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[F. MARTIN]

ESCHATOLOGY (IN THEOLOGY)

The word eschatology is derived from the Greek (ἔσχατος, last) and means the science of the last things. Individual eschatology treats of death, particular judg-

ment, purgatory, heaven, and hell; collective eschatology, of the end of the world, the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment. In the twentieth century the term eschatological began to be used in a wider sense, designating all those aspects of the Christian revelation that transcend this world. In this sense it no longer looks solely to those subjects usually dealt with in the treatise *De novissimis* but includes the Christian's basic attitude to life and his striving to reach fulfillment in the following of the gospel. The first part of this article will survey the ways Christians have historically understood the ultimate realities discussed in eschatology. The second part will present the position of eschatology in recent Catholic theology.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

One can break down the structure of Christian belief as put forward in the creeds into a present conviction that involves a hope of certain events in the future, justified by reference to past events. The future events are expressed as "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead," implying that Christ will come again and man's present moral dispositions will have an important bearing on his ultimate fate, and "I believe in . . . the resurrection of the body and life everlasting," thereby stating that the redeemed will enjoy a never-ending existence in which the body will be present so that man's future condition is not that of a disembodied spirit. The past events that justify this expectation are connected with the life, death, and RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

Early Church. The close connection between the paschal events and man's final destiny was very much to the fore in early Christianity. There were many treatises on the resurrection. Like St. Paul, Justin, Origen, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Methodius linked Christ's Resurrection with that of the Christian at the last day. There was special reverence toward the martyrs because they most clearly imitated Christ by laying down their lives, and in the acts of the early martyrs, for instance in the acts of Polycarp, one sees the strong affirmation that those bodies that had been consumed by the flames and dismembered would rise in glory at the last day. The legend of the phoenix arising from the ashes and the peacock as the symbol of immortality are both found among early Church inscriptions. Thus one sees that the Christian belief was something more than the philosophical belief in the immortality of the soul. It was something transcending merely human experience and reason. It was a belief centered on the risen Christ.

The desire and yearning for the accomplishment of God's plan for the world in the definitive victory of Christ meant a recognition of the transience and impermanence of man's present state. It would be an oversimplification

to read into this a firm belief and conviction that the END OF THE WORLD was imminent. In the early Church, certainly, a problem was posed by the delay in the Second Coming, but it was soon recognized that the Church had to make use of the period of waiting to convert the world and that in a sense the Christian has already begun to enjoy the future goods in the Resurrection of Christ and his access to God through GRACE. Only the heterodox movements such as MONTANISM looked to a speedy Second Coming that would purge the Church of all its carnal elements.

In those days there was a keen awareness of the social aspect of the future state of mankind, and Origen perhaps more than anyone looked forward to an APOCATASTASIS, the restoration of all things in Christ. He did not fall into the error of CHILIASM as he interpreted Revelation allegorically, but his insistence on the idea of fulfillment led him into supposing that in the end all would find happiness in Christ. Even the devil would be pardoned and hell would be no more. This view was to reappear from time to time in the history of theology. It was taken up by the disciples of Origen, was condemned at the synod of Constantinople in 543 (H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum* 411), and was combated by the Fathers. The error is really based on a failure to see that God's glory can be manifested in those who freely reject the divine advances and suffer the consequences. See GLORY OF GOD (END OF CREATION). In the West it was St. Augustine who was most conscious of God's action in history, and in books 20 to 22 of *The City of God* one sees this applied to the last things. In his writings against the Pelagians St. Augustine focused attention on the individual's attitude toward death and the last things by his insistence on the gift of final PERSEVERANCE. The importance of the moment of death for the Christian and the need for God's help if man is to enter into eternal life are well brought out in the *De dono perseverantiae*.

Since the time of Nicaea I (325) Christian thinkers had been making use of pagan philosophy to develop the doctrine of man's ultimate end. St. Basil and especially St. Gregory of Nyssa in his *Life of Moses* had helped Christians to recognize that the last things are the conclusion of a long process, not only the progress of mankind through history, but the progress of the individual toward his end, which is God. St. Augustine shows that man cannot but seek his own happiness, that his life is a search for this, and that he can find rest only in God. This individual and collective eschatology have an ultimate harmony.

Middle Ages. Throughout the Middle Ages there continued the same general pattern that was found in the patristic period. Augustine's sense of history is seen in

Isidore of Seville, and his influence continued into the 12th century, being particularly marked in Hugh of Saint-Victor. The Manichaean view of matter as evil and consequent denial of the Resurrection were repeated in the heresies of the Catharists and Albigenses.

Monasticism. There has always been a strong witness to the values of life beyond the grave in monasticism. In the 4th century the flight to the desert reminded Christianity that, although it was no longer persecuted, it still had to keep its sights on superterrestrial values. It was a useful corrective of those who like Eusebius of Caesarea tended to identify the Church with the new political order. The prophetic ministry of the Old Testament was continued by the fathers of the desert, who demonstrated that the KINGDOM OF GOD was not yet fully realized. These ideas continued both in the East and in the West. In the East the Hesychastic movement and Gregory Palamas drew men's attention to otherworldly values even to the extent of being thought antihumanist. Their spirituality is founded on two events in the history of man's salvation: one in the past, the INCARNATION; one to come, the resurrection of the last day. This eschatological perspective is essential to their teaching. In Western monastic literature certain eschatological themes are developed. If hell is only alluded to indirectly, it is because this is the place to avoid and is not a subject for contemplation as heaven is. The great wealth of Biblical imagery was used to describe the New Jerusalem. These descriptions of heaven do not convey the idea of a place of disembodied spirits, since the Dionysian tradition had far less influence inside the monasteries than outside them. The mystery of the Transfiguration that patristic tradition had regarded as an anticipation of the Second Coming was a popular subject of devotion, and the feast was introduced into the West by the monks. The Canticle of Canticles was one of the most popular books of the Bible, and the monastic commentators always saw in it the relation between Christ and the individual soul, a tradition that was to continue in the 16th-century mystics. For every Christian the life of grace can be said to be the beginning of union with God, but in a special way the *otium* of the monastic life, the leisure for the things of God, exemption from the cares of the world, was seen as a foretaste of heaven.

Joachim of Fiore. But there was the danger that the monk would idealize the monastic life and deny any value at all to life in the world, and this is what happened with the Abbot Joachim of Fiore. It was not his sense of history nor his harmony between the two Testaments nor his symbolism that were novel but his pessimism concerning any life other than that of the monastery. This led him to overspiritualize the Christian message and look for an immediate Second Coming. The taking of Jerusa-

lem by Saladin in 1187 was a severe blow to Christendom, and, as with previous political happenings of this nature, men's minds were once more recalled to a contemplation of the transitoriness of life. Cyprian, Hilary, Jerome, and Ambrose had spoken of the world growing older, and at the time of Gregory the Great the position of Rome seemed to forebode the end of the world. But these reactions at times of crisis were simply those of the Christian conscience recognizing the precariousness of human existence rather than a definite expectation of the end. In the 12th century there were many allusions to the coming of ANTICHRIST, but often these were nothing more than a literary convention adopted by moralists, reformers, and polemicists dramatizing the situation. Every public misfortune announces the final catastrophe and is another act in the great drama. This is the way the Christian has interpreted St. John's "Antichrist is come already" (cf. 1 Jn 4.3), as an awareness of the power of evil in the world. Any attempt to calculate the date of the end was discouraged, and popular superstition and extreme literalism were always a danger to the true doctrine. Joachim fell into this error of exact calculation and overingenious explanation and so was condemned (*see* JOACHIM OF FIORE).

Biblical Commentaries. The traditionally accepted interpretation of the Scriptures included the anagogic sense, which drew the attention of the reader to the significance of the sacred text in reference to Christ's Second Coming. Thus, for the word Jerusalem there would be called to mind the past history of the people of Israel (historic or literal sense); it would recall that the Church is the New Jerusalem (allegoric sense) and that the true city of God is yet to be fully realized (anagogic sense). This anagogy took two forms. For some passages there was the objective doctrinal exposition of the end of the world and the end of the individual, the consideration that man is intended for heaven, that he has yet to enter into his inheritance. But in many cases the anagogic sense was more practical and meant a consideration of the life of prayer and contemplation as a preparation for man's final end.

Scholastics. In his *Book of Sentences*, Peter Lombard considered the main purpose and direction of man's life at the beginning, in the first distinction of the first book. At the end of the work, in book four, distinctions 43 to 50, there is a specific treatment of the themes of resurrection, judgment, heaven, and hell. In the *Summa theologiae*, 1a2ae, 1–5 St. Thomas Aquinas harmonizes the Aristotelian idea of HAPPINESS as the end of man with the Christian teaching that man is created for God. He had reserved a place in the third part for a special treatment of eternal life as the end that one attains through the risen Christ. (Since he never completed the *Summa*

theologiae, one has to rely on his commentary on Peter Lombard and on the *Summa contra gentiles* 4.79–97 to ascertain his views on these matters.)

Aquinas's division has the methodological advantage of separating the *finis intentionis* from the *finis executionis*. It gives a unifying principle to the consideration of Christian morality. The danger is that the truths of *De novissimis* may not be sufficiently integrated into Christian life but be considered simply as an appendage. Certain elements of medieval mysticism exaggerated the connection between the two. Thus those movements associated with the names of Meister Eckhart, the Beghards, and the Alumbrados (Illuminati) maintained that in this life one could experience the vision of God. As a reaction against a false mysticism Catholic theology tended to relegate *De novissimis* to an abstract consideration of man's state as it would be in the future.

East and West. The theological disputes in the Middle Ages between East and West concerned the last things only on minor points. There was general agreement on the basic doctrines of man's destiny, but the Council of Florence revealed misunderstanding about the reward or punishment that was given immediately after death, and the nature of the pains of purgatory.

Reformation. It was the doctrine of purgatory that was called into question by the reformers. This was connected as much with the basic Protestant idea of the nature of JUSTIFICATION and an inability to understand temporal punishment as with certain abuses in the practice of Masses for the dead and the use of indulgences.

Since the Reformation. The dispute about the NATURAL ORDER and SUPERNATURAL ORDER has meant discussion as to how far the BEATIFIC VISION can be said to be man's natural end. Against M. Baius the Church has maintained that the destiny to which man has been called completely transcends any exigencies of his nature. In the 17th and 18th centuries the quietist movement neglected the importance of human activity and minimized the role of Christian morality. Counter Reformation theology was characterized by stress on the last things of the individual; there was little about the PAROUSIA. The age was one of individualism, and it is not surprising that personal values were more thought of by theologians. In the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, in the writings of St. Grignon de Montfort, in retreats and sermons, the last things are continually referred to; but it is almost exclusively from the point of view of the individual soul. Since the Protestant error had made Catholics insist on the authoritarian and fixed aspect of the Church, it was not surprising that there was little about the Church as still imperfect and on pilgrimage to its final realization at the Parousia.

In the 19th century there came a change. At first it was not seen how there could be any reconciliation between the Church's teaching and contemporary ideas of the progress of mankind. But soon it was appreciated that there is such a thing as a God-directed progress of man. The social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI testify to the belief that man can attain his fulfillment only in a society that has been transformed and Christianized.

In the 20th century the questions of progress continued to inform reflection upon eschatology. Other trends furthered the integration of eschatology with the whole of theology. Biblical studies came to a better appreciation of the idea of SALVATION HISTORY. Man can reach his fulfillment as an individual only within the framework of society, and society is moving toward the final completion of God's saving plan. Scientific theories of evolution allowed theologians to see a continuity between this world and the next. The notion of a sudden end of the world has been reexamined. Certainly it will be sudden in the sense that it will be due to divine intervention, but it is not necessary to hold to annihilation of the old and creation of something entirely new. The debates about nature and grace produced a better appreciation of the Augustinian concept of the world as being created and destined for a supernatural end.

Biblical studies also uncovered the Semitic idea of man as a totality, which meant less attention was paid to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and more to the resurrection of the body. Christ came to save the whole man and not just man's soul. The soul is the more important part since it governs and gives form to the rest, but one must not neglect the working out of the Redemption in man's body. Christ's healing of the sick was part of His mission as redeemer. The fall of man meant the loss of the gift of bodily INTEGRITY and immortality of the body. This has been restored to man by Christ, although he does not yet possess it in its totality. As man is body as well as soul, the material creation has a part to play in the redemptive scheme, and one sees this especially in the sacramental system. Much thought has been given in recent years to the Sacraments of the Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, and Matrimony, all of which have a special reference to the body.

In such a context death is not a liberation from the body so much as a *transitus*, a going over in totality to the new world to which the Christian already belongs in essence by his Baptism. The opposition is not between one place of existence and another so much as between the world as affected by sin and death and the redeemed world of the Spirit. The theology of death began to focus on the call of the Christian to a daily dying as witness to eschatological values. In this the Christian shares in the

prophetic mission of Christ, announcing the future event, the Parousia, when Christ will come in glory and the kingdom will be finally and irrevocably established. It is in the religious life that this witness is most clearly seen. The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience speak to man of another world. The liturgical revival drew attention to the paschal mysteries as the central point of Christianity, which fostered a Christological approach to the last things.

See Also: DEATH (THEOLOGY OF); DESIRE TO SEE GOD, NATURAL; ELEVATION OF MAN; ESCHATOLOGISM; ESCHATOLOGY, ARTICLES ON; HEAVEN (THEOLOGY OF); HELL (THEOLOGY OF); INCARNATIONAL THEOLOGY; INCARNATIONALISM; JUDGMENT, DIVINE (IN THEOLOGY); MAN; PURGATORY; RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD; SANCTION, DIVINE; SUPERNATURAL EXISTENTIAL; TEMPORAL VALUES, THEOLOGY OF.

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[M. E. WILLIAMS/EDS.]

CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

One of the most significant developments in eschatology in the twentieth century was the rediscovery of the primacy of the advent of the end (the *eschaton*) in Jesus the Christ crucified and risen. It is only in the light of the end of time revealed "in Christ" that a truly Christian theology of the last things can be worked out.

In the middle 1960s eschatology was given a new lease on life through the writings of Johann-Baptist Metz and Jürgen Moltmann, who drew attention to the neglect

of hope within theology and the need to reintegrate eschatology into the mainstream of Christian theory and praxis. Others, like Karl RAHNER and Wolfhart Pannenberg, emphasized the importance of CHRISTOLOGY for a balanced understanding of eschatology. Since the 1960s there has been a steady stream of literature on eschatology which gathered momentum in the years leading into the celebration of the Jubilee Year 2000 A.D.

To review the contemporary state of eschatology we shall summarize first of all the teaching of the Catholic Church on eschatology from Vatican II onwards. This teaching of the Church will be easily misunderstood if it is not accompanied by some principles of interpretation, and so it will be necessary to outline some hermeneutical guidelines. Mention of interpretation demands that consideration be given to the modern and postmodern contexts in which eschatology exists at present. Since eschatology deals with the destiny of the individual, particular attention must be given to anthropology. The centerpiece of eschatology is Christology, which gives both shape and form to Christian hope. In addressing the relationship between eschatology and Christology some discussion must be given to the current debates about Resurrection. It is impossible to talk about eschatology today without some reference to the contemporary fascination with cosmology. And finally something must be said about the increasing impact of eschatology on the rest of Christian theology.

Church Teaching from Vatican II Onwards. The few eschatological statements that do exist in the Vatican II documents are quite significant and signal a subtle shift in emphasis. The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* contains a short chapter devoted to “The Eschatological Nature of the Pilgrim Church and Her Union with the Heavenly Church” (Chap. VII). This chapter reminds us that we are living in the end times: “Already the final age of the world is with us (cf. 1 Cor.10/11) and the renewal of the world is irrevocably underway” (LG 48). In the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the Modern World* a number of important developments are discernible in articles 38 to 43. Article 38 talks about those who are called “to give clear witness to the desire for a heavenly home” whereas others are called “to dedicate themselves to the earthly service of humanity.” Of the latter group, it points out they can “make ready the material of the celestial realm”—thus highlighting the existence of important links between historical existence and eternity. Those who are dedicated to the service of humanity in this life can “give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age to come” (39). In the same vein this document points out that “the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but stimulate our concerns for cultivating this one” (39). Indeed, the Council describes those who

“knowing that we have no abiding city but seek one which is to come” as “mistaken” (43). Equally significant in this document is the Latin title *Gaudium et spes* which signals the important link between hope and joy: the exercise of Christian hope carries with it an essential element of joy. These shifts opened the way for the development subsequently of political and liberation theologies which in their own different ways gave considerable emphasis to the *praxis* of social justice and its place within the coming Reign of God.

A further emphasis implicit in the eschatology of Vatican II is the way the Council puts Christ at the center, claiming that Christ “is the goal of human history, the focal point of the longing of history and of civilization, the center of the human race, the joy of every heart and the answer to all its longings” (a. 43; see also G.S. a.10 and 12; A.G. a. 8). These eschatological references are notable for the way they talk about the *eschaton* rather than the *eschata*, for the value they place on the significance of earthly activities for the world to come, and for the focus they give to the possibility of a social eschatology.

In 1979 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued an Instruction “On Certain Questions concerning Eschatology.” The context of this document was a view being put forward about “Resurrection in Death” by the German theologian Gishbert Greshake initially in 1969 and more extensively in 1977. Greshake’s theology of “Resurrection in Death” seemed to call into question the need for and the credibility of the classical notion of “an intermediate state.” By emphasizing “Resurrection in Death” Greshake also appears to eliminate the necessity for a general judgment and the resurrection of humanity at the end of time. In response the Congregation reaffirmed classical eschatology: the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time, the immortality of the soul after death, and the existence of heaven, hell, and purgatory. The immortality of the soul is described in terms of the “spiritual element (that) survives and subsists after death.” The same congregation also warns against “arbitrary imaginative representations” of the hereafter which can be “a major cause of difficulties that Christian faith often encounters.” Instead it must be recognized that “neither scripture or theology provide sufficient light for a proper picture of life after death.” This Instruction concludes by emphasizing on the one hand “a fundamental continuity between our present life in Christ and the future life” and on the other hand “a radical difference between the present life and the future.”

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* set forth its teaching on eschatology by offering a commentary on the last two articles of the Apostles Creed: “I believe in the Resurrection of the Body and Life everlasting.” The Cat-

echism outlines what it means by “Christ’s Resurrection and ours” (992–996). It notes that in death there is a “separation from the body,” with the human body decaying and the soul going to meet God (997). The Catechism then goes on to say that God will reunite the body with the soul through the power of Jesus’ Resurrection at the end. As to “how” the resurrection takes place the Catechism says that this “exceeds our imagination and understanding” and “is accessible only to faith” (1000). Next the Catechism deals with death, which it says is “the end of earthly life” and “a consequence of sin.” Death “shrouded in doubt” has been transformed through the obedience of Christ unto death.

Under the final article of the Apostles’ Creed (viz., life everlasting), the Catechism discusses six areas: particular judgment, heaven, purgatory, hell, last judgment and the hope of the New Heaven and the New Earth. Concerning the New Creation the Catechism “affirms the profound common destiny of the material world and man” (1046). The visible universe “is . . . destined to be transformed” (1047). The approach of the Catechism in its treatment of eschatology is Trinitarian, Christological, ecclesiological, relational, and communion based. In many respects it could be said that the Catechism expands and elaborates on the content contained in the 1979 CDF *Instruction*.

On a different doctrinal level the International Theological Commission (ITC) published a lengthy document in 1992 entitled “Some Current Questions in Eschatology.” The document defends the immortality of the soul after death and the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time. The ITC talks about an “anthropology of duality” and an “eschatology of souls.” It also refers to the existence of the separated soul as “half a person,” as “not the I,” and as “an ontologically incomplete reality” and uses these descriptions of the separated soul as ways of justifying the need for resurrection at the end of time.

Principles of Interpretation. This teaching of the Church on eschatology will be easily misunderstood unless it is accompanied by some principles of interpretation. The first principle is that eschatology is not some idle speculation about the future, nor is it some kind of report of what goes on in the next world, nor is it a prediction about the end of the world. Instead eschatology is about hope seeking understanding, more specifically about a particular hope-filled interpretation of human experience in the light of the Christ-event. Eschatology seeks to explore, analyze and interpret the potential within human experience insofar as that experience points us towards the future. Eschatology looks at present experience against the background of the salvation offered by Christ to see what it promises for the future.

The key to the interpretation of these experiences is the reality of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ summed up in the New Testament and kept alive in the Christian tradition. One way of describing eschatology is to see it as the application of christology to the self, humanity, and creation in a mode of fulfillment. In particular it is the Paschal Christ, the Crucified and Risen One, that gives us an embryonic view of the future of humanity and the world.

A third principle guiding the interpretation of eschatology concerns the question of language. Eschatology statements are symbolic, dialectical and analogical. Symbols point beyond themselves to a dimension of life that is not readily available to human experience. The symbol is not the reality symbolized and yet that reality is only available through the mediating power of symbol. The perspective of dialectic, preferred more by Protestant theologians, highlights the need for negation and usually grounds itself in the cross of Christ. The doctrine of analogy, more favored among Catholic theologians, signals the limitations attaching to all eschatological statements while seeking to assert negatively the truth within its positive statements. Within analogy there is a dynamic movement from affirmation to negation and from negation to further refinement. Of critical importance to analogy is the awareness that we know more by way of negation than by way of affirmation.

A fourth and final principle guiding the understanding of eschatology is the importance of the practical and ethical import of its statements. An authentically Christian eschatology is one that generates a *praxis* of liberation in the present in the name of the coming Reign of God.

The Context of Contemporary Eschatology. One of the most significant contextual shifts within Catholic theology in the twentieth century has been the transition from a classical, fixed understanding of culture to the emergence of a historical consciousness. The culture of historical consciousness recognizes the contingent character of events within history and this clearly has implications for the way we construct a theology of history and providence as underlying suppositions of eschatology. The making of history, which is always self-involving, carries with it a burden of responsibility in the exercise of human agency. History, therefore, is not predetermined but open-ended and therefore subject to the influence of the *praxis* of individual and social liberation. Historical consciousness calls forth a new sense of shared responsibility for the shape of the world in the present and the future. This task for eschatology has been given particular expression in the requests for forgiveness articulated by John Paul II in the Jubilee Year 2000, especially in Jerusalem, and in Athens in 2001.

A second inescapable part of the contemporary context in which eschatology exists today is the new sense of globalization. From an eschatological point of view globalization reminds theology that the destiny of the individual is bound up with the destiny of the whole. Globalization also challenges eschatology to work out an ethic of human justice and ecological sustainability for the well being of the earth in the present.

A third element relating to context concerns the highly ambiguous legacy of the Enlightenment in modernity. The rise of individualism and the cultivation of the shining-self-sufficient-subject of modernity has no need of eschatology. Similarly, modernity's myth of progress, the promise of endless growth, and the politics of social evolution have taken over the role of eschatology in modern theology. Likewise the modern denial of death and the covering over of so much suffering in history has paved the way for the promotion of a purely secular utopia. Lastly, the promises of science in their pursuit of objectivity in the delivery of new freedoms, and the promotion of social reforms have had the effect of sidelining eschatology within contemporary thought.

In recent times these dreams of modernity have been found to be wanting in many respects and in some instances are perceived to be deceptive. This exposure of modernity has given birth to the vague, illusive, and deliberately ill-defined movement known as post-modernity. In contrast to modernity, post-modernity seeks to promote the cultivation of particularity, difference, and otherness. For many the logic of post-modernity seems to be one of radical deconstruction leading to fragmentation, relativism, and ultimately nihilism. One of the most immediate casualties of post-modernity is eschatology insofar as post-modernity dissolves the human subject into an empty site for linguistic exchanges and reduces history to a collection of disconnected fragments. However, it must be noted that there are some affinities between post-modernity and Christian eschatology.

The most obvious affinity is the adoption of the *apophatic*/negative tradition. Both post-modernity and eschatology emphasize what is unknowable, unrepresentable, and unsayable concerning the future. A second affinity between post-modernity and eschatology is the way in which post-modernity deconstructs all affirmations in the name of something other—even though it is impossible to name this other. The nearest post-modernity comes to naming this “something other” is to call it the “possibility of the impossible,” “the thought that cannot be thought,” the future that exists beyond the horizons of the foreseeable. In a somewhat similar fashion some post-modernists are prepared to talk about “religion without

religion” or “God without being.” These positive “negations” contain a faint echo with classical eschatology which openly acknowledges that it does not know the future and that it is impossible to express it adequately. There may be some connection between the radical deconstruction of post-modernity and the ‘learned ignorance’ (*docta ignorantia*) of theology put forward by Aquinas, though it must be pointed out that *docta ignorantia* is a point of arrival in theology and eschatology and not a point of departure.

A third affinity between post-modernity and eschatology is the deep suspicion post-modernity has towards all meta-narratives. Eschatology, of course, cannot succeed without some meta-narrative, especially the narrative of the creation, redemption, and the consummation of all things in Christ. Nonetheless, eschatology shares some suspicion with post-modernity about those narratives that claim to know too much about the end of the world, the nature of the *Parousia*, and the character of eternal life.

Some radical differences between post-modernity and eschatology are the following. Eschatology is constructed in and around the narrative of the unity between the creation, redemption, and the consummation of all things in Christ. Further, eschatology and post-modernity differ significantly on the issue of anthropology. Here eschatology affirms the enduring existence of the self as a conscious, free, and responsible agent both within history and beyond history into eternal life. Lastly, eschatology affirms a unity between the past, the present, and the future within its statements about the meaning of history.

Anthropology. It is most of all in the area of anthropology, namely the question about what it means to be human, that the modern and postmodern contexts of eschatology is most problematic. The exalted and exaggerated self of modernity (going back to Descartes) has given rise to a self-sufficient individualism. This strong individualism has little need of eschatology since as Gabriel MARCEL was fond of pointing out “hope does not exist at the level of the solitary ego.” The human self knows that it cannot survive death on its own and that it is only because the self is known and loved by God that it has a future beyond death. It is the experience of loving and being loved that assures a future for the self. However, each of these moves is unavailable to and unnecessary for the shining-self-sufficient-subject of modernity.

At the other end of the spectrum there is the deconstructed self of post-modernity, which is even less available to eschatology. According to post-modernity the human self is something of an empty site around which a great variety of transactions take place, a little like a crossroads that facilitates the movement of traffic. On

such a view there can be no coherent anthropology and therefore no viable eschatology. The dissolution of the self carries within itself the dissolution of hope and ultimately the dismantling of eschatology. The sharpness of this deconstruction of the human self highlights the necessity for some form of reconstruction of the human that is able to take account of the positive aspects contained within the modern and postmodern conceptions of the human self, namely the strong sense of human identity within modernity and the equally strong awareness within post-modernity of the presence of so much change in the life of the individual.

The reconstruction of the human required for a viable eschatology needs to take account of the variety of impulses coming from various sources. There is first of all the reaction against the individualism of modernity coming from feminism, ecology, and cosmology. Feminism in its great variety places a strong emphasis on the self as relational. Environmentalists emphasize the “connected self” as that which exists in dependence on the rest of nature and creation. Cosmologists talk about the individual as cosmic dust in a state of self-conscious freedom, which is always embodied. These different though complementary perspectives suggest that the whole of life, in particular human life, is organically interconnected, inter-related and inter-dependent. This perspective on human identity prompts the formulation of the following principles in the reconstruction of anthropology: to exist is always to co-exist, to be is always to be in relationship, self discovery comes into being through self surrender to the other.

A second impulse on the nature of the human self comes from the work of Paul RICOEUR as expressed in *One's Self as Another* (Chicago 1992). According to Ricoeur the human self is only available in narrative form and this narrative is more often than not a point of historical arrival rather than a point of departure. What is distinctive for Ricoeur about the human self is the pivotal role that action plays in the constitution of the human self. The self is not available through a process of introspection; rather, the self comes into view through a process of interpersonal action and reaction.

There are at least two different aspects to the self within Ricoeur's philosophy. The historical identity of the human self arises out of a dialectic between the underlying sameness of the self (*idem*) and the ongoing development of selfhood (*ipse*) through a process of mutuality and reciprocity with other selves. Selfhood is never quite as settled or fixed as modernity would suggest; instead, selfhood is far more flexible, as can be seen through the impact of actions associated with a career change, a new relationship, or the death of a spouse. Selfhood is always

in process of becoming, open to change and development even though it is the same underlying self that is in motion.

What is significant about these relational and narrative anthropologies is the existence of an active self that is open and unfinished. Given these perspectives on human identity, eschatology emerges not as something additional or extrinsic to anthropology. Instead, eschatology is, as Rahner frequently pointed out, anthropology in a mode of fulfillment or anthropology conjugated in the future. Further, this kind of anthropology, namely a relational anthropology, sees the human subject as one who is in touch with God at the beginning of life and not simply at the end of historical existence. Thirdly, a relational anthropology opens up the way for the development of a social eschatology in both the present and the future.

Christology. The christological focus within eschatology has not always been to the fore in the history of Christian thought. The most obvious example of a break in the link between christology and eschatology is the emphasis often given to the *eschata* at the expense of the advent of the new *eschaton* in Christ. To say that Christ is the hermeneutical principle of eschatological statements (Rahner) means that we must be able to recognize the influence of the Christ-event within eschatological statements. The Christ-event is best summed up in terms of recognizing the theological significance that belongs to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ. This significance can be expressed in a variety of ways. At the Second Vatican Council emphasis was placed on the Paschal Mystery of Christ as the centerpiece of salvation history. Equally, as already noted, Vatican II also described Christ as the goal, ground, and center of human history.

The New Testament points out that God “has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Ep. 1.9–10). The letter to the Colossians claims that Christ “is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation . . . in Him all things hold together; He is the beginning, the first born from the dead” (Col. 1.15). The future, therefore, is christomorphic.

In the early Church there was a sense that an eschatological breakthrough had occurred in the historical life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The earliest interpretations of the historical life of Jesus are thoroughly eschatological. For example, Paul says that Christ has “abolished death, brought life and immortality to light” (2 Tm 1.10). In virtue of the Christ-event we are now living in “the end of ages” (1 Cor 10.11) and in the “latter

times” (1 Tm 4.1) and therefore all are encouraged “to put away the old man and put on the new man” (Eph 4.22; Col 3.9). Because Christ is “the first born among many” (Rom 8.29; Col 1.18) and “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15.20) Paul can say that since “all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ” (1 Cor 15.22).

Further, this experience and understanding of Jesus as the Christ is something that affects not only human existence but also the direction of history as well as material creation itself: “. . . for creation itself will be set free from its bondage and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom 8.21). The Christ-event, therefore, reconfigures our understanding of God in relation to the future of humanity, of history and of creation.

This sense of eschatological breakthrough is so strong in the early Church that initially Paul believes that the return of Christ (*PAROUSIA*) is imminent and so his early theology emphasizes resurrection and *parousia*. With the passage of time there is a shift from resurrection and *parousia* to death and resurrection, with resurrection taking place after death (2 Cor 5.1–10; Phil 1.21–23; Phil 3.21) to a later theology of being and becoming “in Christ” in the present.

Within this theology of Paul there are two key points to be noted. The early Church had a strong awareness and belief that the future has already dawned in Christ and has therefore taken a hold of the present. The future is not something that we are waiting for to take place; instead the future is here already in embryo in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. Also, in the theology of Paul there is a creative tension between what has “already” taken place “in Christ” and what is “not yet” achieved, between being “in Christ” and becoming “in Christ,” between the indicative statements such as “you are in Christ” and the imperative statements that “you must put on Christ.” In Paul there is a dialectic between the already and the not yet, a paradox of dying and rising, a mysticism of being and becoming in Christ. The crucified and risen Christ is *one* eschatological reality.

Debates about the Resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead, so central to eschatology in the early church and in particular in the theology of Paul, needs to be recovered in the twenty-first century. Part of the problem concerning the historicity of resurrection is that the symbol of resurrection has become isolated from other equally important eschatological symbols such as exaltation, glorification, ascension, and Pentecost. The eschatological breakthrough that occurred in the life and death of Jesus can only be grasped in the context of the variety of eschatological symbols employed to capture one and the same post-Calvary experience of Jesus as

alive, personally present, gathering, empowering, and missioning the disciples. When resurrection is separated from these other eschatological expressions, then it becomes distorted and literalized.

While it is true to say that the immortality of the soul has captured in the past and continues to capture in the present a most important aspect of eschatology, it must also be recognized that this pre-Christian philosophy needs to be subordinated to the revelation of God’s decisive, eschatological action in the life, death, and destiny of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus is described in explicitly eschatological terms: “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15.20), the first born of all creation (Col 1.15), the New Man (Eph 4.22; Col 2.9), and the New Creation (2 Cor 5.17). These images highlight that the Resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of a new process in history, a re-ordering of existence, and the re-shaping of creation. The resurrection of Jesus affects all who die, alters the course of history, and reconfigures the destiny of the cosmos. The theological content of these claims of the New Testament cannot be carried adequately by the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

The third area of debate about the resurrection concerns the time of resurrection. Between the two positions of resurrection at the end of time (classical view) and resurrection in death (Greshake et al.) there can be found a third position. The perspective of Vatican II, following Paul on the Paschal Mystery and the centrality of communion in Christ, suggests that resurrection is initiated in this life through Baptism and lived out in varying degrees through the paschal process of dying and rising in Christ. This new life “in Christ” is deepened in the celebration of the Eucharist and reaches a point of finality in death. In death personal resurrection sets in and is completed, socially and cosmically, with the second coming of Christ, which will effect the final harvesting of humanity, history, and the cosmos into a New Heaven and the New Earth (Rv 21.1–6; Eph 1.9–10). Within this vision there is room for individual resurrection in this life, personal resurrection in death, and the social-cosmic resurrection at the end of time. This position is developed in more detail by Dermot A. Lane in *Keeping Hope Alive: Stirrings in Christian Theology* (New York 1996), 150–162.

Scientific Cosmologies and Christian Eschatologies. It is impossible to discuss Christian eschatology today without giving some consideration to the current fascination with scientific cosmologies. Throughout the twentieth century cosmologists have been attending not only to the beginning but also the ending of the universe. The resulting “scientific cosmologies” are increasingly popular and have been taking a hold of the secular imagination. Two very brief sketches will suffice to provide

some broad points of comparison with Christian eschatologies.

Freeman Dyson, who works out of an open and expanding universe that will eventually collapse into a cosmic void, emphasizes the importance of adaptability for the future of human life in *Infinite in All Directions* (New York 1988). Dyson suggests that before the onset of cosmic collapse it will be necessary to export life to another planet or galaxy. The nature of life in question would be new forms of human consciousness that could become detached from flesh and blood. These forms of consciousness will be captured through vast systems of organizations and networks made available through computer circuits. For survival it will be necessary for this artificial intelligence to be able to adapt to zero levels of temperature, gravity, and pressure. A second “scientific eschatology” is put forward by Frank Tipler in *The Physics of Immortality* (London 1977). According to Tipler the human mind is a software program within a particular hardware system of the brain. Before the end of time this software program could be transferred to some other hardware system. Tipler claims this transfer of mental software is possible by using the vast quantities of matter and energy that would accumulate just before the collapse of the universe. This transfer would bring into being Omega Point, which would represent the soul as omnipotent, omniscient, and infinite. These summaries do not do justice to the detailed “scientific eschatologies” of these authors. At most they can give a flavor of what is envisaged in terms of creating artificial intelligence and replicating vast banks of information in computer systems about the constitution of human identity which are then presented as expressions of immortality.

A number of observations should be made by way of initial response to these “scientific eschatologies.” From an anthropological point of view they seem to be operating out of an understanding of the human as that which is reducible to a gigantic mountain of information-software processes. This perception of the human is explicitly dualistic, presupposing the possibility of disembodied existence in the future, which seems to lack any kind of human subjectivity. In brief the human person is replicated as a vast bank of information, with no sense of the need for healing or wholeness. From a theological perspective it must be noted that these “scientific eschatologies” are secular, making no reference to the creative, redemptive, and consummating God of the Bible; they are “scientific” in that they provide at best speculative information about the future. In contrast theology is not about information but the experience of being grasped and loved by that gracious mystery we call God which refuses to be reduced to propositional data. From an eschatological point of view these “scientific escha-

tologies” suffer from the absence of human memory as something quite distinct from mechanical memory. Within these predictions there is no memory of the pain, suffering and injustices of former generations that cry out for redemption. There is no memory of the historical Passover of the people of Israel or the Paschal Mystery of Jesus as the Christ, both of which provide sources of hope for the future. Thirdly, there is no memory that the future has already appeared in the death and resurrection of Jesus and that, therefore, the future is already shaping the present. Most of all these secular “scientific eschatologies” are flawed because of the way they disrupt the unity between human memory and imagination. Memory of the past and the future is essential to the credible operations of the imagination. Without memory the human imagination runs the risk of lapsing into fantasy. The capacity of the human imagination to articulate credible alternatives is impaired once it loses contact with tradition and ceases to adhere to the real.

In making this rather negative assessment, it must be acknowledged that these “scientific eschatologies” do provide an opening for an important dialogue between religion and science. The dialogue between Christian eschatology and “scientific eschatologies” has hardly begun, and the distance that exists between the two can be seen in the above points of comparison. It is essential for the credibility of Christian eschatology that this dialogue take place. In particular the dialogue is important to ensure that eschatological claims do not conflict with the established findings of cosmology.

The Growing Influence of Eschatology on the Rest of Theology. In many respects eschatology, understood as hope seeking understanding, is the missing link in a lot of contemporary theology. Metz and Moltmann, Rahner and Pannenberg have sought to bring eschatology to the center of the theological enterprise. This relocation of eschatology is having positive effects on rest of theology.

For instance, eschatology is a powerful reminder of the incompleteness of Christology and that what Christ has set in train continues to be subject to the second coming of Christ. In the area of ecclesiology, eschatology functions as a moderating influence on exaggerated ecclesiological claims, highlighting the fact that the church is always a pilgrim people continually in need of reform and renewal, never to be identified or confused with the coming Reign of God but always seeking to sight and celebrate elements of the Reign of God in the world. In sacramental theology, eschatology is coming more and more to the fore. For example, the eucharist is understood as the sacrament of the *eschaton*: celebrating the past and remembering the future, providing a foretaste of what is

to come. In the area of moral theology eschatology provides a grounding for the work of justice, the praxis of liberation, and the care of the earth.

There is an important sense in which the end organizes and unifies the whole of life. Without an end in view, life lapses into empty time (*chronos*). But if there is an end in view, then *chronos* can be transformed into *kairos*, time filled with meaning, a purpose and promise. This, among others, is one of the primary tasks facing eschatology in the twenty-first century.

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ESCHMANN, IGNATIUS T.

Dominican philosopher, theologian, and critic; b. Dusseldorf, Nov. 13, 1898; d. Toronto, April 11, 1968. After completing his studies at the Hohenzollern Gymnasium in Dusseldorf in 1916 he was ordered to the trenches as a machine gunner until the end of the First World War, when he was honorably discharged. He joined the Dominican Order and made profession on May 19, 1920. He was sent to Rome to study philosophy and theology at the Angelicum, where he was ordained to the priesthood on July 12, 1925, and where he obtained his doctorate and taught moral philosophy until 1936, gaining the reputation of being a good teacher and a very persuasive preacher. When PIUS XI's encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* appeared on March 4, 1937, he promulgated its contents as cathedral preacher in Cologne, and found himself at odds with both the police and the German hierarchy. He was ultimately arrested by the civil police and incarcerated in Cologne until the fall of 1938, when he was released and made his way to Canada.

In Ottawa he collaborated with the Canadian Dominicans in preparing the piana edition of the *Summa*

theologiae of St. THOMAS AQUINAS, his particular contribution being the sources provided by that edition (1941). Until the end of the war he was under constant surveillance by the Canadian police and suspected by the French Canadian Dominicans as an enemy alien. Invited to join the staff of Laval University, Quebec, he taught for only one year (1939–40), becoming embroiled in a controversy with Cardinal Villeneuve and Charles De Koninck. In 1942 he joined the philosophy department of St. Michael's College and the faculty of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto. He became a Canadian citizen in Dec. 1945 and devoted the rest of his life to teaching graduate students the riches of St. Thomas and a critical, historical approach to the study of moral philosophy. He pioneered many ideas which have since become part of Catholic scholarship.

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ESCOBAR, ANDRÉS DE

Benedictine abbot, bishop, canonist, and theologian; b. Lisbon, 1366 or 1367; d. Florence(?) 1439 or 1440. His writings on the canonical-moral aspects of confessional practice in the Sacrament of PENANCE, on the underlying causes of the EASTERN SCHISM, and on his proposals for the reform of the clerical and lay states of life made him one of the most widely read of Renaissance Churchmen up to the 17th century. This Hispano-Portuguese monk (he was neither a Dominican nor a Franciscan, as some have asserted) earned his master's degree in theology at the University of Vienna. After becoming abbot of Randuf in the Diocese of BRAGA, he began his 40-year career in the papal Curia (c. 1397), acting as a papal penitentiary and adviser. He later took part in the councils of CONSTANCE, BASEL, and FLORENCE, and his signature appears on the Decree of Union with the Greeks. In 1408 Pope GREGORY XII made him bishop of Cività (Tempio-Terranova) in Sardinia; in 1422 MARTIN V transferred him to the See of Ajaccio in Corsica. He does not seem to have resided in either see. In May 1428 Martin V transferred him to the titular See of Megara. Besides Randuf, he held the abbeys of San Juan de Pendorada in Oporto and San Rosendo de Celanova in Galicia in *commendam* in order to supplement his meager income.

In his *Gubernaculum conciliorum* (1435) he manifested certain conciliarist views (see CONCILIARISM), but Candal asserts that these views must be understood in the light of Escobar's anxiety for the promotion and carrying