

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I

The politics of salvation

Global realities of human inequality, poverty, violence, and ecological destruction call for a twenty-first-century Christian response that can link the power of the gospel to cross-cultural and interreligious cooperation for change. The aims of this book are to give biblical and theological reasons for Christian commitment to justice, to show why just action is necessarily a criterion of authentic Christian theology, and to give grounds for Christian hope that change in violent structures is really possible.

The premise of this work is that religious experience of God carries a moral way of life as its equally original counterpart. This is because inclusive community with other human beings is a constitutive dimension of community with God. “Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, mind, and soul; and your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:28–34). Love God *and* neighbor – not God, *then* neighbor. To experience salvation is to have one’s life completely reoriented in relation to God and simultaneously, integrally, in relation to other human beings. Authentic religious experience – salvation – is inherently transformative and political. Reconciled human relations are lenses through which we glimpse the goodness and power of God.

In the words of Gustavo Gutiérrez – almost four decades ago – “to know God *is* to do justice.”¹ Jürgen Moltmann voices the theological corollary: “christopraxis is the source from which Christology springs.”²

¹ “Conversion means a radical transformation of ourselves ... To be converted is to commit oneself to the process of the liberation of the poor and oppressed, to commit oneself lucidly, realistically, and concretely.” Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson; rev. edn., with new introduction, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), p. 118. Originally published by CEP, Lima, 1971; original English translation published by Orbis Books, 1973.

² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). See also Jürgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for Today’s World*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), p. 47: “There is no Christology without christopraxis, no knowledge of Christ without the practice of Christ. We cannot grasp Christ

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)

2

Global justice, christology, and Christian ethics

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza makes the same point with specific reference to feminist theology: “we must ground feminist theology in wo/men’s struggles for the transformation of kyriarchy.”³ I agree with Paul Murray that “Christian faith is not primarily a way of thinking or speaking ... but a lived, communal praxis of living in accordance with and out of God’s transforming action in Christ and the Holy Spirit.”⁴ David Tracy explains that “the criteria of theology are ethical-political criteria because ... there is no revelation without salvation.”⁵ Therefore, in the words of Jon Sobrino, *orthodoxy* must meet the criterion of *orthopraxis*, because it is the experience of resurrection life, the proximity of God’s reign in our historical existence, that gives rise to worship and theology in the first place.⁶

The term “salvation,” derived from the Latin word for health, *salus*, connotes an actual healing of sin as idolatry, selfishness, and violence.⁷ If God’s full incarnation in human existence is a fact, and resurrection life a present reality, then Christian politics must be, can be, and is transformative of its social world. To proclaim that God is truly present in Jesus Christ, and that in Christ humans are reconciled to God, is to commit oneself to personal and political ways of life coherent with the reign of God that Jesus inaugurates.

Furthermore, the sociopolitical dimension of salvation has consequences for the purposes and criteria of theology. Theology is systematic, intellectual reflection on the experience of salvation; to be adequate to that experience, theology must incorporate and foster salvation’s relational and social dimensions. To the extent that theological concepts and systems foster historical injustice, they are inauthentic and false to the

merely with our heads or our hearts. We come to understand him through a total, all-embracing practice of living ... Discipleship is the holistic knowledge of Christ, and for the people involved it has a cognitive as well as an ethical relevance; it means knowing and doing both.”

³ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 48.

⁴ Paul D. Murray, *Reason, Truth and Theology in Pragmatist Perspective* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), p. 9. Murray references John W. de Gruchy, “Christian Witness and the Transformation of Culture in a Society in Transition,” in Hilary D. Regan and Alan J. Torrance (eds.), *Christ and Context: The Confrontation Between Gospel and Culture* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), pp. 131–52.

⁵ David Tracy, “The Uneasy Alliance Reconciled: Catholic Theological Method, Modernity, and Postmodernity,” *Theological Studies*, 50 (1989), p. 569.

⁶ Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), p. 157.

⁷ The New Testament provides many metaphors for the restoration of right relationship of humans to God in Jesus Christ, all of which disclose dimensions of an ultimately mysterious reality. They include salvation (biological or organic), redemption (economic), justification (legal or forensic), and purification (cultic or ritual). Salvation as healing suggests the real change in believers and in the community that is essential to a transformative Christian politics.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)

experience of salvation in Jesus Christ. Theology must be tested by its effects in human life, judged not only in terms of spiritual conversion and the formation of religious community, but also in terms of the well-being of humans and other creatures. Theology is accountable to the normative claims of a moral realism that defines justice as practical recognition of basic human goods, human equality, respect for other species, and participation of all in the common good.

In the face of the evils of poverty, war, gender-based violence, and environmental destruction, Christians must proclaim in deed and word the cosmic span of God's creating power and the transformative possibilities of redemption. We must not give up the fight for justice as ultimately nonsensical, historically doomed, or outside the vocation of Christian discipleship. Indeed, Christian justice work is a testimony to the authenticity and power of the gospel. Good Christian practices and true Christian theologies display salvation as love of God and neighbor, forgiveness, reconciliation, resurrection, and the power of the Holy Spirit in history. This is why moral and political practices are criteria of theological truth.

Finally, it is vital to my project not only that biblical narratives of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus shape Christian social ethics, but also that the key formulations of Nicaea and Chalcedon furnish its inspiration and rationale. The recovery of the humanity of Jesus, his ministry of the reign of God, and salvation through the resurrection have been dominant and vital concerns in recent Christian ethics and in liberation theologies. Yet more traditional affirmations of the divinity of Christ, salvation through the cross, and the real presence of God's Spirit in the church are equally crucial to a confident Christian politics of liberation and justice. Both biblical and credal sources must be interpreted flexibly, receptive to Christianity's internal pluralism, today and in ages past. Diversity within Christian theology and its sources reflects diversity within the biblical canon, within the viewpoints in union at Nicaea and Chalcedon, and among the sites of global Christianity.

The reality of reconciliation and renewal in Jesus Christ, with its practical and political ramifications, will be guiding concerns of later chapters, especially Chapter 4 ("Christ"), Chapter 5 ("Spirit"), and Chapter 6 ("Cross"). The present chapter will concentrate on the case that the relation between theology and ethics is a two-way street. Not only do biblical and theological claims about salvation in Jesus Christ require active commitment to social justice; the practices in which Christians are already engaged shape their theological vision, and the just or unjust practical

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)

consequences of Christian concepts and doctrines are indicators of the latter's truth and adequacy.

This chapter will expand on the basic interdependence of theology and ethics in several steps. The section to follow will examine the mutual formation of morality, politics, and religion, and hence of interpersonal ethics, social ethics, and theology ("The Necessary Interdependence of Theology and Politics"). The link of sociopolitical realities and theoretical knowledge is now well established by philosophers from Marx to Nietzsche to Wittgenstein to Foucault to Irigaray and Chandra Mohanty. In *Sources of the Self* and *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor reveals the cultural and intellectual heritages culminating in a Western ethos of individuality, "inwardness," agency, and equal respect, as well as a worldview that allows only for historically "immanent" but not "transcendent" meaning.⁸ His diagnosis of the ways historical realities enable and constrain the possibilities of thought and imagination for their participants may be applied analogously to theology and theologians – emphasizing more strongly than Taylor, however, the fact that worldviews are created at least as much by social and material practices, and by the quality of human relationships, as by their intellectual and artistic streams. The codetermination of Christian theology and practices will be illustrated at the end of this chapter by a liturgy honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe and, in Chapter 6 ("Cross"), by the Roman Catholic Tridentine Good Friday liturgy and its depiction of the Jews.

In the next section of this chapter ("Pragmatism: A Resource for Theology and Ethics"), I will turn to an aspect of my own cultural heritage, the American philosophical tradition of pragmatism, to explicate further how ethical and theological truths have practical origins, practical meaning, and practical criteria of verification, even though they can also be true across particular communities or "universally." Varieties of realist Christian ethics are numerous and may be defended in many ways. My own approach is indebted to the revised "natural law" tradition rooted in Aquinas and developed primarily by Roman Catholic authors (see Chapter 7, "Nature"). It also bears affinities with several other thinkers associated with the University of Chicago, such as James Gustafson, David Tracy, Robin Lovin, Douglas Ottati, William Schweiker, Stephen Pope, Cristina Traina, and Kevin Jung.⁹ In Lovin's words, the Christian

⁸ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); and *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁹ See James M. Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, vol. 1: *Theology and Ethics* (Chicago and Oxford: University of Chicago Press and Basil Blackwell, 1981); and *Ethics from a Theocentric*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)*The politics of salvation*

5

realist's complex and culturally pliable conception of human nature is compatible with the conviction that "the human good is the proper subject of ethics, and that we cannot settle our disagreements about what we ought to do without reference to our understandings of a fully human life."¹⁰ My appropriation of pragmatism is carried forward in this spirit.

After laying out the political side of all theology and making a neo-pragmatist case for the practical character of truth claims, I will argue that, consequently, religion and politics are not separate spheres but interdependent ("Christian Identity and Public Politics"). Most if not all societies are colored by the religious dimensions of human experience. Moreover, the religious identities of Christians are thoroughly intertwined with their other identities and communities, and this holds for Christian theology and ethics too. This has been the case from biblical times onward, since Christianity began as a Jewish reform movement, incorporated Gentiles, adapted Greco-Roman social and household structures, and continually found new cultural and philosophical forms in which to cast its experiences of God. Paul Ricoeur captures this dynamic by speaking of the "narrative unity" of a life. Selves, living "with and for others," gather together multiple relationships and spheres of belonging in identities constituted over time.¹¹ The diachronic and dynamic nature of identity applies to communities as well.

Perspective, vol. 2: *Ethics and Theology* (University of Chicago Press, 1984); David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981); Robin W. Lovin, *Christian Realism and the New Realities* (Cambridge University Press, 2008); Douglas F. Ottati, *Hopeful Realism: Reclaiming the Poetry of Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009); William Schweiker, *Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics: In the Time of Many Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Stephen J. Pope, *Human Evolution and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Cristina L. H. Traina, *Feminist Ethics and Natural Law: The End of the Anathemas* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999); and Kevin Jung, *Moral Realism and Christian Ethics* (manuscript submitted to Cambridge University Press). Gustafson, strongly influenced by the Reformed tradition and H. Richard Niebuhr, taught at the University of Chicago from 1972 to 1989 and mentored myself, Ottati, Schweiker, Pope, and Traina. Niebuhr's interest in pragmatism influenced Gustafson and was transmitted to several of his students. Lovin, a scholar of the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr, taught for thirteen years at the same institution. Jung is a student of Schweiker. For all of these, moral discernment is situated and thus partial, is often biased, must be accountable to evidence about basic human and moral goods, must be informed by accurate and adequate descriptions of the "facts" of human life, and should be guided by the well-being of humans and other species, in relation to God and God's purposes. Tracy, who taught at Chicago during Gustafson's tenure, brings a Catholic perspective on the "sacramentality" of ordinary life and on justice, and a critical yet realist hermeneutic of knowledge.

¹⁰ Robin W. Lovin, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Realism* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 240.

¹¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 139, 158.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Christian theology and Christian ethics are not insulated from other traditions of belief, practice, and theory. This is one of the main factors that give Christian ethics social and political traction. “Other” identities do not necessarily dilute Christian commitment; on the contrary, they can provide important insight into what is humanly good and to be affirmed, what is evil and to be rejected. For example, modern equality and respect have made it possible to recognize more clearly that Jesus’ “kingdom or reign of God” requires inclusive community and social justice as universal participation in the common good. Patriarchy and slavery are recognized as deformations of the Christian life. In addition, the flexibility and porousness of human identities, and the potential to share practices and values across groups, make it possible to work with others toward moral and political aims. Later in this chapter, efforts to combat rape and sex trafficking will provide illustrations (“Christian Politics and Global Justice: Sex Trafficking”), while a celebration of the feast of Guadalupe will connect transformative politics to Christian ritual, showing that the meaning of the ritual is both dependent on and refracted through ordinary social life (“Guadalupe: Ritual, Conversion, and Transformation”).

These two examples in particular illustrate an argument central to the book as a whole: personal, communal, social, and political transformations are real possibilities, despite the intransigence of sin and evil. Political realism, not otherworldliness, liberal individualism, or secularism, is the biggest contemporary threat to Christian ethics and the preferential option for the poor. Political realism is the idea not only that the overriding motive of moral and political behavior is self-interest, but that self-interest is politically normative. While self-interest is indeed a powerful (and often valid) motivator, human beings and societies are capable of altruism and solidarity. It is these capabilities that salvation regenerates and to which Christian ethics appeals. Christian faith in the incarnation, atonement, and resurrection – as well as in Jesus’ inauguration of the kingdom of God – require hope that change is possible and that hope takes root in real experiences of salvation as reordered relationship. These ideals have resonance in global, interreligious movements to alleviate human suffering and make societies more just.

To be practically effective, theological and ethical ideals must grip people and communities at more than an intellectual or theoretical level. They must have imaginative and affective appeal. Jon Sobrino accompanies orthodoxy and orthopraxis with *orthopathy*.¹² To understand in the

¹² Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, pp. 209–10, 213.

right way requires doing in the right way; to do what is right requires an attraction to the good, commitment to its reality, and the imagination to see possibilities of goodness that stretch beyond present conditions. The aesthetic dimensions of truth and of “beautiful” relationships account for the importance of story, symbol, ritual, music, and art in conveying the truth of theology and the goodness of Christian practices or, for that matter, the real presence of God in human existence.

THE NECESSARY INTERDEPENDENCE
OF THEOLOGY AND POLITICS

Theology aims to orient humans rightly, in relation to the divine. As Elizabeth Johnson repeatedly declares, “The symbol of God functions.”¹³ Thus feminist theology explores multiple images of God to orient humans more justly to God, other persons, and all creation. In the estimation of James Gustafson, “Theology primarily is an activity of the practical reason. This it shares with ethics.”¹⁴ He sees the task of theological ethics as “the interpretation of God and God’s relations to the world, including human beings.”¹⁵ Miroslav Volf agrees: theology is more a practical than a theoretical science; it aims not only “to deliver ‘knowledge,’ but serve a way of life.”¹⁶ Christian transformation in community is the proving ground of theological formulations.

Why and how theology is embedded in and interdependent with social and political practices is clarified by the modern social sciences. Building on Ernst Troeltsch’s sociological approach to ecclesiology,¹⁷ H. Richard Niebuhr first showed how Christian denominations in North America are captive to and distorted by all sorts of national, regional, racial-ethnic, and economic forces; he then proposed more constructively that different church stances toward culture represent recurrent and perhaps complementary ways of experiencing, understanding, and enacting the significance of Jesus Christ for “the world.”¹⁸ To see the church and theology as

¹³ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), p. 5.

¹⁴ Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, vol. 1, p. 158.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 144.

¹⁶ Miroslav Volf, “Theology for a Way of Life,” in Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (eds.), *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 246.

¹⁷ Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon, new edn., 2 vols. (original translation 1931; reprint Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992).

¹⁸ See H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (originally published 1929; reprint La Vergne, TN: Lightning Source, 2004); and *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)

culturally embedded and as constituted in response to historical realities does not equate to reductionism. Rather, the churches are historical sites where the contingent encounters the eternal; God is present to human beings in and through their historical communities and relationships. To be determined by, yet responsive to, God is to be determined by and responsive to the historical communities, relationships, and structures in which God is actively present. The role of theology is to articulate the significance of the inner dynamic presence of the divine to, and sometimes over against, humanity and human societies.

The economist Margaret Archer offers a “morphogenetic” approach to social structures and human agency that sheds light on culture and church, politics and theology.¹⁹ Archer’s main concern is to show how, within a temporal process, individual human agency is always shaped by preexisting structures and forms of social agency; yet the “social self” as an emergent entity still has the capacity to transform systemic features, which in turn guide new social formations and new agency.²⁰ An important point that Archer does not emphasize is that emergent agency and structures are more than constraining forces that future agency has some freedom to reinscribe or escape. Emergent structures can enable greater human freedom, more complete instantiations of justice, and more authentic patterns of relating to the transcendent and divine. Examples might be systems of democratic government and the rule of law, the Christian eucharistic liturgy and its cultural variations, Catholic social tradition, and Caritas Internationalis.

Not only theology but the Christian churches, and the Christian experience of God in Jesus Christ itself, are “morphogenetic” in that they depend on and are even constituted by structures and practices (such as “the body of Christ”); yet they also constantly recreate and reinvent what has nurtured them. Going beyond sociology, however, Christian faith and theology pose a normative test for the adequacy of any Christian reality that emerges morphogenetically: analogical resemblance to the good news of salvation embodied in Jesus Christ. This resemblance must be real and practical, not just conceptual or theoretical.

David Tracy shows that the theological enterprise is shaped by its historical circumstances and its three “publics” of church, academy, and world, making theology accountable both to the real presence of a loving

¹⁹ Margaret S. Archer, *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 255, 257.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)*The politics of salvation*

9

God and to the test of transformative praxis.²¹ Church, academy, and society provide for theology some of the inevitable “social-political realities embedded in all discourse.”²² They also enable theology’s voice and vitality. When Christians proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord or explicate that confession theologically, they are witnessing to the “fundamental existential truth” that human life has meaning in light of the gracious power of a loving God, who breaks the power of sin and makes a new existence possible.²³ The theologian conveys this meaning to the three publics shaping his or her dynamic and sometimes conflicted identity.²⁴

The final norm of theology is “the risen, exalted Jesus present now” in Christian community and its texts, rituals, and practices – not apart from “social-political realities” but in and through their renegotiation.²⁵ The cognitive status of the truth claims of Christianity cannot be resolved by “better theories” alone. It requires verification in the authenticity and transformative capacity of the combined “intellectual, moral and religious praxis of concrete human beings in distinct societal and historical situations.”²⁶

That practical results test theology is not a new idea; in fact it is a very old one. Nicaea and Chalcedon were driven by debates over what theological expressions of Jesus’ identity best suit the *fact* of salvation in Jesus Christ, a fact also of reordered relationships. It was and is assumed that the practical quality of Christian community as mediating the gospel anew depends on the answer. For example, for Gregory of Nyssa, the church as body of Christ mediates salvation and presupposes union with the person of Christ. To faithfully sanctify its members, it must derive from the intimate union of the Word with the Father and their sharing of a single divine power.²⁷ For Augustine similarly, Christian practice and identity are shaped by the presence in Christ and in the church of the coeternal Word of God.²⁸ For the defenders of the Nicene legacy generally, the

²¹ See in particular David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (University of Chicago Press, 1996; originally published 1975); *Analogical Imagination*; and *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (University of Chicago Press, 1994); see also T. Howland Sanks, S.J., “David Tracy’s Theological Project: An Overview and Some Implications,” *Theological Studies*, 54 (1993), pp. 698–727.

²² Tracy, “Uneasy Alliance,” pp. 548–70, 569.

²³ Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, pp. 221, 223.

²⁴ Tracy, *Analogical Imagination*, pp. 30–1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 272. ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁷ Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 307.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02877-7 - Global Justice, Christology, and Christian Ethics

Lisa Sowle Cahill

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Christian life is possible due to the action of the “consubstantial Word drawing Christians towards God in union with him.”²⁹

The dominant theological traditions pursuant to the early christological formulations affirmed the identity of Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the divine Word in order to account for and mediate experiences of authentic human existence, salvation, and sanctification. However, as later critics were to note (and as will be developed in Chapters 3 (“Kingdom of God”) and 4 [“Christ”]), the theologies of Jesus Christ as Word incarnate tended to downplay the humanity of Jesus, the moral and political content of his ministry of the reign of God, and the eschatological conviction that God’s transformative reign is even now affecting history.

In the twentieth century, some of the spiritualizing trajectories of Word christologies were held up to scrutiny in light of theology’s recovery of the social dimensions of salvation. In 1917, Walter Rauschenbusch took to task “the individualistic gospel” and its “doctrinal theology” for not rendering faithfully the social nature of salvation and the effects of salvation on social institutions.³⁰ The next one hundred years were to see variants and improvements on the social gospel in the form of liberation theologies, feminist theologies, Latina and womanist theologies, and Christian theologies from Asia and Africa. Also driven by ethical and political concerns are critiques of soteriologies interpreting the cross as the penal substitution of an innocent man for unrepentant sinners (the subject of Chapter 6, “Cross”). Influential alternative interpretations see the cross as God’s solidarity with the victims of historical evil or as a historically evil consequence of Jesus’ unflinching and self-sacrificial commitment to his mission.

The “bottom line” is that both humanity and divinity, both cross as historical evil and cross as divine salvation, are essential to Christian experience and to practices of salvation and liberation. Bad theologies can engender practices that have a negative effect on the community’s relation to God; social effects that are patently out of line with the gospel are very reliable symptoms of inadequate or unfaithful theologies.

PRAGMATISM: A RESOURCE FOR THEOLOGY AND ETHICS

Some insights of pragmatist philosophy help clarify not only why theological claims should issue in a coherent ethics and politics, but why ethics

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

³⁰ Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1945), pp. 5–6. Originally delivered as the Taylor Lectures, Yale School of Religion, 1917.