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TWO AGES AND TWO COMMUNITIES: THE
IMPLICATIONS OF AN ESCHATOLOGICAL DUALITY FOR
DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL ETHIC.

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TWO AGES AND TWO COMMUNITIES:
THE IMPLICATIONS OF AN ESCHATOLOGICAL DUALITY
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL ETHIC

by

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

TWO AGES AND TWO COMMUNITIES:
THE IMPLICATIONS OF AN ESCHATOLOGICAL DUALITY
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL ETHIC

Lynn E. Mitchell, Jr.

A major concern for Christian theology is the tension created by the "already" and "not yet" aspects of Christian eschatology. This study seeks to characterize the nature of that tension as it has been interpreted in the Biblical materials and in the history of Christian theology. The study then suggests the implications of eschatological tension for a Christian approach to a public social ethic, i.e., an ethic for a pluralistic, natural community.

The study first deals with the problem of eschatological dualism in the New Testament. Other New Testament literature is dealt with summarily, but the bulk of the study's analysis deals with the way Paul maintains eschatological tension in his thought. Although Paul's theology contains definite elements of "realized" eschatology, he still insists on the theological and ethical significance of the eschatological elements as yet unrealized. The latter are symbolized by a realistic and definitely future parousia. It is concluded
that the New Testament generally speaks both of that which has already been realized in Christ and of that which is yet to come, and that this tension leaves the Church with a mission "between the times."

The study then deals with the historical-theological tradition in which the realistic, dialectical mode of eschatology has been best maintained, i.e., the Augustinian-Reformation tradition. Augustine's "two cities," Luther's "two kingdoms," and the Anabaptists' "two worlds" are shown to be concepts which attempt to provide a modus vivendi for Christians in the light of the eschatological tension between the "already" and "not yet." Insofar as they fail, they fail by dissolving, in one way or another, the tension which should preclude premature unification or resolution of our situation in the world "between the times."

The study concludes by reaffirming the indispensability of the dualistic tension created by a realistically future eschaton. As to the relation between this and a Christian approach to a public ethic, the study concludes the following:

(1) Christian eschatology makes plain that the present situation "between the times" is not the "normal" situation. The "normal" situation, from the Christian perspective is eschatological, i.e., it is yet to come in its fullness.

(2) Therefore no naturalistic or rationalistic structure which perceives the present situation as normal or which
prematurely unifies the "already" and "not yet" can be the basis for Christian action. Unity and resolution of the tension is eschatological.

(3) The Christian eschatological vision, by its very nature, can be known and maintained only by the Christian community and can be shared only through the Gospel. The theological integrity of the Christian community is essential to its being for the world.

(4) In the light of the eschaton, the Christian vision can be applied to the natural community only by some kind of analogy, and even then very tentatively and ambiguously.

(5) The Christian must approach work toward a social ethic, not as the participant with the "divine plan," but as a participant with a Christian eschatological vision which can be concretized only ambiguously and fragmentarily.

(6) The status quo is never the will of God. But a "vision" is not a "plan" for transforming the world. The Christian is called upon, then, and is free to use whatever information and wisdom is available to him in bringing about fragmentary but real transformations of the status quo in the light of his vision. He is also free to work in concert with whoever is willing to attempt to concretize love, freedom, and wholeness.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTORY SURVEY OF THE PROBLEM  
   The Thesis ........................................... 14  
   Scope and Methodology ............................... 16  
   Social Ethic ......................................... 16  
   Eschatological Duality .............................. 17  
   Modus Vivendi ....................................... 20  
   Some Presuppositions ................................. 26

II. THE PROBLEM OF ESCHATOLOGICAL DUALISM  
    IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ............................. 29  
    Gospel of John ..................................... 32  
    Paul .................................................. 38  
    General Survey of Recent Interpretations  
        of Pauline Eschatology ......................... 67  
    Excursus on theDelay of the Parousia  
        and Mission ..................................... 75  
    Conclusion ......................................... 84

III. ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POST-BIBLICAL  
    REPRESENTATIVES .................................... 85  
    Augustine .......................................... 86  
    The Concept of "Saeculum" as an  
        Eschatological Modus Vivendi .................. 110  
    Martin Luther ...................................... 115  
    Luther and Scholasticism ........................... 117  
    Development of Thought ............................ 125  
    Anabaptism ......................................... 136

IV. CONCLUSION: THE IMPLICATIONS OF A TWO  
    AGE - TWO COMMUNITY ESCHATOLOGICAL DUALITY  
    FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL ETHIC ............ 146  
    Indispensability of the Vision  
        of Eschatological Duality ....................... 147  
    The Two Axes in the Post-Biblical  
        Representatives ................................ 152  
    Augustine ......................................... 152  
    Luther .............................................. 152  
    Anabaptism ......................................... 154
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of the Temporal-Sequential Aspect of the Two Ages</th>
<th>158</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Importance of the Two Age Doctrine for Cosmic and Bodily Redemption</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cross and the Eschaton</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church as Eschatological Community</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analogies, Two Communities, and &quot;Social Ethics&quot;</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;Principle of Human Freedom&quot; as a Historical Concretion of &quot;Christian Freedom&quot;</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church as Sign</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church as Pilgrim People</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eschatological Ethic and &quot;Social Ethics&quot;</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursus on Eschatology and the Dignity of the State</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kingdom of God and the &quot;World&quot;</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Modus Vivendi</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY | 231 |
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY SURVEY OF THE PROBLEM

The present crisis in theology and in culture is, as Helmut Thielicke points out, a "crisis in the concept of reality" that prevents our identifying the question of ethics with the specific question, "What shall we do?" and compels us to see it instead embedded in the far more comprehensive question, "How are we to understand that reality within which our doing must take place?" In other words, what does our "being-in-the-world" -- in the emancipated world! -- really mean? What the New Testament calls being "in the world" but not "of the world," living "in the flesh" but not "according to the flesh," thus becomes for us the most pressing problem of ethics.¹

As Biblical, historical and theological study has amply demonstrated since the turn of the century, any consideration of the Christian "concept of reality" leads very soon and unavoidably to the problem of eschatology. It is here that the conflict between 19th and 20th century theologies is still being felt. To get a sense of the conflict, one need only to juxtapose the confident dicta of two significant representatives of modern theology, one from the 19th and one from the 20th century. Julius Kaftan

expressed the nineteenth century's theological "gasp" at the rediscovery of New Testament eschatology when he declared: "If...the conception of the Kingdom of God is an eschatological one, then it is impossible to make use of this conception in dogmatics."\(^2\)

Compare this with Karl Barth's announcement that "If Christianity be not altogether thoroughgoing eschatology, there remains in it no relationship whatever with Christ."\(^3\) Thielicke's description of the "present crisis" aligns him with Barth on this question. He is at least as strong in asserting that "Theological ethics is eschatological or it is nothing."\(^4\)

The purpose of this dissertation is not to show that there is too little concern with eschatology in recent theology. That is manifestly not so. The eschatological nature of the Christian faith is almost universally recognized in contemporary Biblical and theological studies. The character and implications of that eschatological element is, however, still much at issue.

This study will attempt to determine the general character of an eschatological faith such as that to which


\(^3\)Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 314.

\(^4\)Thielicke, Theological Ethics, p. 47.
the New Testament testifies. It will then present an overview as to how that eschatological faith has fared in post-Biblical Christian interpretation (particularly in the Augustinian-Reformation tradition). It will conclude by commending a more Biblically oriented eschatological vision as a corrective for the inadequacies of traditional eschatology, particularly with respect to the implications of eschatology for social ethics.

The playing down of eschatological thought forms by some liberal theologies (and, more generally, in lay liberal piety) is at odds with the whole preceding history of the Christian tradition. Eschatological thought forms have been widely assumed to be invalidated by modern science and philosophy, and where they linger in liberal Christian piety, they linger as only vaguely symbolic of humanistic hopes.  

"Fortunately," says Petry,  

there have been signs, in the decades past, of a more sober rethinking of the old patterns of doctrine as they affect both the expansion and the curtailment of man's corporate existence on the planet earth.  

He continues;  

A reputable body of scholars deeply concerned with the spiritual lapses and cumulative inertia of

---


6 Ibid., p. 15.
modern religious life supplies a mounting chorus of reaffirmation as to the abiding significance of eschatological doctrines.\textsuperscript{7}

Petry's thesis is that, contrary to a prevalent notion, eschatology has been responsible for "constructive repercussions of a constructive order" and "has provided the basic motivation and nucleating matter for Christian social thinking."\textsuperscript{8} Indeed, eschatology requires a response from temporal society. Though varied in form, emphasis, and detail, historic Christian eschatology consistently implies four lessons that can be ignored only with peril, Petry warns:

These lessons are: (1) that the present order must be replaced by, not just modified by, a final one; (2) that the present order must grow out of the future more than it grows out of the past or gives rise to the future; (3) that the future kingdom, while served by the known present and past, makes -- and is not made by -- the present and past; and (4) that the social present is under the demands of the social future. The society of the existing order must be patterned, now, after the community of "that other order."\textsuperscript{9}

We should not, however, be under the illusion that all Christian forms of eschatological thinking have had the constructive impact on the ethics of society which they should have had. In fact, these forms have been liable to various kinds of distortions which militated against their proper function; and even the better formulations have not

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 16.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 45.
been adequately related to or realized in the societies to which they spoke. The root of this problem is not, however, to be found in the eschatological motif as such, but in the sin and distortion of the world and society (including the Church). This is the very thing to which an eschatological understanding must speak in terms of judgment and in the spirit of semper reformanda.

An intimate acquaintance with its historic principles provides the best protection against the historical distortions and spiritual perversion that masquerade unchallenged in the name of genuine Christian teaching.  

Reinhold Seeberg had long ago also concluded that "the most remarkable thing about [the lively expectation of an imminent end] is that it has not undermined moral power." Ernst Troeltsch scored "short-sighted opponents" who "imagined" that eschatological doctrines "render this world and life in this world meaningless and empty."  

On the contrary (the idea of the future Kingdom of God) stimulates human energies, making the soul strong through its various stages of experience in the certainty of an ultimate, absolute meaning and aim for human labour.... This idea creates a perennial source of strength for strenuous activities, and a certainty of aim.... All social Utopias, then, become superfluous; over and over again experience teaches that the

10 Ibid.


ideal cannot be fully realized; but that does not mean that the seeker of truth and justice need lose heart and fall back into scepticism...The life beyond this world is, in very deed, the inspiration of the life that now is.\textsuperscript{13}

This insight and its significance has never been entirely lost, even during the period in which eschatology was in eclipse or was being transmuted into totally imminent categories, as Petry’s brief survey of the various authors of the early 20th century demonstrates.\textsuperscript{14}

In 1941, J. S. Whale summed up these concerns by declaring that,

Other-worldliness is the differentia of Christian life in this world...Our citizenship is in heaven. Its centre is in God. This is true of original Christianity; this is the unmistakable implication of our Churchmanship, and it has immense relevance to the predicament in which we now are.\textsuperscript{15}

The proper clothing for these concerns and their rooting in Biblical motifs had to wait, however, for greater dissemination of newer understandings of the Biblical materials themselves. Roger Shinn notes the rediscovery of Biblical eschatology in his work on *Christianity and the Problem of History*, a good general introduction to our problem. He

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 1005-6.

\textsuperscript{14}Reference might be made to such defenses of eschatology as those by H. S. Holland (*The Real Problem of Eschatology*, London, 1916) and Baron von Huegel (*Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, First Series, New York, 1925, esp. pp. 119ff., 195-224).

gives an overall view of the history of eschatological interpretation in the Christian tradition from Augustine's reinterpretation of Biblical eschatology through the recent "rediscovery" of Biblical eschatology. "Augustine's permanent importance," Shinn says, "lies in his adaptation of New Testament eschatology to the expectation of a continuing history." 16

This reformulation, as Shinn's survey shows, was to color the mood and exigences of eschatological thinking to the present, issuing finally in modernistic interpretation which resulted in the eschatological symbols being absorbed into the "myth" of evolution or progress.

Before this submersion of eschatology in the 19th century, however, the Biblical eschatological vision was first weakened by the medieval synthesis involving predominantly non-eschatological modes of thought. Here George Lindbeck's The Future of Roman Catholic Theology gives us some indication of the drought of eschatological vision from which the Roman Church is only now beginning to show signs of recovery. In this book he speaks of a "vision of a world renewed" which he sees "fragmentarily reflected" in the documents of Vatican II. This new vision, according to

Lindbeck, "grows out of a new understanding of Biblical eschatology together with the acceptance of the secular-scientific world view."17

Some of the younger Catholic theologians are, like Thielicke, rediscovering Biblical eschatology as an aid rather than an embarrassment to the understanding of "that reality within which our doing must take place."18 Lindbeck labels this new understanding of Biblical eschatology "realistically futuristic" eschatology. It is neither wholly "realized," as in much contemporary theology, nor "other-worldly," as in more traditional eschatology. He contrasts the new vision, first, with the traditional or "classical" view of a two or three-storied world view. The classical view is characterized as a "nature-supernature pattern of thought" -- a static, hierarchical structure which resulted in an unbiblical individualism in which emphasis is placed upon the escape of individual souls from the lower level to the higher.

The Biblical view, on the contrary, pictures the world "not in terms of endless sameness but as the story of God's creative and redemptive action and man's ever new responses."19

18 Thielicke, Theological Ethics, p. 6.
For the Bible, the great divide is not the vertical ontological contrast between material and immaterial, natural and supernatural, but the horizontal, temporal contrast between the two ages of the same world's history.  

Lindbeck further characterizes Biblical eschatology as holding in tension the aspects of "already" and "not yet."

The new age has begun in Christ, even though it still remains partly hidden, and salvation, though intensely personal, is not individualistic, for it is mankind and the cosmos as a whole which are being redeemed, and men are saved by entering into the new humanity.

The distinctive thrust of the present Catholic thinking is that it seeks to "go beyond" not only the nature-supernature stagnation of medieval eschatology, but the existentialized eschatology of Bultmann and the limitations of Gullmann's Heilsgeschichte as well. Indeed, the reformulation of eschatology must involve a radical critique of post-Biblical theology.

As Lindbeck points out, the distortion of the eschatological vision took place under the impact of the "Hellenization" of early Christian theology. There has been a massive effort in some Protestant and, to a lesser

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., p. 14.
22 Ibid., p. 18.
23 Ibid., p. 14ff.
extent, Catholic circles to "de-Hellenize" Christian theology and Biblical interpretation.

Some philosophical theologians argue quite rightly that it was probably inevitable and even necessary that the Biblical faith be translated into Hellenistic language and thought forms.  "In order to be received the Christian message had to be proclaimed in categories which could be understood by the people who were to receive it." Lindbeck recognizes the truth in this contention. "They preached the gospel in a Greek milieu to people for whom Hebraic categories were alien and unintelligible." But two things happened during this process of translation. "Greek thought was Christianized, but Christian

---

24 The Protestant effort to de-Hellenize Christianity finds its origin already in Luther's polemic against Aristotelianism in Thomism. It experienced a rebirth in the Ritschlian school, particularly in Adolf Harnack's History of Dogma. Since this is one cause in which Harnack and Barth were basically agreed, the effort to de-Hellenize Christian theology continued in different ways in the Neo-Orthodox movement and in the "Biblical theology movement." De-Hellenization, as Lindbeck shows, is now growing space among Roman Catholics; Cf. Hans Kueng, What is a Christian (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1976); Edward Schillebeeckx, Revelation and Theology, 2 vols. trans. by N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1968); Leslie Dewart, The Future of Belief (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966).


26 Ibid., p. 221.

thought was also Hellenized."\(^{28}\) Christianization of Greek thought can be seen in the Fathers' insistence on a new view of history and the uniqueness of redemptive events within that history (i.e., covenant with Israel, incarnation, etc.). But, conversely, in the Hellenization of Christian thought:

The coming of the Kingdom of God was no longer the hoped for redemption of humanity and the cosmos, but was viewed exclusively in terms of final judgment, the total destruction of almost everything except the souls of the redeemed and, oddly enough, their resurrected bodies. Through most of Christian history the resurrection has not been the main focus of hope for the world's salvation; rather, it has been an uncomfortable addendum to theological treatises. One sometimes suspects it would have been cheerfully sacrificed in favor of an exclusive emphasis on the soul's natural immortality if it had not been for the clear testimony of Scripture.\(^{29}\)

The proclamation of Jesus was irreducibly eschatological. This understanding is now commonplace, since the explosive work of Albert Schweitzer at the turn of the 20th century forced it upon a reluctant scholarly and theological "liberal" establishment. In *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (1901) Schweitzer argued that Jesus could not be understood in the non-eschatological way in which he had generally been depicted up to the time of Schweitzer. This book drew little attention, but with the publication of *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* (*Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, 1906), Schweitzer compelled attention

\(^{28}\) Ibid.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., p. 14f.
to his conclusion that the "liberal life of Jesus" was a fabrication. Johannes Weiss and others had already published works that showed the non-eschatological picture of Jesus to be untenable. Schweitzer accumulated the evidence, drew the conclusion more stringently, and thus posed the problem in an unavoidable way for both "liberal" and "conservative" theology.

With the subsequent publication of Karl Barth's Commentary on Romans, the movement to rebuild theology on an eschatological foundation had begun. In the years since, a great deal of theological thought has focused on the implications for systematic theology of an eschatological Jesus. Obviously, some conclusions about what eschatology (and apocalyptic) meant for Jesus and the Biblical writers must precede a constructive position on what it means for contemporary theology.

There has been a growing consensus, rebounding from the liberal eclipse of eschatology, that Christianity must recover its distinctive alternative with respect to the meaning of history. Shinn, for instance, characterizes this distinctive Christian alternative as a synthesis between prophecy and apocalyptic. He asserts that the Hebrew Christian faith

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30 Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes (1882, 1900), translated by Richard H. Hiels and David L. Holland as Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971); both above mentioned works by Schweitzer are published by Macmillan in translation by Walter Lowrie.
rejects two frequent alternatives with respect to the meaning of history: "(1) The belief which finds the meaning of life in the escape from history; (2) The belief that history creates and exhausts its own meaning."31 Rather, in the synthetic view, prophecy pictures history as a mighty drama authored and directed by God. History and the nations are judged by God's sovereign will. But what is the meaning of the judgments of history if they are always incomplete, as they are? "To answer the problem prophecy must be transformed into apocalypse."32

Such a facile transformation of prophecy into apocalypse is quite problematical for many historians and Biblical scholars33 because apocalyptic is now often put in opposition to prophecy and even eschatology. Perhaps this is a problem of semantics, and perhaps it is one of important substance for theology. It is safe to say, however, that historically the Church has always been uneasy, to one degree or another, with both prophecy and apocalypse; still, it has always

31Shinn, Christianity and the Problem of History, Part I, p. 33.

32Ibid., p. 32. By apocalypse Shinn means the general theological conception having to do with judgment and resurrection beyond history over against the prophetic conception of judgment within history. He sees Christian eschatology as a synthesis between the two conceptions, the apocalypse providing an ultimate, cosmic judgment of history which completes what in the prophetic judgment of history remains incomplete. This is, in general, the meaning and relevance of apocalyptic for our thesis.

maintained, to one degree or another, elements of both in its self-understanding. This synthesis of the prophetic and the apocalyptic is made necessary because of, and is characterized by, an unavoidably dualistic element in the Biblical vision of reality.

The Thesis

Throughout Christian history, eschatology has forced ethics to search for a mode of existing within a situation of dualistic tension between continuity and discontinuity. The style of the answer to the ethical question in the light of the Christian Gospel depends upon whether this tension of duality is maintained, and if it is, how it is maintained.

This tension of duality (however adequately understood and maintained as eschatological) has manifested itself in the history of Christian ethical thought in such motifs as "two cities," "two kingdoms," "two moralities," "two communities." In Biblical and theological terms, the tension is between continuity and discontinuity with the old aeon -- a tension between fallen creation and redeemed creation. This tension is reflected in all basic distinctions essential to theological clarification of the Christian message (law and gospel, sin and grace, works and faith, etc.).

The tension lies in the fact of our existence in the vortex between the old aeon and the new aeon--between the times: "In the world, but not of the world" (New Testament); in the saeculum at the vortex of the City of God and the
City of Man (Augustine); at the same time a "Christian person" and a "world person," within the "two kingdoms" (Luther).

The thesis of this paper is that this dualistic tension is a necessary and a key element in Christian ethical thinking if the tradition (especially the Biblical materials) is to be seriously considered revelatory of reality. This thesis will further attempt to show that this tension is at bottom an eschatological tension, and that certain aspects of the traditional constructions since Augustine (up to and including contemporary constructions) need a corrective provided by a re-evaluation in the light of our present understanding of the eschatological character of the Biblical materials and, of course, in the light of the contemporary situation as a whole.

Barth's distinction between the Christian Community and the Civil Community, with modifications, will be used as a Biblically rooted corrective for the "classical Christian" understanding of the implications of the tension of eschatological duality. It will be shown that these implications can be better elaborated under the rubric of the "two communities" rather than "two realms." This will involve a critical development of the concept of "analogies of the Kingdom" or some equivalent concept for the elaboration of a social ethic.
Scope and Methodology

The scope of this paper may be put into relief best by clarifying some of the important terminology which will be used.

Social Ethic. Man is a social being, yet Christian man sustains a peculiar relationship to the society within which he lives. This relationship is determined by his relationship to the gospel, yet the Biblical witnesses to the gospel offer no comprehensive or permanent framework for Christian social-ethical action. Therefore, though the primary impetus and the warrant for Christian action is contained in the gospel (as witnessed to in scripture), this impetus and warrant must be continually translated into our historical situation through some theoretical framework. This theoretical framework must preserve the impetus of, demonstrate the warrant for, and inform the character of Christian action in the social situation. The ongoing construction process is the task of Christian ethics.

The theoretical framework will be the description of a context out of which the Christian derives the understanding of himself and the character of the relationships he should have within the Christian community and, as a part of that community, with other communities and the world in general. The character of this framework or context will be informed by certain motifs (i.e., two ages, two communities, redemption, pilgrim people, exodus, liberation, hope, etc.) which serve
to illuminate, delimit, and, to a certain extent, even "create" for us "the reality in which our doing must take place."\(^{34}\)

Our distinction between two communities will also involve a distinction between two meanings of "social ethic." An ethic for the eschatological community would, of course, be a "social" ethic. But it shall be argued in this thesis that an ethic for the Christian community and a public ethic for society in general are not convertible, as has been traditionally held. "Social ethic" will be used in this thesis, therefore, to refer to an ethic for the natural community as distinguished from an ethic for the Christian community.

**Eschatological Duality.** The dualism argued here is the conflict between fallen creation and redeemed creation.

There is an element which is "inseparably connected with faith's viewpoint of existence" which is "incurably dualistic" (Aulen), but which cannot be explicated in terms

\(^{34}\) The symbolic nature of such conceptual motifs will be assumed throughout this dissertation. These are realities which can be appropriated only through symbolic or metaphorical language. Eschatological or soteriological symbols will be taken seriously, however, as conveying important meanings about the realities to which they point. "Resurrection of the body," for instance, affirms the goodness of bodily, sensual creation as over against the contrary implications of "immortality of the soul." Two ages" will be understood as conveying implications of temporal sequence as over against non-temporal symbols such as "two worlds." In order to avoid the confusing and problematical nature of the terminology, the word "myth" will not be used in reference to the Biblical stories (e.g. Adam and Eve), though their symbolic character will be taken for granted. In the same vein, emphasis on the relevance of "cosmological" aspects of Biblical eschatology is not an obscurantist attempt to maintain the validity of an ancient cosmology. It is, rather, an emphasis on the interrelatedness of hope for mankind and hope for the cosmos.
of metaphysical dualism. Thus, we must speak of "the legitimacy and the limitation of dualism" (Aulen).

Christian faith, of necessity, combines the will of God and the reality of existence. When this is done, a tension is inevitably created that cannot be resolved -- "since this would imply either a toning down of evil or an abridgment of the sovereignty of divine love" (Aulen).  

Thielicke refers to this in terms of "tension" and "dualistic tendency." Aulen uses the expression "tension of dualism" or simply "dualism." Recognizing both the limitations and the legitimacy of this kind of language, therefore, we will retain the expression "duality" or "tension of duality" to guard against the dissolution of the very concept which is the key element in our thesis.

Eschatological dualism is in no sense an ultimate or necessary dualism. The eschaton is in fact the overcoming even of eschatological dualism ("God will be all in all"). The eschaton has theological meaning, in fact, only in light of this dualism of which we speak. This dualism is, therefore, neither the conflict of ultimate realities nor the conflict between the finite and the infinite. It is the conflict between the old and the new aeon, the conflict that has been overcome, is being overcome, and shall be overcome.


36 Thielicke, Theological Ethics, p. 97.
To the extent that this duality is formulated under the impact of the New Testament, the context of that understanding is incurably eschatological. The ethic of Jesus was an ethic of the Kingdom of God. The Christian ethic was from the beginning, therefore, an eschatological ethic. Jesus may or may not have conceived of this ethic (Sermon on the Mount) as an "interim" ethic in anticipation of an imminent parousia (Schweitzer).

The delay of the parousia did not, however, des-eschatologize ethics for the early Church -- particularly Pauline Christianity. Despite the undoubted presence of an element of parenetic or wisdom ethics, the primary thrust of Paul's ethical thinking is still to be understood chiefly within the context of his eschatological thinking. The Sermon on the Mount and the ethics of Paul may in fact be correlated within the context of eschatological dualism from which Pauline ethics cannot be extricated; that is, the "already" and the "not yet" of Christian eschatological existence. In the light of the proclamation of Jesus and the New Testament, the Kingdom "has come" and "is coming."

The eschatological character of Christian ethics is underscored by its characterization as the "impossible possibility" (Barth, Niebuhr, Thielicke). It is
an impossible enterprise inasmuch as it lies
under the disruptive fire of the coming world....
Yet it is also a necessary enterprise inasmuch
as we live in the field of tension between the
two aeons and must find a modus vivendi. 37

The formulations surveyed are all attempts at constructing
this modus vivendi. The contention of this thesis is that
insofar as these formulations are Biblical and Christian,
their formative stimulus was basically eschatological. It
is further contended that the adequacy or inadequacy of each
formulation as an expression of the Biblical faith is related
directly to its recognition and proper consideration of this
fact.

The tension of duality which is an indispensable
 element in Christian ethics cannot be resolved into a timeless
"parallelogram of forces" (Thielicke's description), 38 but
must always be viewed eschatologically as the character of
existence "between the times."

Modus vivendi. This expression is used in our discussion
in its primary meaning, "a way of living or existing," with
emphasis on the temporality and the contingent nature of

37 Thielicke, Theological Ethics, I, 45. Cf. Reinhold
Niebuhr, esp. in The Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New

38 Thielicke, Theological Ethics, p. 360, et passim.
By "parallelogram of forces" Thielicke is referring to the
result of Luther's "de-eschatologizing" of the Sermon on
the Mount. This "de-eschatolization" results in the shift
from two ages which "are sequential in point of time" to two
kingdoms which "stand side by side," i.e., the shift from
"two time continuums" to "two spheres of reality." p. 360.
the "way" or "mode." It refers to a temporary basis for living as Christians in the world. This temporary basis is not the result of temporary agreement between the contending parties. It is a basis that is necessary for Christian existence and action in the world, yet it is one that is necessarily "temporary" in the light of the lack of a "final settlement." The maintenance of this temporality and contingency will be shown to be theologically necessary despite the problem of the so-called delay of the parousia. Christianity is still not the "normal situation". Christian theological and ethical thinking cannot, therefore, settle down into categories of normalcy or acquiescence. The Christian as "sojourner" (New Testament) and the Church as pilgrim people do not permanently settle down in the world. All action, all movements, and all motives stand under judgment in the light of the eternal Kingdom. All solutions are proximate solutions.

Further, this temporality is not only temporariness in the light of eternity, but also temporariness and contingency in the light of the flux and flow of life within the vortex between time and eternity. No particular historical development of the modus vivendi can be considered a permanent fixture even for the "interim." Particular ethical constructs must

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be considered temporary and proximate even in the critical light of history. Every construction of a framework for Christian social ethics must, therefore, be considered no more than *modus vivendi* in both the vertical and the horizontal senses.

This study's method will involve a survey of representative Christian thinkers and an attempt to recognize in them the options for relating eschatological dualism to social ethics. These options which are embodied in the Christian heritage will be analyzed and criticized in the light of our new understandings of Biblical eschatology. An attempt will then be made to suggest how an eschatological faith might approach social ethics in the contemporary situation. The historical survey will deal summarily with representative positions of Biblical and post-Biblical theologians, analyzing them as types much along the same lines as H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*. 40

The relation of Christ to culture is, at bottom, the eschatological problem. Characteristics of the historical types of radical Christianity and cultural Christianity, for example, are directly related to the eschatological outlook. The Christ of the former is radical because he stands eschatologically against culture. The Christ of culture, on the other hand, can arise only in the wake of the eclipse of

eschatology. The Christ and culture problem, therefore, may be characterized as the larger and more general problem of which our problem is a theoretical aspect. Just as the realities of Christ and culture are so complex as to produce an almost "infinite dialogue" among Christians as to their proper relationship, so the problem viewed from the aspect of eschatology and ethics has produced an almost "infinite dialogue" (H. R. Niebuhr's words).\(^{41}\) The presumption here is that the exemplars analyzed provide partial but typical answers to the question of the implications of an eschatological tension of duality for the construction of a social ethic.

Criteria, in general, for selection of the typical representatives are: (1) that the selected representatives be truly "key" figures whose impact was important to and well within what is generally termed "the Christian tradition"; and (2) that the "twoness" model or the model of duality of the selected representative promises to illuminate the question of the thesis; that is, the ethical implications of eschatological motifs. The models chosen, therefore, will be those which are comparatively most paradigmatic. They will be broadly interpreted as typological models, rather than minutely examined or elaborated.\(^{42}\)

\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 39.

\(^{42}\) A typology broken down on purely historical lines might run as follows: (1) Biblical types (e.g., Jesus of the Gospels, Paul, John, the Apocalypse); (2) Classical and
The problem of Biblical representatives poses questions of its own. In the first place, the Biblical materials have already been meticulously and voluminously analyzed. The task now is to analyze in broader categories the results of these studies and to relate them to the construction of a framework for contemporary ethical thinking. In the second place, the selection of Biblical representatives is problematic. The realistic dialectical theme of the study prompts concentration here on Paul, with only minor attention to other Biblical witnesses, particularly John.\(^{43}\)

Similar presuppositions lead to the selection of post-Biblical representatives who are basically in the Pauline tradition, i.e., the Augustinian-Reformation tradition. Historically, it is this tradition which has effectively maintained the dialectical, realistic mode of eschatology. Concentration on this strand of Christian thought allows us to address the question of whether other emphases have more or less denied the eschatological character of the Christian faith.\(^{44}\) The primary exemplars of the study are, therefore,

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\(^{43}\) See below p. 30 for justification of this selectivity.

\(^{44}\) Franz Overbeck, Christentum und Kultur; Cf. Barth and Thurneyse, Zur inneren Lage des Christentums (1920); Cf. Barth, Epistle to the Romans, p. 3.
Augustine and Luther. The Anabaptists are discussed because of the special role they play in the development of Luther's social ethic and the special role their history is playing in the present criticism of Luther's social ethic. These roles will be clarified as the thesis proceeds.

Aquinas and other pre-Reformation medieval exemplars are not central to this study because eschatology was generally subsumed by other concerns of the period. As Roger Shinn says:

The eschatological theme was taken for granted. But it took the form of otherworldliness. The vivid expectation of New Testament apocalypse was subordinated to the reality of an existing institution and a sacramental power available in the present.\textsuperscript{45}

Another significant era for Christian thought, the post-Reformation period of liberal theology, is also omitted from thorough investigation. Radical eschatology certainly came to one of its lowest ebbs during the 19th century. Significantly enough, Albrecht Ritschl's views of eschatology became the prime example used by his son-in-law, Johannes Weiss, to show how not to interpret Biblical eschatology.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45} Shinn, Christianity and the Problem of History, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{46} Johannes Weiss, in 1892 (The Preaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God) and in 1900 (The Idea of the Kingdom of God in Theology) argued that Ritschl and his school of neo-Kantian theologians could not legitimately claim Jesus or the New Testament as a basis for their conception of the Kingdom of God. This is especially telling when one understands that Weiss evidently preferred Ritschl's doctrine to that of Jesus.
The problematic nature of this non-eschatological vision has been dealt with by an enormous literature in 20th century theology, and need not be reviewed here.

Some Presuppositions

To paraphrase Reinhold Niebuhr, it is not possible to interpret the history of Christian eschatological thought in any kind of constructive way without some belief that these eschatological expectations have their ground and fulfillment in the reality of the revelation in Jesus Christ out of which they arose. This is necessary for critical and constructive interpretation:

for there can be no interpretation of the meaning of life and history without implicitly or explicitly drawing into the interpretation the faith which claims to have found the end [and the promise, L.M] of those expectations. That is to say, merely, that there can be no interpretation of history without specific presuppositions and that the interpretation which is being attempted in these pages is based upon Christian presuppositions.47

More specifically, these presuppositions are that in Jesus Christ the end of life and history ("end" as meaning and "end" as fulfillment) has been revealed. This means that the Biblical materials and the tradition that testify to and interpret the Christ event will play, at the very least, a constitutive and criteriological role in our eschatological thinking. This role will not involve

"transposing to our age certain prescriptions that had meaning only in relation to a definite historical situation," but we may hope to find (especially in the scriptural materials) "a vision of man and of his destiny, a meaning and a finality to history which are precisely the elements that our present society is incapable of considering." 48

Whatever our constructive conclusion, it is presupposed that it must be scriptural without being Biblicist, and it must be contemporary without being modernistic. It will involve not a synthesis of Biblical, traditional, and contemporary materials, but rather a prolegomenon for a critical and constructive use of the criteria derived from them. It will not be an attempt to make the eschatological vision relevant, but rather an attempt to show its relevance as revelatory of real history and thus relevant to our understanding of the nature and destiny of man. This will involve taking the language of former formulations seriously but not slavishly.

The cosmological and apocalyptic aspects of the eschatological vision are logically and Biblically related, and they are the aspects of Biblical-traditional eschatology that are taken least seriously in recent eschatological thinking. They are the aspects by which we hope to keep the

existential from becoming reductionistic, the dialectical from becoming transcendental, and the whole from being not nearly radical enough. They are the aspects which (paradoxically) may help us to take existence in "the world" more seriously, while, at the same time, making it possible to regard the programs and institutions of "this age" less ultimately. More importantly, the cosmological and apocalyptic aspects of Christian eschatology will be shown to be integral and inseparable phenomenological and theological elements of the Biblical-traditional vision. If we ignore them, we should know why and at what cost.

The implications of this criteriological approach for the critique of particular constructions of social ethics can be illustrated, for instance, by showing that Luther's social ethic was not paralyzed because he was too eschatological, but because he was not eschatological enough. Similarly, the Anabaptists lacked concern for the world not because their eschatology was apocalyptic, but because it was not Biblically cosmological or dialectical enough. Barth lacks the power for "proximate solutions to ultimate problems" (Reinhold Niebuhr) not because he is eschatological, but because his eschatology is too transcendental, and on we could go.

The meanings of these characterizations, as with all theological characterizations, will remain somewhat obscure until illuminated by the context of our critique and construction.
CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF ESCHATOLOGICAL DUALISM
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A study of New Testament eschatology might well begin with the recognition, with John Bright, that "the concept of the Kingdom of God involves, in a real sense, the total message of the Bible."¹ The problem, of course, is that agreement to this proposition can be found along a vast spectrum (from Ritschl to Rauschenbusch to Dodd to Pannenberg). Though the expression "the Kingdom of God" is not used in the Old Testament to describe the new order of the eschaton, it may be assumed as demonstrated by Bright that the idea runs throughout the prophets. The Day of the Lord introduces a substantial element of eschatological dualism into prophetic thought. In whatever terms it is cast, "this worldly" (Amos 9:13-15) or "other-worldly" (Isa. 65:17), there is still present a significant difference between the old order and the new. There are different degrees of continuity and discontinuity in the varying conceptions, but both elements are there.

However Biblical eschatologies may be contrasted (e.g. Gospel of John vs. Apocalypticism), they may still be studied in the light of this common element -- an eschatological dualism that cannot be reduced except on the basis of philosophical preferences.

I will concentrate on the exegesis and interpretation of Pauline eschatology. This choice does not arise out of a reductionist view of the canon. On the contrary, it is because the eschatology of Paul (like that of John) has been a focal point in Neo-Lutheran and existentialist reductions of eschatology to wholly realized eschatologies of various types and in the denial of relevance of realistic eschatology for contemporary Christian faith. Paul's maintenance of realistic future eschatology over against wholly realized eschatologies of his own day will serve to demonstrate a dominant New Testament concern.

It is not necessary, I assume, to argue, for instance, that the Apocalypse of John is apocalyptic or futuristic in its eschatology. Certainly one of the Synoptic Gospels might serve as well as Paul to illustrate the present-future dynamic of New Testament eschatologies. The thesis is becoming well established that the Synoptic Gospels (especially Mark) served, among other things, as a corrective to different kinds of enthusiasms which depreciated realistic future eschatology.  

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My purpose in this section will not be to force various New Testament theologies into the same eschatologically dualistic mold in spite of all evidence as to their differences. But, as Kuemmel puts the problem:

If we are neither willing to give up the concept of the canon nor able to deny the presence of fundamental contradictions in the New Testament, then we must necessarily face the question as to the central message of the New Testament, by which the statements of the individual writings are to be assessed. 2

The closest witnesses to this central message are, of course, Jesus, the earliest church, as reflected by the Gospels, and Paul.

But these three witnesses present a double message: God has let his final salvation break in in Jesus Christ, and he will complete this salvation by means of the appearance of the risen Christ in the future; but the issue of this present and future salvation consists in this, that God has condescended to sinful humanity and has offered his saving love, which has found its completion in the cross and resurrection of Jesus. 3

Kuemmel asserts that theologies as diverse as Luke, Hebrews, and even John, are in essential agreement "with this 'middle of the New Testament.'" The reasonableness of such a


4Ibid.
conclusion is all that is necessary to our thesis with respect to the relation of these eschatologies. Others have also found the interpretation of many critics which puts Hebrews within the framework of philonic Greek "two-world" dualism to be unwarranted.  

Gospel of John

The eschatological dualism in the Gospel of John is certainly problematical. In comparison with the Jesus of the Synoptics, the Jesus of John seems to show little interest in eschatology. The synoptic Jesus has the eschatological Kingdom of God as his central theme. Real life belongs to the eschatological kingdom (Mk. 10:30, Matt. 18:8-9). In John the central theme of Jesus is eternal life offered in the present (John 3:24), and the Kingdom of God is only mentioned twice (3:3,5). The apocalyptic vision is almost totally lacking; there are no apocalyptic outlines of end time events; and the parousia of the Son of Man is no

5Ibid.

impending hope or threat. The parousia of the spirit has taken the place of the future parousia of Christ. There is no question about this difference between John and the Synoptics. The question for purposes of my thesis is whether this involves a matter of radical emphasis on the realized nature of eschatology as opposed to a primitive futuristic eschatology, or whether the Gospel has collapsed eschatology totally into the present, leaving little or no meaning to a realistically future eschaton. In other words, does John totally lack a dualism of present and future?

A surface examination of the text itself answers the question simply. There are obvious examples of both present oriented and future oriented eschatological sayings. The question is, what is the relationship between the present and future sayings? Until recently, it was merely assumed that the author John, like Paul, believed in some sense in both a present and a future manifestation of eschatological reality and that, while there must of necessity be tension between these two aspects of eschatological reality, there is no necessary contradiction or logical conflict. But there is no doubt that John's interpretation of eschatological language

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(i.e., eternal life, judgment, etc.) puts much greater emphasis on the present, realized nature of eschatology, as has been amply shown by the contemporary scholar most associated with "realized eschatology," C. H. Dodd.

Dodd argues, however, that the textual evidence indicates, "at least that the evangelist is developing his doctrine of eternal life with reference to the Jewish idea of the life of the Age to come, qualitatively as well as quantitatively."\(^8\) That Jewish idea is that associated with the doctrine of the two ages. Dodd notes the use of \( \zeta \omega \eta \)
\( \alpha \iota \omega \nu \iota \zeta \) in apocalyptic literature precisely within the context of the two age doctrine (e.g., Greek versions of Daniel xii. 2; Testament of the Twelve Patriarch's Asher v. 2; Psalms of Solomon iii. 16; and the corresponding Ethiopic phrase in Enoch xxxvii. 4, x1.9),\(^9\) and he observes that, just as in John, "where the doctrine of the two ages is in view, it is made more explicit that the difference between the life of this Age and the life of the Age to Come lies not merely in its infinite devotion but also in its quality (IV Ezra vii. 12-13, viii. 52-4)."\(^10\)

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\(^9\) Ibid., p. 144f.

\(^10\) Ibid., p. 145.
He concludes,

So closely indeed does [the Johannine doctrine] agree with the eschatology of popular Judaism and Christianity, and so different does it appear from the teaching of other passages in the Fourth Gospel..., that many commentators have attributed it to a redactor who did not fully understand the meaning of the evangelist. But as we have seen, there are several other passages in the gospel, not so easily detached or attributed to a redactor, which also imply the idea of ἐοθῳν ζωον τονος in the sense of a future life, like the Jewish "Life of the Age to Come." We must conclude that this is a part of what the evangelist meant by "eternal life." Thus, the scholar most widely associated with "realized eschatology" is not convinced by arguments that any futuristic eschatological sayings are in such conflict with "realized" eschatological sayings that they must be the work of a redactor.

As a chief spokesman of the latter position, Bultmann concludes that the present-oriented sayings are sufficiently in "conflict" with future-oriented sayings that we must assume that they are not both from the original theologian-author but that the futuristic sayings are the work of a redactor. This means that the redactor misunderstood the argument of the text which he received to such an extent that he did not hesitate to insert sayings at several points.

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11 Particularly in xii. 25 a saying which is given in the synoptics various forms (Mark viii. 35, Matt. x. 39, xvi. 25, Luke ix. 24, xvii. 33), but "The Fourth Evangelist alone has given it a form which obviously alludes to the Jewish antithesis of the two ages." p. 146. The saying is ὑπεξεῖν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ.

which logically contradicted the argument of the text. In Bultmann's view, the original evangelist was involved in demythologizing the primitive two-age myth and redirecting the primitive futuristic imagery to the existential moment, an enterprise for which the redactor did not share the same enthusiasm.

Many interpreters since Bultmann have reaffirmed the importance of both present and future elements in Johanin eschatology, agreeing with Dodd that:

The Evangelist agrees with popular Christianity that the believer will enter into eternal life at the general resurrection, but for him this is a truth of less importance that the fact that the believer already enjoys eternal life, and the former is a consequence of the latter.

The fact is that there seem to be elements of both realized and unrealized, present and future eschatology throughout the literature of the New Testament. The Gospel

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of John and the Apocalypse represent the extremes. In the former, present, "realized" eschatology almost totally dominates, whereas in the latter, futuristic eschatology dominates. These differences might be explained in various ways. Certainly the existential situation is different in each case.

The source of this tension between realized and unrealized eschatology might be found in the original message of Jesus. Raymond E. Brown suggests this as a "working hypothesis" for explaining the tension within the New Testament literature as a whole as well as in the Gospel of John in particular.

Within Jesus' own message there was a tension between realized and final eschatology....The recognition that there were both realized and final elements in Jesus' own eschatology means that in the subsequent developments...the NT writers were not creating ex nihilo theories of realized or of final eschatology, but were applying to a particular situation one or the other strain already present in Jesus' thought.15

In line with this hypothesis, whatever date or persons to which the futuristic passages in the Gospel of John may be ascribed, "In any case, the final form of the Gospel with its twofold eschatology is not, in our opinion, an unfaithful

mirror of the several strains in Jesus' own attitude toward eschatology."¹⁶

My point is not that John's eschatology is the same as that of the Apocalypse or of Hebrews. It manifestly is not. My only point is that, in common with primitive Christianity as a whole, the Gospel of John contains elements of both present and future eschatology. This indicates, at least, that the Johannine community continued to maintain elements of both realized and unrealized eschatology, and that they did not perceive these elements to be in unresolvable conflict.

Paul

Paul's eschatology, as the Pauline texts themselves clearly indicate, shows a more conscious and more consistent maintenance of a tension between realized and unrealized eschatology.

The structure of Paul's eschatology appears antithetical. It places the end under the control of one principle with the sway of which an opposite principle of equally comprehensive rule and of primordial origin is contrasted, so as to make the two, when taken together, yield a bisection of universal history...more comprehensively the antithetic structure appears in distinction between the two ages or worlds.¹⁷


Ephesians 1:21 is the only place in the Pauline or Deutero-Pauline literature where the contrast is explicitly drawn: "not only in this age but also in that which is to come." There are a number of passages, however, where "this age (στός αἰώνος)" appears explicitly and the contrast is present by implication; i.e., Romans 12:2; I Corinthians 1:20; 2:6,8; 3:16; II Corinthians 4:4; Galations 1:4; Ephesians 2:2; I Timothy 6:17; Titus 2:12.

The implication in the indisputably Pauline literature is strong. Paul's thinking was in the framework of στός αἰώνος -- στός αἰών μέλλων even though the technical term for the contrasting age is not explicitly used. As Vos points out, the passages in which στός αἰώνος is found are dealing specifically with pre-eschatological concerns, and so only "this age" is specifically mentioned. But the contrast implied could hardly be anything else than to another age; i.e., στός αἰών μέλλων -- the age to come.

This conclusion has not generally been disputed even among those interpreters emphasizing the "eschatological now" of Pauline eschatology. Bultmann himself asserts:

\[18\] Ibid.

...the primitive Christian community is conscious of standing "between the times," namely at the end of the old aeon and at the beginning -- or, at least, immediately before the beginning -- of the new one. Thus it understands its present as a peculiar "interim." This is expressed with particular clarity in I Cor. 15:23-7.20

Just as Dodd does with respect to the Gospel of John, Bultmann interprets the two ages in terms of personal, existential relationship to God, but he does not deny the existence of the two age framework in Pauline eschatology. F. G. Porter 21 and Guenther Bornkamm 22 hold similar positions.

Klaus Galley,23 on the other hand, explicitly argues that the two age conception is no longer applicable to Pauline eschatology. From the fact that the specific ἰδίων μεταλλων terminology is missing in Paul, he concludes that ἰδίων οὕτως is not temporal in character for Paul.24


24Ibid., p. 62.
As we shall see, however, Paul definitely holds to a temporal, sequential conception in which the future parousia plays an important role. This means that his eschatology cannot be collapsed into a wholly present eschatology. The missing terminology is not so important a factor, then, if all the important elements of ὁ ἀγων μελλῶν are found in Paul's thinking.

What complicates Paul's view of the two ages is that he does not reproduce a rigid old age/new age dichotomy in which we are simply either in the old age still waiting for the new or already in the new age looking back on the old. Because of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus ὁ ἀγων σὺντος becomes ὁ νῦν καλός 25 (Rom. 3:26; 8:18; 11:15; II Cor. 8:14); i.e., a time when the two ages are somehow blended and neither has full sway.

As Nygren puts it: "...the life of the Christian on earth is throughout conditioned by the contrast between the two aeons....and their interpenetration of each other."26

It is because of the character of ὁ νῦν καλός that Paul does not speak of the new aeon in contrast to the old aeon. That contrast is always there implicitly, but he explicitly contrasts the old age with the knowledge and power

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which are granted at the juncture of the ages. This is
Martyn's conclusion in his article on II Corinthians 5:16.

When [Paul] is exercising great care, he
does not speak of knowing by means of the Spirit,
the gift of the new age. Why? Because he does
not live entirely in the new age, but at the painful
and glorious juncture where some are being saved and
some are perishing (2 Cor. 2:15).  

He takes this great care, as we shall see, in order to
preclude enthusiasts from confusing the present time with the
coming time, the Kingdom of God, which follows sequentially
the future resurrection and the parousia.

Paul generally speaks in terms of the eschatological
Kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; I Thess. 2:12),
but his conceptions are still within the basic structure of
the scheme of the two ages.

This age, for Paul is a time of evil and death
(Gal. 1:4). The wisdom of this age is a failure at putting
man right with God (I Cor. 1:20; 2:6; 3:18). The rulers of
this age (οἱ ἀνθρώπων τοῦ αἰῶνος) are spiritually blind and
are responsible for the crucifixion of Christ (I Cor. 2:8).
Satan is "the god of this age" (II Cor. 4:4). The Day of the
Lord, or the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ, will bring an end
to this age (I Thess. 5:2; II Thess. 2:2; I Cor. 1:8;
II Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6). This is the day of the "parousia"

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27J. Louis Martyn, "Epistemology at the Turn of the Ages: 2 Corinthians 5:16", Christian History and Interpretation,
Studies Presented to John Knox, ed. by W. R. Farmer, C.P.D. Moule
p. 284-5.
(I Thess. 2:19; II Thess. 2:1; I Cor. 15:23). The time of the end will mean the complete and unambiguous destruction of all the powers which stand in hostility and opposition to the ultimate will of God (I Cor. 15:23-26).

The two-age scheme is modified in Paul by his Christology, so that the Christ-event (death and resurrection) and the giving of the Spirit are also eschatological events. The traditional elements of the eschaton (e.g., the resurrection at the last day) are no longer merely elements of apocalyptic speculation about the future. They are now understood as having already made themselves felt in history through the redemptive activity of Christ. They are now, in some way, a part of present experience of redemption. The age to come is already being felt because the believer has already been delivered from the power of the present evil age (Gal. 1:4). Christ has become "the first fruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20) so that the first and determinative act of the eschaton has been effectively brought to pass in history. The end of the eschatological drama thus becomes the center of salvation history.

The new element in Paul's two-age doctrine, therefore, is Christ. The effect of this new element is to modify the apocalyptic pessimism about the present somewhat, and to speak with both caution and confidence about the inbreaking of a new situation, a new age, a new creation. It is confident because it is based on the already present
eschatological events, the resurrection of Christ and the
gift of the Spirit. It is cautious because the present situ-
ation remains ambiguous since the not yet eschatological
events are still to come.

This ambiguity is known and experienced only by
believers since they know and experience the new life of the
age to come. Unbelievers are still in the present evil age
and are effectively blind to their plight (II Cor. 4:4). The
believer experiences this ambiguity as one who is not to be
conformed to this age (Rom 12:1-2) even though he must con-
tinue to live out his life within it. He continues to be
limited by the powers of this age even while he begins to
experience the renewing power of the new.

The believer lives in the tension of the already and
the not yet. His redemption from sin and death is real and
secure, yet it is only experienced partially and in hope
(Rom. 8:31-39; 18-25). The Kingdom, new or eternal life,
salvation, and resurrection are all both experienced as a
present reality and expected as a future consummation.

The ambiguity of the present situation demands the
parousia to complete the redemptive work which has already
begun. "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ
has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised our
preaching is in vain and so is your faith." (I Cor. 15:13-14).

First Corinthians 15 contains the most powerful New
Testament argument against the collapse of futuristic
eschatology into the present. This chapter is a self-contained discussion of the resurrection of the dead. This specific topic is raised beginning at verse 12, following a traditional confession of faith that Paul claims to have introduced to the Corinthian community; i.e., "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve" (vv. 4-5).

It is particularly in verses 23-28 that Paul reaffirms his apocalyptic orientation.

This section shows us Paul in the tradition of apocalyptic. The latter's fundamental notion that the course of the world follows a predetermined plan along with a concrete conception of this plan, of the stages of its development are here taken for granted.28

Of course, for Paul the Christ of the confession has by his cross and resurrection modified the schema; but the schema remains nonetheless. In fact, the apocalyptic order becomes in this passage an important argument for a realistic future resurrection of the dead against some kind of opposition to this idea within the Corinthian community.

The exact character of the opposition Paul perceived is hard to determine. The difficulty in such a determination

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is compounded by the fact that Paul's response in this section (unlike those preceding) is to a rumour rather than to a direct inquiry.29 Has he fairly understood his opponents' views? This question need not be answered in order to determine against what Paul believes himself to be arguing and in what way he proceeds. But even this is open to debate.

The schismatic groups mentioned in chapter I are not assigned specific positions by Paul, so it would seem impossible for us to do so with real confidence at this late date. Paul's polemic throughout I Corinthians, however, points to a general position to which an apocalyptic schema might be definitely opposed. The position has been variously described as "enthusiasm," "pneumaticism," "hyper-Paulinism," "proto-Gnosticism," and "Gnosticism."

The terms "enthusiasm" and "pneumaticism" more generally describe symptoms observed at Corinth, and so they may unhesitatingly be applied to Paul's opponents. The latter three terms, however, are more specific in their connotations, and they are, therefore, more open to controversy. Some refrain from any more precise definition of the Corinthian enthusiasm.30 Many unhesitatingly call the Corinthian opponents

29 τεράς ως "now concerning" is missing. Cf. 7:1
(τὸν ἐγκαθάρτημα); 7:25 (τῶν μαθητῶν); 8:1 (τῶν ἐνδοξοῦστων);
12:1 (τῶν θεοματικῶν); and 16:1 (τῆς λογίας). Paul has simply heard that "some of you say there is no resurrection from the dead" (v. 12).

Gnostics. Others deny that the Corinthians can be meaningfully referred to as "Gnostics." Conzelmann settles for "proto-Gnostic."

The term "hyper-Paulinism" suggests perhaps unanswerable problems about the role Paul's own preaching or the misinterpretation of it might have played in the development of his opponents' position. Paul after all has declared himself to be as "free" (I Cor. 9:1) as "gnostic" (I Cor. 8:1) and as "pneumatic" (I Cor. 14:18) as the best of them. What then is his problem with the Corinthians?

For purposes of this dissertation, the primary thing we must know is that some of them had denied the future resurrection of the dead, and, that, in response, Paul had reaffirmed this future apocalyptic event as an essential concomitant to the gospel that they had received. Why did they deny the future resurrection of the dead?

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33 Conzelmann, I Corinthians, p. 15.

34 This question is pursued by Wilhelm Luegert, Freiherrspredigt und Schwarmgeist in Korinth (Beitraege zur Foerderung Christlicher Theologie, 12.3. Guetersloh: Bertelsmann, 1908); Cf. Adolf Schlatter, Die Korinthische Theologie (BFCT, 18.2. Guetersloh: Bertelsmann, 1914).
Perhaps it was merely that some Corinthians were
"repelled by the materialism of Jewish expectation."\(^{35}\) It
almost certainly involved this. But what does such a po-
sition imply? Lietzmann thinks that it is the general Greek
notion of the immortality of the soul.\(^{36}\) Pearson agrees with
this, saying that he sees "no reason not to take the statement
in 15:2 as it stands, i.e., that there were people in Corinth
who actually said ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν ὑμᾶς ἐστιν .\(^{37}\) But it is
unlikely in Pearson's view that this means skepticism about
any afterlife at all.\(^{38}\) Perhaps then the statement is not
so self-evidently clear as it stands. As Conzelmann warns,
"The statement...does not give such a clear answer to this
question at first sight."\(^{39}\)

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\(^{35}\) Albrecht Oepke, "ἀνάστασις, ἀνάστασις., " Theological
by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans

\(^{36}\) H. Lietzmann, An die Korinther I, II (Handbuch zum NT),
ed. W. G. Kuemmel (Tubingen, 1949), p. 79f; Cf. Justin Martyr,
Dialogue 80.4, where he refers to λέγουσαν μὴ εἶναι νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν, ἀλλὰ ἀμα τῇ ἀποθνῄσκειν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν
ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν.

\(^{37}\) Pearson, The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology,
p. 15.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.; Pearson erroneously attributes this latter view
to A. Schweitzer (p. 94, note 4). Schweitzer's view was that
the opponents denied hope to any but those who were alive at
the parousia; See A. Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the

\(^{39}\) Conzelmann, I Corinthians, p. 261.
For Conzelmann, mere scepticism about after-life on the part of the Corinthian opponents is ruled out by the practice of vicarious baptism (οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν, ch. 15:29). Paul's knowledge of this practice also, according to Conzelmann, is an argument against the view of Robert Jewett and others, that Paul misunderstood the Corinthians to be skeptics about the after-life. Conzelmann also rules out the idea that the Corinthians are merely advocating the Greek doctrine of the immortality of the soul, because "he does not emphasize the bodily character of the resurrection."

Conzelmann finally, though tentatively, adopts a modification of Albert Schweitzer's thesis. Schweitzer thought that the eschatology with which Paul had to deal in I Thessalonians had been introduced into Corinth, i.e., the idea that only those still alive at the parousia had hope.

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40 Ibid., Conzelmann here assumes the "normal" exposition of this text, i.e., "in Corinth living people have themselves vicariously baptized for dead people." Cf. Ibid., p. 275.

41 Ibid., p. 275f.


Conzelmann modifies this to the effect that "Paul thinks this teaching has made its way into Corinth." But "we can hardly manage without assumption of a certain misunderstanding on Paul's part. Then, however, there is much to be said that he is attacking people who, as he thinks, believe only in a transformation of the living parousia, but not in a raising of the dead."\textsuperscript{44}

A number of exegetes (e.g., Conzelmann, Jewett, Schmithals, et. al.) are forced back to the conclusion that Paul has in some way misunderstood the Corinthian position. But whichever "misunderstanding" we assume, Conzelmann reasonably concludes:

If we assume a misunderstanding, then of course, it is impossible to derive from chap. 15 any conclusions as to the eschatology of "some," but the latter must be deduced from the rest of the epistle -- and this, too, with caution, since indeed Paul does not ascribe this teaching to the community, but apparently to a small group.\textsuperscript{45}

It would seem to me that the nature of the eschatology of "some" might be deduced from the rest of the epistle whether we assume a misunderstanding by Paul or not.

Paul's argument on the sequence of eschatological events would certainly be in most vivid contrast to a position

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 262f.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 262.
ascribed to the Corinthians by Robert Jewett⁴⁶ (following H. von Soden and others); i.e., that the Corinthians are "enthusiastic" in their eschatology as well as in other ways, and that they teach a prematurely realized resurrection "in the Spirit" on the order of the false teachers mentioned in II Timothy 2:18, who claimed ἀνάστασιν ἀδιανοούμενον ("that the resurrection is past already").

Though Jewett's use of the term "Gnostics" for the Corinthian opponents of Paul is still sharply contested,⁴⁷ I can certainly agree with him that "an increasingly plausible case" has been developed that one party at Corinth (the "Christ party"?) "consisted of radical enthusiasts and libertinnists with definite gnostic tendencies."⁴⁸

Whatever we label them, the enthusiastic party in Corinth seemed to have had a sense of fulfillment which would certainly have implications for their eschatology. First


⁴⁷E.g., by Pearson, The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology, p. 82f.

Corinthians 4:8 seems to be a veritable summation of their position: "already you are filled. Already you have become rich." Paul continually reminds those of this inclination that their present situation is still imperfect and incomplete.

Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you thinks that he is wise in this age (τῷ αἰῶνι ἑαυτοῦ), let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world (τῷ κόσμῳ) is folly with God. (I Cor. 3:18-19)

In 7:26-31, Paul acutely relativizes the present in light of the imminent future. His opponents evidently believe "complete redemption to have already been effected," so that "everything which apocalyptic still hopes for has already been realized."50

Paul's persistent references to the future dimension of Christian hope indicate that his opponents have emphasized the present at the expense of the future. Paul has no intention of denying the present enjoyment of the benefits of Christ's work, but his determined repetition of as yet unfulfilled aspects of Christian existence (3:11-13b; 4:5; 5:5; 6:9; 11:31) are evidence that he considers certain future realities to be necessary to the proper understanding of the present. And it is in chapter 15 that he states this concern in the sharpest of terms.


50 Ibid.
For this perishable nature must put on the
imperishable, and this mortal must put on immor-
tality. When the perishable puts on the imper-
-ishable, and the mortal puts on immortality then
shall come to pass the saying that is written:
"Death is swallowed up in victory."(15:53-54)

But only "then" shall that come to pass. This does
not imply that Paul has jettisoned any sense of "realized"
eschatology. He has already agreed with his opponents (15:19)
that Christian existence is not merely hope. 51 But the
Corinthian opponents evidently think that the eschaton is
almost wholly "realized" and that "they already experience
the resurrection mode of existence." 52 They must then have
been very disappointed at Paul's clear eschatological
reservation in 15:53-54. 53

The creed affirms that Christ ἔγενεται , "has been
raised" (15:4), an already completed act in the history of
salvation. Paul reaffirms this in verse 12 and in verse 13.
Now he reaffirms it again in verse 20; but this time he does
so in order to introduce a point of order against the
Corinthian enthusiasts. Christ has been raised from the dead
(with which there should be agreement); but to say this is
also to say that Christ is ἀναστήσας τῶν κεκομιμώμων , "the
first fruits of those who sleep" (v.20). This, he affirms,
is quite proper in the apocalyptic scheme of salvation.

51 Cf. J. H. Schutz, "Apostolic Authority and Control of
52 Ibid., p. 440.
"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (vv. 21-22). "But, each in his own τάγματι (order of succession); Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's at his παρουσία " (v.23).

Thus, Christ makes possible and guarantees the future resurrection of those who belong to Him, but only he now participates in the resurrection mode of existence.

The Adam/Christ typology reinforces the provisional nature of the present by contrasting what is with what shall be (ζωοποιοῦντος). But Paul goes on to spell out in clearer terms to temporal distance between the resurrection of Jesus and the final resurrection of those who belong to Him. The apocalyptic order of successive times serves as the vehicle for his argument.

The sequence is simply as follows: First the resurrection of Christ; then the resurrection of those who belong to Christ at the parousia; then the end (τὸ τέλος), when the Kingdom is delivered by Christ to God and when every rule (ἀρχὴν) and every authority (ἐξουσίαν) and every power (δύναμιν) has been destroyed (vv. 23-24).
The future destruction of the cosmic powers is an important point in Paul's view because it implies that these powers still have some degree of power over man, and that man's redemption cannot be contemplated apart from the ultimate redemption of the cosmos from the powers that oppress it.

At the end, Jesus will accomplish the destruction of these powers and then will hand over (παραδώσω) His Kingdom to God. But this is at the end of a future succession of cosmic salvation events which have not yet been accomplished.

He climaxes his argument with a statement of necessity. Christ must (δραίω) reign until this succession of salvation events reaches the end. The Corinthian error shows ignorance of this δραίω. Paul agrees with his opponents that since the resurrection of Jesus He has been reigning; but he does not agree that the reign of Christ is the final and complete Kingdom. Paul puts definite temporal boundaries on the reign of Christ. The resurrection Christ as first-fruits must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet, the

Verlag, 1968), p. 347, where he argues that Paul is not referring to temporal distance between the events but is simply establishing what Luz calls a temporal "Nacheinander" (successiveness).


56 An apocalyptically interpreted combination of Psalm 110 and 8.
last of which is death (vv. 25-26). Thus, Christ's reign must issue in the prior destruction of the cosmic powers before the resurrection hope can be completed or enjoyed. In verses 27-28, he merely reinforces his point concerning the incompleteness of the present by defining the succession of events even more clearly with reference to the temporal limitation of Christ's reign. Even after He has subjected the powers, He Himself then will be subjected to God so that God may be all in all. However, this affirmation may be explicated theologically, the main point is certain; i.e., the present situation is not the final, complete fulfillment which the Corinthian enthusiasts assume it to be. They have robbed the future of its promised fulfillment by prematurely equating enthusiastic or pneumatic experience with the ultimate victory of the resurrection.

Whatever benefits of salvation Christians now enjoy, they, according to Paul, still have before them that victory which is involved in the mystery of the future resurrection (vv. 50-54).

What Paul has done in this section is to take over the particular type of apocalyptic which expects the Kingdom of the Messiah to precede temporally the coming of the new aeon. 57

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This schema, however, is of necessity modified by Paul's Christology, so that the Messianic Kingdom is inaugurated by the resurrection of Jesus, but the annihilation of death still waits for the end of this Kingdom.

Whereas the Johannine Apocalypse simply takes over the Jewish combination of the new aeon, or new world, and the messianic Kingdom preceding it, Paul refashions the Jewish notion in such a way as to make it a means to the presentation of his own eschatological intention, the distinction between present and future...[Christ's] Kingdom fills up the period between the resurrection and the consummation of the work of salvation after the parousia. It is not the kingdom of visible peace. This period is determined by the cross.  

The Corinthians knew the creed; but not understanding so well the necessity of the cross and the "must" (else) of Christ's reign, they settled prematurely for less than the promise of the resurrection.

It is not at all essential to my thesis to know exactly what the eschatology of the "some" is. It is also not necessary to know exactly Paul's misunderstanding was. It is necessary only to know that, however Paul understood his opponents' position in Corinth, his response to them involves the affirmation of an apocalyptic order of events which includes a realistic future resurrection of the dead. Such a view is so specific in what it affirms that it may be considered to be in contrast to almost any possible position that scholars have suggested.

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58 Conzelmann, I Corinthians, p. 270.
It also is not essential to my thesis to enter into the debate concerning the development in Paul's eschatology, except to affirm that on this point, the steadfast maintenance of a realistic eschatological future, Paul seems to remain consistent. Two other passages which are important to this question are I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 and II Corinthians 5:1-10. It will not be necessary to discuss these passages in as much detail as I have discussed I Corinthians 15. My purpose is not to explicate Pauline eschatology in general nor to exegete all relevant passages in particular. It is merely to establish for Paul the importance and the implications of a realistic, future eschaton. Some observations on these passages, then, will suffice.

The character of Paul's opposition in I Thessalonians is also the subject of much debate. The question which Paul addresses in I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 is occasioned by the disturbing death of some of the Thessalonian Christians. These deaths are not so much disturbing as mere examples of death, but they are especially disturbing because of some peculiar attitude which the Thessalonians had to the fact that Christians were continuing to die. At first reading of the passage itself, it seems as though the Thessalonians simply had no doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and were simply expecting the transformation of all living Christians
at a very imminent parousia. In the larger context of the Epistle, however, another picture emerges, i.e., that of a group of "enthusiastic radicals" who are dismayed at the death of some of their members because they "discounted the possibility of mortal death for members of the new aeon," and also "lacked the traditional early Christian hope in a resurrection." The character of their problem is further evidenced by the fact that they are similarly disturbed by the presence of persecution against them (I Thess. 3:3). Jewett suggests that this would probably not be "cowardice or despair in the face of suffering," but rather unbelief at the fact that it could happen at all. Paul responds, "When we were with you we told you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction, and as you know, it has been so" (I Thess. 3:4).

"It seems to imply... that the Thessalonians were for some reason surprised that persecution would be part of their life in the new aeon, and that its presence cast doubt on the

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59 Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, p. 93.


61 Ibid., p. 201.

62 Ibid., p. 203.
validity of their faith."\(^63\) If this is the case, it is easy to see how that the death of a member of the new aeon would be even more disturbing. Jewett builds his case for the identification of the problem as "enthusiastic radicalism" by calling attention to the false sense of security (I Thess. 5:3) which seems to indicate a discounting of future judgment, the controversy concerning "the status and control of ecstatic manifestations" (I Thess. 5:19-22), and the "clue" from II Thessalonians that there were those capable of believing "the day of the Lord has already come"\(^65\) (II Thess. 2:2).\(^66\)

However accurately this characterizes the Thessalonian problem, Paul's primary response is to reaffirm his futuristic eschatology and emphasize its implications for ethics. He seems to have been indirectly preparing for one clinching argument of 4:13-5:11 all through the epistle. Even in the thanksgiving which begins his letter he twice juxtaposes present ethics with future hope (1:2-3 and 9-10). We find the same juxtaposition in the second benediction of the letter (3:12-13) and in the closing benediction (5:23). Paul's

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\(^63\) Ibid.

\(^64\) Ibid.

\(^65\) Jewett translates ἔρευνα "has already come" on the authority of J. H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh, 1949), I, p. 109. According to Moulton the perfect verb is one of action completed in the past and continuing as completed into the present.

\(^66\) Jewett, p. 203.
primary concern, then, seems to be the maintenance of the proper juxtaposition of the present and the future (against enthusiastic collapse of the future into the present?).

The present, for Paul, is loaded with real meaning; but that meaning is validated by its completion by the future apocalyptic events. Those future events include the judgment (e.g., 3:12-13), the resurrection of the dead (4:14-17), and the parousia.

Paul chooses, as the primary answer to Thessalonians' problem, to vigorously affirm the reality of a future parousia. He deals with their improper behavior (e.g., disorderly, 5:14) and their improper attitudes (e.g., "grieving as those who have no hope," 4:13) in terms of the relation of this attitude and this behavior to the hope of the parousia.

When Paul chides the Thessalonians for grieving as "those not having hope" (4:13), Caudill believes that Paul has a concrete charge in mind.

This does not refer primarily to hope in the resurrection of the dead but appears to refer in general to the entire scope of the future hope of the Christian faith, and specifically in this 67 epistle to the hope in the parousia of Christ.

It is not that they are not to grieve at all; but they are not to grieve as though there were going to be no parousia. For motives that have already been deduced, or for whatever other motives, the Thessalonians have behaved as though they

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67 Caudill, The Two Age Doctrine in Paul, p. 313.
doubted the actuality of the parousia. Evidently Paul considers this to be an assault on the validity of the Christian faith itself. So 4:13-18 attempts to reintroduce this reality into the faith of the Thessalonians. The parousia is grounded in the belief that Jesus died and rose again. On the basis of this belief we can be sure that ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας ὁλὰ τῷ Ἰησοῦ Χρῖστῃ σὺν αὐτῷ (v. 14).

The interpretation of the language is difficult, but the use of ἀγένει here instead of ἀγελασθεῖν indicates to many interpreters that Paul intends consciously to stress the bringing together of Christ and his saints at the parousia rather than merely reaffirming their resurrection. Paul is concerned with the certainty of the parousia event itself. In 4:15-17 he establishes the certainty of the future event even more forcefully by showing its reality in the cases of both the living and the dead, using the vivid language of the apocalyptic tradition.

Based on the future parousia which is so certain that they may "comfort one another with these words" (4:18), Paul then argues that the parousia is of uncertain date but of near expectation (5:1-3), and that its future certainly coupled with its imminence should issue in a particular

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stance and lifestyle on the part of the Thessalonians. They should now seriously view the present not merely in the light of itself but in the light of the impending future. The Thessalonians will not be caught by surprise; they will be ready, because they are "sons of light" and not "sons of darkness" (v. 4). This not uncommon motif (Qumran, Didache, etc.) suggests the sphere of influence in which one lives and the character of the activity within that sphere.

In addition to the light/darkness motif, Paul also uses the day/night motif which further defines the stance he is recommending to the Thessalonians. This motif is found also in Romans 13:11-14, where, according to Nygren, 69 Paul uses the terms to refer to the old and new aeons. Here, as elsewhere in Paul, however, the old aeon/new aeon motif is not completely intact. The old aeon no longer has its complete power, but the new aeon is not completely present yet either. For Paul, the Christian lives on the "frontier" between the two aeons. 70 His scheme produces an overlapping of the two aeons; it is a blending of the old age and the new age. This is the main thrust of the last Pauline passage to which I will give attention, i.e., II Corinthians 5:1ff.

Whatever conclusions might be drawn about the integrity of "II Corinthians," 71 2:14-7:14 is consistently interpreted

69 Nygren, Commentary on Romans, p. 436-37.
70 Ibid., p. 435-36.
as a self-contained unit in which Paul is defending his apostolic authority against opponents who are very difficult to identify. His defense of himself involves a consistent elaboration of the paradoxical nature of his existence and ministry. This comes to the foreground in 4:7-16 where he concludes that, despite the paradoxical nature of his existence in both life and death, "we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day." (4:16). The curious blend of life and death, the old and the new in which Paul lives is evidently in contrast with (as in I Corinthians) something which does not recognize the paradoxical situation of the present. Perhaps, as Bultmann suggests, Paul is now better informed of the gnostic-like dualism of his Corinthian opponents and is about to contrast this view to his own apocalyptically oriented duality of the present and future in a very interesting way. To the enthusiastic prematurity in claiming to be "full," Paul contrasts the paradoxical situation of "already/not yet" which exists in the life between the times; and to the gnostic-like depreciation of the body and the desire for "nakedness",


73 See Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, p. 27-32 for a survey of attempts to identify them.

74 Bultmann, Theology, p. 169, n. 1.
Paul contrasts his intense desire for the parousia when he will receive the σῶμα ἐκ θανάτου, the future heavenly body. The latter is exactly the contrast in 5:1ff. God has made us for that event when we will be "clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (5:4-5). This event is undoubtedly the parousia to which I Corinthians is referring (also without using the term). That which motivates Paul's "groaning" and "longing" (verse 2) is the earnest ἀρπαγή of the Spirit (verse 5), which is an aspect of the "already" -- an element of the eschaton that is realized. But being fully clothed and swallowed up by life belongs still to the "not yet" of the future parousia. If Paul ever drops the future parousia from his schema in favor of enthusiastic "realized" eschatology, or if he ever scuttles the apocalyptic doctrine of future resurrection in favor of the gnostic "divine metamorphosis," II Corinthians 5:1ff is certainly no evidence for it (whatever evidence it may hold for other kinds of development in Paul's eschatology).


77 Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, p. 30.
Finally, it must be emphasized that Paul manages to maintain his balance of present and future eschatology because of his grounding in the past of the history of salvation. He preserves the importance of the future, paradoxically, by his reference to the past (e.g., I Cor. 15:1ff). As Kaesemann remarks in reference to the same dynamic in the Gospels, "Present eschatology without this reference to the past of salvation is delivered over defenseless to enthusiasm."78 The New Testament, Kaesemann asserts, "is determined equally by present and future eschatology and holds them both up to the light of the past."79

That is another way of saying that in Paul and in the Gospels eschatology is transformed by Christology so that the old aeon/new aeon scheme which lies behind much New Testament thought is also transformed. The contrast between the present and future is not nearly as simple, but that does not mean it is less necessary to the Christian understanding of the reality in which he must act.

79 Ibid., p. 64.
General Survey of Recent Interpretations of Pauline Eschatology

In recent decades, several different types of interpretations of the Pauline two-age doctrine have been put forward. The first broad type of interpretation is that Paul in essence relegates the temporal future of Jewish apocalyptic to an indifferent status. The primary figures in this interpretive school are Rudolf Bultmann and C. H. Dodd. For Bultmann, Paul ultimately transcends temporal categories by radically individualizing the aeon motif and spiritualizing apocalyptic, so that "Age" as a Cosmic World-Epoch falls away in Pauline theology. According to Bultmann, Paul's interest is not really in the future eschaton but in the eschatological event which has already occurred for the Christian making him able to exist authentically. The "world" or "this age" means for Paul, according to Bultmann, man's own bondage to himself, and the eschaton has come in Christ's death and

80 See Earl Madison Caudill, Two Age Doctrine in Paul, Part I, for more extensive analysis of recent interpretations.


82 Bultmann, Theology, I, p. 348.
one's acceptance of that through faith. In the decisive event that occurred the old aeon has come to an end for the Christian. This does not mean that Bultmann sees in Paul no expectation of a parousia as an actual future event. That would be impossible in the light of Paul's explicit statements. He [Paul] does not abandon the apocalyptic picture of the future, of the parousia of Christ, of the resurrection of the dead, of the last judgment, of glory for those who believe and are justified.

While Bultmann cannot deny that these exist in Paul, he claims that they are subordinated by Paul under the impact of his present experience of redemption, so that such futuristic elements are no longer important to the believer's life of authentic existence. As Caudill says, with significance, "Because what Bultmann says about Paul corresponds remarkably with his own position, our understanding Bultmann's position at this point assists in our clarifying his interpretation of Paul." Suffice it to say, for our purposes, that Bultmann consistently wishes to define the ordinary temporal expressions, particularly the eschatological future, in terms of existential categories and Heideggerian anthropology.

Dodd similarly relegates the temporal future to an indifferent status by describing a maturing process within

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84 Bultmann, History and Eschatology, p. 42.
85 Caudill, Two Age Doctrine in Paul, p. 20, n. 2.
Pauline eschatology which moves him away from apocalyptic eschatology into a realized eschatology, in which the aeon motif is collapsed into a present experience through individualistic emphasis on personal death more than on the parousia.

Though one certainly must recognize the "realized" nature of almost any Christian eschatology as opposed to ordinary Jewish apocalyptic, one may, however, wish to see more justice done to the futuristic eschatology which still remains in all New Testament eschatologies. In order to find this, we must move on to the next group of interpreters, represented primarily by Oscar Cullman and W. G. Kuemmel.

Cullmann is one of the more consistent opponents of the approach described above. He argues against Bultmann (primarily) that the temporal futuristic statements in Paul are constitutive for Pauline eschatological thought as well as that of primitive Christianity as a whole.

On the basis of the New Testament evidence, I have decided plainly in favor of temporariness being the essence of eschatology, not as Schweitzer saw it, but from the redemptive-historical perspective,

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in which there exists a tension between the present (the already accomplished) and the future (the not yet fulfilled).\textsuperscript{88} The "redemptive-historical perspective" simply means the view that God's plan of salvation (the \textit{Ωκονομία} of Paul) is carried out in a series of events which will conclude with a consummation which involves cosmic renewal.\textsuperscript{89} Other terms Cullmann uses for the same idea are "redemptive history" (Heilsgeschichte), "revelational history," or "salvation history." Cullmann argues that linear time is the framework within which the message of the New Testament is developed.\textsuperscript{90}

He wants, then, to take more seriously than Bultmann the "not yet" of Pauline theology. Our question must be: Does he take the future seriously enough? Caudill finds in Cullmann the tendency to collapse the future into the present that is characteristic of other contemporary interpreters. Theoretically, the collapse of the future into the present is exactly what Cullmann seeks to avoid.\textsuperscript{91} However:

Although Cullmann emphasizes in a manner unlike that of the scholars discussed...that Paul still awaits the transformation of the body and of the entire creation, Cullmann nevertheless suggests in a manner not unlike theirs that Paul's interest

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 3.


\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Christ and Time}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{91} Caudill, \textit{Two Age Doctrine in Paul}, p. 72.
is concentrated more upon the present than on the future... The full entrance of the Christian into the final portion of the new age is actually not a central point of interest for Cullmann.\textsuperscript{92}

This happened because even though the coming age is preeminently fixed on Cullmann's time line, the shift of the mid-point of salvation history from the eschaton (as in Jewish apocalyptic)\textsuperscript{93} to the time of the Christ-event\textsuperscript{94} shifts the decisive point of transition from the future (eschaton) to the past (Christ-event).

No other point of time in the entire process, either in the past or in the future, can have so central a significance as this one does for men who are convinced that Jesus Christ has risen in bodily form as the first-born of the dead.\textsuperscript{95}

As Caudill points out, this means that for Cullmann, "The Christ-event really makes all other events superfluous, and this interpretation makes Cullmann interpret Paul in ways very similar to both Dodd and Bultmann."\textsuperscript{96}

From Cullmann, then, we get a convincing interpretation which theoretically established an eschatological tension of duality in Paul, characterized by the tension between the

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 79.

\textsuperscript{93} I.e., \begin{tabular}{c|c|c}
Present Age & \times & Coming Age \end{tabular} \begin{tabular}{l}
mid-point\end{tabular} \begin{tabular}{l}
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{94} I.e., \begin{tabular}{c|c|c}
Present Age & \times & Coming Age \end{tabular} \begin{tabular}{l}
mid-point\end{tabular} \begin{tabular}{l}
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p. 85.

\textsuperscript{96} Caudill, \textit{Two Age Doctrine in Paul}, p. 74, n. 1.
"already" and the "not yet." We must go to someone else, however, for a more radical view of the importance of the eschatological future ("not yet") because Cullmann rests in the final analysis on the priority of the "already."

Basically the same criticism could be directed at Kuemmel who, while attempting to maintain both present and future in eschatology, defines the new age primarily in terms of the individual's relation to God and finally negates the importance of apocalyptic for Pauline theology.\textsuperscript{97}

Kuemmel's interpretation\textsuperscript{98} may be labeled "proleptic eschatology."

According to this position, salvation is not merely awaited but is actually already present in a high degree, but all scholars who accept this outlook maintain that the future consummation is a constitutive part of Pauline theology.\textsuperscript{99}

However:

Mere retention of the future does not guarantee that it is actually functional in their interpretation of the Pauline two-age doctrine.\textsuperscript{100}

With Kaesemann we have a conscious attempt to interpret Paul in apocalyptic categories, thus preserving the cosmic

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., p. 95-114.


\textsuperscript{100} Caudill, p. 106.
and temporal dimensions of Paul's doctrine of the Ages, while at the same time continuing the emphasis on the "realized" aspects of Pauline eschatology.

According to Kaesemann, the reign of the cosmic power in this age is constitutive for Paul's theology. Participation in Christ goes far beyond a mere subjective, individualistic shift from bondage to self to the Lordship of Christ. Cosmology cannot be separated in Paul from eschatology or from his concern for individual redemption.

According to Kaesemann:

For the technical terms "spirit" and "flesh" do not signify, any more than the term "body" does, the individuation of the individual human being, but primarily the reality which, as the power either of the heavenly or the earthly, determines him from outside, takes possession of him and thereby decides into which of the two dualistically opposed spheres he is to be integrated. Man for Paul is never just on his own. He is always a specific piece of world and therefore becomes what in the last resort he is by determination from the outside, i.e., by the power which takes possession of him and the lordship to which he surrenders himself. His life is from the beginning a stake in the confrontation between God and the principalities of this world. In other words, it mirrors the cosmic contention for lordship of the world and its concretion. As such, man's life can only be understood apocalyptically. Thus what is described as the dialectic in Paul of the indicative and the imperative,...is nothing else but the projection into the human


condition of the relationship of the lordship of Christ to the subjection of all cosmic principalities.\(^\text{103}\)

The saving activity of God is a reaching for the world and recapturing of it for His sovereignty.\(^\text{104}\) And "world" includes the whole of creation of which man is a part.\(^\text{105}\) We might add, because the language quoted does not make this quite clear, that God's reaching out is not to draw man and the world into a spiritual sphere parallel to, but above the fleshly sphere. The reaching out is, so to speak, from the future in order to draw man and the world into the new age or the new creation.

Kaesemann does not neglect the "realized" aspect of Paul's eschatology, but he does not want to see eschatological salvation collapsed entirely into a present experience of salvation. He avoids this somewhat better than Cullmann and Kuemmel, by maintaining the apocalyptic framework much more intact.\(^\text{106}\)

Paul is absolutely unable and unwilling to speak of any end to history which has already come to pass, but, he does, however, discern that the day of the End-time has already broken. This is the case since the Resurrection of Christ, because since then the subjection of the cosmic powers has


\(^{104}\)Kaesemann, "Righteousness of God," p. 182.

\(^{105}\)Ibid., p. 178.

been taking place. The present eschatology of
the enthusiasts is therefore picked up but
apocalyptically anchored and delimited as it is
not for them. For Paul, it is not an alter-
native to, but a component of, a future
eschatology....Its realm is called the basileia
Christi.\textsuperscript{107}

Even the "realized" element of Pauline eschatology is
not wholly divergent from "at least one stream of Jewish
apocalyptic," e.g., the Thanksgiving Psalms of Qumran.
\textsuperscript{108}

Kuemmel's willingness to allow Paul to remain an
apocalyptic theologian, though at the same time a Christian,
frees him to understand Paul's position in a way much more
naturally suited to the actual language of Paul. He
stands, then, on the brink of breaking through tendentious
interpretations of Paul based more on abhorrence of
apocalypticism and preference for existentialist categories
than on the Pauline text themselves.

\textbf{Excursus on the Delay of the Parousia and Mission}

The so-called "delay of the parousia" and its effect on
apocalyptic and realistically future eschatology has been a
A view which has arisen out of this discussion is that the
pressures of on-going history caused Luke to give up the near
expectation of the parousia and to invent redemptive history,
in which the life of Jesus and the time of salvation is

\textsuperscript{107}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 133.

\textsuperscript{108}Kaesemann, "Righteousness of God," p. 178.
in the past. Hans Conzelmann\textsuperscript{109} set the tone for much of the discussion about Luke which tended to this view.

It is clear that for Dr. Conzelman Luke's portrayal is a distortion, indeed almost a betrayal, of the original Gospel. Indeed one of the leading members of the form critical school has been heard to refer to Luke in his lecture as "The falsifier of the Gospel."\textsuperscript{110}

Stephen Neill shows in his sketch of the problem that the key to the esteem with which a scholar holds Luke depends on how one relates to his conception of \textit{Heilsgeschichte} or redemptive history. There are those for whom "the Gospel, as they have understood it, breaks into history, shatters it, and brings it to an end; and so any attempt to 'historicize' the Gospel, to bring it into relation with history, of necessity robs it of its essential character."\textsuperscript{111} For such a perspective, Lukan theology would be "the great and unpardonable heresy."\textsuperscript{112}

Since the Pannenberg group, Kuemmel, and others find a relation between gospel and history, Luke is regarded more highly among them. If we measure Luke by the position defined by the agreement between Jesus, Paul and John, Keummel argues,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111}Ibid., p. 267.
\item \textsuperscript{112}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
it becomes clear that the criticism of Luke's theology of redemptive history not only rests on the denial of the redemptive historical character of Jesus' preaching, the message of the earliest church, and the theology of Paul, which is exegetically wrong; it is also really rooted in a denial of the significance of history for the Christian Kerygma. Wilckens has rightly pointed out that the "theology of the word," which Rudolf Bultmann, Karl Barth, and their disciples inaugurated after the first World War, with its denial of history's importance for the faith of the earliest Christians, is one of the roots of the negative assessment of the Lucan theology of redemptive history.\textsuperscript{113}

Wilckens argues that it is "very questionable whether his [Luke's] concept of redemptive history originated as a theological reaction to the problem of the parousia."\textsuperscript{114}

Kuemmel asserts that it is clearly false to say that Luke invented redemptive history.

Already Jesus, the early church, and Paul thought the final salvation - as fulfillment of the Old Testament promise of God's salvation - had broken in Jesus, and yet they also expected that Jesus would soon appear in glory to complete the saving act of God which began in Jesus.\textsuperscript{115}


\textsuperscript{114}Wilckens, "Interpreting Acts in a Period of Existentialist Theology," p. 66.

There is no doubt that Luke is attempting to solve problems for his own time. This leads him to push aside the near-expectation\textsuperscript{116} in the light of the developing conception of mission in the early Church.

The question is whether this shifting of the near-expectation and incorporating the parousia into a salvation-history scheme is in some way a subversion of some purer, more original, or more profound concept of the gospel. Or is it perhaps a most natural elaboration of the implications of the gospel in the situation of a continuing community with a continuing mission within a continuing history.

The relation among these elements should be obvious. Whether or not Jesus' apocalypticism allowed for a continuing community, there was one. Whether or not the earliest community expected history to last more than a few years, it did. And whether or not there was disappointment or embarrassment at the delay of the parousia, the first century interpreters of the gospel seem to have accepted such a delay as necessary to the fulfillment of the mission of the eschatological community.

Cullmann,\textsuperscript{117} as well as Michaelis\textsuperscript{118} and Kuemmel,\textsuperscript{119} had already argued that Jesus himself maintained a juxtaposition

\textsuperscript{116}Paul also found this a quite natural thing to do in the light of certain considerations; cf. II Thess. 2.


\textsuperscript{118}W. Michaelis, Zur Engelchristologie in Urchristentum, Abbau der Konstruction M. Werners, 1942.

\textsuperscript{119}W. G. Kuemmel, Promise and Fulfillment.
of present and future and that he had himself expected a
continuation of this aeon after his death, however short.

If a temporal juxtaposition of present and
future was fundamental to Jesus himself, then one
cannot speak of a radical break occurring between
the eschatology of Jesus and that of the early
Church, nor of a radical contrast between
eschatology and salvation history. 120

It is not necessary to our thesis to establish that
this in fact was Jesus' understanding. The Biblical writers
may have so understood it even if Jesus did not. We may,
however, reasonably assume that in this area where the Biblical
writers are in substantial agreement, they may be reflecting
an understanding of Jesus himself in some way. Thus, we
might certainly acknowledge "that a development unfolded from
Jesus to Paul and the early Church, but that this in no way
signifies a break." 121

The relationship of the parousia (and its so-called
"delay") to mission is a key to understanding the character
of that development. It is often assumed that the near expec-
tation of the parousia eliminates or at least stifles the
concept of mission in the world. We will not enter a discus-
sion of the problem of near expectation or imminent parousia,

120 Oscar Cullmann, Salvation in History, (New York:

121 Cullmann, Salvation in History, p. 39; See Rudolf
Schnackenberg, God's Rule and Kingdom, trans. by John Murray
(New York: Herder and Herder, 1963) p. 77ff; See W. G. Kuemmel
for a survey of the scholarship on the recent discussion in
"Die Naherwartung in der Verkündigung Jesu," Zeit und
except to note that the so-called "crisis of delay" made so prominent by "consistent exchatology" did not seem to paralyze New Testament theologians with respect to mission. As G. C. Berkouwer notes:

Undoubtedly the fact that the Lord has not yet come plays a considerable role, and there are surely traces in the New Testament that indicate that his coming had been expected sooner. But it does not necessarily follow from this that a crisis is inevitable. A crisis will arise only if faith in God's promises about the parousia is lost.\textsuperscript{122}

According to Cullmann, the real problem for interpreters about the parousia is not the delay itself, but the fact that the apparent delay did not shake the original Christian hope.\textsuperscript{123}

This really did not, as we have seen, produce substantial de-eschatologizing within the New Testament. Instead, it simply turned more attention to the mission of the eschatological community.

Kaesemann makes an important point in reference to Paul, which he does not sufficiently elaborate, but which is very important for our purpose. That is: "Paul makes a sharp


\textsuperscript{123}Oscar Cullmann, "Das wahre durch die ausgebliebene Parusie gestellte N. T. Problem," Theologische Zeitschrift, III, (1947), p. 177.
distinction between the Church as the redeemed creation and the world as the unredeemed creation and thereby modifies the apocalyptic scheme of the two aeons.\textsuperscript{124}

But this is not a static situation. That aspect of the eschaton which has already been realized within the eschatological community has created "treasures in earthen vessels" (II Cor. 4:7) to be shared through a "ministry of reconciliation" (II Cor. 4:11ff). In the Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians, the relation of the eschatology already realized to that not yet but ultimately to be fulfilled is described in grand terms. In Colossians, in particular, Christ is "the first born over all creation" (1:16), the creator of all things "in heaven and on earth, visible or invisible, whether Thrones or powers or rulers or authorities" (1:16). He is "the head of the body, the Church" (1:18). Through Him God intends to reconcile all things to Himself (1:20). This great mystery he has disclosed to the saints (1:26). "To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the glorious hope "(1:27).

This sounds almost like completely realized eschatology - except for the element of hope, which in Ephesians issues in a declaration of mission. In Ephesians the Church is pictured as an enclave of redeemed creation within the world of

unredeemed creation. But this is not a static enclave; it is merely a beachhead, through which the "unsearchable riches of Christ" is preached to the Gentiles (3:8). Not only is there preaching to be done "to make all men see what is the plan (σχέδιον) of the mystery," (3:9), but the Church itself is the instrument through whom "the manifold wisdom of God" is to be made known "to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (3:10). Whatever we might make of the language, there is obviously a mission to be accomplished by the Church even in the face of what God has already accomplished in Christ.

The genuine Christian hope does not paralyze Christian action in the world. On the contrary, the proclamation of the Christian Gospel in missionary enterprise is a characteristic form of such action, since it expresses the belief that "missions" are an essential element in the eschatological divine plan of salvation. The missionary work of the Church is the eschatological foretaste of the Kingdom of God, and Biblical hope of the "end" constitutes the keenest incentive to action.126

He goes on to show127 that the missionary proclamation of the gospel is an eschatological "sign" and that such "signs"

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125 See Amos N. Wilder, Kerygma, Eschatology, and Social Ethics, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), for discussion of the language of "principalities and powers" as eschatological basis and warrant for social ethics.


127 Ibid., p. 413ff.
are not peripheral phenomena (e.g., Acts 1:6-7), but are part of the plan (διακοινωνία) of salvation.

In Christ and Time Cullmann calls the reference to "the close of the age" in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:20) "a clear reference to the eschatological character of mission, which must take place precisely in the intermediate period and which gives to this period its meaning."\(^{128}\)

My thesis does not require a comprehensive discussion of mission in the whole of the New Testament. Among those who have done this is Ferdinand Hahn, who concludes:

In the New Testament...we do not find a conception that is in all respects uniform. What we do see, however, is that all the different lives converge....

For the New Testament the mission is determined by two facts: the one is the knowledge that the eschatological hour has dawned, bringing salvation within reach and leading to its final completion, and the other is the commission that they had received from Jesus Christ and his authorizing them to preach the glad tidings that concerned everyone. Whatever divergences occurred in details, these two elements never constituted a problem for early Christianity.\(^{129}\)

As Jeremias puts it:

The Gentile mission is the beginning of God's final act in the gathering of the Gentiles. The Gentile mission is God's own activity, it is an anticipation of the visible enthronement of the Son

\(^{128}\)Cullmann, Christ and Time, p. 162f.

of Man, and as such it is the "actual sign" of the period between Easter and the Parousia.\textsuperscript{130}

In our construction, we will suggest the continuing relevance of missionary activity as an eschatological sign, and we will suggest other "signs," or at least a broader understanding of mission as sign.

Conclusion

We have shown on the basis of selected New Testament literature that neither "realized" eschatology nor the so-called "delay" of the parousia has produced any substantial deviation from the apocalyptic, temporally consecutive two-age motif within the canon itself. We now move into post-Biblical theology where such deviation may be found.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POST-BIBLICAL REPRESENTATIVES

This chapter will provide a preliminary description and interpretation of selected post-Biblical interpreters of the Christian faith. Specifically, we will examine the character of the eschatological thrust of each and the modus vivendi each proposes for Christian existence.

The exigencies of personal and historical development, as well as the ad hoc nature of much of the material in each exemplar, make a systematic statement of the "position" of each person almost impossible and hermeneutically undesirable. This chapter will provide rather unsystematic descriptions and commentary. From this analysis some conclusions will be drawn concerning the adequacy or inadequacy of the exemplars' respective positions with respect to the maintenance of the Biblical eschatological vision.

Due to the special hermeneutical problems presented by the Biblical exemplars, and the special problems with respect to their primary authoritativness, the Biblical materials have been dealt with in a separate chapter (chapter II).

This chapter will deal with Augustine, Luther, and the Anabaptists.¹

¹See above, chapter I, p.12 for rationale for and justification of the selection.
Augustine

According to Roger Shinn:

Augustine's permanent importance lies in his adaptation of New Testament eschatology to the expectation of a continuing history. The materials for his reformulation he took largely from the Bible itself. On this issue, in fact, he made little use of the non-Christian philosophies (Stoic and Neo-Platonic) which influenced other aspects of his thought.²

This statement is important for several reasons:

(1) It gives proper credit to Augustine for his substantial reorientation of Christian eschatological thinking in a direction which then seemed quite natural and now seems almost inevitable, (2) It rightly implies that Augustine considered himself to be a Biblical theologian, i.e., as an interpreter of the Bible and the Biblical faith, (3) It raises the question of how much residual Neo-Platonic influence remains in his eschatological thought.

Augustine's reinterpretation of Christian eschatology was made necessary by the simple fact that history kept going on, more than three hundred years of it since the heated apocalyptic excitement of the earliest Church. The expected parousia not only had been delayed (a problem already in the New Testament), but it seemingly had been delayed indefinitely. The need had become increasingly greater for Christian thinkers to take account of continuing world history and its meaning.

The edict of Constantine (A.D. 313), particularly, placed Christianity squarely in the "world keeping" business. The Church had in some way to understand the relation between faith and history in this continuing and developing situation and to learn how to take responsibility for the order of a society in which she was now a substantially significant part.

The decline and fall of the Roman Empire, which had once been the hope and prayer of Christians, now became the cause for fear and trepidation. What was happening, and why was it happening? How did the tumultuous events of continuing history relate to the Christian hope? De Civitate Dei was Augustine's monumental attempt to deal with the challenge of a world history which should have already ended, but had not. Whatever "non-Christian elements" which might be found to affect Augustine's eschatology would, of course, be primarily Neo-Platonic.³

Augustine himself advises that "whoever wilt read my works in the order in which they are written will discover

³It is beyond our scope to explore the extent to which Augustine should be considered "Platonic." See John O'Meara, Against the Academics (Ancient Christian Writers Series, Vol. 12) (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1950), p. 19-22, for a summary description of the controversies on Platonism in Augustine since Harnack. Despite the debate, there is little doubt that Augustine never came to the point of completely repudiating Platonic thought or of desiring to expunge it from his system.
how I made progress while writing them." At the time of the writing of De Civitate Dei, Augustine still considered the Platonists (Neo-Platonists) to be "closer to us [Christians]" than any other philosophy. But the eschatology of De Civitate Dei must be understood as being less influenced by Neo-Platonism than the eschatology of the earlier philosophical writings. F. Edward Cranz takes Augustine's suggestion seriously and traces the "progress of the development of his thought."  

Augustine's earlier ideas on eschatology, history, and society may be fairly called a harmonious but precarious synthesis between Biblical and Platonist thought, with Platonism in this period being the "major partner." The synthesis must be called precarious because "he has tried to harmonize two bodies of thought which are essentially disparate." By A. D. 393 tensions were already beginning to rise which were to lead to a fundamental reorientation of his thought toward a more Biblical perspective in both language and substance.

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4Retractiones prol. #3.
5De Civitate Dei, 8.5.
8Ibid.
Between 393 and 396 Augustine moves rapidly to the new position of *Ad Simplicianum*. Through a more profound study of the Biblical doctrine of sin, he begins to abandon his high estimate of human virtue and historical possibilities. Since he now knows more profoundly what sin is, he also begins to know more about the meaning of grace. Jesus Christ now becomes more than teacher and example; his death for sin becomes more real to Augustine. The ecclesia becomes more the place of grace than merely the place of education. This new found understanding of grace and sin would inevitably undermine his optimistic theory of history.

In this earliest period of Christian writing, from the first Dialogues (386) through circa 393, Augustine was involved in a more or less conscious synthesis of Platonic and Biblical thought. This would, of course, appear to him to be a quite natural enterprise, since he felt his Christianity to be a necessary fulfillment of his Platonic period, not a negation of it. During this period his early ideas are stated first in the language of Greco-Roman philosophy. As Cranz puts it:

The main theme of the first dialogues is the quest for wisdom. As a Christian he is sure that he will never part from the authority of Christ; as a Platonist he is sure that he will find in Platonism what agrees with Christianity. But while Augustine thus recognizes two ways to wisdom, through authority and through reason, it is the method of reason which dominates the early writings. ⁹

⁹Ibid., p. 338. On the agreement of Platonism to Christianity, he cites Contra Academicos III, 20 #43 and
In other contemporary works Augustine makes use of Biblical and ecclesiastical language, but the results are synthetic. His method is to show that such concepts as sin and ecclesia are simply "different ways of stating the same world-view which we have already seen expressed in the language of Greco-Roman philosophy." Sin, in Biblical language, means turning from the invisible, immutable, and permanent, to the visible, mutable, and impermanent. Ecclesia is basically the place of instruction in the wisdom (either from reason or authority) which shows the way to the blessedness of the intelligible world. Christ came to show us the way to the intelligible world. The Biblical distinction between flesh and spirit is another way of speaking of the distinction between things sensible and things intelligible.

ver. rel. 5, #8 (Sic enim creditur et docetur, quod est humanae salutis caput, non alien esse philosophiam, id est sapientiae studium et alien religionem . . .). On the domination of reason, he cites Contra Academicos III, 20, #43 (ita enim iam sum affectus, ut quid sit uerum non credendo solum sed etiam intelligendo apprehendere impatienter desiderem).

10 Ibid., p. 347.
11 De libero arbitrio, I, 16, #35, and De Genesi contra Manichaeos, I, 3, #6.
12 The Ecclesia is schola Dei. Cf. Sermones II, 4, #5.
13 Contra Academicos, II, 19, #42.
14 De magistro, 12, #39.
The synthesis runs this way quite consistently throughout his work of the earliest period. There were Christian doctrines which could not be fit into the synthesis, such as original sin and the resurrection of the flesh. 15 During this period of synthesis, he finds these potential contradictions to be mere difficulties in understanding. He will understand them better, and more profoundly explicate them, when the synthesis breaks down. When sin, flesh, spirit, and incarnation are understood more Biblically, a doctrine such as the resurrection of the body becomes more meaningful.

His conception of history's goal remains much the same during this period of change, but he becomes less and less sure of man's ability to attain it and more and more doubtful that it can be attained in this life. 16 He turns increasingly to Paul, and, at the leading of Paul, comes to a total denial of man's capabilities in effecting his own salvation. Finally the idea of gradual progress is dropped altogether. According to Cranz:

We may conjecture that Augustine begins to be dissatisfied with the theory of the De vera religione because it does not sufficiently emphasize grace and because the assumption of gradual and regular progress seems inconsistent with his increasingly absolute contrast between sin and salvation. 17

15 See De moribus ecclesiae catholicae, I, 22.

16 De utilitate credendi 12, #27.

Be that as it may, it would be safe to conclude that anyone who appeals to Augustine for support of the idea of universal historical progress is appealing to what Augustine himself would consider his immature work. Augustine had come to the conclusion that sin was more profound (and, therefore, the Biblical understanding of man was more profound) than anything dreamed of in his Platonist philosophy.

*Ad Simplicianum* annihilates the last obstacles to Augustine's doctrine of predestination, to the denial of man's "freedom" to save himself, and to the absolute contrast between the saved and the damned. It remains, however, for his subsequent writings to work out the *modus vivendi* for Christian existence in the light of this radicalized view of history. The harmonious, hierarchical order of society upheld by the pagan virtues must now give way to an understanding of society more in line with the radical implication of the Christian doctrines of sin and grace.

One important point must be especially emphasized. Augustine did not consider society and the Christian's role in society to be less important as he shifted from a hierarchical order of being to an eschatological perspective. This is what one might suspect if one subscribed to the uncritical assumption that the more eschatological one's view the less concern one has for earthly society. The opposite is in fact the case with Augustine. In his earlier works, Augustine is fairly clear about how society fits into his world-view; and
within the context of that world view, society is relatively unimportant. The individualistic soteriology of Platonism certainly allows a place for society, but society is of no great value at all within itself. The proper attitude of the philosopher toward society is one stage on the way to wisdom, but that proper attitude is one of detachment, as one is detached from any other of the sensibles or mutables.

This individualistic and intellectualist transcending of society will give way in his later work to a more dialectical understanding of the Christian's present situation. The patria or City of God will become more "down to earth," not in the sense of being identified with anything earthly, but in the sense that its transcendence is primarily eschatological rather than metaphysical.

This is not to say that Augustine's world-view has become totally identical with a less Hellenistic "Biblical world-view." His description of the proper structure of the universe and society remains relatively unchanged. It is still very Greco-Roman, philosophically. His perspective is still governed by the hierarchy of being, i.e., God, souls, bodies:

The soul is more excellent than the body; God who is the maker and Creator of both, is more

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18 Ibid., p. 380.

19 See Cranz, Ibid., p. 339ff. for a discussion of this early attitude with respect to the relation of the philosopher to society.
excellent than either body or soul, and He hates nothing in man but sin. Sin then is the disorder and perversity of man, that is turning away from the more excellent creator and is turning toward the less excellent creature. 20

In fact, as Cranz points out, Augustine's contrast between the outer man and the inner man might serve as a paradigm of his whole development vis-à-vis the role of the Platonic element in his thought. Originally, as a new Christian, he still defined salvation primarily in terms of turning away from the outer man and turning toward the inner man, which is to turn away from the sensible and temporal toward the intelligible and eternal. This, he thought, was the meaning of the Biblical contrast between the Old Man and the New Man. Gradually, though still maintaining the language of inner and outer man, he comes to see man as more of a unity in either his damnation or his salvation. Both the inner man and the outer man are the Old Man, and therefore damned, or the inner and outer man are the New Man, and therefore saved.

Thus, a more "Biblical perspective" has won a strategic place in the reorientation of Augustine's world-view, but Platonism has only retreated to a less vulnerable position (from which to reassert itself in later interpretations of Augustine's thought).

In the same way his view of society falls under the overriding control of his new insistence on the total gulf

20 Ad simplicianum I, 2, 18.
between creator and creature, temporal and eternal. Man and history no longer move toward the eternal by stages; the eternal comes to man and to history by grace. This is what brings the fatherland more "down to earth." The great gulf begins to disappear "in the coincidence of the eternal and the temporal effected by grace." In the same way, society and the patria, when understood as the heavenly Jerusalem, coincide by grace. There would obviously be social consequences of this significant shift.

The act of grace by which the heavenly ecclesia coincides with human society is the act by which is produced the earthly ecclesia. By that same act is constituted the contrast between two societies in which human beings live in the present age; i.e., the society of the saved and the society of the damned, the City of God, and the City of Man. We have arrived then at a dualism which must be carefully understood, as it is liable to oversimplification and gross distortion.

Where, in particular, does this radical dualism of salvation and damnation leave the Christian with respect to the ordinary, workaday world of kings, soldiers, farmers, artisans, bishops, and criminals? This, really, is where the wisdom of the philosophers will continue to play its role. Augustine, like Paul, has been enabled, in the light of his more eschatological perspective, to "secularize" the

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natural order. The natural order is not annihilated by the vision of the eschaton, and its "wisdom" is not totally relativized.

By the time of De Catechizandis rubis (A. D. 400) a consistent dualism of two cities has been achieved, but earthly relationships and societies remain goods which must be considered to be at least neutral vis-à-vis the absolute contrast between the two cities. Though the contrast between the two cities is sharpened on the level of theological-eschatological thought, he continues to use non-Biblical (Greco-Roman) forms on the level of descriptive thought. An important reason for this, other than his past commitment to

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I would demur with respect to Cranz's judgment about Augustine vis-à-vis Paul (See Ibid., p. 363). In Cranz's judgment Paul "secularizes" and "relativizes" the Jewish law, whereas Augustine secularizes but does not relativize the natural order. I would suggest that Paul and Augustine both secularize and relativize the particular forms of "wisdom" which they must assess in light of grace and the eschaton, but neither annihilates this "wisdom" in a sort of enthusiastic or triumphalistic frenzy. First, Augustine seems able to conceive of the natural order of Greco-Roman thought as being, dynamically at least, in the same order as the Jewish law was for Paul; i.e., as law but not Gospel. Paul, in much the same way, relativizes both the Jewish Law and Greek wisdom, while at the same time allowing both the Law and "wisdom" their due. Any interpretation of Paul's radical grace versus Law/wisdom dichotomy must remain an abstraction if it does not account for the fact that the sources of Paul's rules of practical piety and wisdom are the very Law and wisdom that he has so radically relativized (See Paul's use of the Law especially in Romans 13 and his unabashed use of pious pagan wisdom in the form of paranesis. Cf. Martin Dibelius, An die Kolosser, Epheser, und Philemon, HzNT, XII (3rd ed. 1953), p. 45f., where he argues that "Christian paraenese preserved for the common ethic of the West both the moral family principles of Greek popular philosophy and those of Jewish halakah").
these forms, is that, as Cranz puts it, "one cannot live or think merely in terms of the eternal contrast between damnation and salvation."\textsuperscript{23} Cranz ends his study of Augustine's development by suggesting a crucial difference of position which was to develop as Augustine writes his \textit{De civitate Dei}. In this work the earthly city loses its neutrality and the contrast between it and the city of God produces a fierce dualism of history.

This is where Cranz leaves it; but we must not be satisfied with this unless we assume that Augustine had in fact finally learned to live or think "merely in terms of the eternal contrast between damnation and salvation."

As Cranz himself suggests in his final paragraph, many of the difficulties of the commentators on \textit{De civitate Dei} might be better approached by seeing that

Augustine's position of about A. D. 400 is both the end-point of one development and the beginning of another. And as the earlier development modifies without totally abandoning the ideas of A. D. 386-93, so the later development of the \textit{De civitate Dei} modifies without totally abandoning the ideas of A. D. 400.\textsuperscript{24}

With this in mind, we might suggest that the idea of neutrality of the earthly city has not been abandoned for a static parallelogram of eternal contrast between two cities. Such an interpretation makes the mistake of failing to note

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 384.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
a more subtle but just as crucial development in eschatological thought. In the City of God the transformation of the earthly city from a position in a hierarchical order to a position in the eschatological drama of salvation is completed. The "neutrality" of the earthly city is not so much abandoned, as transformed into a place of existential tension between the times. This place, the saeculum, is the world of men and of time. It is not neutral with respect to the eschaton; it is in the vortex of the separating action of the eschaton -- a vortex which must exist because of the confrontation of sin by grace. It is a place between the times, i.e., between the old age and the new. For this reason, even the earthly ecclesia must be understood as existing in this vortex, in the saeculum. The saeculum as Augustine understands it, is the result of the fact that the contrast between the two cities is eschatological and can be understood as "absolute" only from the perspective of the eschaton. In the present situation, in the saeculum, "the two cities are inextricably interwoven and mingled with each other, until they shall be separated in the last judgment."\textsuperscript{25} So the bald dichotomy of absolute contrast between the heavenly city and the earthly city must be understood and described as "polemical" or "formal." With respect to the world as it now is, any eschatological statement must be in some sense polemical or

\textsuperscript{25}De civitate Dei, I, 35.
formal since the eschaton is definitely "not yet." It is this which basically differentiates Augustine from both Donatism and Eusebianism. In the light of the eschaton, the sectarian rigorism of the Donatists and the political optimism of the Eusebians are seen to be premature and, in differing ways, triumphalistic.

Put simply, the answer to both the pure Church of the Donatists and the Christian empire of the Eusebians is: "not yet." The Church of the Saeculum is a corpus permixtum whose purity is eschatological. 26 The peace of the earthly city may be used by the heavenly city during its earthly pilgrimage, but true peace and the real kingdom of God are eschatological. 27

Markus characterizes Donatism by the phrase "eschatology as ecclesia" 28 and Eusebianism by the phrase "eschatology as politics." 29 It was this vision which lead the medieval


27 De civitate Dei, XIX, 17.

28 Markus, Saeculum, p. 178.

29 Ibid., p. 166. The dialectical character of Augustine's thought at any one time, as well as the dynamic progression of his thought over a lifetime, makes it not too difficult to "proof-text" either as Augustine's position.
Church finally to the concept of "Christendom," not, as many felt, at the inspiration of Augustine\textsuperscript{30} but in spite of him.\textsuperscript{31}

The criticism of Eusebianism (eschatology as politics) and Donatism (eschatology as ecclesia) is fundamentally the same: i.e., the end is not yet. Though both the empire and the ecclesia must be understood in the light of the eschaton, neither represents the eschaton fully realized ahead of the time. For each, for different reasons, the parousia remains only an almost anticlimatic ratification of what has already happened either in "Church" or "secular" history.

Augustine agreed certainly with the Donatist insistence that the ecclesia was the eschatological community and should act like it. Where he differed was in his more radical

\textsuperscript{30}E.g., Otto von Freising, Chronicon sive Historia de duabus civitatibus, V, Prologue, in edition by W. Lammers (Berlin, 1960). Otto says that since Constantine, and especially since Theodosius, "not only the peoples, but even their rulers, for the most part, have become Catholics. From then on, it seems to me that I have been writing the history not of two cities but, almost, of one, which I call 'Christendom'". Cited by Markus, p. 164. The word translated "Christendom" in this passage is "ecclesia." For justification of this translation see W. Lammers Introduction to Otto von Freising: Chronik (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte d. Mittelalters, 16, Berlin, 1960).

\textsuperscript{31}Markus, Saeculum, p. 166. Markus shows that even Augustine's pupil Orosius misunderstood his teacher in reverting back to the Eusebian tradition in writing his Seven Books of Histories Against the Pagans. Eusebius and Orosius both knew and spoke about the eschaton, but they had no grasp, as Augustine did, of exactly how "eschatologically" the eschaton should be conceived. "No historical conditions can provide so much as a shadow of this fulfilment, no historical process can lead either towards or away from it."
understanding of what it means to be the eschatological community. "For the Donatists' sociological interpretation of the Church's holiness and apartness he substituted an eschatological one."\textsuperscript{32}

Markus suggests that the complexity of Augustine's conception has led to the dispute about whether the Church could be identified with the City of God. As Markus points out, "Thanks to Cranz" ('De Civitate Dei, XV, 2 and Augustine's idea of a Christian society') "this debate may now be said to be of no more than historical interest."\textsuperscript{33} Cranz has established that there are in the final analysis not more than two cities. Augustine repeatedly identifies City of God, ecclesia, and Kingdom of God, using the terms interchangeably. ("The City of God, that is His ecclesia." C. D. XII, 16 (I 574); "The Kingdom of heaven, which is the City of God." C. D. XVII, 1 (II 198); "Even now the ecclesia is...the Kingdom of heaven." C. D. XX, 9 (II 429). There is

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 178. "Sociological," as Markus uses the term, means subject to empirical observation or verification. In this case, "a sociological interpretation of the Church's holiness" means an interpretation based on the empirically observable purity and saintliness of the empirical Church, particularly her clergy. On this basis the Donatists judged their own churches to be holy while the more lax Catholic churches were judged to be unholy. An eschatological interpretation would be one like Augustine's based on the Scriptural advice to allow the wheat and the tares to grow together, until the harvest. Only at the judgment in the eschaton will the holiness of the Church be verifiable.

no justification, says Cranz, "for denying that Augustine uses all three terms to refer to the same society. He has no reason to labor the point with an audience which already felt themselves members of that society."  

Why then do modern scholars such as Etienne Gilson not accept these statements at face value? Gilson argues that the Church, for Augustine, is not the City of God. The latter is the society of all the saints, past, present, and future, including the saints before the establishment of the Church. As Cranz points out, however, Augustine considers saints before the time of Christ to be members of the ecclesia. In fact, the passage Gilson quotes as referring to the pilgrim ecclesia actually has the Dei civitas as its subject.  

The problem is that Gilson's argument "represents an attempt to translate Augustine into different terminology," a terminology which is linked to Augustine through the Augustinian tradition, but which is not Augustine.

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35 Etienne Gilson, Introduction a l'etude de Saint Augustin (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1943), p. 235. "... l'Eglise n'est pas la Cité de Dieu, car cette cité est la société de tous les élus passés, présents ou futurs; or il y a manifestement eu des justes élus avant la constitution de l'Eglise du Christ... ."


Where Augustine knows an *ecclesia* which appears both as *peregrina* and *coelestia* (cf. Sermo. CCCXL, 9 (11) (P.L. XXXIX, 1500), Gilson's *l'Eglise* is apparently restricted to the former. Where Augustine knows a *civitas Dei* which is both pilgrim on earth and also established in heaven, Gilson's *Cité de Dieu* seems to have marks only of the latter. Such translation of Augustine's thought into a different terminology, even when done as accurately as possible, probably hinders rather than helps our historical understanding of him. 38

Judging from what Cranz shows, much of the dispute in modern interpretation of Augustine vis-à-vis the relation between the Church and the City of God arises either from an assumption of too much Platonism in the later Augustine, or, possibly, for a Platonic perspective in the interpreters themselves. Cranz shows that Augustine does not, in Platonic fashion, speak of two churches, one now and a different one in the eschaton. 39

The earthly city and Rome may or may not be identified depending upon whether the emphasis is eschatological or sociological. When defined formally, the *civitas terrena* and the *civitas Dei* are mutually exclusive eschatological categories. Sociologically speaking, citizens of the City of God may also rightly be found as citizens of the *res publica*. "Rome is here suspended, so to speak, between the two 'cities,' that of the righteous and of the unjust. The

38 Ibid.
39 E.g., Gilson, *Introduction a l'étude de Saint Augustin*. 
possibilities of Rome being assimilated to either one or the other are both left open.\textsuperscript{40} So, in such a scheme, both Rome and the Church may be designated as "secular."

At this point, we must note two important aspects of this modus vivendi which Augustine proposes for life in the saeculum: (1) In the saeculum, redemption is not a static fait accompli. Rome is invited in the name of Christ to enter the civitas Dei, the city of the Martyrs.\textsuperscript{41} The end is not yet. God still loves the "world," and the called have not all been gathered. The redeemed may participate in the res publica, and members of the res publica may be redeemed. (2) On the other hand, Augustine is not really as optimistic as one might wish about the possible amelioration of society's ills or even about the ultimate eschatological hope for most members of human society.

As Markus points out, Augustine transposes the sociological "within" (Church) and "without" (world) into what "is now" and what "shall be."\textsuperscript{42} It certainly serves the New Testament apocalyptic "two ages" doctrine to reemphasize the "already-not yet" character of Christian existence in a way which the Donatists did not.

We need to explore in this thesis, however, whether this transposition is too complete, and the "within" and "without"

\textsuperscript{40} Markus, Saeculum, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{41} Civitate Dei, II, 29.
\textsuperscript{42} Markus, Saeculum, p. 123.
in terms of two communities is slighted in Augustinian and subsequent Christian ethics. Perhaps Augustine, in combating Donatism, has failed to give proper emphasis to aspects of sociological difference between the two communities which are necessary to maintain in the light of the eschatological differences.

In this area, Augustine did not learn enough from the Donatist theologian Tyconius or the New Testament about the sociological importance of the eschatological community as a redemptive enclave in the world, the front line of what must be perceived by the "world" as a foreign invasion. In such a situation, "collaboration" must be for the world, not against it. But it must also be from a position of relative spiritual, theological, and ethical integrity. This is what we shall describe as sectarianism "for the world" as opposed to the Donatist style sectarianism "against the world."

Where Augustine has failed in this regard is where he has failed to be eschatological enough. In bringing the City of God more "down to earth," he has made it less a matter of metaphysical hierarchy of being.

On the other hand, he would have brought the City of God even more down to earth if he had emphasized more the New Testament view that it is through the Church as the eschatological community that God intends to make known his manifold wisdom "to the principalities and powers in heavenly places" as well as to "all men." (Eph. 3:9-10) The lines
of demarcation between the two communities, the Christian and
the civil, are certainly blurred, but they must not be treated
as insignificant or nonexistent.

An important contribution of Augustine and the Augustinian
tradition is the vision forged in the crucible of this two-
front battle against Eusebianism and Donatism in the light of
a more radical (and more Biblical) eschatology. This vision
involves a sense of conflicting purposes, of uncertainties of
direction and of tensions unresolvable in society. It fosters
a sense of precariousness by a continuing awareness of the
perpetual proximity of disintegration. "It resists the
investing of immediate projects, policies, and even social
deals, with any absolute character."43

This is life for the Christian in the saeculum, between
the times. He may participate in and work within the world,
but he may expect only the provisional, only proximate and
ultimately ambiguous solutions within the saeculum. The
state certainly functions as a "servant of God," but
principally as a dike against the chaos toward which the
fallen world tends.

From here we would like to suggest two ways which
Augustine might have gone consistently with his vision; but,
we must insist, he went neither way. One is the direction

43 Ibid., p. 173.
which H. R. Niebuhr calls "Christ transforming culture."\(^{44}\)
The classification of Augustine as a theologian of cultural
transformation by Christ, says H. R. Niebuhr, "is in accord
with his fundamental theory of creation, fall, and regen-
eration, with his own career as pagan and Christian, and
with the kind of influence he has exercised on Christianity."\(^{45}\)

This assertion must be countered, however, by suggesting
that such characterization is not really in accord with
Augustine's doctrine of radical distinction between the two
cities, extending into an eternal eschatological dualism, or
with his insistence that very little can be expected within
the present situation in the saeculum. As to "the kind of
influence he has exercised on Christianity," it will be
argued that the lack of interest in social amelioration for
which Niebuhr blames Luther (and other "Christ and Culture in
Paradox" representatives) is basically Augustinian. Further-
more, we shall argue, the more radical examples of the
transformation of culture can, with more historical justifi-
cation, be credited to people much more radically eschato-
logical than Augustine (or Luther). These transformations
are paradoxical in that they were brought about not by
conscious "Christ transforming culture" theologians, but by
Christians who had quite different things in mind. We are

\(^{44}\) H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York:
Harper Torchbooks, 1956).

\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 208.
speaking, of course, of the more radically eschatological elements of the Reformation (not to speak of their more secular progeny). Their original and primary intention was not to transform the world, but to be the Church. They meant to take God's redeemed community seriously in the midst of a fallen, often hostile world. Taking the Christian community radically more seriously than the civil community, they transformed the latter more significantly than did those who so were much more concerned with a theology of the state or of culture.

This leads to a second direction in which Augustine might have gone; this is a direction which might have preserved the insight of the precariousness of life within the saeculum, while at the same time averting to some degree the static parallelogram of forces which inhibits social amelioration with the Augustinian-Lutheran tradition. This possible direction is suggested by Markus. It is a theology of the Church elaborated in terms of being a sign. As Markus points out, such a theology is not to be found in Augustine. But

he does provide a theory of signs with the aid of which such an ecclesiology may be constructed.... Moreover,..., a theology conceived in such terms alone seems to offer the possibility of doing full justice to the duality deeply embedded in Augustinian theology; it would allow us to give full weight, on the one hand, to Augustine's insistence on the 'secular' character of the Church, on its identity with the 'world,' the uncertainty and ambivalence of human institutions to which the Church is not immune, its perpetual liability to betray the Gospel which it must proclaim
and the Lord whom it must serve. On the other hand such an ecclesiology would safeguard the notion of the Church as visible, as an institution with a specific task and a mission. 46

In so far as the Church itself lives between the times as an ambiguous and incompletely actualized sign, the Church is a res, blurring into and identified sociologically with the "world." In so far as it is actualizing itself in the saeculum (between the times) as a signum, it points the "world" humbly but not timidly to the Kingdom of God. The Church functions as such a sign, proclaiming its message of the Gospel of the Kingdom, by becoming itself a sign of love and community which is proclaimed as the hope of the world, and by serving the "world" in the power of that redeeming love which it proclaims.

The Church can maintain this function of sign only so long as it takes seriously the difference between itself and the civil community. The "world" cannot be saved by the Church's premature capitulation to "secular" service. The Church must continually regard its own integrity, or, as Barth would have it, it must draw a circle around itself, not against the world, but for the world.

Barth's "analogies of the Kingdom" 47 is an extension of this projected idea from the thought of Augustine. An analysis

46 Markus, Saeculum, p. 185.

47 See below where Barth's "analogies" are examined in the context of his essay, "The Christian Community and the Civil Community," in Community, State and Church (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1960).
of this concept will contribute to our construction of a modus vivendi through which the Church might minister to the world without losing itself.

When we began the study of Augustine, we assumed that Augustine's position could be typed as more "ontological" than "eschatological." This was based on the presumption that Augustine's position was more Platonic than Biblical. Our research has shown that presumption was in error. As his life work progressed, Augustine seems to have thought of himself less and less as a philosophical (Platonist) theologian and more and more as an interpreter of the Bible. As he learned more about the historical and apocalyptic visions of the Biblical materials, he thought less and less in the ontological categories of his pagan education. He may, however, be interpreted as developing a "Biblical ontology" and substituting this for the Platonic. The relevance of his theology for this thesis is in its critique of the contemporary theology of Imperium Christianum and its reactionary counterpart, Donatism, in the light of a radically eschatological vision.

The Concept of "Saeculum" as an Eschatological Modus Vivendi

Political and social ethics in Augustine can only be understood in the context of his concept of the saeculum. Saeculum, according to P. R. L. Brown, should not be translated by "world" but by "existence" -- "The sum total of human experience as we experience it in the present, as
we know it has been since the fall of Adam, and as we know it will continue until the last Judgment." 48

The saeculum for Augustine "is a profoundly sinister thing."

It is a penal existence, marked by the extremes of misery and suffering (De civ. Dei XXII, 22), by suicide (De civ. Dei XIX, 4, 110-131), by madness (De civ. Dei XIX, 4, 43-61), by more diseases than any bode of medicine can include (De civ. Dei XXII, 22, 89-94), and by the inexplicable torments of small children (Contra Julianum, V, i., 4)....There are no verbs of historical movement in the City of God, no sense of progress to aims that may be achieved in history.49

Augustine certainly believes in the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise, but he really does not expect much within the saeculum.

The most obvious feature of man's life in the saeculum is that it is doomed to remain incomplete. No human potentiality can ever reach its fulfillment in it; no human intention can ever be fully resolved. The fulfillment of human personality lies beyond it. It is infinitely postponed to the end of time, to the Last Day and the gloriﬁc resurrection. Whoever thinks otherwise, says Augustine, 'understands neither what he seeks, nor what he is who seeks it.' (De consensi cum Evangelistarum II, 20)50

This life, life within the saeculum, is "hell",51 there is no respite on earth.52 This lack of expectation

49 Ibid., p. 321f.
50 Ibid., p. 322.
51 Christ saves us "ab huius tam miserae quasi quibusdam inferis vitae" (De civitate, XXII, 22).
52 See John Burnaby, Amor Dei (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), p. 53-60, for an illucidation of Augustine's attitude in this regard.
with regard to life in the saeculum is not ameliorated by Augustine's celebrated conception of peace in society. Pax is, of course, the goal of society. But expectations of peace cannot ignore a seemingly uneradicable aspect of life in the saeculum. The saeculum is described by Augustine (as Burnaby so aptly characterizes it) as a great sea "full of fishes devouring one another." (De Civ. XIX, 5-9). It is a place where even peace itself "is but a doubtful good" (XIX, 5) because of the unrelieved uncertainty of relationships.

The peace of God is the proper goal of society. In fact, this peace is the only peace which is truly "social" because the love of God is the only truly "social" love. The other kind of love is selfish, not social; the "peace" it produces is the peace of "arrogant domination" (De Gen ad. litt. XI, XV, 20). "These two kinds of love distinguish the two cities established in the human race...in the so to speak commingling of which the ages are past" (Ibid.).

They also issue in two very different kinds of peace. One, the "peace of Babylon" which is good "in so far as it can be used by the Heavenly city," which is not very far (cf. XIX, 17, 26). Its use is primarily as a "brace" against the load which it cannot lighten, so that the attention of the saved can be directed in another direction. The peace

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53 Ibid., p. 54.
54 Burnaby, Amor Dei.
of Babylon serves primarily, then, to keep the world ("the corruptible body") off our backs until the peace of the Heavenly City can be experienced in the eschaton (XIX, 17).

In order to put the peace of Babylon in its Augustinian perspective, it is important to note that even the "proper peace" which Christians experience by faith in this life is only such as "must be called a solace of our wretchedness than a positive enjoyment of blessedness."

Your very justice, too, though true, thanks to the true final good to which it is subordinated, is nevertheless in this life only such as consists rather in remission of sins than in the perfection of virtues (XIX, 27).

Again, according to Augustine, to expect more comes from a misunderstanding of the true human situation within the saeculum.

As Brown points outs, Augustine's melancholic expectations with respect to fulfillment within the saeculum seem especially poignant in the light of the optimism of his early days. This leaves the Christian in a distinctly unsatisfying situation within the saeculum. Christians are aliens here. "Even to call them 'pilgrims' somewhat weakens the impact of Augustine's terminology: they are perigrini in the full

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56 Cf. above discussion; cf. Burnaby, p. 35-36.
classical sense; they are registered aliens, existing, on sufferance, *in hoc maligna saeculo*.

When, in our constructive statement, we deal with the Church as "pilgrim people," we shall have reason to emphasize the significance of the phrase "in the full classical sense" in the above interpretation. Brown does not, and few do, explore the significance of the radically new meaning which earlier Biblical ideas assume when they have passed through Augustine's experience.

To continue to use *peregrini* in "the full classical sense" while radicalizing the understanding of sin and fall leaves the Christian as "pilgrim" in a position so alien as to strain Augustine's doctrine of creation (not to speak of the Biblical doctrine). If the redemption is related to the Biblical doctrine of creation, the Christian pilgrim cannot properly be confused with the classical *peregrini*. The Christian "pilgrim" (Heb. 11:13; I Pet. 2:11) is a stranger only to the "world" as "present age" not to the world as creation and scene of redemption. The latter, in reality belongs to him (Mt. 5:5). The classical *peregrini* is a stranger in both worlds because he cannot ultimately distinguish the two. The Biblical world of creation in which the drama of redemption is being acted out is, in classical thought, a world alien to the true nature of man. Insofar as that world of classical thought still impinges upon Augustine's thought, just so far has Biblical eschatology been
subtly, but significantly distorted. Augustine's "saeculum," then does not exactly correspond to the "world" in which Christians live in the light of the Biblical doctrines of creation and eschaton.

Martin Luther

With Martin Luther came what Shinn calls "the most spectacular development of radical eschatology since apostolic times."\(^{57}\) The theme of eschatology dominates "when Christians are especially impressed by the otherness of God, the radical divine judgment upon sin, and the fragmentary character of meaning in all human institutions."\(^{58}\)

In contrast to medieval (particularly Thomistic) theology, Luther no longer spoke in terms of nature-supernature, but in terms of "two kingdoms." Biblical and Augustinian motifs were again consciously set over against alternative ones, particularly the motifs of scholasticism. Luther's eschatological strain of thinking was more radical than Thomas' simply because his assessment of the human situation was more radical. In the Biblical and Augustinian tradition, he could not think in terms of man's merely lacking the perfection which supernatural grace supplies. The antithesis is no longer that of nature and supernature, but that of Law and

\(^{57}\) Shinn, Christianity and the Problem of History, p. 74.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., p. 73f.
grace. "The Fall does not mean a relapse into Nature, and Redemption is not the ascent from Nature and Grace; rather the idea is that the Fall means the removal of Nature, and Redemption is its restoration." 59

Troeltsch's use of the terms "removal" and even "destruction" 60 is problematic. These terms feed the tendency of those who are wont to find in Luther (and Calvin) a starkly morbid view which totally lacks appreciation for man's natural (created) qualities. Such interpreters misunderstand the theological debate and confuse theological statements about man's existential condition (i.e., totally depraved) with philosophical conclusions about his "nature" (as if the Reformers believed that there was nothing left to redeem).

As Tillich explains,

...total depravity does not mean that there is nothing good in man; no reformer or Neo-Reformation theologian ever said that. It means that there are no special parts of man which are exempt from existential distortion. The concept of total depravity would be translated by a modern psychologist in the sense that man is distorted, or in conflict with himself, in the center of his personal life. Everything in man is included in this distortion, and this is what Luther meant.

I need delve no further, for my purpose, into a scholastic debate on what is left of the imago Dei after the


60 Ibid., p. 474.

fall. Suffice it to say that for Luther the fall did not merely deprive Adam of a supernatural *addendum* which is now resupplied from on high through the hierarchy and the sacraments.

This means, however, that the idea of evolution has disappeared in its Catholic form of an ascent from Nature to Grace, which Catholicism had combined with the Aristotelian doctrine of the steady process of the development of latent potentialities into actualities, or of the whole process of Nature as a struggle towards perfection. Man does not ascend from the Primitive State to a supernatural perfection which has already been prepared by Nature; the universe and the earth do not evolve from Nature into the realm of Grace; society is not linked with a natural basis in order that there may be a natural continuity between it and the supernatural fellowship of Grace....The Aristotelian doctrine of evolution disappears, as well as the Neo-Platonic theory of emanations.

Luther and Scholasticism

From Luther's perspective, the principal threat of the Catholic view was to the doctrine of "justification by faith" as he understood it. For Luther, Christian ethics was "faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6). He considered the reassertion of Biblical ethics over against the vestiges of philosophical ethics inherited from incautious formulations of the early Christian apologists. Proper distinctions were not maintained between the "virtue" of Greek philosophy and the "justification" and "being in Christ" of Biblical theology.

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Luther viewed the medieval synthesis of Biblical and Aristotelian ethics as the disastrous outcome of this process. Luther dissolved the synthesis and set gospel ethics over against Aristotle's ethics. "For he is not righteous who acts righteously, as Aristotle says, and we are not called righteous when doing righteous deeds, but when we believe and trust God."\(^{63}\)

The basic quarrel of Luther with the scholastics, therefore, had to do with the relationship between being and act, person and work. The disastrous result of the scholastic dependence upon Aristotle (in Luther's view) was the emphasis upon the ability of man rather than the grace of God. Luther was aware, of course, that the scholastics had a large place for the grace of God. Grace is distorted, however, when incorporated into a superstructure built on Aristotle, especially when (as Luther believed) Aristotle was not even correctly understood.\(^{64}\)

Luther's criticism of the scholastics turns on their use of Aristotle's concept of \textit{habitus}. As Gerhard Ebeling perceptively brings out, \(^{65}\) Luther's difference with Aristotle


was not over the precedence of being over act. Both Luther and Aristotle held that action proceeds from being, i.e., that a state of being is precedent to the individual act. Luther's polemic was concerned with the way in which the person and the personal attribute comes into being. His concern (as always) was soteriological. He was not set to deny the indisputable function of practice and habit in the development of skills--technical, intellectual, or moral. His argument was not so much with Aristotle, actually (though he may not have always seen this clearly), but with the scholastics who confused Aristotle's moral habitus (self-acquired moral skills) with a kind of supernatural habitus (moral skills endowed by the grace of God). The theoretical emphasis upon grace was not the problem for Luther. The problem lay rather in the continued moralistic understanding of habitus, which sabotaged the radical meaning of justification by grace through faith.

Although this habitus is not self-acquired, but is infused through grace, nevertheless the way in which the acts of a justified person proceed from this habitus is conceived entirely in moral terms....Habitual grace must not be actualized. Thus a person is only truly justified to the extent to which grace is realized in works.

Such use of Aristotle's concept endangers, therefore, that which for Luther is the basis for Christian being, i.e., forensic righteousness by faith, the new birth, the gift of

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66 Ibid., p. 157.
the Holy Spirit--ideas with which Aristotle was not concerned. "Christian ethics, in order to again become truly Christian, had to be freed from philosophical ethics."67 This included a rejection of eudaimonistic tendencies from Augustine to the contemporary pope. Aristotle was useful in his place; but his place was not in the elaboration of the stance for Christian ethics. The basis for Aristotelian ethics simply could not be harmonized with the Christian doctrine of redemption. Luther wished to recall theological ethics to a level of concerns about which Aristotle did not and could not have anything to say: the revelation in Jesus Christ and justification by faith in him.

The first and highest, the most precious of all good works is faith in Christ, as it says, in John 6, when the Jews asked him, "What must we do, to be doing the good work of God?" Jesus, "This is the good work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ...For in this work all good works exist, and from faith these works receive a borrowed goodness.68

This distinction between faith and work is the distinction between person and work, and even between faith and love. Faith is the doer and love is the deed.69

67 Forell, Faith Active in Love, p. 76.


69 Luther, Werke (17, 2: 98, 5, 1525), as translated by R. A. Wilson in Ebeling, Luther: An Introduction to His Thought, p. 159.
...faith and love must be distinguished in such a way that faith is referred to the person and love to works. Faith destroys sin and makes the person pleasing and righteous. But when the person has become pleasing and righteous, the Holy Ghost and love are given to it, so that it takes pleasure in doing good.70

As Ebeling comments: "This takes us to the very heart of what it means to be a Christian"71 -- "the fundamental essence of Christian doctrine."72

In Luther's words:

All Christian doctrine, works and life can be summed up briefly, clearly and more than fully in the two terms faith and love, whereby man is placed midway between God and his neighbor, receiving from above and giving out below, and becoming as it were a vessel or a tube through which the stream of divine goodness flows unceasingly in others.73

Though faith and love may be ultimately comprehended in dialectical unity, their distinction is still essential. What is at stake in this distinction is the distinction between the relationship of man to God and his relationship to the world—a distinction essential (I believe) to Christian doctrine, but one hard to maintain by those who do not distinguish between God and world (or by those who feel compelled to think in the categories of the latter).

70 Ibid.
71 Ebeling, Luther: An Introduction to His Thought, p. 159.
72 Ibid., p. 160.
73 Luther (10, I, I: 100, 8-101, 2, 1522), as translated by Wilson in Ebeling, p. 159.
For we do not become righteous, as Aristotle holds, by doing right..., but,...by becoming and being righteous, we do right. The person must be changed first, and then the works are also changed.  

Faith, Luther says:

...is a work of God within us which transforms us and makes us born again from God...and slays old Adam, makes us completely new persons in heart, courage, mind, and all our powers, and brings the Holy Spirit with it.  

Faith, therefore, maintains precedence over love for Christian ethics (not arbitrarily, but necessarily) in that faith gives the power to love. This does not mean a mere impartation of supernatural virtues or aids.

Luther's real and primary concern is not with the imparting of additional powers to human existence, but with man's becoming something radically new, with a rebirth that includes the end of the old man, and with a change in regard to man's very existence as a person, ...But this cannot mean a change to the person, for this will be no more than the alteration of certain attributes and abilities--but an actual change of man's person itself.

Thomas was clear about how he pictured the movement back to the supernatural beatitude which Adam had lost in the fall. He was also clear about what constituted that movement ("works which are called merits"). And, not surprisingly to Luther, he is also clear about the source of his perspective ("the Philosopher").

74Luther (W.A., Br. 1: 70 No. 27, 29-32), in Ibid., p. 151.
75Luther (W.A., D.B. 7:10, 1522), in Ibid., p. 167.
76Ebeling, Luther: An Introduction to His Thought, p. 168.
Now to possess the perfect good without movement belongs to that which has it naturally: and to have Happiness naturally belongs to God alone. Therefore it belongs to God alone not to be moved towards Happiness by any previous operation. Now since Happiness surpasses every created nature, no pure creature can become either Happiness without the movement of operation, whereby it tends thereto. But the angel who is above man in the natural order obtained it according to the order of Divine wisdom, by one movement of a meritorious work,...; whereas man obtains it by many movements of works which are called merits. Wherefore also according to the Philosopher (Ethics I, 9) happiness is the reward of works of virtue.77

Thus, Luther complains, Aristotle rules and "teaches us virtues and natural philosophy..."78

Luther was of the opinion that Thomas misinterpreted Aristotle,79 but that was not his main problem. His main contention was that Aristotle did not belong in theology at all.

The sophists quote that statement of Aristotle that reason leads us always to do the best....Especially do they quote the claims of philosophers that right reason is the cause of all virtues. I do not deny this if it is understood to apply to those matters which are subject to reason, as for example, the raising of cattle, the building of houses, the planting of fields....80

77 *Summa Theologica*, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (London, 1920), Part II, 1 Qu. 5, Ar. 7 (VI, 82).

78 W. A. 7, 739, 19. (Luther's reply to M. Ambrosuis Catharius, 1521), cf. Forrell, *Faith Active in Love*, p. 75.

79 *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, (Phila. ed. II, 188ff.).

80 W. A. 42, 197, 24ff.
In dealing with man's situation before God, however, Aristotle is "the destroyer of sound doctrine."\textsuperscript{81} This is not Aristotle's fault; it is the fault of Christians who should have known better.

Therefore is such a pagan philosopher much better than a hypocritical advocate of work-righteousness. For he realized his limitations and concerned himself with honesty and civil tranquility and did not mix the Divine and the human.\textsuperscript{82}

Reason is quite capable of dealing with "society in general," but without the Holy Spirit it is without the knowledge of God or the ability to understand true righteousness. This distinction must be made; and the distinction is basically an eschatological one.

It is "not only proper, but imperative to use reason"\textsuperscript{83} in the area of the "estates," i.e., government, marriage, etc. Within this realm it is even possible for Luther to say that "[God] even instructs us through natural reason, by which we rule these civil affairs, that we should not tempt God, who has made the earth subject to us."\textsuperscript{84}

But even though the "natural orders" are reasonable orders, reason cannot give or tell us the importance of these orders in God's scheme of creation and redemption.

\textsuperscript{81} W. A. 8, 127, 19 Rationis Latomianae Confutatio, 1521); Farrell, p. 55.

\textsuperscript{82} W. A. 40, I, 17ff., Farrell, p. 79.

\textsuperscript{83} Farrell, p. 135.

\textsuperscript{84} W. A. 43, 106, 26. Lectures on Genesis, 15:35-45.
Development of Thought

The importance of the natural orders is discussed by Luther in the context of the development of his doctrine of the "estates" and his doctrine of the "two kingdoms," which is basic to understanding the whole of his ethical thought.

In his sermon on "The Sacrament of Baptism" (1519), Luther speaks of "the estate of marriage," "the spiritual estate," and "the ruling estate." Here, and in most of his early writings, Luther did not clearly go beyond the traditional sense which implies a dualistic distinction between the spiritual and the secular. As he developed his concept of the two kingdoms, he began to see more clearly the implications of this concept for the doctrine of the estates. As he recognized the dangers of the type of thinking which had characterized the medieval Church at this point, he reinterpreted the estates in the light of his two kingdom distinction. His distinction came to be the distinction between two realms of Christian existence, not the distinction between the Christian realm and the secular realm.

F. Edward Cرانz argues that there was a fundamental reorientation of Luther's thought in the years 1518-19. This

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was the period when the existence of the Christian in two realms is cleared up. This distinction was to become so completely woven into his theology that one can follow threads in all directions: to his view of God, his doctrine of the creation and preservation of the world, his Christology, his eschatology, his concept of the Church, of reason, of justice, and so forth.\(^{87}\)

An illustration of this "two realm" development can be seen in his solution to the problem of the relation between sin and good works. In the beginning, his polemically anti-scholastic position was that good works are sins apart from grace.\(^{88}\) Before 1518, he was to decide that even good works with grace are partially sinful.\(^{89}\) His mature position subsequent to 1518-19, was that even good works done in grace are, when viewed from a different aspect, sins.\(^{90}\)

In his commentary on Galatians, he further develops the two realms as involving persons as well as acts.\(^{91}\) This, of

\(^{87}\) Bornkamm, "Die Verzögerung der Parusie," p. 29.

\(^{88}\) Cranz, An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law, and Society, p. 50; cf. Luther's Quaestio de viribus et voluntate hominis sine gratia (1516), I, 146, 26f. in Weimar ed.


course, affects the doctrine of justification. Is a saved Christian partly just and partly sinner? This was his earlier solution; but

as Luther read the promises and threats of the Bible, he came more and more to feel that the Christian was also in some way to be regarded as "totally" just and "totally" a sinner.\textsuperscript{92}

With his reorientation, the difficulties disappear. The Christian exists in two realms. In the spiritual realm, he is totally justified by Christ, but totally condemned as sinner under the law; in the world he is partly just and partly sinner. Justification was no longer a goal but a starting point, from which man can be active in the world of human law and human justice. This allowed for a significantly new and positive approach to a theology of the world.\textsuperscript{93}

It is in his lectures on Galatians that Luther gives us his polished statement on the two realms. By the concept of the two realms, one distinguishes between Christian passive justice and civil justice, morals and faith, works and grace, politics and religion, and so forth.\textsuperscript{94} The Pope, Luther charges, is guilty of "mixing" the realms.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{92}Cranz, \textit{An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law, and Society}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{93}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94}\textit{Works}, Vol. 26, p. 10f.
\textsuperscript{95}Ibid., p. 117; I, 208, 8f. in Weimar ed.
What is the relation of the individual Christian to these two realms? He exists in both, but from different aspects. He is dead to law; yet he is under law. In the sermons on Matthew 5-7, he very practically illustrates this two-realm existence by taking up the question of the Christian as a magistrate. He speaks of the two persons of the Christian—the "Christian-person" and the "world-person." A Christian can be a magistrate because he must live in the world and act responsibly as a world-person. It is as world-person, or secular person, that the Christian is involved in relationships with others and in estates and callings.

In his sermon on baptism, the clergy as the spiritual estate still occupies the prominent place among the estates. As his thinking developed more consistently, he modified this traditional view; first, by making all of the estates (including that of the clergy) into worldly estates in contrast to the Christian estate in Heaven (to which all Christians belong); and, second, by eventually rejecting completely any "spiritual government" in the strict sense even by the clergy. Only God can govern spiritually. This distinction involves


the recognition of the worldly or secular aspect of each estate, even the Church. On the other hand, he argues that, for the Christian, each one of the worldly estates is also spiritual—marriage, for example.99

The same aspects and distinctions are true of the estates of Church and polity in their relation to each other. The old concepts of Church militant and Church triumphant (or visible and invisible Church) are reconstructed along the dynamic lines of the two realms. The invisible Church triumphant is totally perfect in justice, while the visible Church has only partial justice.100

Rule or polity, like civil justice, is also divinely ordained, but only the Christian can recognize it as a mandate from God to man.101 The relation between Church and polity is complicated by the facts that the clergy is as worldly as the other callings, and that the visible Church is, therefore, as subject to reason as is polity.102 The visible


100In Tillich's terms: "The invisible Church is the spiritual quality of the visible Church. And the visible Church is the empirical and always distorted actualization of the spiritual Church." Paul Tillich, History of Christian Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 252.


Church is involved with masks (larvae) of God (the clerical hierarchy) as are politics (kingship, magistrate) and economics (father, teacher). Luther is not as explicit as one might wish concerning the exact relationships among these masks, but he is certain that the relationships should reflect the fact that behind these masks of the worldly estates there is the hidden God. Behind the primary powers ordained by God to help us in resisting the devil, and behind the two realms and governments in which the Christian exists, there is an ultimate unity in the commandment of God.

The fact that there is development in the two kingdom doctrine is certainly well established. A crucial question for purposes of our thesis is: How does this development relate to eschatology? An important point seemingly overlooked by some interpreters is that as the two kingdom doctrine changed, the relationship among the two kingdoms and the eschaton also changed.

In his interpretation of Luther's "Temporale Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" (1523), Heinrich Bornkamm

103 Luther, Lectures on Galations in Luther's Works (American Edition), Vol. 26, p. 95f; XL, I, 175, 3 (Weimar ed.).

104 As a special aspect of the theory of the estates, Luther's doctrine of the three hierarchies has relevance only to the solution of special problems of Church and secular organization. Bornkamm emphasizes a point of fundamental importance in dealing with the world from the viewpoint of Lutheran ethics; "namely, that what is called Luther's conservative, patriarchal, authoritarian political thought is not identical with his two kingdom doctrine." Bornkamm, "Die Verzögerung der Parusie," p. 36.
insists that the use of "kingdom" (regnum) and "government" (regiment) should not be distinguished. "Luther draws no distinction between them." \(^{105}\) It seems that Bornkamm has interpreted the text of "Temporal Authority" in the light of later development of Luther's thought, rather than interpreting it as it stands. As Paul Althaus points out, there is a clear later development, or at least a change, for the position of 1523.

In Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Observed (1523), Luther clearly distinguished between the two "kingdoms" on the one hand and the two "governments" on the other. Because there are two kingdoms, the kingdom of God to which all believers in Christ belong and the kingdom of the world to which all others (that is, nonbelievers) belong, "God has ordained two governments the spiritual...and the secular" (WA II, 249-51; LW 45, 88-91). Later Luther does not maintain this distinction but uses the concepts kingdom and government in the same sense. He alternates between "spiritual kingdom and secular kingdom" and "spiritual government and secular government" and between "the kingdom of Christ and the government of Christ."\(^{106}\)

The loss of this distinction is not merely incidental. It is related to a change in the structure of the doctrine of the two kingdoms. Further, as we shall see, this change of


\(^{106}\) Paul Althaus, The Ethics of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 49; See e.g., WA 30, 526; LW 46, 242; WA 36, 385; WA 45, 252; WA 49, 137, 143; WA 51, 238-39; LW 13, 193-94; WA TR 6, no. 7026.
structure also involves a change in the way in which the
two kingdoms are perceived and the way in which each
kingdom relates to the eschaton.

It is in the period of 1523 and a few years afterward
that Luther's perception of the two kingdoms could be called
Augustinian. Luther's later position differs in a signifi-
cant way from Augustine. As he developed his position in
*Temporal Authority*, Luther was definitely indebted to
Augustine's theology of history. The two kingdoms of Luther
were substantially the two cities of Augustine. The two
kingdoms were dualistically opposed to each other as the
kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world, that is, of
Satan. "That is, all true believers in Christ belong to the
Kingdom of God and all other people belong to the kingdom of
this world. In this usage, world means the sinful world
under the Lordship of Satan." ¹⁰⁸

The kingdom of the world is still, by necessity, under
the law, while Christians in the Kingdom of God need no law,

¹⁰⁷ Althaus debates Johannes Heckel on this point.
Heckel writes as though Luther's "Augustinian" position of
1523 were his final position. "As Heckel understands Luther,
he continues to think of the secular government as almost
completely overshadowed by the kingdom of this world, which
is opposed to God and to His kingdom. Thus, he partially
distorts Luther's doctrine where he describes it as
Luther's Thought on Justice, Law, and Society*, p. 197ff. for
further criticism of Heckel.

¹⁰⁸ Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, p. 51.
being under the gospel.¹⁰⁹ When thinking of the worldly regiment primarily as the state, it was easier for Luther to use dualistic language of opposition between the kingdoms. But, says Althaus, "As soon as Luther began to speak of secular government in a broader sense, including such matters as marriage and property, he could no longer identify the power of evil among men as the basis for secular government in this broader sense."¹¹⁰

Althaus is correct, I think, in insisting that Luther does not distinguish between regnum and regiment in his later thought. Cranz's study of Luther's development shows, however, that Althaus' dating of the change is problematic.¹¹¹ Cranz has clearly shown that the thought of Luther had substantially developed toward the more mature two realm conceptuality before the writing of Temporal Authority. Perhaps Temporal Authority represents a transitional period in which Luther's language has not yet caught up with his more profound insights; or, to put it another way, it may simply be an example of the fact that his thinking as a whole is not yet consistent with those insights.

As Cranz puts it, Temporal Authority incorporates "a considerable advance" over the ideas up through 1522,

¹⁰⁹ WA II, 249-251; LW 45, 89-91.
¹¹⁰ Althaus, The Ethics of Martin Luther, p. 52.
¹¹¹ See Above, pp. 125ff.
but ambiguities still remain. On the positive side, Luther has achieved a clear division between the two governments of God, His spiritual government exercised by God alone, and the worldly government exercised through the worldly sword. Luther has thus successfully disentangled this contrast from its earlier confusion with the contrast between God's Kingdom and Satan. On the other hand, it does not seem that Luther has yet achieved an adequate statement of the relation of God's government to the two groups of mankind. 112

One of the more helpful suggestions for interpreting subsequent development of the two kingdom doctrine comes from Gerhard Ebeling. Ebeling notes that the clarification of the substance as well as the language of the idea does not come out of his earlier confrontation with medieval Catholic social doctrine, but rather out of the later challenge of the enthusiastic sects. 113

As Cranz points out, Luther "did not develop his theory of the two kingdoms further until 1526 in Ob Kreigsutsche auch

113 Gerhard Ebeling, Luther: An Introduction to His Thought, trans. by R. A. Wilson, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 181. This is important; for, as we shall see, to whom one is reacting determines how one reacts. A loss of eschatological urgency in judging the kingdom of the world took place in reaction to the enthusiasts. This loss betrayed Luther's concern for the worldly government into a rather static situation in which the status quo persists until the eschaton and amelioration is limited. On the other hand, the eschatological urgency of the enthusiasts translated facilely (however unexpectedly) into the revolutionary urgency of the Levellers and others. See below pp. 156f.
in seligem stande sein Können." In this work "he drops the emphasis of Von weltlicher Obrigkeit on the division of mankind into two exclusive groups." 

In other words, Luther obscures the theological line between the two communities by shifting the resolution of the tension between them. With this shift, Luther no longer reserves the resolution of this tension for the eschaton. The tension is resolved somewhat by interrelating the two governments with the two kinds of justice in a kind of static "holding pattern" until the eschaton. The shift is subtle, and certainly the emphasis on the eschatological resolution of tension between the two communities is not completely obliterated; but the shift is significant. It provides the basis for what results, for most practical purposes, in that "parallelogram of forces" against which Thielicke warns. 

The shift serves to make Luther's view more dynamic than Augustine's with reference to the interrelationships among kinds of governments and kinds of justice, but it also serves ironically to make the tension between the secular (temporal) and the eschaton less pronounced than that of Augustine. In other words, in reaction to the eschatological excesses of the enthusiasts of his day, Luther has taken the edge off of

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114 Cranz, p. 166.
115 Ibid., p. 169.
the eschatological judgment of the opposition between the two communities. In doing this, it must be noted, he dropped one of the consistent emphasis of Augustine's doctrine of the two cities.

If this conclusion is sound, then the subsequent social-political problems of Lutheranism did not arise out of too radical an eschatology in Luther, but resulted from an eschatology not radical enough in its urgency. The antagonists who are largely responsible for Luther's reactionary, counter-eschatological shift were the Anabaptists.

Anabaptism

Abstracting a theology from Anabaptist sources is much more difficult than doing so from Luther, Augustine, or even Paul. A modern son of Anabaptism, Robert Friedmann, even raises the question of whether one could properly speak of "an Anabaptist theology." He answers in the affirmative, with the understanding that theology is never systematically formulated by the Anabaptists. But "Even as Jesus spoke mainly in parables, thus revealing his theological ideas but indirectly, so it is with the Anabaptists."

118 Ibid., p. 105f.
119 Ibid., p. 115.
The specific area of which Friedmann speaks is the area with which we are primarily concerned, that is, Kingdom theology. His thesis is that the Anabaptist Kingdom theology which is characterized as "the doctrine of the two worlds" is "the deepest layer of the Anabaptist theological outlook."\textsuperscript{120} As such it constitutes the distinctive difference of Anabaptism from the mainstream of Protestant thought.

The new Kingdom of God which is being established in their terms and through them... is of necessity distinct from the world order which is dominated by Satan. That the church and state join in persecuting the true church is only one more bit of evidence of the wickedness of the world order, they concluded. The old church (Roman Catholic and Protestant) has failed particularly in mixing of the two Kingdoms, hence the true church must be, and is being, re-established separate from the world. The true church is the present Kingdom of Christ which is being established in the midst of and along side of the Kingdom of this world; it is not to be deferred to some millenial future.\textsuperscript{121}

Thus, Luther and the Anabaptists mutually accuse each other of "mixing the two kingdoms," though what constitutes that danger differs from each perspective.

In Luther, the doctrine of the two kingdoms serves primarily his interpretation of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith alone. In the Anabaptists, the doctrine of the two worlds serves primarily their doctrine of

\textsuperscript{120}Ibid., p. 106.

\textsuperscript{121}Harold S. Bender, "The Pacifism of Sixteenth Century Anabaptists," \textit{Church History}, (June, 1955), 24;128.
discipleship (Nachfolge). The implications of this difference are important. If Luther might accuse the Anabaptists of endangering the doctrine of justification by faith alone, the Anabaptists certainly might justly charge Luther with lacking a strong doctrine of discipleship. For the Anabaptists, "It is not faith alone which matters...but it is brotherhood, this intimate caring for each other as it is commanded to the disciples of Christ as the way to God's Kingdom."\(^{122}\)

Interestingly enough, Roland Bainton attributes the differences to the portions of Scripture each favored. It is well known that Luther depreciated the synoptics in favor of John and Paul.\(^{123}\) "The Anabaptists went back further than any other groups [of the age of the Reformation]. They tended even to neglect Paul and push back to Jesus."\(^{124}\)

As Friedmann points out, Luther could not very well completely overlook Christ's teaching on discipleship, "but unfortunately there is no organic place for it in his differently slanted system of Pauline-Augustinian theology."\(^{125}\)


\(^{123}\) Cf. Preface to the German New Testament. Note the similar preference of 20th century "Existentialist" Lutherans, e.g., Bultmann.


\(^{125}\) Ibid.
Friedmann generalizes that the "Kingdom theology" (or at least "Kingdom emphasis") which the synoptics attribute to Jesus is not primarily concerned with personal salvation as is the Protestant interpretation of Paulism (an interpretation Friedmann believes to be "one-sided").\textsuperscript{126} The real representatives of the synoptic Kingdom idea, Friedmann asserts, "have always been the old evangelical brotherhoods,"\textsuperscript{127} and especially the Anabaptists.

We might coin phraseology parallel to Luther's to show the difference. Whereas Luther's two kingdom doctrine was concerned with showing each Christian's character as both "world-person" and "Christian-person" at the same time, the Anabaptist doctrine of the two worlds was concerned with preserving the New Testament dualism between world-brotherhood and Christian-brotherhood. That is a significant difference. It is a difference by which Anabaptists preserve more forcefully the idea of community in the world for the world (evangelism) as well as against the world (separation) while at the same time not losing the individual (or personal) aspect of salvation. It really comes down to a matter of priorities; and the Kingdom as manifest in community is more primary for the Anabaptists, while personal justification remains primary for Luther.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 109.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., p. 108.
The idea of the two worlds produced in Anabaptism is its own characteristic value system, view of history, and social ethic. The value system involved a willing, naive determination to live the Sermon of the Mount as literally as possible. Such a value system is, of course, based on a more radical concept of possibilities present in repentance and new birth. Simple discipleship required fulfillment of what would be "unrealizable to an unregenerate mind."^129

In Bender's judgment, the Anabaptist view of history was more dualistic and equally as pessimistic as that of Luther. Luther agreed with the pessimistic view of history, but "he must make a compromise with it." (e.g., by participating in war.)^130 "Only within his personal private experience can the Christian truly Christianize his life."^131

The Anabaptist, on the other hand, completely rejected this view.

Since for him no compromise dare be made with evil, the Christian may in no circumstance participate in any conduct in the existing social order which is contrary to the spirit and the teaching of Christ and apostolic practice. He must consequently withdraw from the worldly system and create a Christian social order within the fellowship of the church brotherhood. Extension of

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128 Ibid., p. 109ff.
129 Ibid., p. 111.
131 Ibid.
this Christian order by the conversion of individuals and their transfer out of the world into the church is the only way by which progress can be made in Christianizing the social order.\textsuperscript{132}

On the Christianizing of the social order, however, the Anabaptists insisted that realistically this was an eschatological hope,\textsuperscript{133} and that Christian social ethics must primarily be concerned with the context of the Christian community.

A lack of "social ethics," or at least of what may better be called a concern for the social order of this world, was often observed in the teaching of the New Testament. The absence of any doctrine of "natural law" was observed at an early date in church history, but it was soon supplied from Stoic philosophy to promote a more adjustable foundation of church life. Thus far, however, very little attention has been given to the genuine social ethic of the gospel message of the Kingdom of God....We mean here the brotherhood idea, the idea of Gemeinde, the ecoslesia in its first meaning, the idea of the koinonia, a closely knit fellowship of believers and disciples, not in the form of conventicles as in later Pietism, but in the form of brotherhoods as we know them in the early church, and in all old evangelical brotherhoods including the Anabaptists. All individualism and individualistic concern for salvation is ruled out.\textsuperscript{134}

It is in the differing concepts of the Christian community that the ultimate question of eschatology is posed, according to John Yoder. In opposition to the idea of \textit{Corpus Christianum} which still lingered in Luther the

\textsuperscript{132}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{133}Freidmann, "On Mennonite Histiography and On Individualism & Brotherhood," p. 112.

\textsuperscript{134}Ibid.
Anabaptists revived the New Testament doctrine of the two aeons. They discovered that the "world" is not simply "an amorphous conglomerate of evil impulses but a structured reality taking concrete form in the demonic dimensions of economic and political life."  

They could have this realistic view of the world because the church was, in their view, an equally concrete historical reality already incarnating the coming aeon. Thus they were able to grasp the tension between the "already" and "not yet" and between church and world in a way which maintained the priority of the coming aeon. For the Reformers the New Testament eschatology was fulfilled and thereby resolved in the Corpus Christianum. Now that there is a Christian government, there is no longer a difference between church and world (or, what means the same thing, the difference lies on the same non-historical level as the true and invisible church).

The Reformers were no freer from the apocalyptic feelings than the Anabaptists, but only with the Anabaptists did eschatology take on present historical relevance. With Augustine, the Reformers identified the Millenium with the Christianization of the empire.  

The Augustinian-Medieval, but still Lutheran, concept of Corpus Christianum had consequences for ethics, the doctrine of the Church, evangelism, and eschatology which were "revolutionary and yet were hardly noticed."  

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137 Ibid., p. 97.
their Biblicism the Anabaptists learned, on the other hand "that the 'world' was just as significant a theological quantity in the sixteenth century as it had been in the first."\textsuperscript{138} They also learned that the Church is not merely "an administrative subdivision of a monolithic society" or "an invisible mystic communion," but "a new kind of disciplined fellowship, taking shape within history by the gathering of confessing believers."\textsuperscript{139}

As Yoder himself points out, these characterizations of the Reformers would have to be labeled false or caricature if they were characterizations of their positions vis-à-vis the Roman Church. But, as we have seen, their mature positions were forged not in debate with Rome, but with the radical Reformation. "The Reformers themselves caricatured themselves. Defending their compromises against their own spiritual children, they used arguments which clashed visibly with their own starting points."\textsuperscript{140}

Several writers refer to the Anabaptist experience as abortive.\textsuperscript{141} Bainton has concluded that Anabaptist's

\begin{footnotes}
\item[138] Ibid.
\item[139] Ibid.
\item[140] Ibid., p. 104. Cf. Oyer, Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists, for full discussion of Luther's unfortunate, extremely reactionary attitudes toward Anabaptists.
\end{footnotes}
influence on the modern religious-ethical situation has been very indirect.\textsuperscript{142} And H. R. Niebuhr generalizes, correctly, I think, that whatever impact the Anabaptist had on culture had to be mediated through groups who had a different view of the relation of Christ to culture.\textsuperscript{143} Reasons for this were partly historical and partly theological. Historically, the radical Reformers were before their time. The vehemence of the religious and political opposition to them crushed whatever possibility they had to be the direct donors of their insights to Western culture.

That which was to be in England constitutionally a permanent legacy of the age of the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth and a major resource in the evolution of Christian democratic critical pluralism was, in the aging Empire, ground up between the nether millstone of particularistic territorialism under the princes and with the sanction of Magisterial Protestantism and the upper millstone of the Hapsburg domination of the Empire in the interest of one dynasty and a tightly defined Catholicism.

... It is a tragedy of central European constitutional history down into modern times... that back in the sixteenth century the evangelically motivated revolution..., after being persecuted and crushed, did not at least undergo a belated and constitutionally significant sublimation in some kind of glorious central European revolution.\textsuperscript{144}


\textsuperscript{143} H. R. Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{144} Williams, The Radical Reformation, p. 86ff.
Be that as it may, we may certainly conclude that the failure of the Reformers to keep open serious dialogue with Anabaptists is one of the more unfortunate historical turns in the Reformation age. It resulted in extensive theological truncation for both sides, and the consequences for subsequent history in Reformation territories are inestimable.

Among the results are that we cannot appropriate Luther's two kingdom doctrine because it lacks the critical primacy of the coming aeon, and it therefore devolves historically into the easy compromise of "two sphere thinking," cheap grace, non-costly discipleship, and the tendency to abdicate to an autonomous world. The Kingdom theology of Anabaptism affirms radical brotherhood and discipleship, but it also fosters an unbiblical kind of separation and puritanism (abetted by incredible persecution) which ultimately gives the lie to its evangelistic thrust as well as denigrating the redemptive power of Christian brotherhood and giving creation over to the devil.

Somewhere in between Luther and Anabaptists we should find a framework for a social ethic that involves these strengths and avoids these weaknesses; i.e., one that preserves the uniqueness and integrity of the eschatological community while emphasizing its being for the world.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION: THE IMPLICATIONS OF A TWO AGE-
TWO COMMUNITY ESCHATOLOGICAL DUALITY
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL ETHIC

A view of reality firmly grounded in the Biblical materials is from first to last an eschatological world-view. The fact that it is grounded in the Biblical materials indicates that such a view is essentially and dynamically related to the past of revelation. But the very nature of that final revelation in Christ is described in terms of death and resurrection, repentance and new life, Kingdom of God and new age. The Christ-event reveals that the status quo is not the will of God and can never be until status quo and the Kingdom of God are the same. That is an eschatological hope that brings meaning and power to the present.

I concur with Franz Overbeck, however, that most post-Biblical Christian theology has obscured the essentially eschatological character of the Christian faith and has, consequently, stifled the revolutionizing and transforming of

\[1\] Franz Overbeck, Christentum und Kultur; Cf. Barth and Thurneyse, Zur innern Lage des Christentums (1920); Cf. Karl Barth, Epistle to the Romans, trans. by E. I. Hoskyns (Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 3.

146
the present which is the practical-proleptic embodiment of the eschatological vision.

This chapter will summarize what I believe to be the still relevant aspects of that eschatological vision, including its implications for two communities, the eschatological community and the natural community. Then suggestions will be made concerning the position into which a dualistic eschatological vision places the Christian vis-à-vis a social or public ethic; i.e., an ethic for the natural community.

Indispensability of the Vision of Eschatological Duality

Without the maintenance of a strong sense of eschatological duality the Church could not maintain the vision of the reality in the light of which Christian action must take place. Christian ethics is not a search for eternal principles; it is instead a search for a modus vivendi for a temporary situation.

As Bonhoeffer puts it, ethics is a reflection of the situation of fallen man -- it is reflection on the knowledge of good and evil. This is what makes ethical reflection so complex. It not only reflects the fallen situation of man, but it participates itself in that fallen situation. In Adam's original union with God, his only knowledge was God's will. Now he is in disunion with God, with himself, with other men,

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and with things. This brokenness makes ethics both necessary and complicated.

Bonhoeffer's way of stating the problem of ethics in terms of creation and fall is very important. As a corollary, the character of ethics is determined also by the delay of the parousia. The fact that the eschaton has not yet arrived is equally important for the understanding of the nature of Christian ethics. The eschatological nature of the Christian faith tempts one to say that this perspective of the future is more important. It would be necessary to say this if "creation" were understood in the sense of "Golden Age." We must not, however, understand it this way.

There is a unity of creation and eschaton in Biblical thought. 3 "It is not possible to speak of an end of mankind without assuming that there was a beginning, and it is impossible to speak of the creation of the world and of man without implying the possibility of an end." 4 Westermann is here speaking logically. Pannenberg goes further. Speaking ontologically, he asserts, "The Creation occurs from the side of the end." This means effectively that the story of

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4 Westermann, Beginning and End in the Bible, p. 1.
creation is itself an eschatological statement, in addition to whatever else it might be, when properly understood.

The unity of creation and eschaton is important not only for understanding the Biblical vision of reality, but also for its implications for Christian ethical practice. It will inform our attitude toward the goods of the created world (world denying or world affirming) and our responsibility for the welfare of the created world and its inhabitants. The unity of creation and eschaton means that one cannot be understood except in the light of the other. This means that what God has in store for us in the eschaton cannot be absolutely unrelated to what he has created. In fact, in terms of eschatologically oriented theology, the eschaton will be what God has created, complete and fulfilled.

The Biblical symbols for this unity of creation and eschaton are "new creation" (II Cor. 5:16) and "new earth" (II Pet. 3:13, Rev. 21:1). They imply both continuity and discontinuity. The Christian ethic, then, which falls in between creation and eschaton, must be in some sense an interim ethic. It is an ethic made necessary by the fall and made unnecessary again by the eschaton.

The interim nature of the Christian ethic is put into relief in Jewish and early Christian thought by the doctrine of the two ages. The old aeon is the time characterized by "the fall" -- the time of sin, destruction, sorrow, and death. The new aeon will be a time characterized by redemption,
healing, joy, and life. There must be an ethic for the time, however long or short, until the new aeon comes. The Christ-event, as we have seen, necessarily modifies the understanding of early Christian theologians as to how they were related to the coming aeon. The new aeon has in some sense broken through out of the future into the present. But a real eschaton still remains in the future. It is the eschaton of which Jesus Christ is the harbinger and the first fruits (I Cor. 15:20). As he was raised, so shall we be raised (Rom 6:4). We are already participating in that which is to come; but it is still to come. The power of the new aeon in which we have begun to live is the power of the future.

All of this changes the character of the interim. The interim is no longer simply a time of total lostness, with redemption being totally in the future. And the future aeon is certainly no longer a time of almost absolute discontinuity with the present (as some apocalypticism seemed to suggest). The Christ-event (particularly when understood as incarnation) demonstrates the unity between creation and eschaton. The new age means the redemption of creation, not its annihilation. And all of this is no longer merely apocalyptic speculation. It is testified to by the resurrection of Christ and guaranteed by the Spirit.

The situation is now one of "already" but "not yet." As we have seen, the varied testimony of the books of the New Testament canon is at this point, in substantial agreement,
i.e., that the Christian should understand himself as living in a situation of "already" but "not yet," maintaining both poles and developing a *modus vivendi* for living in the tension in between.

Assuming Paul's message to be in the theological middle of the New Testament message, then this *modus vivendi* will be one which recognizes and enjoys the elements of the eschaton already "realized" while, at the same time, avoiding any enthusiastic or triumphalistic confusion of the present situation, individually or communally, with the eschaton.

The so-called delay of the parousia also must be considered in determining the character of the ethics of the interim. Historically, the so-called delay of the parousia has in fact been the element which has made necessary the theological explication of the implications of the apocalyptic doctrine of the two ages for history and social ethics. Without the apocalyptic two-age doctrine (or some variant or equivalent) there would be no basis for expecting radical change at all. Without the "delay of the parousia" those implications would not have been worked out, however inadequately, in Western history.

The post-Biblical representatives whose positions have been analyzed in this dissertation all recognized that a strong element of eschatological duality was essential to the Christian vision, and they all made profound contributions to the ongoing task of relating this vision to Christian life in the world.
My criticism of them will involve some adjustments in the character of that vision and its relationship to ethics.

**The Two Ages in the Post-Biblical Representatives**

The peculiar dynamics of the doctrine of the two ages were never allowed free reign when Christianity came into a position of social influence because of the immediate (in fact prior) impact of non-eschatological Platonic and Stoic ideas.

**Augustine** does not merely remain Platonic, but in his hands the two ages were transformed into two cities with vestiges of Platonic body-spirit dualism, Stoic natural law, and the Graeco-Roman hierarchy of being. The fact that Biblical faith maintained the dominating position of his synthesis saved him from the tyranny of the cycle of being and eternal now. It did not, however, entirely protect him from making transcendence almost wholly vertical rather than future, thus divorcing eschatology from the doctrine of creation which he tried to defend so valiantly, if not quite Biblically.

**With Luther**, the problem becomes more complex *vis-à-vis* his appropriation of the two-age doctrine. This is true because Luther had consciously rejected Aristotelian natural theology and Stoic natural law as relevant to the understanding of the proper relation between man and God. Yet Luther still remained in many respects a medieval man, which means that the hierarchical system (or at least the patriarchal
system colored by the hierarchical) was still in his background. And certainly, as an admirer of Augustine, he had not as rigorously ferreted out Platonism as he had Aristotelianism.

His two-kingdom doctrine, therefore, pushed Christian thought back toward the Biblical doctrine of two ages and two communities more than it had been pushed since before Augustine. But some stifling elements still remain.

It is in the context of criticizing these elements in Luther that Helmut Thielicke uses the expression "resultant in a parallelogram of forces." By this he means the tendency in Luther to "de-eschatologize" the Sermon on the Mount which results in a shift from two ages which are "sequential" in point of time "to two kingdoms" which "stand side by side"; that is, the shift from "two time continuums" to "two spheres of reality." 5

This results in a modus vivendi between the two spheres that too easily falls into complacency in the face of injustice (although against it in the abstract) and the corresponding hesitancy with respect to social amelioration (though favoring it in the abstract). Luther's handling of the legitimate (according to Luther himself) claims of the peasants is a case in point, and the whole position of Luther on the state

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is a broader illustration. We will discuss this later in the chapter under the heading, "Excursus on Eschatology and the Dignity of the State."

Thielicke’s general answer to Luther’s problem is a more rigorous and consistent understanding of the two-age doctrine.

When the two kingdoms are regarded as succeeding one another, however, the eschatological tension remains, then there is none of this putting oneself at ease, none of this geometrically calculated finality and sense of inevitability. As we have seen, the coming aeon "breaks in upon" this present aeon like a "disturbing fire." So what is involved is not a resultant of two forces, but a zone of tension within the intersecting aeons.  

Ironically, then, we must surmise that Luther’s problem was not, as might be believed, that he was too eschatological. The aspect of Luther’s thought which (intentionally and unintentionally) lent itself to conservation of the status quo was not eschatological enough.

Even more ironically, we must say the same thing, in a different way, about the Anabaptists.

Anabaptism. As we have seen, the Anabaptist vision more strictly reproduces the two-age doctrine than the Right Wing of the Reformation. It also restores emphasis on the idea of the Church as eschatological community. Where then does this vision go wrong? The results of a vision gone wrong are illustrated by the modern remnants of Anabaptism: scores of disciplinarian, carefully circumscribed, inward directed

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6 Ibid., p. 381.
communities having much to say (about community, fellowship, wholeness, etc.) but never having said it to the world which needs it. This is the meaning of our conclusion in chapter III (p. 145), that Anabaptist history, in its central thrust, gives the lie to its evangelistic thrust as well as denigrating the redemptive power of Christian brotherhood and giving the creation over to the devil. In Pannenberg's terms, something has prevented much light from being thrown from the "circle" of Anabaptism. In Barth's terms, Anabaptism provides no "analogies of the Kingdom" for the "civil community."

This is admitted by the most ardent defenders of the Anabaptist vision in the theological community. Arthur C. Gish, for instance, concludes a passionate exposition of the relevance of the Anabaptist vision with the following demurrer:

There is one aspect of Anabaptism of which we need to be critical. Although they were right that we cannot build the Kingdom by our own efforts, they did not have a strong enough impulse to witness to the social structures. Although they were very much aware of the evil and oppression that came from the social structures, they failed to realize that we can change social structures even though we cannot build the Kingdom of God.7

The Anabaptists have, of course, had a tremendous impact indirectly on the social amelioration that has occurred in Western society. But this was definitely indirectly, through the mediation of non-Anabaptists. Roland Bainton

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vividly describes the historical relationship between Anabaptism \textit{per se} and the "Anabaptist" doctrines which have gained ascendancy.

The Anabaptist contribution to history is comparable to that of the Norsemen who visited America prior to Columbus. They found what he found and they found it first...But they do not occupy the same place in history because their deed was without sequel.\textsuperscript{8}

Similarly the conceptions of voluntarism, separation of Church and state, and liberty of religion were transmitted not by the Anabaptists but by others.

This is also H. Richard Niebuhr's chief criticism of the "Christ Against Culture" position.

Now that we have recognized the importance of the role played by anticultural Christians in the reform of culture, we must immediately point out that they never achieved these results alone or directly but only through the mediation of believers who gave a different answer to the fundamental question [of the relation between Christ and Culture].\textsuperscript{9}

In this regard, Troeltsch\textsuperscript{10} relates several non-Anabaptist groups to the ultimate decimation of Anabaptist ideas in culture; i.e., 1) the "Levellers who display all the more plainly the politico-social conclusions drawn from religious


ideas as such"; 2) The "Diggers" among whom "The Christian-
Social ideal" was upheld "as the logical result of the 
spirituality of the Inner Light and of the Indwelling Eternal 
Christ"; 3) The Millenarians; 4) The Pietists and Puritans 
(from among whom arose abolitionism, the temperance movement, 
etc.); and others.

The problem with the Anabaptists, which did not affect 
the latter groups quite so much, was in the way that they 
related their Biblical-eschatological vision to present social 
reality. As James Sellers points out, the "Levellers," for 
example, insisted upon "the political implementation of such 
Biblical propositions as man's inherent dignity in virtue of 
his creation in the image of God." 13

This vision of man's dignity is, as we have seen, at 
its base an eschatological vision. As Sellers has indicated 
earlier in the same paragraph, the above mentioned groups 
manifest two departures from "the orthodox Christian ethical 
hope:"

First, the plan of realization becomes 
increasingly the world we live in. Second the 
role of human beings, as selves and in groups,

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11 Ibid., p. 710.
12 Ibid., p. 711.
13 James Sellers, Theological Ethics (New York: The 
"Theologie der Gesellschaft oder Theologische Sozialethik?" 
is steadily bolstered. In the most simplified form, this locus appears as the expectation of an earthly Kingdom of God.\footnote{14}

Again, it appears, as in the case of Luther, the truncation of the Anabaptist impact on the amelioration of human communities is not the result of being eschatological, but the result of a specific kind of eschatology.

The problem, put simply, is that Anabaptists drew a circle around the eschatological community against the world rather than for the world.

Luther’s two-kingdom doctrine unified the kingdoms in an unwarranted way as two different modes of divine rule, thus stifling social amelioration by stifling eschatological judgment on the distortions of "natural orders." The Anabaptist two-kingdom doctrine makes the distinction between the two communities so sharp that there is ultimately no basis for proclaiming hope to the civil community. The latter is beyond the pale and is to be abandoned. The eschaton is thus divorced from the creation, and so, therefore, is redemption.

Importance of the Temporal-Sequential Aspect of the Two Ages

The elements of the eschatological vision must be juxtaposed in a proper balance if the role of the Christian community is to be properly explicated in theological-ethical thinking. In order to avoid the kind of premature illusions of completion and fulfillment that we have found in the

\footnote{\textit{Sellers, Theological Ethics}, p. 19f.}
opponents of Paul (Gnostic-like enthusiasts), Augustine (Eusebian triumphalists), and Luther (Radical enthusiasts), we must maintain the futurity of the parousia and continue to explicate the significance of its "delay" for our responsibility in the world. In order to avoid the depreciation of the power of the eschaton in the world that is found in some apocalypticisms and, to some extent, even in the tendencies of Augustinian-Lutheran ethical thought, we must maintain the recreating power of the eschaton that comes to us from the future through Jesus Christ.

This juxtaposition of the present and future, oriented by and grounded in the eschatological activity and power of Jesus Christ, gives the Christian community the freedom that comes from having neither to immortalize the present nor to empty the present of its meaning. The pastness of Jesus Christ gives the Christian community its grounding, but it does not chain the Christian community to the past nor does it immobilize this community against the powers and the newness of the present. This is because the pastness of Jesus Christ is not a sign of the "Golden Age" nor is it a symbol of the "eternal now"; the Christ-event is an eschatological sign of resurrection and redemption, of recreation and newness.

Any Christian social ethic, therefore, that militates, advertently or inadvertently, against the rescue of God's creation from the powers of the old aeon, is to some extent in opposition to the gospel. This subversion of the gospel
comes when the Christian community plays the role of the religious defender and warranter of the status quo. Our God is the God of the future; the status quo can never be His will until He becomes All in All. Radical opposition to the world and its people (as if these were to be equated with the old aeon) through some form of sectarian exclusiveness or apocalyptic world-denial contributes, paradoxically, to the same result. Either way, the power of the old aeon remains undisturbed by any overt action of the Christian community, and the Kingdom of God is either confused with the present or emptied of any present significance for the world.

The Christian community must know, then, who it is and for what purpose it exists. It is the eschatological community, and it exists for God’s created world, not against it. This can be best kept clear by maintaining the temporally sequential language of the two-age doctrine. In this way the eschatological dualism will be less likely to be confused with body-soul (Gnostic), nature-supernature (Aristotelian), two-sphere (Lutheran), nature-culture (liberalism), authentic-inauthentic (existentialism) or any other kind of dualism.

The Christian community, then, will be able to identify with the concerns of the world and the worldly community knowing that these are still under the power of the old aeon but that this is only temporary because they do not belong to the old aeon. The creation belongs to God who is its future. The new aeon, then, is not radically disjunctive in the sense of being
in opposition to nature, humanity, or human communities. It is radically disjunctive only with reference to the aeon under whose power these have fallen.

The eisegesis of much modern interpretation which seeks to eliminate the category of time from the outlooks of Jesus or the early Church, results, from this perspective, in the emptying of Biblical ideas such as redemption, salvation (healing), resurrection, and hope of much of the content which they have in the Bible. This is often done on the basis of reductionistic prejudices left over from nineteenth century scientism. These prejudices include judgments concerning what "modern man" can or cannot believe. The result is that what the New Testament writers expected to happen did not happen and will not happen because, as modern man knows, it cannot happen. We must turn, then, to a docetic reinterpretation of these Biblical ideas so that redemption has nothing really to say about a groaning creation, and resurrection has little to do with physical death of human beings. Or we may revert back to the "immortality of the soul" or some such notion which has as its corollary a tendency to world-denial

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and the depreciation of creation. Of the two choices, "authenticity of existence" (existentialism) or "immortality of the soul" (quasi-Platonism),\textsuperscript{16} the former is certainly preferable. It certainly represents the desired "existential" result of Biblical faith. But both, devoid of categories of temporal eschatology, tend to distort the meaning of the present. "Authenticity of existence" tends to make the present, however authentic or fulfilled, into "all there is." "Immortality" conceived in quasi-Platonic terms tends to make the present into "not much of anything," depriving creatureliness in the sense of bodiliness of its God-given meaning.

Such views must be considered somewhat docetic in that they tend to deny or ignore the general New Testament expectation of a realistic eschatological future for the history of individuals, communities, and creation.

The Importance of the Two-Age Doctrine for Cosmic and Bodily Redemption

Any enthusiastic, existentialistic or quasi-Platonistic reduction of the future eschaton to the present results in a marked inability to relate salvation to the created cosmos, and reduces God's activity to ecstatic, existential, or spiritual activity involving only man in his individuality, having little relation to the real history of creation. If God can or will only involve Himself in the spiritual or

\textsuperscript{16}The term is Millar Burrow's. Cf. "Thy Kingdom Come," p. 2. His concern, and mine, is to avoid Platonic eisegesis of non-Platonic literature, and not merely to be "anti-metaphysical."
existential transformation of man, then the doctrines of creation and eschatology become only statements about man in relation to God. Creation in Christian thought is certainly for-man's-sake. But it is not for man's sake in the sense of being merely a launching pad for spiritual ecstasy or existential freedom. Creation is given meaning in itself in relation to God and man. God is related to creation as Creator, declaring it good in its relationship to Him. Man is related to creation as creature. He is creature, has always been creature, and will always be creature. He may remain fully in the old creation, under the power of the old aeon; or he may have begun his participation in the new creation under the power of the new aeon. But either way, creation is his only existential context.

Further, neither creation nor new creation should be docetically detached from the cosmos. For all of the major representatives that have been analyzed in this dissertation, eschatology says something about the fate of the cosmos. What God has in mind, according to Paul, is nothing less than the redemption of the cosmos of which man is inextricably a part (exp. Rom. 8). Paul seemed unable to envision the redemption of one without the other. Augustine and Luther had no problem with this idea, even though they had to overcome the counter influences of Plato and Aristotle, respectively, before they could adequately affirm this. And even then their affirmations were somewhat blunted by left-over elements of
Platonistic other-worldliness. Against powerful forces of pagan spirituality, Paul, Augustine, and Luther affirmed the essential creatureliness, and therefore the bodiliness, of man.

The bodiliness of the cosmos and the bodiliness of man are extricably bound together in most Hebrew and early Christian thought. In their unity, the creation and the eschaton are both talking about, among other things, bodiliness, the creation and redemption of bodies. As creature, man's past, present, and future cannot be understood apart from his bodiliness. This is the significance of the Biblical idea of the unity of man as opposed to Hellenistic-Oriental dualisms of body and spirit. This is the significance of the fact that even in some of the more disjunctive of Jewish-Christian eschatologies, the prevailing symbol of man's hope for the future was "resurrection of the body" rather than "immortality of the soul." In the thought of our major representatives, if man does not have a bodily future, then he does not have a future (e.g., Paul in I Cor. 15).

It is this worldly and bodily realism that prompted William Temple to call Christianity the most worldly and

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17 Cf. Oscar Cullmann, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?" Immortality and Resurrection, ed. by Krister Stendahl (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), the most forthright and (to some) disturbing scholarly statement in recent decades on the contrast between the two fundamentally irreconcilable concepts which have coalesced in the quasi-Platonistic and Aristotelian development of Christian thought.
materialistic of all religions. The adequate maintenance of this proper worldliness is the function of the doctrine of the two ages: i.e., what is wrong with the world is not its created nature but the "time" under whose power it groans; therefore, what man needs is not an escape from creation, but a new creation in which he can participate. Redemption is not redemption from the created world, but from this "age." Man, therefore, should not hope for redemption from the body, but redemption of the body.

The ethical implications of this vision for a *modus vivendi* between the times are profound. It means the difference between world-affirmation and some kind of world-denial or world-neglect. World-denial as an ethic results from the confusion of creation with the fall and, as a corollary, the identification of redemption with salvation from creation (sensuousness, bodiliness). Christianity has suffered the sometimes devastating effects of this unnatural ethic on its individual and collective psyches since even before Augustine learned about creation after being a Manichee. Plato helped Augustine and Christianity overcome many aspects of Manicheeism, but as one of the more powerful of pagan spiritualitics it did not help the interpretation of creation and eschatology in this very important area.

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In an age facing questions concerning the quality of human life and the very existence of human and every other form of created life, the Christian doctrine of creation offers an appropriate redemptive vision if understood in its unity with eschatology. This is especially important to say in the face of contemporary attempts to blame the Biblical view of reality for the ecological crisis. Lynn White, for instance, contributes essays to scientific journals and environmental symposia arguing, as a former Christian theologian, that since the Christian doctrine of creation is the historical source of modern science and technology, then it is primarily to blame for the present rape of nature by technological societies. He concludes that our only hope is to jettison the Christian doctrine in favor of an Oriental or Native American view, thereby solving our ecological problem.  

Besides the psychological and sociological unlikelihood of such a remedy, it is based on a calumnious charge against the general Biblical view of creation. White evidently confuses creation with the fall and understands little of its unity with eschatology. The doctrine of creation, unlike Oriental mysticism, operates in the same "real" world as modern technology. A stance like White's involves the

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continued acceptance of the "reality" of technology while attempting to overcome its abuse by an Oriental denial of creation. I would suggest that a consistent Christian view would deny the reality of neither, confuse neither with the fall, and therefore provide a basis for the redemption of both.

In many other areas of vital concern to bodily creatures, individual Christians have often inherited the same kind of ambivalence which White displays. The popular Christian view of man's sensual nature, for instance, still suffers from more or less identification with sin (e.g., "sensuality" or concupiscence). This is true even in the orthodox theologies that this dissertation has analyzed -- more in Augustine, less in Luther. The primary source of this ambivalence is non-Biblical spirituality, but, of course, justification for this ambivalence can be traced to, or read into, some of the Biblical materials.

Whatever the source, the remedy is, I suggest, to properly relate man's existence to creation and eschaton by maintaining the temporal-sequential nature of the duality in which he exists. In this way we shall avoid more successfully dualisms which deny the goodness of creation or the power of the eschaton (which is the power of God through Christ in the redemption of creation.
The Cross and the Eschaton

The character of the interim between the times is determined not only by the resurrection of Christ, but also by the cross of Christ. It must be made clear, therefore, that nothing I have said should be construed as some sort of pagan glorification of the world as theophany. The world has no ground within itself; it has been "subjected to futility" (Romans 8); and it is the scene of the crucifixion of Christ. To proclaim the "goodness" of creation and the resurrection without proclaiming the cross of Christ would be to legitimize enthusiasm, triumphalism, and a premature theology of glory. The resurrection proclaims the power of the new aeon coming out of the future; but the cross reminds us of the power of the old aeon which God has confronted in Christ and which the Christian community still confronts, though now in the power of the Spirit. The modus vivendi of the eschatological community in the interim will reflect the validity of the cross as well as the reality of the resurrection.

This means that the Christian community will always (that is, in the interim) have a paradoxical identity. As Bultmann points out, this paradoxical identity is "analogous with the Lutheran statement simul iustus, simul peccator."\textsuperscript{20} The profoundity with which Luther expounded this paradox of Christian existence constitutes much of his greatness. If the

understanding of the *simul* becomes static and poorly related to the power of the eschaton, as it tended to do in Lutheran ethical thought, then the "already" of eschatology tends to be limited to forensic righteousness. Moltmann suggests, instead, that

the Lutheran *simul* is incomplete without the further definition of the simultaneous non-simultaneity: *peccator in re -- justus in spe*. The present simultaneity of the just man and the sinner is accordingly the simultaneity of the transcendent world of sin and the coming world of righteousness. If we take this definition of the Lutheran doctrine of justification into consideration, then the paradoxical "at the same time" becomes the actual dialectical process of the righteousness of God which succeeds against the transience of sin, a process which finds its end in the "resurrection of the body and the new creation."21

The cross of Christ makes sober the doctrine of justification, and it seems to make Luther's *simul iustus -- simul peccator* a necessary characterization of the Christian between the times. But the cross of Christ does not mean that there is a static frustration of the power of the eschaton in the interim, that the interim is characterized by a static parallelogram of forces which paralyzes the Christian community within the tension. The *simul* has had this result in some traditional Lutheran ethics. This is another way of stating the problem with the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms.

On the other hand, a more conscious temporal-sequential understanding of the paradox of identity provides (as in the case of Moltmann) a basis for avoiding utopianism while proclaiming real hope. It allows us to take full note of the fact that the eschaton has not fully arrived, without losing from view the fact that it is coming and that the Christian community is already participating in it. The Christian community, in fact, is created by the eschatological event of Christ, and its character is determined by the interim nature of the present situation. According to the nature of the interim, the Church is in transition. This means its freedom and its holiness are being created by God and their fulfillment is in the future. But this is not to be confused with the old illusion of progress. The Christian community remembers the cross.

"The teleological relationship between the Church's hope and experience only remains eschatological in the tension of history opened up through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection."22 In fact, it is "the suffering which is anonymously enslaving the world, and not the beauty and righteousness of creation" that Paul (Rom. 8. 19ff) sees as "the sign of the Creator's struggle for the liberation of the world--a struggle initiated by Christ."23

23 Ibid., p. 222.
The memory of Christ which the Church cherishes, the hope it has in Him, and the tension in present existence that it perceives are what constitute the uniqueness of the eschatological community in contrast to other communities.

The Church as Eschatological Community

From both a sociological and theological perspective, the early Church was an eschatological community. Sociologically speaking, the character of the early Christian communities was determined by the fact that they were oriented toward the future of the Kingdom of God. Awaiting and/or pursuing that future kingdom "is a characteristically communal venture," claims John Gager in his sociological study of the early Church.

If we look back to the first generations from the perspective of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, we cannot help but be struck by the relative absence of specifically theological reflection on the one hand and the tremendous emphasis on community and ethics on the other. One way to characterize, and also to explain the difference, is to state that in the first generations Christianity was millenarian and that in later centuries it was not.24

From the theological perspective, its eschatological vision is also that which characterizes the raison d'etre of the Christian community and distinguishes it from others.


Ibid.
This knowledge of the new heaven and the new earth already given in relation to Him distinguishes it, for all the restriction of its vision, from the rest of humanity which does not participate in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and what has taken place in Him. And it is this distinction which capacitates it for witness to the world, and commits it to this witness.\textsuperscript{26}

The Church is therefore "compelled and commanded to see world history as such very differently from the way in which the rest of humanity can see it."\textsuperscript{27}

Barth's presupposition is that the Church is not merely a voluntary sociological community but must be understood theologically as an eschatologically engendered community, knowing its destiny, awaiting its destiny, and moving toward its destiny in and through Christ.

For Barth the Church is the eschatological community, compelled by that fact to be distinct from other communities. But this distinctiveness, this drawing of a circle around the Christian community is both against the world and for the world. If, as the Anabaptists, Barth placed the community only over-against the world, he would, as the Anabaptists, be recommending a sectarianism against the world. By holding the over-againstness and the for-ness in a kind of an eschatologically induced dialectic, Barth instead stands for a kind of a "sectarianism for the world," much as the early Christians seemed to have understood themselves.

\textsuperscript{26} Karl Barth, \textit{Church Dogmatics}, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961), Vol. IV, part 3, p. 715.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
What then, in Barth's view does the Christian community owe to the worldly community?

What Christians decidedly owe to the world is just that they should love one another in this way [Romans 13:8-10]. In so far as this love is alive among Christians, in all its depth and reality, with all the joy and sorrow it brings, with all its fervour that must not be confused with passion, the Church is edified, the good work which God requires takes place, not only in the inner circle of Christians, but with the maintenance of this circle for everyone and for the whole world. 28

How then is the benefit of this love to be shared with the world? Barth answers by presenting what are called "Analogies of the Kingdom."

The Church must remain the Church. It must remain the inner circle of the Kingdom of Christ. The Christian community has a task of which the civil community can never relieve it and which it can never pursue in the forms peculiar to the civil community. It would not redound to the welfare of the civil community if the Christian community should be absorbed into it..., and were therefore to neglect the special task which it has received a categorical order to undertake. It proclaims the rule of Jesus Christ and the hope of the Kingdom of God. This is not the task of the civil community. 29

Nevertheless, the civil community may be regarded "as an allegory, as a correspondence and an analogue to the Kingdom of God which the Church preaches and believes it." 30

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28 Barth, Church Dogmatics, II, 2, p. 719.


30 Ibid., p. 169.
Since the state forms the outer circle, within which the Church, with the mystery of its faith and Gospel, is the inner circle, since it shares a common centre with the Church, it is inevitable that, although its presuppositions and its tasks are its own and different, it is nevertheless capable of reflecting indirectly the truth and reality which constitute the Christian community. Some of the analogies to the Kingdom are as follows:

1) God became man and "thereby proved himself neighbor to man," by treating him with compassion. By analogy, in the political sphere "the Church will always and in all circumstances be interested primarily in human beings and not in some abstract cause or other." The Church witnesses to the divine justification; therefore it will support "commonly acknowledged law" and "equal protection for all" within the political sphere.

2) The Church came to seek and save the lost; therefore the Church must concentrate in society "first on the lower and lowest levels of human society."

3) The Church is a fellowship of freedom; therefore the Church affirms that freedom of choice "must be guaranteed by the state."

31 Ibid. I consider Barth's concentric circle model to be an adequate one if the "beachhead" and "pilgrim" character of the inner circle is maintained.

32 Ibid., p. 171.

33 Ibid., p. 172.

34 Ibid., p. 173.

35 Ibid.
In all, Barth lists twelve categories, adding that these are just a few examples of Christian choices, decisions, and activities in the political sphere: examples of analogies and corollaries of that Kingdom of God in which the Church believes and which it preaches, in the sphere of the external, relative, and provisional problems of the civil community. 36

Most commentators, even those sympathetic to Barth, find problems in his concept of analogy. Will Herberg argues that the analogies have no proof value. 37 He is correct, as almost all of Barth's commentators agree. 38 Yoder considers them to be of little sure interpretative value. In fact, Yoder believes, they are "probably proffered tongue-in-cheek anyway," 39 an example of what Barth calls "humor" -- "a measure of not-taking-oneself too seriously." 40

Whether or not Yoder's suggestion is correct, Barth's "analogies" fail from our perspective in two important ways, both of which are recognized by Herberg. (1) They are "Platonic-Origenistic" hangovers "out of line with the main trend of his work." 41 And (2) they are dependent on remnants

36 Ibid., p. 179.
37 Ibid., p. 31ff.
39 Ibid., p. 126.
40 Ibid., p. 127-8.
41 Herberg in Barth, Community, State and Church, p. 36.
from "the Augustinian-Reformation doctrine of the State," which we shall criticize.

Whether or not the critics are correct in their evaluation of Barth's idea, something must still be found to fill the role of the "analogies of the Kingdom," or there may not be a basis in the two communities doctrine for the development of a social ethic.

Analogies, Two Communities, and "Social Ethics"

In a debate with his brother (H. Richard) Reinhold Niebuhr criticizes him in a very striking manner.

I realize quite well that my brother's position in its ethical perfectionism and in its apocalyptic tone is closer to the gospel than mine. In confessing this I am forced to admit that I am unable to construct an adequate social ethic out of a pure love ethic. I cannot abandon the pure love ideal because anything which falls short of it is less than ideal. But I cannot use it fully if I want to assume a responsible attitude toward the problems of society.

Is it true that one must choose between being "closer to the gospel" and constructing "an adequate social ethic"?

Mennonite theologian John Yoder suggests an important insight which is crucial to dealing with this problem:

That there could be a distinction between ethics for Christians and ethics for the civil

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42 Ibid.
community had not been a constitutive part of Christian social thought since Augustine. One could distinguish clergy and laity, or body and soul, or revelation and reason, or personal and social ethics, or law and gospel, or love and justice—but Barth (in "The Christian Community and the Civil Community") now distinguishes communities and identifies the impossibility of tailoring Christian ethics to fit the civil society. Barth begins by recognizing that the difference that matters is another one, namely between the People of God and the other peoples. For Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Harnack, Brunner, and the Niebuhr brothers, the distinctiveness of church and world is not an axiom for ethics.45

As Yoder sees the problem in the traditional approach:

Lutheranism and its pietist offshoots worked out most systematically a duality of ethical realms, emphasizing that the obligations of one's station (father, prince, merchant) are the same for the Christian as for the Turk. A duality is maintained between this level of general ethical obligation and the gospel, but what one should do in society as faithful Christian, unfaithful Christian, or Turk is the same. The point of the law/gospel duality is to preserve the denial that social-ethical insights or obligations are different for the believing community. Niebuhrian language can speak of a tension between Church and the world; but it means a difference between worthy and unworthy ethical goals for a whole society, or a conflict between incommensurate leadership structures in a pluralistic society, not the distinction between the community of faith heralding the acts of God on one hand and the givenness of the total social order on the other.46

If Yoder's generalizations are accurate, then Barth's distinctive contribution has been to present a conception of Church and civil community which preserves the kind of theological unity with which the older formulations were concerned

45 John Yoder, Karl Barth and the Problem of War, p. 126.
46 Ibid.
while at the same time reviving the kind of distinction to which the Anabaptists testified. In doing so, he has co-opted into one vision the ethical concerns of both the left and right wings of the Reformation. At the same time that they are co-opted, however, they are also transformed.

My contention is that all of these concerns might be maintained if one were not afraid of asserting the utter uniqueness of the Christian love ethic and the community of faith to which it is relevant. One can then "use fully" the love ethic for that which is its purpose (which is not as "a social ethic for our time"), while at the same time providing for the construction of "an adequate social ethic."

The first step is to distinguish between the ethics possible and appropriate for two different communities. When the expression "social ethic" is used, it usually refers to an ethic appropriate for the human community in general. A "social ethic" is an ethic for a society composed of Christians and non-Christians. The New Testament ethic is not a social ethic in this sense. It is a social ethic only in the sense that it is an ethic of reciprocal encounter among persons within the community of faith and an ethic of personal and community responsibility toward those who are without the community. It is an ethic of the community of faith and not of a natural community (even if the natural community is partly Christian). If there is no room for such an ethic in our modern situation, then we should let the New Testament lie in
peace and ground our ethic somewhere else. If we want to maintain the validity and integrity of the New Testament ethic as an ethic of grace in the community of faith, then we should leave the ethic of grace room for its work and try to find a way of dealing with our other concern - i.e., an ethic for a pluralistic society.

An ethic for the civil community was not a primary concern of Jesus. He did not contest the lawfulness of political authority, but he did put limits on its domain, i.e., it was not to take precedence over the infinite demands of God. A clear separation between the order of the state and the divine order is made in the words, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's." Further, there is assumed in the trial of Jesus the lawfulness of the political authority of Pilate; and on Jesus' attitude toward Pilate Paul seems to build a teaching on the Christian relation to government in Romans 13. The function of the government there is penal justice, not what is today called social justice; and when Paul encounters a problem of social structure (e.g., the condition of slaves), his primary concern is to transform personal relationships, rather than modify the established order. The individual relationships can be transformed because the persons have entered through faith and have been led by the Holy Spirit into a new life in Christ.

The question of the direct relevance of New Testament ethics to social problems may be best evaluated by considering
the nature of ἀγάπη in the New Testament. The love commandment is ascribed to Jesus in all three synoptic gospels and has received special attention recently in the emphasis on love as the only intrinsic good and only norm in ethics. The two-part commandment calling for ἀγάπη for God and ἀγάπη for one's neighbor is concerned with a "giving" kind of love. "ἀγάπη is determined by the subject, as a free determined act." It may be provisionally defined for the entire New Testament as "energetic and beneficent good will which stops at nothing to secure the good of the beloved object."

The commandment is rooted in the Old Testament, of course, but its uniqueness in the New Testament is clear. First, Jesus' identification of the neighbor was broader than the Jewish restriction of Him to compatriots or family. In fact he put a relatively high value on loving those who have no claim on one's love except that they are in need and he


50 The Shema of Deut. 6:4-5 and the demand of Lev. 19:18.

put disinterested love on an entirely different level from natural human love. 52 Second, the combination of the two commandments was notably scarce or non-existent in Judaism and Jesus seems to give the thrust that the only way in which a man can prove that he loves God is by showing that he loves men, without restriction.

Because, for a long time, some kinds of pietism have thought that social life was no more than the sum of the relationships between individuals and that social ethics was no different from personal ethics, it has also been assumed that this "commandment of commandments" can be used as spoken by Jesus as the base for social ethics. But as Bultmann points out, 53 Jesus' love ethic was an eschatological ethic, not an ethic of world reform, "for it does not envisage a future to be molded within this world by plans and sketches for the ordering of human life." 54 On the contrary,

It is an ethic that, by demanding more than the law that regulates human society does and requiring of the individual the waiver of his own rights, makes the individual immediately responsible to God. 55


54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.
This is certainly not a "social ethic" in the sense recognized in this thesis. It is a very personal ethic, but not individualistic. It directs the Christian in the personal encounter with his neighbor and in the koinonia among the persons within the redeemed community. But its very source and nature precludes its direct use as a social ethic.

The remainder of the New Testament emphasizes brotherly love from the context of a redeemed Christian community. But the prerequisite for this love, if it is known by those in the redeemed community, is the new life the community has received in relationship to God through Christ. And this love based on Christian commitment is difficult to relate directly to an ethic for a community that includes non-Christians.

Nothing can have transforming power unless it maintains its own integrity. The moment Christian love is translated into social love or into "approximations" in the form of social programs it loses its own integrity, obscures its own sources and power, and is, therefore, itself the transformed rather than the transformer.

An ethic of personal love or of the community of faith cannot be substituted for social justice. Pietism is wrong in attempting this. But social justice may be taken as seriously as the love of personal relationship, while still

56 This is the point of Montefiore’s article. Also note Stauffer, TDNT, v. I, p. 51.
continuing to recognize the latter as a sine qua non of Christian ethical self-understanding. The paucity of Jesus' political ethic is sometimes attributed to his ignorance: He expected an immediate end to politics; and he did not anticipate the modern situation. However, there may be a more basic reason for the inadequacy of Jesus' ethic for a social ethic (then or now); i.e., that it was not meant to be a social or public ethic, and that, in fact, something essential to the meaning of his work is obscured if the distinction is lost.

We might venture to suggest that perhaps Jesus' ethic might best be considered as an interim ethic--and we are still to consider ourselves as in the interim. The interim may best be described as the existence between the "already" and the "not yet" of Christian eschatological understanding. The Christian understands himself as justified "already" but "not yet," as redeemed "already" but "not yet," as conforming to the perfect love of the kingdom ethic "already" and "not yet." This is the self-understanding of the Christian and of the Christian community. Only the Christian and the community of faith have this self-understanding, however. The kingdom ethic is the content of our obedience, our response to God. It determines our action toward all men, but it does not

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determine the action of all men. Thus, when we speak of social ethics or public ethics, we confuse the issue by speaking of them as kingdom ethics, except by analogy. By analogy, a social or public ethic is itself an interim ethic, an ethic "between the times," until "the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ" (Revelation 12:15). The ethics of the kingdom are possible only as the fruit of the "already"; social ethics reflect the necessary situation of the "not yet." The Christian knows that he exists in both realms at once. This understanding comes to him by revelation in Jesus Christ.

This analysis involves, to some extent, a kind of conceptually sectarian view of the relation of the Church to the world. It is not, however, a sectarian exclusivism. The circle must be drawn theologically and ethically around the community of faith. The circle is not against the world, however; it is for the world. It is indispensable to the integrity of the redemptive community, and, consequently, it is indispensable to the redemption of the world. As Barth has put it, what Christians owe the world is to love one another and to maintain this circle of love for the benefit of the world. 58

This love "contains directions about the life of Christians in relationship with others; first their fellowship among themselves and then their contacts with the surrounding non-Christian world." Thus even the Christian's relation to the state is another form of neighbor love. This neighbor love to the non-Christian does not involve the imposition of an ethic which he can neither understand nor take seriously. Toward the society in which the Church lives it involves gospel proclamation, "maintaining the circle," prophetic criticism, and simple cooperation in bringing Christian light to bear on the continual development of an interim ethic for the natural forms of community. Such an ethic must, of course, be considered just as relative as is existence in the interim. The natural communities are "independent of faith and of the love which flows from faith."

It is not the primary task of the Church to influence public opinion; its duty rather is to educate and inspire the local congregations. But much of what is known and willed by those who confess the name of Christ is also known and willed by those who do not.

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59 Ibid.


62 Ibid., p. 521.
Neighbor love makes it incumbent upon Christians, therefore, to make the Christian ethos as effective as possible within the formation of civil justice. This may be accomplished by humbly working with our fellows, Christian and non-Christian, in intensive analysis and reflection on common, public grounds.

In doing this, however, we must carefully avoid the confusion of identifying the ethics of grace with the public ethics, and vice versa. We must maintain the distinction between the community of faith and general community. In such identification, both lose; transformation results, but in the wrong direction.

As we have seen, one possible theoretical expediency for maintaining the distinction and avoiding this confusion is a concept of analogy. Barth sets the stage for this kind of thinking:

Conscious of the lordship of Christ of the Church and over the world, conscious of the permanent imminence of the kingdom, the Christian seeks to realize analogically in society and in the state what Christ manifestly realizes in the Church which is his body: a new brotherhood.63

Analogy does seem to allow Biblical-theological ethics to illuminate a social or public ethics without being reduced to the latter or without unduly restricting the latter. Our

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example of ἀγάπη as the law of Christ well illustrates the point.

The law of Christ is love, and love in its fulness and truth always shows itself in a personal encounter within a personal relationship. Love knows no mediation. That is why Christ came into the world to meet men and to establish a personal relationship with them. That is also why, within the community of the church, the personal relationship must always come before the juridical and administrative type of relationship. But modern society could not be satisfied with a purely personal expression of love and mutual help. 64

The gap between the purely personal expression of love and mutual help and a full-fledged social ethic could be bridged, theoretically at least, by some form of analogy. As Barth suggests, "The only more concrete way of discussing the relationship would be to refer to individual historical decisions." 65

As a matter of fact, I would like to suggest another concrete way of discussing the "analogies of the Kingdom." The idea of analogy discussed in abstract terms tends to be Platonistic. Discussed in reference to "individual historical decision," it tends to ignore the fact that the more significant concretions of the Christian vision have occurred as concrete historical movements and were, paradoxically, often impeded by historical decisions of the empirical Church. The way Pannenberg goes about discussing the "analogies of the

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64 Ibid.

65 Barth, "Christian Community and Civil Community," p. 179.
Kingdom," in fact, is by referring to historical movements which have resulted in real though ambiguous concretions of the Christian vision. 66 Discussed in this way, the idea of "analogy" is productive of insight into the history of the relation between Christ and culture. Pannenberg takes for his example the concrete historical movement from Christian "freedom" to the concept of political freedom in Western humanism.

The "Principle of Human Freedom" as a Historical Concretion of "Christian Freedom"

A basic element of the Christian vision is the idea of freedom. Pannenberg shows how an "analogy" of Christian freedom has been translated into concrete reality. He notes 67 that two of the chief elements associated with the Christian doctrine of man (i.e., 1) creation of man in the image of God, and 2) the sinfulness of man) do not even indicate that which is the distinctive Christian element in the understanding of man; i.e., Man has been reconciled to God in Christ. New Testament images of this fact are numerous, but Paul's is the simplest;

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66 This writer explicitly asked Pannenberg about his understanding of Barth's "analogy of the Kingdom." His reply was, "That is exactly what I am doing tonight [in the Lecture on freedom entitled, "The Christian Idea of Personality."]."

67 The following material on freedom was developed from that unpublished lecture and from personal dialogue with Pannenberg in Houston, Texas, February 5, 1976.

67 Ibid.
that is, that by being "in" Christ -- in communion with Christ -- we participate in the blessings which God wishes to impart to us -- liberation from the power of sin and freedom for communion with God.

This implies that in the Christian vision the individual human being is "the goal of God's eternal intentions." This view is in turn based on the idea of the eternal value of the individual expressed in Jesus' parables of the lost son (Luke 15:11-32) the lost sheep (Luke 15:5-7) and the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10). The bridge between Jesus' view and Paul's is the cross of Christ understood in the light of the resurrection, which witnesses to and guarantees the importance of the individual which Jesus' parables suggest. The cross "proves" that "God searches in love for every individual who has gone astray."  

There is a prior historical context for these ideas to be found particularly in the post-exilic Jewish Faith. It is here that the question regarding the destiny and responsibility of the individual comes to the fore. Then it is noticed "that there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous" (Eccl. 8:14), and it is declared that "all souls are mine; the soul of the

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68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
father as well as the soul of the son; the soul that sins
shall die" (Ez. 18:4), in qualification of the older idea
that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the sons
(Deut. 5:9).

Out of this context arises the resurrection faith which
emancipated the individual from the social context by giving
his own personal life legitimation and value even beyond death.
But, without the cross and resurrection of Christ the value
of the individual in Jewish thought was based on the idea
that the individual is "the place where the righteousness of
God should be manifest." 70

The Platonists only appeared to give great value to
the individual. In reality they did not attribute eternal
value to the individual as we understand him, but only to the
soul. The soul in Plato is not identical with the individual
from life to death. It is not even the individual in
resurrection. 71

Judeo-Christian thought, therefore, is the historical
root of the so-called "principle of human freedom." The con-
cretization of this principle in human history did not, however,
proceed smoothly and naturally from the assumption of
Christian influence in the West, due in large part to the
tragic sin and intransigence of the Church itself. "The
hierarchical structure of the Church itself got into conflict

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
with the Christian freedom rooted in the Communion of the Faithful with Christ."^72

And so, the universal application of Christian freedom had to arise, tragically, out of the rupture of the Church and the pluralism produced by religious war. Christian theology could then only follow up with a Christian legitimation of that which had been won in so tragic a fashion. This is especially tragic, in Pannenberg's view, because having cut itself off from its historical roots, modern culture's values are so hopelessly ambiguous.\(^73\)

The liberal illusion grew that individual freedom and equality is a self-evident fact of human culture; i.e., that man is free by nature and that his freedom has merely been suppressed by outside influences. Pannenberg insists that this is not the Christian doctrine of creation, but the Stoic. The Christian view does not assume that man is free by nature, but that he must be liberated by God through Christ. This is not primarily a liberation from the impediment of certain social systems. In this view the heart is the chief impediment. If human beings were free by nature, they would need no Savior. Their behavior, however, testifies eloquently to their need for liberation.

Even in medieval Christian theology the impact of the Stoic ideas of natural law produced the idea that the first

\(^{72}\)Ibid.

\(^{73}\)Ibid.
Adam had been free. The New Testament, instead, never speaks of the freedom of the first Adam, but only of the freedom of the second Adam -- that is, Christ, "in" whom we have our freedom.

In modern thought there is still this confusion between the freedom of Christ and the freedom of nature. This means that the relation of the hierarchical Church to the history of realized freedom has produced a tragic reaction in modern thought away from Christian freedom toward the Stoic natural freedom which was confused with and rendered the Christian view relatively impotent.

The failure of the Stoic view, Pannenberg, surmises, is due to its nature as a formalistic and abstract principle of natural law. These principles were only realizable in the Golden Age and were, therefore, not really applicable to the present. The medieval thinkers consciously agreed; modern thinkers do not agree, but make the practical conclusion inevitable by their understanding of what freedom is. So freedom as natural law remains an abstraction even today. Liberal conceptions of freedom continue to measure the concrete by the abstract. For example, the abstract idea of natural equality is difficult to apply to concrete cases, where inequalities cannot be removed by mere social adjustments. This produces the massive failures of vast bureaucratic measures

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74 Ibid.
when the idea of reason confronts the reality of the concrete. Delusion or despairing pessimism result.

The answer of Pannenberg to the impasse resulting from this tragic irony is to reintroduce modern thought to its roots. In this case, the roots are in one sense in the past, but in another sense, in the future. The roots of the so-called principle of individual freedom are in the Christian doctrine of reconciliation in Christ. This means the principle of individual freedom is an eschatological principle.

Freedom is mediated by a historical tradition; and that tradition speaks of freedom and equality as a common destiny. It is that common destiny which constitutes a deeper freedom and equality than that which now appears.75

Modern thought and Christian faith can agree, then, that freedom belongs to the essence of being man. Perhaps we might even say that freedom belongs to his nature, as long as nature is understood as "true identity" rather than "actual character." Perhaps we might also recognize together that "human nature is the history of the realization of human destiny."76 It is in Christ that the destiny of man is realized, but not yet fully and universally. Without Christ man is alienated from himself, and what he knows as freedom turns out actually to be his alienation.

75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
Does that mean that Christian freedom is only meant for the Christian as a part of a small elite? No. Man is being created "into" the image of God. Within the circle of the communion with Christ God is creating man's liberation. But, "Beyond this circle a light is thrown upon every human being; for this liberation is meant for the whole world."77

The picture, then, that emerges is as follows:

The eschatological gospel of freedom came into a world that did not know what true freedom is. It met with the intransigence of the sin of a fallen humanity, an intransigence left untouched by religions and philosophies that either rationalized and sacralized the status quo or counseled escape from the sensible world of creation into a spiritual world which is beyond the sphere of creation. What is amazing is not that this gospel of freedom got lost in ambiguities, but that it survived at all and impacted history at all. The fact that it did and still does is an eschatological sign of no small significance.

As Carl Braaten points out, "The experience of evil in the world does not of itself justify a belief that the world can or should be changed."78

What then does? "It is the intervention of a contrasting vision with inherent power and truth which bestirs the

77Ibid.

conscience to revolt against the way things are and which generates hope for better things to come."

That the Church itself historically and tragically stifled and inhibited human freedom is not unique. In this the Church was aping all of fallen humanity. That it was the historical bearer and theological guarantor of the freedom of man, that is the amazing and unique fact. The Church itself, of course, is not the source of that freedom; it is the proclaimer of the gospel of freedom.

Eschatology becomes effective in history whenever the gospel of Christ is proclaimed as the eschatological "message of good tidings" expected by prophecy and apocalyptic. The future glory of God and the liberation of man takes on historical form; now indeed, only as the Word that opens up the future and as hoping faith, but already in the power of God. In this way...the eschatological future casts its light ahead on history, and righteousness, the liberation of the captives and the glorification of God are already realized.

The Christian community acts in this hope, and in the sign of the crucified Jesus it protests the idolatry and injustice that persists in the power of the old aeon. Through obedience and new forms of fellowship it responds itself to that liberating protest and calls others to respond.

Wherever the liberating protest in the face of resistance leads to such responses, fragments and anticipations of the new creation come into being. They are to be understood as "signs

79 Ibid.
and wonders" of the Holy Spirit. In this sense the Spirit verifies the proclamation of the gospel. 81

As when Christian evangelicals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries protested slavery as a remnant of the old aeon and called for abolition in response to the vision of the new, the Church in its transit to the future will continue to discover situations in which its gospel calls for protest and obedience. These situations will involve suffering and fighting among people and with peoples. The Church will not expect to bring about the Kingdom of God, and it certainly should not confuse itself with the Kingdom. But an eschatological community will certainly be given innumerable opportunities to be a sign of the Kingdom.

Church as Sign

In our critique of Augustine (above, p. 108) we suggested that a fruitful direction in which he might have gone was in the direction of Church as sign. This is related also to our discussion of the Church as "an enclave of redeemed creation within the world of unredeemed creation" (see above, chapter II, pp. 81ff). "Sign" in this sense means a proleptic indication of what God has in store for us in the eschaton. In this sense, of course, the Christ-event (particularly the meaning of the cross in the light of the resurrection) is the "Sign" par excellence in which the eschaton proleptically takes hold of

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81 Ibid., p. 223.
the present. By extension the outpouring of the Spirit is also such a "sign." As the community created by the Spirit on the basis of the resurrection, the Church, then, insofar as it participates in Christ (i.e., in the resurrection and in the Spirit), is itself a "sign." In Pauline language the Church is "the firstfruits" (Romans 8:23), but only the first. The community, then, is not to consider itself to be an end in itself, but serves as the visible sign of the new creation, pointing to that for which not only the Church but the whole of creation groans. The Church is that redeemed enclave, the beachhead, which looks forward to the reclaiming of the whole of the territory seemingly lost to the enemy.

As the soul of man is a microcosm in Platonic thought, so the Church may be understood as a microcosm of a very different kind; i.e., as an eschatologically proleptic foretaste of what God's future holds in promise. This microcosm, of course, often appears to us as, in a sense, ambivalent, ambiguous, and even equivocal. But such is the fate of any sign. Especially is this true of the Church as sign, because, by the very nature of her self-understanding, she lives in two ages, the old and the new. In fact, as an eschatological sign, one of the more important things to which she witnesses is to the ambivalent, ambiguous, and fragmentary character of any human action in the saeculum between the two ages. It testifies then to both the eschatological hope and to the eschatological reservation. The eschatological hope is grounded in the Church's
participation in the new age. The eschatological reservation is made necessary by the Church's continued limitation by the old age.

The tension is a part of the Church's self understanding which is created by the knowledge about the two ages. This tension cannot be relieved as long as we live "between the times."

But all of this does not obliterates the power of the Church as sign, however fragmentary, of the love and the freedom which God is bringing to man out of His future. But the Church can maintain this function as sign only to the extent to which it takes seriously the difference between itself and the civil community.

Whatever ameliorating impact may be properly attributed to the witness of the Church in the world evidences that the Church as sign has not been irrelevant to life between the times.

The Church as Pilgrim People

The relevance of the gospel to social ethics, however, must be understood as intrinsic, and not as something which theologians or ethicists must produce. The Church is most relevant when it is being itself, not when it is trying to be relevant.

When the non-Christian pretends to assimilate Christianity to this or that other moral system, that is not a matter of great importance. It is a misunderstanding which is inevitable. The natural
man absolutely cannot understand, of himself, the irreducible novelty of Christian truth.... The mistake is only serious when it is made by Christians....

As Roger Mehl so well puts it, we may hope to find in the Bible and the Christian faith "a vision of man and of his destiny, a meaning and a finality to history which are precisely the elements that our present society is incapable of considering."  

This means that Christians remain convinced that Biblical faith, much more than any so-called Christian social doctrine, constitutes a force of invention for the resolving of the problems of society. In other words, the task of Christians is not so much to impose a certain order on the world, but to put their own spiritual resources at the service of others, in order to solve the problems of justice, of peace, of social integration....

All of this makes Christians sound like a community of gypsies or migrant workers, not really integrated into the activities of the saeculum, but only providing insight for those who might listen and service for those who might be able to use it. This is not a totally inapt description of the Church as Pilgrim People, "in the world, but not of the world." But is this not a reversion to the pre-Constantinian

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84 Ibid., p. 115.
social situation? Not really. It is more a reversion back
to the eschatological vision which constitutes the essence
of the Christian faith.

Christians are "pilgrims" awaiting the eschatological
time when the promise will be unambiguously fulfilled and they
will come into their own (Cf. I Pet. 3:11; 1:3-9).

But Christians are not pilgrims in the Graeco-Roman
sense of peregrini. As we have pointed out in our critique
of Augustine (above, p. 114), his use of peregrini strains the
Biblical doctrine of creation and the redemption of creation
to the breaking point. Christians are not aliens in creation.
They are, in a sense, aliens in their own land, but they are
not alien to it. They are alien to the power of the Age which
holds it in its grasp. That power has been proleptically
broken, but so long as it still manifests itself as the power
of this age, those who participate in the new age will remain
pilgrims. This means that there never can be total identifi-
cation with any present world order or social program. But
neither does he leave the world to the devil in sectarian
fashion. It is eschatologically certain that God's creation
does not belong to the devil. For the Church, therefore, to
abandon creation and non-Christian society would be a denial
of the doctrine of creation and an affront to the eschatological
future for which the whole creation longs.

Christians as pilgrims are, therefore, pilgrim workers,
servants, and prophets, not monks.
Mission. The mission of such an eschatological pilgrim community can be simply put: evangelism and service. In the New Testament period, the eschatological community demonstrated its mission by evangelization of the Gentiles.

The prophetic promise that, after the redemption of Israel, the Gentiles, too, would come in, is now no longer the mighty act reserved for God alone. It now becomes a task to be realized by Christians.85

The question therefore arises, "What other eschatological goals are now to be realized by Christians?" Are there other transformations possible "because the time of the End, with its signs and wonders, is seen as already dawning"?86

Such an understanding of the Gentile mission will give consideration to the suggestion of a number of contemporary theologians that the Christian eschatological vision warrants a bolder conception of human activity. James Sellers argues, for instance, that the conception of sola fide as the Reformation held it invokes the idea of man as altogether too passive,87 introduces "an unintended theological cleavage between faith and culture" and obscures "the cultural and social significance of the Reformation itself."88

86 Ibid.
88 Ibid., p. 47.
He suggests instead the conception "Promise and Fulfillment" as a stance for ethics which corrects this cleavage between faith and action, Christ and culture. This expression, at least, conforms to our preference for language more in tune with both the prophetic and apocalyptic emphasis on the future and the impact of this future on life in the present.

Sellers further suggests that the word "wholeness"\textsuperscript{89} better expresses for our age the Biblical-eschatological vision of redemption to which the Church witnesses. Wholeness, therefore, is not merely a vacuous or vague expression of a wish for something better. It is informed by the Biblical vision of what God intends man to be. Sellers' description of "wholeness" and his emphasis upon human activity provide important elements for properly conceiving the Christian mission.

Two tendencies in the linguistic roots of "wholeness" must be distinguished. One is the tendency toward the idea of safety; the other is the tendency toward the idea of completeness. The traditional emphasis has been more on salvation as safety rather than salvation as completeness.\textsuperscript{90} On the other hand, "Modern man's plight is that he is less than complete."\textsuperscript{91} I would add that a proper maintenance of the eschatological vision would have preserved this emphasis for all of Christian history. This is the universal human plight; i.e. we are divided against ourselves and less than complete.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 55.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., p. 56.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
The "fall" involves the loss of wholeness as openness in three dimensions: to God, to men, and to nature. Salvation is the restoration of openness in these relations. It is recreation.

But the distinctive contribution of the New Testament to the picture is to tell us that what is restored is more than a simple return to the "way things were" before the fall. In Jesus Christ the restoration brings higher possibilities than we had in the first place.

This idea of "restoring" possibilities that have not yet been is consistent with our earlier discussion of creation as an eschatological statement. If creation occurs from the side of the end, then the wholeness envisioned in the imago dei and the community of which the Church is a sign are both eschatological realities which nonetheless should illuminate and give impetus to Christian activity in the present.

The Eschatological Ethic and "Social Ethics"

If the Christian ethic is primarily an ethic for an eschatological community, i.e., a community conscious of its place between the times, how can it contribute substantially to a "social ethic" for a society unconscious of, or only partly conscious of, this eschatological vision. The Christian

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92Ibid., p. 57.
93Ibid., p. 59.
94Ibid.
95Above, pp. 148f.
community cannot contribute prescriptions which presuppose Christian faith, if for no other reason than that they would not be listened to. It could withdraw into a radical sectarianism and let the "world" fend for itself. We have already rejected this alternative, not as being too radical, but as not being radical enough. It fails to witness to the universality of the eschatological vision; it leaves to the devil what ultimately belongs to God.

The attempt to find an overarching theological unity from which to view the two communities is commendable. But the failure to adequately maintain the radically eschatological nature of this unity results in either a premature identity of the two communities (liberalism) or a static parallelism of the two communities (Lutheranism). Barth's concept of the two communities points to a resolution of this problem, theologically, by reviving the idea of a "sectarianism" of sorts. It is a sectarianism which preserves the witness and the power of pietistic sectarianism while avoiding the quietism of the sects.

We noted in the conclusion of our discussion of Anabaptism that it is unfortunate that the two wings of the Reformation lost dialogical contact with each other. Perhaps the experiences of history have forced them again into dialogue in the form of the Barthian dialectic.

By "Christian community" Barth means "the Church"; not the Church in the sense of institutional programs or hierarchy,
but the Church in the sense of Gemeinde; i.e., the congregation gathered under the Word.

Barth's increasing seriousness about the centering of ethical thought in the really gathered church derives partly from his experiences in the German church struggle, where such a church-against-the-world actually came into being; partly from spelling out the implications of his theology of preaching; partly from continuing concern with what the preaching of the Word of God means to the hearer (cf. his simultaneous movement toward the rejection of infant baptism); partly from his ecumenically appreciative assimilation of some of those strands of pietism which had sowed into European Protestantism the seeds of ecumenical, missionary, and social concern (Zinzendorf, Blumhardt); and partly from continued working with the concept of peoplehood in covenant theology.\textsuperscript{96}

This is the history which forces in Barth the dialectical meeting of right and left in reformation theology; i.e., (1) the failure of ordinary (particularly Lutheran) rightist social-ethical constructions to be able to deal with Nazism; (2) the failure of liberal theology in the same regard, but also in regard to its relation to and proclamation of the Word of God; and (3) the success of the Gemeinde-against-the-world (e.g., Pietism) in the very areas where two sphere thinking and culture Christianity had failed.

First we must deal with the failure of the traditional theological-ethical conception of the dignity of the state.

\textbf{Excursus on Eschatology and the Dignity of the State}

Due primarily to the German experience with the Third Reich, the Lutheran doctrine of the state has become a

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Yoder, Karl Barth and the Problem of War}, p. 127.
theological by-word. None has more clearly earned the right to remonstrate against the disastrous results of "wrongly interpreted Lutheranism" than has Karl Barth. Barth attributes the German experience to "a hopeless dualism and defeatism" which issued from the German interpretation of Luther's two-kingdom doctrine. The German people, he says (in the heat of the early years of World War II), "suffers...from Martin Luther's error on the relation between...the temporal and spiritual order and power." The result of this error is to "establish, confirm, and idealize the natural paganism of the German people" and to provide a basis for "the sanctioning of National Socialism."

The dangerous aspect of Luther's political ethics was not so much the two-kingdom doctrine as it was the baneful combination of two elements in Luther's Biblical interpretation, i.e., Paul's statement on governing authorities (Romans 13) and the eschatological urgency symbolized by an imminent parousia. The eschatological urgency itself was not

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99 Barth, *A Letter to Great Britain from Switzerland*, p. 36.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., p. 48.
the problem, but rather an erroneous exegesis of Romans 13 with respect to the dignity of the state. Later German Lutheranism, as a matter of fact, lost the eschatological urgency, turned the two-kingdom doctrine into a static dualism, and retained the erroneous exegesis of Romans 13, producing in this process the context for an autonomous, demonized state.

Luther's overestimate of Paul's concern (Romans 13) for the dignity of the state left him with a very unwieldy "natural order" which tended to escape the full force of prophetic judgment. His firm belief in the imminence of the parousia compounded the danger by referring any really radical social betterment solely to the work of God subsequent to that event. The work of God (with respect to society) previous to the parousia was best described in the comparatively negative terms of "preservation" and the like. Any amelioration of inequities within the social order before the parousia could at best be only "patches" and "bandages." 102

If, as Paul probably was not, one were thinking in terms of "natural orders," some of the language of Romans 13 would fit quite well into such a conceptual rubric.

Let every person be subject (ὑποτασσόμεθα) to the governing authorities (ἐξουσίας ἑαυτερικάς). For there is no authority (ἐξουσία) except from God, and those that exist have been instituted (ὑποτασσόμεθα) by God. Therefore he who

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resists the authorities, resists what God has appointed (δικαστήριον). . . . he [who is in authority] is God's servant (δικαιος). . . . The authorities are ministers of God (λειτουργοί θεοῦ).

Romans 13:1ff RSV.

Luther found in these words a basis for the power and dignity of the state as resting in a peculiar, divinely endowed quality of the state as such. Moving far beyond Paul's description of rulers as "servants" in regard to particular aspects of his will (e.g., Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. 25:9), Luther speaks of a reified state as a "divine thing."\(^{103}\) This "divine thing" is certainly neither autonomous nor absolute for Luther. It is merely a "mask" for the ordering and preserving will of God. \(^{104}\) Further, it is merely an emergency measure, in light of the fall, between the times. \(^{105}\)

Theoretically, then, the state is not ultimate, but periodically and historically, it still tends for Luther to be (in this period between the times) almost completely sacrosanct. Even when this "divine thing" appears to be quite demonic, the Christian subject has no recourse but to suffer patiently and await the working out of the divine wrath. For all practical purposes, then, the state has the

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\(^{103}\) Luther, Exposition of 82nd Psalm, 1530, as cited in ibid., p. 129 (from Phil. Ed. IV, 290).

\(^{104}\) Luther, Exposition of Psalm 127, as cited in ibid., p. 130 (from W. A. 15, 372, 25).

\(^{105}\) Luther, Exposition of I Peter, 1523, as cited in ibid., p. 130 (from W. A. 12, 329, 3).
theologically protected right to become absolute in all matters except in the so-called spiritual. The latter category is quite restricted. The Christian is required to resist the suppression of the gospel; but even here action is limited to the options of defiant preaching and/or passive enduring of persecution.

On the surface, Paul does sound much like this. The problem is that the historical and conceptual context was completely different. The position of Paul and first century Christians vis-à-vis Rome is not equal to the position of Luther and sixteenth century German Christians vis-à-vis the German princes. State power was completely beyond the control or influence of first century Christians. Their only options were the ones their leaders urged: to take full advantage of the proper concern of the state for law and order; i.e., "as far as within your power, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18) and "prayers [should] be made for ... kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life" (I Tim. 2:1f.).

A quiet and peaceable life is not the only motive for obedience to authorities in the New Testament, however. The fact is that he who resists the authorities resists God's appointment (Rom. 13:2). One is subject "for the Lord's sake" (I Pet. 2:13). The concern of these injunctions is not, however, the peculiar quality of the state, but the quality of Christian ethical action in his relationship with these persons of authority.
Barth clearly saw a need for somewhat of a distinction here, and it was the basis of his criticism of the Lutheran development of the concept of orders. Preceding and in the early years of the Hitler era, a theology of "orders of creation" moved Lutheran ethical thinking in the direction of an idealistic, natural, autonomous set of "orders" incorporated into and emerging from creation (Althaus, Gogarten, and others). Barth commends Bonhoeffer for modifying the concept of orders into "mandates." The problem with which the concept of orders was meant to deal is the problem of the constancy of the divine mandate and human action. In Bonhoeffer's answer "he has perceived that what is involved in the constancy of ethical events must also be learned from the Word of God. . . ."

Even Bonhoeffer's concept of the mandates retains too much emphasis on the definite order of the command. For Barth the emphasis should be more upon the constancy of relationships as such. It is in these constant relationships as such that God's command finds us, and the command does not arise from the nature of some "divine thing."

Barth and Bonhoeffer still agree on the basically Christological grounding of the state. It is here that we

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107 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III/4, p. 21f.
108 Ibid., p. 22.
might find room to move beyond them both. Where shall we go from Barth? An interesting and rather appealing line of development is represented by Martin Dibelius, Ernst Wolf, and Hans Werner Bartsch. This view involves a development and a correction of Barth's view. It provides not a Christological ground for the being of the state, but a Christological ground for the attitude of the Christian toward the state. The relation of the Christian to the superior powers is "only a special form of the relation of the Christian to his neighbor."  

Barth comes almost to this position, but not quite. He rightly brings out that the verb "be subject to"

so characteristic of this exhortation (Romans 13:1; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:3), is used not only in Titus 2:9 and I Peter 2:18 for conduct of Christian slaves towards their masters but also in Colossians 3:18, Ephesians 5:22, Titus 2:5, and I Peter 3:1, 5 for conduct of women towards men, and in I Peter 5:5 for conduct of the younger towards the older members of the community, and in Ephesians 5:21 and I Peter 5:5 for the conduct of Christians towards one another within the Church.

It would seem proper to conclude, therefore, that the Scriptural imperatives have to do with relations of persons (i.e., Christian neighbor-love) and not with relations of persons to some "divine thing." Barth, however, is

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110 Ibid., p. 67.

111 Karl Barth, Community, State, and Church, p. 134.
himself still caught to some extent in the older mode of thinking in terms of "orders." To the question as to how state officials may be properly characterized as "God's ministers," Barth answers:

It seems to me clear that they do 'to a certain extent' actually stand within the sacred order, not—as was later said, with far too great a servility—as membra poecipua, but as ministri extraordinarii ecclesiae.\textsuperscript{112}

This attempt to find a common ground (a Christological one in Barth's case) for the institutional state as such and the Church fails, at least on exegetical grounds, because the New Testament does not discuss the ground of the state as such.

The έξουσία of Romans 13 is the derived but ordinary designation for "office bearers" or "rulers." "The government as such never seems to be denoted by the term."\textsuperscript{113} Τεταγμέναι (those have been instituted) is from έτοσω and refers not to an institution as such but to persons placed or stationed in a particular situation. Υποτάσσω, as Barth did bring out, refers not only to subjection to those persons in secular authority, but to husbands (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; Tit. 2:5; I Pet. 3:1,5), to Church leaders (I Pet. 5:5), and to the

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p. 135.

voluntary yielding in love to all men (I Cor. 16:16; Eph. 5:21; I Pet. 5:5b). 114

Furthermore, it is now clear that even the usual translation of I Peter 2:13 ("Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution" RSV) cannot be supported. Interpretations of "human institutions" as referring to an "order of the state" are based on this erroneous translation. Such usage for ἀνθρωπίνη κτίσεω "is not supported by any examples from secular Gk., the LXX, or the Rabb. . . . . the reference is not to an order; it is to men." 115 It should be translated not "every human ordinance," 116 but "every kind of human." 117 It is, in fact, probably to be regarded as the general title for the entire section (2:13-3:9), dealing with subjection to the following persons: the emperor, governors, masters, husbands, and to each other.

How does all of this help us in critically re-evaluating Luther's position? Luther's mistaken exegesis of Romans 13 gave the state a theologically based metaphysical power and dignity. Combined with a strong sense of the imminent


116 Cf. Barth, Community, State and Church, p. 138.

dissolution of all things, the sense of futility in "doing anything about" the state was compounded by a sense of illegitimacy in "doing anything about" the state. If the state is engaged in doing God's will in the secular realm, and all residual inequities will be squared at the eschaton, then this leaves the average Christian citizen very little legitimate business with the state except to take its orders.

If, on the other hand, the state as such has no more metaphysical ground than the master-slave relationship as such, then the implications of the gospel may be allowed to carry more critical and even transformational weight than Luther was able to envision. In fact, if the relationship of the Christian to the "state" is another form of the relationship of the Christian to his neighbor, then the eschatological urgency which is implied in ἄγαμος should have the opposite effect on the transformation of relationships within the secular community than what it could have had for Luther. Whereas, for Luther, eschatological urgency tended to produce emphasis on "spiritual matters" to the neglect of the area of social justice (because the structures of society and its institutions are God's will—and inequities will soon be taken care of), in our view an eschatological orientation should give, on the contrary, supreme urgency to the ethical injunctions to love my neighbor by working to correct inequities.

Paul's statement in Romans 13 is bracketed by two elements: 1) The command to love our neighbor (12:1f and
13:8) and, 2) the eschatological conclusion (13:11ff.). We are to "subject" ourselves to government officials because we are to manifest that which shows love toward all men ("every kind of human" I Pet. 2:13). In the light of the eschaton, that love must be an immediate, active, and healing response to human needs and hopes--not an acquiescing, passive, submission to demonic, metaphysical, or institutional "powers that be." The latter response would be a sacrifice of persons to an "order." That is not the gospel. The officials of government are tools in the hand of God, performing functions which make for order and justice. But they are not metaphysically or theologically grounded determiners of justice or of the limits and possibilities of neighbor-love. They themselves are subject to being transformed by the power of the eschaton.

The Kingdom of God and the "World"

How is the eschatological community related to the "world"? Among the most misleading expressions used in contemporary discussions of the Kingdom of God are "this-worldly" and "other-worldly." Neither expression, in fact, seems to correspond to any thing in the New Testament idea of the Kingdom of God. The expressions seem to carry too much neo-Platonic baggage to be useful in New Testament interpretation or theological reflection on New Testament ideas. Using this language, Günther Klein distinguishes three
models of contemporary reflection on the Kingdom of God.

First is the model of orthodoxy; i.e., the Kingdom of God is other-worldly and future. The second is the model represented by Herbert Braun; i.e., the Kingdom of God is this-worldly and present. The third is the dominant trend in contemporary theology from Albert Schweitzer to the theologians of revolution; i.e., the Kingdom of God is this worldly, but future.

What is meant by "worldly" in these formulations? If "world" equals the Biblical "creation," then the Kingdom of God is "this worldly." The scene of God's relationship with man will always be creation, old and new. If "world" equals the Biblical "age," then the Kingdom of God is other worldly. The Kingdom comes with a new age. Any throwback to a quasi-Platonic distinction between the physical (phenomenal) and spiritual (noumenal) world is immediately confusing in a discussion of Christian eschatology. Christian eschatology envisions the renewal of creation, not escape from it. The eschatological Kingdom of God is not "unearthly," it is "New Earthly." The New Testament eschatological symbols "spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:43) and "New Earth" (Rev. 21:1) should not,  

119 Jesus Der Mann aus Nazareth und seine Zeit (Themen der Theologie I [Stuttgart, Kreuz-Verlag, 1969]).
of course, be understood in some literalistic fashion. Indeed they cannot be (What is a spiritual body?). But they may be taken seriously as communicating a concept of discontinuity within continuity. Hyper-spiritualisms ignore the continuity. Premature unification ignores the discontinuity. The latter is the danger of many modern efforts to develop a social ethic.

There is a problem, for instance, with a kind of a truncated eschatology -- an eschatology sans eschaton. James Sellers sees the Kingdom of God as not a futuristic symbol at all, "but an operating concept to be used here and now to test and try human conduct." ¹²⁰ The "test value" of eschatology consists, he says, "in the content of the last things rather than a supernatural form of stating them." ¹²¹

By "supernatural form" he evidently means not only apocalyptic, but even eschatology no more other-worldly than Karl Barth's. ¹²² Sellers does emphasize the cosmic element in Christian eschatology ¹²³ but insists that "its cosmic references are not superterrestrial but continuous with our universe." This he considers consistent with a "monopolar"

¹²⁰ Sellers, Theological Ethics, p. 191.
¹²¹ Ibid., p. 194.
¹²² Ibid., p. 193f.
¹²³ Ibid., p. 192f.
¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 194.
view of the universe. In this he is properly criticizing a Platonic, transcendental eschatology, but, at the same time, not taking into account the Biblical-eschatological alternative. One may at the same time object to "otherworldliness" while proclaiming a new age. The new age is both continuous and discontinuous of our universe because our universe is in the vortex between the two ages. Sellers' "monopolar" view of reality does not, therefore, exhibit a radical enough conception of the fall. It protects the doctrine of creation at the expense of the new creation, and thus slips the old liberal view of progress in through the back door.

Ignoring the theological-eschatological distinction between the Christian community and the civil community is one of the results of premature unification. The Church seems sometimes to be viewed as an expendable, not very satisfying model of community. Ethicists often speak of the ethics of Christian community as though these could be directly applied to American society or to pluralistic societies. Perhaps it is the failure and seeming irrelevance of the sociological Church as community which tempts ethicists to short-circuit the process and attempt to bring the idea of Christian community to the civil community unmediated.

\[125\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 203, \ n. \ 18.\]
The motives are probably noble and the goal is commendable. But what results is another rational, pragmatic, universal ethic delivered in language of Christian symbols considered merely "operating concepts" by the ethicists and considered at best irrelevant by a non-Christian or quasi-Christian society.

For Moltmann and Pannenberg, on the other hand, eschatological conceptions are not reduced to an "operating concept" for ethics. They are certainly that; but they are that because of the reality of the future of which they are concepts.

Johaness Weiss has said,

"The Kingdom of God is in Jesus' view an absolutely supraworldly factor which stands in exclusive contrast to this world....The ethico-religious use of this concept in recent theology, which wholly strips it of its original eschatological and apocalyptic sense, is only seemingly Biblical...."

Moltmann agrees with Weiss' statement but chides that "after his sally into the no-man's land of eschatology, Johaness Weiss returned again at once to the liberal picture of Jesus."

Moltmann also chides modern theologians for effectively retreating from eschatology in similar ways today:

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Without apocalyptic a theological eschatology remains bogged down in the ethnic history of men or the existential history of the individual. The New Testament did not close the window which apocalyptic had opened for it towards the wide vistas of the cosmos and beyond the limitations of the given cosmic reality.\textsuperscript{128}

Neither should we.

The basic mission of the Church is to proclaim this hope of individual, social, and cosmic re-creation and live within its vision and power. This will involve a simple mission as it has always been understood, i.e., the preaching of the gospel. It will also include apologetics, a mission Barth and Neo-Orthodoxy scuttled, but one which Pannenberg seeks to revive as the major thrust of his work. Apologetics, in this sense, in a form of evangelism, challenging the presuppositions of the "cultured despisers of Christianity" who live in the light of the eschatological vision which has been thrown on them by the Christian gospel, but who deny its source and power.

Living within the power of this vision means active not passive waiting for the coming of the Lord. As in the case of the Gentile mission in the early Church, the so-called "delay of the parousia" is what deepens and brings out the profound implications of the apocalyptic two ages for history and social ethics.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., p. 137f.
As we have seen, without the two-age doctrine, and all it implies about the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, there would be no implications of a "new age" nor a basis for expecting radical change at all. Without the "delay of the parousia," those implications would not have been worked out, however inadequately, in history.

The parousia is still delayed. We still have our mission. How it will be understood in any situation will depend on the situation itself. It is here that what Sellers calls "Wisdom" enters in. The Christian community is to be held responsible for knowing what is going on. Knowing and understanding the facts of the situation is important for understanding how the situation falls short of the Christian eschatological vision and how it might be brought into closer proximity to that vision. This is the unending task of the theological-ethnicist. The sources of his insights will include his own observations and experience, as well as the insights of sociological, psychological, medical, and other specialists.

The radical tension between what is (this age) and what will be (the new age), does not stifle far-ranging research and action. Properly understood, this tension actually gives this research and action more urgency. Historically, radical eschatology, when it has not been

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Platonized, Aristotelianized, or trivialized, has provided the basis of an amazing degree of theological permission and ethical freedom for ameliorating societal ills and approximating eschatological solutions.

We are at a juncture when such theological and ethical permission may be coming into its own (e.g., present theologies of "hope," "freedom," "liberation," and even "play").

With this theological permission, the Christian ethicist may then proceed to do ethical research where and with whom he wishes, restricted in no way so as to prejudice the results of his research. The dialectic then brings him back to theology "at the back of the book," which brings to light the temporal and non-absolute nature or his work while bringing it under the profound illumination of the Word of God. The latter part of this dialectic is characterized by Ellul as follows:

The existence of this morality does not bring man closer to God....The Christian, because he is a man, should lend a hand in making the world livable. Morality is part of that task, the common morality, the morality of the group, interpersonal morality. We must respect it, build it, and strengthen it in company with our fellows. This is more true since in all this complexity there are values to which the Christian cannot remain indifferent.\(^{130}\)

Of course one could (and may do) go about their business of ethical research firm in the conviction that the

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\(^{130}\) Jacques Ellul, To Will and To Do, p. 81.
traditional concerns of Christian theology are no longer relevant to the modern situation. Ellul's forte (valid or not) is in being able to take the traditional concerns of Christian theology in complete earnestness, while taking the real concerns of man in society with stark seriousness. My feeling is that one cannot really do justice to the one without the other. The freedom and the impetus which Ellul gives to ethical research and reflection is astounding in the face of the rigor of his Word of God theological position.

But once it is recognized that ethics is essentially fluid at that juncture between the word of the Lord and the stream of circumstances, of social, political, and economic relations; once it is recognized that ethics can only be valid for the perhaps brief period during which things are stabilized, and that it should be modified in accordance with events, then we perceive the possibility...of the coming together of the hic et nunc of the word of God and the hic et nunc of a valid and true ethic of man.131

The tension of the "already" and "not yet" of Christian eschatology does not, therefore, paralyze Christian action in the world or the participation of a Christian ethicist in the development of a concrete social ethic (e.g., a public ethic for American society): On the contrary, it sets Christians free for such activity by making proper distinctions about what is and what will be. This age which holds the world (creation) in its power is not the new age, but the world (creation) has begun to participate in the new age.

131 Ibid., p. 265.
The Church is the first fruits of that new age. Human society is not yet the Church and should not be confused with it. But God intends the Church to include the whole of creation at the eschaton, so we cannot abandon it.

We will not create the Kingdom of God; God is doing that. But we will be obedient to the Kingdom of God both within and without the Christian community. Christian hopes should not be reduced to hopes in future history. What Christians take into their work in the world is not a scheme for social change; the eschatological vision does not provide such a scheme. It speaks instead of the fragmentary and penultimate nature of any such scheme or the results of any such scheme. The Christian does not participate in the fight against injustice because he expects to abolish injustice. He participates in this fight because injustice is opposed to God's will for humanity. The Christian fully expects God to abolish injustice and he wishes to respond to God's ultimate will through repentance, obedience, and witness.

God's ultimate will is apprehended by the Christian through the eschatological vision. What a Christian takes into his work in the world is this vision. The schemes for social change are not dictated by this vision. The strategy is hammered out through research, practice, compromise, and cooperation with all those, Christian and non-Christian, whose well-being is affected by the strategy.
The Christian works to make the strategy conform to his own vision of wholeness or of what it means to be human. The strategic possibilities may be limitless -- pacifist, non-pacifist, revolutionary, evolutionary. The Christian should not expect the strategy to be always to his liking or to be perfectly reflecting of his vision. His vision, after all, is a Christian eschatological vision, not a universal, self-evident one. When he moves as an agent of God's will in the world, he moves as a pilgrim or an ambassador, not as a bureaucratic official. This means, also, that his vision will inform his decision of support or non-support for any particular strategy, based on what Christ has revealed to him about human nature and destiny. He cannot, for example, identify himself completely with Marxist, humanist, idealist, or utopian goals because he knows better. On the other hand, he cannot completely disassociate himself from them because he knows they are more or less well motivated distortions of his own vision.

If he withdraws, he must not do so with the arrogance of being right, but with the conviction that the particular strategy is not in the direction of wholeness as he envisions it. If he stays, it should not be with the hubris of the revolutionary who thinks he is going to finally bring about justice, but with the conviction that whatever fragmentary and temporary actualization of wholeness he may see is a sign of the reality of the vision which he obeys.
Most visions of reality suffer either from the hubris resulting from the ignorance of human nature, or from the impotence resulting from ignorance of human destiny. The Biblical eschatological vision is realistic about the human situation while witnessing to the hope for a radically new situation which it pictures as equally realistic. But this hope can be conceived as realistically as the present situation because it does not arise out of the present situation, but out of the future of God.

Within the confines of the Christian eschatological vision, then, the possibilities of creative imagination are circumscribed only by properly perceiving the need and by properly perceiving what wholeness truly means in the situation.

Freedom and permission are watchwords because the radically new of God's future is the criterion. The freedom to be what God intends us to be, involves the proposition that the status quo is never wholly God's will; and no matter how radical the freedom or the wholeness we are able to approximate, we have still not overstepped our bounds, because our bounds are yet in God's future.

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation has not been to explore individual or detailed possibilities for particular ethical activity in the present situation. The purpose has been to explore the nature of and the historical expressions
of the peculiarly Christian eschatological vision of reality and to explore its value as a conceptual framework for theological-ethical thinking.

Our conclusion is that an eschatological duality is indispensable to theological-ethical thinking where the Biblical witness is taken seriously, and that, for the Christian, this eschatological vision is the reality in which our doing must take place.

More specifically, we have concluded that a two-age/two-community conceptuality is truer to the Biblical understanding of reality than other historically developed conceptions such as two cities, two kingdoms, etc., and, further, that the two age and two community conceptions which are more Biblical are those which take seriously the future oriented, cosmic, even apocalyptic elements of Biblical eschatology.

These conclusions are not based on any "antiquarian" or "restorationist" interests, but on the concern, justified by historical evidence, that a surrender of a radical, realistic eschatology involves the surrender of the uniquely Christian element in the concept of redemption and, usually, the substitution of conceptualities which hinder more than help the Christian transformation of individual, society, and culture.

It is further concluded that eschatological ethics must be an ethics of a community -- the eschatological community.
The eschatological community understands itself, human society and the cosmos in the light of the eschaton.

"The world" outside of the eschatological community is, of course, to be understood in the light of the eschaton, but it does not so understand itself. Only the eschatological community has this understanding (however inadequate).

Christianity is not the "normal situation."\(^{132}\) The "normal" (not "natural" or "necessary") situation is the situation of the "old aeon" -- the unredeemed situation. There may come a time when "God will be all in all," i.e., when God's original intention (creation) and His ultimate will (redemption and consumation) will be identical with the human situation "now." The very importance of the eschatological duality within Christian thinking is to preserve the understanding that this "now" is "already" but "not yet." Despite the decisive importance of the "already," the "not yet" is still so important in understanding the present situation "between the times." The whole of humanity may be God's community "in prospect."\(^{133}\) But is is not "now" - not yet.

A circle must be drawn around the Church, the Christian community, not for the sake of the Church, but for the sake of the world. There is no doubt that the Christian community

\(^{132}\)Ellul, To Will and To Do, p. 289.

\(^{133}\)Even this is still theologically debatable.
participates itself in the ambiguity that characterizes life between the times. But the fact that one feels it necessary at all to clarify the "Christian" perspective as over against others indicates that he feels that his participation in the Christian community involves an experience (at least pro-leptically) of that which the wider, "worldly" community has not experienced, or at least does not understand. There must be, then, a sense in which one might speak of the "redeemed" Christian community with emphasis on the "already" without forgetting the "not yet." Similarly, one must speak of the "unredeemed" worldly communities, with emphasis on the "not yet" redeemed. One may then speak of the "redeemed" and the "unredeemed" without pharisaical or pietistic overtones, or else "body of Christ" or "community of Christ" means nothing distinctive and should be immediately translated into other terms and forgotten.

The Church, then, is a sign -- a sign of redemption, freedom, wholeness. It testifies to its vision humbly as a pilgrim people.

As a pilgrim people, it does not settle down in this age, but participates in its transformation through proclamation and reclamation. The eschatological community participates in this transformation sometimes consciously, in ways it knows, using all of the wisdom, intelligence, insight, and energy which God has created and/or revealed to it. It also participates in this transformation in ways
of which it is not conscious, of which it is conscious only in retrospect, or of which it will be conscious only in the "last day."

This latter fact reminds us that ultimately the Kingdom is God's, and that man's future is God, not the other way around.

The Modus Vivendi. Living as a community for the world's future involves being for the world as it shall be in God's Kingdom, but always against the status quo. It means living as pilgrims or sojourners and never allowing identification or confusion with worldly communities. It also means at the same time, "losing its life to save it." It necessitates a clear vision of the reality which is coming to us from the future of God, living out of the power of that future, and, at the same time, recognizing the ambiguity of the reality in which our present action must take place. It means having and living within the power of that vision without succumbing to naive utopianism. But it means expecting God's future to transcend the comprehension of and power of mere utopianism, in the Kingdom of God.

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