

CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY AND CHRISTOLOGY: TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION AS EMANCIPATORY SOLIDARITY

A person, Jesus from Nazareth, is executed among criminals by the Roman authorities for the alleged charge of political insurrection.¹ Two thousand years later more than a half billion people confess this Jesus of Nazareth as their God and Savior.² How was it possible that a person crucified as a political criminal could become acknowledged as savior? What does it mean that this crucified person is now proclaimed as a savior? For a crucified person to be acknowledged as the savior was inconceivable at the time of Jesus and was in no way anticipated or expected.³ Nor was the death itself easy to understand. The reaction of the disciples at the crucifixion betrays their perplexity and incomprehension. They were confused, dismayed, and bewildered. They denied him, they scattered, and they fled. They did not appear to have expected his violent death.⁴

In the light of their Easter faith, the early Christians sought to understand the enigma of Jesus' death with every possible concept and category available to them. The earliest Christian theology as reflected

¹R. Bultmann claims that Jesus was executed by the Romans as a political criminal because of a misunderstanding of his activity. Cf. "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*, ed. by C. E. Braaten and R. A. Harrisville (Nashville: Abdingdon Press, 1964), p. 24. E. Käsemann refuses to characterize it as the result of a political misunderstanding, but sees it following out of the internal logic of his own activity. Cf. *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 50f.

²The Amsterdam Confession of the World Council of Churches states that the World Council consists of those "Churches which acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Savior."

³The notion of a suffering messiah was foreign to the Jews at the time of Jesus. R. Schnackenburg notes that the contrary opinion of Jeremias has found very little acceptance among exegetes. Cf. "Christologie des Neuen Testaments," in *Mysterium Salutis* 3, 1, ed. by J. Feiner and M. Lohrer (Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1970), p. 240.

⁴For the question of the passion narratives cf. the treatment and bibliography of Fr. Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 46-53.

in the theology of Q (the collection of sayings forming a source common to Matthew and Luke) understood Jesus' death as the fate of a prophet.⁵ The early passion narratives depict his passion by appropriating and applying to Jesus the psalms about a suffering just person⁶ and the gospels see it as the fulfillment of the prophecy of the suffering servant. Already at this stage we see a development toward an understanding of Jesus' death as salvific even though it must be conceded that the earliest stages of the tradition did not explicitly and directly assert its salvific character.⁷ R. Schnackenburg writes that "the expression 'for us' should not be understood here in the sense of 'for our sins' since this narrower soteriological interpretation can de facto not be proven to be present in a section of the tradition (the pre-Markan passion narrative and the Q-source)."⁸ Whether the eschatological expectation of this earliest traditions implicitly provides the basis for the later explicit soteriological interpretation of Jesus' death is at the

⁵See the significant study by O. H. Steck, *Israel und das Gewaltames Geschick der Propheten* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967) as well as the recent literature on the theology of Q. by P. Hoffman, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (Munster: Aschendorff Verlag, 1972) and S. Schulz, *Q. Die Spruch-Quelle der Evangelisten* (Zürich: EVZ Verlag, 1972).

⁶J. Gnilka, *Jesus Christus nach frühen Zeugnissen des Glaubens* (München: Kösel Verlag, 1970), pp. 95-109.

⁷The recent exegetical position is best summed up by W. Schrage, "Aber auch im ältesten palästinischen Christentum ist eine positiv explizierte Bedeutung des Todes Jesu nicht überall zu beobachten. Die stark an der eschatologischen Verkündigung Jesu und der Nachfolge und Erwartung des Menschensohnes orientierte Logienquelle Q etwa lässt bei ihrem Interesse an der Weiterverkündigung der Botschaft Jesu jeden Hinweis auf das Passionskerygma und die Heilsbedeutung des Todes Jesu vermissen." "Das Verständnis des Todes Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament," in *Das Kreuz Jesu Christi als Grund des Heils*, ed. by F. Vierung (Gerd Mohn: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1967), pp. 49-89, here p. 63. The present discussion has moved beyond the way the question was posed in Modernism. The decree of the Holy Office, *Lamentabili*, condemns in proposition 38: "Doctrina de morte piaculari Christi non est evangelica, sed tantum paulina" (DS 3438). The contrast between Paul and the Gospels is no longer maintained by serious scholarship. The question today involves the earliest tradition of the pre-Gospel material.

⁸"Der geschichtliche Jesus in seiner ständigen Bedeutung für Theologie und Kirche," in *Rückfrage nach Jesus*, ed. by K. Kertelge (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1974), p. 207, n. 26. Schnackenburg argues for an indirect or implicit salvific interpretation of Jesus' death.

center of contemporary exegetical discussions.⁹ It is evident that the early Christians did not simply remain at a non-soteriological interpretation and understanding of Jesus' death as the fate of a prophet, but moved on to other categories and different models. The Pauline writings document how Paul took over traditional elements from Jewish cultic practice and juridic thought as well as from Hellenistic mystery religions and Gnostic mythic beliefs in order to explain the meaning of Jesus' death. All were taken over and yet all were inadequate to explain the significance of Jesus' death. Paul applies his own theology of justification to underscore his understanding of redemption and the saving event of Jesus's death and resurrection.¹⁰ Whereas Jesus' death and its significance becomes central to Paul's theology of the cross, in John's Gospel "the saving significance of Jesus' death recedes into the background" for "John sees the essential salvation event in the sending of the Son into the world and in his return to the Father, so that the death of Jesus is regarded only as an important stage in the exaltation of the Son of Man (John 3: 13-14)."¹¹

This diversity is not limited to the New Testament, but extends throughout the history of Christianity. Any historical survey of the history of the doctrines of atonement reveals a myriad of differing theories.¹² Not only is the meaning and significance of Jesus' death an

⁹W. Kasper asserts "so impliziert die eschatologische Deutung des Todes Jesu eine soteriologische Deutung. Analog zu der verborgenen Christologie Jesu können wir deshalb von einer verborgenen Soteriologie Jesu sprechen," in *Jesus der Christus* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald Verlag, 1974), p. 141.

¹⁰R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. by K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), Vol. I, pp. 292-306.

¹¹W. Kümmel, *The Theology of the New Testament*, trans. by J. E. Steely (New York-Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), p. 298.

¹²Cf. the classic histories of the doctrines of atonement and redemption: A. Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, trans. by J. S. Black (Edinburg: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872); J. Riviere, *The Doctrine of the Atonement. A Historical Essay*, trans. by Luigi Cappadelta (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1909), 2 vols.; H. Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1919); R. S. Franks, *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918), 2 vols. For more recent literature, see H. E. W. Turner, *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1952); F. W. Dillistone, *The Christian Understanding of Atonement* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968);

issue of debate, but also the historical cause and factual reasons for his death are issues of scholarly discussion.¹³ More fundamental is the diversity of the theological attempts within the Christian tradition to understand atonement and redemption. The history of Christian theories of the atonement has been divided into three basic types: the classic or "ransom" theory, the latin or "satisfaction theory," and the subjective or "moral" influence theory.¹⁴ Modern theology, moreover, is seen to move between the poles of an objective and subjective interpretation of atonement and redemption.¹⁵ Any constructive attempt to understand atonement and redemption and to elucidate the saving significance of Jesus Christ should in no way underestimate the degree and significance of this diversity within the Christian scriptures and tradition.

Despite this diversity, contemporary theology has often placed primary emphasis upon the death of Jesus in its explanations of atonement and redemption. Although these theologies have brought much light to bear on a central event of Jesus' life, namely, the end of his life, his death, they have in my opinion made the death of Jesus so much the starting-point or pivotal point of their understanding of redemption that they have to that extent short-sighted the broader dimensions of redemption and have neglected traditional elements of the understanding of redemption. In this paper, I should like *first* to survey a select number of contemporary theologians and to examine their understanding of redemption and its relation to the death of Jesus as well as the presuppositions and consequences of their interpretations. In a *second* section, I should like to suggest that critical theory rather than literary hermeneutics provides the key to understanding significant elements of the Christian tradition and its explanations of atonement and redemption. In the *third* and final section, I should like to present and C. Andresen, "Erlösung," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Aton Hiersemann, 1966), Vol. 6, pp. 54-219.

¹³H. W. Kuhn, "Jesus als Gekreuzigter in der frühchristlichen Verkündigung bis zur Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 72 (1975), pp. 1-46, esp. 3-7.

¹⁴Cf. G. Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

¹⁵Cf. R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London: John Murray, 1917).

three theses toward understanding redemption and atonement as emancipatory solidarity.

I. THE ROLE OF THE DEATH OF JESUS IN MODERN EXPLANATIONS OF REDEMPTION

In an article anticipating much of contemporary theology, Martin Kahler wrote "without the cross no Christology, and in Christology no single feature which cannot find its justification in the cross."¹⁶ This emphasis upon the cross in a modern Lutheran theologian writing at the turn of the century has been echoed most recently by Catholic theologians. Walter Kasper proposes the thesis that "Christology 'from below' is therefore only possible as a theology of the cross."¹⁷ And Hans Küng writes even more pointedly that "the cross is thereby not only the example and model, but also the ground, power, and norm of Christian faith. . . ."¹⁸ The overwhelming emphasis given to the cross of Jesus in understanding Christology and the Christian faith as well reveals a characteristic common not only to these authors but also to a large segment of modern Christology. The dominance of this emphasis is due in my opinion paradoxically both to existentialism and to the reaction to it. This can easily be ascertained by analyzing how Karl Rahner and Rudolf Bultmann are decisively influenced by "existentialistic" presuppositions and how Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg can be interpreted as reactions to this position especially as represented by Bultmann.¹⁹

THE INFLUENCE OF EXISTENTIALISM

Two theologians of the twentieth century influenced by existentialism are Karl Rahner and Rudolf Bultmann. Each understands his

¹⁶"Das Kreuz. Grund und Mass der Christologie," *Schriften zur Christologie und Mission* (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1971, reprint of 1911 essay), pp. 292-350.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁸*Christsein* (München: R. Piper & Co., 1974), p. 400.

¹⁹Since I have limited the paper to contemporary theologians, I have not included an analysis of Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr. The "existentialism" of their works would require quite a separate treatment. In addition to Moltmann

theology as an attempt to take seriously the present situation and contemporary human experience. Each admits his indebtedness to the existential philosophy of the early Heidegger as it was understood at that time.²⁰ And yet each exhibits a very distinctive appropriation of Heidegger's thought in their attempts to offer theological explanations of the saving significance of the death of Jesus.

Karl Rahner: Death as Personal Acceptance and Realization: Although Karl Rahner faults traditional theology, often labelled "school theology" or "textbook theology" for not taking seriously enough Jesus' earthly activity and life, his own discussion of Jesus' redemptive activity does not in my opinion take up sufficiently this very insight except insofar as he places emphasis upon the explanation of how Jesus has redeemed us precisely through his death and not through any other act of his life.²¹ In this respect there is an inconsistency between his critique of the traditional satisfaction theory and his own constructive proposals, an inconsistency that can be explained away only on the basis of his presuppositions from existential philosophy.

Rahner criticizes the satisfaction theory for failing to do "full justice to all the factors of soteriology."²² Its starting point comes from categories of Germanic law and these cannot easily be applied to the personal relation between God and the sinner. It does not explain how a moral action that is already due to God can be regarded as compensation. More importantly, it does not immediately show how the saving and Pannenberg, the Christology of Hans Urs von Balthasar should also be included. Its unavailability in English has led me to omit a discussion of his kenotic Christology.

²⁰From the perspective of Heidegger's later writings, the "existentialism" of his earlier writings has been called into question so that the "existentialistic" reception of his works seems less valid now than it appeared to his contemporaries. Cf. W. J. Richardson, *Heidegger. Through Phenomenology to Thought* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963) and O. Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske Verlag, 1963).

²¹*Theological Investigations*, Vol. 1, trans. by C. Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), pp. 194-7. When Rahner discusses Christology in terms of an evolutionary framework as he does in some of his later writings, he presents a perspective that differs from the emphasis here.

²²"Salvation" in *Sacramentum Mundi* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), Vol. 5, p. 430.

initiative comes from God's universal will for salvation. And finally, it presupposes that any act of the God-man, and not precisely his death, could redeem us.

The guiding question for Rahner is: "Why is it that we have been redeemed by Christ's death (and by nothing else)? . . ." ²³ Rahner's response to this question is largely determined by his theology of death. In his early writings, he suggests that death does not separate the person from the world, but places her or him into a more comprehensive relationship with the world. He combines this suggestion with the Thomistic teaching on the instrumental causality of Christ's humanity as a possible explanation of the salvific character of his death. This death moreover should be seen not as an act that has passively happened to Jesus (or any other person for that matter), but rather as the most personal act of Jesus since death itself is an act of personal realization and full consummation. ²⁴

In his later writings, Karl Rahner no longer underscores in the same manner the new cosmic relation after death. The notion of instrumental causality recedes into the background of his explanations, and the emphasis upon the universal salvific will is placed even more in the forefront of his interpretation. His understanding of death as an active personal realization, however, remains at the center. Rahner constantly underscores Jesus' death as the radical self-gift and self-acceptance that expresses the meaning and significance of his divinity and humanity.

The sense of this assertion becomes clear when it is seen in the perspective of the line that Rahner draws between the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Redemption. The Logos of God is God's immanent self-utterance and as such is the condition of God's self-utterance outside of himself/herself. This external self-utterance of God's love in creation culminates in God's self-emptying in the Incarnation by which God expresses her/his nature as love precisely in the kenotic act of becoming human. ²⁵ And this love and self-giving that God actualizes and manifests itself precisely in the death of Jesus.

²³TI (= *Theological Investigations*), I, p. 194.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 194-7. Cf. *On the Theology of Death*, trans. by C. H. Henkey (New York: Herder & Herder, 1961) pp. 64-88.

²⁵*Theological Investigations*, trans. by K. Smyth (New York: Seabury, 1974); first printing, London, 1966), pp. 105-20.

Consequently, "Jesus' death belongs to God's self-utterance" for "precisely this death (like Christ's humanity) expresses God as he is and as he willed to be in our regard by a free decision which remains eternally valid."²⁶ Since death is the definitive acceptance by a free person of himself/herself, "the radical acceptance of divinizing self-communication occurs, however, by death"²⁷ i.e., by the death of Jesus.

His death is seen as the culmination of the history of divine self-communication and as the radical human acceptance of this communication.²⁸ God manifests his/her self-gift of love by making and accepting the history of the human world as his/her own. This acceptance of the world by God finds its culmination in the death of Jesus which at the same time is the radical human acceptance of God's self-communication. The death of Jesus is seen by Rahner in a two-fold significance in terms of his understanding of Jesus as divine and human. His death expresses at the same time the radical self-giving and kenosis of the divinity as it expresses the radical self-giving and self-acceptance of the humanity of Jesus. The death characterizes or expresses the self-gift that brings to expression both the divine and human constitution of Jesus. Jesus' death is both the divine offer of salvation in its most radical form and the total human acceptance of it.²⁹ Through this theory Rahner has attempted to overcome both the weaknesses of the scholastic theory of satisfaction that does not sufficiently take into account the divine initiative in salvation and the liberal theological position that sees the death of Jesus only as an attestation but not as a cause of our redemption.

Rahner's argument has a two-fold presupposition. Death is seen not only as an event passively happening to an individual, but rather as a totally personal and voluntary act. Moreover, as such it involves a total

²⁶"Jesus Christ," *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol. 2, p. 208.

²⁷"Salvation," *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol. 2, p. 431.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 430f.

²⁹Whether this explanation solves the problem of the divine-human relation that has been considered one of the weaknesses of the traditional satisfaction theory is open to debate. Rahner's explanation attempts to give priority to the divine universal salvific will while at the same time emphasizing the human acceptance of this will.

summation and expression of the person's life. Although death entails for Rahner both a passive fate and an active act, it is primarily when the human person accepts it that it becomes "the highest act by which the human person completely disposes of himself/herself in the absolute surrender of self."³⁰ Aware of the objection that the end of a person's life is not a personal act, Rahner underscores that death as an act of consummation is achieved throughout the whole human life and is present in all the acts of the whole life.³¹

In this analysis, Karl Rahner discloses his heavy indebtedness to Martin Heidegger's understanding of death in *Being and Time* where he defines death as the possibility that is most one's own and thus characterizes the ontological structure of human existence as being-towards-death or more accurately as "to-be-going-to-die." In his discussion of death Heidegger distinguishes between an inauthentic and an authentic relation toward death. Whereas the inauthentic relation seeks to evade, cover up, or give a new explanation for death, the authentic does not. The authentic relation expects death and anticipates death in the sense that persons as persons comport themselves towards death as possibility. In his own words, "Being towards this possibility [death] enables *Dasein* to understand that giving itself up impends for it as the uttermost possibility of its existence. Anticipation, however, unlike inauthentic Being-towards-death, does not evade the fact that death is not to be outstripped; instead anticipation frees itself *for* accepting this."³² The notions of radical orientation toward death, anticipation and acceptance of death as a possibility are elements of Heidegger's thought that Karl Rahner has taken over and appropriated for a theological understanding of death and has used to explain the significance of the death of Jesus.

There is an important difference in accentuation between Heidegger and Rahner. Whereas Heidegger's analysis concentrates on

³⁰*On the Theology of Death*, p. 49. Translation revised slightly. Cf. his statement on p. 48. "The end of the person as a spiritual person, is an active immanent consummation, an act of self-completion, a life-synthesizing, self-affirmation, an achievement of the person's total self-possession, a creation of himself [herself], the fulfillment of his [her] personal reality."

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 51.

³²*Being and Time*, trans. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 308.

the being-toward-death as a possibility and the authentic anticipation of death, Rahner's analysis focuses primarily on the act of dying itself and he almost begrudgingly admits the axiological presence of death in all of man's acts. This focus becomes sharpened in his discussion of Jesus' death where he stresses the active and personal element of the death in itself and places in the background the other acts of Jesus' life and even criticizes the traditional school theology for allowing that redemption could have taken place through them.

Two critical questions could be asked of Rahner. *First*: Is his emphasis upon death as a personal realization and consummation justified? Since he even admits that death is present throughout all acts of life, should he not have asked how Jesus in his preaching and deeds has taken a position toward death? Such a question would have brought him even closer to Heidegger's analysis of the notions of anticipation and authenticity. Moreover, such a question would have enabled him to present a picture of Jesus' redemptive activity that did not concentrate just on his death, but included the activity and preaching of Jesus. *Second* and more fundamentally: Although the orientation toward death constitutes a fundamental, essential, and indispensable element of human existence, does it have the almost absolutely exclusive and primal meaning which Rahner assigns to it? Would it not be more accurate to understand human existence as situated between eros and thanatos (to borrow from the later writings of Freud without necessarily agreeing with his interpretation of each of these instincts)?³³ Does not the eros as the desire for human solidarity, personal union, the creation of new life, social-cultural harmony and unity constitute an equally fundamental principle of human existence? Should not any constructive theological explanation of the meaning of salvation and redemption attempt to relate the significance of Jesus not only for the problem of death, but also for the human drive for solidarity, union, and new life for oneself and for others?

Rudolf Bultmann: Death as the End of Human Possibility: Rudolf Bultmann also borrows heavily from the early Heidegger in his theo-

³³Cf. S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962). See Paul Ricoeur's analysis in *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. by D. Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 281-309. A further question can be raised about Rahner's understanding of love: Does he not conceive of it too exclusively in terms of self-giving and self-surrender to the neglect of the desire for union and solidarity?

logical elucidation of the meaning of human existence and Christian redemption. Central Heideggerian categories such as the distinction between "authentic" and "inauthentic existence" play a significant role in Bultmann's writings when he uses the categories of inauthenticity and authenticity as a background to his explanations of sin and faith. Yet his theological interpretation involves not only a qualification but also a modification and correction of Heidegger's philosophical standpoint, as an analysis of Bultmann's treatment of faith and salvation discloses.

Bultmann's fullest analysis of the meaning of redemption and salvation can be found in his *Theology of the New Testament* where he analyzes the understanding of the salvation occurrence in Paul and John.³⁴ In section 33 Bultmann discusses "Christ's Death and Resurrection as Salvation-occurrence" and observes that for Paul the death and resurrection are seen as a unity; they represent for Paul the decisive, indeed, "the sole thing of importance" concerning the person and life experience of Jesus.³⁵ The crucial questions are: How are they a unity and how are they solely decisive? The answer is found precisely in Bultmann's interpretation.

Bultmann notes that Paul took over traditional Jewish notions of expiatory sacrifice, vicarious sacrifice, and even the concept of ransom. However, he breaks through the cultic and juridic horizon of these categories and sees Christ's death not merely as a sacrifice cancelling the guilt of sin but also as a release from the powers of law, sin, and death. To explain how Christ's death has such an effect, Paul has recourse to the conceptuality of the mystery religions and to Gnostic myth. His death is described in analogy with the death of a divinity of the mystery religions, but Paul gives it a new and more comprehensive meaning. Through baptism and the sacramental communion of the Lord's Supper, Christians participate both in the dying and rising of Jesus. By leading them into death Christ delivers them from death. This expla-

³⁴Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, pp. 292-306. Cf. the interpretation of Bultmann's theology presented by W. Schmithals, *An Introduction to the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* trans. by J. Bowden (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), pp. 71-194 and G. Hasenhüttl, *Der Glaubensvollzug, Eine Begegnung mit Rudolf Bultmann aus katholischem Glaubensverständnis* (Essen: Ludgerus-Verlag, 1963).

³⁵*Theology of the New Testament*, p. 293.

nation is expanded by means of the Gnostic view that persons form together with the Redeemer a unity insofar as they and he together form and belong to one body. What happens to the Redeemer does not happen to him alone, but happens also to his body, to all belonging to it. In this view Christ's death and resurrection are seen as cosmic occurrences.³⁶

Yet Paul found none of these thought complexes or categories adequate to explain the significance of Jesus' death. This assertion is central to Bultmann's position for he argues that Paul transfers the salvation-occurrence out of the juridic and sacrificial conceptuality of Jewish thought and out of the cosmic-natural framework of the Hellenistic mystery religions and of Gnostic myth and places them into "the dimension of genuine occurrence in a human's actual life."³⁷ In his explanation of this transferral, Bultmann reveals his own position which he argues is Pauline. The salvation, which in the Gnostic myth was seen as a cosmic-natural occurrence of a union of believers in one body or substance is now seen as taking place in the proclamation of the word. Not through unity into one body, not by sharing of one supernatural substance, but through the proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus does the salvation occurrence become a possibility for human existence and an object of faith.

Just how Bultmann understands this occurrence and possibility becomes clear in his analysis of faith. Two concepts of faith are distinguished. Faith as belief is the willingness to acknowledge something as true, e.g., the facts reported of Christ. Faith as faith is the self-surrender to God's grace and as such signifies the absolute reversal of the person's previous self-understanding. Bultmann unites both elements into one concept of faith so that to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord is the same as giving up one's previous self-understanding.³⁸ Since statements about Christ's incarnation are considered by Bultmann as mythological they do not in his opinion present either a direct challenge to man's previous self-understanding nor do they express the faith that involves a self-surrender.³⁹ This challenge and proclamation takes

³⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 293-300.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 302.

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 300-1.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 304.

place solely through the proclamation of the crucified one as Lord and only through this proclamation is the cross recognizable as a salvation-occurrence.⁴⁰ The decision and the challenge presented by the proclamation of the cross is whether the individual will acknowledge that God has made the crucified one Lord and whether the person will "thereby acknowledge the demand to take up the cross by the surrender of his previous understanding of himself, making the cross the determining power of his life, letting himself be crucified with Christ (I Cor 1: 18-31; Gal 6:14; cf. 5:24)."⁴¹ That the crucified one is Lord is precisely the scandal and the foolishness of the cross. Its acknowledgement in faith is not only an assent to truth, but also a surrender of one's previous self-understanding.

This understanding of the salvific significance of the cross reveals its close interrelation with a specific anthropological conception. Bultmann clearly distinguishes and delineates the Christian meaning of human existence from modern as well as from Greek conceptions and makes this distinction central to his soteriology. In the Greek understanding of human existence, human persons understand themselves as particular instances within the general order of the whole. This means that they have the ideal standard of the cosmos which they can observe and then conform to as to an ideal. It is therefore possible for them to realize this ideal which is both set before them and yet is not strange to them because it is the very law of their nature. This Greek view provides persons with a world-view in which they find security and even destiny becomes comprehensible.⁴² This Greek understanding of existence is not something only in the past, but it prevails in principle in the modern scientific understanding of human existence. Here too human nature is seen as a part of the cosmos whose phenomena are ruled by laws that can be discovered by human reason. Modern persons acknowledge as real only such phenomena that can be seen within scope of the rational order of the universe. This scientific world-view likewise creates the temptation that persons can through their know-

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁴²"The Understanding of Man and the World in the New Testament and in the Greek World," *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, trans. by J. C. C. Greig (New York: Macmillan, 1955) pp. 67-89.

ledge of the laws of nature organize life more effectively and achieve mastery over their lives and over the world.⁴³

It is precisely against both this Greek and the modern scientific world-view that Bultmann places the Christian understanding of human existence.⁴⁴ The New Testament understands human existence as fallen or as in sin. This sin consists in the cutting of oneself off from encountering a God who is not at one's disposal and in the seeking to live in one's own disposal and control. In such existence one is closed to the future and no longer lives authentically, is no longer open to all possibilities. Seen against the background of Bultmann's understanding of the Greek and modern scientific world-view, the New Testament view of sin as so described uncovers the basic tendency of that world-view and considers it as the sin of human existence. The striving to live at one's own disposal is from the Christian view sin or inauthentic existence.

The proclamation of the crucified one as Lord is therefore the direct challenge to this inauthentic existence. It challenges the presupposition of the Greek and modern scientific world-view according to which self-identity and salvation are at one's disposal and can be achieved by one's efforts. Instead it proclaims the cross as the saving event. What is from a human standpoint a failure and a scandal is in the Christian proclamation the saving event. To believe in the cross as the saving event is therefore not just to assent to its truth, but involves the giving up of one's previous false self-understanding, the surrender of one's attempt to control one's future, and the opening of oneself for the grace of God in Jesus. In this view Bultmann has reversed and overcome the traditional dichotomy between objective and subjective salvation. Instead, he asserts that the salvation occurrences takes place in the proclamation and obedient confession of faith in the cross.⁴⁵

⁴³*Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 35-44.

⁴⁴Quite often Bultmann is understood as saying precisely the very opposite of what he is saying. A blatant example of such misrepresentations is: S. Brown, *Do Religious Claims Make Sense?* (London: SCM Press, 1971), where it is asserted Bultmann wants to reformulate biblical statements into a new world-view or that he claims that the New Testament authors did not mean what they wrote.

⁴⁵"The salvation-occurrence is eschatological occurrence just in this fact, that it does not become a fact of the past but constantly takes place anew in the present." *Theology of the New Testament*, I, p. 303.

Much could be said about this understanding of the salvation event as taking place in the event of proclamation. Although fundamental, this question would take us astray from our central question of precisely why the cross or the preaching of the cross. This question remains important even if we look at Bultmann's analysis of John's Gospel. Although Bultmann correctly perceives that John in contrast to Paul makes the death of Jesus subordinate to the incarnation and even asserts that for John "Jesus' death has no pre-eminent importance for salvation,"⁴⁶ he asserts that despite all differences in terminology and mode of thought a "deep relatedness in substance . . . exists between John and Paul."⁴⁷ This relatedness in substance is given a basis by Bultmann only insofar as he unites incarnation (sending) and death as obedience and exaltation in such a way as to assert that for John "Jesus' death, therefore, is not a special work, but is conceived as of one piece with the whole life-work of Jesus, being its completion."⁴⁸ He, moreover, underscores this death of Jesus on the cross as a triumph over the world ("for the cross itself was already triumph over the world and its ruler").⁴⁹ The coming-and-going of Jesus, therefore, constitutes a unity and as such is the eschatological event, an event understood as the judgment of the world.⁵⁰ In this respect John and Paul are "deeply related" because both understand the salvation event as a challenge to the world and its self-understanding.

This notion of salvation as challenge reveals the differences between Bultmann and Heidegger. They agree insofar as Bultmann's analysis of sin parallels Heidegger's notion of inauthenticity and insofar as Bultmann maintains that sin and inauthenticity have the same ontological structure. The human person is fallen or thrown into the world and has surrendered himself or herself by attachment to what is disposable and controllable. But they differ, for Bultmann maintains that although philosophy can recognize the fallenness of human existence in the world, and can disclose it as inauthenticity, this does not suffice. Philosophy does not characterize the fallenness of human existence as

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 52.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 9.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 55.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 56.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 37.

apostasy from God and it is convinced that persons can find the way to authenticity on the basis of a philosophical understanding of human existence. The philosopher believes that if persons are shown their plight then they will be able to escape from it. Bultmann maintains that such a view not only fails to do justice to the radicalness of the New Testament understanding of inauthenticity as slavery to sin, but it also represents the desperate attempt to control one's own destiny and hence is a self-glorifying and self-assertion. Authentic life is only a gift, a grace of God. Bultmann sees the Christian understanding of existence as a radicalization and as such a criticism of the self-righteousness of existential philosophy.⁵¹ The Christian proclamation that the crucified Jesus is the exalted Christ offers an understanding of human existence in which God's grace is manifest in the midst of human failure and death.

Bultmann has provided us with a brilliant dialectical insight into the relation between human finiteness and divine grace. Yet it can be questioned whether he has too excessively contrasted human effort and divine grace. This question becomes obvious when his view on the significance of Christ's death is compared with Rahner's interpretation. Whereas Karl Rahner as a Catholic Jesuit sees the death of Jesus as an active act of love expressing a full personal realization, Rudolf Bultmann betrays the influence of his Lutheran background when he asserts that divine grace becomes manifest in human failure. Although both Rahner and Bultmann agree that a juridic notion of redemption in terms of the satisfaction theory is inadequate, both concentrate upon the death of Jesus. His life activity is seen only in terms of his death. Human existence faces, moreover, not only its limitations, especially the radical limit of death, but it also faces the constructive task of social and political life. Must not an understanding of redemption take this fundamental principle of human existence also into consideration?

THE REACTION TO EXISTENTIAL THEOLOGY

Recently there has been a reaction to the existentialism of the previous theology. Since this existentialism was particularly prevalent in

⁵¹*Kerygma and Myth*, edited by H. W. Bartsch, trans. by R. H. Fuller (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), pp. 22-33. Cf. J. Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1955), pp. 152f; Karl Löwith, "Phänomenologische Ontologie und protestantische Theologie," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 12 (1931) pp. 111-22.

Germany, it is not surprising that the reaction is represented especially by German systematic theologians. Many aspects of the constructive work of Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann can be understood as a reaction to the existentialism of Rudolf Bultmann, just as the political theology of Johann B. Metz involves a modification of Rahner's transcendental theology. Since Metz has produced no Christology, the analysis must be limited to Pannenberg and Moltmann.

Wolfhart Pannenberg: The Death of Jesus as Representative Substitution: Pannenberg begins his Christology precisely with a polemic against a characteristic feature of the Bultmannian position, namely, the soteriological approach to Christology. His main fear is that such an approach leads to a subjective reduction of Christology. This is especially evident in his survey and evaluation of the soteriological motifs within the history of Christianity. Seven basic tendencies are delineated. Deification through incarnation or deification through assimilation represent two soteriological motifs of the patristic period. Vicarious satisfaction and Christology of God's grace are respectively seen as the Anselmian and Lutheran conceptions. In the modern period Schleiermacher's prototype of the religious person, Ritschl's ideal of moral perfection and Gogarten's Christology of pure personality are analyzed. Each of these soteriological approaches to Christology are criticized by Pannenberg for their subjectivism and for their vulnerability to the Feuerbachian critique. They represent and involve the human striving for happiness, for example, the human desire for deification, for freedom from guilt, or for perfect morality, personality and trust.⁵² Pannenberg observes that the change of Christological patterns in the history of Christology has been defined by soteriological interests. This connection between Christology and soteriology involves the danger that one has not really spoken of Jesus himself, but has perhaps projected onto Jesus human desires and striving. He asks whether "the desires of men only become projected upon the figure of Jesus, personified in him" because he fears that such a position "is not far removed from Feuerbach's thesis that all religious concepts are only projections of human needs and wishes into an imaginary transcendent world."⁵³

⁵²*Jesus—God and Man*, trans. by L. L. Wilkins and D. A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), pp. 21-46.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 47.

Pannenberg's evaluation of this tradition touches on one of the most controversial and central points of his constructive theological endeavor. His *Revelation as History* attempted to assert the objective facticity of revelation over against a Bultmannian theology of proclamation.⁵⁴ This work, like many of his essays, reacts against "the tendency toward a subjectivization and individualization of piety, which has threatened the life of our churches and wrought its divisiveness for a long time. . . ."⁵⁵ Although Pannenberg does not contrast objectivity and subjectivity as he has been accused, he does fear that the transcendental existential approach to theology does not sufficiently secure the objective foundation of faith upon which faith is built. Due to this fear he looks askew at the soteriological approach to Christology and in my opinion falsely presupposes that the objectivity of Christology could be guaranteed primarily if its objectivity were established prior and independent of human interest and desire. Although Pannenberg's critique reveals an inadequate reflection upon the interrelatedness between theory and interest, his constructive position should be evaluated in its own right.

Not the significance of Jesus for us, but Jesus himself is the starting point of Pannenberg's Christology. Since he seeks to develop the significance of Jesus "from what Jesus actually was then,"⁵⁶ he is interested in discovering what significance is inherent in Jesus "himself, in his history, and in his person constituted by this history."⁵⁷ Although this starting point should provide the perspective from which Pannenberg would consequently elucidate the significance of Jesus' death, that is not quite the case. In my opinion Pannenberg has not developed his starting point consistently.

⁵⁴Trans. by D. Granskou (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

⁵⁵*Basic Questions in Theology* trans. by George H. Kehm (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971) p. 43. This article on insight and faith gives a clarifying response to many objections and criticism of *Revelation as History*. His reservations against a total transcendental approach is, however, still evident in *Wissenshaftstheorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973) as his attempt to interrelate a consensus theory and a correspondence theory of truth indicates. In this book he accepts much more than in his earlier writings the transcendental aspect of knowledge.

⁵⁶Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, p. 48.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

Pannenberg separates the death and resurrection of Jesus from his activity in two ways. *First*, Jesus' activity is distinguished from his fate. Not only does Pannenberg accept the consensus of critical exegetical scholarship that the so-called passion predictions are to be understood as *vaticinia ex eventu*, but he also seeks to underline that neither the death nor resurrection should be seen as actively accomplished by Jesus but rather as something that happened to him. This is certainly true insofar as Jesus was slain by the Romans and was raised by the Father. Yet it does not spell out the extent to which this fate of Jesus was a consequence of his initiative and actions. Pannenberg admits that Jesus could have reckoned with the possibility of his death when he turned toward Jerusalem. Yet, rather than draw the obvious conclusion from this reckoning, he states that "nonetheless, his passion and death remain something that happened to him and are not to be understood as his own in the same sense as his activity with its message of the nearness of the Kingdom of God."⁵⁸ If this activity and preaching were in some way the cause of Jesus' execution, then his death could be seen, in my opinion, as an action of Jesus insofar as he remained committed to that action and preaching even after the death of the Baptist and in view of growing hostility.

Second and much more importantly: although Pannenberg places Jesus' death for the benefit of humankind within the context of Jesus' service to persons, the way he elaborates the relation between Jesus' death and the activity of his life-service for others tends to vitiate the very intent implied in his starting point. He does so insofar as he places this relation under an alternative. Pannenberg asks, "But how is his death related to his service for humanity? Is it merely the consequence of his service, or was it in itself a service?"⁵⁹ Although carefully modified by use of "merely" the alternative is crucial to the extent that the vicarious significance of his death is seen as depending upon this alternative. In this manner Pannenberg seeks to secure the objectivity of the cross as a service but does so only by weakening its consequential relation to Jesus' active service for humanity.

The death of Jesus in itself has this significance in service according to Pannenberg if it is viewed from the perspective of the resurrection.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 258f.

Jesus was executed as a blasphemer. The resurrection reveals that he was a righteous person and not a blasphemer. His rejectors and executioners were the blasphemers. Since they executed him not because they were malicious but because they were bound to the law, Pannenberg concludes that "the death penalty borne by Jesus is the punishment deserved by the whole people to the extent that it was bound to the authority of the law."⁶⁰ Hence Jesus' death has representative or substitutional significance for Israel. Since the question of Jesus' substitution for all humanity needs to be answered, Pannenberg does so by refusing to concede that Jesus' conflict with the political power of the Roman empire could function as a basis for understanding his death as a substitution for all humanity. Instead he refers to Paul's understanding of the law in which Jesus' death abolishes the law as a way to salvation and is seen as one with human death insofar as the death of all persons is the consequence of sin. Jesus' death for our sins should be seen in the context of the anthropological interpretation of human mortality as a consequence of sin. The law asserts this relation between sin and death under which all stand. Hence his death has vicarious significance because he died the death all have incurred. All still have to die, but because of his representative death and resurrection they have a hope in a future resurrection.⁶¹

Aware that the Enlightenment had criticized the substitutional theory of redemption Pannenberg seeks to defend his position by imputing to the Enlightenment an individualistic understanding of guilt and a failure to recognize the social character of human existence.⁶² Moreover, he seeks to delineate his position by a discussion of the theories of the saving significance of Jesus' death, but from the very beginning and a priori he refuses to discuss either the "classical" view of soteriology (as described by G. Aulen), in which Christ conquers death and Satan, or the "subjective" theory of reconciliation, in which God's loving disposition is manifest in Jesus. Each of these does not come into consideration because "they see in Jesus' death only a particular example of that which constitutes the saving significance of his entire activity."⁶³ The same is true of soteriological theories concentrating on

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 260-4.

⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 263-9.

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 274, n. 53.

Jesus as the Second Adam. Instead of discussing these theories Pannenberg relates his position to Luther's notion of the penal suffering of Christ and takes issue with Anselm for overlooking the passive character in Jesus' death. His own position, as he points out, is closer to Barth's understanding as developed in the *Church Dogmatics* except, whereas Barth saw the doctrine of atonement as related to the incarnation, he departs from the historical life of Jesus.

As our survey indicates a certain tension exists in Pannenberg's interpretation. On the one hand, he seeks to emphasize the historical Jesus and his activity. He even goes so far as to interpret the descent into hell as a symbolic expression of the continuation of his preaching in Hades.⁶⁴ Yet despite his emphasis upon the universal elements in Jesus' activity and preaching, he isolates, on the other hand, the death of Jesus as salvific from his preaching. While he asserts that Jesus was executed because of his preaching, the significance of his death is not seen as a consequence of his preaching but rather as the penalty suffered that is to be reversed by the resurrection. In comparison with Karl Rahner and Rudolf Bultmann, Pannenberg actually separates the significance of Jesus' death from his life-activity much more than they do despite his intention to the contrary. Because of his incarnational approach, Rahner can see Jesus' death as the culmination of incarnation, or more precisely in German, of the *Menschwerdung*. Bultmann's interpretation of Jesus' eschatological preaching enables him to assert that Jesus' preaching places persons before a decision for a new understanding that is functionally equivalent to the Christian proclamation of the crucified one as the Lord. Since Pannenberg rejects an incarnational understanding, significance is given to Jesus' death less through his life than through his resurrection. Likewise his interpretation of Jesus' preaching makes him claim that it "is no longer a live option for us in its original sense."⁶⁵ It is rather the resurrection and the hope for its universal consequence that is of significance and gives meaning to his death and life-activity.

In his defense of the theory of penal substitution, Pannenberg raises the important societal question. Since it is not universally accepted that substitution can take place in the realm of guilt and

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 269-75.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 242.

personal interaction, Pannenberg points out that modern society has an understanding of the relation between guilt and punishment different from that of previous societies, especially the Israelite society. Although he correctly criticizes the increasing individualistic concept of guilt and responsibility, he does not take a critical view of the societal constellations in which the penal theory of substitution originated and were theoretically formulated. If he had appropriated a critical theory of society or a critical social theory, he would have necessarily asked that question. He does not question the societal presuppositions and consequences of a position whose image of God is one who both condemns and justifies Jesus.⁶⁶ For this reason it becomes necessary to ask about the relation between critical social theory and Christology. Before doing so, it is helpful to look at Moltmann's position because his interpretation of the death of Jesus brings its societal implications much more into the forefront.

Jürgen Moltmann: The Death of Jesus as an Inner-Trinitarian Event: In his most recent book, *The Crucified God*, Moltmann seeks to develop the cross of Christ as both the foundation and criticism of Christian theology, as the subtitle indicates.⁶⁷ He likewise reacts to Bultmann's existentialism and this reaction provides the background for his constructive proposals. While Moltmann agrees that Bultmann rightly protests against an objectification and historicization of the cross as a mere event of the past, he critically notes that Bultmann's understanding of the cross seems to be "deprived of any significance of its own, and to obtain historical significance only in the existential process of being crucified with Christ."⁶⁸

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 264-9. "To that extent the judgment over him is authorized by the God of Israel himself. God himself, who raised Jesus, had laid on him the punishment for blasphemy through the actions of his legitimate officeholders. He subsequently legitimated Jesus as being justified in what he had preached" (p. 269). In some respects my criticism of Pannenberg is directly the opposite of E. F. Tupper's in *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), pp. 160-5, 299-300. He is, however, correct in that Pannenberg has failed to clarify the material relationship of the cross to God's coming Kingdom.

⁶⁷Trans. by R. A. Wilson and J. Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 61.

The distinctive contribution of Moltmann lies in his attempt to elucidate the enduring significance of the cross. Instead of seeing the resurrection of Christ as an expression of the significance of the cross, Moltmann argues that Christ's death on the cross expresses the significance of the resurrection.⁶⁹ The resurrection does not so much demonstrate that his death on the cross took place for us as Jesus' death on the cross for us makes his resurrection significant. To understand this significance of the cross it is necessary to go beyond the ideas of expiatory sacrifice. Although the ideas of expiation are important in understanding the cross, because they show that the unrighteous person cannot achieve her/his own righteousness and the new future demands an acceptance of guilt and liberation from it, it is necessary to go beyond the ideas of expiatory sacrifice and the framework of the law in which such ideas move. Moltmann does so by accepting as the basic New Testament idea of Christ his representative function for us and by developing it systematically from the concept of prolepsis. The anticipation of the resurrection of the dead that took place in the resurrection of Jesus has significance for us because the "one who was raised proleptically takes our place and dies."⁷⁰ This means that the cross modifies the meaning of the resurrection insofar as the resurrection is not just a mere future event, but is an event of liberating love for us.

The fundamental significance of Jesus' death can be found in Moltmann's trinitarian explication of Jesus' death. Since Jesus suffered and died as the Son of God, his actions and passion are those of God. God takes on himself/herself the sin, guilt, and punishment of humanity. In Moltmann's view God "accepted the unforgivable sin and the guilt for which there is no atonement together with the rejection and anger that cannot be turned away."⁷¹ But God does not remain passive in the cross of Jesus. Moltmann asserts, rather, that "in the passion of the Son, death comes upon God himself, and the Father suffers the death of his Son in his love for forsaken man."⁷² Consequently the death on the cross involves an intertrinitarian event between God and the Son of God. Since God himself suffers in the cross of Jesus, the cross of Jesus

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁷²*Ibid.*

"reveals a change in God, a *stasis* within the Godhead: 'God is other.'"⁷³

Two consequences are drawn by Moltmann from this understanding of the death of Jesus as an intertrinitarian event. It provides first of all a theodicy, which is from its very heart Christian. If innocent suffering challenges the idea of a righteous God, then the response is neither the traditional theism with its stress on the transcendent impassibility of God nor atheism with its rejection of God. Instead, the theology of the cross suggests that God suffered and in proclaiming the Christian God as the suffering God in the suffering of Christ, it can and does speak of this God's significance for those suffering in the world.⁷⁴ Secondly, it provides the identity of the Christian faith. Moltmann argues that neither church membership, creedal belief, nor conversion experiences provide the Christian dimension. Likewise, social involvement, rebellion against injustice, and political solidarity does not constitute its identity. "The Christian identity can be understood only as an act of identification with the crucified Christ."⁷⁵

Despite its brilliance Moltmann's interpretation encounters two fundamental problems. Although his understanding of the death of Christ perceptively associates it with the theodicy question, his speculative solution in my opinion aggravates rather than solves the problem of theodicy insofar as his solution involves a transcendent ontologization of suffering and evil. Suffering and evil present anomalies to our expectations of meaning and order in the universe. Faced with the inescapability of suffering, persons look for the possible meaning of suffering so that life can be liveable within this valley of tears. The problem of evil goes beyond that of suffering insofar as it is not only concerned with the adequacy of our symbolic resources to come to terms with suffering, but questions the very morality and justice of those resources in terms of ethical norms. It raises the question of how a just and good God can exist and allow such evil. In this respect religious symbolism plays an important function within societal existence insofar as it formulates a response to the very ambiguity of human existence.⁷⁶ The Christian response has traditionally interpreted evil as the result of

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 207-27.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 7-31, here p. 19.

human sin or non-identity with self or God. It has considered evil as the surd to be eliminated in the eschatological kingdom of identity with God, with oneself, with fellow persons, and even with nature. The present situation of suffering is placed in contrast with a transcendent absence of suffering. Insofar as Moltmann elevates suffering to an inner-trinitarian event, he has ontologized suffering and attempted to give it a meaning that it should not and does not have. Since the implications and consequences of this critique are too far-reaching to be discussed here, reference can only be made here to my evaluation of Moltmann elsewhere in which this problem is treated in the context of the meaning of suffering.⁷⁷

Equally significant is his attempt to link the meaning of the cross with the search for the identity of the Christian faith. Moltmann asks and searches for the distinctiveness of the Christian existence. It is not creedal belief nor church membership nor social solidarity. After all, he writes, "it is not social commitment on behalf of the poor and wretched, for this is fortunately found amongst others."⁷⁸ Instead, identity with the cross is "what is specifically Christian." Apart from the issue of whether the cross is de facto the specific difference defining the essence of Christianity, the basic approach of understanding the Christian faith in terms of an essential specific difference is questionable. It not only assumes that a living faith can be defined in terms of some essential specific difference, but by searching for the difference it also runs the risk of positing one partial aspect as the essential core. This danger can be illustrated by a more obvious example. If one were to determine the nature of Catholicism or Protestantism from the perspective of specific differences, one would define each, not in terms of what they had in common, but rather in terms of their differences. If this approach were followed rigorously, the danger would be that Catholicism would be seen primarily in terms of its teaching on the number of sacraments or the papacy, and Protestantism would be

⁷⁶C. Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropological Approaches to Religion*, ed. by M. Banton (London: Tavistock Publications, 1965), pp. 1-46.

⁷⁷F. Fiorenza, "Joy and Pain as Paradigmatic for Language about God," *Concilium* 5 (May, 1974), pp. 67-80.

⁷⁸J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1974), p. 13.

understood likewise. Their common commitment to Jesus as the Christ would not be seen as essential. Likewise if Christianity is defined primarily in terms of a specific difference, then the love of God becomes secondary, for other religions maintain that; or the love of one's fellow person is secondary, for humanists maintain its importance also; or commitment to the life and teaching of a historical person is secondary, because other religions have such commitment. What becomes important is only the one specific element of that historical person that is not shared by others, whereas elements that are shared become insignificant.

This consequence becomes evident in Moltmann's application of the cross to Christianity. Since he defines Christian identity in terms of the cross, he is compelled in a manner very reminiscent of the early Karl Barth to attack religious Christianity. The Augustinian tradition of understanding God and Christianity in terms of the desires of the human heart and the deep-seated interests of human nature is criticized sharply. Moltmann claims, "he who was crucified represents the fundamental and total crucifixion of all religion. . . ."⁷⁹ The cross is seen as the negation of everything religious and of all images and analogies not within the ambit of this criticism of religion.⁸⁰ Consequently, the social and political implications of the Christian faith become reduced to a political theology that is almost exclusively conceived as a critique of ideologies. The positive practical function of Christianity is seen precisely as a critical function and no attempt is made to correlate the human interest in a social and political order of justice to the correspondingly positive impulses of religious interests.⁸¹ He fails to elaborate how Christian faith and praxis have positive relations or constructive correspondences to the human interest in social justice and political peace.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸⁰Cf. the debate between Kasper and Küng. Kasper's critique in "Revolution in Gottesverständnis? Zur Situation des ökumenischen Dialogs nach Jürgen Moltmanns 'Der gekrenzte Gott,'" *Theologische Quartalschrift* 153 (1973), 8-14. J. Moltmann's response: "Dialektik, die umschlägt in Identität"—was ist das? Zu Befürchtungen Walter Kaspers," *ibid.*, 153 (1973), 346-50 and Kasper's response: "Zur Sachfrage: Schöpfung und Erlösung. Replik auf Jürgen Moltmann," *ibid.*, 151-2.

⁸¹Moltman, *Crucified God*, pp. 317-40.

Moltmann has spelled out the consequences of understanding the cross of Christ as the essence of Christian faith. In so doing, he reveals, much more so than any other theologian surveyed here, the practical implications of interpreting the nature of Christian redemption and salvation exclusively from the cross of Jesus. What has been said of the others could be said of his position also: the life-work and activity of Jesus is not taken seriously enough. With some reservations the statement that Harnack made at the beginning of the century could be repeated against this view of Christian faith for which the "God-man need not have preached, and founded a kingdom, and gathered disciples; he only required to die."⁸²

In my opinion it is necessary today more than ever before to elaborate a Christian understanding of atonement and redemption that does not separate the life-activity of Jesus as understood by early Christianity from his death, but rather to see the latter as a consequence of the former. In this sense, his death will not become the sole focal point for interpreting the meaning of his life as it was for Karl Rahner and Rudolf Bultmann under the influence of their existentialistic understanding of the early Heidegger. Likewise, it is necessary in rejecting such an existentialistic approach not to refuse also to correlate the meaning and significance of Jesus with human social and religious interests. Instead of following Pannenberg's objectivism and Moltmann's inner-trinitarian speculation, I should like to suggest that the "critical social theory" provides the framework for a constructive theological interpretation of redemption.

II. CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY AND EMANCIPATORY INTEREST

The above analysis suggests that neither existential philosophy nor the reaction to this existentialism in terms of the objectivism of Pannenberg or the speculative innertrinitarian doctrine of Moltmann suffices to provide a conceptual framework for the constructive theological task today of elaborating the redemptive significance of Jesus. In place of existentialism or an objectivistic or speculative metaphysic, I am suggesting that the "critical social theory" of the Frankfurt School can provide such a framework. Rather than present a complete exposi-

⁸² A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. by N. Buchanan (New York: Dover Publications, 1961; reprint of 1900 edition), Vol. 6, p. 76.

tion of critical social theory, I should like to point out some misunderstandings of its intent and to outline the direction in which it is developing.

The phrase "critical theory" or "critical social theory" is often misunderstood partly because of the association that immediately arises with the word "critical." One thinks of critique, negativity, and denial. Moreover, since some theologians have picked up the term and proposed a "critical theology" or "critical Catholicism" in which theology had the primary task of criticizing the Church,⁸³ the impression has gained ground that critical theory is exclusively a negative or critical approach to truth. This impression has become widespread in the United States due to the appearance of Edward Schillebeeckx's *The Understanding of Faith*⁸⁴ which raises four objections against the critical theory. These objections betray not only a misunderstanding and caricature of critical theory, but often ascribe to critical theory the very opposite of its actual intention. For example, in his first criticism Schillebeeckx writes of the "critical theory of society, which again and again claims to be based exclusively on scientific analysis and to depend in no way on religious or ethical values."⁸⁵ Not only does such a critique betray that Schillebeeckx is totally unaware of the writings of Horkheimer and Habermas on ethics, but it also overlooks the primary intent of critical social theory which is to overcome a positivistic understanding of social science with its abstract separation of facts and values.⁸⁶ Likewise, his criticism that critical social theory makes a fetish of negativity, that it looks only for a lack of meaning in history, and presupposes that an existent universal subject of history controls the development of history,⁸⁷ overlooks significant statements of Habermas and others that directly contradict such an interpretation.⁸⁸

⁸³Cf. Ben van Onna & Martin Stankowski, *Kritischer Katholizismus: Argumente gegen die Kirchen-Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1969).

⁸⁴Trans. by N. D. Smith (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 124-66.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 124-5.

⁸⁶Cf. J. Habermas, "Ueber das Verhältnis von Politik und Moral," in *Das Problem der Ordnung*, ed. by H. Kuhn and F. Wiedmann (Meisenheim, 1962), pp. 94-124, "Discussion on Value-Freedom and Objectivity," in *Max Weber and Sociology Today*, ed. by O. Stammer, trans. by K. Morris (New York: Harper & Row, 1971; German original, 1965), pp. 51-66.

⁸⁷Schillebeeckx, *Understanding of Faith*, pp. 124-35.

⁸⁸J. Habermas, "Ueber das Subject der Geschichte (Diskussionsbemerkung

In view of these misunderstandings, it is necessary to clarify the use of the term "critical theory" or "critical social theory" as represented by the Frankfurt School.⁸⁹ The term was first used by Max Horkheimer in an essay entitled "Traditional and Critical Theory," which was written in 1937 and still remains programmatic for an understanding of the central intent of the Frankfurt School.⁹⁰ In 1965, Jürgen Habermas made the distinction between critical theory and traditional theory central to his elaboration of the relation between knowledge and human interest. Since Habermas related the notion of critical theory to Anglo-Saxon linguistic and social sciences as well as to European Marxist, phenomenological, and sociological thought, his position has attracted international attention. I should like, therefore, to limit my presentation of critical social theory to the work of Habermas by pointing out the relation between theory and practice and between knowledge and interest that he has elaborated.⁹¹

zu falsch gestellten Alternativen)," in *Geschichte-Ereignis und Erzählung* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973), pp. 470-6.

⁸⁹For a general history of the Frankfurt School, cf. G. E. Rusconi, *La Teoria critica della società* (Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino, 1968) and M. Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination. A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973). For Habermas' thought in particular, see A. Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society*, trans. by J. Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971) and T. Schroyer, *The Critique of Domination* (New York: George Braziller, 1973), esp. Chap. 4. Cf. also the Spring-Summer issue of 1970 of *Continuum* in which I collected articles by Lorenzen, Wellmer, Huch (best single presentation of Habermas' thought), Schroyer, Shapiro, Gadamer, and Habermas.

⁹⁰*Critical Theory*, trans. by M. J. O'Connell (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 188-243. Cf. also W. Post, *Kritische Theorie und metaphysischer Pessimismus Zum Spätwerk Max Horkheimers* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1971) and A. Schmidt, *Zur Idee der Kritischen Theorie, Elemente der Philosophie Max Horkheimers* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1974).

⁹¹*Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. by J. J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971). The appendix contains the inaugural lecture, cf. 301-17. The following major elements of Habermas' work are not mentioned or discussed in our presentation: his analysis of the "public sphere"—cf. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Neuwied: Luchterhand Verlag, 1962) and *Toward A Rational Society*, trans. by J. J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); his analysis of late capitalism, see his recent book, *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1973), and his interpretation of Marxian philosophy, cf. his collection of essays, *Theorie and Practice*, trans. by J. Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).

The aprioria of positivistic and hermeneutic disciplines: Habermas' work has as its starting point a critique of a disinterested or objectivistic understanding of theory and knowledge. Hence he criticizes an idealistic understanding of theory that would isolate theory from the interrelationship of the theory's origin and application as well as of its interests and praxis. Such an understanding considers knowledge primarily as contemplative and theory as pure insofar as the goal of knowledge and theory is to be as abstracted as possible from human interests and human praxis. Critical theory can therefore be seen as the attempt to reject the contemplative and objectivistic claims of monologic theory and to place theory within the historical complex of a constellation of interest and praxis.⁹²

In the pursuit of this goal Habermas argues against a strictly behavioral understanding of social science that would reduce intentional action to behavior, as well as against the universalism of a systems theory that reduces all social conflicts to unresolved regulatory of self-governing systems. In his argumentation against such objectivistic understandings of social science, Habermas draws on the resources of ordinary language analysis and the tradition of hermeneutical analysis. The positivistic attempt to reduce intentional behavior to observable data and to treat social facts as natural facts so as to make social science into a purely empirical analytical science overlooks the relative autonomy of intentional action in reference to non-intentional natural processes, as linguistic analysis has shown. Moreover, when the object of social science involves symbolically structured formations, then the approach to them cannot avoid what is specific to ordinary language communication but must allow access to data via an understanding of meanings. Access to observed social data is obtained through the medium of communication. Hence there arises a participatory relation of the understanding subject to the subject studied. The true paradigm for social science should not be observation, but dialogue since the understanding subject with all the presuppositions of his own subjectivity plays a role in the understanding and interpretation of the social data. Since it involves the understanding of meanings and language, it is necessary to have recourse to interpretation and hermeneutic dis-

⁹²*Knowledge and Human Interests*, pp. 301-8.

ciplines. The hermeneutical circle is a relevant problem not only for the historical sciences, but also for the social sciences.⁹³

If Habermas has recourse to hermeneutical thought to uncover the inadequacy of the social scientist's claim to an objectivity independent of the researcher's horizon, he also moves to criticize the claim to universality on the part of the hermeneutical method. This comes to the fore in his confrontation with the hermeneutics of Gadamer and his critique is of special relevance for theology. The point at issue is the very opposite of the conflict with positivism and yet is just as objectivistic. If positivism reduces social symbols to facts, then the hermeneutical approach commits what could be called the opposite fallacy insofar as it isolates literary texts of a cultural tradition from their societal contexts and considers them independent of the life-praxis in which they were embedded. With its stress on the universality of language and its independence from life-praxis the hermeneutic approach idealizes and absolutizes language. Habermas argues at first that Gadamer's separation of language from its life-praxis makes possible a dominance of tradition, since it subordinates human action and life-praxis to language and to tradition insofar as the life-praxis is accessible to us only through and in language and tradition. Therefore, the possibility of radically questioning and challenging the tradition is lost. Habermas argues that the tradition cannot be the uncriticizable authority that Gadamer grants it. The right of critical reflection in the face of tradition demands a limitation of the hermeneutical method. This dogmatic narrowness of hermeneutics that subordinates reflection to tradition can be avoided if one realizes that besides language, work and domination are essential and constitutive elements of social relations. To understand social relations it is necessary to understand them as constituted out of language, work and domination. It is therefore necessary to realize that the tradition can reflect structures of domination and authority that should not and cannot be legitimized by tradition alone.⁹⁴

Later Habermas will advance a second argument against the universal claim of hermeneutics, which he makes clear by drawing upon generative linguistics and psychoanalysis. He suggests that psychoanalysis is a

⁹³J. Habermas, *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften, Materialien* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970).

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 261-7.

linguistic analysis that has self-reflection as its goal insofar as it interprets the specific incomprehensibility of systematically distorted communication. Its model is not simply the translation model of hermeneutics or ordinary semantic analysis. It uncovers the subconscious structures of repression and inhibition that block the individual's freedom, inhibit his/her actions, and distort the meaning of his/her linguistic expressions. Such a procedure calls for a theory of communicative competence that goes beyond the hermeneutical limitation to language and is concerned with the transition from pre-linguistic factors to language.⁹⁵ An analogy is drawn between the function of psychoanalysis on the individual level and the function of critical reflection in reference to social structures of domination and violence. The end-result of these objections to the hermeneutical approach is the demand to reflect critically upon the meaning of one's cultural tradition. The tradition should not be seen just as a tradition of linguistically expressed ideas, but also as a tradition involving structures of authority and domination.

*Language as Communicative Competence and Praxis:*⁹⁶ Wittgenstein's theory of language games forms the starting point of Habermas' construction of a theory of language of communicative competence in terms of a universal pragmatics. The model of language game comprehends language as a complex of language and praxis. It places language in relation to communicative action. It includes the use of symbols, the reaction to expectation of behavior, and an accompanying consensus concerning the fulfillment of expectations. The learning of a language involves the use of words and the reaction to them. Wittgenstein calls this total complex a language-game. "I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven the 'language-game.'"⁹⁷ To understand a language and to be able to speak it involves

⁹⁵"Der Universalitätsanspruch der Hermeneutik," in *Hermeneutik und Dialektik. Festschrift für H. G. Gadamer*, ed. by R. Bubner et alii (Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1970), pp. 73-104.

⁹⁶Habermas promises to publish in the near future his completed theory of "communicative competence." For now, see: "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence," in *Recent Sociology, No. 2*, ed. by H. P. Dreitzel (New York: Macmillan Co., 1971), pp. 115-48, and *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie? Was leistet die Systemforschung?* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), pp. 142-290.

⁹⁷*Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan Co., 1966), number 7.

obtaining a competence to exercise an activity, to learn to act, and to realize a communication. Language immanently depends upon and a logical connection exists between understanding a language and learning to speak a language or between the comprehension of symbols and their correct use.⁹⁸ This insight into language as the interconnection of symbols and activity provides Habermas with the basis for his confrontation with transformational grammar.

Whereas Chomsky uses the term "linguistic competence" to express the mastery of an abstract system of rules based on innate language apparatus irrespective of its de facto use of actual speech, Habermas proposes a theory of "communicative competence." Through a critical analysis of the implicit assumptions of monologism, apriorism, and elementarism within the program of general semantics, Habermas argues for a theology of language according to which a speaker's competence involves more than the mastery of an abstract system of rules and communication and is more than a mere application of linguistic competence. Participation in normal discourse demands not only abstract linguistic competence, but also a mastery of speech and symbolic interaction (role-behavior) which together form what Habermas called "communicative competence." This communicative competence is further elucidated by reference to J. L. Austin's analysis of performatory language. Verbs like "promise" and "command" not only describe acts, but also perform them. These linguistic utterances have an illocutionary force, i.e., performatory or pragmatic power. The mastery of this pragmatic feature of de facto speech belongs very much to a communicative competence and is an essential element of language. The further development of Habermas's theory of communicative competence in terms of his classification of "semantic universals," the necessary presupposition of "ideal speech situations," and the consensus theory of truth cannot be traced here without going into too great detail and too far astray from the topic. It suffices to point out that Habermas understands language as involving speech acts that aim at a mutual understanding and involve claims of comprehensibility, truth, appropriateness, and authenticity. Although the language analysis of Wittgenstein and Austin has been appropriated by theologians, especially in favor of religious language as a particularistic and isolated language game, the

⁹⁸Habermas, *Zur Logik*, pp. 236-42.

need for a theological reception of a theory of communicative competence and its universal pragmatic remains a task for contemporary theology. Moreover, the practical task of creating conditions of theological discourse that anticipate the ideal situation of discourse equally remains an imperative to be fulfilled.

*Emancipatory Interest:*⁹⁹ The final point of Habermas' critical theory that deserves mention is his elaboration of the interrelation between knowledge and interest. Habermas distinguishes three types of sciences: empirical-analytic, historical-hermeneutic, and social science (including politics, economics, and sociology). The empirical sciences have a technical interest. Observations and experimentations betray a cognitive interest in control over nature insofar as hypothetical propositions are drawn from them. The historical-hermeneutic sciences do not aim at technical control over nature, but have a practical interest in the appropriation and application of the meaning of tradition to oneself and one's situation. The meaning of the cultural tradition becomes clarified to the extent that its relation to one's own world is comprehended. In this sense the attempt to understand the meaning of the tradition has a practical cognitive interest. Finally, sciences of social action are not satisfied, or rather should not be satisfied, with the goal of obtaining nomological knowledge. Instead it has an emancipatory cognitive interest insofar as it shares with philosophy the goal of self-reflection and demands a critique of ideologies. Through this interconnection of theory and interest, Habermas aims to overcome the abstract contemplative understanding of traditional theory as pure theory insofar as he reaffirms the traditional affirmation of the interrelation between truth and the good life. The truth of statements is in the last analysis linked to the true and good life. This analysis of emancipatory interest aims at a truth and praxis that has not yet been realized, but is still its goal. In Habermas' own words: "Yet, it is evidently a fact of nature that the human species, confined to its socio-cultural form of life, can only reproduce itself through the medium of that most unnatural idea, truth, which necessarily begins with the counterfactual assumption that universal agreement is *possible*. Since empirical speech is only *possible* by virtue of the fundamental norms of rational speech, the cleavage between a real and an inevitably idealized (if only hypotheti-

⁹⁹ *Knowledge and Human Interest*, pp. 301-17.

cally ideal) community of language is built not only into the process of argumentative reasoning, but into the very life-praxis of social systems."¹⁰⁰

III. TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION AS EMANCIPATORY SOLIDARITY

Kierkegaard relates how philosophers often disappoint us just as a sign in a shop window disappointed a passerby. The sign read: "Pressing Done Here." But when the person went into the store to have her clothes pressed, she was let down. The store did not press any clothes. Only the sign was for sale. The same could be said of theological conferences. They are attended for the sake of theology, but instead of encountering theology, one hears only about the possibility of using different theological methods or only about differing interpretations of past theology. It is often metatheology or descriptive theology that is for sale, rather than constructive theology.

Although I cannot avoid Kierkegaard's verdict, I should like at least to go beyond merely criticizing existential theology and the reaction to it and I should like to do more than merely suggest that critical theory be used in theology. Instead I shall attempt to suggest three theses that at least point out the direction in which such an appropriation should take place in regard to Christology. Each remains hypothetical, open to revision, and in need of further elaboration. Since they only point in the direction of such a reception, they do not completely escape Kierkegaard's criticism.

THESIS I: Since theory and praxis are inextricably interrelated, traditional theories of redemption should be studied in the context of the symbolic configurations, social needs, transcendental interests, and political patterns of the societies in which they were developed and should be critically analyzed as to how patterns of authority were appropriated.

Explanation: This thesis attempts to spell out the manner in which theological formulations should be approached. It suggests that it does not suffice to study theological texts and opinions in absolute isolation

¹⁰⁰"A Postscript to *Knowledge and Human Interests*," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 2 (1972), pp. 157-89, here p. 185.

from their social context. Social symbols, political patterns, and diverse interests have gone into the formulation and construction of theological theories and these theories often have had a practical and functional value within various contexts that should not go unexamined. A critical theory of hermeneutics requires not only that the formal and internal structures of theological texts be analyzed, but also entails an inquiry into the patterns of authority and freedom, emancipation and domination, that are expressed in the texts. In the face of a growing use of a formalistic method of interpretation, be it structuralism or the "New Criticism," this thesis suggests that the proper subject of theological investigation is not just literary texts, but Christianity itself as a living religion embedded within specific cultures and various societies.

This difference of approach can be illustrated by contrasting two classic American theologians, whose contributions to systematic theology have still not received their proper due in contemporary theology. The first is Horace Bushnell (1802-76). Although he wrote more than a century ago, he has anticipated in many ways the recent typological approach of the Scandinavian School¹⁰¹ of the model analysis of contemporary theologians.¹⁰² Bushnell classifies and analyzes the historical spectrum of the various theories of redemption and atonement in relation to three basic analogies, which are according to three types of law.¹⁰³ Criminal law: Sins as crimes; Christ accepts our sins and bears the penalty of punishment. Civil or Commercial Law: our sins are debts and Christ offers himself as a ransom or payment for us. Ceremonial law: our sins are transgressions and Christ is the propitiatory or expiatory offering that obtains remission of them. These theories of atonement are analyzed according to these three analogies; their advantages and disadvantages, adequacies and inadequacies, are pointed out. Yet no reference is made to the historical societal context or function

¹⁰¹Cf. H. Alpers, *Die Versöhnung durch Christus, Zur Typologie der Schule von Lund* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964).

¹⁰²J. McIntyre, *The Shape of Christology* (London: SCM, 1966).

¹⁰³H. Bushnell, *God in Christ* (Hartford: Brown and Parsons, 1849), pp. 119-81, and *The Vicarious Sacrifice Grounded in Principles Interpreted by Human Analogies*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1866). Bushnell has been often unjustly maligned. His earlier work tries to combine a subjective and objective theory of interpretation and his later work moves more in the objective direction.

in which they were developed. The analysis remains formal and conceptual.

Shailer Mathews (1863-1941) as Dean and leading representative of the "Chicago School" took the contrasting approach of a "sociohistorical" method. Theological beliefs were studied in relation to the dominant social mind of particular periods. The social structures and political patterns of those periods came under scrutiny when examining the theological beliefs. The history of Christianity was divided into seven social mind-sets: semitic, hellenistic, imperial, feudal, nationalistic, bourgeois, and modern. In each of these periods the interrelation between cultural, religious, and political patterns and the way the death of Jesus and atonement was conceived were stressed.¹⁰⁴ Since Mathews writes from the perspective of his experience of democracy and modern science, he raises the critical question of the need for the reformulation of a doctrine that had been expressed in terms of patterns of sovereignty that no longer exist in the American situation.¹⁰⁵

The point at issue in this approach can be illustrated by a contemporary debate in Germany. Recently two Catholic theologians, Hans Kessler and Josef Ratzinger,¹⁰⁶ have sharply criticized Anselm's theory of satisfaction. Ratzinger writes that "the perfectly logical divine-cum-human legal system erected by Anselm distorts the perspectives and with its rigid logic can make the image of God appear in a sinister light."¹⁰⁷ Moreover, in the popular consciousness "a much-coarsened version of St. Anselm's theology of atonement" moves the notion of

¹⁰⁴*The Atonement and the Social Process* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930). Mathews very carefully perceives the mutual interconnection between religion and society. "Such a social approach to the idea of God does not necessarily imply that a religion is passive in the social order or that it may not itself be efficient in furnishing patterns for other aspects of social life such as politics. . . . Changes in religious conceptions may be both causes and effects of changes in other aspects of life." "Social Patterns and the Idea of God," *Journal of Religion* 11 (1931), pp. 158-78, here p. 177.

¹⁰⁵*The Growth of the Idea of God* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930).

¹⁰⁶Respectively: *Die Theologische Bedeutung des Todes Jesu. Eine Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1970), pp. 83-165, and *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. by J. R. Foster (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969).

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p. 174.

"infinite expiation" on which God insists "into a doubly sinister light. Many devotional texts actually force one to think that Christian faith in the cross visualizes a God whose unrelenting righteousness demanded a human sacrifice, the sacrifice of his own Son, and one turns away in horror from a righteousness whose sinister wrath makes the message of love incredible."¹⁰⁸

Taking offense at Ratzinger's judgment of Anselm, Gisbert Greshake seeks to utilize Peter Berger's notion of plausibility structures to understand Anselm. Although totally unaware of Mathews and the Chicago School, he attempts like them to interpret Anselm's teaching against its societal background. An analysis of feudal law reveals that satisfaction was distinct from vindictive punishments. Moreover, whereas in feudal society disloyalty involved both an injury of personal honor as well as a break in the publicly constituted legal order, for Anselm sin did not affect God's honor (that could not be made greater or smaller), but only the order of the world. Anselm, therefore demands satisfaction not for the sake of God personally, but rather for the sake of humanity, for the sake of the law and order of this world.¹⁰⁹ Concurring in this evaluation of Anselm's doctrine, Walter Kasper suggests that it corresponds to the biblical pattern of thought.¹¹⁰

Yet precisely at this point, theology should become sensitive to the critical hermeneutical issues at stake. Is it adequate for theology to conceive of God as a sovereign who guarantees law and order and demands the death of his son as a satisfaction for order? First of all, must we not as theologians in a Catholic tradition keep before us the statement of the Fourth Lateran Council about human knowledge of God: *quia inter creatorem et creaturam non potest similitudo notari, quin inter eos major sit dissimilitudo notanda* (DS 806). This means that God is more unlike a sovereign, than he or she is like a sovereign. Since this is true, then why use a conception of God as sovereign as the theological underpinning for a theory of redemption? Is it not true, as Shailer Mathews has pointed out, that we no longer live in a society

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 213-4.

¹⁰⁹"Erlösung und Freiheit. Zur Neuinterpretation der Erlösungslehre Anselms von Canterbury," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 153 (1973), 323-45. The increased influence of Roman law over Germanic law is seen as the sociological basis for Thomas Aquinas' modifications of Anselm's conception of satisfaction.

¹¹⁰Kasper, *Jesus*, pp. 260-3.

with the experience or expectations of a messianic king, an imperial ruler, feudal lord, or national king, but rather in a democratic society? Moreover, could we not say that the twentieth century has witnessed the greatest distortions of political sovereignty as evidenced by the totalitarianism of governments both on the left and right? Should not our experience of totalitarianism lead us to be cautious about using political sovereignty for understanding God's relation to the world? Does not the absence of traditional forms of sovereignty in our contemporary experience mean that we should no longer attempt to speak of God and redemption according to political patterns of sovereignty? These critical questions must be raised by theology.

As a conclusion to this thesis, I should like to suggest first of all that Shailer Mathews' distinction between pattern and analogy be appropriated.¹¹¹ Whereas analogy referred to the conscious use of metaphors in a non-literal sense to explicate theological beliefs, patterns referred to the unconscious acceptance of metaphors as literal descriptions and constitutive elements of religious beliefs. If we were to apply this distinction to traditional theories of redemption, then it would be important to see how the creative theologians of the Christian tradition sought to modify political patterns and critically to transcend them in their theological concepts rather than, as Greschake did, to interpret theories of redemption as conforming to societal patterns. Secondly, this awareness of the analogous character of religious beliefs should lead to a sensitivity as to the analogies selected and their possible practical and social functions. It should lead us to ask whether the pattern of sovereignty underlying traditional theories of redemption and atonement should be eliminated. The constructive theological task today would then be to formulate an understanding of God and of the notions of atonement and redemption that would not be patterned on traditional forms of political sovereignty. This need for new images of God and a new understanding of redemption must, however, be met not in individualistic isolation, but rather in confrontation with socio-political reality.

THESIS II: *The constructive theological task of interpreting the redemptive significance of Jesus should not isolate his death from his*

¹¹¹Cf. Mathews, *Growth*, pp. 9f. and Mathews, *Atonement*, pp. 30-9. See also E. E. Aubrey, "Theology and the Social Process," *The Process of Religion*, ed. by M. Krumbine (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), pp. 15-52, esp. 34ff.

life-praxis and posit it alone as redemptive in itself. Instead it should take as its starting-point Jesus' communicative life-praxis with double openness toward solidarity or identity with God (the "Father") and with his fellow-persons.

Explanation: Our survey of the contemporary emphasis upon the death of Christ as redemptive touched upon two distinctive perspectives. From the existential perspective a person's anticipation of death and act of death expressed how he or she related to life as a finite possibility. Rahner saw the significance of death as a culmination of radical self-giving and self-acceptance. Bultmann saw the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection as the possibility for a new self-understanding of trust in God's grace rather than in the boastful attempt at self-achievement and self-security. Concerned about a more objective perspective, Pannenberg fears that Bultmann's stress on the significance of Jesus' death in terms of the Christian's new self-understanding undermines the objectivity of the saving significance of his death. He therefore seeks to show the significance of the death of Jesus in itself. The alternative between service or significance in itself and consequence of his service expresses the traditional alternative between objective and subjective theories of interpretation. As Bushnell so clearly expressed in the last century, the objective theories of redemption consider the death of Christ as "availing by force of what it is" and the subjective "by force of what it *expresses*."¹¹² In this terminology, Pannenberg fears that the soteriological approach to Christology contains the danger of swallowing up the objective reality in the expression of it.

I should like to suggest that the understanding of language as "communicative competence" overcomes the aprioria of this alternative as well as the traditional dichotomy between objective and subjective understandings of the atonement. The interrelation between language and praxis as well as between linguistic competence and linguistic communication makes it impossible to separate and to divide as alternatives what something or someone is or what something or someone expresses. The alternatives are mutually constitutive.

This insight can be further clarified if we take a sociolinguistic understanding of personal identity (rather than an existential or objectivistic conception) as our starting point. The notion of person is rela-

¹¹²Bushnell, *God in Christ*, p. 195.

tional. Personal identity is relational insofar as it is constituted through interaction with speaking and thinking subjects. In other words, self-identity is mediated through symbolic systems (language and culture) and through intersubjective relations. The formation of I-identity takes place in the attainment of sociolinguistic competence. The double structure of language means that speakers encounter one another through what they communicate to one another and can communicate only if they relate to one another. In short, personal identity constitutes itself in and through its communicative interaction. Persons use the linguistic expression "I" to express their self-identity and this expression has three functions: referential, performative, and pronominal. It refers to the person as the other in dialogue, as a person capable of speech and action, and as a singular individual. In this last sense it refers to a personal identity that secures the continuity of a life-process and localizes it as an irreplaceable singular individual within a social group. The unity of the person constituted and expressed by this self-identity differs from the identity of things and events insofar as its identity is not specified by empirical predicates or spatial temporal qualifications alone. Rather, predicates of role and reflective temporal-spatial specifications for possible connections of interaction are used. The person maintains "its identity in the face of others insofar as it brings to expression the paradoxical relation that in all roles it is similar to the other and yet absolute distinct from the other and so represents itself as the one organizing its interactions in an unchangeable historical-life connection."¹¹³ Self-identity involves the maintenance of a social and personal identity. Although it would be necessary to develop further the relation between self-identity and the social and personal identity and to relate the above description to traditional ontological views of self-identity,¹¹⁴ I should like now to look at Jesus from the above perspective.

¹¹³J. Habermas, *Kultur und Kritik. Verstreute Aufsätze* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973), pp. 219-31.

¹¹⁴Much of the discussion in recent Christologies revolves around the attempt to overcome the supposed opposition between the classical ontological understanding of person and the modern notion of person that takes as its starting point consciousness (cf. Kasper, *Jesus*, pp. 284-300). Whereas Pannenberg and Kasper have found Hegel helpful for their Christological understanding of person, I should like to suggest that the work of P. F. Strawson, *Individuals. An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysic* (New York: Doubleday, 1959) and G. Ryle, *The Concept*

Despite the diversity of the various New Testament writings, the gospels understand and confess Jesus' life-praxis (his preaching, teaching, deeds, etc.) as manifesting a twofold solidarity. He is one with the Father and he solidarizes the religious, moral, social, and civil outcasts of his society. This double solidarity is revealed in his proclamation of the will of the Father and his preaching of the Kingdom of God as well as in his forgiving of sins, performing of exorcisms, and miraculous healings. This double solidarity constitutes the self-identity of Jesus. It brings to expression who Jesus is in himself.

Yet this life-praxis of Jesus did not take place in an empty vacuum. As Habermas has noted, social interaction does not take place only through the medium of language and work, but also occurs in the medium of domination and power structures. The gospels relate that precisely because of his life-praxis, his double solidarity, Jesus was condemned and executed. Since both the religious and political leaders played a role in his death, it would be inadequate to attribute his death mainly or solely to the responsibility of the one over the other, the self-identity expressed in his life-praxis must have offended both authorities. It was not his proclamation of superiority to the law alone.¹¹⁵ Nor was it merely his preaching of the kingdom that might have been understood in terms of possible zealot overtones. Instead it was precisely his life-praxis as a totality, his radical solidarity with the Father and with the outcasts of his society, a solidarity expressed in his communicative words and actions, that lead to his death. Since his

of Mind (New York: Berners & Noble, 1949) are equally helpful. A relational and performative understanding of "person" would necessarily take into account both the insights of analytic philosophy and those of a social critical theory. Significant is the recent historical research on the origin of the use of the word "person." Cf. C. Andreson, "Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des Trinitarischen Personbegriffs," *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 52 (1961), pp. 1-39 and H. Köster, "hypostasis," *Theological Dictionary of the Bible* 8, trans. by G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1972), pp. 572-89. A performative understanding of person would in my opinion avoid some of the aprioria and deadends of the question of the psychological unity of Christ. Still basic for this discussion are the significant but diverse contributions of Lonergan and Rahner respectively: *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica* (Rome: University of Gregorian Press, 1961), and *Sacramentum Mundi* 3, pp. 193-209.

¹¹⁵From a historical point of view Pannenberg sees Jesus too exclusively in conflict with the "Jews" who are seen as the main cause of his death. Cf. Kasper, *Jesus*, pp. 251-8. For a necessary corrective, see Moltmann, *Crucified*, pp. 112-59.

personal identity can be described as being constituted in and expressed by this double solidarity, we can assert that precisely his self-identity as expressed in his life-praxis lead to his death.¹¹⁶ It was a necessary consequence of his self-identity because in a world of sin and injustice such an identity and such a solidarity had necessarily to be rejected by the world of sin and injustice. In the Johannine language the sending of the Son is the crisis of the world.

This understanding of Jesus and his death should be seen in contrast to the positions I have previously criticized. Contrary to the existentialist position of Rahner, I am asserting that it was not so much through a personal act of self-surrender in death that Jesus totally summed up and realized his self-identity. Instead, his identity is constituted by his relation to the Father and his fellow-persons. Since he radically lived out this self-identity, he was killed for it. In this way the death of Jesus can be seen as something that happened to him. It is a personal act in so far as he could have anticipated it as a consequence of his self-identity in a twofold solidarity. If Rahner were to take radically and seriously his understanding of death as a full personal realization, it would seem almost logical for him to have to posit a progressive incarnation. Although he explicitly rejects such an understanding (due to his understanding of incarnation in terms of creation so that a "spiritual being 'gives itself away from itself' primarily in the act as which God creates it"),¹¹⁷ yet he still affirms that it is precisely Jesus' death that is the act of redemption. This latter affirmation in my opinion is somewhat in tension with his understanding of incarnation in terms of creation. In terms of the perspective I suggest above, it would seem more appropriate to speak of Jesus' self-identity as expressed in his two-fold solidarity, to which his death attests and of which it was a consequence, but which it does not solely constitute. Only in this indirect and consequential sense does it receive its role within the total context of Jesus' whole life-praxis.

This places us even more in disagreement with Pannenberg for whom the resurrection is ontologically and epistemologically the foundation of Jesus' self-identity in relation to the Father in so far as it

¹¹⁶The assertion of a unity of person and work does not involve the dissolution of the person into the work, but rather constitutes the basis for the work.

¹¹⁷Rahner, *TI* 4, p. 109, n. 1.

retroactively effects the past. In his view, death is the substitutional penalty that is born by Jesus and is reversed by the resurrection.¹¹⁸ In our opinion Pannenberg's position does not sufficiently guarantee the self-identity of Jesus prior to the resurrection and inadequately conceives of Jesus' death as the "punishment" that "God himself" "laid on him," which the resurrection reverses.¹¹⁹ Instead the death of Jesus should be understood primarily as a consequence of the wrath of the world of sin and injustice for whom his identity and life-praxis was a crisis. The death, then seen as a consequence of his identity and life-praxis, receives its *meaning* primarily from its consequential relation to his life-praxis. The resurrection does not give meaning to the life-praxis but confirms its *validity* in the face of rejection. The Christian faith in the resurrection is a faith in the eschatological and historical victory of God over evil, of eschatological life over death. God's eschatological act in Jesus establishes his at-oneness with Jesus' life-praxis of at-oneness with the Father and us and is as such the basis of our salvation and eschatological hope.

My emphasis upon the incarnation (against Pannenberg) and my emphasis on the resurrection (against Moltmann) can be seen historically as an attempt to reclaim for systematic theology the so-called classic idea¹²⁰ of atonement over contemporary emphases of a theology of the cross. The classic idea views the life of Jesus as a whole and conceives of atonement in terms of conflict and victory. The work and person of Jesus are seen as one. Atonement and redemption, reconciliation and salvation are seen in their fundamental unity. This view describes in various images the work of Christ as a victory over the powers holding humankind in bondage, sin, and death. It understands sin not in an individualistic sense, nor in a mere moralistic sense, nor as a division between a higher and lower self. Instead it comprehends the social dimension of sin and sees it as an objective power holding persons in

¹¹⁸It should be noted that Pannenberg uses the German word "Stellvertretung." It has been translated as "substitution." Although this is the usual theological translation, it conceals that "Stellvertretung" also has the meaning and connotation of "representation."

¹¹⁹Kasper, *Jesus*, p. 269.

¹²⁰Aulen, *Christus Victor*. Although Aulen has elaborated the classic idea of atonement with reference to both Irenaeus and Luther, scholars have taken issue with his interpretation of Luther.

bondage, involving a lack of fellowship with God, and resulting in death. Christ's work is understood as a victory over this sin, bondage, and death. It recreates the fellowship with God.

This emphasis upon conflict and victory is quite evident in the principal representative of the classic idea, Irenaeus. He underscores the triumph of Christ through conflict, he understands salvation as life and fellowship with God, and he gives a central role to the resurrection. Although the death of Christ does play a role in Irenaeus's writings, "it is not," as Aulen writes, "the death in isolation; it is the death seen in connection, on the one hand, with the life-work of Christ as a whole, and on the other with the Resurrection and the Ascension; the death irradiated with the light of Easter and Pentecost. The whole order of his thought, his whole emphasis on the victory of life, makes it clear that he cannot rest till he has brought us to the thought of Christ as Lord of Life. The Resurrection is for him first of all the manifestation of the decisive victory over the powers of evil, which was won on the cross."¹²¹ But how was it won on the cross? The answer is significant. It was won through obedience. Jesus' obedience annulled the ancient disobedience (*Adv. Haer.*, III, 21.10;22.4). This obedience is, however, seen in his life. The temptations, preaching, and teaching are placed in the light of the same obedience.¹²² This insight of Irenaeus can be formulated in this way: the radical obedience of Jesus to his self-identity with God the Father and to his fellow persons expresses not only who he is but also manifests the radical integrity of his life to the extent that he was killed for being who he was. His obedience was the obedience of one so identified with the Father and with his fellow persons that his identity could later be conceptualized by the early Church in its belief that he was both God and human.

As a conclusion to this thesis: I have selected "critical social theory" over existentialism because in my opinion it comprehends more adequately the conflictual nature of reality and society; it grasps the fact that we live in a world of domination, and it underscores the radical need for emancipation on a personal as well as a societal level. Critical social theory does not merely understand individual self-

¹²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 31f.

¹²²It would be important to understand and formulate the notions of sacrifice and ransom in terms of obedience and to understand obedience not as something merely formal, but also as an objective commitment.

identity in terms of orientation toward death, but sees it in relation to social interaction within the norms, values, and dominating powers of social and political reality. For the same reasons, I refer back to the classical patristic notion of redemption. This classical idea provides a perspective for interpreting Jesus in the light of his interaction with the powers of domination and in view of his radical solidarity with the Father and his fellowship with us that provides the key to his identity and redemptive activity. This classical idea goes one decisive step further than critical theory insofar as it affirms that the fundamental root of all alienation is sin and the fundamental hope is God's eschatological victory. In this vision, it is superior to critical theory. Yet since it has been tied to mythological images and cosmic categories, it needs to be reformulated in the conceptuality of a critical theory of society for the truth of its images is still valid. In my opinion, it is regrettable that Pannenberg has globally dismissed this classical type of soteriology because in his opinion it does not "attribute a particular saving significance to Jesus's death"¹²³ and would advocate instead a Lutheran theology of substitution without at the same time analyzing the societal presuppositions and political consequences of such a theory and its concomitant theology of the cross.¹²⁴

THESES III AS CONCLUSION: *Atonement and redemption can be understood as emancipatory solidarity.*¹²⁵

The expression "emancipatory solidarity" sums up and delineates the results of the two previous theses. Recently much discussion has

¹²³Kasper, *Jesus*, p. 274, n. 59.

¹²⁴Cf., however, his article "Luthers Lehre von den Zwei Reichen und ihre Stellung in der Geschichte der christlichen Reichsidee," in *Gottesreich und Menschenreich*, edited by A. Hertz *et alii* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1971), pp. 73-96, where he defends Luther's teaching of two kingdoms against Karl Barth's critique that it was ineffective against National Socialism. The worldly regiment still has "die Bedeutung eines Korrektivs . . . gegen den schwärmerischen Enthusiasmus, der sich mit der Idee der Freiheit so leicht verbindet" p. 96.

¹²⁵For reasons of space, I have not developed here a fourth thesis that I presented at the conference outlining the communal and ecclesial elements of "emancipatory solidarity." In such a context I would posit an interpretation of Paul's theology of the cross that would serve as an "eschatological correction" against any enthusiastic or presential theology of the resurrection.

centered around the question of new titles to express the meaning of Jesus and redemption. For example, Dorothee Sölle and Hans Küng¹²⁶ have suggested new titles to apply to Jesus. They would replace the old ones and yet spell out the significance of Jesus much more appropriately for today. The main title which they have chosen is "Representative" (*Stellvertreter*). Jesus is God's Representative. In my opinion this title does not adequately express Jesus' significance today. In a world of alienation, domination, and sin, it is not enough to assert that Jesus represents God to us. But rather one must profess how he represents God to us. What is the fundamental interest underlying such representation? Jesus' representation has a specific interest. It is an interest in emancipation or, traditionally expressed, an interest in redemption.

This insight has been grasped by recent attempts to understand redemption primarily as "emancipation" (Metz)¹²⁷ or "liberation" (Kessler,¹²⁸ Gutierrez).¹²⁹ Yet these titles also appear inadequate; by placing the emphasis upon emancipation or liberation, they do not sufficiently accentuate the solidarity that lies at the basis of liberation and emancipation. Instead I propose that the expression "emancipatory solidarity" be used to formulate the meaning of what the tradition has understood and sought to describe with the words "reconciliation," "atonement," "redemption," and "salvation." As such the expression "emancipatory solidarity" expresses the Christian understanding of the Church, Jesus, and God.

The expression "emancipatory solidarity" places together atonement and redemption, reconciliation and salvation. One cannot exist

¹²⁶Christ the Representative: An Essay in Theology After the "Death of God," trans. by David Lewis (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), and Küng, *Christsein*, pp. 374-82. Küng suggests also "Sachwalter," "Anwalt" and "Treu-händer" among others to replace shepherd, savior, or Son of God.

¹²⁷"Erlösung und Emanzipation," *Stimmen der Zeit* (1973), 171-84.

¹²⁸H. Kessler, *Erlösung als Befreiung* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1972).

¹²⁹*A Theology of Liberation*, trans. by C. Inda and J. Eagleson (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973). For the differences between "political theology" and "liberation theology," cf. F. Fiorenza, "Political Theology and Liberation Theology," in *Liberation, Revolution and Freedom: Theological Perspectives*, ed. by T. McFadden (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 3-29.

without the other. The basis of our redemption is God's presence in Jesus expressing his solidarity with us in and through Jesus. It underscores that Jesus' solidarity with the Father and with us even until death is the basis of our faith in him. But his solidarity was interwoven with an emancipatory praxis. He healed the sick, cast out demons, forgave sinners, and fed the hungry. In his actions, the kingdom that he proclaimed was already anticipated for his actions were signs of the future kingdom. Yet he was killed for the emancipatory solidarity expressed in his preaching and deeds. Consequently the Christian faith in his resurrection entails necessarily a faith in God's decisive solidarity with emancipatory solidarity expressed in Jesus' preaching and deeds. It expresses a hope in God's future act of emancipation and solidarity for us.

In this sense, the Christian community, based on this belief in Jesus' resurrection as God's eschatological act, has as its object and goal emancipatory solidarity. Like Jesus, it too must identify with the Father and with the poor and outcasts of society. It too must be concerned with the liberation from the evils of sin and death and with the emancipation from injustice and oppression in so far as it seeks to embody the signs of the kingdom in the here and now as he did. Since the Christian community confesses to God's validation of Jesus' emancipatory solidarity, it proclaims an eschatological hope in a kingdom of solidarity, in which there will be no evil or suffering, no oppression or death. Since the full realization of the kingdom is an event of the eschatological future, the Christian community must, through its life-praxis and in its institutions, anticipate by an emancipatory solidarity that eschatological solidarity that fulfills our striving for liberation and community.

This proclamation and life-praxis not only defines Jesus, but equally important involves a radical change in the understanding of God. It defines God not as a symbol of transcendent sovereignty but as a symbol of "emancipatory solidarity." That this "emancipatory solidarity" is a transcendent reality and neither an illusion nor a human projection cannot be empirically proven. It is the object of Christian faith and hope, the reality of which Christian faith and love can only attest through its emancipatory life-praxis.

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