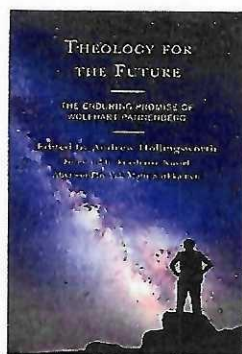


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Chapter 8

Redemption as Creation *The Future of Pannenberg's Future*

Ted Peters

INTRODUCTION

When the world is redeemed, it will be created. At the Omega Point of redemption, God will speak with the evaluation we find in Genesis 1:1-2:4a: the creation is "very good."

At the present moment the world is on the way, so to speak, to become what it truly is. Are we there yet? No. What we experience in the present moment is the process of becoming created. Only in the resurrection and eschatological consummation will we be what God from the beginning has intended us to be.

I get this from the teachings of Jesus, and from Wolfhart Pannenberg's interpretation of these teachings. Others such as Teilhard de Chardin, Paul Tillich, Carl Braaten, Robert John Russell, and Jürgen Moltmann help round out this picture.

I began imbibing what Pannenberg was serving while studying in Heidelberg in 1968. Then, under the tutelage of David Tracy at the University of Chicago, I wrote my dissertation on Pannenberg's theology of history in light of Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy.¹ I continued to feed from the Pannenberg kitchen over the following decades, digesting what was nourishing until his much-too-early passing in 2014.² By relocating Paul Tillich's *ground of being* from the depth of the moment into the eschatological future, Pannenberg dished up a retroactive ontology I found delectable. I cleaned my plate and asked for more. Actually, I asked for more than what Pannenberg's original recipe could deliver. The result is an ontology of the future that thanks Pannenberg for the entrée while adding garnishes and dessert.

In what follows, I would like to outline a view of God's creative work oriented toward Point Omega that links redemption and creation through retroactive ontology. Redemption provides the inner logic and power of God's creative advance. The skeleton will be my own, fleshed out in large part by the meat Pannenberg puts on the bones.

TOWARD OMEGA VIA RETROACTIVE ONTOLOGY

Omega, Ω , is the final letter in the Greek alphabet. It marks not only the last float in the parade or the climax of the story, but it also symbolizes completion or fulfillment. The eternal God is our Omega, just as God all along has been our Alpha. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8, NRSV).

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin tacks the Omega sign above the door to eschatology. That sign reads: *Point Omega*. According to Teilhard, "St. Paul tells us, *God shall be all in all* . . . the expectation of perfect unity, steeped in which each element will reach its consummation at the same time as the universe."³

Even though Pannenberg does not rely on the term, *Point Omega*, his exposition of the symbol of the Kingdom of God is a sister to Teilhard's Point Omega.⁴ The biblical symbol of the Kingdom of God directs Pannenberg toward God's eschatological future as fulfillment of the divine plan for all of creation. There are moments when Pannenberg mirrors Teilhard: "The stages of the evolution of life may be seen as the stages of its increasing complexity and intensity and therefore of a growing participation of the creatures in God."⁵

Despite this overlap on evolution, the difference between Teilhard and Pannenberg is significant. Whereas for Teilhard evolution gives creation a push toward the future, for Pannenberg the future gives creation a pull. "God's future is still the creative origin of all things in the contingency of their existence even as it is also the final horizon of the definitive meaning and therefore of the nature of all things and all events. On the path of their history in time objects and people exist only in anticipation of that which they will be in the light of their final future, the advent of God."⁶ Although Point Alpha may come first in time, Point Omega comes first in priority and power.

Jürgen Moltmann and Carl Braaten helpfully distinguish between two models of the future, *futurum* and *adventus*.⁷ Future understood as *futurum* connotes growth or progress, an unfolding of potential already existing in the past. An oak tree is the *futurum* of the acorn. A new model Mercedes is the *futurum* of past years of design engineering. *Adventus*, in contrast, connotes a future without precedent. It identifies something new that is breaking in. Whereas *futurum* signals a becoming, *adventus* signals a coming.

When the sovereign God creates, the creation is new in the sense of *adventus*. When the sovereign God redeems, new creation transforms the past creation. In what follows, I will demonstrate that it is God's *adventus* that makes *futurum* possible.

I dub this approach to creation and redemption *retroactive ontology*. The kernel core of retroactive ontology is that our being is determined by, and defined by, our future. The transformed reality promised by God is the ground for all other reality that anticipates it. "The future of God," asserts Pannenberg, "contrary to our usual way of looking at things, is constitutive for what we now are and already have been."⁸

Here is an important implication: creation is contingent on transformation. The meaning and being of the past are contingent on their future. God's Omega redefines—actually defines—all that has gone before. Who we are now is dependent on who we will be at Omega, and creation is not done yet. Creation was not completed back in Genesis or back at the Big Bang. Creation is ongoing. Creation is continuing. This means that creation will not be completed until it is reconciled with its creator. "Reconciliation is a constitutive aspect of creation."⁹

As we turn to constructive systematic theology, I would like to construct a superstructure on retroactive ontology as the conceptual foundation.¹⁰ My building materials will include, to be sure, scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. My blueprint calls for explanations of the natural world being discussed in the sciences. In particular, I will refer to Big Bang cosmology and evolutionary biology. What each of these fields makes clear is that nature is not static. In consonance with Pannenberg's description of the creative process, nature understood scientifically is malleable, changing. Nature has a history, and nature has a future. What we can see in nature through scientific lenses is contingency. What we cannot see without looking through theological lenses is that contingency is God's gift, and fulfillment is God's Omega.¹¹

THESIS 1: GOD CREATES FROM THE FUTURE, NOT THE PAST

"Reflection upon the power of the future over the present leads to a new idea of creation, not toward a primeval event in the past but toward the eschatological future," proposes the Munich theologian.¹² This key opens the door to a radical reversal, a reversal in direction for the power of being.

God creates from the future, not the past. Really? Yes, really. But, one might object, I thought *creation* refers to what God did once upon a time back at the beginning, back in Genesis or the Big Bang. Well, let us think again. We are accustomed to assuming a closed cause-and-effect nexus of

finite events. We place the cause in the past and the effect in the present. What exists in the present is the result of past causes. When we think of the creation of the world, then, we look to the past. We look to the *arche*, to the beginning, to the point of origin. We look backward to Alpha. What we find back at Alpha we call *Genesis*. Common sense places creation at Genesis.

But, let us look once again, a bit more closely. Just what does it mean to *be*? What does it mean to exist? Can we exist without a future? No. Without a future, we are not. If someone takes away our future, we drop from existence into nonexistence. This is what death is, the loss of our future.

To be is to have a future. Let me restate this: *to be is to have a future*. Here is the implication for the doctrine of creation: the way God gives being to creatures is to give them a future. Each moment, God gives the cosmos the next moment. God is moment by moment giving to all of reality its future.¹³ Without this future-giving on the part of God, all of reality would freeze up and cease. God "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Rom. 4:17b).

Pannenberg hints at retroactive ontology—almost but not quite—reversing the direction of cause-and-effect. "We see the present as an effect of the future in contrast to the conventional assumption that the past and present are the cause of the future."¹⁴

Let us return to the moment of Alpha, the moment our cosmos originated, to the biblical Genesis or the cosmic Big Bang.¹⁵ Perhaps we could say this: *the first thing God did for the cosmos was to give it a future*. By calling it from nothing into something, God bestowed a future that set reality on the course of historical becoming. By the term *creation*, we designate God's gracious gift of futurity. And moment by moment with unceasing faithfulness, God continues to bestow a future. Right now, God is bestowing on you and me our future.

The present moment needs further dissecting. The present moment is characterized by openness, openness to what is new. This means that God's future-giving is both positive and negative. It is positive in that God is the ground of being, the one who protects what exists now from ceasing to be. God's work is negative, as well, in that by giving a new future God releases the present from the grip of the past. Contrary to common sense, past causes do not hold the present moment in the grip of inviolable determinism.¹⁶ The present moment is open to change, open to what is new. This is because God liberates the present from the oppression of the past. New things can happen because God prevents the past from overpowering the present.

Back at Alpha, back at the beginning, the first thing God did was provide nascent reality with an open future. Since then, God has continued this double relationship to the created order, negatively releasing the grip of the past while positively offering being and openness to a future of new possibilities.¹⁷

Yes, past causes may set the parameters that give specific form to the finitude of each present moment. Yet, within these parameters God opens up an array of potentials that await actualization. The way the creatures within the world take free actions determines which potentials become actualized. Taking free actions forms us creatures into persons.

Pannenberg alludes to this depiction of freedom in his treatment of what makes us personal: "If . . . personality expresses itself in freedom, then freedom itself presupposes openness to the future. [We are] free only because [we] can go beyond what is presently extant. And so freedom is in general the power that transforms the present. . . . Futurity as a condition of freedom constitutes the very core of the personal."¹⁸

THESIS 2: GOD'S CREATIVE ACTION WITHIN NATURE AND WITHIN HISTORY IS DERIVATIVE FROM THE DIVINE ACT OF REDEEMING AND CREATING THE WHOLE OF THE COSMOS

The hinge event on which cosmic history swings is the Easter resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus' resurrection within history is a *prolepsis* of the fulfillment of history, an anticipation of Point Omega. In the words of Pannenberg, "The resurrection of Jesus is the proleptic manifestation of the reality of the new, eschatological life of salvation in Jesus himself, just as the coming lordship of God that Jesus proclaimed broke in already in his earthly work."¹⁹

This anticipatory connection between the intensive work of redemption in Christ and the extensive or universal eschatological redemption is not uncommon among twenty-first century theologians. Ilia Delio evokes this vision without using the term, *prolepsis*. "The resurrection of Jesus is the beginning within history of a process whose fulfillment lies beyond history, in which the destiny of humanity and the destiny of the universe together find their fulfillment in a liberation from decay and futility."²⁰ Richard Bauckham adds, "The activities of Jesus were small-scale anticipations of the Kingdom that heralded its universal coming in the future. What is notable about them . . . is the way that their holistic character points to the coming of the Kingdom in all creation."²¹ And Robert John Russell adds, "The eschatological future reaches back and is revealed in the event of the resurrection of Jesus. . . . Both creation and New Creation are part of a single divine act of creation *ex nihilo*."²² Or, more succinctly, "Creation must be taken as eschatological," says Paul Hinlicky.²³

Our trust in God's future is based upon the truth of the New Testament claim that Jesus rose from the dead. In that resurrection, God confirmed the

divine promise that the Kingdom of God is coming. What happened in the person of Jesus will also happen to all things in creation's history. Easter is a prolepsis of Point Omega.

What is more, we can construct an eschatological model that views the entire history of creation as a single divine act. "God's action [in creation] is seen to be a single act that embraces the whole cosmic process,"²⁴ declares Pannenberg. When we are talking about creation, we are talking about the universe, not just the park along the seashore or even planet earth.

Now to the central promise of this theological promise. At Point Omega, God will include incorporation into the divine life of our entire cosmic reality. The creation will be absorbed into the trinitarian perichoresis of God, and God's presence will imbue the creation as a whole and in all its parts. God's love will become the glue that binds all sentient beings into community with one another. The meaning of all past things will be established by their transformation. God's creative activity will attain its completion. God will be able to take that Sabbath rest described in the first book of the Bible: "And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done" (Gen. 2:2). That seventh day is tomorrow, the day that will conclude all of God's creative work. When it is redeemed, our world will be created.

THESIS 3: THE CONCEPT OF CREATION OUT OF NOTHING (*CREATIO EX NIHILO*) SHOULD BE COMBINED WITH CONTINUOUS CREATION (*CREATIO CONTINUA*)

When in constructive theology we temporalize God's creative activity, we must integrate creation-out-of-nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) with continuing creation (*creatio continua*). If we restrict *creatio ex nihilo* to what God did back at Alpha and not to God's continuing providence, then we might overlook the *adventus* quality to God's ongoing creative activity.

Robert John Russell may be clearer on this than Pannenberg. According to Russell, *creatio ex nihilo* "first of all affirms that God alone is the source of all that is, and God's creative activity is free and unconditioned. . . . The world is contingent, finite, temporal, and relative, for only God is necessary, infinite, eternal, and absolute. Finally, as creation by God, the world is characterized by freedom, purpose, and beauty."²⁵ Nancey Murphy adds, "It is necessary for theological reasons to grant that every created entity, however small and ephemeral, has an existence independent of God."²⁶ Though independent, this creation is loved by its creator, according to Kathryn Tanner: "From out of God's stores, God provides to

the world its created, non-divine existence, and all that it includes: life, truth, beauty, goodness in their finite forms."²⁷

Creatio ex nihilo can be distinguished, though not separated, from *creatio continua*. "The notion of *creatio continua* stands for God's continuing involvement with the world. Not only does God relate to creation as a whole but also to every moment. . . . God is continuously creating the world anew."²⁸ What we experience as the contingency of events and the arrival of new potentials is actually the divine imparting of newness every day. As Catherine Keller would say, "Beginning is going on. Everywhere."²⁹

There is a theological logic of *creatio ex nihilo* that draws in large part on implications of the gospel message of the Christian church. By *gospel*, I mean the story of Jesus told with its significance. Part of the significance is built into his Easter resurrection. As Jesus rose, God promises that we too shall rise. More: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now" (Rom. 8:22), and God promises to liberate creation from its travail. The new creation including our resurrection is the promise made to us by God when raising Jesus from the grave.

Rather than preserving a creation already complete, I view God's creative work as ongoing; it is yet to become complete in the eschatological future. Right now, we creatures are becoming who we will be. So also is the entire creation still under construction, so to speak, yet to be completed and yet to be judged "very good."

THESIS 4: GOD IS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF NATURE'S SECONDARY CAUSES

Our natural scientists look only for natural causes when constructing explanations. They exclude from consideration miracles and all forms of supernaturalism.³⁰ They exclude appeals to divine action. To perform laboratory research, scientists presuppose *methodological naturalism*.

As long as the scientific researcher restricts naturalism to a methodological principle, then knowledge can grow. But, on occasion, methodological naturalism gets upgraded into metaphysical naturalism, into a materialistic ideology. Here, a scientist conscripts metaphysical naturalism into the army of atheism. "The broader ontology typically associated with atheism is *naturalism*—there is only one world, the natural world, exhibiting patterns we call the 'laws of nature', and which is discoverable by the methods of science and empirical investigation. There is no separate realm of the supernatural, spiritual, or divine; nor is there any cosmic teleology or transcendent purpose inherent in the nature of the universe or human life."³¹

If we can avoid such metaphysical naturalism, then methodological naturalism will pose no threat to theological insight into the divine action in nature's world. Natural causation does not compete with divine action. According to Pannenberg, "There is no competition . . . between the creator Spirit of God and created agencies. Rather, as the omnipresence of God permeates all the space of the creatures, so God's Spirit permeates all natural forces and the life of the creatures, and thereby empowers them in their own activities."³² Or, to say it Robert John Russell's way, "Essentially what science describes without reference to God is precisely what God, working invisibly in, with, and through the processes of nature, is accomplishing."³³

Just how should the constructive theologian conceive of divine action in concert with natural causality? The Latin tradition in Western theology offers a way, namely, by distinguishing between God as primary cause and nature as a nexus of secondary causes. From Aristotle on into medieval theology, we have presumed that a secondary cause (*causa secunda*) precipitates a change or an effect in preexisting matter. It took God as the primary cause (*causa prima*) to bring matter into existence in the first place: "On the transcendental level, one may speak of God as the 'First Cause' whose action pervades the world in and through natural causes, which may now be viewed as 'secondary' or 'instrumental' causes acting under the influence of the First Cause."³⁴

According to what we said earlier, we should avoid limiting God's creation to Alpha, say 13.82 billion years ago at the moment of the Big Bang. Rather, God's exercise of primary causation continues as *creatio continua*. Divine action is exercised moment by moment or, better, as a ceaseless durative relation between creator and what is becoming created. The relations between creatures characterized by secondary causation are subject to scientific study. In our modern context, only the philosopher or the theologian can point in the direction of God as primary cause.

The much-criticized position of classical theism holds that God's power is absolute. Pannenberg, when defining deity in terms of *lordship*³⁵ and designating God as the "all-determining reality,"³⁶ is a member in good standing of the club of classical theists.³⁷ Despite the absoluteness of God, according to classical theism, creatures influence one another. Once the plan of creation is set in motion, God places absolute power in abeyance and ordains power to creatures to maintain the preordained plan of creation. God invests creatures with their own natural powers. Hence the medieval distinction (*potentia dei absoluta et ordinata*) between the absolute power of God and the power God ordains to be exercised by the world's creatures.

Do these two powers—absolute power and ordained power—compete? Neo-kenotic theologians assume so. Here is the neo-kenotic logic: in order for creatures to have ordained power, God's absolute power must be lessened by divine self-withdrawal. Moltmann, for example, proffers a version of

creation-kenosis that goes too far, in my opinion. "In order to create a world 'outside' himself, the infinite God must have made room beforehand for a finitude in himself. It is only a withdrawal by God into himself that can free the space into which God can act creatively. . . . The omnipotent and omnipresent God withdraws his presence and restricts his power."³⁸ Moltmann wrongly presumes that creatures can have power only when God withdraws, when God's power is absent. But, biblically speaking, power is not a competitive quantity. God's power actually empowers that of the creatures. It is God's presence, not God's absence, that empowers the creation.

Celia Deane-Drummond makes more sense to me than Moltmann. She recognizes exegetically that *kenosis* applies to Christ in the incarnation, not God the Father in creation. Jesus Christ, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness" (Phil. 2:6-7). She writes, "I position myself in favor of those who argue for *kenosis* as a self-emptying of God in Christ, rather than a giving up of divine power . . . or a form of inner withdrawal or spatial self-limitation in God."³⁹ This criticism applies directly to Moltmann: "Extending *kenosis* to include God is, in my view, far more problematic if it envisages some sort of spatial withdrawal prior to self-involvement, as in Moltmann's account."⁴⁰

Moltmann's neo-kenoticism fails exegetically, and it fails systematically. To contend that God constricts divine power in order to make a power vacuum that can be filled with natural powers seems inconsistent with divine omnipotence. The problem with this neo-kenotic view is that it presumes a fixed pie of power, according to which God must take a smaller slice in order for the world to get a larger slice. In contrast to this view, I believe it is the exercise of God's power that empowers the world. God exercises this power duratively, faithfully maintaining the world in existence while granting partial release from the mechanistic grip of the past nexus of efficient causation. It is the exercise of God's power upon the world that makes contingency in nature and freedom for humanity possible.

Pannenberg says it better: "the experience of the God who is the power of an ever-renewed future" makes us "free for a truly personal life."⁴¹ So, better than this neo-kenoticism is the complement of primary and secondary causation. Yes, the distinction between primary and secondary causation is a conceptual abstraction from the concrete flow of physical and extra-physical becoming; however, this theological framework is consonant with methodological naturalism.

Primary causation is not absent when secondary is in effect; rather, they constitute two dimensions of a single reality. This permits a noninterventionist theory of divine action. God does not intervene in the sequence of secondary causes, because God's primary causation is always coincident

with whatever is happening within the world. This does not preclude special divine action at the secondary level; rather, it simply depicts God's ordinary relation to the world as that of primary cause while making no commitment to extraordinary interventions such as miracles.

Through the eyes of science what we see is the sequence of secondary causes. We do not see miracles, nor do we see primary causation. Science is free to limit itself to secular explanations for natural phenomena. Science provides theories of explanation within the self-imposed parameters of secondary relationships. The theologian must rely on distinctively theological resources to see God's action as primary cause in nature's world.

THESIS 5: OUR HUMAN NATURE IS NOT YET FULLY CREATED. WE ARE STILL BECOMING

Who we are as persons is dependent on our future, on God's ultimate future: "We have our self, our identity, only in *anticipation* of the totality of our life," asserts Pannenberg.⁴² Moreover, who we are will be determined by the eschatological unity of all things, the final whole that determines all of the parts.

Human selfhood and identity are not static. They are historical. Who we are today is on the way, so to speak. "History is the *principium individualionis*. History as a formative process is the way to the future to which the individual is destined. . . . Only through anticipation of this [God's] future can human beings presently exist as themselves."⁴³ We attain our final identity only eschatologically, in the context of the fulfilled whole of Point Omega. To say it another way, we are who we are today as a gift of a not yet fulfilled future.

Our individual creation is not something past. It is present. We are not done yet. We are not yet what God the creator intends for us to be. We are still baking, so to speak; we still need to emerge from the oven in our final form. It will be our destiny that determines our definition. In the first of his two anthropologies, *What is Man?* of 1962, Pannenberg teased out the double meaning of *Bestimmung*. This term could be translated either as "destiny" or "definition."⁴⁴ He intended both: it is our destiny which defines who we are. Perhaps more precisely, it is our ultimate future that will retroactively determine who we are now.

We will not become who God intends us to be until we ourselves share in the resurrection at Omega. Once raised, we will look back over our biographies and over the evolutionary biography of the entire human race and understand who we are in our totality. Who we are will be defined by the length and breadth of our relationship with our creator, God. We arrive at our full identity at the same moment everything does, because "eschatology has always to be both universal and individual."⁴⁵

**THESIS 6: OUR HUMAN REALITY IS IN
CONTINUITY WITH THE SURROUNDING NATURAL
WORLD, INCLUDING SUFFERING AND SIN**

"Creation is inherently *good* because it is the product of God's will, but creation is not (yet) *perfect*," observes Ian McFarland when writing about the book of Genesis. Not perfect? Why not? "Because the flourishing of creatures that God wills is in the present partial, competitive, and transient—a series of qualifications that can be overcome only in a state of communion with God to be realized beyond the constraints of life in time and space."⁴⁶ We *homo sapiens* belong inextricably to this creation that is good, though not yet perfect.

Sin, evil, suffering, and estrangement from God; that's the *locus* at stake here. Note that, for Pannenberg, human sin is rooted in a destiny that precedes us and is folded into nature. "Sin does not consist merely of individual offenses. . . . It precedes all human acts as a power that dwells in us, that possesses us like our own subjectivity as it overpowers us. It is a state of alienation from God. Yet this alienation does not come about without our own cooperation and . . . consent."⁴⁷ We inherit sin, and we pass it along.

For Pannenberg, human sin and natural evil are so intertwined that they cannot be untangled. *Natural Evil*, Nancey Murphy tells us, refers to "the suffering of animals and the suffering that nature causes for humans."⁴⁸ Does this mean evolution has passed original sin down to us in our DNA? Here's a slogan: DNA is DNA is DNA. The four chemicals—ACGT—that make up DNA are the same in all life forms on planet earth.⁴⁹ Whether with chimpanzees, chihuahuas, chickens, chinooks, or chickpeas, we human beings share a pattern of genetic activity. Just as Genesis 2:7 says we (*Adam*) are formed from the soil (*Adamah*), and therefore are made up of our planet's material, we must grant that we share our physical nature with everything in our physical world. And if Darwin's theory of evolution holds, we will have to grant also that all living things share a single biological history, perhaps even a single biological origin. Whether we like it or not, cheetahs and chihuahuas are our cousins.

Our embeddedness in nature suggests a relationalist anthropology. The relationalist model cedes ontological priority to the relationship over the individual, and it subordinates the status of the individual to the relation's terms. What we know as human individuality finds its place within the more comprehensive network of relationships and in the totality of reality. Pannenberg is a holist when it comes to personhood and resurrection. "The soul is not on its own the true person as though the body were simply a burdensome appendage or a prison to which the soul is tied so long as it has its being on earth. Instead, the person is the unity of body and soul, so that we can think of a future after death only as bodily renewal as well."⁵⁰

THESIS 7: THE THEOLOGIAN NEEDS TO THINK EPIGENETICALLY, NOT ARCHONICALLY

To find the essence of reality, should we look back to the past, to its origin? Or, should we look to the future? How do we get at the basic structure or essence of something? Two paths are available: the archonic and the epigenetic. The *archonic* path takes us back to the origin, to the beginning. I elect this term because its Greek root, *arche*, has a relevant double meaning. It means both beginning and governance. In the word *archaeology* it means origin, for example; and in *monarchy* or *hierarchy* it means governance.

This powerful little word, *arche*, betrays a structural propensity in human thinking, namely, we associate the definition or essence of something with its origin. The rule or governing principle is coincident with the way something begins. If the nature of things is established at origin, then whatever comes subsequently is a betrayal or deviation from a thing's original nature. Analysis takes the form of seeking origins, because in an origin we believe we find the essence. What this leads to is the concept of revolution—to revolve—as a return to an original essence by means of clearing away unwanted accruals.

This is where myth comes in. Myth provides the poster child of archonic thinking. Here is my working definition: a *myth* is a story about how the gods created the world in the beginning, *in illo tempore* or the time before there was any time, which explains why things are the way they are today. Myths provide archonic explanations.

Whether providing etiologies for the cosmos, one's nation, name, disease or whatever, the myth reveals a thing's essential nature by telling us a story of its origin. We may tell very few myths in the modern world, but the archonic path is still followed. Physical cosmologists still look back to the Big Bang in hopes of devising a Grand Unified Theory (GUT) of the universe. Medical researchers still look for the ontogenesis of maladies. Customers purchase mail order genome tests in order to find their ancestry and, thereby, think they have found their identity thereby. Archonic thinking is common to myth, science, and self-understanding.

I recommend another path to the constructive theologian: *epigenesis*. If we take this word apart, we can see that "Genesis," reminding us of "generate," refers to bringing something into existence for the first time. It is no accident that the First Book of Moses is called "Genesis." However, if we prefix it with "epi," the Greek preposition for "upon" or "after," we get a compound word that suggests ongoing or repeated Genesis. Epigenesis is the process by which new things continue to emerge. The way the world begins is not the way it remains. It changes. New things appear. New things do not need to bow in allegiance to what preceded them, nor is their essence reduced to the

nature of their predecessors. The reality of new developments is not suspect because they were not present at the point of origin.⁵¹

Yes, the theologian must grant that much of the Bible follows the archonic path, connecting present reality to Alpha. The book of Genesis is rife with etiological narratives, stories about the origin of virtually every aspect of daily life for Israelites in ancient Canaan. The origin of Israel was given in the story of Abraham's call, and the name "Israel" was given in the story of Jacob. Yet, this is not all. The God of Israel makes promises to do new things and he fulfills these promises. The people of Israel lived between promise and fulfillment. God is not stuck in the past. God's future relationship to the covenant people is not determined by what happened at origin. "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19) We will miss perceiving God's new things if our eyes look only toward the past and not toward the future.

So, the lens of epigenesis helps us perceive the dynamism of everyday existence as well as view with credibility the divine promise for an eschatological consummation where God will become all in all. New things happen every day, both in natural history and human history. The eschatological transformation is continuous with daily newness, even though the breadth of the eschatological transformation will be total. Only by liberating our thought processes from reliance upon archonic ontologies can we come to appreciate the Christian gospel that anticipates Omega.

Let me be clear: in no way do I ask the theologian to disregard what the Bible says. The symbolic speech of the Hebrew scriptures is frequently cast in the past tense, as archonic stories of origin. The future is frequently cast in the past tense. It is at the rational level of theological interpretation that we recast archonic to epigenetic conceptuality, interpreting archonic symbols, such as God created the world in seven days (Genesis 1:1-2:4a), in light of eschatological symbols, such as the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21-22). Ontology is the responsibility of the theological interpreter, not that of the origin stories themselves.

THESIS 8: GENESIS CAN BE INTERPRETED ESCHATOLOGICALLY

The holistic principle I have enunciated includes this observation: new wholes transform past parts. Integration into new more comprehensive unities preserve while renewing what came before. The eschatological new creation will, accordingly, realign and reorient all that is past to Omega.

We can observe this process on a smaller scale—proleptically—in the present in the phenomenon of emergence, the emergence of complex new

entities with new properties.⁵² This holistic complexification process is non-linear. Adding a new whole changes an entire situation in a significant way. The possibility of transformative effect renders redemption possible. Now, suppose we apply this to eschatology and then to creation? God's eschatological redemption will so reconfigure all that had been past that it might as well be a new creation or, perhaps more accurately, the completion of the creation already begun. Does this mean that eschatological Omega takes ontological priority over what happened at the beginning? I believe it does.

Point Omega, or the new heaven and new earth prophesied by the biblical Apocalypse, will transform yet preserve the entire history of cosmic creation. What God did at the beginning to draw the physical world from nonbeing into being along with his continuous sustaining of the natural order during its period of self-organization will be taken up into the consummate new creation. God's creative activity within nature and human history is derivative from his eschatological act of redeeming the whole of the cosmos. Where we find ourselves today is looking back to Alpha, to *creatio ex nihilo*, and looking forward to Omega, the new creation *ex vetere*, out of what has come before.

Healing is symbolized by the garden in scripture.⁵³ The Garden of Eden described in the earliest chapters of Genesis reappears in the New Jerusalem. God "will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). The violence, suffering, and death so inescapable in today's world will become only a past memory. This is the component of redemption in the new creation.

Now, to our thesis: Genesis can be interpreted eschatologically. Could we think of the creation week of seven days in Genesis 1:1-2:4a as inclusive of the entire history of the creation from Big Bang to whatever will become of the universe in the future? Could evolutionary history constitute one small episode in the divine epic of creation?

Note how God asks the earth to bring forth living things. "God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind'" (Gen. 1:24). Could this mean that God, the primary cause, ordained earth as secondary cause to evolve? Could we see this as a process that still envelopes us? Could we see ourselves today standing between the initial moment when God opened his divine mouth to say, "Let there be ..." and the final moment when God declares that, behold, it is "very good"? Could we still be looking forward to the Sabbath day, to God's first day of rest yet in the future?

Jürgen Moltmann adds a nice touch here. He retrieves the biblical symbol of the sabbath and applies it to the end, to the consummation of creation. God's sabbath is our future: "Because this consummation of creation in the

sabbath also represents creation's redemption—the redemption enabling it to participate in God's manifested, eternal presence—it will also be permissible for us to understand the sabbath as the feast of redemption."⁵⁴ The *adventus* of Omega marks the beginning of God's sabbath.

THESIS 9: THE LIFE OF BEATITUDE DAILY ANTICIPATES OMEGA

We do not simply wait for the future. The future as *adventus* pre-actualizes itself ahead of time in ambiguous fragments, as *prolepsis*. What I mean here by *prolepsis* is pre-actualization of a still outstanding future. It is the equivalent of incarnation, incarnating in the present in our person what is yet to come at Omega. I use the word *prolepsis* to emphasize the ontological weight of anticipation. A *prolepsis* is an embodied anticipation.

Jesus' Easter resurrection provides the paradigmatic model for *prolepsis*. What happened to Jesus on the first Easter was a *prolepsis* of the new creation, an anticipation of the final resurrection that will include you and me. "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died" (1 Cor. 15:20), wrote the apostle. As Jesus rose on Easter, so also will we rise at Omega. Or, as Pannenberg puts it, "Jesus' resurrection . . . has its eschatological significance only because it is a *proleptic* occurrence of the general eschatological salvation expected by the Jews of that time, and hence only in the context of the totality of human history, whose ultimate future it unveiled."⁵⁵ What happened to Jesus intensively, in his person, on Easter is destined to happen to us extensively, to the world, in the future. "The *proleptic* character of the Christ event . . . [signifies that] the resurrection of Jesus is indeed infallibly the dawning of the end of history . . . the onset of the end had occurred only in a preliminary way, happening in Jesus himself . . . for the rest of us, the resurrection of the dead, which already happened to Jesus, is still outstanding."⁵⁶

Pannenberg uses the terms "anticipation" and "prolepsis" almost interchangeably: "Here we find anticipation to be a real instance of something's occurring in advance. The anticipated future is already present in its anticipation—though only given the presupposition that the eschatological future of God's Lordship and the resurrection of the dead actually occur. If this future does not occur, then its anticipation will have been only prophetic enthusiasm. Anticipation is therefore always ambiguous; its true significance depends upon the future course of our experience."⁵⁷ A *proleptic* anticipation that we experience in the present moment is ambiguous, both incarnating God's future yet subject to interpretations that ignore the divine action at work. This ambiguity characterizes the Life of Beatitude.

The biblical symbol of *Beatitude* includes ambiguity, especially the double character of living tomorrow's reality today. Beatitude is proleptic. The future Kingdom of God seems to affect if not imbue the kind of person Jesus describes in his aphorisms. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth," says Jesus. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." Or, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." Or, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." And, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." The dialectic of future with present is vivid. The anticipated Kingdom of God is present—almost unconsciously present—in we who live the Life of Beatitude; and our blessing will be revealed at the *adventus* of Point Omega.

CONCLUSION

Teilhard tilled the soil. Pannenberg planted the seed. It's now time for the next generation of theologians to fertilize, water, and prune a coherent retro-active ontology. I have attempted here to construct a pergola of nine theses.

- Thesis 1. God creates from the future, not the past.
- Thesis 2. God's creative action within nature and within history is derivative from the divine act of redeeming and creating the whole of the cosmos.
- Thesis 3. The concept of creation out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) should be combined with continuous creation (*creatio continua*).
- Thesis 4. God is the primary cause of nature's secondary causes.
- Thesis 5. Our human nature is not yet fully created; we are still becoming.
- Thesis 6. Our human reality is in continuity with the surrounding natural world, including suffering and sin.
- Thesis 7. The theologian needs to think epigenetically, not archonically.
- Thesis 8. Genesis can be interpreted eschatologically.
- Thesis 9. The *Life of Beatitude* daily anticipates Omega.

Point Omega is as close to us as the next moment. The eschatological fulfillment of the whole creative process God began at the Big Bang is reaching back into the present moment, liberating us from the predetermining grip of the past, opening before us potentials for a yet-to-be-decided future, and giving us a foretaste of the banquet that will celebrate the redemption of all things. God's *adventus* makes possible our contribution to *futurum*.

NOTES

1. Ted Peters, "Truth in History: Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Pannenberg's Apologetic Method," *The Journal of Religion*, 55.1 (January 1975): 36–56.

2. Ted Peters, "In Memoriam: Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928–2014) *Dialog* 53.4 (Winter 2014): 365–383.
3. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Intro. by Julian Huxley (New York: Harper, 1959), 294. Teilhard "is thus speaking not of God alone nor of the world alone, but of their meeting point." Henri de Lubac, *Teilhard Explained*, tr. Anthony Buono (New York: Paulist Press, 1966), 55.
4. Theology is basically rational reflection on multivalent symbolic speech. "The symbol ... opens up and discloses a dimension of experience, that, without it, would remain closed and hidden." Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 165.
5. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 3 Vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991–1998), 2.33. Though Pannenberg likes that Teilhard affirms "the end is the true beginning," he fears Teilhard contradicts himself. On the one hand, Teilhard makes Point Omega the product of evolution, an "extrapolation" from the inner energy of living thing that transcend themselves. On the other hand, Teilhard's Omega is "the power of the future that shapes the creative origin of evolution." Which is it? Teilhard cannot have both. Pannenberg elects the latter. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Spirit and Energy in the *Phenomenology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*," *Beginning with (the End: God, Science, and Wolfhart Pannenberg)*, eds., Carol Rausch Albright and Joel Haugen (Chicago: Open Court, 1997), 80–89, at 85.
6. Pannenberg *Systematic Theology*, 3.531. "Here we are faced with the fundamental ambiguity which permeates Teilhard's thought; the ambiguity of his explanation of the ultimate mover of the evolutionary process: Point Omega or self-evolving beings." Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Faith and Reality*, trans. John Maxwell (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1977), 30. Whereas Teilhard is ambiguous, Pannenberg is unambiguous. "The Kingdom of God will be established not by men but by God alone." Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1969), 69.
7. For the distinction between *futurum* and *adventus*, see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Future of Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979), 29–30. Here is the key point: "Omega is more than alpha." Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future*, trans. M. Douglas Meeks (New York: Charles Scribners, 1969), 36. I have been personally inspired by the early work of Carl Braaten, who said, "The new place to start in theology is at the end—eschatology." *The Future of God: The Revolutionary Dynamics of Hope* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 9.
8. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3.551.
9. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, 61.
10. The constructive theses developed here extend previous work in Ted Peters, *Anticipating Omega* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); and Ted Peters, *GOD the World's Future: Systematic Theology for a Postmodern Era*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).
11. Pannenberg interprets primarily the New Testament symbol of the kingdom of God. Jürgen Moltmann prefers the symbol of the new creation. "Cosmic eschatology's symbol of the new creation of all things is more integral than the historical symbol 'the kingdom of God'. . . . There can be no historical eschatology without

cosmic eschatology." Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming God: Christian Eschatology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 132. When interacting with the natural sciences, the symbol of the new creation might be more fertile to interpret.

12. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, trans. George H. Kehm, 2 Vols. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1970–1971), 2.243.

13. This may sound at first like occasionalism. What is occasionalism? "Occasionalism teaches that all causal efficacy is properly ascribed to God alone. Therefore, when a creature appears to cause a particular effect (e.g., the earth pulling an apple from a tree, a bat striking a ball, water reviving a wilted plant), that appearance is an illusion; the putative creaturely cause in fact simply serves as the "occasion" for God's action, which is the sole necessary and sufficient cause of the observed effect. According to the occasionalist, to argue otherwise undermines the claim of total creaturely dependence on God demanded by the doctrine of creation from nothing." Ian A. McFarland, *From Nothing: A Theology of Creation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 138. The retroactive ontology I construct here differs from occasionalism on two counts. First, I describe God's future-giving as a constant durative process, not a sequence of staccato moments. Second, occasionalism is deterministic, whereas retroactive ontology includes the use of divine power to liberate the present moment for alternative contingent futures and the exercise of animal freedom.

14. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, 54.

15. Pope Pius XII addressing the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in 1951. "Thus, with the concreteness which is characteristic of physical proofs [science] has affirmed the contingency of the universe and also the well-founded deduction as to the epoch when the world came forth from the hands of the Creator. Hence, Creation took place. We say, therefore, there is a Creator. Therefore, God exists." Pope Pius XII cited in Helge Kragh, *Cosmology and Controversy* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), 257. "Both Fred Hoyle and Pius XII had confused theological Creation with astrophysical origination." Owen Gingerich, *God's Planet* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 116.

16. "Determinism is the position that the state of any system is completely fixed by its preceding state or states." Nicholas A. Christakis, *Blueprint: The Evolutionary Origins of a Good Society* (New York: Little Brown Spark, 2019), 404.

17. Freedom at the human level requires contingency at the pre-human physical and biological levels. Where I use the term *contingency*, renowned physical cosmologist, George Ellis, refers to *randomness*. "Randomness is harnessed through the process of adaptive selection, which allows higher levels of order and meaning to emerge. It is then a virtue, and not a vice. It allows purpose to be an active agent by selecting the desired outcomes from a range of possibilities. . . . If it were not for this effective randomness, we would be stuck in the vice of determinism and outcomes would be limited and uninteresting." George F.R. Ellis, "Necessity, Purpose, and Chance," *God's Providence and Randomness in Nature: Scientific and Theological Perspectives*, eds., Robert John Russell and Joshua M. Moritz (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2019), 21–68, at 23. Randomness providing us with alternative futures is one of God's gifts to the present moment.

18. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, 2.245–2.246.
19. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3.627.
20. Ilia Delio, *Christ in Evolution* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 156.
21. Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Ecology* (Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 167.
22. Robert John Russell, *Time in Eternity: Pannenberg, Physics, and Eschatology in Creative Mutual Interaction* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 15.
23. Paul R. Hinlicky, *Beloved Community: Critical Dogmatics after Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 72.
24. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2.34.
25. Robert John Russell, *Cosmology from Alpha to Omega: The Creative Mutual Interaction of Theology and Science* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 34. "Between God and the world there exists an otherness founded on the fact that the world's being is based on the will, not the substance, of God." John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 86.
26. Nancey Murphy, "Divine Action in the Natural Order: Buridan's Ass and Schrödinger's Cat," in *Chaos and Complexity: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. Robert John Russell, Nancey Murphy, and Arthur R. Peacocke (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory and Berkeley CA: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1995), 325–358, at 341.
27. Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, and Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 42.
28. Russell, *Cosmology*, 35. "While creation from nothing rules out any ontological continuity between God and creatures (so that creation is not in any sense divine), it affirms the ontological grounding of creatures in the inexhaustible richness God's own life." McFarland, *From Nothing*, 90. William Lane Craig, for one, would most likely place more weight on the *de novo* creation of God at the Big Bang. The Big Bang establishes creation, so what follows is not *creatio continua* but rather conservation of what has already been created. William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
29. Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 3. Rather than assign the act of creation to the Father creating *ex nihilo*, Catherine Keller locates creativity in the deep, the *tehom*. "Ocean of divinity, womb and place-holder of beginnings, it is not Elohim but the first place or capacity of genesis." Keller, *Face of the Deep*, Keller's italics.
30. Following Tillich, I prefer the term *supranaturalism*, referring to what is above or beyond the natural, over *supernaturalism*, denoting an extension or enhancement of what is already natural. See, Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 Vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–1963), 2.5–10.
31. Sean Carroll, *The Big Picture: On the Origins of Life, Meaning, and the Universe Itself* (New York: Dutton, 2016), 11.
32. Pannenberg, "Contributions from Systematic Theology," 369. "Theology cannot refrain from describing the world of nature and human history as the creation of God, or from claiming that only thus do we bring into view the true nature of the

world. Theology must make this claim in dialogue with the sciences" Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2.59.

33. Russell, *Cosmology from Alpha to Omega*, 214.

34. Michael J. Dodds, *Unlocking Divine Action: Contemporary Science and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press of America, 2012), 188.

35. "The being of God and that of the kingdom are identical, since the being of God is his lordship." Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, 2.240.

36. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 1.159.

37. Even though Pannenberg belongs to the club of classical theists, he grumbles over the club's idea of divine absoluteness immune to the vicissitudes of time, change, and history. Pannenberg's doctrine of the Trinity places the history of the creation within the perichoresis of the divine life. "The doctrine of the Trinity is the seal of the pure futurity of God, which does not harden into an impotent diastasis, a mere beyond contrasting with man's present, but which instead draws it into itself and through enduring the pain of the negative reconciles it with itself." Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, 2.249.

38. Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God, The Gifford Lectures 1984–1985* (New York: Harper, 1985), 86–87.

39. Celia Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 54.

40. Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution*, 172–173.

41. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, 69.

42. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3.561.

43. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1985), 527.

44. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *What is Man? Contemporary Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. Duane A. Priebe (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1962), vii.

45. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3.543.

46. McFarland, *From Nothing*, 135.

47. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 2.262.

48. Nancey Murphy, "Science and the Problem of Evil: Suffering as a By-product of a Finely Tuned Universe," in *Physics and Cosmology: Scientific Perspectives on the Problem of Evil*, eds., Nancey Murphy, Robert J. Russell, and William R. Stoeger, SJ (Berkeley and Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory and Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 2007), 131–152, at 133. On the one hand, death is natural or even good, according to Kristin Johnston Largen. On the other hand, death represents estrangement from God. "At the same time however, clearly there are aspects of death that are to be resisted, aspects that are sinful, and that are a regrettable—even demonic—manifestation of brokenness in the cosmos. These aspects include unnecessary suffering, privation, intentional cruelty and torture, and disease. Particularly when it comes to individual deaths, there are many aspects of the experience that we can and should seek to eradicate—both for humans and for animals." Kristin Johnston Largen, "Un/natural death and distinction," *Dialog* 57.4 (December 2018): 279–286, at 279.

49. Synthetic biology may add nucleotides, increasing the number from four to six or so. But, to date evolution has bequeathed to all living things only four: adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine.

50. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3.572. *Holism* or *Wholism* recognizes the principle that an emergent whole is greater than the sum of its parts and, further, just as the parts have causative effects on the whole, the whole also has causative effects on the parts.

51. John Haught conveys the same contrast with slightly different vocabulary. "Archeonomy locates the matrix of all being in a fixed and unfeeling past; *anticipation* proposes that the universe has not yet fully awakened to rightness because it is still coming into being." John F. Haught, *The New Cosmic Story: Inside Our Awakening Universe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 170.

52. "The concept of emergence says simply that *the whole is more than the sum of its parts*" Terrence W. Deacon, *Incomplete Nature: How Mind Emerged from Matter* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012), 144.

53. I observe that the symbol of the garden plays a decisive role in binding together the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The first garden is Eden, paradise. The final garden is Eden again, located downtown in the city park of the New Jerusalem. The third garden sits between: it is the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus wills to embrace his salvific destiny.

54. Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 277.

55. Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Focal Essay: The Revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth," in *Theology as History*, eds. James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. (New York and San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1967), 125.

56. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, 2.24.

57. Pannenberg, *Metaphysics and the Idea of God*, 96. In reviewing this book, Roger Olson faults Pannenberg. "One suspects that two entirely distinct and incompatible notions of the relationship of the future and the present are stitched together and covered with the idea of anticipation. Either anticipation is prolepsis—the real presence of the future in advance—or it is subjective and provisional preapprehension of the future. . . . Pannenberg wants it both ways." Roger E. Olson, Review of *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* in *The Journal of Religion* 72.2 (April 1992): 285–286, at 286. Yes, Pannenberg uses *anticipation* both ways. But, this does not make them incompatible. Pannenberg invokes a version of eschatological confirmation which will confirm or disconfirm both an incarnate prolepsis as well as a subjective or imaginative anticipation of the future.

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