

## NOTE

### PANNENBERG'S RESURRECTION CHRISTOLOGY: A CRITIQUE

Wolfhart Pannenberg wrote *Jesus—God and Man* ten years ago at the age of thirty-six. Since its publication, the Munich theologian's Christology has been generally recognized by theologians of varying backgrounds as a major achievement.<sup>1</sup> In this essay I want to focus on two portions of his book which I take to be significant contributions to systematic Christology: his notion of the retroactive power of Jesus' resurrection and his thesis regarding the dialectical or indirect identity of Jesus the man with the eternal Son of God.

#### RESURRECTION AND RETROACTIVITY

Pannenberg sees the fundamental problem of traditional Christology residing in the doctrine of the Incarnation itself. This appears in several ways. He analyzes the aporias of Antiochene and Alexandrian Christology, in which he shows that neither side was able to express in a balanced way the unity and duality of Christ.<sup>2</sup> He examines the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* and judges that it failed to show how Jesus was fully one with God from the beginning of his life in such wise that there was room for Jesus to grow as an authentic human being.<sup>3</sup> He discusses the kenosis theory, which tried to escape the dilemma that flows from the concept of incarnation by either calling God's divinity and unchangeability in question or rendering Jesus' real humanity problematic.<sup>4</sup> He addresses himself to the role of the Resurrection in modern theology, where the Incarnation is generally conceived in such a way that the Resurrection acquires secondary importance.<sup>5</sup>

To escape the dilemma of traditional Christology, Pannenberg proposes his theory of the retroactive power of the Resurrection (*rückwirkende Kraft*).<sup>6</sup> In general it can be said that this means that Jesus is essentially one with God on the basis of the Resurrection event, and that his entire earthly existence is united essentially to God via this event, which was temporally future with respect to his earthly existence. But

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus—God and Man* (Philadelphia, 1968). See, e.g., David Tracy's article in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 31 (1969) 285–88 and Hendrik Berkhof, "Schoonenberg en Pannenberg: De tweesprong van de huidige Christologie," *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 11 (1971) 413–22.

<sup>2</sup> *Jesus—God and Man*, pp. 287 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 296 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 307 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *E.g.*, *ibid.*, p. 135.

what precisely Pannenberg means by this is not clearly stated in any one place. He expresses the relation between the Resurrection and Jesus' divinity in a number of ways. (1) Sometimes Jesus seems to be divine only because of the Resurrection.<sup>7</sup> (2) On the other hand, Pannenberg insists that it is wrong to say that Jesus received his divinity only at the Resurrection,<sup>8</sup> since Jesus was divine from the beginning of his existence, although this fact became apparent only at the Resurrection.<sup>9</sup> (3) There are times when Pannenberg advocates a progressive incarnation (divinization) which is completed at the Resurrection;<sup>10</sup> this allows him to speak of Jesus' divinity as established in his earthly life by his dedication to his Father.<sup>11</sup> (4) Yet he maintains that Jesus' life was thoroughly ambiguous, and that His death was a catastrophe for Jesus and his disciples,<sup>12</sup> so that the Resurrection is sometimes called the confirmation of what Jesus was in his earthly life.<sup>13</sup>

A closer examination of the texts reveals that two positions are definitely excluded by Pannenberg in *Jesus—God and Man*. The first is the view that Jesus received his divinity through his resurrection and without relation to his claim or message. The second position which Pannenberg rejects views the Resurrection as an event which simply made apparent the divinity which Jesus possessed independent of the Resurrection.

For Pannenberg, the Resurrection is both ontologically (*quoad se*) and epistemologically (*quoad nos*) the basis of Jesus' essential unity with God. This involves him in a new metaphysical view, partly inspired by Old and New Testament eschatology, regarding the relation of future to present, a view which involves accepting the idea that the future can influence the present.

Initially, Pannenberg draws on common sense and ordinary experience to illustrate what he means by "retroactivity." First he refers to legal terminology.<sup>14</sup> But he acknowledges that this does not go far enough, since a retroactive declaration in law does not reach the ontological order. The second illustration comes from our experience that the future of a person decides what and who that person really is.<sup>15</sup> The future is constitutive of the meaning of a person. The second illustration, however, is deficient because it is open to an interpretation which Pannenberg wants to avoid. It can be interpreted in evolutionary categories, according to which we know something's essence only when

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 325 f., 364.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 153.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 307, 322, 338 f., 344.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294, 336.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 332.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135 f.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

we know its final state of development. This is a truism; but Pannenberg wants to express more than a truism.

The new ontological perspective offered by Pannenberg is given its best expression in an essay entitled "Theology and the Kingdom of God." He wants to recapture for systematic theology a fundamental element of the Gospels: "The resounding motif of Jesus' message—the imminent Kingdom of God—must be recovered as a key to the whole of Christian Theology."<sup>16</sup> But this does not mean that Pannenberg wishes to borrow an already available conception of the kingdom of God for use in systematic theology.

The interweaving of future and present in Jesus' statements is not taken seriously by those who denigrate futurity as a hangover from Jewish apocalyptic. On the other hand, neither can we agree with Cullmann, who says that Jesus understood the Kingdom of God as beginning in his presence and only to be fulfilled in the future. It is more appropriate to reverse the connection between present and future, giving priority to the future. Of course, this is strange for contemporary thought. . . .<sup>17</sup>

But this view is not altogether strange for students of North America's "process thought":

One of A. N. Whitehead's most fascinating ideas is that the new is not set forth by the already existing but enters subjectively into relation with what is. Thus the continuity of nature is no longer understood as the irresistible dynamic of the already existing pushing forward, but as the building of bridges to the past that save the past from getting lost.<sup>18</sup>

Pannenberg wishes to amend Whitehead's view, however, by introducing an eschatological dimension in process thinking, a dimension he feels is seriously lacking: "I believe Whitehead's vision can be conceptualized in a more consistent fashion than Whitehead himself utilizes, if the contingency of the new events or occasions which occur to the existing world is described as a result of the futuristic power of creative love."<sup>19</sup>

The resurrection of Jesus is the prehappening of the future of the world, of the end of the world. Drawing on texts such as 1 Cor 15:20 and Col 1:18, Pannenberg lays great stress on the universal aspect of Jesus' resurrection, namely, that the final fate of the world (resurrection and judgment) happened in Jesus, but not for himself alone, nor simply as a

<sup>16</sup> "Theology and the Kingdom of God," in *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia, 1968) p. 53.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

chronological first, but as the prolepsis, anticipation, or prehappening in one man of that which is, through his mediation, the destiny of all. Because God, as the "power over all," is the only one who can bring the world to its End (which is Himself), the Resurrection is also the "prehappening of God" as actual Lord of history. Thus Jesus is identified with God's essence as power over all and as the end of history. God's unsurpassable future is present *in its futurity* in Jesus—which is Pannenberg's way of saying that God as the world's Future is not simply identical with Jesus, for Jesus is not the Father. This means that God grasps Jesus' entire earthly existence as His own through (out of, on the basis of) an event that is future and outstanding with respect to Jesus' life on earth, but which in his claim and behavior he anticipates. God unites Jesus to Himself not from "above" but "in advance of" Jesus.<sup>20</sup>

On the basis of this brief sketch of Pannenberg's point of view regarding the Resurrection as a retroactive event, it is perhaps possible to see how he reconciles the apparently divergent views referred to above. First, the Resurrection is the event which constitutes Jesus Son of God. Second, through that event God is uniquely present in Jesus during his earthly life, present as the one who will come in the resurrection of Jesus, which anticipates the end of history. Third, as Jesus matured as a human being, his unity with God grew in the form of response to God's presence, which comes to Jesus out of the future (the Resurrection). The Resurrection is able to influence Jesus' earthly existence precisely because it is an eschatological event.<sup>21</sup>

Before the Resurrection occurred, it influenced Jesus' life in the only way in which the future can exert influence, namely, by being anticipated in the present. Pannenberg does not always express clearly the relation of future to present, no doubt because he conceives of God as Jesus' Absolute Future who is eternal actuality. Unlike the influence of his Father in his life, the Resurrection event, before it happens, can only enter Jesus' life to the degree that Jesus acted out of the conviction (however general) that God would confirm him in his claims and behavior. As much as I am attracted to Pannenberg's view of the presence of God in Jesus' life, I cannot escape the impression that there are times when he smuggles actuality into the still outstanding future.

By means of this conceptuality, Pannenberg hopes to be faithful to the

<sup>20</sup>The reader is referred to Pannenberg's article "Kontingenz und Naturgesetz," in A. M. Klaus Müller and Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Erwägungen zu einer Theologie der Natur* (Gütersloh, 1970) pp. 33-80, for a restatement of many of the same themes regarding the future. Here Pannenberg speaks of an "eschatological ontology," of "continuity toward the past" (p. 44), of "continuity from the end," of "building a bridge to the past" (p. 65).

<sup>21</sup>See Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Future and Unity," in Ewert H. Cousins, ed., *Hope and the Future of Man* (Philadelphia, 1972) pp. 71 ff.

tension existing between present and future in both Jesus' message and in the Resurrection event. He hopes also to achieve something that the kenosis doctrine tried unsuccessfully to do: relieve the pressure of divinity from the human shoulders of Jesus, but not in such a way that he falls into an adoptionist position. All of Jesus' life is the self-revelation of God, but *because* of the Resurrection, which reaches back, as it were, to claim (ontologically) all of his earthly life.

The doctrine of the Incarnation still retains its value as an expression of the fact that the Resurrection not only sheds light on Jesus' whole earthly existence but *effects* it as the self-revelation of God. What was hinted at in Jesus' earthly life becomes fully constituted fact in his resurrection, and in such wise that *now* Jesus' earthly life is no longer merely a hint but is the unsurpassable medium of God's self-communication.

As far as I can judge, Pannenberg's notion of the ontological priority of the future, as applied to Jesus' unity with God, is original with him.<sup>22</sup> While G. W. F. Hegel, Alfred North Whitehead, Ernst Bloch, and Martin Heidegger have a share in the shape which Pannenberg's thinking has taken, he is offering his own contribution in Christology.<sup>23</sup> The usefulness of the notion for the question of the divinity of Jesus shows itself in two ways. First, Pannenberg can affirm Jesus as God in the totality of his earthly existence as God's definitive self-revelation and at the same time allow Jesus' oneness with his Father to grow and mature before Easter. Second, Pannenberg can make systematically fruitful the insight gained from form criticism that the affirmation by the early Church of Jesus' divinity and Lordship was rooted in God's confirmation of Jesus' claim to authority in the Resurrection.

Pannenberg sees in traditional Christology the tendency to locate the constitutive event in Jesus' life in the beginning of his existence. The

<sup>22</sup> The idea of the ontological priority of the future is central to the thought of Jürgen Moltmann as well; see his *Theology of Hope* (New York, 1964). It is only recently that he has applied this insight to the question of Jesus' unity with God, and this he does with substantial dependence on Pannenberg; cf. *Der gekreuzigte Gott* (Munich, 1972).

<sup>23</sup> I offered a sampling of Pannenberg's references to Whitehead above. See also Cousins, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-78. With respect to Ernst Bloch, see Pannenberg's "The God of Hope," in *Basic Questions in Theology 2* (Philadelphia, 1971) pp. 234-49. On Heidegger's view of the future and Pannenberg's critique, see "On Historical and Theological Hermeneutic," in *Basic Questions in Theology 1* (Philadelphia, 1971) 162-71. For Pannenberg's assessment of Hegel's view that history acquires its truth only at its end, see "What Is Truth," in *Basic Questions 2*, 1-27. A new approach to Hegel can be found in Pannenberg's address to the Hegel Congress in Stuttgart in 1970, "The Significance of Christianity in the Philosophy of Hegel," in *The Idea of God and Human Freedom* (Philadelphia, 1973) pp. 144-77, esp. 174-77. For Pannenberg's critique of Teilhard de Chardin, see "Geist und Energie," *Acta Teilhardiana* 8 (1971) 5-12, esp. 8 f.

Incarnation is a contingent event in the sense that it is God's free self-communication to the world, which is not necessitated by Jesus' prehistory in Israel and which nonetheless comes as the fulfilment of that prehistory. Within that perspective the Resurrection is not contingent but brings to conclusion the free event of God's self-communication in the Incarnation. In Pannenberg's context, however, we are not permitted to speak first of the Incarnation and then of the Resurrection: the order of-ontological priority must be reversed. Does this mean that Jesus need not have been raised from the dead?

The answer flows from Pannenberg's own point of view. It is his contention that the Resurrection event, and nothing preceding it, *decides* Jesus' divinity both for Jesus and for God's eternity.<sup>24</sup> This implies that before the Resurrection Jesus' essential unity with God was not yet decided, that he had an open future before that event occurred. If this openness of Jesus' existence to various possibilities was real and not simply apparent (needing, as it were, only the Resurrection to clear up lingering doubts about who he was), then how can Jesus have been the presence of God *in history* during his earthly life? Would it be better to say simply that "Jesus' earthly conduct appeared thoroughly ambiguous"?<sup>25</sup> But Pannenberg does not want to leave it at that, because Jesus' earthly life was unique in that it was affected by the Resurrection event before the latter happened; that is, Jesus' authoritative behavior *anticipated*, at least in a general way, the Resurrection and all that it spelled for Jesus' life.<sup>26</sup> Present in the mode of anticipation, God's confirmation of Jesus affected his life beforehand.

We are being asked by Pannenberg to apply to Jesus a statement which he first of all relates to the problem of the continuity of nature. Paraphrasing, we might say that the continuity of Jesus' entire existence (the earthly and the glorified) comes not from the beginning of his life but from its end, so that the Resurrection as the eschatological event can be conceived as the building of a bridge which saves Jesus' past (his earthly existence) from being lost or, positively expressed, claims it as

<sup>24</sup> "Had Jesus not been raised from the dead it would have been decided that he also had not been one with God personally" (*Jesus—God and Man*, p. 136). Cf. *ibid.*, p. 321.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334. Pannenberg insists that Jesus' resurrection was always present to God's eternity, and also insists that the Resurrection works retroactively not only after it occurred (claiming all of Jesus' earthly existence as God's self-revelation) but before it occurred, insofar as it is *anticipated* in the hidden unity in Jesus' earthly life (*ibid.*, p. 322). Perhaps Pannenberg would be open to rethinking Augustine's dictum about Jesus' human reality in a futuristic perspective: "Nec sic assumptus est ut prius creatus post assumeretur, sed ut ipsa assumptione crearetur" (*Contra sermonem Arianorum* 8, 6 [PL 42, 688]). For Pannenberg, creation occurs out of the future (*Jesus—God and Man*, p. 230).

belonging to the Absolute Future of history, God Himself. In this respect Pannenberg has made systematically significant the eschatological character of the Resurrection, in spite of the occasional inconsistencies in his expression. We can leave undecided the truth of his position regarding the influence which ordinary future events exert on antecedent events within the spatiotemporal continuum without endangering his contribution regarding the relation of eschatological reality to human history.

#### THE DIALECTIC OF JESUS' SONSHIP

The unity which comes to be in its fulness at the Resurrection was already present in Jesus' earthly life. Pannenberg's reflections on the personal unity between the pre-Easter Jesus and God form a second very significant portion of *Jesus—God and Man*.

Pannenberg rightly points out that Jesus' life was marked by a profound commitment to his Father and to the task asked of him, the task of calling men into the imminent kingdom of God. In all this Jesus revealed a consciousness of distinction from and subordination to the Father. There is no sign that Jesus was conscious of a relation to the divine Son as a reality over against him, as a Thou in his life.<sup>27</sup> Jesus' distinction from and subordination to the Father are not just those of one who is human over against the divine Thou; the distinction and subordination express a special relationship. Thus Pannenberg rightly speaks of the earthly Jesus in more than anthropological terms. The unity between the earthly Jesus and God his Father is first correctly described as a functional unity, insofar as Jesus' life and fate consisted in preactualizing the future full reality of the kingdom.<sup>28</sup>

This functional unity was marked by a personal relationship between Jesus and God his Father: Pannenberg calls this *Persongemeinschaft*. This personal relationship involved a life of dedication (*Hingabe*) to the point of self-surrender (*Selbstpreisgabe*) on the cross in which, paradoxically, the unity with God increased in direct proportion to the loss of clarity which overcame him as he was apparently rejected by God.<sup>29</sup> But the Resurrection shows that Jesus is wholly "of God," wholly "one with God."

The striking thing about Pannenberg's discussion of Jesus' divinity is that he insists on talking about Jesus' divinity indirectly, by way of what he himself calls a "detour." Scripture speaks of Jesus' relation to the

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> The perfection of this surrender to the Father, as Pannenberg earlier shows, includes rather than excludes on the level of conscious reflection a degree of ignorance regarding Jesus' own identity and his Father's plan (*ibid.*, pp. 332 ff.).

Father and to his fellow man, and that is how we must speak about him. This principle functions in Pannenberg's reflections as a basic rule of the Christological language game and might also be expressed by saying: never formulate anything about the divinity of Jesus that is not based on a statement about the concrete unique relationship of the man Jesus to his Father and to his fellow man. This is an eminently sensible control on Christological discourse, and one which is rooted in the New Testament.

Jesus is functionally one with God and in personal community with Him as his Father, but this is not all. The personal community between Jesus and God is also essential community. Pannenberg justifies this assertion in two ways. First, he understands the Resurrection as God's *self-revelation*, insofar as only God can bring about the end of history (even in a proleptic way).<sup>30</sup> Secondly, he refers to Hegel's understanding of a person as that which acquires its essence through dedication to another, through immersion in the other.<sup>31</sup> Hegel's formula allows Pannenberg to say that Jesus' dedication to God his Father is what mediates (*vermittelt*) and establishes (*begründet*) his divinity.<sup>32</sup> Jesus' dedication, confirmed by the Resurrection, reveals that he is the correlate of him whom he called Father: Jesus, in the execution of his dedication, is *the Son*.

Pannenberg is the mortal enemy of that interpretation of the two-natures doctrine according to which Christ is a compound (*Zusammensetzung*) of two substances or principles; for him—and I concur—Jesus' humanity and divinity are two complementary, radically distinct, total aspects of his existence. Thus the recognition of Jesus' eternal Sonship is based noetically upon the particularity of this human being in relation to the Father; and ontologically the relation is inverted, for the divine Sonship indicates the ontological root in which Jesus' human existence, united with the Father and nevertheless distinguished from Him, has the ground of its unity and of its meaning.

This ontological statement of the relationship between Jesus and the divine Son brings us to Pannenberg's discussion of the doctrine of enhypostasis. What he finds acceptable here—faithful to his methodological principle of the "detour"—is that it expresses the truth that the whole course of Jesus' human existence was ontologically dependent on the Son of God. The ontological dependence is distinguished from personal, dialogical dependence. The latter, experiential form of dependence existed between Jesus and his Father, and is what mediates the ontological rootedness in the eternal Son. The more Jesus grew in his relation to the Father, the more he became the Son. Understand-

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.



ing the enhypostasis formula as an ontological statement summing up what takes place in the course of Jesus's existence (including the Resurrection as confirmation of that existence), Pannenberg reminds us that the abstract notion of enhypostasis may never be the starting point of Christological discussion. The starting point and constant framework must always be Jesus in his concrete career. Ontology is unavoidable, if we are to be clear about our concepts of person, existence, and relation (for example). but these ontological tools must help illuminate Jesus' life in his concrete relations to the Father and his fellow men.

Pannenberg's analysis of the history of the concept of person makes it clear to him that we must distinguish person and spiritual individual, since the latter applies only to finite realities. Moreover, the concept should keep the implication that personhood is grounded in a "relation of origin," and that being a human person means, in the last analysis, transcendental openness to God. The notion thus strongly emphasizes relationality and God-openness.<sup>33</sup> What is seriously lacking in his analysis is attention to the correlative aspects of personhood both infinite and finite: self-consciousness, interiority, self-possession. Surely it is possible to show that self-possession and relatedness are not mutually exclusive, while at the same time indicating the difference between the second Trinitarian hypostasis and human personhood. Because he does not accentuate self-possession, Pannenberg can speak of the Hegelian notion of person in the Trinity as the high point of Trinitarian speculation up until our day, because it gives the sharpest accentuation to the personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit.<sup>34</sup> According to Pannenberg, the Trinity in Hegel's conception consists in three subjects "confronting" one another, subjects who surrender their subjectivity, and immerse themselves in the other, in order to be really person. I have to agree with Professor Berkhof that Pannenberg's Trinitarian theology is sorely underdeveloped.<sup>35</sup> This is somewhat ironical, because it is Pannenberg, with his notion of the indirect, dialectical identity of Jesus and the eternal Son of God, who has shown that the "simple" notion of God at work in the two-natures doctrine is inadequate, and it is he who has

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 339 ff. He thus chooses those aspects he favors from Richard of St. Victor, Duns Scotus, and Hegel (*ibid.*, pp. 181 f.). A serious weakness in Pannenberg's Christology is the fact that Hegel's notion of person is crucial to *Jesus—God and Man*, yet Pannenberg contents himself with two brief allusions to Hegel on this point. The dialectical nature of person as that reality which acquires its own identity in "losing" it in the other is well brought out in a doctoral dissertation written under Pannenberg's direction; see Falk Wagner, *Der Gedanke der Persönlichkeit Gottes bei Fichte und Hegel* (Gütersloh, 1971).

<sup>34</sup> *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 182.

<sup>35</sup> In his review in *Nederlands theologisch Tijdschrift* 20 (1965-1966) 72.

made Trinitarian theology the more fruitful context in which to speak of the hypostatic union.

What is disappointing about Pannenberg's discussion of Jesus as person is that he suggests things about the nature of the divine Son which call for further reflection. For example, he offers a fine methodological principle when he speaks of the necessity of speaking of the unity between Jesus and the eternal Son only indirectly, as an implication of the unity between Jesus and his Father ("unity," of course, meaning something different but related in each of these cases).<sup>36</sup> But does not this methodology have some important implications? Does it not imply something about the way the eternal Son is "person" in his life? Pannenberg insists that the only divine Thou in Jesus' earthly life was the Father. Might we not conceive the eternal Son as the Father's communication of His own integrity and unity of life to Jesus' existence, which integrity and unity is the second divine hypostasis? The Father, I am suggesting, is "person" in Jesus' life in a way different from the way the second divine hypostasis is "person"; does this not reveal a difference within the Trinity?<sup>37</sup> Pannenberg does not go into this question. But there are tantalizing hints of possible further development in his reflections. For example, he says that the person which integrates Jesus' life into a whole (here he means the eternal Son) is both active *and* passive because of its relational character.<sup>38</sup> Again, he says that the integrating person *realizes* itself precisely as the person of the Son belonging eternally to the deity of God.<sup>39</sup> To what degree did the eternal Son of God become son of God in Jesus of Nazareth? Pannenberg's statements are tantalizing, but they call for development. And I do not wish to draw conclusions from them that Pannenberg does not draw.

Pannenberg never speaks of Jesus explicitly as a human person, nor does he deny that he is one. He does affirm that Jesus the man is in and

<sup>36</sup> E. Flesseman-van Leer, "Inleiding tot 'Grundzüge der Christologie' van Wolfhart Pannenberg," *Kerk en Theologie* 17 (1966) 45.

<sup>37</sup> Pannenberg's discussion of the pre-existent Son of God does not shed much light on his understanding of his character as person. He correctly points out the mythological element in this concept, and admits that even today it is difficult to combine the two total aspects of Jesus' concrete existence, the eternal Son and the human individual in one (*Jesus—God and Man*, p. 154). While it is true that he does not speak of the pre-existent Son except in relation to the history of Jesus, and expresses this as a requirement of a healthy Christology (*ibid.*, p. 155), and while he elsewhere suggests that there may well be with God Himself a tendency to (hypostatic) unity with a creature (*ibid.*, p. 321), still Pannenberg appears to have no problem with a fully personal second hypostasis in the Trinity. At this point Pannenberg should have tried to show how Hegel's notion of person can serve as the key to the answer.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

of himself a concrete individual; this individuality is not due to his unity with the divine Son.<sup>40</sup> Jesus is person (i.e., an eminently relational and unique reality) by being rooted in the person of the divine Son. Yet Pannenberg so expresses the matter that nothing is denied Jesus' human reality to make room for a special divine principle. In this approach God and man do not compete in Jesus. Nor, to discover the divine in Jesus, must one move from his humanity to another "level" of his being. Jesus' divinity is not a second "substance" in the man Jesus in "addition" to his humanity. Precisely as this man, Jesus is the Son of God and thus himself God. Precisely in his particular humanity Jesus is the Son of God.<sup>41</sup>

There are open questions in Pannenberg's treatment of Jesus' divinity, but this affirmation regarding the locus where one meets that divinity sets the stage for the only kind of Christological discussion that has a chance of moving forward. Furthermore, it is apparent that he himself has already moved the discussion forward in at least the two decisive points we have just examined: the retroactive role of the Resurrection and the dialectic of Jesus' sonship. On both counts he has shown that a fruitful confrontation of Scripture and Church doctrine is possible and indeed necessary for a renewed systematic Christology.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>41</sup> The development of this central insight is the main preoccupation of the discussion among the Roman Catholic theologians Ansfried Hulsbosch, Edward Schillebeeckx, and Piet Schoonenberg which appeared in *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 6 (1966) 249-306. For a report and critique of this discussion, see Robert North, S.J., "Soul-Body Unity and Man-God Unity," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 30 (1969) 27-60.

<sup>42</sup> The strongest influence that Pannenberg has exercised on Roman Catholic Christology can be found in Dietrich Wiederkehr's significant essay "Entwurf einer systematischen Christologie," *Mysterium salutis* 3/1 (Einsiedeln 1970) pp. 477-648.



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