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JURGEN MOLTMANN'S "THEOLOGY OF HOPE"

A Brief Purport

Rod Crowell

Preface

This "brief purport" began as a critique. In the best of intentions, however, zeal quickly outran intelligence, and the need to get a firm grip on the thought of Jurgen Moltmann became tantamount to producing anything at all. The strange new territory of dialectical theology, coupled with the added handicap of formulating and answering my own questions, forced reconsideration of this project's direction and purpose.

Accordingly, the intention of this paper has shifted to a practical (and less scholarly) level that is in consonance with my limited abilities. It is written for those professional ministers who have found keeping up with rapidly succeeding theologies to be a luxury in their crowded schedules. To them I dedicate this presentation, hoping to gain some sympathy for it in the process.

I am indebted to Rev. Ken Downing of Sheridan, Michigan for the use of his library; Rev. William Hastings of Fredonia, New York for his most welcome comments; Rev. Francis Turpin of Athens, Michigan and Guntram Bischoff, Th.D. Western Michigan University for their help--and most especially, I wish to thank Otto Grundler, Th.D. Western Michigan University, whose patient guidance as advisor for this project has made this the enjoyable and challenging experience education should always be.

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Introduction

"A thing is alive only when it contains contradiction in itself and is indeed the power of holding the contradiction within itself and enduring it."

--Jurgen Moltmann, citing G.W.F. Hegel

* * * * *

Theology of Hope is a combination of three theses: 1) a critique of the modern view of the "self" as over against the empirical "world", 2) an argument for a political hermeneutics of the Bible which illuminates Christian existence as bound up in the dialectical relation between the suffering of the present and the promise of future deliverance, and 3) an examination of the present position of the Christian church in modern society and outline of the function it should have in an eschatological interpretation of its own existence.

In this book, Moltmann rightfully points out that man experience history in the modus of being and having: he is both actor and spectator in the unfolding of history.¹ While history is an expression of man's being, it also shapes his possibilities for the future in a collective sense. This very important fact has been handled poorly in twentieth century thought: scientists deny the effect of history upon their "world" of causal laws, while existential philosophers subordinate history to man's power of choice. The result is that we have two modern definitions of "world", which is either a body of eternal, empirical "facts"--or else it is the "world" of your own possibilities.

During the reign of modern thinking (which, since Descartes, has consisted of distorting the mind/body dualism in different ways) Christian theology built upon its Thomistic foundations a system that was largely comfortable with the view of the scientific universe. While Christian theologians would occasionally insist upon a patently ridiculous statement, their agreement that faith in God did not cast doubt upon the "verifiability" of the physical world or the sphere of ethics won them a tentative membership, at least, in the club of Rational Men. The steady incorporation of modern scientific and philosophical ideas into Christian theology appears clearly in the church today: its loss of hope for the future of the world reflects the scientific view of the universe as a thing totally distinct from man, following immutable laws.

In like fashion, the church's lack of hope for the future of mankind as a totality reflects the existential reduction of the "world" to the world which individuals encounter as islands in the stream of time. The existential "search for the meaning of Being" has become in the church a "search for personal fulfillment" which shuts out the cries of the "wretched of the earth". Many times in early Christianity, the feeling of premature fulfillment has broken the bond uniting Spirit and mission: the ironic exclamations of Paul in 1 Corinthians 4 is directed against such a feeling.

In the theology of hope, the final things in Christianity, namely judgment and the ensuing new age, place a creative tension upon the events of the present that heightens awareness of our missions and the awareness of spiritual communication with God. But why hope, one may interrupt to ask. Isn't hope an opiate, a justification for suffering? As rational men, don't we realize that our hoped-for future is continually delayed? Hope is an illusion, and we must reconcile ourselves to what IS. This form of realism might be called by its proper name a fear of disappointment. "For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8:35) It is not enough to answer the question, "Are you saved?" with another question--"Saved from what?". The proper answer is more accurately, "No, I am not saved. I am lost in hope that I might be saved when the Kingdom comes." The realization that the Christian mission is not yet finished is the ground, in part, of the Christian hope.

Ever since men acquired the ability to completely obliterate themselves in a nuclear holocaust, the future of mankind has taken on a universal cast. It is only by the formation of a total community that we can manage to survive. This universal horizon is found in Christian eschatology, with its power of anticipation. In such a dynamic eschatology, our hope for the end of history brings a glorious vision into tension with our present reality of suffering: the world is seen in the light of the "not-yet"² and the great difference between vision and reality provides the point of tension in which man's identity can truly be said to reside. The contradiction between future and present is the contradiction which Christians are called to recognize and strive to overcome: for one cannot await such a universal future passively. He must be in correspondence with it in the liberation of the oppressed and in the renewal of all life.³ It is in this respect that eschatology is cast as a political hermeneutic. The danger that secular liberation groups which have preserved the element of hope during this century will tire and lapse into cynicism is a threatening one. Only that vision which is Christian can prevail, for it promises a new Creation. That such a contradiction as crucifixion and resurrection is the announcement of hope is something that does not rest on the capriciousness of reason, but is a constant apprehension in faith.

SECTION ONE: THE "THEOLOGY OF HOPE"

A. Transcendental Eschatology in Philosophy

Eschatology, the doctrine of the "last things", is a unique and quite Judaic idea. The "first things" it corresponds to is the promise made by Jahweh to Abraham. It only makes sense, then, to assert that whatever use the term gets must be related to the nature of this promise and to the God who reveals himself in the history of this promise, that is, in events. Otherwise, the term rests on a philosophical (and specifically Greek) concept of the divine revelation which descends to add only to man's momentary self-understanding, and not on the God of the promise.⁴ But how else could eschatology have been pushed to the back of Christian dogmatics if it had not been given this Hellenistic twist? Clearly, this is what has occurred, and Moltmann locates the modern source of this ahistorical brand of eschatology, which he calls "transcendental eschatology", in Kant. Kant states in Das Ende aller Dinge (1794) that knowledge of the "last things" cannot be intellectual; however, he says, they acquire through the practical reason an ethical significance. This originates in the strange Kantian observation that whatever idea the speculative reason finds void of meaning has been given by the practical reason with the intention that we should make the idea mean something in that sphere "according to the relation it bears to our perceptive faculty." It does not have speculative, but practical meaning. In this manner, Kant has actually excluded the eschatological categories of hope, so that present reality can now be rationalized--and the conditions of this present reality we confront acquire an unchangeable nature.⁵ It is only in Kant's transcendental, moral realm that man escapes the laws of causality and discovers certain things to be determinable by himself.

Two modern theologians, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, have shown their affinities with Kant's basic scheme. For both of them, the eschaton is the "moment bearing the unborn secret of revelation" and thus the boundary between time and eternity.⁶ Their point of difference is the nature of God. Barth holds to God's absolute difference from man, and Bultmann presupposes an analogia entis; hence, for Barth, God reveals himself; and for Bultmann, it is man who must awaken the revelation within himself. While Barth's thought opens man to the world in a libertine fashion, it closes out the Kingdom. What fulfillment could exist after the disclosure of the eternal? Bultmann, on the other hand, allows the possibility of being "open to the future" at the expense of closing out the world. It becomes dead matter which follows the laws of physics, as in Kant.

We must concern ourselves with another interpretation of eschatology at this point: redemptive history. While this is a pre-Kantian development, it nonetheless receives a grounding in philosophy. The eschaton is transformed, via Aristotelian metaphysics, into the purpose of all efficient causes in history. History then replaces God as the source of revelation, and the final result is given an attractive name--"the long march from animality to freedom" in its Hegelian description.

Yet history cannot be understood as a path to perfection or as an epiphany of man that he "awakes", or even as an object confronting us (as in Kant) for the simple reason that history is also the history of the physical world--and all of these interpretations presuppose that the universe follows eternal laws. History in this new, broader sense is closer to the Judaic view of the way in which God reveals himself. The eschaton is now back in its proper place at the end of history. History, however, cannot be a direct revelation of God, for such a statement can be made only when history has been completed. It is then an indirect revelation of God. This interpretation, as advanced by Wolfhart Pannenberg, is an improvement over the others in that it is truly a universal history. But it is not universal enough, for it deprives the risen Christ of a future! Now the connection between Old Testament and New is sharply brought into question. Christ is proclaimed not only within the eschatological horizon of the resurrection of the dead, but also as the "resurrection and the life" himself.⁷ The Christian church finds its future in Christ, the Christ who is also the "crucified one". So Christian eschatology must be an eschatology of the cross. In face of the enormous difference between cross and resurrection Jesus is the same. His identity is bound up within this very contradiction, which anticipates his not-yet apparent future. The Easter appearances of the risen Lord, then, show him not as he is, but as what he will be.⁸

B. Christ and the God of Promise

We have distinguished Moltmann's eschatology of the cross from other, more philosophical interpretations of eschatology. Now we must set his interpretation in the context of the Judaic promise, that it may be defined more clearly. Several questions immediately arise: How is the revelation of the divine in Judaism different from other religions which appear to have common structures of myth and hierophany? Secondly, if it is different, how is the revelation of the God of the promise to be understood apart from the entry of the eternal into the temporal? Finally, how can Christ be understood theologically as an extension and partial validation of the promise?

It should be clear that Israel was little concerned with understanding the appearances or self-revelations of God. Instead, the appearance of God was immediately linked up with the uttering of a word of divine promise. His very appearance "points away" from itself to the future which it announces. While the appearance of God is considered to be the entry of the eternal into the temporal, the effect of the appearance is not such that it brings the hearers of the promise into a realization of their incongruence with the "eternal presence". No, it is rather that the hearers realize their incongruence with the reality around them, and break away from the bondage of the present in hope of the future.⁹ Knowledge of God in these terms does not become an intimate knowledge; but rather, in successive appearances, he is re-cognized in his historic faithfulness. As Martin Buber points out, knowledge of God begins with two experiences, and one identifies the God in each of these two experiences as being the same one. Cognition begins with re-cognition.¹⁰ This does not mean to say that the promise should be used against itself to determine why it has not been fulfilled; indeed, this is what happened in Judaism. Man was the one thought guilty of delaying the promise, and from this reflection grew a cult of obedience and repentance. But this idea supposes that man has the power to bring the promise to fulfillment--God's faithfulness has been pushed aside.

The horizon of the promise expanded in prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology. Prophetic eschatology expanded the notions of covenant (Jer. 31:31-40) and judgment (Amos 1-2) to include other nations. An excellent example of this is found also in Hosea 2:23, ". . . and I will have pity on Not pitied, and I will say to Not my people, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'Thou art my God.'" Jahweh's lordship over all nations now figures in the eschaton, as does the belief that Jahweh will turn judgment into blessing and new creation--a typical occurrence in prophetic literature. A different outlook evolves in apocalyptic literature--so different that Old Testament scholars are divided as to whether it is a continuation of prophetic literature or a result of the dualistic picture of Iranianism. The deterministic view apocalypticism takes of history stands in sharp contrast to the call to repentance found in the prophets. Apocalypticism asserts that the world lies under the influence of evil, that judgment is an inescapable fate, and that this world of evil will be replaced by the coming world of righteousness. This is an extreme dualism not found in the prophets.¹¹ The apocalyptic literature applies cosmological patterns to history; for many years Christian theology saw this as a cosmological interpretation of eschatological history. But there is another alternative: might it not represent an eschatological interpretation of the cosmos? This other alternative is quite a different thing, as Moltmann indicates:

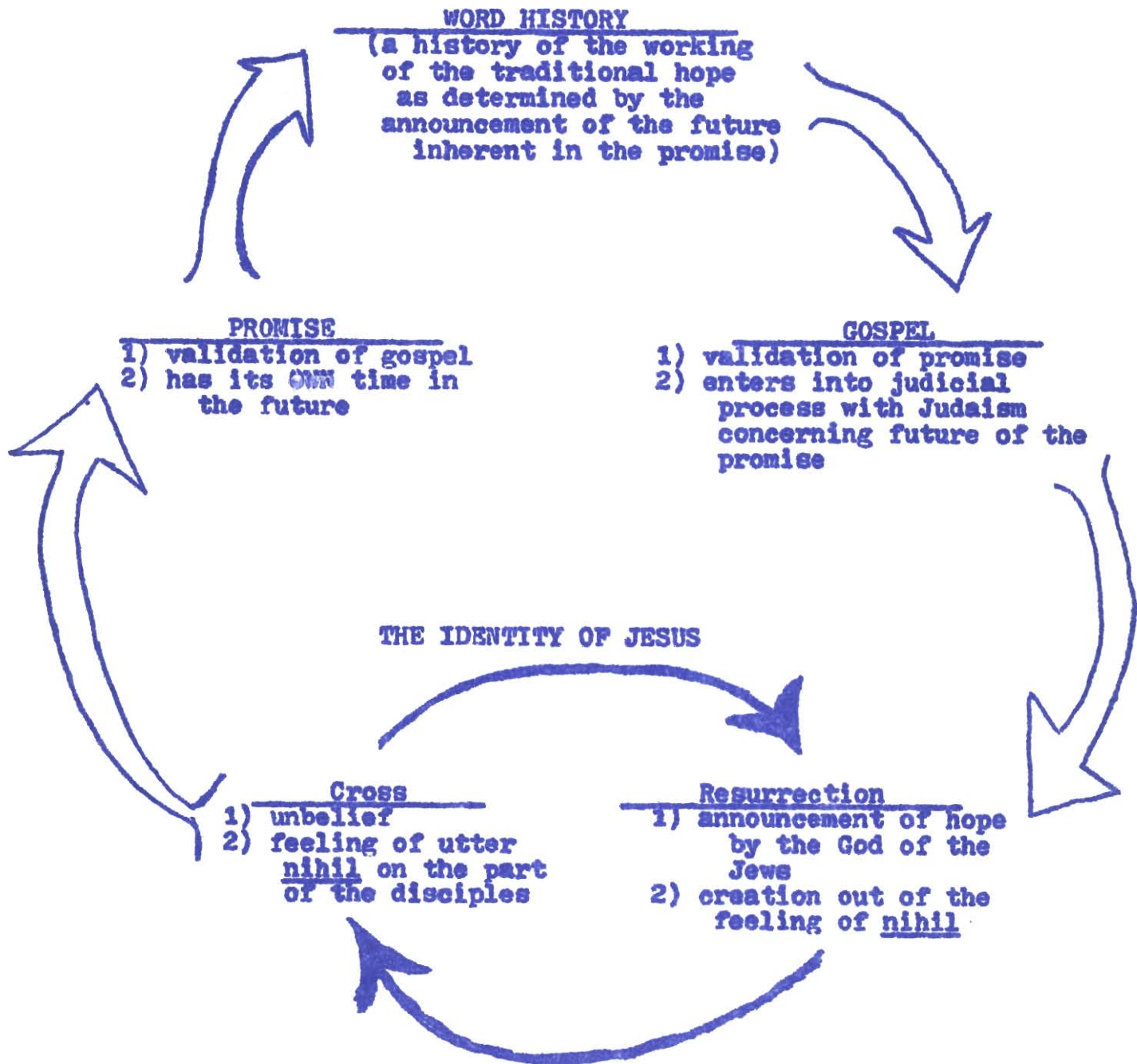
It might well be that the existing cosmic bounds of reality, which the moving historic horizon of the promise reaches in eschatology, are not regarded as fixed and predetermined things, but are themselves found to be in motion. It might well be that once the promise becomes eschatological it breaks the bounds even of that which aetiology had hitherto considered to be creation and cosmos, with the result that the eschaton would not be a repetition of the beginning . . . but is ultimately wider than the beginning ever was. Then it would not be the case that eschatology becomes cosmological in apocalyptic, and is thereby stabilized, but vice versa cosmology would become eschatological and the cosmos would be taken up in terms of history into the process of the eschaton.¹²

The universe no longer is seen as mechanistic. Instead, it splits into aeons of the apocalyptic process--into a world that is coming and one that is passing away. Everything is now bound up in God's process of history.

The final question now remains to be answered. How shall we understand Christ and the Gospel in relation to the promise to Abraham? Two ways immediately present themselves: understanding the connection between the two Testaments as a historic continuity, with the resurrection representing the fulfillment of the Old Testament; or interpreting the connection as one of discontinuity, that is, regarding the connection between Christ and Abraham as a retrospective projection of faith which can only be captured individually. Yet both of these interpretations clearly show the one-sided attitude Christian theology has taken toward the Old Testament. It regards it as either a historic documentation of the Gospel or as a list of the ways in which the Judaic law contributed to human failings. (Whether or not these attitudes can be attributed to the apostle Paul is still a bone of contention for scholars.)

In Moltmann's view of Christian eschatology, the Gospel cannot present itself as total fulfillment of the promise because there are eschatological promises made in the Old Testament which have not yet been fulfilled. Christianity must link up with those promises in a judicial process with Judaism, and present those promises along with the future of Christ.¹³ The future of the promise, like the future of Christ, is still incomplete. In the Gospel, the promise finds a new, eschatological future (and a new history)--while the law finds its end.

The dialectical connection between promise and gospel may still not be clear, so I hope that the following diagram and explanation will suffice:



Word history, which continually interprets the present in relation to the history of the promise and in relation to the announced future in the promise, binds gospel and promise together in such a fashion that the future of hope in the promise is inseparable from a hope for the future of the risen Christ.¹⁴ The identity of Jesus is bound up in, and not outside of, the two radically different experiences of the disciples: a feeling of utter nihil in the crucifixion which extends even to God--and an overcoming of the nihil in the resurrection experiences of the disciples, in which the risen one is identified as the crucified one. As the resurrection overcomes the feeling of nihil and announces the eschatological, it can be said to be a creatio ex nihilo.¹⁵ This identity of Jesus, found in the dialectic of cross and resurrection, links the eschatological with the historical--the abolition of the law with the history of the promise, now given in a new context.

"... the gospel which reveals the presence of the coming Lord requires a continuity with the earthly Jesus which has constantly to be discovered anew--for otherwise a myth about some new heavenly being threatens to take the place of Jesus of Nazareth and the gospel turns into gnostic talk of revelation."¹⁶

If one accepts that Jesus was a Jew and that the God of the Jews raised him from the dead, then the connection with the history of the promise becomes crucial. One cannot anticipate the second coming of the risen Lord blindly. It must have ground in the past.

C. Political Theology and the "Spirit"

Now that we have a brief overview of the theology of hope, two questions arise. First, how is Christian eschatology necessarily a political theology? Aren't we being dictated to in some way or other? The second question is crucial to any theologian. From what experience of the Christian faith are you speaking? It would seem that Moltmann has shut out all form of spiritual communication and embraced the rational, ethical dimensions of Christianity.

Political theology must be distinguished from "politicizing theologians" and "pietizing politicians" as Moltmann says. It is neither a religious justification of the political order nor a religious deification of the political order. Christianity has long fought against the pagan gods of unknown soldiers, beloved forefathers, and the like ever since Justin Martyr. But in recent times, the church has become a private cult working hand in glove with the political order. It takes on the function of unburdening weary citizens, offering them a artificial feeling of human community, soothing them in preparation for another week's sojourn into society. It appears that the church, in focusing upon salvation of the soul and the individual tendency toward pride, has neglected the collective, national, political forms of pride which often spill over into violence. That the "Big Powers" have the capacity to wipe out life on earth several times over is a fact which bears repeating. So political theology in this context is not of the bumper sticker variety. It is more like the recent feeling of "one world" which characterizes the peace and ecology movements. A recent ecology slogan puts it nicely: "We have made a world for each of us, but we need a world for all of us." It takes the form of an individual decision on the part of Christians and non-Christians to adopt an ethic based on the hope found in eschatological faith--and not on a metaphysical system of cosmological stagnancy. Such systems crumble with every historical upheaval.

Why must Christian eschatology be political? To paraphrase a quote by A.N. Whitehead concerning ideas may be the most direct explanation: "Hope won't keep; something must be done with it." We might add: concerning nuclear disarmament, excessive per capita consumption, dehumanization and environmental damage in industries, poverty. It just may be the case that a serious attempt at these problems would result in the decay of that economic empire once called America. It just may be the case that recent romantic movements of the "back to the land" type in the counter-culture ~~may~~ not be fads, but the call for a style of living that does not require the alienated forms of work our society demands from all people at present. Whatever may prove to be the case, it is clear that Christianity has a long Exodus ahead of itself--assuming that Christians do no longer wish to be handmaidens of a selfish system, and that they truly seek that "city which is to come".

We turn now to the question of religious experience. The uniqueness of the Judaeo-Christian experience lies in the experience of promise. Spirit is then an eschatological spirit, as in the writings of Paul. It is the life-giving Spirit, the spirit that raised Christ from the dead and dwells in those who recognize Christ and his future, and shall quicken their mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11). It is the power of futurity in anxious men, wanting to be free. "It is the yearning, unfulfillment, anxiety, and suffering in matter itself . . . The formation of an eschatological or messianic understanding of being will necessitate 1) understanding nature historically

and 2) understanding spirit materially and matter spiritually . . .
 To man's 'restless heart' (Augustine) there corresponds a
 'restless world.'" 17

SECTION TWO: PAUL

The writings of the apostle Paul defy any theological system. They express not only the great difference between Saul, the student of the Law, and Paul, the itinerant missionary, but also how Paul combined those two seemingly opposed points of view in his own faith. His letters juxtapose Gnostic insights and techniques of Midrash; highly structured arguments by allegory and chiasm (Rom. 2:7-10) are found along with primitive Christian creeds (Rom. 1:3-4, 1 Cor. 15:3-5). These stylistic meanderings are possible for one who is not worried overmuch with system-building and its patron, St. Coherency. Paul has practical interests always in sight: settling arguments, reassuring churches cast into doubt by encounters with "superlative apostles" and other false teachers, chastising other churches for their piety, and so on. He appears in his letters as being "all things to all men" (1 Cor. 9:22) for the sake of Christ and the gospel. It falls to the task of theologians, however, to search Scripture continually in the light of questions asked by modern men. Any denial of the applicability of Scripture, as a totality, to the human situation results in reading the Bible like a pack of tarot cards--where the finger points lies the timeless answer to the personal question.

Bearing in mind the danger of contorting Paul's thought to fit a system, let us begin with the question: From what kind of religious experience is Paul speaking? One of the first things that stands out in the Pauline writings is the absence of references to the historical Jesus. It is his conversion experience on the Damascus road that takes precedence (2 Cor. 5:16). He did not receive the gospel "from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12). This, in addition to the diaspora Jewish Christianity spread throughout the Hellenistic world (as hinted at in Acts 6,7,8 and 11) would seem to lay a good foundation showing Paul's ties to Hellenism. Passages such as Gal 3:27, which reads like a parallel to the robing of an initiate in a Greek mystery religion, and Gal. 3:20, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me," together with 2 Cor. 3:18, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness . . ." present a Christ-mysticism that appears to stem from the Hellenization of early Christianity which Paul is continuing. In addressing the Roman church (Rom. 6:3-6) Paul can already presuppose the sacrament of

baptism in a specific formula. The significant difference here in the Pauline interpretation of baptism lies in the symbolism. His formula does not correspond exactly to baptism, for Jesus' burial has to be used instead of his crucifixion. But Paul did not himself make that move; he only proclaimed "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Paul's theology is a theology of the cross, which includes the experience of suffering for Christ (Col. 1:24). Yet it is interesting to note that his baptism formula does not correspond in the same fashion. Perhaps this is because, for Paul, baptism does not mediate salvation but is participation in a cosmic event which is directed toward the time of the end. Also noteworthy is the new sense of the word "initiation" in Phil. 4:12. Paul says he has been initiated into hunger and want. This is a very literal usage, to be sure.

So Paul's "Christ-mysticism" is not the personal flight to the divine. He does not deify himself, shutting out the world. He includes the world eschatologically (1 Cor. 12:13, 2 Cor. 10:7, Col. 3:11). Christ must put all his enemies under his feet; only then will he turn his rule over to God (1 Cor. 15:25-28). This element of the "not-yet" is strong in Pauline literature. It is in this cosmic, eschatological sense that the person "in Christ" is a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). The Pauline mysticism is one of community, not isolation. In his mysticism, the consciousness of the separation between God and man comes to the fore--the awareness of man's suspension that generates the spiritual longing for the unredeemed whole of creation. An amazing picture: Paul claims to have touched the heights of Gnostic piety (see 2 Cor. 12) yet plays it down, so that he may help make the divine message accessible to all (1 Cor. 14:18-19, and 26-33 especially).

"Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

(Phil. 3:8-11)

1 Cor. 15 is the keystone of the Pauline eschatology. It is made clear that "if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised" (verse 16). Christ is here set in the context of the promise. He is its partial fulfillment; the final fulfillment awaits the end of the age, when we will be raised with a "spiritual body" (verse 44).

Pauline literature has long been respected for its insights into "original sin" and "justification by faith working through grace". But is it not important to see these two concepts, long held dear to theologians, in their actual development centuries later? These concepts cannot be attributed to Paul alone, but to Paul as he was seen by the men of a particular age. The question must arise: why has the eschatological experiences of Paul been buried under doctrine for so long? How is it that this early, collective, cosmic vision was displaced by a radically individualistic one in which God, after balancing a person's mortal ledger, allows his soul to float like a balloon into heaven? The answer, I think, is twofold: first, the question concerning salvation has been put wrongly; second, Christian theology has yet to reconcile its tenets about death with the final things. We turn to these problems now.

PART THREE: THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND PRE-RADIANCE

We have covered the collective vision of Christian eschatology, its bearing upon the common fate of mankind, the response of the individual to the promise in the social sphere, and the Pauline eschatology of the cross. What yet remains to be fit in the picture is the fate of an individual upon death, and the bearing of that projected fate upon his life. In this respect, Carl Braaten's¹⁸ criticism of the theology of hope indicates the problem: when eschatology is made the keystone of theology, it has strong ethical import upon the individual, but does not leave him anything to hope for! Gone in this eschatological view is the comforting notion of the immortal soul; in its place, we have talk about an expected (but not imminent) general resurrection. Such talk, as talk of "withstanding the contradiction of present and future", falls short of assuaging the individual. The question Braaten takes up, then, is one first raised by Immanuel Kant: "What can I hope?"

Moltmann, in an address given at Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan, on October 14, 1970, rephrased the question. His lecture was titled, "How can I play in a strange land?". This line, taken from a Negro spiritual, parallels Psalm 137:4. It represents a critical change of

approach to the question of salvation. Instead of ignoring the political sphere in which soteriological thinking takes place, Moltmann includes it as part of the established order an eschatological Christianity must call into question. So now, in place of the term "salvation", we are confronted with two new symbols: "play" and "strange land". What do these mean in Moltmann's theological structure?

The "strange land" is actually the land we all live in. It is a land where religious people imagine a heaven of disembodied souls that is just as morbid as their present existence in many ways. It is a land where religious people rally behind those leaders who promise to give meaning to their lives. It is a land where the Christian church still imagines it is needed by society to be a stabilizer. (The truth is, society doesn't need the church anymore--but finds that it is still useful in its rapidly diminishing role as a pacifier of the populace.) Surprisingly enough, it is a land where religious people are still scared of their own death: this is clearly demonstrated in the sway held over them by their authorities. Who has no fear of death cannot be manipulated by superiors. All the foregoing might appear like serious and revolutionary talk--especially since we have been speaking of "political theology". The answer is, well--it is and it isn't. It is not talk of a revolution that wants to replace one form of alienated society with another form. It is talk concerning how Christians can work toward a humane society without making an idol out of it, or turning it into a mechanical gargyle. The danger I speak of is the tendency to take Utopian ideas that are this-worldly quite seriously. Such seriousness rules out the vision of the Kingdom of God, re-establishes the old bugbear of works-righteousness and the consequent "pearly gates" concept of heaven--in short, rules out the ability to work and yet laugh and play at the same time.

It is for this reason that Moltmann, in his address, introduced the question, "Can believers play in a world where there is so much suffering?". Certainly it is true that those who are incapable of grieving are superficial optimists. Those kind we have no need for. But what about the other side of the coin: take ourselves, the ordinary people. Can we play? Is our society structured for aesthetic enjoyment? The answer is no. Our spirits are out of joint with the spontaneity of freedom. We cannot play without realizing what we are bound to, our work. We cannot take a vacation without knowing that we are expected to increase productivity on "the line" when we return. Further, it is a fact of history that play, or rather, occasional suspensions of oppressive restrictions, has been used as a "safety valve" by power structures. It lets off steam that might have been used in some insurrectory activity.

It is precisely in this situation that eschatology can and does have great personal meaning. Individual hope takes the form of "pre-radiance", a spontaneous ability to enjoy the aesthetic side of life. While most of our play activities are still alienated encounters, as explained previously, they are nevertheless encounters. As such, they offer an alternative environment to the workaday world we too often think to be the only possible mode of existence. Through art forms such as drama (one thinks here of Bertolt Brecht), satire, folk dance, and so on, ~~one~~ realizes that matters don't have to be the way they are. Eschatology conceives of the end as finally being free from purpose. We expect a new body penetrated by the spirit, a new innocence analogous to but not identical with that innocence of children. We become like a child, and exude the primal trust children are known for. This pre-radiance of God's new creation does not spiritualize or moralize. Isn't it true that we always speak with the intention to get someone to do something? Instead, this grace or pre-radiance is manifested in the body.

Is it not a contradiction that, while we think there is a reason for everything in the world--we are at odds to find a reason for the world itself? The man who needs goals tries to reconcile the theodicy question with the creation, and finally collapses into that theological quagmire called the "doctrine of the devil". The choice is actually very simple: recognize that God created the world out of his "good pleasure", that existence is already meaningful in itself--or add another branch to dogmatics called "Satanology", with all its morbid consequences.

"How about the crucifixion?" one may ask. Here, admittedly, the esthetic categories break down. Certainly the cross is quite serious, and does not belong in the category of "play". Yet is it not true that it makes new play possible? Perhaps there also was no compelling reason for God's revelation in Christ--that grace is not a reparation for human guilt, but an eschatological bonding, as in Paul. There is something of the aesthetic in the Easter celebrations, it should be noted: the laughter and song which erupts when we realize that death itself has been mocked. We go back to the dialectic of the identity of Christ: suffering and laughter, unbelief and transforming new faith are juxtaposed in his person, crucified and risen for us. Can we not in the same fashion laugh in the midst of unredeemed humanity, and feel the pain of "not-yet" in the midst of joy?

Theology, in interpreting what "eternal life" is, must begin to turn away from the "immortal soul" and consider the Pauline "spiritual body": for it is in this symbol that lies the close connection between this life and the "new life" we anticipate.

FOOTNOTES

1. Moltmann, Jurgen, Theology of Hope, New York, 1967, p. 271.
2. Ibid., p. 92.
3. Ibid., p. 229 (cf. also pp. 288-9).
4. Ibid., p. 89.
5. Ibid., p. 48.
6. Ibid., p. 51.
7. Ibid., p. 82-3.
8. Ibid., p. 85.
9. Ibid., p. 100.
10. Ibid., p. 117.
11. (cf. p. 134)
12. Ibid., p. 136
13. Ibid., p. 152-3.
14. Ibid., p. 153.
15. Ibid., p. 198.
16. Ibid., p. 300.
17. Moltmann, Jurgen, "Hope and History," Theology Today, vol. 25, October, 1968; p. 383.
18. Braaten, Carl, "Toward a Theology of Hope," Theology Today, vol. 24, July, 1967; p. 208.

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The Brief Purport was written for people who, I had assumed, shared a certain amount of sympathy for Christian theology and its claims. Now that it is being evaluated by men who are concerned with the basic presuppositions of its content, some extra "bridge-work" is required. The following essay intends to lay down the critique of modern philosophy as presented by Jurgen Moltmann and other political theologians.

At the end of Michael Gelven's commentary on Heidegger's "Being and Time" is added a postscript entitled "Why Existence?". It outlines why the emphasis on existential themes is due to the nature of philosophical inquiry itself. It traces the theme of transcendence as human freedom through Kant's "noumenal realm of practical reason", Nietzsche's "transvaluation of all values" and Heidegger's incorporation of the two in Being and Time. His contribution to modern thought is twofold: it is an extension of Kant in supplying a more fundamental critique of technical reason, and an extension of Nietzsche in supplying a way to grasp the structure of one's own existence. Yet these are given new status in Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of "worldhood", "understanding" and "temporality" -- all grounded in the structure of finite Dasein. Against the deification of both Aristotelian metaphysics and technical reason, Heidegger stresses the importance of the ways in which man comports himself, since this is the ground of his freedom and transcendence.

Political theology attempts a critique of this view of transcendence as freedom. This Kierkegaardian-Nietzschean-Heideggerian view is at once oblivious to the unfree conditions of present reality and reliant upon a diminished notion of transcendence. The diminished notion appears most strongly when we consider finite man's place in unfinished world history. According to Heidegger, the totalization of all particular moments and parts of history is not to be sought in a future end of world history, but is to be decided in one's historical ability to be integral in the face of death. This indicates that meaning is found only in the present -- which implies a statement about history as such. It is a shift from the actuality of historical events to a mere inquiry into what makes history possible. The result is a reification of history, history regarded as pure knowledge. In the attempt to know the ground of history through the temporal structure of Dasein, the real character of history is concealed.

For history moves for human perception out of the mode of being into the mode of having. We always have history more, since we always can have and comprehend the past more. But then we are no longer historical in the open processes of the present.¹

¹Moltmann, Jurgen. Religion, Revolution and the Future, p. 54.

History doesn't stand still long enough to be summed up. Yet the problem of being and having is not merely historical, but also personal. Two questions are opposed to each other: How can one identify with one's bodily life, considering all the suffering and death it brings? And yet, how can one live at all, if one does not identify with one's mortal being? Heidegger's analysis of inauthentic existence treats the second question seriously. One does not merely "have" time or "have" a body -- he "is" both of them. When one does not identify with his body and his finitude, he becomes estranged to himself. Separated from the question of "what it means to be", he merges into the everyday environment where all things are replaceable and human relationships interchangeable. The first question, however, remains ignored. It is a question about man's existence that points beyond the realm of appearance to the noumenal realm, which Kant reserved solely for duty. It is the question of theodicy.

The response of Political Theology to the theodicy question is one oriented to both finitude and the non-finite realm from which the future "breaks in". Political theology, like Marxism, wants religion to wither away -- but stresses that it will wither away only when it has been fulfilled. Thus the orientation toward the future. The Christian future (or eschatology) must be identified with a transformation of the conditions of history itself; it is not a mere succeeding event to history, but its highest stage of development. Moltmann agrees with Marxism that the basic problem is not only the myth which is a realization of human existence in fantasy, but also the reality which forces man to deceive himself. When the expressive side of myth holds sway over the protest function it also has, the Cross becomes a burden for the oppressed to carry for their masters. The announcement of hope in the Resurrection must be identified with the utter negativity of the Cross, or the connection with the earthly Jesus is lost.

The Christian hermeneutic is praxis-oriented. It does not wish to be formalistic, or concerned with "written expressions of life" only. It seeks to understand all historical expressions of life within a political context. It seeks to make the static dualism of modern metaphysics fluid once again; the dualism, that is, between causal scientific and philosophical views of the world. This is being done in the theoretical realm by "sociologists of sociology", who are studying crisis situations in social science where one paradigm is threatened with a new view. In such a case, data collection is suspended and forces mount on both sides for the battle of persuasion. It is an epistemological conversion experience.

Returning to the "Brief Purport", I wish to substantiate the claim of this modern dualism (which shuts out the history of the physical world -- amid the turmoil in the anthropological sphere, environmentalists remind us that man is also a "piece of world") by tracing it back to antithetical interpretations of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason.

Kant was a kind of dualist himself, making a distinction between noumena and phenomena. This distinction was necessary in order to show the a priori nature of both mathematics and natural science. In his search for the limits of knowledge, Kant had to presume that the world "in itself" is not known; what we find is the world as it appears under the imposition of our order upon it.

Heidegger shows that finite human understanding directs itself to a world that is already present, or "given". It is this finitude which characterizes our knowledge: the objects of our understanding are not created by us but are received. In other words, "thinking is in the service of intuition" -- an intuition made finite by its characteristic receptivity. In interpreting the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a foundation for ontological, not ontic knowledge, Heidegger tries to show that the transcendental imagination is the unifying faculty of sensibility, understanding and reason. Because this unity of pure knowledge occurs "earlier", Kant erred in seeking the origin of the categories through the table of judgments. The transcendental imagination is prior to transcendental apperception (which seems to be the *cogito* for Kant). It does not intend schemata in the way understanding intends concepts, but is "pre-thematic". It supplies the schemata which supply the images for conceptualization. The schemata themselves are not images, but "transcendental determinations of time" (Kemp Smith trans., p. 181). Heidegger claims that forms of intuition as well as the categories of the understanding have their origin in the transcendental imagination. The temporal structure of the transcendental imagination, through pure syntheses of apprehension, reproduction and recognition, disclose senses of past, present and future respectively.

Ernst Cassirer of the Neo-Kantian school offers a rebuttal. According to him, Heidegger fails to acknowledge the independent character of thought. The understanding is not dependent upon intuition to the point that it loses its independence. When Heidegger relates the transcendental imagination to temporal existence, the distinctions between sensuality and intelligibility as well as those of phenomena and noumena, are done away with. The ideas of reason are not referential to intuition, but to understanding and its uses, seeking to systematically unify experience. It is the path of the active reason, not the path of passive receptivity, which leads Kant to the noumenal realm. While Cassirer agrees the transcendental imagination is important, he does not feel it is central.

Cassirer intellectualizes Kant and Heidegger sensualizes him. Yet while Heidegger doesn't say much about the role of reason, Cassirer drops his argument precisely at this same point. Reason is not an illusion, yet when it seeks to affirm the unity of subjective and objective conditions of experience, it runs into severe problems. As C. O. Schrag concludes in his article "Heidegger and Cassirer on Kant":

The transcendental imagination does not "create" the ideas through schemata, but it does "create" them, and it creates them in a way not dissimilar from the way in which it "creates" the moral law.¹

We arrive at the dualism: a scientific, third-person view that is at heart transcendental -- and a counter-assertion of human finitude that, strangely enough, releases the soul which has become homeless in its own world, allowing it to drift outside, where it is recaptured in various escapist methods of transcendence. We have lost the ability to hold immanence and transcendence in tension, in short. The stabilization of immanence accomplished by existentialism resulted in the free play of transcendence in Romantic religious consciousness. It is now time to ask if these declarations of fulfillment coincide with the ability of the modern subjectivity to rule its own world.

As man's own being is simply not yet complete, neither is his view of the world. The notion of the world as ~~sons~~, one coming, one passing away, does not measure up to the critical philosophy of Kant in epistemological terms. But if the way in which one views the world affects his response to it, political theology may prove to be the view most conducive for social change -- even though it has nothing to add to epistemology.

The advancing future calls us to respond in hope. Not agnostic caution, or blessed assurance, or scientific prediction. Hope.

¹Schrag, C. O. "Heidegger and Cassirer on Kant," *Kantstudien*, 58 Jahrgang, Heft 1, s. 87-100.