person" to describe the unity of Jesus with God. To be sure it points toward a unity of being, or essence, but it also
implies a loss of autonomy or individuality in all-embracing unity.

The second aspect or characteristic of Jesus' earthly life which Pannenberg finds decisive for his relationship to God may be aimed at solving this problem. Just as Jesus lived in total dedication to God, so he also actively differentiated himself from God. This active self-differentiation was also a part of Jesus' unity with God in that he sacrificed any claim to his own ultimacy and reserved for God alone the glory and honor. Thus, when Jesus said "The Father is greater than I" and "There is none 'good' but God," he was not merely expressing the general transcendence of God or speaking out of his humanity, but he was actively distinguishing himself from the ultimate future and therefore letting God be God. According to Pannenberg, Jesus was expressing his own self-consciousness of not being ultimate, but being in absolute service to the ultimate future of God's reign. Only thereby, he avers, did Jesus attain unity with God and maintain distinctness from the Father.

According to Pannenberg, man's essential separation and estrangement from God lies precisely in his refusal properly to distinguish himself from God and in his attempts to consider himself as ultimate rather than reserving ultimacy to the future beyond himself. This is how he interprets the "sin of Adam"—as the perversion of his own true determination for community with God into a life lived in desiring to be God.56 True humanity, on the other hand, is to be
found only in community with God which presupposes active self-differentiation from God. This dialectic of unity-in-differentiation goes back to an insight of Maximus the Confessor, Pannenberg claims. Maximus recognized that the unity of God and man is not simply opposed to the difference between them, but rather "increasing differentiation (and above all increasing consciousness of such differentiation) is a condition for increasingly intensive community and unity."\(^{57}\) Of course, "unity-in-differentiation" is also a fundamental principle of Hegel's philosophy of Absolute Spirit in which it is characteristic of "Spirit" to differentiate itself within itself in order to attain a higher and more concrete unity than is otherwise possible.\(^{58}\) Pannenberg's insistence on self-differentiation as a necessary moment in Jesus' achievement of full unity with God may be read as a constitutive element in his view of reality as a totality in the process of being completed. That is, in this man Jesus, the future community of man with God which is man's true "determination"\(^{59}\) is proleptically achieved through the self-dedication and self-differentiation which such unity presupposes. In this way, Jesus is not only united with God, but at the same time is the fulfillment of ideal humanity.

Pannenberg's emphasis on Jesus' active self-differentiation from God raises the question of Jesus' true self-consciousness. Did he indeed differentiate himself from God so exclusively as Pannenberg seems to suggest? Does this not conflict with his own recognition of Jesus' proleptic
claims to authority, such as the ability to forgive sins and to be the eschatological touchstone for men's decisions regarding their destinies? The Catholic scholar Walter Kasper, who otherwise largely agrees with Pannenberg's basic orientation in Christology, finds Jesus' self-consciousness to be one which reflected a high degree of awareness of divine authority:

Forgiving sins is something only God can do. Jesus' attitude to sinners implies an unprecedented Christological claim. Jesus acts here like someone who stands in the place of God. In and through him God's love and mercy become fact. It is not far from this to the saying in John "He who has seen me has seen the Father." 60

For Pannenberg, then, Jesus' self-differentiation as well as his self-dedication grounded his unique relationship with God. The relation established by these characteristics which were Jesus' total personal existence was "oneness" or "unity" with God:

Precisely by distinguishing himself from the Father and his Lordship, by serving the Lordship of the Father as the Lordship of another in dedication of himself, so and only so is Jesus one with the Lordship of the Father. 61

This oneness or unity with God is "negatively communicated," Pannenberg says. 62 In other words, it is based on negation—negation of Jesus' own self-enclosed being in total dedication to the absolute future of God and his lordship. "Thus, the difference between what is presently extant, and the future of God and his lordship, shows up in the personal relationship of Jesus to the Father." 63 In recognition and affirmation of this difference, the difference is nullified and Jesus "becomes" the presence of God's future
proleptically. His unique relationship with God, then, is structured temporally as anticipation and in this Pannenberg finds the key to a fuller understanding of Jesus' divinity.

In this scheme, it is clear that the relationship to God which constituted Jesus' divinity is a relation of unity with the Father, not with any Logos or Son distinguishable from Jesus himself. Pannenberg insists that there is no justification in Jesus' experience or consciousness for supposing that he had any direct relation to a divine Logos, as a Second Person of the Trinity. Thus, he says, the question of the unity of the man Jesus with the eternal Son of God cannot be put or answered directly. The unity or identity of Jesus with the Son of God results rather by way of a "detour." This detour is Jesus' relation to the God of Israel, the power of the future, whom he called "Father."

"Only the personal community of Jesus with the Father shows that he is himself identical with the Son of this Father." Not only does Jesus' Sonship have to be reached by way of this detour, but also use of the concept Son of God at all must find its justification in this way.

Pannenberg concludes from his analysis of Jesus' life in personal community with the Father that in his very concrete human personhood Jesus is "indirectly" or "dialectically" identical with the eternal Son of God. Apparently this means that there is an element of negativity in this identity. What he means is somewhat obscure, but it would appear that Jesus' "identity" with the Son of God is
structured similarly to the "identity" of a prolepsis or anticipation with the future which it anticipates. There are varying degrees of intensity of anticipation and how "present" the future is is determined by the intensity with which it is pre-grasped by the present event. Yet, the most intense anticipation remains provisional and thus contains an element of negativity in its identity with the future which presents itself in it. As was noted earlier, the concept of anticipation, though problematic in itself, is intended to combine absolute and relative aspects of reality in a single instance. It is suggested that this is the significance of Jesus' Sonship in Pannenberg's Christology. As the "anticipation" of God's lordship in temporal history, Jesus is already God's Son even during his earthly life and ministry. Yet, the element of "not-yetness" remained even for this identity since Jesus recognized God's lordship as something future even for him. Thus, Jesus' Sonship was something essentially future to himself, but also already a present reality by virtue of the intensity with which he lived the future and the future presented itself in him.

This "indirect" or "dialectical" identity of Jesus with the Son of God is preferred by Pannenberg to the more traditional orthodox doctrine of Jesus' direct identity with the eternal Son of God because he believes the latter is unable to take seriously Jesus' authentic humanity. The problem which he sees in the traditional model which he believes is solved in his own is that of the completeness of Jesus'
human nature. This was, of course, a vexing problem in the early Christological debates in which it was decided that the humanity of Jesus was complete (in opposition to Apollinarianism), but "hypostatized" or given concrete, personal existence, only in union with the Logos. This view was given its fullest expression by Leontius of Byzantium who defined Jesus' humanity as "enhypostatic" in the person of the divine Logos.

In a remark apparently aimed at the classical view, Pannenberg says "The absence of individual concreteness in Jesus' human nature as such, apart from its unification with the Logos, would make the completeness of his humanity problematic." In spite of this claim, it is not immediately apparent that the traditional Christology, in its fully developed form, would involve any loss of "completeness" for Jesus' humanity. The church fathers and councils were concerned to do justice to Jesus' full and complete humanity, even to the point of rejecting Monothelitism as a diminution of it. What Pannenberg apparently is uncomfortable with is rather the lack of independence of Jesus' humanity which is entailed by the "enhypostatic" Christology. In this respect he repeats the concern of the Antiochene school to do justice to Jesus' independent human activity and contribution to the salvific event. Whereas the Antiochenes attempted to solve this problem by positing an intimate, moral union of the man Jesus with the divine Logos which grew through Jesus' human response to the divine initiative, Pannenberg posits a
personal, essential union of the man Jesus with the Father which grew through his human response to God's call and constituted his "Sonship." In this way his Christology very closely parallels the dualism of Nestorianism, with the very important exception that Jesus was united with the Father, not with a divine Logos distinct or separate from himself.

A major motive of Pannenberg's resurrection-Christology, then, is to account for the eventfulness of the unification of God and man in the temporal execution of the course of Jesus' existence. In contrast to the impression left by traditional incarnation-Christology, Jesus' divinity as the Son of God was no "fixed and presupposed reality" but depended on his dynamic human response to God. "Precisely in and because of this dedication to the Father, Jesus is identical with the Person of the Son." Presumably, then, Jesus "could have" failed to be the Son. However, that is a consequence Pannenberg does not seem to want to follow from his view. In apparent contrast with his concern for Jesus' human freedom and independence, he states that Jesus did not have any "other possibility" alongside his divine mission which he passed over in favor of it. Rather, Jesus' mission was something which "grasped him" so that "the clarity with which Jesus' mission claimed him must have excluded any alternative for him."

In this way, Pannenberg attempts to account for the primacy of the divine initiative in Jesus' life and mission, a major concern of traditional, orthodox Christology.
However, this would seem to conflict with the freedom and human involvement of Jesus in his unity with God which Pannenberg finds so crucial and which forms a major motive for his revision in Christology in which Jesus is indirectly identical with the Son of God in virtue of his human dependence on the Father.

What consequences does this view of Jesus' Sonship have for the doctrine of the Trinity? This will be a major concern of the next chapter, but must receive a partial answer here. Allan Galloway is correct when he says that "Pannenberg seems to want to say that the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son is what happened between Jesus and God in the Gospel story." The relation between Father and Son in God's eternity is not conceived by Pannenberg as a timeless interaction "above" or "behind" the personal community between Jesus and God established in history. The being of the eternal Son of God is ontologically tied to the historical, human person of Jesus of Nazareth. According to Pannenberg, "The distinction between a preexistent divine being and the man Jesus or his earthly appearance conceptually divides precisely that which belongs together in Jesus' existence." The distinction between them refers only to two different "aspects" of the one person Jesus Christ, not to two substances or two states of being. For him, anything said about an eternal Son of God must be said in reference to Jesus and his human unity with God as his Father.

What does this mean, then, for the preexistence of
the Son of God to the history of Jesus? Pannenberg labels this idea, insofar as it separates the Son of God from the man Jesus, "mythical." The truth in the idea belongs to the "retroactive" validity of Jesus' unity with God established for all eternity by his resurrection. Pannenberg refers to the "paradox of future and present" to explain this:

That in the eternal God himself a becoming takes place, a path to incarnation that the unity with God which acquired form only in the concrete path of the man Jesus, but which nevertheless precedes the earthly beginning of Jesus' life as unity with the eternal God, these are the most important of the paradoxes that emerge here. They can be tolerated only when one perceives the necessity of their emergence from the circumstances of the proleptic appearance of the eschaton in Jesus' history. One may question whether this paradox really solves anything or whether it simply expresses in a novel way the classical formula of Jesus' preexistence as the eternal Son of God. However, there is at least one basic difference between this conceptuality and traditional Christian belief in God which cannot be avoided or passed over. Whereas in traditional, orthodox Christian theology Jesus is "divine" because God is triune, in this Christology, God is triune because Jesus is divine. The impression that the eternal God is somehow made dependent for his full actuality as this triune God on the contingent, historical life and destiny of a human being can hardly be dismissed. Surely Pannenberg would not wish this conclusion to be drawn from his Christology, but it would seem to be a conclusion more easily drawn
than its opposite: that God would "already" be triune as Father, Son and Holy Spirit prior to and apart from Jesus' earthly life as classical Christology asserts.

Pannenberg objects to the "already" in traditional theology of the Trinity and the preexistence of Christ because it reflects a "mythical" mode of thinking which sees the really real as the "prototypical eternal" which occasionally appears in the temporal flux of things but is unaffected by time and history. "Indeed, the uniqueness of mythical thinking in general is that it separates the essence of reality as a special, prototypical essence from the appearance in order to reunite the two through a dramatic process especially conceived for the purpose."78 One might object that this could be a description of the function of the resurrection of Jesus in Pannenberg's own theology, or of "prolepsis" in general. More important, however, is the objection that he has missed the point of traditional theology's insistence on God's "prior actuality" as Father, Son and Holy Spirit to the historical event of Jesus Christ. It does not have to do with mythical or "prototypical" thinking, but with the transcendent freedom of God and the reality of grace.

This will be discussed further under the rubric of the relation of immanent and economic Trinity in Pannenberg's thought. Here it is simply to be noted that only if God is somehow "already" in himself the self-communicating love between Father and Son independently of the historical event of this love (setting aside temporal distinctions of "before"
and "after") can the love manifested in Jesus Christ be a free and gracious self-communication and self-revelation of God to the world and not the necessary process of God's self-identity completing itself.

It is not history which imparts identity to God, he is not a God who comes to be, who would first have to grasp and realize himself in time. On the contrary, it is God who gives history its identity, who endows it with coherence and meaning. Here again lies the deeper significance of the idea of preexistence. It does not imply any projection of time backwards into eternity: it intimates that God in his Son from eternity and in freedom is a God of history and has time for man. 79

It has now been seen that Pannenberg considers Jesus' relationship with God to be "unity with God" as the unique prolepsis of God's own future Kingdom in history. In absolute self-dedication in active self-differentiation, this man Jesus is united with God in a personal-essential community which includes temporal distinction. This raises the question of how Jesus' humanity and divinity are to be understood.

3. The Humanity and Divinity of Jesus

In the classical Christology of the church, deriving from the creed of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), the unity of Jesus with God was conceived as "hypostatic union" of the human nature of Jesus with the divine nature and person of the eternal Son of God. This raised, or made more pressing, the question whether Jesus was two "persons" or one. Since "nature" (ousia, or physis) implied completeness, the human "nature" had to have a personal center of existence in order
truly to be human since that is implied in the concept of human nature. However, if the principle or only "subject" of the life of Christ was to be the preexistent Logos, or Son of God, how could the human nature be accorded a personal center without dividing Jesus into two persons—as Nestorius had done? One solution was to say that the human nature of Jesus Christ was "enhypostatic"—i.e., received its unique individuality and personal center of existence in the person (hypostasis) of the divine Logos. This has already been seen as the conclusion reached by Leontius of Byzantium and generally accepted by the church as the "orthodox" interpretation of Chalcedon.

Behind this complex definition lay the conviction that divine "being" and human "being" are two infinitely different orders of reality incapable of mingling or "substantial" union and that only if the divine Logos was the subject of the human experiences of Jesus could one really speak of an incarnation of God in him. Therefore, the union of God and man in Jesus involved a "hypostatic" union—a union of two absolutely distinct ontological realities in one person or individual subject who was divine. The patristic church recognized this as a unique and therefore mysterious reality. The duality and unity which are held in tension in this formula have constantly threatened to fall apart, however, into sheer dualism of the natures (as in neo-Nestorianism) or simple monism (as in Monophysitism).

Pannenberg finds this doctrine of the person of
Christ in need of serious revision today. Before Chalcedon's complex formula of "two natures in one person," he argues, Christians were content to confess of the man Jesus: "vere deus, vere homo." This confession sought to begin with the unity of the person of Jesus of Nazareth and then say both things about him, describing one and the same person from both points of view. The formula of the "two natures," however, began with the ontological difference between the divine and human generally and then attempted to unite them in the person of Jesus: "Jesus now appears as a being bearing and uniting two opposed substances in himself. From this conception all the insoluble problems of the two natures result." Pannenberg insists that in rejecting the two-natures doctrine he is not objecting to the true humanity and divinity of Jesus. "Vere deus, vere homo is an indispensable statement of Christian theology," he says. However, the classical formula contains difficulties which make it impossible for him to accept it. A primary fault in his eyes is that it speaks of divine and human "natures" as though they were on the same plane, as though they could be juxtaposed as equal concepts. By this he means that "nature" cannot mean the same thing when said of man as when said of God, if it can be said of God at all. Apparently he feels this would be demeaning to God. However, this does not seem to be a valid criticism of the patristic formula since there is no necessity of "comparing" divine and human natures there, but
only of confessing that they are absolutely distinct ontological categories. What Pannenberg's objection may amount to is a discomfort with the exclusivity implied in the "juxtaposition." That is, calling each a "nature" and excluding them from each other as absolutely distinct implies what is true of finite, human beings, but questionable (from one perspective) when applied to God: limitation and exclusion. However, unless one wishes to espouse a sheer monism in which all "natures" are really one, it would seem still to be meaningful and necessary to distinguish between two types of reality, divine and human. This is what the Fathers of the church intended with their use of the term "nature."

Christopher Stead, in his important study of patristic ontology entitled Divine Substance argues very cogently that to ascribe "nature" to God does not necessarily entail limitation or finitude. Furthermore, he argues, to speak of God as a "substance" or "nature" does not necessarily put him on the same plane with other substances or natures, but simply says that there are some things that are true of him and others that are not: "If God exists, it must be possible to construct a number of classes of which God is a member; and this may seem or indeed be, irreverent; but it does not in fact impair the claim that God is unique."

A second fault which Pannenberg finds in the classic doctrine is the way it relates "nature" and "person." The attempt to conceive the individual person Jesus as containing two natures, he says, led Christology into an impasse from
which there is no escape: "If divinity and humanity as two substances are supposed to be united in the individuality of Jesus, then either the two will be mixed to form a third or the individuality, Jesus' concrete living unity, will be ruptured." One must wonder whether the same "impasse" does not inevitably result from any Christology which wishes to ascribe to the one individual Jesus the description "vere deus, vere homo." Certainly the Chalcedonian fathers recognized as mysterious or paradoxical the formula they created to describe this reality. The distinction between ousia (nature) and hypostasis (individual subsistence) which was made clear at Nicea was used by Leo and the orthodox fathers of Chalcedon to attempt to express this mystery. While the distinction did not remove the mystery, it did remove contradiction. The force of Pannenberg's argument here would seem to be historical: the tendency to fall into either dualism or monism plagues the classical two-natures formula. It would seem incumbent on anyone who uses this argument who wishes to affirm of Jesus vere deus, vere homo to provide an alternative conceptuality which, when pressed for absolute rational consistency, will not fall into dualism or monism. It is questionable whether this is possible if divinity (vere deus) and humanity (vere homo) are held to be absolutely distinct ontological realities.

Pannenberg surveys Christian theological history to show that every interpretation of the doctrine promulgated by Chalcedon has led toward either "unification" or "disjunction."
of the two natures. In his view, even the most profound efforts at amelioration of the tension, such as the "communio idiomatum" and the various "kenotic" theories, have led to either the conjunction of the natures into a tertium quid or the disjunction of the person of Christ into two distinct identities. From this analysis of the history of Christology, he concludes that due to the impossible effort to unify two natures in a single, concrete individual, either the unity of Jesus or his true humanity or divinity were lost to view. The unity of Jesus with God, whom he called "Father," "can only be found in the historical particularity of the man Jesus, his message and fate." Any "synthesis" of human and divine natures, he argues, cannot do justice to this particularity. Rather, if Jesus is to be recognized as divine, it must be in such a way that "as this man, Jesus is God." Of course, Pannenberg does not mean by this that Jesus is simply identical with God, but that he is "dialectically" identical with God by virtue of his unity with God based on his unique anticipation of the future of God: "the eschatological character of Jesus and his history as a prolepsis of the end is the correlate and, for our perception, the foundation of his unity with God." Thus, Jesus is divine, not by virtue of a hypostatic union with the divine Son of God, but by virtue of his personal union with God his Father through the peculiar phenomenon of the presence of the Absolute Future in him as this man. The questions must be asked whether this alternative to the two-
natures doctrine is any less paradoxical and whether if pressed for absolute logical consistency, it does not fall into either an absolute identity of Jesus with the Father or total, substantial difference of Jesus from the Father. Also it must be asked whether this proposed solution to the impasse does not presuppose a dissolution of the ontological antithesis of humanity and divinity which lies at the basis of traditional Christian Christology. An attempt at an answer to this last question will be made here.

If one rejects the two-natures doctrine, but still wishes to speak of Jesus as divine as this man, it would seem necessary to consider humanity as somehow "capable" of bearing the divine, or even of being divine in some sense. Although Pannenberg is Lutheran, this demand would seem to go beyond the "infra-Lutheranum" finitus capax infiniti. Luther was not concerned with precise ontological formulas, nor was Melanchthon. They were content to hold as a mystery how this man could be God. Pannenberg wishes to go beyond this contentment with mystery, however, and provide a conceptuality which will at least begin to explain how divinity can be predicated of a man.

Two concepts help Pannenberg arrive at this conceptuality and form the basis for it. The first is that "personal community" is also "essential union." This idea was already discussed and shown ultimately to be borrowed from Hegel's doctrine of the Trinity. For Pannenberg, Jesus' self-dedication to the future of God his Father resulted in
a personal union in which Jesus sacrificed himself and thereby became "negatively" one with God. Jesus' very personality, then, was "won" in this relation to the "other." This still leaves open the question how a man can be divine without abrogating his humanity. This brings Pannenberg to his second principle and perhaps the most important one in this regard: "man" is not a nature completed from the beginning, but is a history—a being open toward a future unfulfilled destiny. 95 Certainly, for him, "man" is not a finished reality somehow antithetical to God, but is a being "spiritually" open to God and inwardly determined for union with God. 96 In order better to understand his Christology, it is necessary briefly to survey Pannenberg's anthropology since these are inextricably interwoven themes in his theology.

Pannenberg's theological anthropology is one of his most creative and philosophically profound contributions. Borrowing on the insights of such contemporary sociologists and anthropologists as George Herbert Mead and Peter Berger, and connecting these with older reflections on man such as those of Herder, Scheler, Hegel and especially A. Gehlen, he has attempted to construct a view of man as a being essentially "open to the world." This Weltoffenheit which belongs to man's humanity is interpreted eschatologically by Pannenberg as openness toward a yet-unrealized future unity and ultimately toward God. Noetically and ontically, he argues, man is a being oriented toward a whole of meaning and being in which his own wholeness lies. Man violates himself and his
true nature when he attempts to exist independently or pre-
maturely to close off some limited area of experience as the
totality of his life's meaning. Only a totality of reality,
the world as a whole, can be man's true horizon of fulfill-
ment:

Only in a world that is a unity can our life succeed
as a whole and remain or become healed, that is,
whole. Therefore we ask about the one truth and
about the harmony in all the various things. ...Yet
the unity of the world, to which peace between men
also belongs, always remains an open problem.97

Sociologically, he argues, man lives for community
with other men and violates his true "eccentric" nature when
he attempts to live in self-sufficient, independent isola-
tion. As a communal, social being, man is inwardly oriented
toward the widest possible community which is the unity of
mankind itself. Education, creativity and the peace which
makes human progress possible all presuppose a unity of hu-
manity which alone provides the wholeness of the individual's
existence: "...man's destiny is directed toward attaining
the wholeness of his own existence. The wholeness is not
possible apart from the unity of his world and apart from
community with other men."98

In every area of his existence, Pannenberg finds
man to be a "self-transcending" being whose fulfillment be-
longs to the process of realizing himself in unities beyond
himself and ultimately in unity with the totality of reality
itself. This orientation toward the unity of reality, he
avers, is the source of the modern apprehension of the
"questionableness of man." Profound thinkers among both
theists and atheists have found man to be essentially a "question to himself" because he lacks a ground, a support, for his essential openness in self-transcendence within himself. Thus, Jean-Paul Sartre is correct, Pannenberg says, in recognizing man as a being that "lacks" in his openness to the world, but wrong in his denial of the possibility of an answer to the question of a term, or limit implied in that openness. What man lacks is a totality within which his open striving takes on meaning. Pannenberg argues that without this answer the result is nihilism. The very existence of man presupposes a totality as a possibility and this leads to the "question of God" as the source or ground of the unity of man's existence.

...the idea of God or...to put it impersonally...of a mysterious ground of all reality transcending one's own and all other finite existence, is so implied in the movement of human existence beyond everything finite that man finds himself referred to this transcendent mystery and can have a well-founded hope for fulfillment of his existence only from it.

That this transcendent mystery can be called "God" is based on the apprehension common to most religions and worldviews of its personal character as "non-manipulableness" (Unverfugbarkeit).

On the basis of these considerations, Pannenberg concludes that "man" is not an "essence" or "nature" closed in on itself, but is essentially "openness" toward the infinite mystery that is the goal of his self-transcending activity as the basis of the unity of reality. Man is "infinite dependence"--empty, unfinished striving toward a destiny. This
leads Pannenberg to a fundamental assertion: "God is the goal in which alone his [man's] striving can find rest and his destiny be fulfilled." Pannenberg says, God, then, is not an "object" or being outside man, but infinite wholeness in which alone man finds fulfillment. Man's true destiny is "community with God" as this non-objective source of wholeness, and thus God may be said to be the very "essence of man." Pannenberg cautions that this does not mean God is man's "immanent essence," but man's "transcendent destination" in that "The destination of man aims at going beyond his finitude, sacrificing it, and surrendering it to the infinite in devotion." Unity with God in this sense, then, would not be a contradiction of man's true humanity, but its fulfillment.

The unity with God which is man's true essence, Pannenberg says, is not a present state of affairs, but an eschatological possibility and a present realization only through anticipation. This is the basis of man's finitude—and thus his distinction from God and his own true essence. It is also the reason for man's historical being. The unity and totality of everything finite, which would be infinite, is not a presently existing state of affairs but is future. Thus, man's "eccentricity," or relation to God, is a relation to what is future. Yet this future appears in the present in historical, provisional manifestations which come to expression primarily in man's religious striving beyond himself toward the future unity in limited unities now.
This conceptuality of historical God-man unity forms the basis of Pannenberg's view of Jesus' humanity and divinity. Jesus can be "God" or "united with God" as this man because it belongs to man's humanity as such to be united with God. God and man share an essential community in this theology as in Hegel's philosophy, although Pannenberg reserves to the eschaton the completion of that community. What constitutes Jesus' humanity in distinction from God is his historical particularity—he is not yet that future unity itself since even for Jesus the future remains outstanding. "Even in the history of Jesus...the future of God is only present in that it is at the same time also future." Therefore, Jesus shares in the lot of all humanity as having his destiny outside himself. On the other hand, Jesus is divine in that in him the future unity of God and man appeared anticipatorily in a unique and unsurpassable way. This appearance of the future in him is not a contradiction of his humanity, but the fulfillment of its highest capability:

In Christianity Jesus, the new man, is not simply opposed to the old man. He is the new man in that he realizes in himself the original destiny of man, that of community with God and in that he was in a special way an ordinary man. This special aspect of his humanity is to be found in his mission to proclaim the Kingdom of God and in his distinction between the future of God and his own present. He staked everything on this future beyond himself and it was precisely because of this that God's future became present in him. Jesus' divinity, then, is understood as a "special aspect" of his ordinary humanity: anticipation which became prolepsis of God's future in him. This naturally raises many
questions for theology. One which presents itself immedi-
ately is whether for Pannenberg Jesus is different from the
rest of humanity in "degree" or in "kind." It would seem
that the capacity for this kind of divinity is a potentiality
of man as such and in this sense Jesus was different only in
degree. Only in him was this capacity fulfilled and there-
fore he became the saving event by participation in which all
other men can be saved, or "taken up into a life from God."111
In principle, however, it is not obvious why this could not
have been the mission and ministry of some other man. On the
other hand, Pannenberg wishes to affirm the divine initiative
in Jesus' achievement.112 The answer to the question may
have to be that in Pannenberg's Christology, Jesus' differ-
ence from other men is of such a high degree as to be a dif-
ference in kind.

A question more directly pertinent to this critique
of Pannenberg's doctrine of God is whether this Christology
does not involve a fundamentally monistic "ideal" unity of
God and man which results in their difference being reduced
to a merely temporal distinction, the goodness of man's crea-
turely status being impugned, and the being of God becoming
involved in the estrangement which is being overcome in his-
tory. This raises questions of the relation of finite and
infinite in Pannenberg's ontology which must be reserved for
the final chapter. Here it can be stated, however, that
rather than Jesus Christ being the gracious condescension of
God to man which preserves the distinction and ontological
antithesis between them, Pannenberg's Christ would seem to be the symbol in historical event of man's essential divinity—in Tillich's terms, "Godmanhood." Tillich's critique of the traditional two-natures dogma is essentially similar to Pannenberg's. He too believes it impossible to conceive Jesus as a unified being, a person, in this doctrine since the unity of God and man in him is understood as two natures "which lie beside each other like blocks and whose unity cannot be understood at all...." Also, the dynamism of Jesus' unity with God is not comprehended in this model. Tillich says that Jesus' divinity is the appearance in him of the "New Being" which is reestablished unity between God and man:

We replace the inadequate concept "divine nature" by the concepts "eternal God-man-unity" or "Eternal God-Manhood." Such concepts replace a static essence by a dynamic relation.

Pannenberg's suggested revision in Christology very nearly parallels Tillich's at several points. What Tillich calls "New Being," Pannenberg calls the "Logos" and the "New Man." This is man "united with God." He differs from Tillich in that he sees this reality as exclusively eschatological, however. For Tillich, it is "eternal" in the sense of "ideal." Yet Pannenberg comes close to Tillich even here in that he affirms what is true in the eschaton as eternal—as the truth of everything already present in a hidden way. Both would seem to follow Hegel in considering the unity of God and man to be ideal but contradicted in appearance. Pannenberg also could be interpreted as agreeing
with Tillich in seeing Jesus Christ as the key to the "essentialization" of man, bringing man to his true, essential being in unity with God. For Tillich, however, this is a "re-essentialization," a restoration of a lost condition. For Pannenberg, the essential unity with God which is man's essence is something never yet achieved, but an eschatological promise proleptically fulfilled in Jesus and therefore assured for man in union with Christ.

This comparison of Pannenberg's Christology with Tillich's points out some weaknesses in his view which are also present in Tillich's. First, the entire scheme rests on an ontology which denies any final, ultimate difference between God and man and therefore fails adequately to account for God's transcendence. This is because if God-man unity belongs to the unity of reality itself, which is intrinsic to God's deity, its achievement would be as decisive for God as for man. The speculative unity of God and man, however eschatological and tension-filled, is the driving force of Pannenberg's Christology and the question whether this is an illegitimate imposition of ontological categories on theology is unavoidable.

Second, Pannenberg's Christology would seem to impugn the creatureliness of man as something estranged by virtue of its very existence as something separate from God. Man, in this view, does not have an "essence" of his own, but belongs to a unity beyond himself which he can join only by negating himself in his existence and becoming one with God. Implied
in this is the view that creatureliness, finitude and particularity are marks of "ontological sin"—that is, what should not be and is to be overcome.

Last, there is the implication of divine involvement in the negativity of existence in this Christology in that this man Jesus is also God, so it is logical to assume that God's essence includes the negativity, as well as the positive aspects, of this individual human existence. If "God-manhood" is a feature of the eschatological unity of all reality, then it is as necessary to say that manhood belongs essentially to God as vice versa. It is only a small step, then, to Hegel's thesis that God is only God in positing a reality distinct from himself, overcoming its negativity and uniting it with himself. For Tillich, as for Hegel, this dialectic is the process of the divine "life" itself and is what makes it dynamic.121 That this is the case for Pannenberg is not as clear since it is nowhere stated so baldly. However, the whole point of this thesis is to show that implied in his eschatological theology as a whole is a relation of God to the world, and especially to man, which makes it a "moment" in the life of God himself. Insofar as Jesus Christ, as this man, belongs to God's own essence by virtue of his human accomplishment of self-transcendence in Pannenberg's theology, this thesis is already substantially verified. Yet it calls for further demonstration.

In Pannenberg's formulation of Jesus' humanity and divinity, then, what are expressed as "natures" or
substances in classical Christology are really "two complimentary total aspects" of Jesus' unified existence. The divine aspect is given in and with the human. It is given in the temporal-transcending, anticipatory relation of this man to God as his Father in which God is made uniquely present in him. In this relation he is the eternal Son of God, though this can only be expressed paradoxically. Now the question of the concept of God implied in this unity must be raised more directly. What does it mean for God himself that as this man Jesus is God? Some implications have already been discussed in this section. Now it is to be seen that Pannenberg believes this confession calls for a radical revision in the traditional theistic idea of God as timeless aseity. It calls for an understanding of God's essence as in some sense constituted in a historical process. These implications of Pannenberg's Christology for the doctrine of God will be the focus of the next section.

4. Jesus in the Eternal Essence of God

In the preceding section an attempt was made to discover what conditions in Jesus' life and history make it possible for Pannenberg to confess him as "divine." Also, his view of the relationship between Jesus' humanity and divinity and some problems associated with it were discussed. Now it must be asked: What conditions in the nature of God make it possible for Pannenberg to confess this particular man Jesus as the divine Son of God? As noted already, he believes that
if God has revealed himself in Jesus, then Jesus' community
with God, as well as the self-differentiation from God which
he maintained, belongs to God's own essence. For him, this
is necessitated by the nature of "self-revelation" but can be
expressed only paradoxically:

It includes Jesus' oneness of nature with God. For
otherwise God would not be revealed as himself in his
revelation in Jesus. But Jesus' oneness of nature with
God also means that this man participated in God's etern-
ity, although he was, as man, not eternal but born in
time, like the rest of us.

Pannenberg follows Barth's axiom concerning "revela-
tion" in this statement: If Jesus did not belong to the very
essence of God, God would not be revealing himself in him,
but would remain something else behind the self-revelation.
God is identical with his event of self-revealing activ-
ity. If the self-revealing event is understood as a par-
ticular, historical event, the question then arises how God
can be identical with such an event in all its finitude and
historical contingency. Barth's solution was to follow his
principle of being-revelation correspondence to its utter
logical extreme and posit the man Jesus as somehow present in
God's eternal, triune nature.

Pannenberg also faces this
question of what must be true in God's essence if it is
united with this particular, historical event. That is, how
is the incarnation as understood by Pannenberg compatible
with an understanding of God in general? He lists three con-
ditions under which it would be compatible.

First, "God in all his eternal identity is still to
be understood as a God who is alive in himself, who can become something and precisely in doing so remain true to himself and the same." The first condition for the incarnation in God himself, then, is that God must be able to "become" while remaining identical with himself. How can this be conceptualized? Pannenberg considers Karl Rahner's suggestion that God can become in an "other" while remaining unchanged in his own inner being. This form of expressing God's sameness-in-becoming is based on Hegel's dialectic of self-differentiation, Pannenberg says. What he finds wrong with it is the assertion that the "becoming in the other" does not effect any change in God's inner being itself. "It does not yet show...how God can be one with what is distinguished from him, provided that this difference is to be taken seriously." As shown already, some question exists whether Pannenberg himself takes this difference seriously enough. In any case, he does not believe that Rahner's formula does justice to the "abyss of distinction" which the incarnation must bridge, nor to the real "becoming" and change in God in this bridging which cannot, he says, be held remote from God's own inner being. "It will hardly suffice to speak only of a becoming 'in the other,' as if an inner being of God were to be distinguished that remains completely untouched by such becoming." The maker himself, Pannenberg avers, is changed in the production and shaping of another being, and this is especially true in the incarnation
which is God's unity with this particular man Jesus who is an "other." In becoming one with him, God himself undergoes change. ¹³¹

This raises the question for Pannenberg of how God can remain himself and maintain his identity in this becoming. He argues that if time and eternity are not held as mutually exclusive, God's identity with himself in this change is not necessarily affected. He refers to his idea of eternity as the powerful simultaneity of all times in the future to solve the problem: "...the presence of eternity is to be thought of as including in itself and uniting what is separated in the succession of temporal events." ¹³² God's "eternal identity" is then understood paradoxically as eternal in his absolute futurity, but also as undergoing change through time. The "paradoxical interweaving of future and present" as the interrelation of time and eternity reappears here as the proposed solution to God's sameness in becoming in the incarnation. Yet, the question whether this solves anything arises again in this context. Does not this conceptuality merely state that "change" is in appearance only since the separation of succession in time, which change presupposes is not ultimate, but is really totally comprehensive for God?¹³³ Does this differ substantially from the "timeless" interpretation of God's eternity implied in the simul totus idea of Boethius and Anselm, or from Barth's conclusion that since God cannot change, Jesus must belong to God's eternity? Has Pannenberg really improved on Rahner's idea that although
God "becomes" in the other, his inner being in eternity is unchanged? These questions must be kept in mind throughout the exposition and discussion of Pannenberg's other two conditions for the incarnation in God.

The second condition is the "dialectic of the divine self-differentiation." That God can "become" what is other than himself, Pannenberg says, presupposes that God can remain himself in "creating what is differentiated from himself, in devoting himself and emptying himself to it...." Taken alone, he argues, this condition does not explain the incarnation and that is why he disagrees with Rahner. However, the dialectic of divine self-differentiation does form an important aid in understanding the incarnation. Only if this unity-in-difference is a capability of God can incarnation in the sense in which he interprets it be possible for God. He even goes so far as to say that "one may even speak in this connection of a tendency in God to such unity."

Clearly Pannenberg is here adopting a position derived ultimately from Hegel, although he explicitly denies that he understands God as the Hegelian "Concept" (Begriff). For him, as for Hegel, God can be and is himself in relation to an "other" to which he devotes himself and which he reconciles to himself in a process of unification which is interior to himself. This, then, is the "becoming" which is a possibility for God: a dialectical process of positing and overcoming otherness within himself.
Where Pannenberg disagrees with Hegel and Rahner is on the question of how "other" the other is in this process. He believes the dialectic of self-differentiation as expressed in Hegel's concept of Absolute Spirit does not bring adequately into view the real difference which is overcome in the incarnation, although it may be a satisfactory parable of the identity-in-otherness of the inner life of God. In any case, it is now seen more clearly than ever that it is not Whitehead's organic, evolutionary model, but Hegel's speculative, "logical" and dialectical model which forms the basic framework for Pannenberg's conception of God's "becoming."

Pannenberg's assertion, against Hegel and Rahner, of the true "otherness" of that which God differentiates from himself and unites with himself in the incarnation raises problems which do not exist if one leaves the otherness as a mere "vanishing moment" in appearance only. In Hegel's concept of the Begriff, the "difference" is purely negative and therefore in its reunification in Aufhebung of the difference God remains pure activity. The "other" which is different remains always identical with God even in the mode of negativity. This conceptuality certainly has its own problems including a pantheistic-like philosophy of sheer identity which cannot take seriously the relative independence and goodness of the finite, creaturely reality. But when Pannenberg adopts the dialectic of self-differentiation as the basic model for the incarnation and then asserts the
real, ontological difference between God and the "other" which constitutes this self-differentiation, he introduces into God an element of determination by something outside God—as is seen in the role he allows to Jesus' contingent, historical activity in determining the "eternal" union of God and this man in God's own essence. It was precisely in order to avoid such a determination of God by anything "outside" God that Hegel never allowed the dialectic to move outside the life of God himself. The "otherness" or negativity in the Aufhebung of which God realizes himself was always considered as "within" God. The concept of "self-differentiation" itself does not seem compatible with genuine ontological difference. The "gap" or "antithesis" between finite and infinite, necessary and contingent being, and God and man cannot be considered anything but "appearance" or a "vanishing moment" in this dialectical process. That the real "difference" in any ultimate sense does not hold in Pannenberg's theology has already been suggested and will be argued further in the final chapter.

The third and final condition which Pannenberg proposes is essentially a restatement of the first and of the paradox of time and eternity:

...that an element of God's becoming and being in the other, in the reality differentiated from himself, is one with his eternity requires 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. In order to soften the paradox somewhat Pannenberg suggests
that this may be expressed in the concept that the "intention" of the incarnation has been determined from all eternity in God's decree. However, being true in God's "intention" and being true in God's eternal essence would seem to be two distinct things. However this is to be interpreted, Pannenberg cautions that the temporal occurrence of the event of Jesus must not be left out as superfluous to whether the incarnation belongs to God's eternity. The incarnation, or the "tendency toward union" in the life of God in eternity is there, he says, because of Jesus' contingent, human actuality and his resurrection.

Apart from Jesus' resurrection, it would not be true that from the very beginning of his earthly way God was one with this man. That is true from all eternity because of Jesus' resurrection.144

One could speak differently, Pannenberg says, only by depriving the resurrection of its contingency. But does this not introduce into God's eternal essence an element of contingency? If so, in what sense is God then the "all-determining reality?" Since Jesus' resurrection, and thus his unity with God, is partly based on his very contingent, human response to the divine initiative in his life, the conclusion would seem to be unavoidable that God is dependent on contingent history for his eternal being in its full actuality. This is a problem not only for Christian belief in God's freedom in transcendence vis-a-vis the world, but also for the consistency of Pannenberg's own doctrine of God.
These conditions, taken together, point toward an implicit "reciprocity" between God's eternal being and temporal, historical events of ultimate significance.\textsuperscript{145} This is certainly the case with Jesus of Nazareth. This reciprocal unity in self-differentiation is the primary condition in God for the unity of this man with God's eternal essence. For all its conceptual problems and sterile categories of expression, the classical doctrine of the "hypostatic union" avoided this confusion of God with contingent, historical reality.\textsuperscript{146}

There is a final, all-important condition in God which Pannenberg sees as necessary to recognize if Jesus is to be understood as belonging to God's essence: a "simple" notion of God will not do. If the intimate, personal community between Jesus and the Father belongs to God's essence, so must the self-differentiation from God which Jesus maintained. For Pannenberg this is the basis and ground of the doctrine of the Trinity. For him, as for Barth, the doctrine of the Trinity is the immediate implication of the recognition of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Unlike Barth, however, he does not derive it from the threefold structure of God's subjectivity in self-revelation, a scheme he explicitly rejects,\textsuperscript{147} but from the temporal distance between Jesus and the Father in the revelation event. "If Father, Son and Spirit are distinct but coordinate moments in the accomplishment of God's revelation, then they are so in God's eternal essence as well."\textsuperscript{148}
The beginning of the doctrine of the Trinity, Pannenberg says, lies in the fact that Jesus remains distinct from God as his Father even in his revelational unity of essence with him. The distinction as well as the unity belongs to God's eternal essence: "If Jesus' history and his person now belong to the essence, to the divinity of God, then the distinction that Jesus maintained between himself and the Father also belongs to the divinity of God." 149 Thus, the essence of God itself must be recognized as containing the twofoldness and tension, unity and distinction between Father and Son. The doctrine of the Trinity is then directly related to the "historical being of God" as delineated in this chapter. The self-differentiation of God which allows him to be one with this "other" while maintaining his identity in eternity is his triunity. In the next chapter, this trinitarian "becoming" of God will be explored more fully. There it will be seen that in Pannenberg's theology, the innertrinitarian life of God itself is inextricably interwoven with the history of the world which will give further support to the argument that God's full actuality is made dependent on the world or at least on God's relation to it in history.

Excursus: The Holy Spirit as "Life"

Although he has devoted much more theological reflection to the person of Christ, Pannenberg believes that a "third moment" in the process of God's self-revelation can
be distinguished which makes it necessary to speak of God as a triunity rather than a biunity. This "third moment" is the Holy Spirit. However, he admits that there is greater difficulty in establishing this as a distinct relation within God than there is in establishing the Son. He therefore seeks to answer the question: "With what right does the Holy Spirit belong to the Trinity, to the divinity of God, as an independent, differentiated 'person'?."\textsuperscript{150}

Pannenberg believes the answer to this question can only be reached on a Christological basis in the sense that the "divinity" of the Holy Spirit can only be known in connection with Jesus' divinity.\textsuperscript{151} Essentially, his position is that the "Holy Spirit" is the medium of community between God and man through Jesus.\textsuperscript{152} He is the "Spirit of Christ" who dwells in believers, imparting to them knowledge of God and uniting them with Jesus. Men only know God in Jesus because of this Spirit who then belongs essentially to the event of God's self-revelation and to the essence of God himself, "For what belongs to God's revelation also belongs to the essence of God, if the revelation reveals God himself."\textsuperscript{153} The Spirit's divinity, then, is directly related to Jesus' divinity and God's self-revelation in him.

This "third moment" in the event of God's self-revelation is unavoidable, Pannenberg says, because God in this self-revelation does not merely become the "object" of man's consciousness, but takes man up into his own reality.\textsuperscript{154} In Hegel's terms, man's knowledge of God is the
Erhebung of man to God by God.\textsuperscript{155} Thus, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of participation in God which transcends the subject-object dichotomy in the relation between God and man in the event of revelation. He is the true form of God's "non-objectivity," Pannenberg says. This introduces a distinctly anthropological element into his doctrine of the Spirit. The Spirit is the "Spirit of Sonship" \textit{in} believers which makes them "sons of God" just as Jesus was designated the Son of God through the Spirit. The difference between believers and Jesus in this regard is that believers are "sons of God" through participation in Jesus' eschatological Sonship.\textsuperscript{156}

The function of the Spirit in this pneumatology would seem to be tied very directly to man's knowledge of God which transcends the subject-object dichotomy. Pannenberg admits that in this view of the Spirit "pantheism... appears to lie close at hand."\textsuperscript{157} However, he claims this is avoided in the "differentiation" of the Spirit from the Father and Son:

The Spirit of the knowledge of God in Jesus is the Spirit of God only insofar as believers distinguish themselves in such knowledge from God as creatures and from Jesus Christ as "servants" of the Lord: precisely in the humility of this self-differentiation from God that avoids all mystical exuberance, believers prove themselves to possess God's Spirit and thus to participate in God himself.\textsuperscript{158}

As has already been seen, active self-differentiation is a condition of unity between God and Jesus. Yet this did not prevent the fullest possible ontological unity of essence between God and this man. How, then, does the believer's
self-differentiation from God and from Jesus prevent a unity such as Jesus himself possessed? Pannenberg does not seem to have provided a sufficient safeguard against a "pantheistic" absorption of man into God in the Spirit at this point. This is especially the case when he designates the primary role of the Spirit as overcoming the subject-object antithesis in the believer's knowledge of God. This suspicion that Pannenberg has not sufficiently distinguished between God and man in this "third moment" of the process of God's self-revelation is strengthened by the fact that he cannot find any ground or support for it except in reference to man's knowledge of God in relation to Jesus.

Pannenberg confesses that for him, the greatest problem for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit lies in distinguishing him personally from the Son Jesus. "Precisely the close association of the Spirit with the resurrected Lord, as seen in Paul, makes a personal distinction of the Spirit from the Son appear problematic." 159 Paul, he notes, makes no basic qualitative distinction between the present reality of the Spirit and that of the resurrected Lord. Likewise, he virtually equates the dwelling of the Spirit in believers with that of Christ. This identification begins to weaken in later New Testament writers in connection with the weakening expectation of Christ's imminent return. Luke and especially John see the Holy Spirit as substituting for Christ who is "absent" until the parousia. Pannenberg asks whether this "independence" of the Spirit from the Son as a distinct
third moment in God's essence can be sustained by a unique role of the Spirit in God's self-revealing event.

Such a role can be found, he suggests, in the "glorification" of the Son by the Spirit which is mentioned by John as a work of the Spirit dwelling in believers which drives them to confess Christ. "Is not the glorification something that happened to Jesus from outside himself?" he asks. 160 If such is the case, then the important step taken by the early church in attributing to the Holy Spirit the status of a "person" alongside the Father and the Son is probably justified. Again, it must be noted that Pannenbert is driven to locate the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit in man. Nowhere yet has he shown why God could not be considered a biunity instead of a triunity except by including man and his unity with God in knowledge of God in the self-revealing event.

Ultimately, it seems, the question of the distinctness of the Spirit is resolved in "doxology." The worship of believers, Pannenbergs says, is decisive for knowledge of the Spirit's divinity and personal distinctness insofar as the community in prayer knows how to distinguish the Spirit from itself and from the Father and Son. 161 If this is his final argument, as it seems to be, it is exceedingly flimsy. The distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, if not his divinity, remains problematic for Pannenbergs. The role of the Spirit in the divine life is less convincingly argued than that of the Father and Son.
Pannenberg achieves a stronger pneumatology in his discussion of the role of the Spirit in creation and anthropology, although there too he has difficulty distinguishing the Spirit from man. In some of his writings on the Holy Spirit, Pannenberg has abandoned his exclusively Christological approach and attempted to relate the Spirit to the immanence of God in the world as the ecstatic structure of life itself. In order to rediscover the doctrine of the Spirit today, he says, one must go beyond the subjectivism and pietism of the modern doctrine with its one-sided soteriological interpretation.\(^{162}\) What he especially objects to is the tendency in modern theology, in reaction to Hegel, to relegate the Holy Spirit to the role of a "pretended legitimation for otherwise unintelligible assertions of faith."\(^{163}\) That is, since in his attempt to ground the objectivity of knowledge of God in an identification of divine Spirit with Mind or Consciousness Hegel fell into an identification of human and divine spirit, post-Hegelian theology has over-reacted by falling into a sheer subjectivism in which the Spirit is only the guarantee of irrational acts of faith. A viable doctrine of the Spirit cannot be built on such a supra-rational principle, he argues.\(^{164}\)

In order to find an appropriate starting point for a renewed doctrine of the Spirit, Pannenberg finds it necessary to move behind the whole subjectivist trend in the history of doctrine and behind an exclusive concentration on the soteriological function of the Spirit. However, he
warns, this cannot mean simply a return to Hegel's identification of Spirit with Mind, although he clearly believes this was a profound attempt to develop a doctrine of the Holy Spirit which would connect it with "empirical," and thus objective, considerations. The main reason Hegel's phenomenology of the Spirit cannot be reproduced today, he says, is Feuerbach's demonstration that Absolute Spirit as Mind or Supreme Consciousness is merely a projection of human consciousness into the dimension of the Absolute. What Pannenberg possibly does not realize if that what Feuerbach showed was that any attempt to "locate" the Spirit in a special aspect of man or the world leaves itself open to the charge of "projection" when it then asserts the absoluteness or "divinity" of the Spirit. The question which Feuerbach poses for any pneumatology, then, is not just whether it is legitimate to identify Spirit with Consciousness, but whether it is possible to identify Spirit with any dimension of the world without losing from under one's feet all ground for talking about God's freedom in transcendence vis-a-vis the world.

Pannenberg suggests that a new "objective" doctrine of the Spirit may be built today on the basis of the Biblical statements about the Spirit's role in creation and especially in "life." Two contemporary Christian theologians have especially attempted to renew the Hegelian project of connecting the Holy Spirit with a phenomenology. They are Tillich and Teilhard de Chardin. Both avoid the disastrous
identification of the Spirit with Consciousness or Mind and turn rather to the dynamic and ecstatic character of life itself as the basis for deducing a "divine" power present in nature and man. These two thinkers were similar, Pannenberg notes, in that both interpreted the Spirit as the animating power of all life which is not restricted to mental reality as in Hegel's idealism, but is manifested in a new, intensified form in human consciousness. Both identified the Spirit immanent in nature with the "self-transcending" nature of life itself. Pannenberg finds this identification to be the proper beginning point for a new doctrine of the Spirit which is at the same time both Biblical and in tune with contemporary science. It is Biblical because "the life-giving activity of the divine Spirit is the horizon for all other functions which the Old Testament attributes to the Spirit of God." It is contemporary because, as noted earlier, philosophical anthropology as well as certain fields of science, point toward a self-transcending dynamism of life which cannot be reduced to the activity of individuals. Thus Pannenberg seeks to relate "Spirit" with "Weltoffenheit"—the ecstatic structure of life itself.

Pannenberg dismisses Tillich as not helpful in this regard because he held to a fundamental distinction between divine and human spirit. Teilhard, on the other hand, recognized that there is only one spirit which permeates and activates all material processes driving them toward a center of spiritual unity. In his perspective, "created"
spirit can be seen only as participating in the dynamics of the one Spirit animating the whole process by self-transcendence. Teilhard considered cosmic energy itself to be essentially spiritual in this sense. In this he represents a modern form of Bergson's *âlan vital*. For him, "radial energy" is the dynamic, spiritual impulse toward unity manifested only outwardly in the mechanical and corporeal interactions physicists are concerned with, but inwardly animating the drive toward order and complexity in individual entities and in the universe as a total process.

While Pannenberg accepts Teilhard's basic vision of an identity between energy and spirit, he finds unacceptable his confinement of this energy to "inwardness of bodies." He charges that Teilhard was locked into the classical mechanics of traditional physics with its reduction of the notion of natural force or energy to a characteristic of bodies in time-space interaction. Because of this he was unable to conceive of "spirit" as anything but the activity of finite beings as the spiritual interior of their bodies driving them toward creative unification.169 According to Pannenberg, this confinement produced a fundamental ambiguity in Teilhard's thought: he wished to emphasize the future "Omega point" as the unification of reality with "Spirit" as the true source of the creative process, but was unable to accomplish this due to his restriction of spirit to inwardness of self-evolving bodies. As with Bloch and Whitehead, Pannenberg criticizes this thinker for not
following his basic insight into the primacy of the future consistently enough:

If energy is ascribed to bodies, then the process and direction of evolution seem to derive from self-developing forms of life and species acting as though they were the active subjects of their own evolution. In this perspective point Omega becomes a mere extrapolation of tendencies inherent in the evolutionary process or, more exactly, self-developing creatures. 170

Even though Teilhard did identify point Omega, as the creative goal of reality, with its source, he was unable to make this intelligible due to his failure to identify spirit or energy with this future reality itself, which also resulted in failure to do justice to spirit's transcendence.

Pannenberg suggests a fundamental revision in Teilhard's thought which would remove the ambiguity and bring it into conformity with his own eschatological ontology. First, instead of conceiving cosmic spiritual energy as interior of bodies, it should be considered an independent, non-corporeal "field of force" in which finite beings participate only by transcending themselves in ecstatic activity. 171 C. F. von Weizsäcker, drawing on Einstein's theory of relativity, provided the scientific support for such a view by overturning the mechanistic confinement of energy to bodies and seeing natural forces as fields of energy, such as electrical or magnetic fields. Pannenberg suggests this means seeing energy as "the fundamental, autonomous reality which transcends the body through which it manifests itself." 172 If the ultimate cosmic form of
energy which drives toward unity is understood as a "field of force," he says, then spirit may be seen as the transcendent power immanent in everything that has "life." Then this "energy field" may be considered the future of the creature in which it participates by means of self-transcendence. Its very self-transcending activity is the power of this field in the creature, yet the field transcends every individual creature as its future and the future of all reality toward which it is oriented in its ecstatic drive. Thus, Pannenberg says Teilhard's creative insight into the cosmic and ontological primacy of the Omega point can be rescued if it is identified with the power of the future which spiritually transcends every creature but at the same time animates it as its true determination and goal. Clearly Pannenberg is here referring to the power of "anticipation" which he finds to be the connection between everything presently existing and the unity of all reality which is its ultimate future essence.

This ecstatic, self-transcending function which is both an activity of creatures and an effect of a power or energy beyond them is what Pannenberg calls "life" or "spirit." When viewed in the context of his total ontology and anthropology, it can be nothing else but anticipation. Since this phenomenon of self-transcendence cannot be reduced to an activity of the creature, he says, it is reasonable to speak of it as the presence of spirit in it as the source of its life. Man is "spiritual," then, to the degree that he participates in spirit by transcending himself in
anticipation of the ultimate future beyond everything finite.\textsuperscript{173} His finitude, and thus non-spirituality, consists precisely in his failure fully to transcend himself.

Unfortunately, Pannenberg does not carry through his reflections on the cosmic function of spirit in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. He does explicitly identify this "field of force" with the Holy Spirit, however, by saying that the "new presence of the spirit" in the Christian message which relates the believer to the future as God's future and which was embodied in the person of Christ and made effective in history through him "is none other than that which animates and quickens all living things."\textsuperscript{174} In this way, he says, the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit avoids becoming an escapist opiate or piety. The obvious question which must be addressed to this view, however, is whether it can avoid turning the Holy Spirit of God into an abstract cosmic principle, basically identifiable with the supposed urge toward unity and order. Feuerbach's "projection" thesis lies close at hand when this principle of nature is identified as a transcendent divine person.

Pannenberg especially opens himself to this critique when he identifies God's Spirit with man's spirit, even though he cautions that "The human spirit is not an independent reality of its own, but a mere participation of the divine spirit, and a passing one."\textsuperscript{175} While he believes that by saying this he has preserved the transcendence of the divine spirit, the opposite interpretation is also possible:
that the "divine spirit" is the totality of humanity's spiritual nature projected or objectified as something independent of the sum total of humans and other spiritual beings. In order to avoid such a conclusion Pannenberg refers to the primacy of the future. Only the spirit grants identity and fulfillment to human life because man is a being fundamentally related to a future beyond himself—his destiny in union with God. Man is a being who must transcend himself into the future in order to find himself, and the elevation of man beyond himself into his future is the work of the spirit in man. Thus, the spirit is the "pull of the future" in man and man participates in spirit only by transcending himself.\textsuperscript{176}

In the process of protecting the transcendence of spirit, has Pannenberg not denied to man any life or spiritual being of his own? In one sense, he seems to equate man's humanity, his life, with God's spirit in him. Would man still be "man" without this element of divine spirit, however weak it may be in him? Apparently not, since it is just this \textit{Weltoffenheit} which characterizes man in his humanity above all other creatures.\textsuperscript{177} Thus, the divine spirit is identical with the unique quality of humanity as such. Man in this scheme has no spirit of his own, but his life is this dynamic element in him, which is not part of his "natural equipment." In order to save spirit's transcendence, then, Pannenberg has had to remove from man any spiritual reality of his own and exhaust anthropology in
pneumatology.178

Without the "quickening" power of the spirit in man, he would not be man; but without man—or other creatures—to quicken, would there be any divine spirit as a third moment in God's essence? It would be unfair to Pannenberg to state unequivocally that there would not be. However, he has so closely identified the divine spirit with the "pull of the future" in presently existing, living beings, that his function seems to be exhausted in being the immanence of the future in everything present, spiritualizing it in anticipatory ecstasy toward the future. The spirit's transcendence is reduced to the fact that man only participates in spirit by transcending himself toward the future. The difference between man's spirit and God's Holy Spirit seems in this scheme to be reduced to a temporal one. What, then, will the difference be in the eschaton when the unity toward which man is oriented is reached? When anticipation becomes union, what distinction will remain between man's spirit and God's? Jesus' divinity lay precisely in his attainment of full spiritual humanity through perfect anticipation of the future. Could this be why Pannenberg has trouble distinguishing the Son--Jesus--from the Spirit? Is it because in Jesus the temporal "gap" between human and divine spirit is closed and thus as this man he is fully identical with the divine spirit? This suspicion is supported by a revealing description of the Holy Spirit:
If the Spirit is understood as the new life that appeared in Christ, and which operates in our present in a provisional and only initiatory way as our common future, then there is a safeguard against the subjectivistic emptying of the confession of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{179}

In any case, due to his linking pneumatology to Christology and anthropology in this way, it seems that Pannenberg fails adequately to account for the independent status of the Holy Spirit as a permanent "moment" or person in God's eternal essence.

The result of the considerations of this chapter is that for Pannenberg, the innertrinitarian relations of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not entirely independent of what goes on in history. In fact, in light of the essential union of Jesus with God and the identity of the Holy Spirit with man's spirit, God's essence is not simply separable from history. God's triunity would seem to become a predicate of his historicity in relation to the world, not the condition for historical relation to the world as in traditional Christian theism. How Pannenberg conceives God's triunity as his historicity in the world will be the concern of the next chapter.
Endnotes to Chapter III

1 Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, was originally published as Grundzüge der Christologie (Göttersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1964).

2 Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 38ff.

3 Ibid., pp. 33ff. 4 Ibid., p. 33.

5 Ibid., p. 34. 6 Ibid., pp. 34-35.

7 Ibid., p. 34.


9 Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 69ff.

10 Ibid., p. 130. 11 Ibid., p. 127.

12 Ibid., p. 129.

13 Pannenberg, Faith and Reality, p. 57. Also see: Pannenberg, Revelation as History, p. 131.

14 Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 128.

15 Ibid., p. 129. 16 Ibid. 17 Ibid., p. 130.

18 Ibid., p. 132. 19 Ibid., pp. 53-66.

20 Ibid., p. 65.

21 Pannenberg considers the virginal conception to be legendary. See Jesus--God and Man, pp. 141-150.

22 Pannenberg discusses a host of scholars who use Jesus' claims to divine authority to ground knowledge of his divinity: Werner Elert, Paul Althaus, Friedrich Gogarten, Hermann Diem, Ernst Käsemann and others. In the face of all these scholars, he adamantly insists that Jesus' claims required eschatological confirmation. See: Jesus--God and Man, pp. 53-66.

23 Ibid., p. 65.

24 For Pannenberg's historical apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus see: Jesus--God and Man, pp. 88-106. For a good analysis of this argument read: Fred H. Klooster, "Historical Method and the Resurrection in Pannenberg's

25 A fundamental axiom of Pannenberg's hermeneutic is that there must be no separation between events and their meanings. What any event "means" can be discerned in the event itself in its proper "traditional-historical" context. Every event happens within a specific horizon of interpretation to which it inherently belongs ("Geschehenszusammenhang"). See: *Basic Questions*, 1:86.


27 Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, pp. 73ff.

28 Ibid., p. 83.

29 Matthew 28:17 (Revised Standard Version)

30 Tübingen Catholic scholar Walter Kasper devotes a significant portion of his Christology to the question of the resurrection. He rejects both Barth's denial of the relevance of the historicity question and Pannenberg's historical "proof" of the historicity of the resurrection. After a careful consideration of the problems, he concludes "The reality of the Resurrection is inseparable from its testimony. This means that in considering the Resurrection, we are not considering an unique and finished, identifiable fact of the past, but a present reality which influences Christians today. Historical facts, the empty grave in particular, can serve as indicators and signs for faith, but they cannot provide proof of the Resurrection. Far more important that such 'facts,' however, is the existential proof of credibility which the witnesses of the Resurrection gave in their life and in their death for their faith" (*Jesus the Christ*, p. 129).


32 Ibid., p. 69.

33 On the resurrection of the dead as supported by the phenomenon of human hope see: Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, pp. 83-88; *Faith and Reality*, pp. 76-77; *What is Man?*, pp. 49-50; and *Ethics*, p. 188.

34 Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 133.


38 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:160-173.
39 Ibid., p. 163. 40 Ibid. 41 Ibid., p. 171.
42 Ibid.
43 E.g., John Hick, Geoffrey Lampe and John Robinson.
44 Pannenberg, Jesus—God and Man, p. 35.
45 According to explicit statements made by Pannenberg, Jesus' "revelational identity" with God cannot be adequately expressed by the metaphor of "adoption." See: Jesus—God and Man, p. 141.
46 Ibid., p. 115 47 Ibid., p. 335. 48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., p. 342. 50 Ibid., p. 336.
51 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 3:24-25.
52 Pannenberg, Jesus—God and Man, p. 336.
53 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 3:23ff.
54 Ibid., p. 24.
55 For an interpretation of Hegel's doctrine of the Trinity which argues that it is decidedly modalistic, see J. McTaggart, Studies in Hegelian Cosmology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), p. 204.
56 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:126.
57 Pannenberg, Jesus—God and Man, p. 348. What Pannenberg does not mention is that Maximus' axiom concerned the differentiation of the two "natures" of Christ in the hypostatic union: "For there is evidently a union of things in so far as their physical [i.e., having to do with physis or nature] distinction is preserved" (Aloys Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, trans., John Bowden [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975], p. 553). Grillmeier interprets Maximus' axiom quite differently from Pannenberg. He believes it was intended to stress and preserve the difference between the divine and the human in the hypostatic union.
58 Lauer, pp. 141-145; and Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 1:208ff.
59 Pannenberg, What is Man?, p. 55.
60 Kasper, p. 102.
64 Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 334.
65 Ibid., p. 335.
66 Grillmeier, pp. 552ff.
68 Ibid., p. 338.  69 Ibid., p. 339.
70 Ibid., p. 349.  71 Ibid., p. 353.
74 Ibid., p. 155.  75 Ibid., p. 154.
76 Ibid., p. 157.
77 Walter Kasper interprets this "eschatological" Sonship of Jesus as simply another way of expressing his eternal "preexistence" (Kasper, p. 175).
79 Kasper, p. 185.
80 Grillmeier, pp. 552ff.
82 Ibid.  83 Ibid., p. 285.  84 Ibid., pp. 285-286.
86 Ibid., p. 272.
87 Pannenberg, *Jesus--God and Man*, p. 287.
88 Grillmeier, pp. 538ff.
90 Ibid., pp. 296-320.  91 Ibid., p. 322.
92Ibid., p. 323.  
93Ibid.  
94Ibid., p. 321.  


96Pannenberg, What is Man?, p. 55.  
97Ibid., p. 61.  
98Ibid., p. 110.  

99Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:221ff.  
100Ibid., pp. 201-233, especially p. 227.  
101Ibid., p. 102.  
102Ibid., pp. 228-231, and Pannenberg, What is Man?, p. 33.  

103Pannenberg, What is Man?, p. 13.  
104Ibid., p. 38.  

105Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:191.  
106Ibid.  
107Ibid., p. 106.  
108Ibid.  

110Ibid., p. 98.  

111Pannenberg, What is Man?, pp. 66, 149, and Jesus-God and Man, p. 347.  

112Pannenberg says: "The incarnational doctrine is quite right in affirming that the initiative in the event of the incarnation can be sought only on the side of God" (Jesus--God and Man, p. 323).  
113Tillich, 2:142ff.  
114Ibid., p. 148.  

115Ibid.  

117Ibid., p. 93.  
118Ibid.  


120Tillich calls this view "eschatological panentheism" and argues that the final achievement of
essentialization of man in restored God-man unity is as im-
portant for God as for man (Tillich, J:421-422).

Ibid., p. 421. Here Tillich says: "The trini-
tarian symbol of the Logos as the principle of divine self-
manifestation in creation and salvation introduces the ele-
ment of otherness into the Divine Life without which it would
not be life."

Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 337.

Ibid., p. 154.

Pannenberg, Apostles' Creed, p. 68.

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, vol. 1, part 1: The
Doctrine of the Word of God, ed., G. Bromiley and T. F.
Torrance, trans., G. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark,

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, vol. 4, part 1: The
Doctrine of Reconciliation, ed., G. W. Bromiley and T. F.
Torrance, trans., various translators (Edinburgh: T. & T.
Clark, 1956), p. 53.

Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 320.

Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, vol. 4,
114ff. For Pannenberg's discussion of Rahner's view see
Jesus--God and Man, pp. 317-320.

Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 319.

Ibid., p. 320.  Ibid., p. 321.

Ibid., p. 320.

Pike, pp. 7ff. Pike defines "timelessness" as "lack of
d position in time" and lack of "temporal duration." He
argues that this is really what Boethius' "eternal pres-
ent" as simul totus amounts to. Throughout his book, Pike
shows that this is incompatible with assertions about God's
changing relation with the world.

Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 321.


Ibid., p. 318, footnote 92.

Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 1:198ff.
Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 318, footnote 92.

Hegel says:
"Thus the Universal never goes out of this ethereal element of likeness with itself, out of this state in which it is together with or at home with itself. It is not possible that God, as this Universal, can actually exist along with another whose existence is anything more than the mere play of appearance or semblance of existence. In relation to this pure Unity and pure transparency, matter is nothing impenetrable, nor has the spirit, the "I," such exclusiveness as to possess true substantiality of its own" (Philosophy of Religion, 1:96).

Lauer, pp. 279ff.

Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 321.

Ibid.

According to Pannenberg:
"...the occurrence of what is ultimate, no longer superseded, is capable of so qualifying that whole of the course of time, beyond the moment of its own occurrence, that it can be strictly conceived as true (permanent) in eternity and thus as united with God's eternity" (ibid., footnote 96).

At the end of his definitive study of the history of Christology, Grillmeier defends the Chalcedonian formula: "If the person of Christ is the highest mode of conjunction between God and man, God and the world, the Chalcedonian 'without confusion' and 'without separation' show the right mean between monism and dualism, the two extremes between which the history of christology swings. The Chalcedonian unity of person in the distinction of the natures provides the dogmatic basis for the preservation of the divine transcendence, which must always be a feature of the Christian concept of God" (Grillmeier, pp. 553-554).

Catholic theologian George H. Tavard also defends the "two-natures" doctrine: "Chalcedon avoids the confusion of God and man, the mixing up, in the manifestation of the Christ, of human and divine qualities. It guarantees that in Jesus, God is God and man is only man" (Tavard, Paul Tillich and the Christian Message [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962], p. 122).

Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2: 140.
Although the idea of knowledge of God as an "Erhebung" to God is not found explicitly in Pannenberg's published writings, this writer was present during his lectures on the doctrine of God at the University of Munich in 1981 and 1982. In those lectures he used this concept frequently. The idea of knowledge of God as Erhebung to the Infinite is found throughout Hegel's writings. See Lauer, pp. 146ff. and Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 1:75-84.

An example of the theological use of the Spirit to which Pannenberg objects is the theology of Helmut Thielicke which is centered around the subject-object distinction in encounter as the basis of knowledge of God. In this theology, the Spirit is the transcendent, sovereign and absolutely non-integratable basis of the disclosure of the salvation-event to man. For Thielicke, the Spirit and knowledge of God imparted by the Spirit are purely "gifts." In volume 3 of his Evangelical Faith, he launches a counter-attack on Pannenberg's doctrine of the Spirit:

"Pannenberg's pneumatology does not refute our thesis that with him the theology of the Holy Spirit is inevitably secondary. For his putting God's Spirit and man's on the same plane means no less than that the biblical understanding of the Spirit loses its point--the point that the Pneuma is the power of him who discloses himself and that man cannot control this power but can only wait for it to come: 'Come, Creator Spirit.' This way can lead only to something that was already at work at the beginning, namely a radical and rich regeneration of 'natural theology'" (Helmut Thielicke, The Evangelical Faith, 3vols., ed., and trans., G. W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 3:xxvii.)
166 Ibid., p. 27.  167 Ibid., p. 22.


170 Ibid., pp. 30-31.  171 Ibid., p. 31.

172 Ibid., pp. 29-30.  173 Ibid., p. 31.

174 Ibid., p. 38.


176 Ibid., p. 20.  177 Ibid., p. 19.

178 Quentin Lauer points out a fundamental weakness in Hegel's philosophy of Spirit which applies directly to Pannenberg's doctrine also: "What can, of course, be difficult to see in this sort of 'oneness' of the human and the divine, the finite and the infinite, is how the human can succeed in not being swallowed up in the divine, the finite in the infinite--if, indeed, the problem does not turn out to be the reverse! If the human spirit is to be truly spirit it must be self-determining, free; it must be the product of its own activity; its concepts must be its own, even its concept of God. How can the relationship of the human spirit to the divine be 'absolutely free'?" (Lauer, p. 139).

CHAPTER IV
GOD AND HISTORY: THE FORM OF TRIUNIETY

In the previous chapter, the temporal-historical relation of Jesus to the future Kingdom of God was seen as the basis of the doctrine of the Trinity in Pannenberg's theology. For him, God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit by virtue of the self-differentiating process of God in history which overcomes the gulf between God's futurity and the world's present in the incarnation. The unity of God and man realised in the man Jesus is the ground of God's eternal trinitarian being. All of this pointed toward an intimate interrelation between God's being itself and the process of history as the elevation of man to his true destiny in the Kingdom of God. Because Jesus is the proleptic fulfillment of this unity of God and man, and because the Spirit in man brings about this unity, they are both "moments" in God's trinitarian history with the world.

The question which this raises is whether Pannenberg does not introduce the world—as history—into God's eternal being itself as a constitutive moment in his trinitarian life. This question will be pursued further in this chapter with the intention of showing that Pannenberg's doctrine of God cannot finally escape this charge of making the history of the world a history "in" God. That God needs the world,
or at least its redemption, in order fully to realize himself is implied in his trinitarian theology as in his eschatological theism. This will be demonstrated by showing that in his view, the innertrinitarian relations or "processions" of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are inextricably interwoven with the salvation-historical activities of these three in their "missions" in the process of God's Kingdom in the world.
Also, it will be shown that the unity of God is eschatologically determined by the interrelations of these three moments in reciprocal, historical interdependence and cooperation in bringing about God's Kingdom as the truth of history. The "history of the Kingdom of God" and the "Trinity" are virtually synonymous categories in this theology. If these conclusions can be sustained as correct interpretations of Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity, the criticism that his theology involves a "panentheistic" view of God in which God is dependent on the world for the full accomplishment of his actuality will largely be justified.

A discussion of Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity is immediately confronted by a problem: the fragmentariness and vagueness of his writing on this subject. It is the opinion of many of his critics that his theology is decidedly non-trinitarian.¹ There is no question that he tended to neglect this doctrine in much of his early writing, a fact which he deplores. However, he has attempted recently to develop a trinitarian theology consistent with his eschatological ontology and theology and promises that in the future
his theology will be more thoroughly trinitarian than any he knows of.² He has devoted much of his volume Grundfragen systematischer Theologie (Volume II) to this theme, although none of the articles there could be considered a full, systematic account of the doctrine of the Trinity. The discussion of this chapter will have to depend primarily on what is contained in those articles and what else can be found scattered throughout his works. This writer concurs with the criticism raised by a recent interpreter who said

If...Pannenberg thought through his theology of the trinitarian God in an exercise as elaborate as his own Jesus--God and Man, his understanding of the future/present interrelationship would be given a stronger, more precise undergirding and the merits of his position could be more clearly debated.³

Although his writing on the subject is somewhat fragmentary and inchoate, it is this writer's opinion that Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity, taken together with his eschatological ontology, provides the key to his understanding of God as historical. As will be seen, in his view, God is the historical reciprocity of the divine persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit which is completing itself in the world's history. It is this which gives history its meaning and unity. No attempt will be made here to provide a conclusive critique of his doctrine of the Trinity in relation to classical, Nicene doctrine. However, an attempt will be made to point out certain weaknesses in Pannenberg's trinitarian theology as the main discussion proceeds.
1. History as God's Activity

As seen throughout this study, history and its meaning are of prime importance for Pannenberg. Only if history can somehow be conceived as a unity can life be "whole" and therefore meaningful. The question of the meaning of history is also the question of God as the power which unifies history. However, it is not enough, Pannenberg believes, simply to conceive God as the power unifying history from the future imparting meaning to it from its end. The question of a unity of history demands an answer now and this means the quest for an understanding of history itself as God's activity. Pannenberg often clashes with "neo-orthodox" and existentialist theologies, but nowhere more vigorously than over the problem of history. In opposition to these, he wishes to see all of history as God's sphere of activity, not just a special "supra-historical" sphere separated from the rest of world-history called "Heilsgeschichte" or "inner history." He eschews any absolute division between the acts of God in salvation-history and God's activity in history as a whole. He suspects that Oscar Cullmann's distinction between sacred and profane histories and Rudolf Bultmann's division between Historie and Geschichte amount to a "ghettoization" of theology in a special "safe" sphere where it is untouchable by objective historical research and therefore irrelevant to contemporary scientific reasoning.⁴

For him, Heilsgeschichte is indirectly identical with
ordinary world history itself insofar as it moves toward "Heil" or salvation as the unity and wholeness of reality.\(^5\)

In criticism of the partition of history in contemporary theology, Pannenberg asks

> Does God work only in these and not also in the rest of the events of history? And is not all activity of God, who is love, in one way or the other directed toward the salvation [das Heil] of man? And in the final analysis, are not all events in the human experience of history, all activity of man, directed toward the question of man about himself, about the wholeness of his existence and therefore salvation-history?\(^6\)

Pannenberg believes there can only be real meaning in history if it is able to be seen as in some sense God's activity. Behind this assumption lies his acceptance of the idealistic belief that history is only meaningful if it is the activity of a single, universal subject. Among those who have held to a philosophy of world history, he says, either God or man has been recognized as the source of the world's unity as a universal history. In modern thought, especially since Feuerbach and Marx, man has been substituted for God as the creative subject of history.\(^7\) Post-Hegelian theology has largely given up the idea of God as the active subject of history in reaction against Hegel's supposed pantheism and in view of the manifest evil in history and has therefore abandoned philosophy of history to atheism and Marxism.

Pannenberg argues that this is an unfortunate abdication by theology of its legitimate role. He believes that theology can show that if history is a meaningful whole, which it must be if any single event is to have meaning, its
active subject must be God and not man since "man" is not a subject, but a group of subjects. Jürgen Habermas, a philosopher of the "Frankfurt School" of social philosophy, has shown that the idea of mankind as the active subject of its own history represents only a "hypostatization" of the idea of humanity which does not take into account the multiplicity of historical activities and suffering of individuals and the processes of their interaction.

Not only is history meaningful only if it is in some sense God's activity, but Pannenberg argues also that God is only God, the "all-determining reality," if all history is his activity. Ordinary world history cannot be separated from the history of God's acts as an autonomous sphere without threatening God's infinity and lordship over all of reality. In an autobiographical note, Pannenberg refers to this recognition of the connection between God's deity and history:

It seemed to me that the truly sovereign God could not be regarded as absent or superfluous in ordinary human experience and philosophical reflection, but that every single reality should prove incomprehensible (at least in its depth) without recourse to God, if he actually was the creator of the world....

This raises the question of how history can be understood as God's activity in view of its manifest evil and disorder. The apparent absurdity and chaos of history has driven many modern theologians to divorce ordinary world history from God's activity, and therefore from meaning. Another problem for Pannenberg's thesis of history as God's activity
is the freedom of man. Can God be recognized as the one active subject of history without falling into a deterministic historicism? In a crucial essay entitled "Der Gott der Geschichte: Der trinitarischen Gott und die Wahrheit der Geschichte," Pannenber engages these difficult problems, once again arguing that they can be solved, but only by means of a revision of classical theistic and trinitarian categories.

Pannenberg engages his own mentor, Heidelberg philosopher Karl Löwith, in debate over the relationship of God to history. Löwith argued that world history is devoid of meaning. According to him, "meaning" is to be sought only as something transcendent to history and in contrast (Gegensatz) to it. World history is only a history of failure and no hint of any final, comprehensive meaning can be discovered in it. He rejects as hopeless any "theology of history" on the basis of this meaninglessness of history and argues that this is consistent with the biblical view of eschatology as opposed to the "history of this world." History is the "kingdom of sin and death" and needs redemption from outside itself. "Meaning," then, lies in a sphere outside and beyond history and in contradiction to it.

Such a pessimistic view of world history is not by any means unique to Löwith. As noted in the first chapter, Rudolf Bultmann, following Heidegger, also rejected objective meaning in ordinary world history and bade the individual to seek the meaning and wholeness of life in decision and
and authentic existence. "Meaning" lies not in Historie, but only in Geschichtlichkeit. Perhaps one of the most eloquent and theologically profound presentations of this view of history is that of H. Richard Niebuhr for whom ordinary, objective world history is devoid of meaning in any universal sense and is only the sphere of "particularity, finiteness, opinions that pass, caprice, arbitrariness, accident, brutality, wrong on the throne and right on the scaffold." For him, historical relativity forbids any basing of faith on historical considerations or any attempt to discover a unity of history that transcends the particular and finite events of history. Not "outer history," but "inner history" is the sphere of revelatory meaning.

Both of these theologians, who are very different in many ways, sought to take with utmost seriousness the finitude and relativity, as well as evil in world history and therefore located God's activity and "meaning" in a special "history" in which God communicates himself to man. This theological division of history into two semi-autonomous spheres derives largely from the influences of Lessing and Kant, both of whom stressed the finitude of historical reason and banished absoluteness from the realm of objective world history altogether. Another major influence in this regard is Ernst Troeltsch who asserted the relativity of history. The name which stands out in contrast to these philosophies of history is Hegel, for whom world history was the history of the self-unfolding of divine consciousness.
itself and therefore eminently meaningful, even if not truly contingent. To a large extent, the current debate between Pannenberg and Löwith (and the other theologians mentioned) is a renewal of the debate between Hegel and Kant, Lessing and Troeltsch over the status of "history." As was pointed out in the first chapter, Pannenberg's eschatological ontology and his concept of "anticipation" is an attempt to incorporate the universal-historical perspective of Hegel with the relativism of Troeltsch.

Using Löwith as a foil, Pannenberg argues against any bifurcation between world history and the history of God's activity and against the surrender of a "theology of history" which such an antithesis entails. For him, world history is not a sphere opposed to God, but is the sphere of God's activity which constitutes its meaning. In the same autobiographical article referred to above, he states that "When I began to understand that one should not set history and eschatology, nor (therefore) history and God, in opposition to one another, the general direction of my further thought was determined." Against Löwith, he argues that neither the Old Testament nor the New knows anything of a "history" belonging to the world of sin and death. There, he claims, one hears nothing of a cosmos which has become alienated (entfremdet) from its creator in the sense of having a history which stands over against God autonomously. In fact, he avers, the Old Testament represents "history" as the faithful activity of God giving cohesion and unity,
and therefore "meaning," to events. In the New Testament also, he avers, God is seen as the one who acts in history. Therefore, for biblical thought, the unity of history is acquired through the faithful activity of God.\textsuperscript{20}

Pannenberg's analysis of the Old Testament attitude toward "history" as God's activity may have some justification. It is supported by the fact that even Löwith admits that Israel understood history as the faithful activity of God.\textsuperscript{21} However, his position vis-à-vis the New Testament understanding of history would seem to be more problematic. That fact that the early Christians recognized God as the one acting in Jesus and in the believing community\textsuperscript{22} does not warrant the conclusion that all of history was recognized by them as God's activity. In much of the New Testament, eschatology is opposed to ordinary world history, even if not in an absolute way.\textsuperscript{23} This has been argued by Rudolf Bulmann for whom "kosmos" as used by Paul "constitutes the implicit or explicit antithesis to the sphere of God or 'the Lord'. . . ."\textsuperscript{24} He admits that even Paul did not understand the cosmos or "aeon" as a sphere of evil eternally opposed to God in a gnostic dualistic sense. However, he did understand it as a "power" or "spirit" in opposition to God's rule.\textsuperscript{25}

Günther Bornkamm also discovers in Paul's use of the "world" a reference to something that is "man's overlord, and blinding him, it is the realm of Satan, the god of this aeon (2 Cor. 4:4)."\textsuperscript{26} Pannenberg rather cavalierly brushes
aside the strong evidence of a New Testament view of history as under the influence, if not the control, of a "power" contrary to God, although he is probably correct in arguing that in the New Testament eschatology and history are not set in absolute opposition and that the future rule of God is regarded as the truth of history even if presently contradicted by the course of this age.

Pannenberg's insistence on history as God's activity would seem to stem more from his concern for God's deity as the "all-determining reality" than from biblical, theological concerns. He recognizes that the "activity of God" has been regarded by many contemporary theologians as a line of "history" breaking into world history from outside. Oscar Cullman's theology of "Heilsgeschichte" is an example of this. Another example is Karl Barth's theology in which God is seen as acting "in" history with acts which break into ordinary world history "vertically" from heaven.27 God's acts in history can be described by Barth as "eternity in a moment."28 In revelation and redemption, God's eternity enters time and "heals" it.29 "He [God] recreates it and heals its wounds, the fleetingness of the present, and the separation of past and future from one another and from the present."30 For Barth, ordinary world history has no meaning except as the history of Israel and the church which is really "eternal time" which breaks into history from beyond, never identifying with it.31

This superordination of God's time of activity over
ordinary world history is untenable in view of God's deity, Pannenberg charges. It implies a dualism which regards history as an autonomous sphere of reality in which God is not involved. Such a dualism robs God of his deity. It violates God's power over his creation which can only receive justice if every event is somehow seen as an act of God. The separation of a "redemptive history" as the exclusive realm of God's activity from ordinary world history, he says, surrenders to a "profane understanding of history" or a "reduction of God to a more or less powerless spectator of world history or at best it sets up history as a Manichean anti-god." No doubt Pannenberg is here caricaturing his theological opponents, especially Barth, for whom world history is not in any sense a sphere totally out of God's ultimate control, but merely a "fallen" sphere in which man is allowed "room" to resist God for a time.

Against such a theology, Pannenberg asserts an almost theopanistic view of universal-historical providence in which God is the ultimate active subject in every event of history:

If the biblical expressions concerning the historical activity of God are taken seriously, then there is no event—be it to salvation or destruction [...zum Heil oder Unheil] ... in which God does not act, and only on this basis can the question of the meaning of historical events fairly be put. Such an assertion, he admits, seems to conflict with two realities: man's freedom and the reality of evil. How can God and man both be the active subjects of the same
event? How can history be God's activity when it so manifestly runs contrary to God's will in its course? Pannenberg brushes aside the first problem by stating that God's activity and man's do not conflict in any event because they are not on the same level. God's purpose and activity "transcends" the purposes of his creatures, yet is accomplished in and through them.35 Only an inferior concept of God, he says, would lead to conclusions which would place man's and God's activities in competition or rob human activity of its freedom simply because it serves God's purpose.

It does not seem that Pannenberg has answered this problem sufficiently with these brief comments. What exactly distinguishes God's activity in a particular event from man's? In what sense is every event an "act of God" without making it any less a free act of man? What becomes of the "partnership" of God and man in the world in this view? How is any truly active role allowed to man in deciding the course of human affairs? The reality and seriousness of evil is also always a problem for any view which stretches "providence" into a metaphysical doctrine of God's Absolute Subjectivity in history. Can any event be viewed as truly "evil" if in its ultimate depth it is an "act of God?"

What Pannenberg apparently intends to say is that God's activity is "cosmic" in scope. That is, God acts in events by unifying them with a total context of universal history--"fitting them into his plan," so to speak. In other words, God does not determine the "that" of every
event, but he does determine the "what" of every event in relation to meaning and significance for the course of history. This would still seem to presuppose a certain overlapping or conflict of man's activity and God's in events so that retrospectively, at least, every human action can be seen as serving God's greater purpose, in spite of man's intention.

It is interesting to note that Hegel's doctrine of the Trinity was directed at solving just such a problem as this. Like Pannenberg, Hegel held that if God is Absolute all of history must be God's activity without sacrificing human freedom. According to L. Oeing-Hahnoff, Hegel "saw" the "perversity" of the alternative between God's omnipotence and man's freedom as lying in the absolute division between infinite and finite reality and attempted to show the doctrine of the Trinity as the truth of history as the description of God's overcoming the difference between himself and man. In the activity of man, then, God is alienating and differentiating himself from himself in order ultimately to overcome this difference in reconciliation. 36 Thus, seen from a universal-historical perspective, man's activity "is" God's in the sense that it represents a struggle within God himself. The evil which man does is simply an aspect of the negativity of God's self-alienation. The good that man does is the work of God's Spirit in him, raising him up to God. Thus, every event can be seen on two "levels." One is the activity of man, which is as far as mere "Reflection"
(Kant's "theoretical reason") can take one. The other level is God's activity which can be deduced in and behind man's through "speculative reason." The result of this "solution" is a diminution of any truly independent subjectivity of man's spirit, as Quentin Lauer pointed out in the quote given in the excursus on the Holy Spirit at the end of the last chapter. In Hegel's trinitarian-dialectical interpretation of history, the "freedom" of man is actually God's freedom or vice versa. It is difficult to tell which because there are not two "subjects" but only one. For Feuerbach, that one subject was really man simply "projected" into infinity as Absolute Subject by Hegel. It would seem difficult to hold consistently that every event of history has God as its ultimate Subject, as Pannenber does, without some such identification of man's subjectivity with God's or vice versa, as the Hegel-Feuerbach controversy shows.

The second problem facing Pannenberg's assertion of history as God's activity is the manifest deviation of history from God's will. He acknowledges that the reality of man and his world does not correspond to the revealed will of God. This fact is largely attributable to the rebellion (Abwendung) of man against God and the resulting alienation of man from his true determination. Pannenberg rejects the conclusion that this means history is not God's activity because even the world in its alienation is held fast by God through its history. History, he says, is not only a history of salvation, but also a history of judgment,
which demonstrates the boundaries of human emancipation from God. The evil in the world is a sign of the "absence of God," not as an abdication of God or a "death of God," but as a judgment of God on the world. Thus, whether in salvation or judgment, God holds fast to the world through history.

Pannenberg's answer here is actually quite traditional and must receive agreement from much of classical Christian theism. It combines aspects of the "privation" theory of evil and the "free will" explanation of the origin of evil in the world. By "God's absence," Pannenberg seems metaphorically to refer to the fact that evil is not a positive, purposeful power, but a privation or lack of the presence of the goodness and order which the creator intends for his creation. Germain Grisez, a Catholic defender of traditional theism, defines evil in this way: "Evil is the non-obtaining of what might have obtained, and ought to have obtained but does not obtain. What does not obtain does not require a cause of its nonobtaining as such." Pannenberg's explanation of evil by reference to God's "absence" may also refer to God's allowing man to "have his own way" in the world. Does his answer, however, accord well with his own insistence that every event of history is an act of God in its "depth?" If all that means is that an evil event is an act of God in the sense of a judgment of God by withdrawal, then it is questionable whether that event is actually conceived as an "act of God," even in its "depth." What
Pannenberg seems to mean here is merely that the ultimate truth of every event in its interconnection with the whole of history is decided by God, a confession with which nearly all Christian theism would concur. Thus, an event such as the holocaust is an "act of God" only in the sense that God determines it as something evil and allows it to happen as a result of his judgment on man's rebelliousness. Can this really be called an "act of God" in any normal sense of the term, however? Pannenberg needs to be much clearer about what sense he has in mind in speaking of every event of history as in its depths an activity of God. Certainly he cannot mean this in a causal sense.

According to Pannenberg, then, even in the evil of history, God is not inactive because that shows his judgment through his absence in letting man have his own way. However, this brings more sharply into focus the problem of seeing God's activity as the "truth of history" which is his main assertion. God's absence cannot be the "truth of history" unless the position taken by Löwith and the dialectical theologians is true. God's activity can only be understood as the "truth of history" if history's ultimate unity is the product of God's faithfulness and reflects his purpose: the community of man with God.\textsuperscript{41} Only if history ends in the Kingdom of God as its "truth," its unifying theme, can history in its totality finally be confirmed as God's activity.

Pannenberg admits that only the future can prove this
definitively. There is much in history which does contradict God's will for community between man and himself. The confirmation of history as God's activity is bound up with the eschaton and only then will it be unequivocally clear that in its depth—that is, in its ultimate unity—history is the history of God's Kingdom. The eschatological proof of history as God's activity has consequences for God himself, Pannenberg says. That history can only be determined as God's activity at its end means that even the unconditional and unlimited truth of God, his self-identity, stability (Beständigkeit) and faithfulness (Treu) will only appear unambiguously in the future and only definitively in that final future of his Kingdom toward which Israel's hope was directed. "In other words, the full revelation of the deity of Yahweh is bound up with the eschatological future of his Kingdom as the fulfillment of his historical activity."42

There is a sense, then, Pannenberg affirms, in which the unlimited reality of God is limited or conditioned by the still outstanding future of the world as the manifestation of history as his activity. This means that God's deity itself is "at stake" in history ("Gottes Gottheit selber steht in der Geschichte auf dem Spiel").43 Without the final completion of his faithful activity as the unity of history, God would not be God, the truth and ground of everything that exists. The crucial question in this entire matter, he says, is how God can be the "truth of history" if the truth itself is historical and if the unity of
history is not yet decided.

What does this mean for the being of God? Is he himself to be thought of as becoming in the history of his acts? In what sense are they then still his acts? And what kind of relationship of God to the created world...is presupposed if the self-identity of God, his truth...only appears in the process of history which can only be identified with certainty from its end as the history of his acts? 44

In other words, how can God's deity, which includes his manifest Lordship over history, be conceived together with real historical relativity and ambiguity? It has already been seen that for Pannenberg, a partial answer to this lies in "eschatological ontology" in which God is future. Some of the problems involved in that solution have already been discussed. Now he suggests that only if in some sense God's very being is involved in the contingent, historical becoming of reality can it be seen as his activity. That history will only finally be "manifested" as God's activity means that God's deity is at stake in the course of history and thus he is himself in a process of completion through history. What Pannenberg appears to be saying is that history presently does not unambiguously reveal God. It is not yet clear that every event is an "act of God" either in judgment or redemption. Only if there is an ultimate convergence of all the finite events of history on an infinite unity which shows God's redemptive lordship will God be God, the "all-determining reality." That that is not yet decided and is still a question of history means that God himself is involved in the historicity of history. It is not just a
matter of noetic incompleteness and ambiguity for Pannenberg. For him, it is ontologically uncertain whether history is God's activity and that is why God himself is historical. As has already been seen, and will be observed again, Pannenberg fails to be as consistent in this historical vision of God and reality as his interpreter might wish. In this regard, process theology is much more consistent and less paradoxical than Pannenberg.

For Pannenberg, not evolution, but trinitarian self-completion is the key to understanding the self-identity of God as completing itself in history. God's activity in and through history "leaves room" for the openness and contingency of history only because his own unity, and thus his deity, is being completed in history as the history of the Kingdom. The history of the world, the history of the Kingdom of God, and the innertrinitarian unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all bound together in a single history. Only the doctrine of the Trinity, he believes, explains how the God who is transcendent to the world as its absolute future is also, and simultaneously so deeply involved in the world's history that his very deity is at stake in its outcome.

The general direction of this line of thought ought to be clear: Pannenberg sees that he can only hold that history, with all of its negativity of evil and finitude, is the activity of God if its negativity is itself somehow included in the activity of God. But this is only possible if
it represents a stasis or antithesis within the life of God himself which he must overcome. Thus, the dynamism of God's "life," with Hegel and Tillich, is interpreted as opposition to God within God which he is overcoming in history. In distinction from either one of these dialectical thinkers, however, Pannenberg adds the dimension of eschatology and denies that this Aufhebung of opposition in God is an eternal dialectic which is simply identical with the "otherness" of the Son from the Father. However, in Pannenberg too the overcoming of the negativity of the world can only be interpreted as a "moment" in the essence of God in which both the distinction and unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are determined historically. How this use of the doctrine of the Trinity in explicating the "historical being of God" unfolds will be the concern of the next section.

2. The Trinitarian Activity of God in History

Pannenberg admits that to say God's deity is "at stake" in history implies some kind of incompleteness, or a "becoming" of God. This inevitably raises the question of a relationship between his doctrine of God and that of "process theism." In contrast to most continental theologians, Pannenberg is very knowledgeable about American theology and has a lively interest in process theology. Throughout his writings, he refers to it often both positively and negatively. A number of interpreters have suggested that his doctrine of God is most easily understood as a form of
process theology. However, Pannenberg firmly rejects such a comparison. God's "becoming," he admits, is most clearly posited today by American process theology. Its most impressive aspect for him is that it allows the failure and suffering of creation to affect God himself. However, he rejects this option due to what he considers its failure adequately to comprehend God's "absoluteness" as the "all-determining reality" because it reduces God in his primordial nature, which is his eternal, transcendent aspect, to the locus and embodiment ("Ort und Inbegriff") of the ideal possibilities for the self-realization of creatures. His complaint is that in process theism, it is not God who is the active subject of history, but a principle called "creativity." He accuses process theologians of separating God from creativity and relegating him to the "fellow-sufferer" who provides the world with its ideals, but is virtually powerless to do anything more than preserve the value accomplished by the self-realizing activity of creatures. "In this way process theology loses the absoluteness of God, in that he is made into a factor in the universe alongside others and in reciprocal relation with them."

Pannenberg can be faulted for not taking sufficiently into account real differences between process theologians. He seems to be most familiar with Whitehead and John Cobb, but fails to note that not all American process theologians follow Whitehead in every detail, Cobb included. Charles Hartshorne is a major revisionist of Whitehead who
has had the most influence in theology. Certainly God is not as powerless in most process theologies as Pannenberg thinks. Lewis Ford, himself an admirer of Pannenberg's eschatological theology, has attempted to show that the process God is effective in history through "divine persuasion" by which he provides ideal possibilities for the future to entities and "lures" them toward actualization of those ideals. Even for Ford, however, God is not in any sense the active Subject of history, since each entity has the freedom to "follow" the divine lure toward harmony or not. Thus, man's "irreducible freedom" means that he finally determines, through his own present power, how effective God's future power will be.

While he may be indifferent to nuances of difference between process theologians, then, Pannenberg is fundamentally correct in his basic generalization: that process theology reduces God to a factor in the world alongside others and sets him in a "reciprocal" relation with finite entities. This critique is supported by other astute, sympathetic critics of process theism. In his Gifford Lectures, Archbishop William Temple also accused Whitehead of making God into a factor, however, great, alongside others in the world by allowing a totality of God plus the world wherein each explains the other, but the totality itself is unexplained. His major complaint here seems to be that process thought finitizes God in relation to the world. Only the category of "purposive Mind," he argues, can solve
this riddle and that leads to theism. Whatever the merits or mistakes of Temple's own theism may be, he represents a major Christian metaphysician who saw the same basic flaw in process theology that Pannenberg points out.

A more contemporary corroboration of Pannenberg's critique comes from philosopher Robert Neville who has produced an entire volume aimed at showing that "If theism is true, it is not true in the process form." His argument centers around the separation between God and "creativity" in process theology which he believes begs the ontological question of why creative unification of actual entities takes place at all. The only answer in process theology is the elevation of "creativity" to an ultimate principle, something simply "given." But "ontological creativity," he argues, cannot be accounted for by reference to the decisions of entities within the process of creative unification, but only by reference to a transcendent creator who makes himself creator in the act of creating. In his ideologi- cal history of process thought, James Gray draws the ultimate conclusion from Whitehead's distinction between God and "creativity": for Whitehead, he says, "creativity appears to become a god beyond God."

Pannenberg's fundamental critique of process theology, then, is largely supported by other astute, sympathetic critics. The question which must be addressed to him, however, is whether his own doctrine of God entirely escapes the same basic flaw which he finds in process theism. That
is, does his own doctrine of God bring to expression the absoluteness of God or does it also imply a certain "reciprocal relation" between God and the world? Process theology's view of the God-world relation is based on an analogy of organism in which God draws his being from the world as much as the world draws its being from God, although certainly in a different way. Pannenberg objects to this as a diminution of God's deity. However, he too conceives a certain interdependence of God and the world in which God's deity is "at stake" in the history of the world. That this relation is conceived dialectically, rather than organically, does not entirely free him from this criticism although dialectical thinking is better able to account for God's absoluteness than process thought. It has that advantage, however, only at the expense of a flight into an ultimate monism in which the real ontological freedom and independence of the world as something "outside" God is denied. What is being suggested here is that the real difference between Pannenberg and process theology is not over God's "reciprocal relation" with the world, but how that is understood. As will be argued in the next chapter, Pannenberg's view of the God-world relation is also "panentheistic," but in an ultimately monistic sense. For him, the "history" of God with the world is a history "in" God, not a captivity of God to a history or process greater than himself. Process theology is unabashedly pluralistic in its ontology and it may be that this is what Pannenberg really finds so objectionable
in it. 57

Pannenberg and the process theologians have a common goal: to discover a conceptuality which will include both "being" and "becoming," both relativity and absoluteness, in God. Pannenberg clearly believes that process theology has sacrificed the "being" pole of absoluteness. The question which must be asked now is whether his own trinitarian-eschatological solution can better account for the "historical being of God" without also sacrificing God's ultimacy as the free, transcendent Lord of all reality. An attempt at an answer to this question will be made at the end of this chapter.

As much as he criticizes process theology, Pannenberg is even more critical of the traditional theism which denies any history in God at all. He quotes as an example of this view Søren Kierkegaard's statement that it is eternal perfection to have no history, to be the one who exists ("da ist") and yet simply has no history. 58 This position, which is common among traditional Christian theists, is simply untenable in view of the incarnation, he argues. The Christian idea of the incarnation demands that the transformation taking place in historical becoming be recognized as bearing consequences for the being of God himself:

If the incarnation meant nothing different [würde nicht ändern] for God, so that he would be God in exactly the same sense without the incarnation as he is in his incarnation, then the concept of incarnation would itself be cancelled out [aufgehoben] and at the same time a historical self-revelation of God. 59
In contrast, he says, if the incarnation is taken seriously, as the event manifesting God's deity itself (bezeichnete Geschehen der Gottheit Gottes), then "the being of God is not simply separable from history." Here again, it is seen that Pannenberg regards the manifestation of his deity in the world as inseparable from God's deity itself. God is not God without his self-revelation in the world and therefore whatever event would reveal God himself in a definitive and unsurpassable way would belong to his very essence. This has already been seen in the last chapter as the basis for his designation of Jesus as "divine." Here it appears again as a basis for the "historical being of God." If the "becoming" in the incarnation bore no consequences for God himself, then the supreme event of his self-manifestation to the world would remain exterior to himself, not touching his divinity. But, he avers, if the incarnation is taken seriously in all its historical contingency, the difference between the "before" and "after" of at least this one historical event bears consequences for the deity of God himself and with it a "moment" of historical becoming is introduced into the idea of God. Thus for Pannenberg, the incarnation--the event of unity between God and man--is a "moment" in the life of God because it is the fully historical event in which the deity of God is revealed proleptically as the truth of history. This would seem ineluctably to import a "moment" of relation to the world into the being of God himself. This goes far beyond merely a
general "immanence" of God in his creation. What it affirms rather is that God's proleptic presence in the temporal course of incomplete history is essential to God himself in such a way that it is a condition of his deity. In order for him to "be" God, he must "become" Lord of history by uniting all things in himself.

That the world, or God's relation to it, is a "moment" in the divine life was a major thesis of the Hegelian doctrine of God. Pannenberg considers Hegel the first to have spoken of a "history of God in himself." For Hegel the doctrine of the Trinity was the explanation of the eternal divine history as well as of the history of God with the world. It was employed by Hegel to explicate the unity of God's being with his activity and therefore with the history of the world. He rejected the traditional distinction between God's essence and his activity ad extra as evidence of the failure of mere "Reflection" to grasp the concept of God as identical with his reality (i.e., activity). For him, the revelation, reconciliation and redemption of the world is God's essence as the history of the self-differentiation and self-reunion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Hegel's explanation of the Trinity as an eternal history of God himself has not been limited to his school, Pannenberg says. Karl Barth has renewed this idea in his own doctrine of God in the sense that he interprets the Trinity as the history of God on the basis of the unity of
God's being with his activity. However, Barth deviated from Hegel at a crucial point: instead of regarding the innertrinitarian history of God as dialectical unity in and with the history of the world, Barth saw the innertrinitarian "history" of God as merely reflected in the historical process of revelation and redemption so that the latter was only an "analogy" to the eternal divine history itself. Barth introduced this revision in order to avoid the so-called pantheism of Hegel, Pannenberg says. What he does not say is that for Barth, this emphasis on the "immanent" Trinity as an eternal history in God above and before the history of God's activity in the world was intended to connect the very being of God with salvation-history and revelation while simultaneously preserving God's freedom over his activity as something graciously chosen. In this way he attempted to bring to expression the "prior actuality of God" while recognizing the unity of God's being with his activity. What God is in his historical being in the world, he always already is in himself apart from that history. For Barth, this is axiomatic for God's transcendence and for the gratuity of salvation. While Barth's deviation from Hegel serves to protect God's transcendence, Pannenberg believes that it fails adequately to account for the unity of God's being with his historical activity and thus cannot comprehend God as the truth of history.

As further examples of contemporary use of the theme of God's trinitarian "history" Pannenberg cites Jürgen
Moltmann and Eberhard Jüngel, the Tübingen Protestant theologians. These have set aside Barth's doctrine of analogy between God's being and salvation-historical activity and have attempted to identify the immanent, innertrinitarian life of God with the event of the cross of Jesus. Pannenberg labels this a "theological legitimation of atheism under the name of a theology of the death of God." 66 Pannenberg leaves unclear exactly what complaint he has against Moltmann's "trinitarian theology of the cross" at this point. Certainly he is too harsh in judging it a theology of the death of God, although Moltmann does speak of the death of Jesus as a "death in God." He goes to great lengths to deny that he is speaking of a death "of" God, and seems to be understood most easily as following Hegel in regarding the cross as God's suffering of the negativity of evil and death in Christ in order to absorb it in his overpowering life, negating it in himself. 67 In this way, he does import the cross into the innertrinitarian life of God himself, effectively uniting God's own being with history, but leaving questionable whether God's inner life as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is anything complete and perfect apart from world history. He goes so far as to designate the history of man and the world, with the cross as its central event, as the history of God himself. 68

Pannenberg's hostility toward Moltmann's relation of the Trinity to history would seem to be based on a perception that it dissolves God too completely in his
historical activity. Thus Barth and Moltmann represent opposite efforts to employ the doctrine of the Trinity in relating God to history. According to Pannenberg, the unity of God with his historical activity, which has found expression in the recent development of trinitarian doctrine, has not been thought out radically enough in its implications for the idea of God generally and needs to be further refined.\(^{69}\) In spite of the dilemma, going back go Hegel and Kierkegaard, that such an identification has always fallen into either a pantheistic-type dissolution of God in history or a deistic-like transcendentalism of God beyond world history, this task of thinking God's being and his activity as a unity is still a task of thought which Christian theology cannot dismiss. "Such a task is demanded of theology by the need to work out the implications of the biblical speech of God as the truth of his historical activity which itself only appears in history."\(^{70}\) Pannenberg believes that the solution to such a task lies in positing God's relation to the world of time and history not as a limitation of his being, but as a moment in the divine life itself, a powerful completing of himself through himself.\(^{71}\) Only in this way can God be thought as one with his historical activity, which is truly historical, and yet at the same time "absolute" in relation to the world. As Hegel suspected, the key to working out this solution is the doctrine of the Trinity.

In attempting to develop his own approach to this "historicity" of God in his historical activity, Pannenberg
rejects both an exclusive emphasis on the economic Trinity and the simple identification of God with an immanent Trinity existing apart from all relation to the world. He avers that the early church was correct in relating the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to salvation-history, but it was also correct in not leaving them as mere phases or stages in the presentation of the one divine essence _ad extra_ which would be Sabellianism. The church's movement in thought from a functional, salvation-historical Trinity to the idea of an immanent Trinity was basically correct and ought not to be denied since its intention was to guarantee that in revelation God really reveals himself and is not a fourth "something" behind the three phases of outward presentation. However, he believes that the doctrine of the immanent Trinity has caused the relationship of God to history to become problematic, when the doctrine of the Trinity was originally intended to make that relation conceivable:

Because the immanent Trinity was thought out previous to all historical relations of God to the world, these and especially the incarnation appeared as something superfluous and exterior to the eternal life of the trinitarian God. The God of the classical doctrine of the Trinity is only secondarily the God of history and of the historical revelation.

According to Pannenberg, then, the classical doctrine of the Trinity has tended to regard the innertrinitarian life of God and the relations of the three persons in it as totally independent of salvation-history. He sees two negative effects of this deduction of history out of a previously thought-out concept of God: It unavoidably violates
the openness and contingency of history, and it tends to violate the integrity and equality of the divine persons in relation to the one divine essence. Instead of considering the triunity of God as an eternally perfect, self-enclosed circle in heaven prior to all history, and in order to recover the true intention of the doctrine to describe the God revealed in history, Pannenberg suggests that it be considered a reality accomplished in and through salvation-history by God himself. Specifically, he suggests that the "placing in question" of the divinity of the trinitarian persons be thematized in the process of history (die Infragestellung der Gottheit der trinitarischen Personen im Prozess der Geschichte). What he is proposing is difficult to discern, but an attempt will be made here to interpret and evaluate it critically.

The deity of Jesus' God, whom he called "Father," Pannenberg says, was "placed in question" (in Frage gestellt) by his crucifixion because in that event the divine authority claimed by Jesus and given him by God became question-able. The conclusion Pannenberg draws from this is that "The resurrection of Jesus is therefore just as constitutive for the deity of the Father as for the divine Sonship of Jesus. Without the resurrection of Jesus, the Father proclaimed by Jesus would not be God." Thus, the deity of the Father, as well as of the Son, is bound up with the history of Jesus. Likewise, both Father and Son depend on the Holy Spirit who is the presence of God's Kingdom in the
world and therefore the presence of God himself. For Pannenberg, in distinction from Hegel, no one of the divine "persons" is the one divine Subject whose self-differentiation constitutes the trinitarian history and therefore the proper divinity of the other "persons." For Hegel, the Spirit could be called the primordial Subject of the trinitarian life of God in that "Spirit" corresponds to subjectivity or consciousness itself and therefore unfolds according to the dialectic of the Idea (Begriff) in its self-development. Pannenberg rejects this monism of the Spirit, even though it accounts for God's unity with history, because it reduces the Father and the Son to modes of being (Seinsweisen) of the Spirit. He argues instead that each of the persons in God depends on the work of the others for his own proper divinity and receives it in and through his relation with them as his relation to God. The deity of each of the persons is thus "mediated" through the other persons in the revelation-event. Only because the Father is the one God whose Kingdom he serves unreservedly is Jesus the Son. Only because he raises the Son who proclaimed his Kingdom and brought it near and was crucified for doing so is the Father God. Only because he glorifies Father and Son in their unity in bringing to pass the Kingdom of God and refuses to bring glory to himself is the Spirit the divine Spirit. This state of affairs, Pannenberg says, understood solely from God's historical activity, must also determine the representation of the innertrinitarian relationships. He admits
that this would have far-reaching consequences for the form of the doctrine of the Trinity as well as for the relationship of God to history.

A major result of this view, Pannenberg says, is a "widening of the doctrine of attributions." This doctrine, often also called "appropriation," was an attempt on the part of Christian theology to do justice to the connection between the Trinity and the historical activity of God in the face of an overwhelming emphasis on the eternal unity of the divine essence in Nicene theology. The conclusion reached in the orthodox trinitarian reflection of the patristic church was that "God" is one simple essence (mia ousia) eternally expressed in three subsistences (treis hypostaseis) each of which is completely identical with the whole divine being itself, differentiated from the others only by distinction of relation of origin. According to the Council of Florence, summing up this orthodox doctrine which was largely formulated by the Cappadocian fathers, "In God everything is one where the opposition of relation does not intervene" (In Deo omnia sunt unum, ubi non obviat relationis oppositio). The distinctions in God were thus related exclusively to supra-historical "processions" whereby the only difference between Father and Son was that the latter "received" his divinity by eternal generation from the former and the Holy Spirit differed from both only in that he received his divinity "through" (by procession from) the Father and the Son (Western "filioque" clause).
In the metaphysics of the trinitarian doctrine that has dominated the thinking of the church, then, the activity of God is absolutely unified as the activity equally of the three divine persons. This was explained by reference to the "perichoresis" or co-inherence of the persons in each other so that in any activity of one, the others are also immediately present and active. In Augustine's famous phrase, "trinitarian operations toward what is outside of God are indivisible" (\textit{opera trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt}).

The purpose of this strong emphasis on the absolute unity of the activity of the three divine persons was to guard against tritheism, such as certain forms of Arianism threatened, but it tended to leave ambiguous the real distinctions of the three persons and resulted in a complete separation of their "threeness" from their activity in salvation-history. In the West especially, this emphasis on the absolute unity of God in all operations of the persons \textit{ad extra} reached the point where Peter Lombard could say that "just as the Son was made man, so the Father or the Holy Spirit could have been and can be now."

In recent trinitarian reflection, both Catholic and Protestant, this principle has been vigorously attacked as a major cause of the weakness of trinitarian thinking in Western Christian thought. On the Catholic side, Karl Rahner avers that it creates havoc with theology by totally separating the innertrinitarian life of God from the divine
"missions" in salvation-history. He believes it is a major cause of the fact that the doctrine of God in Western theology has become largely a weakly differentiated monotheism. On the Protestant side, Robert Jenson has rejected the principle as the "bankruptcy of trinitarian meaning." Again, this is because it totally severs the innertrinitarian distinctions from salvation-history, the "processions" in God from the "missions" in time, and thereby loses the ground on which the Trinity was originally discerned as the Christian answer to Who God is. Both these modern critics must be judged at least partially correct on the grounds that if the innertrinitarian relations and distinctions have nothing to do with salvation-history, then the "economic Trinity" which reveals God in the activities of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in history reveals nothing about God as he really is in himself in the immanent Trinity. Thus, the task of a contemporary orthodox doctrine of the Trinity would be to bring together the immanent and economic Trinity, the innertrinitarian relations and divine missions ad extra, a task both Karl Rahner and Karl Barth have attempted to accomplish in their own ways.

The doctrine of "attributions" or "appropriations" is a device formulated by the church to balance the unity of God with a connection between God's trinitarian distinctions and salvation-history. Theology could not ignore the fact that the biblical writings, the liturgy, the symbols and even many of the early church fathers attribute "as
proper" to one or another of the divine persons predicates or functions which the dogmatic principle of the indivisibility of divine activity ad extra forces to be seen as common to the three. Thus, during the Middle Ages, especially under the influence of Abelard, the device of "appropriating" a particular activity of God ad extra to one of the divine persons in distinction from the others was developed. For instance, creation is especially to be attributed to the Father, reconciliation to the Son and redemption, or sanctification to the Holy Spirit, as reflected in the Apostles' Creed itself. In the official teaching of the church, Rahner says, "The reason for this preference lies in a certain 'affinity' of this outward activity with the peculiar nature of the divine person in question."

Although the purpose of the device was to provide a ground for distinguishing the three persons of the Trinity in salvation history, its effectiveness in theology was largely thwarted by the influence of the principle of unity which often reduced it to a mere linguistic fiction. Thus, in defining the doctrine, Aquinas said that

To appropriate is nothing else but to draw what is common toward what is proper, not because that belongs more to one person than to another, which would be opposed to their equality, but because what is common has a much greater likeness to the property of one person than to that of another.

This qualification of the doctrine of appropriation meant that it was still forbidden to exclude any of the persons
from equal and identical participation in each and all of God's acts.

Pannenberg complains that this doctrine of attribution has not been developed in a sufficiently trinitarian manner. He apparently means that it has been left an artificial device which does not accomplish the interconnection of the life of God with salvation-history which can only be accomplished in his opinion if one speaks of an "innertrinitarian attribution." This is the "widening" of the doctrine of attribution which he believes can achieve a real unity of God with his historical activity. He wishes to move the doctrine, with its emphasis on the unique activity of each of the three persons, into the essence of God so that the innertrinitarian relations, and thus the deity of God itself is determined in the process of the work of each of the three persons vis-a-vis the others in establishing God's Kingdom in the world. His specific formulation of this revision in trinitarian thought is so crucial as to be worth quoting at length:

This innertrinitarian attribution of the one deity is now entwined [verschränkt] in the revelation-event with the attribution of the divine activity ad extra to each one of the persons in such a way that exactly for that person to whom the activity of God in a certain phase of salvation-history is attributed, the one God is represented through both of the other persons. Thus, for the Son in the events of reconciliation, the Father who is made present by the Spirit is the one God; the Father is himself dependent in the work of creation on its fulfillment by the Son and the Spirit.... The Spirit, finally, does not accomplish the work of redemption by glorifying himself, but through the glorification of the Father and the Son in their
reciprocal [gegenseitigen] fellowship. 94

There is, then, an interconnection between the activity of God ad extra and the deity of the innertrinitarian persons. What Pannenberg appears to be saying here is that each one is "God" only in that he dedicates himself to the others in the work of the Kingdom and thereby "receives" his deity in relation to the others who are God for him. Thus, the Father receives his deity from the Son and the Spirit because in accomplishing the "creation" (unity of reality) he is totally dependent on their working in reconciliation and redemption. Likewise, the Son receives his deity from the Father and the Spirit because his work of reconciliation is dependent on the creation of the Father and the redemption of the Spirit. Each is God for the others because he glorifies them in their salvation-historical activity and each receives his deity through the others because he is totally dependent on their work for the Kingdom, which is God's "deity," in order for his own work to be fulfilled. Thus, the deity of God is being completed in history through the reciprocal and cooperative activity of the three persons in fulfilling the unification of reality in God. According to Pannenberg, this interpretation contains the unity of God with his historical activity. 95

This is what Pannenberg means when he suggests that God's unity with the history of his activity can be brought to expression by "thematizing the placing-in-question of
the divinity of the persons in the process of history."
For him, the deity of God is bound up with the arrival of his Kingdom which is future. The futurity of the Kingdom places the deity of God "in question." Thus, the deity of each of the persons, and therefore of God, is bound up with history as the trinitarian activity of God in establishing his Kingdom. Only if creation is reconciled and redeemed (although the difference is left unclear by Pannenberg) is the deity of the God Jesus called Father established. Until the eschaton, it remains "questionable" (Strittig).\(^\text{96}\) In history, God as the Father has "handed the Kingdom over to the Son" to receive it back from him in the consummation.\(^\text{97}\) Likewise, the Son gives the Kingdom over to the Spirit who unites all things with God. The Kingdom, and thus the deity of God, is not complete without the unity in completion of all three "moments." The "questionableness" imposed on the deity of each by the incompleteness of the Kingdom in history is overcome only by the activities of the others. That is why each person's deity is "mediated" to him in history through his relation to the others as to God. Thus, Pannenberg believes the doctrine of the Trinity is the solution to the problem of the historical being of God: it expresses the drama of the reality of God in history, the drama of the overcoming of the questionableness of God's deity in the process of the Kingdom.

For Pannenberg, it seems, the "widening" of the doctrine of attributions which he proposes means a peculiar
reversal of traditional thinking about God's innertrinitarian life in relation to his activity ad extra and thus to history. If traditional theology tended to separate them too far, Pannenberg tends to identify them too closely. One might say that he "widens" the doctrine of attributions to the point where it threatens to burst apart God's unity and transcendence by making God dependent on history for the fulfillment of his innertrinitarian life. If his language is not merely metaphorical, as it seems not to be in the light of his "eschatological ontology," it implies an incompleteness in God because of the "not-yetness" of the Kingdom. Thus, the disunity of the world is itself a "negative moment" in God's life which God must overcome in order to fulfill and complete himself. Only in negation of the negative by the reciprocal activity of the three persons can God realize his own unity. The "dynamic" element in God's life is clearly dialectical in this conception. The future Kingdom of God may be understood as the totality of reality, the ultimate synthesis of all the world's antitheses. The complete unity of God in himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is possible only through the process of positing a reality other than God, reconciling and redeeming it into a total community with God. Thus, the "negativity" of the world is itself a "moment" in the life of God through which he determines himself as a Trinity.

Pannenberg denies that this scheme implies any "incompleteness" in God himself, a remarkable claim if the
interpretation given here is accurate. However, his denial relies on the now-familiar "paradox of future and present": "The Kingdom can only be the Kingdom of God insofar as its future already now determines the present and in the same way already has determined the present of everything now past." The structure of this idea corresponds exactly with the idea of Jesus' divinity as established only by his resurrection, but then "retroactively" for the whole of his life and for eternity. As there, it also tends here to mitigate the real force and originality of Pannenberg's thesis by throwing it back upon a traditional view just at the point where his own position implies a "process" or development in God through history. If one took this qualification seriously, the whole point of God's unity with history as his activity would be lost. In spite of his usual disclaimer, then, Pannenberg's doctrine of the trinitarian activity of God in history involves a certain completing of God through himself in relation to the world. The final completion of God's actuality is made dependent on the reciprocal cooperation of Father, Son and Spirit in unifying the world under God's rule. Only in and through the mutual interdependence of these three "moments" of God's saving activity does the essence of God emerge as the truth of history as its "Subject."

There are many problems with Pannenberg's proposed revision of trinitarian theism, the most serious of which is that already pointed out, that it implies a dependence of
God on his relation to the world for his unity and deity. This point will be discussed further later. It also poses problems for the unity of God's trinitarian life, which instead of being primordial to his relation to the world becomes consequent to it. Finally, it reverses the traditional concept of the relation of immanent and economic Trinity, making God's innertrinitarian life a result of the "economic" or salvation-historical activity of the three divine persons \textit{ad extra}. These problems will be considered briefly in the following sections of this chapter.

3. The Eschatological Unity of God

Pannenberg's account of the "historical being of God" based on the reinterpretation of the doctrine of attribution immediately raises the question of tritheism. If the doctrine of attributions is "widened" to the point of appropriating to one of the divine persons a particular activity of God to the exclusion of others, the unity of God would seem to become problematic. This is especially the case since in Pannenberg's view, the being of God is one with his activity \textit{ad extra}. How then does he account for the unity of God? What "essence" binds the three "moments" of divine activity together so that they are not activities of three gods, but of one God?

Pannenberg is openly unapologetic for his emphasis on the distinctive personhood of the three moments in God. In the face of what he considers a contemporary tendency
toward modalism in theology, he avers that the fact of historical revelation requires that the unity of God not be superordinated to the three persons so as to diminish their individual distinctiveness. Rather, he believes that the unity of the divine being can only be grasped in the reciprocal relatedness of the three persons:

The one God can be comprehended neither through a concept of essence (as substance), nor through the concept of absolute subject. The Christian affirmation says precisely that the one God is accessible only in the three persons.99

Thus, Pannenberg opposes all views of the Trinity which place the unity of God "prior" to the threeness of the persons in their interrelatedness. He discusses four major theories of the unity of the Trinity which have dominated Christian thought: the doctrine of "processions," the "relational theory," the idealistic concept of Subjectivity, and the theory of the "self-sublimation of the three persons in the unity of God."100

The first theory, the doctrine of "processions," locates the unity of God in a common origin as the "source" of the deity of the three persons. This idea has dominated the trinitarian thinking of the East as far back as Origen and is connected with "Logos Christology." The "source" of deity is generally considered to be the Father, the "font and origin of the whole divinity," from which the Son and Spirit derive their own divinity. In this concept, "the commonness of origin establishes the unity of Father, Son and Spirit with one another and with the origin."101
Pannenberg claims that this doctrine is rooted in Neo-
Platonism with its notion of emanations, although it alters
that pattern by asserting the eternal equality of the three
persons. Still, he believes that it locates the principle
of unity prior to the trinitarian persons and identifies it
with one of them to the exclusion of the others, thereby im-
plying a "subordinationism" of Son and Spirit. He consist-
ently rejects any "order of being" within the Trinity as a
betrayal of the equality of the persons. 102

The second model of explicating the unity of the
triune God which Pannenberg considers is the concept of
"relational unity" first developed by Augustine and dominant
in the West since him. 103 In this view, the relations of
the divine persons among themselves are seen as constitutive
of their distinctness. As E. Fortman notes in his study of
the history of trinitarian theology, this tradition begins
with the unity of God and then attempts to discover the
threeness: "Here the unity is in the foreground, the trin-
itity of Persons in the background." 104 This is not really a
theory of divine unity, which is presupposed, as a theory
of triune distinctiveness. The distinction of "persons" is
explained as "relations" within God: "The Father is the
Father only vis-a-vis the Son; the Son is Son only vis-a-
vis the Father; the Spirit is Spirit only as the bond of the
community of Father and Son." 105 Each of the "persons" or
relations exists only in relation to the others. Pannenberg
finds the weakness in this theory as a tendency to dissolve
the distinctiveness of the persons by de-emphasizing their individuality as a threat to their relational unity. Augustine expressed doubt about the appropriateness of the term "person" as did Barth, in many ways his contemporary disciple. Pannenberg sees in Barth's substitution of the term "Modes of Being" (Seinswesen) for "persons" evidence of this tendency in Western trinitarian thinking. It has seldom succeeded, he believes, in bringing adequately to expression the threeness of the Trinity because of its emphasis on the unity of the divine essence and its reduction of the persons to mere relations of the one-personal God to himself (as in Richard of St. Victor).

Pannenberg's analysis of the Western tradition of trinitarian thinking depends heavily on broad generalizations. Like the English advocates of the "social analogy" (Hodgson, Thornton, Webb), he is suspicious of any suggestion that "person" might be an inadequate designation for the three distinctions in God. He overlooks the fact that in spite of an emphasis on the unity of God, the orthodox Augustinian tradition has always rejected Sabellianism. Fortman points out that even Augustine took pains to distinguish the Father, Son and Spirit as three distinct "somethings" in God which could in no way be confused. Admittedly, however, his "psychological analogy" lends itself easily to the opposite conclusion. Pannenberg fails sufficiently to note the influence of Boethius' definition of "person" in the Western reluctance to use the word for
the triune distinctions. Since "person" is often understood to mean "individual substance of a rational nature" the danger of tritheism is often feared. That Barth and Rahner both reject the term "person" may only be evidence of a rejection of this definition and an attempt to avoid the tritheism of much popular piety.

The third model of divine unity which Pannenberg considers is the contemporary one based on the idealistic philosophy of subjectivity (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) which he sees as a modern development of the Augustinian "relational" theory. It is this model which he most vigorously rejects on the basis of its supposed modalism as identification of the triune unity with a single subjectivity in self-differentiation. It is Pannenberg's thesis that while Hegel was the originator of this view, Barth has been its primary modern exponent. Although Barth deviated from Hegel in major ways, his doctrine of the Trinity was structurally identical to Hegel's in that he "developed the doctrine of the Trinity as the expression of the subjectivity of God in his revelation and indeed in such a way that the subjectivity of God already forms the 'root' of the Trinity and not only results from it." Pannenberg argues that for Barth too, the trinitarian distinctions represent only "moments" in the self-objectification of God who is in himself a single Subject. He decries this not only for its "modalistic" implications, but also because it makes the world necessary for God's personality
since Fichte showed in his "Atheismusstreit" of 1798 that the concept of "personality" involves an "other" in relation to which one realizes oneself as "person."\textsuperscript{112} By reducing God to a single personality or subjectivity, and by positing the world as absolutely distinct from God, Pannenberg believes Barth implied a necessity of the world for God as his "other" in relation to which he wins his personality.\textsuperscript{113} Furthermore, he argues, by identifying the "I" of God with the Father, Barth reduced the reality of the Son and the Spirit and thereby fell into subordinationism as well as modalism.

Pannenberg's critique of Barth raises enormously complex questions in Barth-interpretation. His comparison of Barth's basic pattern of the Trinity with Hegel's is largely supported by L. Oeing-Hanhoff who sees no difference between Hegel's triadic structure of Absolute Subject's self-expression and Barth's triadic structure of God's self-revelation. Like Hegel, he says, Barth reduced the three "persons" in God to three moments of a single self-positing subject.\textsuperscript{114} Jürgen Moltmann also finds a basic affinity between Hegel and Barth at this point and says that Barth's idealist heritage "betrays itself precisely in his notion of the unity of the Trinity as a single divine Subject."\textsuperscript{115}

All these critics concentrate on Barth's deduction of the Trinity from the concept of revelation itself in \textit{Church Dogmatics, Vol. I}.\textsuperscript{116} There, to be sure, Barth developed it out of the idea "God reveals himself as Lord"
with little reference to concrete salvation-history or Christology. However, attention should be given to Barth's further development of the doctrine of the Trinity in Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV where its "root" is no longer the self-objectification of God in revelation, but the event of Jesus Christ and his obedience on the cross. 117 Although Barth continued to speak of God as "Subject" of his history in revelation and redemption, in this volume he makes absolutely clear that God exists not in the identity but in the difference of the three modes among themselves. 118 Nowhere does Barth speak as Hegel did of an Aufhebung of this difference in identity, nor of the "modes" as mere "vanishing moments" in the self-development of the Absolute Subject (Spirit). 119 Nor does Barth ever base the "otherness" in God on negativity as does Hegel or speak of Christ's finitude or his cross as a self-alienation (Selbst-EntMusserung) of God which is necessary for God's self-realization in the depths of negative "otherness" (antithesis). 120 These and other major differences should caution against any identification of Barth's doctrine of the Trinity with Hegel's. The truth in Pannenberg's criticism lies perhaps in his assertion that Barth allows a certain priority to the unity of God as a single personal subject to the threeness of his modes of subsisting.

The fourth model of the unity of the Trinity is the one Pannenberg finds most congenial to his own salvation-historical (or universal historical) concept of the Trinity.
This he calls the "self-sublimation of the three Persons in the unity of God."\(^{121}\) The basis for the unity of God is here derived from Hegel's concept of "person" which was explicated in the discussion of Christology in the last chapter under the rubric of "personhood" as won in self-dedication to an other.\(^{122}\) This idea of divine unity, he believes, does not place it "prior" to the distinction of the persons, but locates it precisely in their reciprocal dedication. In contrast to the two preceding models of divine unity, Pannenberg says that the classical doctrine of the Trinity did not ascribe to the common divine essence a personality alongside the three persons and when this happens, as in Augustine's "psychological analogy" and the theory of the single divine Subject, the Trinity becomes either a superfluous appendage to the theistic concept of the one-personal God or a metaphor for the inner distinctions of its subjectivity.\(^{123}\) The idea of the Christian dogma of the Trinity, he argues, forms the dissolution (\textit{Aufhebung}) of such an abstract theism and is really "consistent monotheism" because it does not make the world necessary to God's personality, but recognizes the "I-Thou" relation among persons as within God himself.\(^{124}\)

Hegel provided an alternative to his deduction of the trinitarian distinctions out of the concept of Subject or Spirit, Pannenberg claims, through his own concept of unity of essence as emerging from personal community.\(^{125}\) Here, he says, the plurality of persons is not deduced, but
is original (ursprünglich) and the unity of God is only actual in it. Hegel contributed to the concept of "person" the idea that it is constituted in relationship to an other, an idea widely accepted due to the influence of Buber's philosophy. For Hegel, to be personal is to exist in dedication to and immersion in an other from whom the "I" gains its "self." Pannenberg believes that through this idea of person, God's unity can be conceived in an intensity and vitality never before achieved, not by cancelling out the threeness of persons, but precisely by accentuating the individual personalities of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Pannenberg claims that there is no conflict in this view between unity of essence and threeness of personality. The "emptying" of one's self to the other in dedication establishes a community of essence while at the same time raising true personhood to its highest fulfillment. The idea here is that the integrity of individual personality increases, rather than decreases, in direct proportion to its degree of real unity with another person in reciprocal dedication. The unity of God as one nature is then constituted through the personal community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit produced by their reciprocal self-dedication. "Subjectivity" is ascribed to the trinitarian persons, not to the love which binds them together or the essence which they share. Yet, this subjectivity is not independence, but personal existence in mutual submission.

Some of the problems with this concept of "person"
were discussed in the last chapter: namely that it is question-able whether in the context of the Trinity Hegel meant anything more by "person" than "vanishing moment." Also, this idea of "person" as existing in the other of itself displays the idealistic penchant for absolute unity. It is questionable whether it allows to the concept enough individuality and independence. In Hegel's own words, "Personality which does not yield itself up to the Absolute Idea is evil" and "In the divine unity personality is held to be cancelled [Aufgehoben], and it is only in appearance that the negativity of personality is distinguished from that whereby it is done away with." 127 Apparently Pannenberg either does not know of this aspect of Hegel's interpretation of "person," which is doubtful, or he believes it is not consistently held by him. What is apparent is that Hegel's concept of essential community in personal self-dedication involves the Aufhebung of individual selfhood in a single, universal Subject, something Pannenberg does not accept.

In fact, so little does Pannenberg agree with this interpretation that he has developed Hegel's idea of union through personal dedication to the point that he leaves himself open to the charge of tritheism. This is because he argues that the unity of God is produced in and through the threeness. It exists only in the fellowship of the three persons and is personal only insofar as the three are personal vis-a-vis one another. Pannenberg is sensitive to the charge of tritheism and denies its validity on the
basis that the reciprocal self-surrender (wechselseitigen Hingabe) of the trinitarian persons is constitutive of their personal identities. 128 What he does not recognize is that "something" logically precedes self-surrender or self-dedication: a "self" which goes out of itself in relation to another. That is, of course, why Hegel considered the "otherness" of Son and Spirit as only a moment in the eternal subjectivity of God—in order to avoid tritheism.

Pannenberg's model ineluctably represents the unity of God as one of goal, not of origin, because he sees it as consequent to the self-surrender of three distinct subjectivities. But this is wholly consistent with his eschatological ontology. Falk Wagner, one of Pannenberg's former pupils, has presented a critique of his doctrine of the Trinity along these lines. He argues that it represents a tritheism because the unity of the Trinity cannot be done justice when based solely on the presupposed persons and their relations. He compares Pannenberg's formulation with the "social analogy" and concludes that "the unity built on the relationships of the trinitarian persons falls into an infinite regress, by which the original threeness of the relations is continuously reinforced." 129

The accusation of tritheism as a dogmatic problem for Pannenberg's Christian theology is serious, but not of primary importance here. Rather, what is of prime concern is the fact that in this scheme the unity of God is necessarily bound up with the history of the world as the history
of the activity of God toward the Kingdom. That is why it was said above that here the unity of God is one of goal, not of origin. For Pannenberg, it seems, the unity-in-community of Father, Son and Spirit is the totality and fulfillment of the three moments of the Kingdom in history: creation, reconciliation and redemption. Thus, the Kingdom in its futurity is the unity of God and in history it "passes over" from one divine person to another and each is "God" in that the fulfillment of the Kingdom depends on his activity in history in completing it. The unity of God is a unity with a future and the unification of all reality in the lordship of God is part of that unity. The incompleteness of that totality of reality is the source of negativity which enters into God's own innertrinitarian being calling his deity into question. The unity of God is then "at stake" in history. It is eschatological, although proleptically present in anticipatory events such as the resurrection of Jesus and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit in man.

For Pannenberg, this view of the unity of God, unlike that based on a single subjectivity, makes it possible to conceive God as "transcendent in the middle of life." That is, it includes the contrast between God and the world, but at the same time transcends this contrast. In his own words:

Although the existence of a world is in general no condition of his deity, once a world exists, the deity of God depends on his immanence in the phenomena
of the world. The divinity of the Son depends on his fellowship with the Father, but it is also true that the divinity of the Father depends on his fellowship with the Son, and both are God only in the unity of the Spirit who renews the world into the Kingdom of God.132

While it is true that Pannenberg here denies that the existence of a world at all is necessary to God, he makes clear that the full actuality of God, his unity and deity, is dependent on the reconciliation and redemption of the world. This is because, as he says, again, once a created world exists, God's deity is not thinkable apart from his Kingdom and since the cross and resurrection of Jesus are constitutive for the presence of the Kingdom in the world, "the suffering of evil by the Son is in fact constitutive for the fulfillment of the innertrinitarian unity of God...."133

The conclusion is inescapable that for Pannenberg, consciously or unconsciously, God's relation to the world forms a "moment" in his own life through which his own innertrinitarian unity is being fulfilled. This is not only an "immanence of God in the world" (which in the classic sense still preserves the contrast between God and the world), but also an immanence of the world in God. The transcendence of God in absolute freedom, as well as the graciousness of God in redemptive activity would seem here to be dissolved in a necessary process of God's own self-constitution in history. God would seem to have as much "at stake" in salvation-history as man and the world.

The question again arises whether the historical
"becoming" of God in salvation-history involves a completing of something lacking in God. Is there something which God lacks which he then "adds" to himself in the creation, reconciliation and redemption of the world? In the next section, Pannenberg's understanding of God's relation to history as his activity will be explored further in relation to this question.

4. The Self-Realization of God in History

It has now been seen that in view of the event of Jesus and the anticipatory presence of God's Kingdom which it establishes in history, Pannenberg holds that God's essence is not simply separable from history and his participation in history is not something supplementary to his deity. This interconnection between God's essence and history he explains through the doctrine of the Trinity, as the history of God with the world in the self-unification of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in and with the process of the world's redemption. How is this unification of God with what is apparently finite and "weak" to be understood? As already seen, it is expressed as a "completing of God through himself." But does this imply a kind of "kenosis" of God or a temporary self-renunciation of his deity? Pannenberg says that God's unity with the man Jesus and his cross, as well as with all the "weakness and 'failure' of the things of peace and justice and merciful love," represents not a self-limitation or "kenosis" of God, but his
self-realization (*Selbstverwirklichung*). This is what God's relation with the world means for God himself, then: in the working out of his lordship over the world in Jesus and through the Spirit in man, God is realizing himself.

The motif of divine self-realization in the world is one which is familiar in the tradition of German idealist philosophy. Although it is questionable whether Fichte could be considered a "theist" in any normal sense, the "self-realization" of an infinite moral order in and through man's morality and religion formed a major theme of his subjective idealism. For him, being itself is this self-realizing moral will which is "an endlessly self-developing life which always advances towards a higher self-realization in a never-ending stream of time." Since human consciousness itself represents the medium of this transcendent will's self-development, F. Copleston calls Fichte's doctrine of God (if his "Being" can be considered "God") a "dynamic panentheistic idealism." The relation between the finite and the Infinite is left problematic in Fichte's work so that it is difficult to tell whether his view of God is more pantheistic or theistic. However, Copleston's designation of it as "panentheism" describes accurately the undeniable "interiority" (to use a misleading spatial metaphor) of finite human consciousness in God or the Absolute Ego.

The second great philosopher of idealism, F. Schelling, also made use of the concept of God's
"self-realization" in the world. For him, "nature" as the total system of finite things represented a cosmic "Fall" from the Absolute. This separation, however, remains always on the phenomenal level of "appearance" as distinct from true Being. The reality of evil is explained by Schelling with reference to this "centrifugal" movement of the Absolute away from itself. The "self-realization" of the Absolute consists in the "centripetal" movement back to itself in identity through the finite ego's discovery of its true center in the Absolute. This is for Schelling the truth of history—it is an "epic" composed in the mind of God which depicts the diremption of the human spirit away from its true being and its return to it. In this process God ''makes himself'' (which is equivalent to "realizes himself") through the conquest of the split between identity and non-identity in himself. The human consciousness, although only something distinct from God on the level of appearance, is the medium of this self-creation of God in history. Like Pannenberg, Schelling relates this process of God with history to the doctrine of the Trinity. History is divided into three stages or epochs which correspond temporally to the eternal drama of God's inner life. The final stage, the era of the Spirit, will be the age of synthesis of law and freedom as well as the unification of the "moments" of absolute identity and otherness in God.

For Fichte and Schelling, then, "history" is conceived as the activity of God in terms of some sort of
conflict or struggle within himself through which he "realizes" himself in the elevation of man's consciousness above the particular and finite (i.e., above mere appearance) to union with the infinite. In Tillich's terms, this is dynamic Spinozism, the combination of Spinoza's ideas about the identity of God and the world with the modern consciousness of historical contingency and change. The philosopher who represents the full theological flowering of this line of thought and who especially conceived history as the self-realization of God is G. W. F. Hegel. The influence of Hegel on Pannenberg has already been noted, as also Pannenberg's considerable deviation from him at many points. A major thesis of this critique of Pannenberg's theology is that wittingly or unwittingly the dynamic panentheism of Hegel has exercised a strong influence on his doctrine of God. That he speaks of history as the trinitarian activity of God and allows the negativity of finite thought and reality to intrude into the inner life of God is largely attributable to this influence. No claim is made here that Pannenberg is a modern "Hegelian" although that would certainly be more accurate than the claim that he is a modern "Kantian" or "Kierkegaardian." However, many of Hegel's theological themes concerning God and the world reappear in Pannenberg's eschatological ontology and trinitarian interpretation of God's historicity. In the final chapter, this will become clearer in the discussion of Pannenberg's idea of God as the
"truly Infinite" (wahrhaft Unendlich). Here it will be helpful briefly to outline Hegel's concept of God's self-realization before explicating Pannenberg's idea in order better to compare and contrast them. The purpose is to show that while they are substantially different, they have this in common: God's full actualization and reality is made dependent on his relation to the world.

For Hegel, "concrete unity" does not exclude "otherness" or opposition, but includes it as a "moment" in its development.\textsuperscript{142} This is as true for Thought, which seeks universality and only attains it through contradiction and resolution of contradiction, as it is true for the "Idea," or truth itself, which attains universality through an "inner dialectical movement" which includes three stages or moments. Taken together, these form the Syllogism: strict identity, negation or "otherness" and the unity of the identity and otherness in universality.\textsuperscript{143} Being itself is characterized by the same syllogistic pattern in achieving unity and totality. "Being" is the dynamic union of opposites which realizes itself in dialectical synthesis. Like the Idea, it is mediated by relation to an other whose otherness is overcome while being retained as a moment ("Aufhebung"). The truth of Being is then "becoming."\textsuperscript{144}

For Hegel, Being itself is essentially "Spirit" (Geist) or "consciousness." In order to become conscious of itself and attain absoluteness and universality, Spirit must "other" itself in Nature and finite consciousness and win
itself back out of this opposition. This is the function of the world of particularity and finite individuality in the life of God as "Absolute Spirit." According to Hegel:

Nature, finite spirit, the world of consciousness, of intelligence and of will, are embodiments of the divine Idea, but they are definite shapes, special modes of the appearance of the Idea, forms, in which the Idea has not yet penetrated to itself, so as to be absolute Spirit. 143

Thus, Spirit, which is identical with the Idea, is not yet absolute as long as the negativity of the world forms an antithesis to it. But Spirit is the overcoming of this antithesis in the negation of the negative which, for Hegel, is why it is Subject and not just substance. History has God as its Subject because it is the process of the mediation of Spirit with itself through raising finite consciousness above its finitude and above its opposition to the Absolute. In the "annulment" (Aufhebung) of the finite, God as Absolute Spirit, realizes himself and maintains himself for himself:

What is true, what is the Idea, exists only as movement. Thus God is this movement within Himself, and thereby alone is He the living God. But this separate existence of the finite must not be retained, it must, on the contrary, be abrogated. God is movement toward the finite, and owing to this He is, as it were, the lifting up of the finite to Himself. In the Ego, as in that which is annuling itself as finite, God returns to Himself, and only as this return is He God. Without the world God is not God. 146

Thus, the divine life itself consists in the movement of Spirit away from itself into relation with an "other" which is the world and back to itself in the negation of all that is merely "natural" in the world through the elevation of man's consciousness to God. 147 God realizes himself in
that he "posits or lays down the other and takes it up again into his eternal movement."\textsuperscript{148} His "taking it up again" happens in man's religion and supremely in the "Absolute Religion" of Christianity with its vision of the incarnation.

For Hegel, the "moments" of Spirit's self-realizing activity correspond to the Trinity. There is a close connection between the "otherness" of Father and Son and the otherness of God and the world. The Son and the world are not simply the same, Hegel says, but the self-differentiation of God in their otherness is the same.\textsuperscript{149} The cross of Christ is for Hegel the cross of finitude, of negative otherness, in which it is overcome in his own life. It is a "speculative Good Friday" because it is the outward presentation (\textit{Vorstellung}) of what takes place eternally in God in the suffering of the negativity of the world in order to reconcile it with himself.\textsuperscript{150} The resurrection is then the "negation of the negative" in God himself.\textsuperscript{151}

The Holy Spirit corresponds to the last moment in the syllogism of the divine life. If the Father corresponds to the moment of identity, the Son to the moment of otherness or negativity, the Spirit is universality achieved through negation of the negative. Although in a sense Spirit is the entire process, it is in a special way the product of the process as the absolute synthesis of the great antithesis of God and the world. In extremely picturesque language Hegel describes the emergence of Spirit in the world through the abrogation of the finite:
...it is the very nature of Spirit to know itself as eternal, to liberate itself so as to form those finite flashes of light which make the individual consciousness, and then to collect itself again out of this finitude and comprehend itself, and in this way the knowledge of its essence and consequently the divine self-consciousness appear in finite consciousness. Out of the ferment of finitude, and while it changes itself into foam, Spirit rises like a vapor.152

This picture of the divine life clearly includes the world in its Aufhebung as a moment in God's self-completion. For God to reach concrete unity with himself, self-consciousness, deity, the manifestation of himself in the consciousness of an other is necessary. The consequences of this philosophy for the finite-infinite relation will be discussed in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to note that "self-realization" in Fichte, Schelling and Hegel involves a relation to something that is not God, however negative that relation might be. It is the attainment of full reality (consciousness) through reunion of opposites in the inclusive infinity of God.

Pannenberg admits that "self-realization" is an extremely difficult category. As a concept it continually falls on the horns of a dilemma: on the one hand it presupposes the self as already the subject of its realization, which then leaves the self at the beginning of the process of realization without reality, and on the other hand if the self is the object of realization its reality is a result which raises the question what reality stands at the beginning of the process and aids the self in becoming real.153

It might be noted that this dilemma accurately describes
the problem with all talk of "self-completion" or "self-development." Pannenberg concludes from this that the same "self" cannot be both subject and object of the process of realization. At least, he says, this is true for finite selves because of their time-bound nature. For a finite subject, the moment of activity and the moment of realization of the goal of activity inevitably fall apart. Therefore, in the strictest sense, "self-realization" is not attributable to man. Man can only "discover" himself. This is because as a person, he is always an "I" in search of a "self" which "appears" in his I but is more. For Pannenberg, the self is always future and associated with the widening circle of possible unities confronting the I. Man discovers his self in community with God, which is his ultimate determination. God, who is not a finite subject, however, cannot be thought of as realizing himself because he is not bound to a point in time different from his activity. He can be both subject and object of his own realization because he is eternal. For him, all moments are temporally comprehensive although also distinct.

For Pannenberg, the self-realization of God takes place supremely in the history of Jesus. However, it is not exclusively bound to this event or history because it is the goal and proleptic achievement of what God is doing in all of history: uniting man with himself. Thus, the self-realization of God is not a "punctual event" but includes every event insofar as it relates to the activity of God as a
"constitutive moment."\(^{156}\) God's self-realization depends on the final overcoming of the questionableness of his deity in history by the establishment of his Kingdom which is the turning of creation back to himself.\(^{157}\) This happens through man's "discovery of God" which happens definitively in Jesus Christ.\(^{158}\) The discovery of God by man is the self-realization of God. This means that God realizes, or makes his self actual, through man's spiritual and religious activity, a major thesis of Hegel's. Pannenberg says

> The self-realization of man and the self-realization of God are therefore identical; they complete themselves in one and the same process. The self-realization of man is the self-realization of God, but it is accomplished only as self-realization of God.\(^{159}\)

As this statement reveals, Pannenberg holds that man's "discovery of God" (in religion), which is also God's self-realization, is man's discovery of himself. This is because man's true selfhood, his "determination" (Bestimmung) is God. In the accomplishment of God-man unity, both God and man fulfill their true ontological destinies and because this is the significance of Jesus' humanity, he belongs essentially to God as his self-realization and to man as the fulfillment of his true essence. As already hinted in the chapter on Christology, Pannenberg's view of the significance of Jesus Christ has much in common with the speculative-dialectical Christology of Hegel in which God-man unity is essential to both and is fulfilled in Jesus as a constitutive moment in Absolute Spirit's progress toward the totality it needs in order to be universal.
Also in agreement with Hegel, Pannenberg avers that man's "discovery of God" in which God realizes himself is not a work of man, but an activity of God in man: "It is God who accomplishes this discovery." The quasi-mystical, idealist identification of God's consciousness and man's so characteristic of Hegel reappears here in Pannenberg's equation of man's religious discovery of God with God's own self-realization in and through man. Hegel repeatedly affirmed that true religion is always an "Erhebung" of man to God as a "return of God to himself" and that it is not a human activity, but divine Spirit's knowing of itself through the mediation of finite spirit. A reciprocal relation of mutual interdependence between God and man in this self-realization of God in man's spiritual activity can only be avoided if man's "spirit" and God's are somehow identified which then leads to a kind of monism, however dialectical it may be. Hegel clearly understood this, and Pannenberg's occasional references to man's religious activity as an activity of God in him who that he also understands this. For him, the reciprocity of human seeking of God and God's seeking of man is taken up into identity when they find each other and that is why the self-realization of God is a thoroughly trinitarian event:

In the moment in which the self of God is definitively found—as is possibly the truth of the history of Jesus—this reciprocity [Verschränkung] is taken up into the identity of the divine essence itself as trinitarian self-relation of God in the differentiation of Father and Son through the Spirit who binds them both together....
For Pannenberg, then, God realizes himself in history and through the activity of Jesus Christ in which man is turned back to God and God's deity is manifested in man. Insofar as all religion seeks God in self-transcending anticipation of God, it points toward and partially participates in the unique and unsurpassable event of Jesus Christ in which God's goal for history reaches proleptic fulfillment. Wherever this union of man with God is anticipatorily present through the Logos of Jesus present in the world, man discovers himself and God realizes himself.

The self-realization of God is then a trinitarian process in salvation-history and it includes man in it in Jesus Christ. It is the history of God's innertrinitarian self-fulfillment in which both the "questionableness" of his deity in incomplete history and the overcoming of that questionableness in man's discovery of God are constitutive moments. In the final analysis it is the history of God's unification of man with himself without which he is not fulfilled or "realized" in himself. Without intending in any way to gloss over significant differences between them, it can now be asserted that Pannenberg's trinitarian history of God in the world closely parallels the dialectical monism of self-realizing Being in Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. The underlying motif is the dependence of God on unification of opposites through negation of negativity in order to attain his full actuality. Pannenberg rejects the idealist
identification of Being with Mind or Consciousness, but accepts its equation of Being with unity and therefore imports into God a moment of "incompleteness" so long as the least conflict, disharmony and separation exists in reality.

Pannenberg attempts to avoid the obvious conclusion that a "development" or process in God himself is implied in this view by reaffirming God's eternity as equal presence to all times. God's "self" and the moment of its realization in man, though distinct, are not temporarily separated for him. Again, however, this is to reduce time to an illusion and to assert that God-man unity is ideally eternal in God and contradicted only in the appearance of succession in temporal history. This is reminiscent of Hegel's notion that the distinctions of otherness and differentiation in God which the world and man represent are really only a "playing of love with itself, in which it does not get to be otherness or Other-Being in any serious sense, nor actually reach a condition of separation and division."\textsuperscript{164} When Pannenberg falls back on the powerful futurity of God in which he is equally present to all times and all times to him, he would seem to be reaffirming the traditional immanent Trinity as stressed by Barth, only turned around, as it were, so that instead of being temporally antecedent, it is consequent to the economic Trinity of God's historical self-realization. Yet, it is allowed a certain "priority" as belonging to God's futurity. The relation of immanent and economic Trinity in Pannenberg's theology will be examined in the next section.
5. The Economic and Immanent Trinity

In any theology in which the relation between God and the world is interpreted trinitarianly, the critical question is whether a proper distinction is made between God's immanent trinitarian life and his "economic" or salvation-historical trinitarian activity in the world. The doctrine of the "immanent" Trinity was originally devised in order to ensure that God is in himself, before and apart from all relation to the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.165 It is an affirmation of the "prior actuality of God." Although the term "immanent Trinity" is perhaps a fairly recent invention, the concept it represents was fervently advocated by the Cappadocian Fathers against modalism in the fourth century. They spoke of tropoi tes hyparxeos, divine hypostases which belong to the essence of God apart from the world, and not of mere tropoi tes apokalypseos, mere modes of divine manifestation or of relation of man's consciousness to God.166

That speculation concerning the eternal divine "processions" in God became severed from the salvation-historical "missions" of the three persons is unfortunate and has led to a modern reaction against this distinction. Friedrich Schleiermacher represents such a reaction. Also, a Kantian disdain for "things in themselves" (Dingen-an-Sich) has led to a rejection of all talk of God-in-and-for-himself including the immanent Trinity.167 For these and other reasons, then, the doctrine of the immanent Trinity has fallen into
disfavor in certain theological circles as a speculative, objectifying doctrine which has little to do with the central aspect of the Christian gospel which is "God-for-us."  

As already seen, Pannenberg conceives of the Trinity as the drama of God's self-realization in history, the doctrine of God's unity with his historical activity in the process of the creation, reconciliation and redemption of the world. Because of the incarnation which is the event of God's self-realization and the basis of the trinitarian being of God, God's essence cannot be separated from history. As he has no interest in the preexistence of the Son of God to Jesus of Nazareth, so he has no interest either in the immanent Trinity as the eternal "antecedent" of the historical, economic Trinity. Such represents for him only the "mythical" preoccupation with "archetypes" and neglects the real openness and contingency of the future. The unity-in-distinction between Father, Son and Holy Spirit takes place in the historical relation between Jesus and the Father in which the Holy Spirit is also active. It is not a supra-historical, heavenly menage-à-trois to which historical manifestation is supplementary, but is a process in history which is open for man.

From this it is clear that Pannenberg places great emphasis on the "economic" Trinity so that he almost reverses the traditional pattern and makes the historical "missions" the bases for the innertrinitarian "processions." The
impression given is that God is only a Trinity in relation to the world. Yet Pannenberg clearly rejects any modalism in which God would be "something" in himself above and behind his threefold self-revelation in history. Is the economic Trinity simply identical with God's being in himself, then? That would be to dissolve God's being in a historical process and tie him so entirely to world history that his freedom in ontological transcendence would be lost. Also, if the inner being of God were so exhausted in the processes of human self-discovery, however moral or religious, the danger would be that "God's activity" might be just pious jargon for man's infinite capacity for self-transcendence toward community in responsible "I-Thou" encounter. That this is no far-fetched fear of a traditional theist is shown in the fact that this is virtually the position of Fritz Buri and Herbert Braun in their absolute rejection of all "objectifying" speech of God-in-himself.169

These are consequences Pannenberg does not seem consciously to want. He does give recognition to a transcendent life of God which is not simply identical with his "becoming" in salvation-history. He acknowledges the validity of the step from the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity in eternity.170 However, he eschews any absolute separation between them which he believes would dissolve the unity of God with his historical activity and return theology to an unhistorical and deistic conception of God. While he nowhere explicitly discusses the relation of immanent and economic
Trinity as such, it would seem consistent with his theology as a whole to say that for him, this "step" from the latter to the former is not a step "backward" into pre-temporality, but a step "forward" into the eschaton. Thus, the immanent innertrinitarian life of God is seen as an eschatological reality. From the perspective of finitude, it corresponds to the absolute futurity of God in the fulfilled Kingdom of God which is the truth of things existing now. The economic Trinity would then be the proleptic "appearance" of that future immanent Trinity in the present as the encroachment of God's future upon incomplete time. The key to this relation between economic and immanent Trinity would have to be the familiar "paradox of future and present."

It is unnecessary to rehearse the form of this paradox here. It includes a reciprocal relation between the eternal, permanent form of reality and its contingent, historical process through time. This was seen as the fundamental conceptuality underlying Pannenberg's Christology in which Jesus is claimed as "divine" by virtue of his resurrection, but thereby is retroactively divine for his entire life and for eternity. In this scheme, the "eternal" status of Jesus as God's Son is made dependent on his historical, earthly life.

The relation of economic and immanent Trinity in Pannenberg's theology may be identical with this relation of Jesus' earthly life to his eschatological, eternal Sonship. Although the future is the locus of God's immanent trinitarian
unity, and thus possesses the "ontological priority" as the ultimate truth about God, it would not be without the historical, economic path of God in self-realization through the activities of Jesus and the Spirit in salvation-history. Thus, the economic Trinity has its impact on the immanent Trinity. There is an irreducible reciprocity between them.

As throughout his eschatological theology, here too Pannenberg seems to want to combine both "being" and "becoming" in God. He wants to give equal weight to God's permanency and identity and to his historicity and relativity. In this sense, his doctrine of God might correctly be designated "di-polar" in a broad sense. The di-polar view of God is of course championed especially by process theologians and it has already been seen that there are irreconcilable differences between Pannenberg's doctrine of God and process theism. However, they share this basic concern to include seemingly opposite ontological categories in God. Does either one succeed in comprehending God as both absolute and relative? Or does one "pole" collapse into the other in both their versions of di-polar theism?

The leading theorist of the process version of di-polar theism today is Charles Hartshorne. His entire doctrine of God aims at including both absolute and relative aspects in the one divine reality.\textsuperscript{171} Divine "perfection" is not exclusion of all interior relatedness and becoming, but inclusion of these in an unsurpassable way. Yet, divine perfection also points toward a non-changing identity which
must somehow be held in tension with the inner relativity. Borrowing heavily from Whitehead, Hartshorne distinguishes two "poles" or aspects in God: the "abstract" nature of God in which he is eternal, absolute and unchanging, and the "concrete actuality of God" in which he is supremely temporal and relative. God's concrete nature is always dependent on the decisions made by worldly actualities. His "abstract nature" is independent of these as the eternal receptacle of the potentialities for the world as God envisions it to be. As is apparent, these poles, or aspects, of God correspond to Whitehead's "primordial" and "consequent" natures of God.

The problem which immediately confronts such a concept is how to avoid dualism in God's being. How are the two "poles" related to one another so that they do not simply fall into conflicting sets of predicates or attributes in God? Hartshorne believes they can coexist in God without splitting him into two beings because each pole has its proper function. God is not both relative and absolute in the same way with regard to the same realities and functions. Thus one might say that "ideals" are absolute in God, while "reality" is always changing him, either by enriching or impoverishing his concrete being. This is a very attractive and seemingly cogent way of conceiving God's absoluteness and relativity, but as Colin Gunton points out, in Hartshorne the poles do fall into conflict and one ultimately swallows up the other.

This is already indicated by the designation of the
pole in which God is relative to the world as "concrete." In this context, "concrete" refers to the whole reality as contrasted with "abstract" which is the omission of part of the truth of something. The abstract nature of God in which he is eternal and unchanging is then a part of the more general nature of God which is absolute social relatedness.

"Becoming" is then the all-inclusive category in which "being" in the sense of permanency is only an aspect. Gunton says that for Hartshorne,

> The most real thing about God is his relativity; this is ontologically and logically prior, and the absoluteness is a necessary implication of the relativity. Abstract qualities can only be understood in the light of the concrete, which describe what God really is.

The "ideals" or "eternal objects" of God's abstract, primordial nature are mere possibilities even for God. That they are eternal and unchanging does little to rescue the real absoluteness of God in process theology. Apart from a world in which these are realized, God himself would be non-actual. In Hartshorne's theology, then, it seems that God is only absolute in that he is the supremely relative one. Apart from his relativity to the presently-existing whole of actual occasions, God would be nothing actual. Just as God is only absolute because he is relative, so for Hartshorne he is only eternal because he is temporal and he is only being because he is becoming. In Hartshorne's process theism, then, "God is not pure being but pure becoming." Gunton concludes from this that process theology's di-polar theism does not really combine being and becoming in the
reality of God, but collapses the former into the latter:

Hartshorne is explicit: "The contrast of being-becoming, absolute-relative, necessary-contingent is contained as a whole in becoming, relativity, contingency," and not in the other pole of the contrast. Or, as he says, "becoming is reality itself, and being only an aspect of this reality." 178

According to Gunton, then, process theism does not succeed in its attempt to do justice to both God's transcendent absoluteness and immanent relatedness. Although a much more sympathetic critic, Edward Farley also find Hartshorne's di-polar account of God's transcendence to be heavily weighted on the pole of relativity and becoming. God's absoluteness is his *surrelativity* which means his enjoyment of relation to all that is in all its aspects. 179 But this means that God is also "supreme dependence" which is "infinitively sensitive" to all influences. 180 In view of these trenchant criticisms, it must be asked whether process theology really represents God as "di-polar" or whether it does not ultimately fall into a mono-polarity of sheer becoming.

It must be asked whether Pannenberg's form of di-polar theism succeeds any better than process theology in synthesizing being and becoming in God. Like process theism, his temporal-dialectical vision of God's historical being tends to reduce one pole to the other. Unlike process theology, however, it is difficult to tell which pole or aspect engulfs the other because both seem to. Viewed from one perspective, Pannenberg's theology appears to affirm the eternal
and absolute character of God in his transcendent futurity to all that exists and passes away. His hearty rejection of process theism seems to confirm this perspective. For him, God as the "power of the future" is the all-determining reality whose Kingdom (deity) is grounded solely in itself and is not the product of human striving or wishing. 181 God's futurity is his eternity, as shown in chapter two. When the eschaton arrives and God's powerful rule over everything is manifested, it will then be seen that he is and has always been the power determining every past and present. His deity will be established "retroactively" for all of time.

When one turns one's head slightly, a different perspective appears. God's essence, though the same from eternity, has a history through time. 182 Pannenberg makes absolutely clear that history, as the activity of God in realizing himself through man, is not something superfluous to God's deity and full actuality. The history of the world, in all its failure and suffering, success and glory, is the history of God in his triune self-unification. The relationship between "immanent" and "economic" Trinity in Pannenberg's theology tends to support the validity of this perspective. This is not because he imports temporal succession into God, which he explicitly denies has any reality for God in his eternity, but because he makes the immanent Trinity--God's very innertrinitarian life--dependent for its final constitution on the economic becoming of God in salvation-history. However much God's "self" (identity) and the moment of its
"realization" coincide temporally for God, if its realization is inextricably interwoven with the reality of the world, God's essence includes the world even if only as a "negative moment." "Becoming" in the sense of dialectical movement seems to swallow up "being" in the sense of self-sufficiency and identity, then, and it becomes questionable whether it can ever be certain that salvation-history is the eternally free, gracious activity of a transcendent God. Only if God "already" possesses his identity and actuality "prior" to his salvation-historical self-expression can it really reveal him as he is and can he be "Lord" over it. The comment of L. Oeing-Hanhoff concerning Hegel's doctrine of God applies equally well to Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity: "Without eternal, pre-temporal completion of the self-constitution of God in the immanent Trinity there can be no post-temporal completion in the eschatological glorification of creation."\(^{183}\)

Pannenberg's desire to do justice to both God's historical "becoming" and eternal "being" is commendable even if his specific solution, for all its originality and intellectual rigor, is not successful from a Christian theistic point of view. His attempt to focus God's relationship to the world on the incarnation and Trinity is also intentionally correct, if not above theological criticism. It is this writer's opinion that the logical and ontological priority of the immanent Trinity is absolutely essential to understanding the economic Trinity as a veridical
and gracious self-revelation of God. This is what Pannenberg's eschatological theism does not express, in spite of the "ontological priority of the future." This is perhaps because he defines the future as eternity in opposition to the past and present. If God's transcendent freedom and self-identical lordship are to be adequately expressed in a theology, his eternity must be conceived as ontologically "prior" to all times in which he expresses or reveals himself. Neither past, present, nor future can be exclusively related to God's eternity, although each can in a special way express an aspect of God's eternity in relation to time. While the future is especially apt as a metaphor to express the fact that God's eternity surpasses and is incommensurable with all temporal states of affairs, it is peculiarly unsuited for expressing God's ontological superiority and self-sufficiency in relation to his historical relation with the world. This is seen precisely in the case of the relation of immanent and economic Trinity, where the immanent Trinity must be conceived as "primordial" if God's economic activity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is to be understood as the free expression of his love and grace. Barth also considered the doctrine of the Trinity the key to God's relation to the world. However, he recognized the necessity of the "priority" of the immanent completeness of God's innertrinitarian life for the "loving" character of that relation. His rejection of a God evolving through history follows from the
fact that if love is to be the ultimate basis of that relation, it must be established and continued freely. A God who is bound to be related cannot be said to relate himself in love for that requires freedom of action. 184

The "priority" of the immanent Trinity does not mean that the innertrinitarian "processions" must be severed from the salvation-historical "missions" of the divine persons, as has happened all too often in the past. It does mean, however, that the processions "in" God cannot be exhausted in the missions ad extra without introducing the world into God's essence as a constitutive moment. It is perhaps possible to find at least a partial solution in Karl Barth's trinitarian theology, especially as interpreted by Eberhard Jüngel. Jüngel has attempted to show that God's immanent being in his eternal innertrinitarian life is God's "Being in Becoming" in that God has from eternity freely chosen to be "for man" in Jesus Christ which is the "office" of the Son. 185 Yet this is a free decision of God. God's innertrinitarian determination to be "for man" in Jesus, to become historical in creation, reconciliation and redemption is grounded in the fact that "He does not need us and yet He finds no enjoyment in His self-enjoyment." 186 God "could" be God in eternal blessedness without man and the world, but in the love between Father and Son there is "room" for man so that God has not chosen to be God without man.

From all eternity, then, the earthly, historical "mission" of the Son is included in God's innertrinitarian
self-determination to be for man. In this way, Jüngel says, God's *opus ad extra* in salvation-history is the *immanent opus Dei ad extra internum*. Thus, the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity. In his salvation-historical becoming in time, God "corresponds" to himself in his eternal, freely-chosen self-election between Father and Son for the sending of the Son into the world. Colin Gunton points out that for Barth, God is absolute (independent, self-sufficient Being) in order that he might be related. He is already fully God in his innertrinitarian being so that he might become, not something different, but what he already is in history. For Barth, God's absoluteness is not the ground of his opposition to historical reality, but the basis for his gracious immanence in it in which he does not "lose" himself in its relativity and dependence.

The crucial difference between Pannenberg's doctrine and that held by Barth and Jüngel is that for the latter, the economic Trinity "corresponds" to the immanent Trinity while for the former the situation is just the reverse. For Jüngel and Barth, God has no "stake" in his historical relation with the world other than to fulfill his freely chosen self-determination to be man's savior. Yet, from all eternity God does so freely choose and the innertrinitarian relation of Father and Son "already" includes this elective purpose. In the person of the Son, then, Jüngel says, God already relates himself to man before he has been created. "God's being
takes place as *historia praeveniens*. In this *historia praeveniens* God determines himself to be ours as one of us." 190

No doubt Pannenberg would consider even Jüngel's account of the immanent Trinity, with all its dynamic connection between the historical "mission" and the eternal generation of the Son a case of turning the incarnation into a "fixed and presupposed reality." Certainly Barth, if not Jüngel, does have a penchant for overriding history in timeless eternity. 191 If Pannenberg tends to equate eternity too simply with the future so that it seems to be consequent to and conditioned by time, Barth tends to equate it too simply with the past so that it often seems everything has already been decided in the pre-temporal Grundentscheidungen of God. It is difficult to avoid creating this impression, however, as long as one wishes to consider the incarnation and other events of saving history as free and gracious acts of God.

The thesis that Pannenberg's doctrine of God involves a certain dependence of God on the world for his full actuality and deity is largely established by the considerations of this chapter. Pannenberg's disclaimers on the basis of the absolute priority of the future and the "eternity" of God in his powerful futurity cannot prevent the fact that apart from relation to the world God would not be fully actual as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the final chapter, an attempt will be made to explore further his ontology, especially with regard to the relation of finite and infinite
implied in it. There it will be argued that his doctrine of God can properly be designated "panentheistic" in that it contains no absolute distinction between the finite and the infinite and in fact imports the finite into the infinite as a constitutive moment.
Endnotes to Chapter IV


2Wolfhart Pannenberg, "God's Presence in History," p. 263.


5Ibid., pp. 355ff.

6Ibid., p. 359. Translations are this writer's.

7Ibid., p. 354; and Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:112-113.


9Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:113.


11Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:112-128.

12Ibid., p. 112. 13Ibid., p. 114.

14Bultmann, History and Eschatology, pp. 154-155.

15H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 54. Niebuhr does not reject world history as entirely irrelevant to faith. His theology of history is much more dialectical than that. However, he does accept Troeltsch's "historical relativity" principle as valid and therefore cannot find revelation or objective meaning in the bare facticity of historical reality.

18 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2: 114.
19 Ibid., p. 116. 20 Ibid., p. 115.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
25 Ibid., pp. 256-257.
27 Barth, The Doctrine of God, pp. 616ff.
28 Ibid., p. 331. 29 Ibid., pp. 616ff.
31 Barth, The Doctrine of God, p. 625.
32 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2: 116. 33 Ibid.
34 Ibid. 35 Ibid.
37 See above, p. 229, endnote 178.
38 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2: 116-117.
39 Ibid., p. 117. 40 Grisez, p. 294.
41 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2: 117.
42 Ibid., p. 118. 43 Ibid. 44 Ibid.
45 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 3:33-100; and Tillich, 3:284ff.

47 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2: 118-119.

48 Ibid., p. 119.


50 Ibid., p. 40.


52 Neville, p. 142. 53 Ibid., p. 44.

54 Ibid., p. 45.


56 Ibid., pp. 77ff. 57 Ibid., pp. 75-85.

58 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:119.

59 Ibid. 60 Ibid., pp. 119-120. 61 Ibid., p. 120.

62 Ibid.

63 This is a brief and necessarily truncated summary of Hegel's doctrine. For its location in Hegel see his Philosophy of Religion, 3:7-150.

64 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2: 121.

65 Barth, The Doctrine of God, p. 663.

66 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2: 121. As this statement shows, there is some conflict between Moltmann and Pannenberg. For the primary theological works see: Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God, trans., R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); and Eberhard Jüngel, God as the Mystery of the World, trans., Darrell Guder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

67 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 3:93-100.


70 Ibid., p. 122. 71 Ibid. 72 Ibid., p. 123.

73 Ibid. 74 Ibid. 75 Ibid. 76 Ibid.

77 Ibid., p. 124. 78 Ibid. 79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., pp. 124-125.


82 Fortman, pp. 82ff.


87 Jenson, p. 127.


89 de Margerie, p. 194.

90 Ibid., pp. 193-198; and see the definition in:

91Rahner, Trinity, p. 77.

92St. Thomas Aquinas, De Veritate, 7:3, quoted by de Margerie, p. 195.

93Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:125. 94Ibid.

95Ibid.

96Throughout this dissertation, "strittig" is translated by the English word "questionable." This follows the first option provided by Cassell's German Dictionary, ed., Harold T. Betteridge (London: Cassell & Co., 1977), p. 457. However, Pannenberg prefers the translation "debatable." A major point of this study of his theology, however, is that for him the negativity denoted by the word "strittig" is ontological and not merely noetic. In English, "questionable" conveys this meaning better than "debatable." Also, this translation is supported by other phrases which describe the same concept in Pannenberg's writing on God: "in Frage gestellt" and especially "auf dem Spiel," both of which refer to God's deity in the world. It is this writer's belief that "debatable" simply does not carry the weight of significance implied by "strittig."

97This is taken from lectures given by Pannenberg at the University of Munich (Ludwig-Maximilians Universität) during the winter semester, 1981-1982.

98Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:127. 99Ibid., p. 95.

100Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 180ff.; and Grundfragen, 2:96-111.


102Pannenberg's analysis and critique of this classical Christian doctrine is only partly correct. He overlooks the fact that while some of the patristic theologians, such as the Apologists and Origen, tended to interpret it in a subordinationist sense, others such as the Cappadocians and Hilary explicitly rejected such an interpretation and held to the absolute, eternal equality of essence ("homoousios") of the Son with the Father (Fortman, pp. 126ff. and de Margerie, pp. 153ff.). Apparently Pannenberg considers any view which posits an "order of being" in the Trinity subordinationist. Also, E. Fortman's analysis of the Trinitarian dogma of early Christianity conflicts with
Pannenberg's over the question of the "priority" of the unity of essence over the threeeness of persons in this doctrine of "processions." The Greek fathers, he says, thought primarily of three persons and "their problem was how to arrive at 'one' from 'three,' how to move from the plurality of persons to the unity of nature" (Fortman, p. 140). Their solution, he says, was the "consubstantiality" of the Son and the Spirit with the Father as well as the doctrine of "perichoresis."

103 Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, pp. 180-181.

104 Fortman, p. 140.

105 Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 181.

106 Augustine said: "The formula three persons has been coined not in order to give a complete explanation by means of it, but in order that we might not be obliged to remain silent" (De Trinitate, 5:10, quoted in Fortman, p. 143). For Barth's reservations about "person" as a proper designation for the triune distinctions see The Word of God, CD 1/1, pp. 375ff.

107 Fortman, p. 143. 108 Ibid., p. 191.

109 For Rahner's reservations about using the word "persons" see Trinity, pp. 103ff. Pannenberg's critique of Barth may be well taken, however. While he insists that his designation of the three aspects of God as "modes of being" in no way involves a modalistic diminution of their distinctness, his identification of the whole divine Trinity as the one "Thou" thrice reiterated, one single "personality," one "face" (Antlitz), one will, one work, tends to reinforce the suspicion that he does not consistently do justice to that distinctness (The Doctrine of God, CD 2/1, p. 297).

110 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:96-111.

111 Ibid., p. 100. 112 Ibid., p. 95.

113 Ibid., pp. 104-105.

114 Oeing-Hanhoff, p. 398.


116 See Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God, CD 1/1, pp. 295-333.
118 Ibid., p. 205.
119 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 3:123.
120 Ibid., pp. 71ff.
121 Pannenberg, Jesus—God and Man, pp. 181-183.
122 See above, pp. 170ff.
124 Ibid., p. 110.  125 Ibid., p. 108.
126 Ibid.
127 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion, 3:25.
128 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:108.
130 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:111.
131 Ibid., p. 110.  132 Ibid., p. 111.
133 Pannenberg, "Vom Nutzen der Eschatologie," p. 94.
134 Pannenberg, Grundfragen, 2:139.
135 Ibid., p. 141.
139 Ibid., pp. 159ff.


143 Ibid., 1:208; and 3:2.

144 Ibid., 1:163.


146 Ibid., pp. 199-200.

147 Ibid., p. 207.

148 Ibid., 2:335.

149 Ibid., 3:39.

150 Ibid., pp. 93ff.

151 Ibid., p. 97.

152 Ibid., p. 124.


154 Ibid., pp. 80-95.

155 Ibid., pp. 142-143.

156 Ibid., p. 143.

157 Ibid., p. 144.

158 Ibid., p. 142.

159 Ibid., p. 144.

160 Ibid., p. 142.


163 Ibid., p. 145.


165 Thielicke, 2:176-177.

166 Ibid., p. 177.


169 Ibid., pp. 81-97.


175 Ibid. 176 Gunton, p. 31. 177 Ibid., p. 33.


179 Farley, p. 160.

180 Ibid. (Quoted from Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity, p. 66.)

181 See above, pp. 47-67.


183 Oeing-Hanhoff, p. 403.

184 Gunton, p. 193.

185 Eberhard Jüngel, The Doctrine of the Trinity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), passim.

186 Barth, The Doctrine of God, CD 2/1, p. 283.

187 Jüngel, Trinity, p. 76.

188 This is an axiom of Karl Rahner's trinitarian theology: Trinity, p. 22.

189 Gunton, p. 197.

190 Jüngel, Trinity, p. 76.
CHAPTER V

ESCHATOLOGICAL PANENTHEISM

The major concern of this critical study of Wolfhart Pannenberg's theology has been to determine his understanding of the relation of God to the world, especially as that relation affects God. As has been seen, in concert with much modern Christian theology, he rejects the traditional theistic concept of God as timeless substance bearing no real internal relation to the changing world, but existing in eternal self-sameness. Yet, it has also been observed that he rejects the idea of a God who is "in process" with the world. It is this writer's view that the heart of Pannenberg's theological contribution lies in his attempt to re-formulate the God-world relation in such a way as to do justice to both the traditional concern for God's absoluteness and infinity and the modern concern for God's historical involvement in the world. It is also this writer's view that his contribution is ultimately untenable in that it poses insuperable problems for the transcendence of God from a Christian theistic perspective.

Several key concepts have emerged through this investigation of Pannenberg's revisionist theism as basic to his understanding of the God-world relation. First is the "root metaphor" of the "paradoxical interweaving of future and
present" as the interrelatedness of time and eternity. It has been found to underlie almost every aspect of his theology insofar as it deals with God's relation to the world.

Second, it has been found that Pannenberg seeks to interpret the being of God as "historical" in relation to the world so that he is truly involved ontologically in history as his activity without being "exhausted" in historical becoming. That is, Pannenberg is concerned to hold together God's "being" and "becoming" without reducing one to the other. The related themes of Trinity and Eschatology are used to develop this view of God's historical transcendence.

Third, it has been argued throughout this study that Pannenberg's eschatological theism implies a reciprocal relation between God and the world in which God's relation to the world is a necessary "moment" in his own self-realization and in the achievement of his lordship and deity. An attempt has been made to show that this is incompatible with the Christian doctrines of God's freedom and graciousness in creation, revelation and redemption.

While a brief analysis and critique of his explicit ontology was given in the first chapter, the task yet remains of supporting the thesis of this work through a detailed critique of his ontology of God and the world. While Pannenberg nowhere develops an explicit, detailed account of Being, ontological and metaphysical concepts are everywhere presupposed and are often "smuggled" into his discussion of biblical themes and theological ideas without being explicitly
announced or discussed. Such concepts as Being and non-being, Infinite and finite are crucial to his whole system. The traditional metaphysical issues of the "One and the many" and perfection and change are unavoidable in his scheme. It would be impossible to discuss every issue of ontology in relation to his theology here. However, an attempt will be made to uncover the meaning of some of the fundamental categories of thought which directly touch on his vision of God and reality. Certain crucial questions will be raised in this chapter which expose tensions in the structure of his theism and call for clearer treatment on his part if his proposal is to find wide acceptance in the Christian theological community.

Some of the most critical tensions which will be discussed deal with the nature of the "Infinite" and its relation to the finite in Pannenberg's thought. Does he do justice to the infinity and transcendence of God over everything finite? Is God represented as somehow conditioned by the finite? Is the finite world at least partially constitutive of God's own inner life? If so, what consequences does this bear for God's freedom and the Christian understanding of grace as the fundamental motive of God's redemptive activity in the world? In the final analysis, the question is whether Pannenberg's view of the God-world relation really allows for the ontological distinctness of God from the world or whether it blurs this distinction so as to call into question the transcendence of God as the free Lord of
creation.

1. Act and Being

Pannenberg's entire theological program may be read as an attempt to transcend what Schubert Ogden has identified as the typical impasse in modern thought about God. Ogden says that exponents of classical theism find it impossible to affirm the transcendence of God without obscuring the reality and significance of temporality.¹ Spokesmen for the more modern view succeed in doing justice to temporality, he says, only by failing adequately to explicate the certainty of faith in its eternal ground. "In neither case are we offered anything like a real third alternative, but are left to choose either the sacrifice of time and man to God's eternity or the abandonment of God and infinity for the temporality of man."²

The poles of this impasse have already been noted in the last chapter and it has been argued that in spite of its dipolar view of God, process theology does not wholly succeed in overcoming it. Pannenberg's eschatological ontology is aimed at overcoming this situation by offering a "third alternative" which may also be designated "dipolar" in that it too attempts to combine absoluteness and historicity in God. In the last chapter it was argued that his particular synthesis of these poles actually collapses into dialectical becoming. Yet, a fundamental ambiguity remains in that Pannenberg does attempt to do justice to God's absoluteness
by designating him as the "truly Infinite" (der wahrhaft Unendlich).

The ambiguity in Pannenberg's theology lies in the fact that it seems God both is and is not historical and both is and is not the eternal and infinite ground of the world beyond all temporal becoming. This seemingly contradictory situation arises from the peculiar way of relating God to the finite world which has been discovered as the "root metaphor" of Pannenberg's theology: the paradoxical interweaving of the future and present which describes the relationship between time and eternity. Pannenberg's critics have divided over the interpretation of his ontological view of God and the world, some finding there the exemplification of one side of Ogden's "impasse" and others finding the opposite side. A few have noted the tension or paradox, but have not seen the constitutive role it plays in Pannenberg's thought. Herbert Neie touches on this ambiguity when he says that there is a tension between God's dominant power and his sharing in the processive character of things in Pannenberg's theology.³

David McKenzie also notices this and says that Pannenberg appears to want things both ways: He wishes to emphasize God's personal character by construing God as in a process of self-development, but "He cannot...finally accept this idea for it betrays the infinite, transcending power of God."⁴

A German interpreter of Pannenberg, Peter Henke,
points out what he believes is the crucial ambiguity in Pannenberg's concept of the historicity of God: "How something infinite can be historical without passing over into a series of finitudes, needs to be explained." One of the things discovered in this study of Pannenberg's "historical being of God" is that it has much in common with Hegel's dialectical vision of the Infinite as Absolute Spirit. Henke's question is precisely the one Hegel was attempting to answer. For him, the Infinite is "historical" without passing over into a series of finitudes because it includes the finite in itself as a "moment." God, as the "truly Infinite," is the totality of finite moments which transcends and embraces them. As Absolute Subject, the Infinite can be at once absolute and historical. As will be seen, this is not far from Pannenberg's solution to how God can be infinite and historical.

The ambiguity noted in this study and by these interpreters leads to two radically opposite interpretations of the fundamental ontology at work in Pannenberg's theology. On the one hand, some critics have held that he historicizes ontology too radically, thus destroying any real infinity and eternity. On the other hand, some find in him an ontology so obsessed with unity and identity that there is no room for the particular, finite and contingent realities. A particularly cogent presentation of the first interpretation is given by Martin Buss who argues that Pannenberg has a weak vision of the infinite:
Though Pannenberg emphasizes the infinite element in Christian faith, he vitiates this element by making it appear finite, locating it in time and space. The infinite can be present in the world at best paradoxically. ...Like many other moderns he lacks a vision of the transcendent.

Such a critique points toward the emphasis Pannenberg places on the reality of the God-world relation for God himself. To be sure, he holds that time, history and change are real for God and that the flow of contingent history in all its finitude contributes something to the ultimate essence of reality in the eschaton. Buss, and the interpreters who agree with him, points out what he sees as the logical conclusion of this "linear" view of reality--a loss of the transcendence and infinity of God. A critic of the "Theology of Hope" (with which Pannenberg is often associated by Americans) says that all "linear" patterns of reality are tacitly atheistic in that they give place to God either as an "eventful possibility" toward which the process of history is moving or as the reconciling agent who works possibilities into the stream of things? This is precisely the result which Buss and some other critics of Pannenberg fear from his eschatological transformation of theism: the finitization of God.

Another group of critics, representing the second interpretation mentioned above, have charged Pannenberg with the opposite error: a one-sided, almost monistic emphasis on the infinite unity of all reality. For these, he gives too little weight to the actualistic, pluralistic and
historical aspects of reality. The finite is swamped in the sea of the infinite Identity.

Perhaps the most notable criticism of Pannenberg from this direction is that given by Jürgen Moltmann. He accuses him of returning to the Greek philosophy of God as the divine "arché" which is based on a cosmology of unity and totality which effectively dissolves real openness in history in timeless structures of being. In reference to Pannenberg's view of meaning as dependent on a future totality of reality already anticipatorily present, Moltmann says "In place of the metaphysical point of unity for the cosmos [in Greek thought] we have the eschatological point of direction and unity for history."\(^8\) In his view, such a change of locus for the unity of reality is not sufficient to ensure the openness of history. In his opinion, any such identification of God with a "totality of reality," even if it is conceived eschatologically, represents the relationship between God and the world as "fixed and settled" and therefore robs historical decision and action of real significance.\(^9\)

Moltmann's critique of Pannenberg's ontology is highly interesting in light of the absolutely contrary interpretation given by Buss and others. Their disagreement seems to be basically over whether Pannenberg's ontological orientation is monistic or pluralistic. In concert with Moltmann's interpretation, some process theologians have reacted negatively to Pannenberg's concern for wholeness,
essences and the eschatological unity of all reality. In his response to Pannenberg's presentation to the Conference on Hope and the Future of Man in 1971, Daniel Day Williams criticized him for his emphasis on the necessary unity of mankind for any real meaning and progress. He labelled Pannenberg a "Platonist" or "Neo-Platonist" due to his alleged identification of the essence of finite things with their transcendent unity in the future end-event of history.¹⁰ In contradistinction to this, Williams said, "Process thought sees a certain inevitable plurality in being."¹¹ Other critics have concurred with Williams and have called Pannenberg's ontology "ontological totalitarianism or conformism"¹² and "contradictory monism"¹³ or "cryptic supernaturalism."¹⁴

Moltmann, Williams and others share a common apprehension of Pannenberg's view of the God-world relation—that it devalues the finite reality in all its historical freedom and particularity and one-sidedly stresses the essential, structural nature of the future unity of reality so as to reduce the present to unreality. Like the first set of critics, who focus on the opposite emphasis, these single out one aspect of Pannenberg's theology and see it as the essence of the whole, namely, God as the infinite unifier of all reality and the particular finite event as dependent on the whole for meaning and being.

The fact of two such divergent opinions concerning the nature of Pannenberg's ontological presuppositions by
equally astute interpreters points to an undeniable ambiguity in his view of reality. This ambiguity has been traced throughout this study and has been seen as underlying his view of God's eternity, reality as "proleptic," the retroactive divinity of Jesus and his manner of relating the immanent and economic Trinity. Clearly he wishes to do justice to two very diverse aspects of reality by synthesizing them within a higher unity. He believes, with Ogden, that neither traditional nor modern theism have succeeded in combining both "being" and "becoming" in God. Before attempting to interpret and critique Pannenberg's constructive view of the synthesis of these aspects, it will be helpful to describe his rejection of ontologies which focus exclusively on one or the other. It will then be clearer that his own interpretation is intended to overcome the either-or impasse between God as pure being and as pure becoming.

Pannenberg has a deep antipathy to all schemes of ultimate reality which envision it as non-historical and timelessly structured like the eternal essences of Greek ontology which provide meaning and rationality to the cosmos but also, he believes, eliminate real contingency and freedom in reality. In this sense, he shares much with the extremely "actualistic" ontology of the process theologians and of Moltmann. Platonic and Scholastic metaphysics, he argues, failed to do justice to the elements of historical becoming and true openness in reality. Since Greek metaphysics regarded reality as existing already complete in the
cosmos, he says, it tended to undervalue the individual. Such an ontology inevitably links God with the unchanging, eternal structure of the cosmos, making him indifferent to history and change. His rejection of this view of reality drives him toward a "horizontalizing" of ontology, toward thinking of reality as temporal and historical rather than as a timeless cosmos and as actually constituted by the decisions of finite, contingent beings.

However, he has an equally deep antipathy towards those schemes of reality which see nothing but change and becoming there. As noted in the first chapter, he believes meaning depends on unity in reality. Sheer pluralism and temporality without structure or depth may account for the contingency of reality, but it cannot provide for the meaningfulness of events or of history itself. In opposition to ontologies of sheer becoming, Pannenberg avers that "Theology...deals with a future that confronts the present world and all its developmental tendencies and even stands in opposition to it." He argues that even the process view of reality cannot do without something like "essences," however problematic the traditional timeless view may be. Without something that provides structure and depth to the temporal process, the future can only "dwindle away in meaningless change." In response to a question about the necessity of positing any end to history at all, a major point of disagreement between him and his process critics, he rejected the idea of an "ever-receding future" as an
example of "bad infinity."

If you go on and on indefinitely, without ever reaching the goal, then the goal isn't really a goal. Then, of course, there is no consummation and...then there is nothing at all, in terms of meaning.\textsuperscript{18}

For Pannenberg, then, meaningful discourse depends on an awareness of "essences" and, in view of the radical openness and contingency of present reality, that means an awareness of an "essential future." For instance, he says, "if we speak about man then we presuppose what man is. But it is something else to give an account of what man is. ...the question as to the essence of man...is still an open question."\textsuperscript{19} Speech about "man," then, is anticipation of the "essential future" which is the destiny or \textit{Bestimmung} of man. Here Pannenberg is expressing the difference between his own view of reality and those of the process metaphysics on the one hand, and traditional Greek metaphysics on the other. His own ontology is intended to be "horizontal" and temporal with depth and structure, an apparent contradiction. Another way of putting this is that he is attempting to combine "act" and "being" as characteristic of ultimate reality. But can "act" and "being" both be included together within a single view of reality without reducing one to the other?

This is a major problem for Pannenberg and he addressed it in an article written toward the beginning of his theological career. The article was entitled "\textit{Akt und Sein im Mittelalter}" and was an attempt to draw upon certain
themes in scholastic philosophy to show that, contrary to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's thesis in *Act and Being*, it is possible to synthesize actualism and ontology, to speak of Being and do justice to history, decision and becoming. This article is instructive in showing how he conceives the world and God's relation to it, which then opens out into the question of the relation of finite and Infinite implied in his theology.

According to Pannenberg, Scholastic theology asked after the Being (*Sein*) of beings (*Seiende*), a search which went beyond Aristotle and his medieval interpreter Averroes, because these conceived of "Being" as nothing more than a function of the substance of things.²⁰ Avicenna, in contrast to Aristotle and Averroes, wished to think of Being as something independent of beings because only thus could justice be done to the contingency of beings and the transcendence of Being. For him, Being is that which in absolute freedom "loans" being to individual existing entities, but is not tied to them.²¹

In spite of the prevailing influences of Averroes in most Scholastic philosophy and theology, Pannenberg avers, this distinction entered. William of Auvergne accepted it: God is Being itself (*ipsum esse*) but not the essence of things. Thus, Being is exteriorly joined to existing things so as to remain absolutely distinct from finite, contingent beings. Here Pannenberg notices a key insight in Scholastic ontology which he believes is missing in Aristotelian
metaphysics: Being in creatures is no "commune essentiale" but remains transcendent to them and they participate in Being only insofar as they transcend themselves.  

According to Pannenberg, then, some Scholastic theology recognized the "ecstatic" or "self-transcending" nature of all reality by acknowledging that the Being of beings is beyond them. He admits that Thomas Aquinas, who continued the Aristotelian tradition, also held to a distinction between Being and the essence of things, but argues that he failed ultimately to take seriously enough the real difference. This is because Aquinas effectually bound Being to the world of existing beings by positing a timeless, cosmic hierarchy of substantial forms of existing things in the world. This cosmic order is for Aquinas the reflection of the rationality of Being and therefore, Pannenberg argues, Being is in danger of becoming only an accident of beings. This is a major point for Pannenberg. As soon as the world of beings is conceived as a timeless cosmic structure of substances, Being at once becomes "tied" to the world of beings so that both the contingency of beings and the transcendence of Being itself is endangered. Thus, while Aquinas conceived the existence of the world as contingent, he failed to see the necessity of going beyond this to the essential structure of things. In the mainline development of Scholasticism, Pannenberg says, this led back to considering Being as a mere function of essence in that God was not creator and Lord in the Christian sense,
but only the principle underlying the world-order. 24 In opposition to this there arose within the Franciscans of late thirteenth-century scholasticism a new concern for the actualistic emphasis on the contingency of beings. William of Ware argued that not only the existence, but also the order of the world is contingent and God could have created a different order of the world than this one. Thus, the cosmic order is the expression of the freedom of God, not of his wisdom or nature. 25 Duns Scotus, perhaps the greatest representative of this school, argued that God could even yet change his will regarding the order of the world. He argued that the individual things of the world stand in contingent, not necessary interdependence so that the whole of the world-order is a contingent expression of the free will of God as its Being. According to Pannenberg, this insight into the contingency of reality as a free work of God in each moment alone allows for the freedom and historicity of reality. The Franciscan school, he says, broke through the domination of Greek thought which influenced Christian theology to see God as the origin of the presently-existing cosmos. It allowed a return to biblical thought about God by recognizing God's freedom to go beyond every existing structure of reality and bring forth new, as yet unheard of things. 26

Thus, Pannenberg believes, the Franciscan school brought about a vision of reality radically different from that assumed by Greek philosophy. The continuity in reality
is not that of a timeless structure of substantial forms reflecting the immutable wisdom and nature of God, but history tied together by God's faithfulness. The Franciscan school succeeded in combining an actualistic view of the world with ontology, then, by seeing God as the Being of beings by virtue of a contingent, free choice of his will. The most important result of this for Pannenberg is that it paved the way for recognition of a relationship between God and the world which does not bring Act and Being into contradiction, something he believes both Scholastic and modern philosophy (whether supernaturalistic or existentialist) are constantly in danger of doing. It sees God's "act" or "activity" as the Being of the world--both the individual events of the world and the world-order itself. The Being of the world is not its timeless essential structure, but the faithfulness of God which brings structure and continuity into complete contingency. Thus, the world is not a "Heilsordnung" as in much medieval philosophy, but a "Heilsgeschichte." In relation to this contingent world-order God is not to be thought of as "a being," but as the transcendent Being of creation insofar as it has its being transcendent to itself in God's faithful working in history.

The significance of this "actualistic" emphasis in late Scholastic theology lies for Pannenberg in the clue it offers to conceiving the world in such a way as to do justice to both its unity and contingency: "Only in the history which proceeds from God and is open to the eschatological future
is the contingency of events united inwardly with their hidden continuity." The "world," then, is essentially history. It is history with continuity—universal history. Its continuity is no timeless order in the mind of God or emanating from him, and thus not a presently-existing unity even for God, but his faithful activity in unifying history from his powerful future. Every individual event in the world's history is ultimately grounded in God as its transcendent destiny and Being. Thus God is the Being of the world as that activity by virtue of which each individual event is a being, a "something" at all.

From this article it is clear that Pannenberg wishes to speak of God as the "Being" of the world while at the same time understanding the world as an incomplete process. For him this requires that "Being" be thought of as future and all "beings" as "ecstatically" oriented beyond themselves toward their essential unity in the future. Ultimately, this ecstatic structure of all beings is their anticipation (Vorgriff) of that unity in which there is both continuity and discontinuity between the present, finite reality and the future, infinite Being of the world.

These considerations raise the crucial question of the ontological relationship between the finite beings and the infinite Being of the world. What is the nature of that relationship and does Pannenberg's scheme of horizontal, eschatological ontology do justice to the distinctness
between them or does it finally imply some kind of dependence of infinite Being on the finite? These are questions that will be considered further here with a view to showing that in the final analysis there exists an unbearable tension between what Pannenberg wishes to say about the transcendence of God as the infinite Being of the finite world and what his ontology actually allows.

2. Finite and Infinite

In classical Christian theism, one way of expressing the transcendence of God has been to distinguish him as "infinite" from creatures, which includes everything not God, which are "finite." To be sure, the idea of infinity and of an infinite Being is a slippery notion and susceptible to varied meanings. In general, however, it has designated what is not contingent, mortal, limited and dependent for its existence or being on something else, what are all characteristics of finite beings. This has led to the conundrum of "exclusive infinity" in classical theism. That is, how can something infinite exclude finite reality since to exclude implies limitation and thus finitude? This has led many modern proponents of classical theism to be wary of identifying God with the abstract notion of the "Infinite"\textsuperscript{31} or to reject altogether the idea of infinity as quantitative as though it were a "magnitude" and adjust it instead to a qualitative concept.\textsuperscript{32} As Keith Ward points out, besides the exclusive concept of the infinite in traditional Christian theism,
there has long been an "inclusive" concept of it in speculative and mystical theism. Many speculative and mystical thinkers from Plotinus to Hegel, Ward says, have found God to be the infinite "Absolute" who by definition includes everything limited in himself.\textsuperscript{33} While this view has been adopted by many Christian theologians, Ward argues that it is most consistent with an emanationist doctrine of the world rather than a creationist one. He finds the most consistent exposition of it in Spinoza's acosmism. In his Gifford Lectures of 1980, F. Copleston discovers the same two alternatives in world metaphysics under the rubric of the "metaphysics of the One and the many."\textsuperscript{34} There is the classical theism of the Christian, Jewish and Islamic religions which sees the "One" as the transcendent source of the many, which raises the question of how it is then the "One" and not one of the many, and there is the theism of the mystics and speculative thinkers of the world, including Eckhart, Taoism and F. H. Bradley, which makes the One inclusive of the many.\textsuperscript{35} The "One" in this discussion is synonymous with the Infinite.

Based on the conclusions reached up to this point, and those yet to be reached in this chapter, Pannenberg's doctrine of God may be classified generally with the inclusivist tradition which according to both Ward and Copleston stands opposite classical Christian theism. In the last section, it was shown that Pannenberg wishes to think of God as the transcendent, free Being of the world as the activity upon which history, and every finite event, is dependent.
In view of all that has been discovered about his ontology, it is clear that for him, the relation between the finite and the Infinite (God) is a horizontal, temporal one. That is, the Infinite is conceived as the future of the finite which powerfully unites reality into a whole. The finite is the individual event or complex of events which anticipates the essential future and only has "being" at all beyond itself in its anticipated unity with the whole of reality. It is finite, then, because it is contingent, particular, preliminary and able to be superseded. It is not yet unifiable with the totality of reality.

For Pannenberg, there must be no absolute conceptual or ontological division or identification of the finite and Infinite. Rather, as with time and eternity, there is a dynamic dialectic which includes both an element of dualism and one of unity between them. This is already implied in his conception of the Being of the world as the contingent activity of God. He believes that unless one could somehow think of God's activity as something separate from his being, it is necessary to think of the relation between God and the world in terms that transcend the mere opposition between them.

In delineating his view of the relation of finite and Infinite, Pannenberg wishes to make clear that he does not, as some of his critics have suggested, simply identify the Infinite with the process of history itself. Rather, the Infinite is the source of every finite event as the
"power working in events in every moment which separates what is actual (as the finite) from itself, casts it off from itself, in that it passes on to the bringing forth of new, hitherto not present, events." 37 This is perhaps at once one of the most cryptic and most revealing of his statements in that it suggests that he considers the finite to be that which is "separated" from the Infinite in the process of history. Such an expression for the distinction between the finite and Infinite sounds more like the "emanationist" tradition Ward speaks of than the creationist tradition of Christian theism for which the world is produced as something good ex nihilo by God. 38 Still Pannenberg is concerned to affirm that he does not "localize" the Infinite in time and space, thereby dissolving its real transcendence into total immanence, but does justice to the "incommensurability" of the Infinite over against the finite, even though this transcendence is not to be conceived as a "lifeless beyondness, but as a living, ever new carrying out of his freedom...as the making possible of future, life, new events in the world." 39

This transcendence or incommensurability of the Infinite over the finite is seen, he says, in the fact that the relation between them is always "mediated negatively." 40 This is true even in the case of Jesus, he says. In answer to his critics, he claims that his idea of the "negative mediation" of finite and Infinite does justice to the truth in the dualistic conception of their relation. This negative
mediation is seen in that the power of the Infinite is active and present in the collapse of the finite. "Thus the infinite expresses itself in the first place negatively."41 This confirms the suspicion that Pannenberg's idea of the God-world relation is quite different from the creationism of traditional Christian theism for which the finite is the good, if fallen, product of the Infinite God.42

History, Pannenberg argues, is the process of this negative expression of the Infinite in bringing about the collapse of the finite in its self-centeredness.43 The finite "lives not by clinging to itself, but only in transformation of itself—a contradiction of itself, and of its tendency to cling to itself...."44 The "finite," then, is essentially ecstatic and self-transcending. Its tendency to assert itself and center on itself is a contradiction of its true being. Yet it seems that this very tendency toward individuality and particularity is also an aspect of its finitude, that aspect which keeps it separate from the Infinite and occasions its "crisis" and "collapse" through "negative mediation." Thus, what Pannenberg means by the collapse of the finite is that the Infinite, in historical action, cancels out the finite reality's self-asserted individuality and brings it into a higher unity, thereby transforming and preserving it so that "the power of the infinite expresses itself also positively, as reconciliation and preservation of the finite in the midst of its collapse."45
In spite of his assertion of the "incommensurability" of the finite and Infinite, what Pannenberg has said so far would seem only to indicate that the Infinite "casts off" and "cancels out" the finite in its irrational and self-contradictory failure to transcend its narrow particularity into the unity of all reality. There are two "moments" of the finite, then. One is its tendency to assert its individuality, and the other is its being inwardly determined toward something beyond itself which is its destined unity with all reality. The "negative mediation" is due to the first moment of the finite. It is this, then, which occasions the ontological "gap" between the finite and the Infinite: the finite's individuality and particularity. There is also a "positive mediation" of them, however, which is occasioned by the "preservation" of the finite in the midst of its collapse by the Infinite which draws it toward its true being in unity with the totality of reality. The finite cannot exist in and for itself. It is something "real" only in relation to the Infinite as the power which both threatens and protects, judges and reconciles. "History" is the process of the negative and positive mediation of finite and Infinite and is therefore itself not merely finite, Pannenberg says, but is the "crisis of the finite throughout time." The steps of this process of the historical crisis of the finite by God are "self-assertion, failure and transforming preservation" of the finite. Thus, history is the "overcoming of the finite" by
God. This is the self-revelation of God in history. History does not reveal God; God reveals himself through history insofar as he breaks down the plurality and chaos of the finite and establishes the unity and harmony of all reality beyond everything finite. Only thus can God show himself to be the power over everything and attain his deity. This is an ontological transcript of the trinitarian process of God's self-realization as delineated in the previous chapter.

Pannenberg clearly wishes to conceive of the Infinite as transcending everything finite as well as the sum of all presently existing finite things in their unity. However, he also seems to say that the Infinite can only fully establish itself and prove itself as Infinite by "overcoming" the finitude of things, as though finitude itself were a threat to the Infinite (God). History, then, is the establishment of God's true Infinity through himself by the suspension of the finite in its self-enclosed particularity ("negative mediation") and the preservation and reconciliation of what can be harmonized in it with the whole of reality ("positive mediation"). Relation to the finite, however negative, would seem then to be a necessary "moment" in the divine life of the Infinite.

In spite of this negative tendency of the finite, Pannenberg does not hold to a sheer dualism or absolute difference between the finite and Infinite. Rather, in the process of their mediation through history, the Infinite
joins itself to the finite, taking even its negativity into itself. In revelation, he says, God "joins himself to the finite." And, "the reality of God is not simply set over against the finite, but at the same time includes it in himself." According to him, this is illustrated above all in the incarnation in which God is seen as the "truly Infinite" (wahrhaft Unendlich) who does not merely stand over against the finite, even in its collapse and failure, but joins himself to it, taking into himself its pain and separation. For him, the Infinite is only as transcendent as it is immanent and vice versa.

As has been seen throughout this study, the relation between God and the world, Infinite and finite, is a distinctly temporal one. The distinctive character of finite reality is temporal provisionality (not-yetness). As finite, it is what is not yet the whole of reality. Yet, by virtue of the moment of anticipation in it, it is more than merely finite. For Pannenberg, this phenomenon of anticipation provides the key to understanding the relation of the finite and Infinite as delineated above. A finite thing or event has being at all only by anticipating the unity of all reality which is its truth and essence. This is what Pannenberg means by the "ecstatic" or "self-transcending" structure of the finite. This anticipatory structure is the immanence of the Infinite in it. That it is merely anticipatory and not yet what it truly is signals the transcendence of the Infinite beyond it. Self-centeredness is the "sin" of the
finite whereby it contradicts the Infinite unity which is its destiny and inward determination. Sin is the tendency of the finite to strengthen and reinforce its individuality and particularity. 51

In this scheme an event or being has a higher degree or level of being in proportion to its intensity of anticipation of its destined unity with all reality and cancellation of its merely individual existence. Thus there are levels or intensities of being in finite reality, corresponding to the traditional Platonic ontology only devoid of timelessness. According to Pannenberg, some finite entities anticipate the future more intensely than others. Jesus is the paradigmatic example of this. Because anticipation is the fundamental task of finite beings in their temporality, he says, one must distinguish between the proleptic aspect of Jesus' life and resurrection and all other sorts of ontic and noetic anticipations of the eschatological fulfillment. 52 Most finite entities are not nearly as intense anticipations of the final reality as Jesus and therefore are lower on the scale of being: "No doubt those forms of anticipations of final reality are predominant which are immediately distinguishable, in their finiteness, from the final reality; their relationship to final reality is similar to that of the copies of Platonic ideas to the ideas themselves." 53

A fundamental aspect of the notion of finite reality as anticipatory being comes to light in these remarks. As a
concept of being it is intended to substitute for the Platonic understanding of finite reality as the broken or inadequate reflection of the Ideas or Forms due to captivity in matter. Certainly Pannenberg rejects the denigration of matter implied in that. However, he does seem to accept the idea of the negativity of individuality, separation and particularity implied in Platonic ontology as in all monisms. For him, it is not captivity in matter which is the problem of the finite, but captivity in temporal provisionality and individuality. For Pannenberg, as for Plato, the finite is a mixture of being and non-being (me on). Insofar as it anticipates the final reality beyond itself in the future it has being. Insofar as it is "immediately distinguishable" from the final reality in its particularity and does not transcend itself in unity with all reality (the Infinite) it has non-being. Finite reality is ranged dynamically along a horizontal spectrum of being graded by intensities of anticipation which bring the Infinite future into the present in varying degrees. The "average" finite entity is a rather "weak" anticipation which is why there exists disorder, chaos and non-being in existence.

These average anticipations stand in stark contrast to others which more perfectly pre-grasp the future totality of reality in their present. Pannenberg names peace, spirit, love, and life as examples of such "unbroken" anticipations of eschatological reality. As in Platonic ontology, then, there is structure to finite, temporal reality which provides
meaning and rationality in the midst of provisionality and incompleteness. Going beyond even the pure anticipations Pannenberg mentioned is the ultimate anticipation which perfectly embodied the future reality in the present thereby providing the key to the meaning of reality. The special character of the resurrection of Jesus, he says, is to be sought in its full participation in the reality of eschatological life. Yet even in this event there is a "provisional aspect" in that that life appeared only in one individual and not yet in all mankind and in the world as a whole.56

With this it becomes clear that the temporal distinction between the finite (as present) and the Infinite (as future) is the difference between particularity and unity. Even the most intense anticipation, in all its proleptic participation in the infinite future, is limited, and therefore finite, due to its individuality. Since in this view the Infinite is unity and unity is contrasted with individuality, the Infinite is nowhere to be found in existence except as the moment of anticipatory being in finite, existing things. In itself, unlimited and unconditioned by the plurality of finite individuals, it is purely future. History, as the "negative mediation" of the finite is thus also the history of the becoming of infinite Being in time.

The question which is of special concern here is what implications this ontology has for the transcendence of God. What is implied about the status of the Infinite itself in the relationship between finite and infinite Being as
envisioned by Pannenberg? As mentioned earlier, it means that the Infinite must be conceived as the "truly Infinite." The Infinite cannot simply be the "other" of the finite, but transcends the difference so that the finite, in the process of negative and positive mediation in history, means something for the reality of the Infinite. This concept of God as the "truly Infinite" will be explored further in the next section.

3. Panentheism and the Truly Infinite

Based on the analysis presented thus far, it may now be asserted that insofar as he represents the relationship between the finite and Infinite as in some sense reciprocal, Pannenberg's doctrine of God's relation to the world may be designated "panentheistic." This term is, of course, very broad and difficult to define. However, several leading Anglo-Saxon theologians use it favorably to characterize a view of God and the world which neither separates nor conflates them. John Cobb believes this is the view implied in Whitehead's philosophy as well as in biblical theism. Whether Whitehead considered God to be infinite at all is debatable, however. According to John Macquarrie, it is necessary to combine the insights that God is infinite and that he includes the world in his own actuality in order to have a truly "panentheistic" theology. He is critical of theologies based on Whitehead because they try to solve the God-world problem by making God finite. True panentheism
does not do this, as the word itself should show.

Other theologians have taken the "finite God" route besides Whitehead and the contemporary process theologies. John Stuart Mill, William James and Edgar Sheffield Brightman all in one way or another advocated the view that God is finite in relation to the world. Clearly Pannenberg wishes to reject such a solution. Instead, he regards God as infinite, but not as the "not-finite" because simply to set the Infinite over against the finite as its other would effectively make it finite. Thus, the finite cannot be simply "outside" the Infinite or it would form a limit to it and reduce it to something particular and not the whole. As has been seen, his own description of the finite-Infinite relation does imply a certain limitation of the Infinite by the finite, but so that this limitation, along with the finite itself, is included "within" the Infinite as a moment in its self-development.

This is the form of Pannenberg's temporalistic panentheism. God, as the Being of history, is not identical with the realm of the finite, but includes it within himself in the way the Absolute Future includes in itself the dialectic of the suspension of the finite as well as the unity of reality produced in and through that suspension. Reality-as-history is the drama of the dynamic unification of finite and Infinite so that in the eschaton all things are included in God and only the Infinite remains.

This scheme is in many ways consonant with
Macquarrie's suggestions concerning a "modern" view of God and the world in his article "God and the World: Two Realities or One." He argues that a truly Christian theism is not "monarchial" but "organic." This means that a certain "symmetrical relation" between God and the world must be recognized. God and the world are distinguishable, but not separable. A God who is outgoing love cannot be conceived without a creation and such a God must be in some sense vulnerable so that he is affected by his creation. Macquarrie avers that this model does not abolish the traditional one but qualifies it:

God is not turned into a finite, struggling God, striving not very successfully to master a recalcitrant world, but it is recognized that his omnipotence and impassibility are qualified by the creation which he has himself brought forth and that he is somehow involved in the travail of creation.

With Pannenberg, Macquarrie affirms that God is both "above" and "within" history however difficult that may be to conceive. In Pannenberg's theism, God is both "ahead of" and present in history and it is the phenomenon of anticipation which helps him to conceive this. Macquarrie believes that the symmetrical and asymmetrical relation between God and the world, which is involved in a truly modern theism, is best expressed if God is understood as "Being." He relies on the ontology of Heidegger to explicate this concept. As seen already, Pannenberg also uses the term "Being" in expressing God in his relation to the world. He differs from Macquarrie in relating this to the future of the world as the ultimate
unifying context which gives meaning and being to every finite event in time. However, Macquarrie suggests a model for understanding God's transcendence which he sees as a possible alternative to speaking of God as "Being" but which is actually tantalizingly close to Pannenberg's use of the term:

Another possibility ["panentheistic"] is to think of God's relation to the world as like that of a meaning to a process or series of events. In this sense, to believe in God is to believe in an ultimate context of meaning that gives sense to the world and is the opposite of chaos and absurdity.67

Macquarrie's "panentheism" describes a general viewpoint concerning God's relation to the world which roughly corresponds to what Pannenberg intends. The major difference lies in the fact that for Macquarrie, this "Being" or "Context of Meaning" could be a presently existing reality whereas for Pannenberg the eschatological locus is of the essence of Being since it is precisely this temporal, eschatological distance which makes it transcendent to the finite.

As already pointed out, the panentheistic flavor of the God-world relation in Pannenberg's theology is made possible by the concept of God as the "truly Infinite." This is his expression for the "organic" relation between God and the world which Macquarrie says is characterized by symmetry and asymmetry. In contrast to the latter, however, Pannenberg conceives this relation dialectically rather than organically. That is, the truly Infinite contains the finite as a negative moment in its self-constitution.

The concept of the truly Infinite received systematic
exposition in the Absolute Idealism of Hegel. Pannenberg is quick to acknowledge Hegel's "achievement" at this point. Some aspects of that achievement have been discussed already in earlier chapters and it has been shown that there are many points of fundamental similarity between Hegel's idea of God and Pannenberg's. Here an attempt will be made to show that underlying both views, in spite of dissimilarities, is a common apprehension of the ontological relation of the finite to the "truly Infinite."

Hegel represents one of the most sophisticated and influential proponents of the "inclusivist" tradition which Ward and Copleston see as the major competitor to the Christian creationist theology in the West. Hegel rejected the "dualism" of finite and Infinite which he saw as the fundamental problem in traditional theism and the critical philosophies of his day (e.g., Kant). The subject-object distinction in dualism led to skepticism, he believed. Only if man's consciousness and God's were somehow united could objective knowledge of God be possible. Yet, Hegel rejected Spinoza's absolute identification of the finite and infinite substance as too static and lifeless a model of their unity. Therefore, he substituted "Spirit" for Spinoza's "Substance" and posited the finite as a "moment" in Absolute Spirit's infinite life which embraces all differentiation.

Hegel never tired of pointing out that the Infinite cannot be the "not finite" without itself becoming finite. In order to save the true infinity of God and to make
knowledge of God possible, he says, "we must get rid of this bugbear of the opposition of finite and infinite."\textsuperscript{73}

Now if the finite is limited by the infinite and stands on one side, the infinite itself is something limited too; it has its boundary in the finite; it is that which the finite is not; it has something which is on the yonder side of it and is thus finite, limited. Thus we have, instead of the Highest, something which is finite.\textsuperscript{74}

The abstract Infinite of mere "Reflection" must then give way to the "true Infinite" of speculative reason for which the finite is not sheer other but other only in appearance as a moment of negativity within the Infinite which it posits and negates in dialectical unity. For Hegel, the "finite" is closely associated with individuality and difference. It is contradiction of universality, in thought and in being.\textsuperscript{75}

As noted earlier, however, concrete unity is not abstract identity, but includes diversity and contradiction as antitheses to be overcome. The Infinite, as truth, unity, Being, must come to itself through a process of self-differentiation which includes the positing and annulment of the finite as something distinct from itself. This "process of the infinite" in self-differentiation, he says, includes in the first moment the Infinite as affirmation, then second, distinction (in finite reality), and third, affirmation as negation of the negation and thus as "True."\textsuperscript{76} The finite, then, in its \textit{Aufhebung}, is "an essential moment of the infinite in the nature of God, and thus it may be said it is God Himself who renders Himself finite, who produces determinations within Himself."\textsuperscript{77}
In order for God to attain his true divinity and infinity, then, he must "abrogate" and lift up the finite to himself and this happens, Hegel says, in the religious consciousness. This abrogation and preservation of the finite (Aufhebung) which is essential to the Infinite is also the true being of the finite. Hegel defines the finite as essentially negativity. It is sheer "lack." As something separate from God, it is non-being. In its abrogation and dialectical unity with God, it is a "moment" in him. Its being as something "other" than God is mere appearance and not truth. "Reconciliation" of finite and Infinite in negation of otherness and preservation of the finite as a "moment" is essential to both God and the world. This is the "divine history" which God is: "The truth of Being is Becoming." 

This then is the explication of the meaning of reconciliation, that God is reconciled with the world, or rather that God has shown Himself to be by His very nature reconciled with the world, that what is human is not something alien to His nature, but that this otherness, this self-differentiation, finitude, as it is sometimes expressed, is a moment in God himself, though, to be sure, it is a vanishing moment....

The unity of finite and Infinite is then a "negative unity." That is, it is produced through abolition of differences. This is necessary to both for their actuality.

Hegel's idea of the God-world relation has been much debated and has often been represented by critics as some form of pantheism. Hegel himself hotly denied that his view was pantheistic, but what he meant by "pantheism" was
sheer acosmism such as Spinoza may have held. Many interpreters have charged that Hegel simply equated the finite world with the Son of God. In his study of Hegel's philosophy of religion, however, Louis Dupré examines this relation and points out aspects of both interiority and exteriority of the world to God. On the one hand, the finite world is included in the Infinite and on the other, it is clearly its "other" and not simply identical with it. According to Dupré, the externalization of God in the world, in which the world represents God's "other" is the mere "appearance" or "shadow" of God's eternal inner development in which the "other" is the Son. There is a distinction, then, between the immanent and the economic Trinity in Hegel, although they are simultaneous and presuppose one another. Dupré concludes, then, that while God and the world are indeed inseparable for Hegel, his thought is not truly pantheistic.

Quentin Lauer concurs in this judgment. He admits that the distinction Hegel posits between God and the world may seem to some to be no distinction at all. However, in distinction from pantheism which posits God and the world as statically identical, Hegel posits finite and Infinite as "dynamically continuous." In view of this unity-in-distinction of God and the world, emphasized by Dupré and Lauer, Hegel's doctrine of God as the "truly Infinite" may best be described as "panentheistic" rather than "pantheistic."
In spite of the above qualification, it can hardly be denied that Hegel tended to "blur" the essential and irreducible difference between God and the world so highly valued by Christian theism. Hans Künig has presented an incisive but sympathetic critique of Hegel's position which applies also to Pannenberg's concept of God as the "truly Infinite." Künig sees the relation of God to finite reality, as explicated by Hegel, as the dialectical process of God's going out of himself and returning to himself: "This God externalizes himself to the world in development, in history, and leads the world and nature and finally as spirit through all stages up to himself and to his infinity and divinity." He interprets this process as one taking place in the life of God himself which is ultimately the process of the unification of finite and Infinite through estrangement. Like Dupré, Künig acknowledges the intent of Hegel to preserve the distinction between them in the course of their dialectical sublation. The identity, for Hegel, is not so much between the finite and the Infinite as between the identity and non-identity of finite and Infinite. The underlying conceptuality would seem to be the speculative, monistic idea of the sublation of opposites through temporal-dynamic self-differentiation of the Whole. Thus, for Hegel, the transcendence of the Infinite is not its absolute ontological distinction and actual independence from everything finite, but its dynamic wholeness beyond the particularity of everything finite.
Küng is critical of what he sees as the insufficient attention given by Hegel to the irremovable difference between the divine and human in this scheme. Whatever dualism between them is acknowledged by Hegel is forcefully overcome in the speculative reconciliation (Aufhebung) of all opposites in the life of the Absolute. Furthermore, history and creation are effectively made necessary internal aspects or moments in that life for the sake of its self-development with the result of the loss of the essential Christian themes of grace and forgiveness. Küng's fundamental critique of Hegelian dialectical panentheism lies in its inability to do justice to the freedom of God in creation and grace. While Hegel attempted to overcome the absolute difference between freedom and necessity in God, Küng sees his delineation of the God-world relation as making God a "prisoner" of a development which involves a relation to the world:

Is the God of this systematization not his own prisoner? Must not this God be forced—if not by someone else, at least by himself—to develop in one way and not in another? Must he not by his very nature function and differentiate himself into finiteness according to an encyclopedic scheme comprehensible to man? Is this God not confined within the necessity of a system of knowledge?

It seems, then, that Hegel's "truly Infinite" needs the negativity of the finite and the negation of this negativity in order to accomplish the full completion of his own self. The result is that while God is not confined within history, nor identical with history, history is within God as
an essential moment in his being.

Certain affinities between Hegel's and Pannenberg's conceptions of the God-world relation are apparent. Küng's critique of Hegel inevitably falls on Pannenberg also. Both understand God as the "truly Infinite" to which the finite does not form a limit or sheer other, but an other which is somehow within the life of God himself and which he must subjugate in order to actualize himself. Hegel's notion of the unity of the finite and Infinite through "Aufhebung" of their difference is structurally identical with Pannenberg's "negative and positive mediation" of finite and Infinite. "Aufhebung" includes two necessary and interrelated moments: cancellation and preservation. For Hegel, the unity is produced through the suspension of the finite as something other and its reunion with God as its true being. Thus, in terms of being, it is preserved by being abrogated. For Pannenberg, the finite is negated by the Infinite and preserved through being reconciled with the totality of reality. In both cases, "negative mediation" of the finite is essential to the attainment of Infinity. In both cases "history" is this dialectical process and therefore essential to God.

In spite of the clear affinity between his own view of reality and Hegel's, Pannenberg is somewhat ambivalent about Hegel's theology. As will be seen, he is especially sensitive to the problem of the freedom of God which Küng points out in Hegel. It has been argued throughout this work that Pannenberg's own model of the God-world relation is
fundamentally incompatible with the freedom of God as understood by Christian theism. Pannenberg does not simply ignore this problem, but attempts to work out a solution which will not deny the important insight into the unity of finite and Infinite gained by Hegel.

4. God and Freedom

Pannenberg's primary concern with Hegel's doctrine of God is its implication that the creation of the world is necessary to God. He does not believe that the charge of pantheism is legitimate and devotes much of his discussion of Hegel, which he delivered as a lecture to the Hegel Congress at Stuttgard in 1970, to refuting this charge.93 This suspicion of pantheism arose, he avers, on two basic grounds. The first was the close association of the early Hegel with Schelling who had clear sympathies with Spinoza's acosmic pantheism. The second ground is more significant:

Hegel's energetic attack upon the abstract opposition between the finite and the infinite, and his concept of the truly infinite, which the finite contains in itself as a "moment", might on a superficial understanding give rise to the same suspicion.94

However, he argues, interpreters who called this "pantheistic" (such as Tholuck) ignored the fact that Hegel carefully distinguished the process within the Trinity from the world process itself.95 The suspicion of pantheism hardened into a prejudice, he says, in spite of Hegel's explicit denials partly due to such generalizations as that
Hegel wished to overcome belief in a God above and beyond the world and the fact that the Hegelian left-wing, represented by D. F. Strauss, openly professed pantheism.  

Pannenberg acknowledges that Hegel spoke of a certain unity and even identity of the finite and Infinite, but he says that for Hegel, this is always a "negative unity," "an identity mediated by the negation and superseding of the finite, which consequently cannot properly be thought of as being contained in God." Thus, Pannenberg rejects even the designation "panentheism" for Hegel's doctrine of God's relation to the world. It should be noted, however, that the spatial symbol is unimportant except as a symbol or metaphor. The "negative unity" of finite and Infinite which Hegel posits simply substitutes a temporal metaphor by calling the finite a "moment" in the life of the Infinite. While the finite is not "contained" in God, there is nevertheless a certain constitutive interdependence of the finite and Infinite and that is what makes a view "panentheistic." In Hegel's ontology, tension with the negativity of the finite is essential to the self-realization of the Infinite so that relation to the finite is an aspect of God's actuality.

Pannenberg further proceeds to defend Hegel against the charge of pantheism by pointing out the distinction which he made between the innertrinitarian life of God and the creation. Like Dupré and Lauer, he emphasizes the fact that Hegel did allow for a life of God which is not wholly
identical with the process of the universe. What he does not note is that in Hegel's philosophy of religion, there is both difference and identity between God and the world-process. That is precisely why it is "dialectical." From the "religious standpoint," Hegel says, the development of God within himself and the development of the universe are seen as not absolutely different:

It is the intellectual divine world, the divine life in itself, which develops itself; but the spheres of its life are the same as those of the world life. This latter, which is the divine life in the mode of appearance, or phenomenal existence, in the form of finiteness, is looked at in that eternal life in its eternal form and truth....

On the basis of this and other clear statements it may be wondered whether the distinction is as great as Pannenberg believes.

Pannenberg does find an element of truth in the "pantheistic suspicion" directed at Hegel in that he derives the coming into being of the world with logical necessity from the inner life of the divine Trinity, that is, with the necessity which entails that the otherness posited within God must assert itself, that is, assert its diversity.

Hegel represented the relationship between the Infinite and finite reality as necessary and thereby made the charge of pantheism inevitable. Pannenberg admits this had much to do with Hegel's interpretation of God as the "truly Infinite" which transcends the opposition of the finite. But it is the necessity of creation of the finite for the absoluteness of the Absolute which he finds most objectionable.

The "necessity" with which creation is endowed in
this scheme must be understood in the light of Hegel's own understanding of "absolute necessity", Pannenberg admits. "If necessity is understood in the sense of Hegel's concept of absolute necessity, then the constitution of nature in the sense in which the term is used here cannot consist of a compulsion imposed from without." In the self-identity of the Absolute, freedom and necessity do not conflict, but coincide so that the necessity with which God created the finite world is not imposed upon him from any power outside his own being. Nevertheless, Pannenberg says, this does not really answer the problem of divine freedom and the question whether in his relation to the world God is free even from inner compulsion of nature. This was seen to be Küng's major concern: that Hegel effectively made God a "prisoner" of his own nature in all his relations with the world. For Küng this is a problem for Christian thought since whatever is of nature cannot be of grace.

Pannenberg admits, then, that the apparent natural necessity in God's relation to the world poses a problem for God's transcendence. If the existence of the world is derivable from God's essence as evolving self-consciousness, it would seem to belong naturally to that essence and be a part of it. That is the meaning of the characterization of the relation between God and the world as a "moment" in God's life. The relation, and thus the finite world itself, whether conceived positively or negatively, constitutes something essential to God. Thus, Pannenberg sees the
crucial test of Hegel's doctrine of God as lying in its ability to account for God's freedom vis-a-vis the world. One might add that this is also the crucial test of Pannenberg's own doctrine since it has been observed repeatedly that for it too the finite world or God's relation to it represents a "moment" in God's life.

Pannenberg says that Hegel erred in thinking of the freedom of God as a manifestation of his self-identity and thus as the expression of his being itself. His error was in trying to think of the freedom of God as the manifestation of a being prior to that freedom. By so dividing God's being from his freedom, Hegel effectively introduced another dualism into God which the concept of God as the "truly Infinite" was intended to overcome. Thus, Pannenberg claims, although Hegel rightly resisted the abstract dualism in the idea of a God who was simply opposed to the finite, he did not seem to notice that the concept of a being as the faculty or power underlying its freedom made the Absolute finite.

What Pannenberg objects to is the whole procedure of conceiving God's "being" as something distinct from and prior to his "freedom" even if that freedom is understood as expressing that being in a rational way. Thus, he argues, Hegel could not do justice to God's freedom because he posited it as the prisoner of God's prior being. In this sense, then, Hegel is judged as having failed adequately to account for God's freedom in relation to the world. However,
Pannenberg continues, Hegel is no more to be faulted for this than traditional theism itself:

For as long as the freedom of God is thought of as a faculty of a divine being, who is asserted to be free, but who is himself the basis of the act of freedom, then the act of God's freedom is bound to appear either as something additional and external to his being, or as an expression of his being itself, his power, and thus as a manifestation of his self-identity, that is, as a necessity inherent in it. The traditional doctrine of God has no solution to this dilemma. 104

Hegel erred, then, by conceiving God's freedom as the necessary expression of his nature, thus calling into question the real freedom of God's acts. Traditional theism erred by positing God's acts of freedom as something added to his being from outside. 105 Both conceptions fail to do justice to God's freedom, Pannenberg avers. He considers it highly "anthropomorphic" to conceive God as a being who is first there and then also makes decisions, such as the decision to relate to the world through creation, incarnation, and so forth. 106 Such a view, he believes, tends to separate too radically God's being and the acts of his freedom.

As has been seen, Pannenberg seems to accept the Hegelian notion that God's being is not simply separable from history, expressed in the idea of God as the "truly Infinite." He rejects Hegel's solution to the problem of God's freedom in relation to the world which such a concept raises: that in God freedom and necessity are one. How, then, is God's freedom to be understood? Pannenberg suggests that the only serious alternative is to understand the nature of God itself as the absolute future of freedom,
instead of as underlying his faculty of freedom. 107 "It is only possible to think of freedom as the absolute future of freedom, if it is not to be subject to the necessity of the nature of a prior being." 108

Pannenberg believes that if the true contingency of events is to be taken seriously, God's acts must not be derivable from anything that already exists, even what he is already in himself. Rather, God's freedom must be conceived radically as the freedom of love which, unlike the freedom of the Concept which is also Subject (Hegel's "absolute freedom"), "cannot be conceptually anticipated; it transcends all prior identities." 109 Only such a concept of God's freedom can account for God's historicity in relation to the world without making the world a limit to God (whether interior or exterior). For him, God must be conceived as the sheer freedom of love which is free to constitute itself as it will in relation to another. God can and does become something in relation to the world which he otherwise is not. This is the "freedom" which he is and "as freedom it is also love, and in this way it attains its own historical being, the specific and definite divine attributes, which come into being only when absolute freedom acts." 110

Pannenberg believes that this view overcomes the traditional "monarchial" idea of God which separates his being from his acts of freedom as well as the Hegelian pantheistic idea which makes God's historical being in relation to finite reality a logical necessity emanating from his prior nature.
Pannenberg does not dispute Hegel's idea of the fundamental unity of finite and Infinite, although he does not consider it "pantheistic." However, he rejects the necessity of the world for God which is implied in Hegel's philosophy and admits that this is implicitly pantheistic. He attempts to abolish this necessity by simply identifying God's being with his sheer freedom. There are no "prior" ontological restraints on God's free will. This provides an important clue to understanding Pannenberg's idea of God's "historical being." God's relation to the world must be considered as a "self-conditioning" in which he attains a character of attributes and properties and "becomes" something without having to on the basis of any "nature" which he already is apart from his free acts. Apart from his will, then, God is strictly indeterminate. All determinations are created, including those which God is "in himself."

This "solution" results in a radically voluntaristic idea of God as sheer undetermined Will somewhat reminiscent of William of Ockham and the nominalist tradition. Pannenberg clearly states that God is not the world-ground who is already what he is apart from all relation to the world (as regards his attributes), but is the One who decides what properties he will produce for himself in relation to the world and makes these his own so that they are now properties of his eternal essence. From his powerful futurity, which is his eternity, God freely opens himself to change in
relation to a reality distinct from himself so that this relation constitutes a "moment" in his own life. This "moment," however, is not one of logical, and therefore ontological necessity, as in Hegel's phenomenology of Spirit, but is surd. For Pannenberg, God's otherness and transcendence must be conceived as his freedom to do just this—to become historical, to create determinations within himself in relation to another reality. It is demonstrated in his personal activity in relation to the world in specific, contingent events whereby he

assumes properties into his eternal essence...in that he chooses these and no other events as the form of his contingent operation. Precisely the God who acts in a personal manner in such deeds is the one who because of his freedom is "wholly other."112

This is Pannenberg's defense against the criticism, raised by Küng against Hegel, that his idea of God as the truly Infinite which includes the finite as a moment threatens to dissolve the freedom of God. For him, God's transcendence is his being his own perfectly free future, unconditioned by anything outside or "inside" himself. Only thus is he the "all-determining reality." His transcendence in sheer freedom includes his ability to surpass himself by acting in new and unpredictable ways, even to the extent of creating new properties for his eternal essence through historical relationship with the finite. Thus, his own "self-realization" in history is not a process imposed on him by any necessity of being, but his own freely chosen, self-constraining and self-enlarging activity. It is identical
with "self-revelation." Through it God freely takes into himself the finite as a constitutive moment in his own eternal essence. The reciprocity between the finite and Infinite which is evident in his eschatological penentheism is a relation in which God opens himself to the risk, challenge and tension which characterizes his historical reconciliation of all things to himself.

Pannenberg's conception of the relation between God and the world has been discovered to be fundamentally "penentheistic." On the other hand, he seeks to avoid the implication of most penentheistic schemes that God is not totally free in relation to the world. The question must now be asked whether he has indeed resolved the riddle of freedom and transcendence in his doctrine of God with his radically voluntaristic notion of God as infinite, indeterminate Will. It is this writer's that he has not. Clearly he wishes to avoid making God the "prisoner" of a necessary relation to the world, which is commendable, but his proposal does not ultimately achieve that because the idea of God as "sheer indeterminate Will" is itself an incoherent ontological concept and because his proposal still includes the finite reality, or relation to it, as a "moment" in God's eternal being--a "property" of his freely chosen nature which implies an ultimate identity, however differentiated, of God and the world. These points will be argued in the final section.
5. Unresolved Tensions

The thesis of this study of Pannenbergs doctrine of God is that it may be viewed as an attempt to overcome certain perceived problems in traditional theistic concepts of God: that God is unaffected in his being by what happens in the world; that history is unimportant for God; that God is unrelated to the succession and crisis of the finite, temporal realm. He commendably seeks to do justice to God's "historical being" in contrast to deistic and absolutist notions of God as pure aseity in the sense of "apatheia."

Yet, he is also to be commended for rejecting the opposite extreme of neo-classical theism (process theology) which too often relegates God's involvement in the world to that of a passive spectator or a cosmic principle of "concretion."

Pannenbergs strives to preserve the transcendence of God in relation to creation while accenting as fully God's real internal relatedness to it. How he attempts to combine these two concerns, God as Being and as Becoming, has been a major focus of this critical investigation of his theology. In its course, certain unresolved and perhaps unresolvable tensions have been noted. These must now be shown as significant barriers which Pannenbergs must overcome if his proposed eschatological revision in theism is to be judged internally coherent and acceptable as a Christian account of God.

On the basis of the analysis of his ontology, it
must be concluded that Pannenberg does not do justice in his theology to the irreducible ontological distinction between the finite and Infinite, God and the world, but ultimately sublates it in eschatological unity. The result is that the unity of the finite and the Infinite, however freely chosen as a self-determination of God, reflects a certain dependence of the Infinite on the finite reality for its completion or an implicit denial of the ontological status of the finite as something real in distinction from God. Seen from one perspective, Hegel's ontology appears to imply the first result. Seen from a slightly different one, it seems to imply the second. In the one case, the Infinite is finitized. In the other, the finite is infinitized.\textsuperscript{113} The same ambiguity plagues Pannenberg's ontology and in either case, the transcendence of God and integrity of the finite world are imperilled with the result that the relation of God to the world based on grace alone is lost.

That God is in some respect dependent on finite reality is implied in Pannenberg's trinitarian concept of the God-world relation. As seen earlier, he represents the innertrinitarian relation of Father and Son as something which takes place in history as the specific relation between God and Jesus. Apart from this historical relation, there is no Father-Son relation in God. Yet, because there is this historical relation, confirmed in Jesus' resurrection, the trinitarian relation of Father and Son within God is true for God's own essence. A moment of determination in
God by something finite would seem to be unavoidable, for while God raised Jesus from the dead, this was a "confirmation" of Jesus' own earthly, human activity which was historically contingent. When Pannenberg speaks of God as the "all-determining reality," this clearly is not meant to imply an overriding of freedom and contingency in finite events. In Christology, Pannenberg would consider such a deterministic view docetic.

The question raised by Pannenberg's representation of this state of affairs is, is God a Trinity in and of himself or only in relation to the finite world? Clearly he does not wish to speculate about what God is "in and of himself" outside of any relation to the world. He considers it sufficient to say that God can and does "assume properties" to himself in his relations to the world. Faith, if not thought, however, drives toward an answer to this question.

One reason this is so important lies in the problem raised for religious knowledge and language if it is impossible to say anything about God in and of himself. The rationality of religious assertions would seem to depend on some assurance that God, in his own being, is truly what he reveals himself to be, even if that can only be described with the use of analogies or disclosure models. The implication of Pannenberg's idea of God's historical being is that apart from any relation to the world whatever, God is strictly indeterminate and whatever attributes or properties
he has are derived from his relations with finite reality. It would seem, however, that God cannot be conceived as sheer, unstructured, indeterminate will. Could God become anything? Are there not possibilities for what God might become in relation to the world which are consistent with his nature and others which are not? Even Pannenberg speaks of God's freedom as the "freedom of love." That would seem to imply a previous character or structure of being which decides what attributes God can assume. Keith Ward argues that while it must be recognized that God can and does "change" in relation with creation, his freedom is limited by the necessity of his own nature. His comment in this regard is directly applicable to Pannenberg:

...to say that God is a completely undetermined will is incoherent, and makes it impossible to distinguish between a rational act of choice and an arbitrary positing. God's will must be conditioned by his uncreated nature; he must have such a nature, and it is that nature which governs the sorts of possibles that necessarily exist.

For Pannenberg it would seem to be the case, then, that God is not a Trinity except in relation to the world. Furthermore, his trinitarian being, as shown in Chapter four, is his relation to finite reality insofar as Jesus Christ is the mediator between finite and Infinite who achieves their "negative and positive mediation" proleptically. He is the "second person of the Trinity" as the finite-Infinite and Infinite-finite--the perfect fulfillment of the potentiality of both for unity with the other: "coincidentia oppositorum." Even if this potentiality is
one assumed by God in his freedom, it seriously calls into question the transcendence of God as the "all-determining reality" since it makes an essential moment in God dependent upon the decisions and actions of a finite being.

Another unresolved tension in Pannenberg's concept of the relation of God to the world is the implication of the non-reality of the finite. This is especially a tension due to its conflict with the state of affairs described above and the overwhelming concern in Pannenberg's theology with the contingency of reality. The peculiar structure of his horizontal ontology requires that "finitude" be equated with "not-yetness," that is, provisionality and incompleteness. Everything is something--has being--in relation to a future which holds the unity of all reality. Finitude is characterized by particularity and individuality and tends to resist unification. "Being" is this unity of the future and only in anticipatory self-transcendence does anything finite participate in Being. What it anticipates is precisely its own negation as something particular, however. Thus, it has being only insofar as it transcends its finitude in ecstatic union with the totality of reality. In its finitude, as something separated from the Infinite, it "veils" the Infinite and is totally negative.

These considerations, more fully developed in the first part of this chapter, point toward a decidedly monistic ontology of Infinite reality in which the finite is seen as a temporary state of affairs which possesses an
essentially negative ontological status.

This raises the difficult question of the ontological status of the future totality of reality itself. It is the essence of everything, but is it itself finite or infinite? If it is infinite, is it God? If it is God, is this not an affirmation of panentheism, if not pantheism? If it is not God, how is it related to him?

Pannenberg equivocates on this point for obvious reasons. Pitfalls of thought lie everywhere. Only once does he deal explicitly with the relation of God to the "totality of reality." He admits that the idea of a whole of reality is extremely difficult.116 A totality, he says, is constituted as a specific whole by something outside itself. Even an infinite unity must have at least its unifying unity outside itself. But how then can it be the totality of everything? Of course, what Pannenberg is expressing here is the classical problem of the "One and the many." He leaves unanswered the fundamental question of whether this totality of reality is God or not. On the basis of an analysis of the concepts of such a totality and of the "all-determining reality," it seems that he comes up against a sheer dilemma of thought. If the totality includes God, how can he be its unifying unity? If it excludes God, how can it be the totality of everything real? The only plausible solution would seem to be to posit the totality as identical with God.

That this identification of God with the totality of
reality is indeed Pannenberg's unannounced view is shown through an analysis of his Christology where so much of his thought crystallizes. For him, Jesus is "divine," united with God's essence, in that he completely anticipates in his life, death and resurrection the future unity of man—the true "destiny" (Bestimmung) of all mankind. Pannenberg says that Jesus "is the new man in that he realizes in himself the original destiny of man, that of community with God and in that he was in a special way an ordinary man." His "divinity," then, was a special aspect of his humanity which seems to lie in his unique fulfillment of the real determination of all finite beings, especially man. That true destiny is self-transcendence in unity with the whole of reality, the ultimate horizon of meaning and being. Pannenberg specifically designates this future which formed the "center" of Jesus' anticipatory existence the "Father":

In the case of Jesus, this centre was certainly outside himself—it was the God who was to come, the Father. In distinguishing himself from God and his future, Jesus was following his divine mission and at the same time at one with God.118

The pertinent question here is whether this "future" which God is is the same future for all men and whether it is the whole of reality, the ontological horizon of essence for all reality which is so much the center of Pannenberg's theology. This monistic idea would indeed seem to be what he intends. Like Jesus' own personality, he says, all human personality derives ultimately from the divine "Thou" which stands outside the finite as that which it anticipates, yet
also forms its true "center" insofar as it transcends its narrow, self-enclosed existence and affirms its true being:

The individuality not only of Jesus, but also of every man, is rationally constituted by his distinction from God and by the eccentricity of his trust in God's future, at least in so far as his destiny is a movement towards a complete likeness of God which appeared in Jesus Christ in the unity of God and man. 119

As noted earlier, Pannenberg posits a dialectic of "self-differentiation" and "unity of essence" in which the former is an essential moment in the latter. Thus, it seems, the essential destiny or "determination" of all men is the same one as Jesus': unity of essence with God.

The conclusion to which this points is that "God" functions in Pannenberg's ontology as the unity of all reality which is the essential future of every finite reality as its true determination. The impulse of this ontology is clearly monistic. However, by removing the totality, God, to the future, he seeks to allow for the undeniable diversity and contingency of reality in history. The phenomenon of anticipation provides the necessary provisional unity which alone makes meaning possible. This monism is not a simple one, but paradoxical or dialectical. What makes this monism paradoxical is its eschatological character. "What is true in God's eternity (future) is decided with retroactive validity only from the perspective of what occurs temporally with the import of the ultimate." 120 It is possible, in other words, for the finite event so to transcend its finitude that it actually qualifies the whole
course of events and thus contributes to the Infinite. Thus, the "paradoxical interweaving of future and present" introduces a moment of paradox and even contradiction into this monism.

Pannenberg is critical of Hegel for representing the creation of the world as necessary for God. His own solution to this has been discussed already. The issue is raised again here, however, in relation to the discovery that there is in his theology an implicit equation of God with the totality of reality. In spite of disclaimers, this would seem to introduce a moment of necessity into Pannenberg's own view of the God-world relation. Even if the creation of a finite world at all is not a logical or ontological necessity for God, it would seem that the "redemption" of the world is. God must overcome the separation and disunity of the finite and abolish its particularity in order to establish his own deity. This means, then, that history as "salvation-history" is as much the history of God's own "salvation" as it is of man's and the world's.121 God's own deity and infinity depends on the ultimate reconciliation of all reality (apokatastasis) through overcoming whatever threatens its unity. History is this process of God's negation of evil and self-enclosed finitude through the anticipatory Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Traditional Christian theology, Catholic and Protestant, has insisted above all on the gratuitous nature of
God's grace in relation to the world. That is, his redemptive activity is free from compulsion, self-interest and is bestowed freely. This conception of grace, which many Christian theologians believe is essential to a truly Christian understanding of God and the world, simply evaporates in the moment in which the redemption of the world becomes a process in which God has a "stake." This is what Hans Küng objected to so strenuously in Hegel's speculative theology. While Küng does not accept an "infinite qualitative distinction" between God and man, he argues that it is necessary for Christian thought to preserve a contrast between them in terms of a "contradiction between a gracious God and sinful man. In the biblical understanding there is no speculative necessity to outmaneuver and render superfluous God's free grace."122

The suspicion that Pannenberg transforms the graciousness of redemption into a speculative necessity for God is deepened when it is seen that there is very little difference in his theology between "sin" and "finitude." In his study of anthropology entitled What is Man? he presents a phenomenology of human nature which discovers it to be characterized by the conflict between individuality (selfhood) and eccentricity (self-transcendence).123 While this tension is shared by all life, it is particularly harsh in man. For Pannenberg, "salvation" is the surmounting of the conflict between selfhood and openness to the world.124 It
is accomplished by God in establishing the unity of all reality, which brings about the harmony of the ego with the whole of reality. "Sin" is the selfhood which resists this unification and asserts its particularity and individuality. He admits that it is in the nature of the finite to assert its selfhood and therefore "sin is something that belongs to man's givenness." In what sense then can it be called "sin"? It is sin in that it conflicts with man's "infinite destiny." "This happens when the ego adheres to itself instead of letting itself be inserted into a higher unity of life." This statement is highly reminiscent of Hegel's assertion that "Personality which does not yield itself up to the Absolute is evil."

The "higher unity of life" which is the "antithesis" of the self is nevertheless that from which it lives, Pannenberg says. Sin, then, is self-assertion and self-contradiction. From these considerations, combined with the conclusions previously drawn concerning the ontological status of the finite in Pannenberg's thought, it is difficult not to draw the conclusion that finitude itself is intrinsically evil and sinful. Finitude is that which is not yet unifiable with the whole of reality which is Being, God. The "good" in it, its salvation and power of being, is its anticipation of its own abrogation in unity with God. This is "Spirit" in the world. Jesus realised this infinite destiny for himself and proleptically for all men, in that
his very finitude was "suspended" in his ecstatic self-dedication to God's future. In his ministry and fate, finitude was "thwarted" so that the Infinite was revealed in him. This is the cosmic significance of Jesus: the unity proleptically established in him "makes it possible for each individual to attain the wholeness of his own life by knowing that he, together with all men, is related to that center" which is the truly Infinite. Jesus' cosmic role is also seen in that he overcame the threat posed to the deity of God by the continued vitality of finitude and thereby negated the negative in reality.

From this perspective, the whole drama of redemption is strangely distorted when judged from the traditional Christian perspective. Instead of Jesus Christ being the gracious and merciful condescension of God to lost man, he is the human salvation of God. Of course Pannenberg would reject such a conclusion. However, it is an interpretation of the significance of Jesus Christ and the meaning of salvation in his theology which presents itself with some force. In "saving" the world, God seems primarily to be exercising the negative mediation of finite and Infinite, establishing his own deity through overcoming the "question-ability" imposed on it by the separatedness of the finite. In this scheme, world redemption becomes God's need, not only man's, a result entirely incompatible with Christian belief and thus a foreign element in Pannenberg's theology insofar as it claims to be "Christian."
Having criticized Pannenberg's formulation of the God-world relation due to its "panentheistic" nature, it seems incumbent on this writer to offer a better alternative. Since that is not the primary purpose of this study, however, only the briefest outline of a doctrine of God's relation to the world can be offered here and that must be restricted to a discussion of the idea of God as infinite in Christian theism. It is this writer's opinion, based on the analysis given in this chapter, that Pannenberg is unduly, even disastrously, committed to a speculative notion of Infinity as a quantitative concept. It is this which inexorably drives him to the idea of God as the "truly Infinite" which includes the finite as a negative moment and to the eschatological sublation of finite and Infinite. Since the underlying conceptuality of his view of the finite-Infinite relation is that of part-whole, his doctrine is close to what Keith Ward calls the "inclusivist" tradition which stands over against the Christian doctrine of creation as its competitor.

An alternative for a modern Christian theism would seem to lie in recognition of God's transcendence and infinity as qualitative rather than quantitative. Traditional Christian theism has affirmed this when it has defined God's "otherness" as his pure freedom from dependence upon or conditionedness by the world. While Paul Tillich does not consistently represent the best of this tradition, he
occasionally expresses its insight on God's transcendence with unusual clarity and precision:

...we find that there is hardly a word said about God in the Bible which does not point directly or indirectly to his freedom. In freedom he creates, in freedom he deals with the world and man, in freedom he saves and fulfills. His freedom is freedom from anything prior to him or alongside of him.... There is no ground prior to him which could condition his freedom; neither chaos nor non-being has power to limit or resist him. Freedom means that that which is man's ultimate concern is in no way dependent on man or on any finite being or on any finite concern. Only that which is unconditional can be expressive of an unconditional concern. A conditioned God is no God.133

In traditional and neo-Thomism, as well as in some Protestantism which values ontological reflection, this qualitative transcendence is expressed as the absolutely distinct modes of existence of infinite and finite being, marked by finite conditionedness and dependence and infinite unconditionedness and independence. In other words, the transcendence of God as infinite Being means that the relation of dependence between God and the world is a "one-way street." On grounds of both rational and dogmatic theology, this is necessary to affirm in order to make sense of the world and to preserve the graciousness of this relation.134

If the idea of God as "infinite" is to be used by such a Christian theism, how can it be understood if not as including the finite in itself? First, the "bugbear" of the Infinite as "bigness" or "magnitude" (quantitative totality) often implied in the speculative notion of the Absolute must be recognized as incompatible with Christian theism. In his
Hibbert Lectures, G. Dawes Hicks expressed this succinctly:

If...by "infinite" be meant "the Absolute," God is not infinite. A quantitative whole of Reality, or one Reality that includes everything, would, no doubt, be "infinite" in the sense of mere bigness or immeasurable magnitude; "infinite" in the sense of being qualitatively perfect and complete it need not, and I should say, would not be. But it is "infinity," I take it, in the latter sense that religion is concerned to ascribe to God.\textsuperscript{135}

Frederick Copleston concurs: "Given this kind of religion [i.e., theistic], with its belief in a personal God, its worship and prayer, it is clear that its basis is undermined by the substitution of the Absolute for God."\textsuperscript{136} He sees the problem of the "inclusive" Infinite as arising from an over-emphasis on the "One" in the metaphysics of the One and the many. This writer agrees with him that the problem of God's relation to the world cannot be escaped through a flight from metaphysical reflection such as much modern Protestantism has attempted. "Metaphysics of some sort or other is a natural development of human thought, and I do not think it can ever be entirely eliminated."\textsuperscript{137} However, metaphysical reflection has a tendency to swing toward one of two poles of reality in exclusion of the other and, Copleston says, it must hold to a "dialectic" between them. The two poles are the plurality of reality, perceived as irreducible by the analytic, discriminatory movement of the mind, and the real unity of reality which results from the synthetic movement of the mind.\textsuperscript{138} When awareness of plurality is allowed to eclipse the synthetic activity of the mind, the result is metaphysical pluralism which cannot
make sense of the intelligibility of the world. In order to make intelligible the many, the metaphysician seeks the One through a process of inference: "The process of understanding involves synthesis or unification, as well as analysis, and this process of understanding, when pursued on the metaphysical level, leads to the idea of the One."139

Where can the "One" be found? Copleston argues that there are two primary fundamental answers to this. One sees the One in the world itself, as the "reality" of which the world of plurality is appearance. He finds this view to be a perennial metaphysical position represented in various ways by Plotinus, Spinoza, Hegel, Bradley, Eckhart, Tao'ism and other speculative and mystical systems. As a model of ultimate reality, it corresponds to Ward's "inclusive" Infinite. The problem with this view is that when one reflects on the empirical reality of the world, the analytic activity of the mind inevitably tends to find in it a multiplicity. What is needed, according to Copleston, is a "dialectic between the analytic and synthesizing activities of the human mind" which leads away from quantitative thinking about the One, as the totality of the many, and toward recognition of the One as transcendent to and non-identifiable with the many.

If the mind does not stop there and abandon the concept of the One or interpret it as a collective name for the many, it is driven, in its movement of unification, to locate the One beyond the world, not in a spatial sense but in the sense that the One is conceived as non-identifiable with the collection of the Many, with the class."140
This is the only view which follows consistently from the "dialectic" of the analytic and synthetic activities of the mind. The "One" or the "Infinite" is not the whole of the many, nor their negation, but their unifying source of being and existing.

To the "inclusivist," among whom Pannenberg must be counted, this account of the Infinite falls into the dilemma mentioned before: If the Infinite or the One does not include the finite and the many, how can it be Infinite and the One? But this is to equate the Infinite with the all-inclusive One which Copleston finds destroying the reality of the plurality of the world. It is a speculative, quantitative notion of the Infinite which is not the only possible one. G. Dawes Hicks represents a theist who finds the notion of Infinity very different from mere vastness and all-inclusiveness. It is simply a misuse of language, he argues, to call an individual "finite" or limited merely because there are other individuals distinct from himself.141 Of course, such an individual would be finite and limited if the individuals distinct from him existed eternally and by virtue of their own being and power. However, Hicks says, God is "infinite" not because he is all there is, or includes everything to the exclusion of the reality of individuals distinct from himself, but because he is the boundless source of all other individuals' existence and meaning:

To know or to love anything or anyone genuinely or intensely is to be "infinite" in regard to that person or
thing. ... And, so likewise, in regard to the world, God may be "infinite," not because He is the world, nor because the world is part of Him, but because in and through Him the world has meaning and significance, because His knowledge of it is complete, and His solici-
tude for it perfect.142

When God is called "Infinite," then, it is meant that his powers and qualities are not limited, not that he includes everything in himself. The infinity of God must be contrasted with the infinity of an infinite number. In con-
trast to this sheer quantitative concept, the infinity of God is the personal infinity of boundless power, love, moral excellence and sufficiency for others which Christian theism ascribes to God. It is the guarantee of all individual per-
sonal existence, not its destroyer. In metaphysical terms, it is the limit of the finite, but is unlimited by the fi-
nite. However, all spatial notions are foreign to this meaning of "limit." Here it simply means that there is no continuity between the finite and Infinite as though the fi-
nite, through negation or elevation, might become Infinite. This does not mean, however, that as the love that under-
lies the being of the finite, God as the Infinite is unable to embrace the finite in his presence without destroying it or identifying it with himself. While the "inclusivist" view is incompatible with Christian theism, so is a strictly "exclusivist" view which would remove the finite and Infi-
nite into absolutely unrelated spheres. This is the danger in Aristotle's concept of the Infinite as noesis noeseos--a "thinking of thinking" which eternally contemplates only
itself and can have no relations with anything limited or imperfect.

British theist Keith Ward offers an account of God as "dynamically infinite" which avoids the errors of both the absolutely inclusivist and exclusivist views. He argues that rational theology demands a modern adjustment in classical Christian theism insofar as it is dependent on the exclusivist tradition stemming from Aristotle. Such a view, he believes, cannot account for the creativity of God in producing a world of free creatures. There must be some element of contingency in God if the world he produces and relates himself to in varying ways is not to be seen as a necessary emanation from him. In contrast to unconstructed Thomism, then, God must have "potency" as well as actuality. But if God is not absolutely complete apart from the world and his relation to it, how is he not finite or the inclusive Infinite? Ward argues that God himself possesses an infinitude of possibilities consistent with his own eternal nature which he may actualize without "having to" in order to become God. Thus, "By a decisive rejection of the Thomist doctrine of Divine simplicity, one may see God as necessary in his eternal nature, and also as contingent in his everlastingly temporal acts by which he expresses that nature."
no part of his eternal essence. God is himself the uniquely self-existent being who freely decides to create beings other than himself. God is "Infinite" in the sense of self-existent and the ground and source of all being, but also free and able to relate himself in various ways to beings infinitely other than himself. The crucial question is, of course, whether these beings he brings into existence limit him. Ward's answer seems to be that they do—only because he allows them to—and therefore they really do not. God is not so logically unlimited (as in the "exclusivist" view) that he excludes all relation to finite beings from himself. Nor is he so all-inclusive that finite beings are swallowed up in his sole reality as in the Absolute Spirit of Idealism or in Advaita Vedanta. 145

But he may be coherently conceived as dynamically infinite; as unlimited by any being which he himself does not creatively originate; as unlimited in his perfections by anything other than his own choices and their consequences, or by what is necessary to him, as the limitless potency of creative being, relating itself continually in new ways to its creatures. God is thus...the one who is uniquely and immutably self-existent, and is ontologically prior to all beings other than himself. But creatures, having been called into being may have a proper autonomy of their own, in relation to which God may determine his nature in changing ways. He is the sole cause of an infinity of creative freedoms, not the pre-determining tyrant of what has been called "monarchical theism." 146

In this writer's opinion, such a doctrine of God explains the universe in the most complete way possible, provides a rational ground for responsibility and objective morality, and "fits" the Christian experience of freedom,
grace and forgiveness. Such a God is not a deistic, impossible contrast to the world such as an extreme dualism implies. He is not the Unmoved Mover who is basically disinterested in the world and man. He is intimately involved in the history of finite creation, though he does not "need" it to be God. His infinity is that of quality of life and power of being which is in no way limited or contradicted by the existence of free moral beings with ontological integrity. It is toward such a view of God's transcendence that modern Christian theism should look.
Endnotes to Chapter V


2Ibid.


4David McKenzie, p. 328.

5Peter Henke, Gewissheit vor dem Nichts, eine Anti-


9It is interesting to note the evolution which has taken place in Moltmann's own view concerning the doctrine of the Trinity and the historical being of God in relation to the world. See Roger Olson, "Trinity and Eschatology: the Historical Being of God in Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg," Scottish Journal of Theology, 36 (1983), 213-227.


11Ibid., p. 87.


14 Neie, pp. 117-118.

15 Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, p. 310.


17 Ibid., p. 193.

18 "A Theological Conversation with Wolfhart Pannenberg," *Dialog*, 11 (Autumn, 1972), 292. (It should be noted that "bad infinity" is a phrase of Hegel's.)

19 Ibid., p. 295.


21 Ibid., pp. 204-205.

22 Ibid., p. 206.

23 Ibid., p. 209.

24 It must be noted that what is being given here is simply an exposition of Pannenberg's interpretation of Scholastic ontology. The accuracy of this interpretation is not affirmed by this writer. The point is simply to show what is Pannenberg's idea of Being through identifying his sympathies with certain trends in medieval thought.


26 Ibid., pp. 213-214.

27 Ibid., p. 214.

28 Ibid., p. 218.

29 Ibid., p. 219.

30 Ibid.


33 Keith Ward, pp. 218ff.


35 Ibid.

37Ibid.  38Gilkey, pp. 41ff.
40Ibid., p. 251.  41Ibid., p. 252.
42Gilkey, pp. 41ff.
43Pannenberg, "Response," p. 252.  44Ibid.
45Ibid.
46Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, passim. (The entire subject of this book is the "self-transcending nature of man.")
48Ibid.  49Ibid., p. 254.
50Pannenberg, *Grundfragen*, 2:140.
51Pannenberg, *What is Man?*, p. 63.
53Ibid.
54Plato, pp. 206-207.
56Ibid.
59For the argument that Whitehead did conceive God as infinite see: John W. Lango, *Whitehead's Ontology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972), pp. 73-75. For the opposite argument see: Neville, pp. 14ff.
61John Stuart Mill, *Theism* (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957); E. S. Brightman, *A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1940); and

62 This is taken from Pannenberg's lectures at Munich in 1982.
63 Macquarrie, pp. 110-120.  64 Ibid., p. 111.
65 Ibid., p. 113.  66 Ibid., p. 117.  67 Ibid.
68 This is taken from Pannenberg's lectures.
71 Ibid., pp. 99-100 and p. 199.
72 Ibid., p. 183.  73 Ibid., p. 200.
74 Ibid., p. 185.  75 Ibid., pp. 193ff.
76 Ibid., p. 198.  77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., pp. 199-200.  79 Ibid., p. 182.
80 Ibid., p. 163.
82 Ibid., p. 132.
86 Lauer, p. 276.  87 Ibid., pp. 279-280.
88 For the view that Hegel's philosophy is pantheistic see: Hicks, p. 251; and Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1977), p. 103.

90 Ibid., p. 163. The translation of the technical term "Aufhebung" in Hegel's philosophy by the English word "sublation" may need explanation. It is this writer's experience that this is the most common translation used by Hegel's interpreter's. Two examples are: E. Gilson, *Being*, p. 147; and Küng, p. 146. Lauer gives a lucid explanation of this difficult concept of Hegel's: When the moments of a process are "aufgehoben" they are "'cancelled' (the inadequacy), 'retained' (the positive contribution), and 'lifted up' (the succeeding level), until they all come to rest...in the completeness of the 'absolute'..." (p. 144).

91 Küng, pp. 182ff. 92 Ibid., p. 167.


94 Ibid., p. 160. Note: There is a translation error in this passage. In the German it reads: "Hegels energische Polemik gegen die abstrakte Entgegensetzung von Endlichem und Unendlichem und sein Begriff des wahrhaft Unendlichen, der das Endliche als 'Moment' in sich schliesst, konnten für ein oberflächliches Verständnis denselben Verdacht bestärken." (Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Gottesgedanke und menschliche Freiheit* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1971] p. 94). It should read in English: "...which contains the finite in itself as a moment...." This has been confirmed to this writer indirectly by Pannenberg.

95 Ibid. 96 Ibid., p. 161. 97 Ibid., p. 162.

98 Ibid., pp. 163-164.


101 Ibid., p. 171. 102 Ibid., p. 173.


105 Ibid., p. 174.


108 Ibid.
109 Ibid., p. 175.
110 Ibid., p. 172.
111 Pannenberg, Basic Questions, 2:172.
112 Ibid., p. 181.
113 Lauer, pp. 143ff.
114 It must not be supposed that Pannenberg is merely saying that God's "relative" attributes are those which he has in relation to the world, as standard dogma has it. Rather, he appears to be saying that apart from the multiplicity and separation implied in historical reality, God has no attributes or distinct properties which would be determinations of his being. He is the "all-determining" reality and that implies that whatever determinations exist, even in himself, are created by him. A modern philosophical theologian who has expounded such a view of God is Robert Neville. Neville's main thesis is that because everything determinate is created, the creator must be strictly indeterminate, except insofar as he acquires a character from creating. The character acquired from creating is itself a created determinate affair. See Robert Neville, "The Holy Spirit as God," in Is God God?, ed., Axel Steuer and James McClendon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), p. 244. Neville's detailed view is contained in God the Creator (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).
116 Pannenberg, Theology and the Philosophy of Science, p. 305.
118 Ibid., p. 99.
119 Ibid., pp. 99-100.
120 Pannenberg, Jesus--God and Man, p. 321.
121 Pannenberg says that the truth and reality of God himself is tied up or involved in the process of history with the overcoming of evil:
122 Küng, p. 182.
Ibid., p. 62.  
Ibid., pp. 63-64.
Ibid., p. 65.  
Ibid.  
Ibid.
Ibid., p. 149.


Ibid., p. 146.  
Ibid., pp. 159ff.
Ibid., p. 166.  
Ibid., p. 169.
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Ward, p. 218.
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