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## Eschatology Today

Karl Barth is correctly reputed to have claimed that eschatology<sup>1</sup> is “a harmless chapter at the end of dogmatic theology”, based on a statement he made in 1933.<sup>2</sup> This paper presents arguments contrary to Barth’s position, based in large on the writing of Zachary Hayes (noted Franciscan theologian and Bonaventure scholar) in his book *Visions of a Future: A Study of Christian Eschatology*.

After the New Testament period, the collective intensity of the eager anticipation for the coming of Christ lessened.<sup>3</sup> Gradually, the focus on individual judgment grew, together with more emphasis on the individual spiritual journey.<sup>4</sup> Travis writes that “in the Middle Ages and the periods of the Reformation and scholasticism the doctrine of last things – death, the second coming of Christ, resurrection of the dead, judgment, heaven and hell – reached its classic expression.”<sup>5</sup> Eschatology was neatly packaged in a hand-book style of theology with the “last things” all predictably outlined and described.<sup>6</sup> This approach tended to, as Barth wrote, “lull us comfortably to sleep by adding at the conclusion of Christian Dogmatics a short and perfectly harmless chapter entitled – ‘Eschatology’”.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S. H. Travis, “Eschatology”, in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 228. The word “eschatology” originates from the Greek, *eschatos*, meaning “last”; the term refers to the “doctrine of last things”.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 500. The statement is from this reference.

<sup>3</sup> Zachary Hayes, *Visions of a Future: A Study of Christian Eschatology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 168.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Travis, “Eschatology”, 229.

<sup>6</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 500.

However, during the twentieth century, in the arena of biblical scholarship, Barth's perspective totally unravelled. The rise of biblical criticism led to a series of rude awakenings.<sup>8</sup> Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) claimed that Jesus' message was *thoroughly eschatological* – that is, all of Jesus' teaching should be viewed in eschatological perspective.<sup>9</sup> Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), while agreeing that Jesus proclaimed an apocalyptic kingdom, attempted to make it meaningful by “demythologizing” the message: Jesus is not “coming again” in the future, but “comes to me”, demanding decision.<sup>10</sup> Jürgen Moltmann (b. 1926) developed the theology of hope, putting the Christian eschatological vision at the centre of his interpretation of the Christian message.<sup>11</sup> By the late 1950s, eschatology had become the “storm centre” of Christian theology.<sup>12</sup>

A significant overarching development has been unearthing the eschatological nature of Christianity itself.<sup>13</sup> Hayes notes that “the history of salvation is, by its very nature, open to an eschatological fulfilment.”<sup>14</sup> In other words, Christianity is indeed thoroughly eschatological in nature.<sup>15</sup> Also, contemporary New Testament theologians are acknowledging the significance of eschatology for New Testament thought – and are, according to Reymond, “prepared to argue that New Testament theology *as a whole*, as the theology of the ‘age of fulfillment’, is, if not eschatology *per se*, eschatologically oriented with respect to all of its major soteriological and ethical emphases.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Travis, “Eschatology”, 229.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (London: A. & C. Black, 1906), 330-397.

<sup>10</sup> Travis, “Eschatology”, 229.

<sup>11</sup> New World Encyclopedia contributors, “Eschatology,” *New World Encyclopedia*,

<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Eschatology?oldid=845665> (accessed June 16, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 11. It was Hans Urs von Balthasar who described eschatology as the “storm centre” of theology.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Robert L. Reymond, “Biblical Eschatology”, in *The New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 980.

One may surmise on Barth's influence on a large part of the evangelical church since this emphasis on the significance of eschatology for New Testament thought had been largely foreign.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, in some circles, eschatology came to be seen as the capstone of [systematic] theology where every other locus of theology finds its resolution in it. Even in the late 1930s, Berkhof (who cites Kuyper) pointed out that:

Every other locus left some question unanswered, to which eschatology should supply the answer. In theology [proper] it is the question, how God is finally perfectly glorified in the work of His hands, and how the counsel of God is fully realized; in anthropology, the question, how the disrupting influence of sin is completely overcome; in Christology, the question, how the work of Christ is crowned with perfect victory; in soteriology, the question, how the work of the Holy Spirit at last issues in the complete redemption and glorification of the people of God; and in ecclesiology, the question of the final apotheosis of the church."<sup>18</sup>

Far from remaining a "harmless chapter at the end of dogmatic theology", eschatological thought has developed in a number of significant areas. Addressed in this paper will be (1) the anthropological basis of eschatology and the nature of hope, (2) the nature of eschatological language, (3) history and eschatology, (4) understanding of individual destiny, (5) the collective destiny of humanity and the cosmos, as well as (6) the parousia and the end of history.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. I concur with an observation that Reymond makes regarding a sizeable segment of the evangelical church "which has taught for years now that there is only one 'prophetic book' in the New Testament, namely, the Apocalypse, and that it is to be read literally. Hence, premillennial eschatology is practically guaranteed to be the outcome of such a narrow eschatological mooring."

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Reymond quotes from Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939), 665.

<sup>19</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 11-14.

### **Anthropological Basis of Eschatology and the Nature of Hope**

Barth (1886-1968) would have been influenced to a degree by the older form of Scholastic and neo-Scholastic eschatology which attempts to focus on depicting the last events of history and describing the future world. It emphasizes the nature of final “things” (and includes apocalyptic speculations about the end of this world and esoteric information about the next world).<sup>20</sup>

Contemporary eschatology, by contrast, is more anthropological in nature and style.<sup>21</sup> In other words, eschatology is seen predominantly in terms of the fulfilment of God’s creative intent in humanity and in God’s creation.<sup>22</sup> The focus is, as Hayes writes, “on the final, life-giving, fulfilling relation between God and humanity, and through humanity, with the world.”<sup>23</sup> This anthropological underpinning means that eschatology is concerned with *human nature* itself, in its relation to the created order and to God.<sup>24</sup>

Within the structure of human nature there is a fundamental openness to the mystery of God.<sup>25</sup> In reality, humans are created for God, where meaning and fulfilment can only come through human *self-transcendence*.<sup>26</sup> Hope arises with the realization that the true potential of human existence cannot be known only on the basis of one’s past experience.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 71. Hayes writes that “in our deepest heart, we are made for God and desire God, even though we may not be consciously aware of this.”

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 73.

Absolute hope, then, deals with hope about the meaning of life itself<sup>28</sup> – it is an abiding attitude and can be referred to as transcendental hope.<sup>29</sup> By contrast, there are also the common experiences of human hope.<sup>30</sup> These two forms of hope are positively related.<sup>31</sup>

Hayes encapsulates the relationship between human hope and human self-transcendence when he writes:

Hope appears as a fundamental attitude, a way of transcending the limits of present experience . . . If the great metaphors of biblical hope can be seen in relation to the deeply human forms of hope, then theological eschatology can become a way of interpreting human hope in its deepest and most radical dimensions . . . [T]he experience of human transcendence from which the reality of hope emerges is intrinsically tied into the human experience of being in time.<sup>32</sup>

### **Nature of Eschatological Language**

In traditional eschatology, such as was extant during the time of Barth, individual and universal eschatology seeks to explain the end of the world and the ultimate destiny of humankind in a dogmatic manner. It tends to use the language of “knowing” which includes definitions, arguments, deductions, and inductions.<sup>33</sup>

Rahner, however, suggests a hermeneutic that gives eschatological language better meaning. Hayes summarizes this principle:

Any attempt to talk about the future can be carried out only from the present experience of humanity. We cannot “know” the future in the way we know the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 79, 83.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 93.

present. The language and images by which we speak of the future, whether a purely human future, or the eschatological future promised by God, can be drawn only from the present experience of humanity, which . . . is rooted in the history of the past.<sup>34</sup>

Consequently, rather than eschatology being “knowledge” about future events, it is the “hopeful projection” of the fulfilment of the mystery of grace which is being experienced now in human history.<sup>35</sup>

A second hermeneutic principle is that eschatological language is non-literal, analogical discourse.<sup>36</sup> Such language does not entail a literal description of the future.<sup>37</sup> Rather, it is highly figurative – using images, symbols, similes, and metaphors to evoke a vision of hope for the future without resorting to specific, concrete details.<sup>38</sup> This is the case with the apocalyptic language in the Bible that portrays the future. It is a language of “hope” which does not attempt to define future reality exactly, but is suggestive and evocative in order to hold reality open to what yet can come to be.<sup>39</sup>

In sum, eschatological language points beyond the power of exact knowledge to hold open the future.<sup>40</sup> “And such language is important,” writes Hayes, “precisely because it does not clearly define and close reality, for only an open reality can be the place in which human freedom and responsibility can be exercised.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Hayes writes that “analogical language, as understood in the theological tradition, involves both a similarity and a dissimilarity between the terms of the analogy.”

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 93-94.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 94.

## History and Eschatology

In Christian eschatology, a question arises about the Christian's identity in the modern world. Two predominant views have arisen. First, "incarnationalists" see the Church as an extension of the incarnation of the Word in history – and therefore emphasize Christian engagement in building the world as contributing to the realization of God's Kingdom.<sup>42</sup> Second, "eschatologists" focus on the Kingdom of God, seeing it as a pure gift from God and therefore cannot be partially made by human endeavour.<sup>43</sup> Both views have a basis in Scripture, underscoring the need for dialectical understanding.<sup>44</sup>

Pannenberg has attempted to address the relationship between history and eschatology.<sup>45</sup> As a student of Barth (in the 1950s), Pannenberg became uneasy with Barth's radical distinction between revelation and human experience in the world.<sup>46</sup> Based on the primacy given to the future in eschatology, Pannenberg reversed the common understanding of the causal relationship between the present and future (namely, today's actions are the cause of what happens tomorrow). In his view, the magnetic power of the future causes the present, in that the God of the future draws humans beyond their present reality.<sup>47</sup>

Pannenberg's proleptical framework leads to a positive relationship between the present and future as follows:

God is not absent from the present; rather God is in the present precisely as its futurity. The present is somehow stamped by the future to which it is drawn. Using

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 126-128. Hayes lists H. De Lubac, P. Teilhard de Chardin, and A. Dondeyne as representatives of this group.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 126-129. Hayes lists L. Bouyer, J. Daniélou, and R. Guardini as representatives of this group.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>46</sup> M. Williams, "Pannenberg, Wolfhart", in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2d ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 886.

<sup>47</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 137-138.



the Scriptural metaphor of the Kingdom as the metaphor for that future, Pannenberg can see positive signs of the kingdom already in the present as the future makes its power felt in history. ‘Creative love, unloosed by faith and hope, has the power to pierce this fragile and mortal life with flashes of eternal meaning and joy. Thus we can know the peace of wholeness and integrity’.<sup>48</sup>

In sum, the Christian faith does not choose between God and the world – rather, it is a matter of finding God in and through the world.<sup>49</sup> An excessively privatized Christian faith forgets the intimate relationship between the love of God and the love of fellow human beings (see for example, 1 Jn 4:7-8, 12).<sup>50</sup>

### **Understanding of Individual Destiny**

On an individual level, the end of physical human life raises the question of a personal life after death and the conditions of such an extended existence.<sup>51</sup> Several specific themes have been developed in the theological tradition such as the relationship between death and sin, the separation of soul and body, the end of one’s personal history, and the afterlife with its experience of reward and punishment.<sup>52</sup> In this section, the central issue of death is covered.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 139. W. Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1969), 74. Williams, “Pannenberg, Wolfhart”, 887. Williams writes that according to Pannenberg, “the meaning and end of history, and the nature of God, is disclosed proleptically in the history of Jesus Christ, as Christ represents the final manifestation of the coming God.” In some ways, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a preview of the eschaton.

<sup>49</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 148.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> New World Encyclopedia contributors, “Eschatology,” *New World Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Eschatology?oldid=845665> (accessed June 16, 2010).

<sup>52</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 101-105. See also New World Encyclopedia contributors, “Eschatology”. Raymond, “Biblical Eschatology”, 981. Raymond lists *individual* eventualities such as (1) death, (2) the state of the disembodied human soul, (3) the resurrection of the body, (4) the final judgment, (5) and the individual’s ultimate eternal destiny. By contrast, *cosmic* eventualities include (1) the return of Christ, (2) the liberation of creation from its bondage to decay, and (3) the new heaven and new earth.

Contemporary discussion is showing that the traditional definition of death as the separation of the soul from the body is no longer adequate.<sup>53</sup> In its place, a convincing development is that human death is not simply a passively suffered fate – rather, it is a profoundly personal act in which the entire person (body *and* soul) is actively and deeply engaged.<sup>54</sup> In other words, not only does death “happen” to a person, but he or she actively dies their death.<sup>55</sup> It is an act of final self-surrender.<sup>56</sup>

Human death as a personal, human act with both a passive *and* active element can be recognized in the Scriptural presentation of Jesus’ death.<sup>57</sup> On the one hand, his death was something done to him that he did not seek and had to suffer through (Mk 14:32-41; 15:34).<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, he gave himself freely into the hands of his loving Father (Lk 23:46; Jn 14:28; 16:17; 19:30).<sup>59</sup>

Hayes summarizes this richer understanding of death when he writes:

Viewed from the perspective of the death and resurrection of Christ, death can be seen as the final act of self-surrender to that Mystery which one has trusted in life, and which one has believed to be a God of love, forgiveness, and acceptance. Death is the final extension of the risk of love experienced throughout life. In specifically Christian terms, the free act by which we give ourselves into the hands of God’s love and mercy is the way in which the believer enters most fully into the mystery of the dying and rising of Christ.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 105.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-106. Three major names in this development of thinking are: K. Rahner, R. Troisfontaines, and L. Boros.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

## **The Collective Destiny of Humanity and the Cosmos**

On the level of universal eschatology, involving the purpose for the whole of existence, three areas are addressed in this paper: the notion of hell, and the related concepts of universal salvation and reincarnationalism.

In traditional theology, as would have been understood by Barth, hell is described in vivid, graphic images drawn from the apocalyptic tradition.<sup>61</sup> Attempts are made to give specific details of a future destiny that could await some humans at death.<sup>62</sup> It is understood as eternal punishment brought about by an angry God who is seemingly appeased by the pain exacted on the sinner.<sup>63</sup> In other words, hell is what God inflicts on people from outside as retribution for their transgressions.<sup>64</sup>

In contemporary theological thought, however, the hermeneutic principle that eschatological statements should be assertions about the future made on the basis of the present experience of faith and grace<sup>65</sup> yields more telling insight into the nature of hell. Since it follows that the mystery of hell has its basis somewhere in present experience, then paramount is an understanding of human freedom and responsibility.<sup>66</sup> Hayes sums up this better perspective:

We are blessed or damned not by an extrinsic, divine *fiat*, but by the inner working-out of our own decisions . . . Free, human decisions carry within themselves the possibility of hell. Thus, hell is not something into which we are cast by God but a reality which we ourselves create. God is active in the punishment of hell only

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

insofar as God does not reverse the free acts of human beings and does not release the human person from that which has been freely chosen, even though that person's condition stands in contradiction to God's intent.<sup>67</sup>

Related to the issue of an eternity of hell is the question of universal salvation.<sup>68</sup> The central problem is that an eternal hell contradicts the nature of God as love.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, according to the universalists, divine love and mercy necessitate that ultimately all human beings must find salvation.<sup>70</sup>

While universalists may respect Scripture in support of their ideas, there are problems in their arguments.<sup>71</sup> The fundamental difficulty lies in the issue of human freedom in response to God.<sup>72</sup> It is questionable to use language such as “love and mercy necessitate . . .” (which implies “must”) when dealing with freedom.<sup>73</sup>

In faith, Christians believe that Jesus has been raised to a life with God the Father – and this anticipates the destiny that God wills for all human beings.<sup>74</sup> However, one cannot know to what extent that destiny will be realized in humanity.<sup>75</sup> Accordingly, eschatology cannot claim that divine love “must” be victorious in the form of universal salvation (it can only hope that such will occur).<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 181-182.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> J. R. Root, “Universalism”, in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2d ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 1232. On the surface, universalist arguments appear convincing and may centre on the following: (1) The character of God is incompatible with the idea of the eternal suffering of anyone, therefore his grace extends to all eventually (1 Jn 2:2); (2) the power of God is sufficient to restore lost humanity and “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord” (Phil 2:10-13); (3) God's sovereign will and purpose will be fulfilled when all are finally saved (2 Pet 3:9).

<sup>72</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 184.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Related to universalism is reincarnationalism. Supporting premises for reincarnation include the need for additional life cycles to close the gap between human weakness and divine reality, accounting for the problem of innocent suffering (due to accumulated karma from past lives), and the harmonious resolution of the problem of an eternal hell.<sup>77</sup> While some Christian theologians have suggested the possibility of accepting reincarnation,<sup>78</sup> it remains a totally different vision of humanity and history, being a rationalistic system governed by the concept of justice – with salvation of the immortal soul existing in a body.<sup>79</sup> By contrast, Christianity is a personalist vision of reality based on freedom, love, communion, and contingency – with salvation for the whole of the human person (body and soul).<sup>80</sup>

### **The Parousia and the End of History**

The hope in the second, glorious coming of Christ at the end of history – the parousia (the word understood to mean “arrival”) – has been a well-established Christian teaching over the centuries.<sup>81</sup> The idea of the return the Lord has seemingly been inseparable from the concept of the end of history. Here eschatology is clearly viewed in a chronological mode.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 185-186.

<sup>78</sup> R. Enroth, “Reincarnation”, in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2d ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 1002. These include L. Weatherhead, G. MacGregor, and Q. Howe Jr.

<sup>79</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 186. Enroth, “Reincarnation”, 1002. Enroth notes that reincarnation teachings promote the essential divinity of humanity, and deny the notion of a sovereign personal God.

<sup>80</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 186.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 160-161. Around this central event stand a number of related themes such as: (1) the signs of the end, (2) general judgment, (3) resurrection of the dead, (4) heaven and hell, (5) the kingdom, and (6) the new heaven and the new earth.

The word *end*, however, can be understood in at least two ways. On the one hand, “end” means “the ceasing to be what is”.<sup>82</sup> This leads to a literal interpretation of scriptural texts, implying the annihilation of existence (involving the destruction of the planet or of all living things).<sup>83</sup>

On the other hand, “end” also describes “the perfecting of what was begun”.<sup>84</sup> This points to the perfection of the created order.<sup>85</sup> Here, the issue is not a point in time, but one of theological purpose or meaning.<sup>86</sup> Hayes reviews the central issue:

To speak of an end to history in this way is not to speak of the annihilation of the world. But it does reflect the conviction that this universe, and humanity in it, unfolds as a unified process which moves as a whole to its consummation . . . As the history of an individual moves to an end, so the history of the human race is envisioned as moving to an end.<sup>87</sup>

From this perspective, the parousia becomes the *symbol* of the consummation of history in God.<sup>88</sup> That is, it represents the saving presence of Christ in history, and the cosmic completion of the process begun in his life, death, and resurrection.<sup>89</sup> This understanding is supported by the fact that the word *parousia* can also mean “presence”, and all history after the death of Christ can be seen as the mystery of his abiding presence or parousia.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> New World Encyclopedia contributors, “Eschatology”. Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 161.

<sup>83</sup> New World Encyclopedia contributors, “Eschatology”.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 161.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, then, the significance of the parousia is not so much when Christ comes back to the earth, but of the world arriving at its goal with God in Christ.<sup>91</sup> Travis also notes that “New Testament writers are in fact less concerned with the timing and manner of Christ’s coming than with its purpose.”<sup>92</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Far from being an innocuous chapter at the end of dogmatic theology, as Barth postulated, contemporary Christian eschatology presents a dynamic vision of the final fulfilment of human existence through love.<sup>93</sup> While not cast in concrete images with precise information, eschatology “opens to human hope the prospect of an absolute future in which all the good, the true, and the beautiful brought forth in history is brought to fulfilment and crowned with eternal significance in the life of God” (Hayes).<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 162. Hayes also writes that “the parousia has been described as the world arriving at Christ rather than as Christ returning to the world after a long absence” (page 166).

<sup>92</sup> Travis, “Eschatology”, 230.

<sup>93</sup> Hayes, *Visions of a Future*, 190.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 204.

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