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The Hope and History Debate in Fundamental Theology

David Patrick Collits
The University of Notre Dame Australia

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THE HOPE AND HISTORY DEBATE IN FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY

David Patrick Collits

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy

School of Philosophy and Theology

Sydney Campus

August, 2020
DECLARATION

To the best of the candidate’s knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published by another person, except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis is the candidate’s own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institution.

Signature:

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Date: 15 August 2020, Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
ABSTRACT

The hope and history debate in twentieth century Catholic theology concerned to what extent the object(s) of eschatological hope could be realised within history. Its context was the ‘secularisation of Christian eschatology’. On the one hand, Joseph Ratzinger, who was indebted to the philosophical work of Josef Pieper, considered hope’s object to belong to the realm of gift. He was sceptical of the extent to which hope could be manufactured by human means within history. On the other, Edward Schillebeeckx, Johann Baptist Metz and Gustavo Gutiérrez presented theologies of futurity, including political theology and liberation theology, in which the realisation of eschatological goals in the historical future became an important object of hope.

The protagonists’ positions depended upon the decisions they took in fundamental theology. They are aligned in broad terms to the Communio and Concilium ‘schools’ of post-conciliar Catholic theology. These ‘schools’ embody importantly different presentations of fundamental theology still at large today. The different areas of fundamental theology engaged by the hope-history debate include metaphysics and the philosophy of history, Christology, the nature-grace debate and soteriology. The Communio perspective on fundamental theology, represented by Ratzinger, adopts an analogical metaphysics and a theology of history aware of the limits of any philosophy of history and its claims to exhaustive knowledge of history’s progress. It privileges the place of Christ, understood in Chalcedonian terms, in the understanding of hope and salvation history, his novelty in relation to nature and his centrality to the redemption. The Concilium interpretation, represented by Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez, incorporate elements of Hegelian-Marxist philosophy, view Christ through politico-historical lens and adopt a Rahnerian theology of grace, in which Christ’s novelty and centrality to nature, grace and the redemption are downplayed, and the redemption is understood as involving the integration of historical and eschatological reality.
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PUBLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

A creature's power is not as great as its desire.¹

Deus, qui cónspicis, quia ex nulla nostra actione confídimus…²

If the hope we have learned to repose in Christ belongs to this world only, then we are unhappy beyond all other men. (1 Cor 19, Knox translation).³

Preface: Hope and History at the Foundations of Theology Today

Reflection on hope, and the meaning and goal of history became pressing in the twentieth century as a result of what Joseph Ratzinger described in 1977 as “the emerging crisis of European civilisation”.⁴ The “crisis… in [the] particular historical configuration” of twentieth century Europe involved the despair and annihilation generated by total war, nuclear proliferation and genocide, the transmogrification of Christian hope into “this-worldly hope”, the “naïve faith in progress” embodied in liberalism, and the optimism and utopianism inherent in revolutionary Marxist systems of thought and praxis.⁵ Present in twentieth century Catholic thought were

² Collect of Sexagesima Sunday (MR 1962 (London: Baronius Press Ltd, 2005)).
various responses to civilisation crisis and the possibility, and nature, of hope in the face of it, which in essence concerns the relationship between hope and history. The hope-history debate raises questions therefore regarding: the nature of hope and its object(s); the distinction and relationship between eschatological hope and worldly hope; whether the object(s) of hope are largely inner- or extra- (or supra-) historical; and therefore what are the meaning of history and the relationship between history and the eschaton. It focuses on “the search for an appropriate ‘praxis of hope’ in contemporary society” and represents the continuing need to form a genuine Christian hope.

The thesis asks the question how various protagonists of the hope-history debate dealt with the issue of whether hope, in its most fundamental sense, has an inner- or extra-historical object. This question is significant because one’s answer to it will determine whether or not hope is secularised and directed to inner-historical goals, projects and strategies. In Catholic twentieth century thought, varying answers were given. The received wisdom that hope concerned the individual and the traditional

---


themes of eschatology (the four ‘last things’ of death, judgment, heaven or hell) was replaced by some with a theology of hope. An exclusive focus was given to eschatology as a motivator to seek, at least partially, the realisation of eschatological realities within history, often conceived in terms redolent of contemporary concerns with justice and peace. A contrary perspective continued to see hope as relating to eschatology’s traditional concerns with the individual’s fate after death, although not in individualistic terms or ignorant of hope’s communal and inner-historical implications. It linked hope to an existential desire for fulfilment in eternal life. It resisted the revolutionary implications that a theology of hope augured for the whole of theology and the fabric of Christian belief.⁸

The contours of the hope-history debate both reveal and are revealed by fundamental theology. The principal objective of this thesis is to make out the contention that the foundational orientations of a theologian will determine the position he takes in the hope-history debate, especially regarding the inner- or extra-historical character of hope’s object(s). Focusing on the nature of hope and history itself while essential does not give the full picture. To answer the question of whether hope can be realised in history, partially or completely, requires reference to a theological framework that itself answers questions regarding the destiny of creation and the human person. This is not to criticise a singular focus on hope, which is necessary to explore the nature of hope. It is to suggest, rather, that a singular focus is incomplete.⁹ The study thus unearths some of the theological assumptions of authors’ contributions to the debate and connects those contributions to what happens elsewhere in theology.

A theologian’s views on the hope-history relationship reveal the fundamental presuppositions of his theology, even if those underpinnings remain unstated or unclear. Positioning in the hope-history debate is akin to a litmus test for the whole of theology and, to a degree, one’s attitude to modernity in general. In its way, it is a building block of fundamental theology because it implicates foundational questions in theology. Analysis of the hope-history debate is, therefore, a case study of the consequences and importance of positions taken in fundamental theology. The thesis

⁸ See for example, Ratzinger on the immortality of the soul, Eschatology, 266-268.
⁹ For example, Schumacher’s indispensable study (Philosophy of Hope) of Josef Pieper’s philosophy of hope is primarily philosophical.
aims to explore in depth the nature and reasons for contrasting orientations evident in the hope-history debate. Through investigation of the theological and philosophical sources of the dispute, it examines the theological roots of the contending positions in the debate and the significance of baseline decisions in fundamental theology today.

The issues in fundamental theology revealed in an exploration of the theological roots of the hope-history debate concern the nature-grace-history relationship and questions of metaphysics. The hope-history debate especially touches on the questions foundational to theology because the position one takes on nature-grace – and with that Christology – is often determinative for related areas of theology, including hope-history, soteriology and eschatology. It is also relevant to fundamental theology because it explores the human capacity for the divine and how the object of revelation – the Word made manifest in Christ – fulfils that capacity, which is essential to answering the question of where hope and its energy is to be oriented.\textsuperscript{10} In a sense, it asks the fundamental question of all theology concerning why God became man and what effect, therefore, his Incarnation has had on human history: is the Kingdom of God to be built on earth by human hands and/or is its realisation to come?\textsuperscript{11} The positions taken on nature and grace and Christ’s relation to human nature, and metaphysics, govern one’s views of the possibilities of history

\textsuperscript{10} Various definitions are given of fundamental theology. Aidan Nichols OP describes it as covering the area formerly discussed in apologetics: \textit{The Shape of Catholic Theology: An Introduction to its Sources, Principles, and History} (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press: 1991), 24. Apologetics partly concerned the possibility of divine revelation and the reasonableness of what Christian faith claims to be divine revelation: see, for example, Ronald Knox, \textit{The Belief of Catholics} (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000; first published 1927). Fundamental theology is taken here to be that area of theology touching on the foundational questions of the theological enterprise identified by Tracey Rowland, \textit{Catholic Theology} (London and New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark: 2017), 205. Answers to these situate a theologian, especially concerning the relationship between nature-grace and history-ontology. At the heart of these questions is how humanity’s transcendent destiny and therefore being is mediated in history, and the role of Christ in that mediation; that is, how the grace of the Incarnate Word is communicated to humanity. C.f. PJ Cahill’s description of “Fundamental Theology,” in \textit{New Catholic Encyclopedia}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., vol. 6, (Detroit, MI: Gale, 2003), 26-27 from \textit{Gale Virtual Reference Library}, \url{http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3407704353/GVRL?u=note_dame&sid=GVRL&xid=f50b1ca8}, accessed 17 Dec 2018. Cahill notes that fundamental theology’s traditional interest was with respect to God’s revelation of himself in Christ, and his establishment of the Church as the bearer of that revelation. He notes that Karl Rahner and others sought to develop fundamental theology by orienting it to a study of “man’s openness to all being”, in which the analogy of being and the human person’s obediential potency are important. The questions of this thesis touch on fundamental theology understood in this sense of an “analysis of [the] capability [of “hearing the word of God”], both in the abstract and as it is fulfilled in the concrete”, especially with respect to differing answers given to how the human person’s capacity for grace is fulfilled in the Person of Christ.

and, even more fundamentally, how soteriology (who saves us and how) and
eschatology (what is the nature of God’s final redemption and when it is realised) is
understood.

If the supernatural and soteriology are conceived immanently, and the distinction
between history and the eschaton blurred, hope will be immanently framed. If
sanctifying grace is imparted through unique means from ‘above’, on the contrary, a
reserve will be applied to the eschatological significance of profane activity, and
hope will primarily be directed to an eternal future. Determinative is one’s
Christology. How Christ is conceived informs one’s soteriology and who is the
primary agent in saving us. If Christ is conceived ‘from below’ in his historicity, the
soteriological import of history will increase and hope will be turned to the social,
historical and political. If ‘from above’, emphasising the unity of Christ’s humanity
to his divinity, history will be relativised and hope directed in a personalistic manner
‘above’ to the Incarnate Word. Metaphysics is also important. If the relation between
God and humanity is conceptualised univocally, the creature and history (and the
secular) have an ontology untethered from God. If analogically, the creature is seen
intrinsically to participate in God’s being and is oriented to the fullness of it. How
hope is understood thus depends on fundamental theology.

The hope-history debate and the underlying theological principles informing it are
pertinent to the state of the Church today. To an extent, what one thinks the Church’s
response to the contemporary philosophical, social and historical matrix ought to be
will turn on what one thinks is the object(s) of hope. Particularly, the answer given to
the question of whether hope’s object(s) is primarily inner- or extra-historical and the
related issue of who has agency in bringing hope’s object(s) about, will determine
what credence is given to the idea that history develops progressively and
immanently, an often unspecified but nonetheless subsisting assumption today. As
one’s view of the historicity or not of hope depends on fundamental theology, one’s
positions on metaphysics, and the relationship between nature and grace will inform
one’s soteriology and eschatology. In turn, one’s soteriology and eschatology shapes
the response give to Hegel’s question of whether or not history develops according to
its own immanent logic towards a telos within history.
Whether one finds thus a Hegelian-Marxist view of history palatable or not coincides with or, more strongly, is determined by how one: understands Christology; conceives the natural in relation to the supernatural and consequently relates Christ to nature; and conceives metaphysics. Much effort in Catholic thought in modernity has been directed to responding to Kant’s epistemological challenge. As well as Kant’s anti-realist transcendentalism, the crisis in the Church today concerns the reception given to the historicisation of ontology latent in Hegelian-Marxist dialectic and how secularisation and the ‘world’ are viewed. The future health of Catholic theology requires a rejoinder to a dialectical view of history. One’s response to Hegel and Marx in the hope-history debate depends ultimately upon higher order theological and philosophical principles. The merit of those principles will shape the quality of that response.

Careful attention must therefore be given to the choices one makes in fundamental theology. Even if the differences between the choices might appear subtle, on these decisions turn the attitudes, dispositions and arguments revealed in the hope and history debate but also those present in the broader ecclesial environment. Fundamental theology is not confined to the academy but plays itself out in the rhetoric of bishops, priests, religious, agency leaders and parishioners. The manner in which the human person is conceived as being capable of receiving supernatural revelation and how grace is imparted to him, and the objective bindingness of that revelation shape understandings of what salvific significance human activity has, sacramental discipline and practice, the adaptability or otherwise of dogma and the purpose of the Church’s activities in the world. It will determine attitudes to the ‘world’, the worth of secular activities and how much guidance the Church should take from the secular realm.

To examine the implications of the hope-history debate in fundamental theology and the place of Hegel and Marx in contemporary Catholic thought, this thesis compares therefore two different sets of authors. The first consists of Edward Schillebeeckx, Johann Baptist Metz (who developed a political theology) and Gustavo Gutiérrez (who developed a liberation theology). Together they will be taken as representative.

12 C.f. Rowland, Catholic Theology, 205.
of the *Concilium* perspective on hope and history, named for the theological journal (see further below).\(^{13}\) As representative of the *Communio* perspective, contrasted against them is Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, especially understood as influenced by the philosophical work of Josef Pieper.\(^{14}\) Each set typifies contrasting positions on the question of hope and history and can be examined as a set. In his own right, each author was a chief participant in the hope-history debate. The study excavates the underlying, higher-order theological principles animating each author’s contribution to the debate in relation to the general perspective they embody. It relates their views on hope and history to their orientations in fundamental theology concerning the Person of Christ and his significance for history and eschatology, the human person’s creaturely capacity for grace and the way in which he receives it, and the nature of the soteriological role of Christ in mediating that grace.

Moreover, in examining these questions, the proper relationship between history and the eschaton, and metaphysics will be touched upon. If Christ is conceived in Chalcedonian terms (3) as the divine and novel intervention in the order of creation,


For further discussion of the *Communio-Concilium* split in Catholic theology and examples of Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez being published in the *Concilium* journal see section 4 of this Chapter.

\(^{14}\) See n88 below for texts of Pieper and Ratzinger on hope and history. The thesis will use Ratzinger in references to his writings to his election as Pope, and Benedict for those published thereafter. As Aidan Nichols OP notes, although Ratzinger’s roles as private theologian and member of the magisterium are distinct, they possess a unity such that ‘Ratzinger’ and ‘Benedict’ can be used “indifferently”: *The Conversation of Faith and Reason: Modern Catholic Thought from Hermes to Benedict XVI* (Chicago and Mundelein, Illinois: Hillenbrand Books, 2009).
and history is conceived as a creature, then history cannot be seen as containing the entirety of being, but as containing it in a provisional, creaturely way (see further below).\textsuperscript{15} Creation – nature and the temporal order – are to be taken out of themselves to partake in eternity. Necessarily, any inner-historical claims for hope are relativised against the recognition that creation and the human person long for a (personal) transformation, which elevates them into an entirely different order of being.

To provide context to how this thesis will explore the competing perspectives on the hope-history relationship, this Introduction will essay the impact of conceptions of the history-ontology relationship on the current ecclesial and theological context, the nature-grace relationship and Christology, the utility of the Incarnationalist/Eschatological distinction sometimes drawn in the literature, and the \textit{Concilium/Communio} split in contemporary Catholic theology. Finally, it will provide an outline of the argument pursued in the thesis.

1. \textbf{Contemporary Ecclesial and Theological Context: The History-Ontology Relationship}

The volatile contemporary ecclesial atmosphere reveals the stakes in the hope-history debate. A theologian is not immune from the travails in the Church around him and will ask what the philosophical and theological sources are of those travails. Virulent disputation characterises public discourse in the contemporary ecclesial climate. The relative calm of the St John Paul II and Benedict XVI pontificates – which was only ever apparent – has been upended. On display in the current ecclesial environment is, on the one hand, a latent if inchoate cocktail of Joachimite, Hegelian and Marxist ingredients, which sees history, dogma and tradition and even the papal office in essentially dialectical terms. The ‘new’ is urged to replace the ‘old’, in the expectation that an essentially different and definitive historical epoch awaits. The drive to the future is joined to a repudiation of the past and an imperative to change existing, “sinful structures”.\textsuperscript{16} Allied to this progressive dialecticism is a treatment of

\textsuperscript{15} References to numerals in parenthesis throughout this thesis are references to Chapters of the thesis.

the ‘world’ as a principal *locus theologicus*. Theology takes its cues from secular reality outside the Church. In this way, human effort is to be focused upon praxis and the working towards of economic and social emancipation, effort receiving its content from secular-inflected dialectics. Received doctrine is apt for revision in light of changing of historical circumstances. The Church must be on the ‘right side of history’. Generally speaking, such an attitude aligns with more immanenstist understandings of hope(s)’s object.\(^{17}\)

On the other hand, there are defenders of the authority of a living, apostolic tradition, which continues to bind today. The Christian religion is not an “open narrative”, which incorporates into the faith what is held in “contemporary critical consciousness” – it respects rather an ontologically-grounded ‘timelessness of truth’.\(^{18}\) A defence of timeless, transcendent ontology is thus a response to the spectre of a “dictatorship of relativism” generated by an immanenstist emphasis on praxis, which struggles to breathe in transcendent air.\(^{19}\) One of the chief proponents of ‘timeless truth’ is Ratzinger, whose theological concerns regarding political and liberation theology – which often manifest the attitude described above – are

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\(^{17}\) The description in this and the next paragraph is necessarily general, painted in broad strokes that inevitably gloss over the subtleties of the positions.


grounded in the fear that an emphasis on praxis can result in relativism.\textsuperscript{20} Ratzinger and those of like-mind see history as turning definitively on the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery of Christ. They are cautious regarding the possibility of inner-historical fulfilment and sceptical of claims that history develops according to its own immanent logic. History already contains instead the seeds of its own yet to be realised supra-historical fulfilment in the Resurrection of Christ. It does not need human action to construct a ‘better future’ and ‘new humanity’. Christ in the Church alone can redeem the world. He is the ‘better future’ and ‘new humanity’. Most important for them is not inner-historical human activity seeking to ‘build a better world’ but a patient orientation to Christ, built on charitable union with him and our neighbour, and fostered in the liturgy and sacraments. On this view, hope’s object is eternal hope in Christ.

Implicit in the contrasting contemporary ecclesial viewpoints are competing metaphysics. Tracey Rowland has often pointed out Ratzinger’s observation that in the wake of Martin Heidegger’s \textit{Being and Time} (1927), the “fundamental crisis of our age” is conceptualising how being is mediated in history.\textsuperscript{21} Several issues are at play in seeking to understand the relationship between ontology and history. Perhaps most crucial is the question of how truth is mediated in history, including regarding the truth of the human person and his nature. Also relevant are questions of how history is reconciled to the present and what significance the past has for the present, issues catalysed by the historical crisis of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{22} Underlying such questions is the more fundamental metaphysical issue of whether truth and its object, Being, transcend particular, historical circumstances or are historically contingent, partially or entirely. Another way of looking at the issue is to ask Hegel’s question

\textsuperscript{20} Ratzinger notes that relativism, including with respect the various world religions, followed in the wake of the subsidence of liberation theology in the 1990s and points out the connections between orthopraxy and relativism, including with respect to P Knitter, who sought to “[link] pluralist theology of religions with the liberation theologies”: \textit{Truth and Tolerance}, 123-126.


\textsuperscript{22} As Rowland points out, in response to these issues Ratzinger notes the question of whether there is a human nature as such is raised, Rowland, “Timelessness of Truth,” 242-243, quoting Ratzinger, \textit{Principles of Catholic Theology}, 9. On Ratzinger’s description of the crisis constituted by the twentieth century, see Ratzinger, \textit{Principles of Catholic Theology}, 153-155, 158, \textit{Theology of History in St Bonaventure}, v. See also text accompanying n5 above.
whether the universal is the historical, unfolding itself in history according to a
dialectical pattern resulting in the ever-greater realisation of the “World’s” “own
freedom on the part of Spirit”. Hegel himself represented the “turn to history”,
which resulted in time being considered synonymous with Being and “the logos [as
becoming] itself in history”. In short, the history/ontology question asks if abiding
truth is ‘inside’ (immanent to) or ‘outside’ (transcendent of) of history.

Framing the question in this manner underscores a key cleavage in contemporary
intra-ecclesial disputes as approbating or disapprobating the Hegelian ‘turn to
history’ as it relates those disputes to the hope-history debate and to broader cultural
divisions regarding what Eric Voegelin calls the perennial gnostic temptation to
‘immanentize the eschaton’, that is, to place in an inner-worldly framework
eschatological expectation. Dividing the opposing camps appears to be a chasm in
the appreciation of the meaning of history and its immanent possibilities. If truth is
understood as historically contingent, it is a short step to saying that history – with
the Church alongside – can and needs to develop according to apparently more
advanced political and ethical understandings. The papal office is seen as unmoored
from binding truth and tradition. The contrary claim argues that truth and being,
while mediated in and through history, nevertheless has its ultimate source ‘outside’

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development” (Walter Kaspar, *An Introduction to Christian Faith* (London, Burns and Oates, 1980), 156 quoting Hegel’s *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, trans. AV Miller (Oxford, 1977), 11). He also quotes this comment of Kaspar’s from his *An Introduction*, 162, which has echoes of Rahner: “It is
impossible to make a clear distinction between secular history and salvation history…All reality is
dominated by the appeal and offer of God’s grace and so is potentially salvation history” (1.4). He
notes that one of Kaspar’s sources is K Rahner, “Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions,”
*Theological Investigations*, vol 5, 115-134. See also the suggestion that Hegelianism is apparent in the
Church today: Anna M Silvas, “A Year After ‘Amoris Laetitia’. A Timely Word,” published in
Settimo Cielo, the weblog of Sandro Magister, 21 April 2017: http://magister.blogautore.espresso.repubblica.it/2017/04/21/a-year-after-amoris-laetitia-a-timely-word/?refresh_ce, last accessed 28 February 2019, RR Reno “Pope Francis and his associates echo the
pieties and self-complimenting utopianism of progressives”: Public Square, *First Things* 278, (December 2017): 68.
history, as its transcendent origin and end. It is ‘timeless’ in Rowland’s terminology. God’s revelation of himself in history points to an eternal reality outside of history, participation in which history is to be brought as its telos and peras, end and boundary, through transformative grace (3 and 5). At stake in the history-ontology debate therefore is whether hope is understood to be oriented towards history’s inner fulfilment or outside it.

For a Catholic theologian, philosophical questions of ontology’s relationship to history also implicate theology, as well as today’s febrile intra-ecclesial environment. Disputation of the sort characteristic in the Church today essentially concerns differing theological and metaphysical tendencies, which manifest themselves in differing ideas of what the Church’s relationship to the world ought to be. Competing tendencies arose in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and remain unresolved. Today’s disputes have exposed to the public eye what had largely remained hidden theological and philosophical flux confined to competing theological journals. Swirling around the ecclesial atmosphere are different theological formations, whose origins are to be discovered in an excavation of the contesting positions and dispositions in fundamental theology of the differing combatants in today’s “theological star wars”.26

Rowland has pointed out that the answers that a theologian gives to certain foundational questions in theology will determine the whole web of his theology. Specifically, in applying Ratzinger’s history-ontology problematic to Catholic theology, she suggests that the issue concerns how to account for the impact of history in relation to questions of truth and the capacity for human beings to respond to grace, without sacrificing the ontological insights of classic formulations of the nature-grace relationship. All people everywhere have the capacity of receiving, and are offered, the grace of justification, but exist in different historical-cultural milieux that may affect the mediation of that grace. Thus, she suggests that, in terms of Catholic theology, at the heart of the ‘crisis’ identified by Ratzinger concerning the history-ontology relationship are how competing “theological schools” differently account for the “relationship between nature, grace and history”.27

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26 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 93.
27 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 205.
approaches in fundamental theology understand this relationship in contrasting ways. How they do so will impact upon the Church’s self-understanding and how she is conceived in relation to the world and surrounding historical circumstances, and in turn, how the hope-history relationship is to be conceived.

2. The Nature-Grace Relationship and Christology

Implicated in the history-ontology question is thus the nature-grace relationship, a site of ongoing debate in contemporary theology. A foundational question implied in the nature-grace-history relationship concerns how nature and grace, mediated through Christ, ought to be understood in relation to one another. For guidance on this question, Rowland points out, a theologian will generally choose from: Francisco Suárez; Karl Rahner; or Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar. The theologian(s) chosen will often be determinative of where one sits generally in fundamental theology and also one’s attitude to the theological significance of the ‘world’.

Intrinsically connected to one’s decision on the shape of the nature-grace relationship is one’s Christology. Nicholas J. Healy has pointed out that the heated nature-grace debates in mid-twentieth century Catholic theology turned on how Christ was perceived “in relation to creation”, and what “novelty and gratuity” he offers nature. The answer to this question presupposes the content of one’s Christology. Bruce Marshall comments, in comparing Rahner and Karl Barth as representative of the Christological poles in theology, that a fundamental issue in theology turns on whether priority is given to “a general religious anthropology allied with the idea of an absolute saviour” (the Rahnerian position) or “the particular person Jesus Christ” (the Barthian position). Whether Christ’s historicity, or the unity of his humanity to

his divinity as per a Chalcedonian Christology, is emphasised will determine how novel he is taken to be in relation to human existence and human history. Christologies that focus upon his historicity will downplay his unique role in mediating grace. Christologies emphasising the subsistence of his humanity in the divinity will maximise the novelty of Christ and his Cross.

Correlative decisions taken in the domains of nature-grace and Christology will also parallel those taken regarding the Church-world relationship. A low Christology will tend to see grace operating anonymously in the ‘world’ outside the visible Church, whereas a Chalcedonian Christology will emphasise the unique mediation of Christ and his Church. The former will see Christianity as an “open narrative”, downplaying the significance of tradition and maximising the significance of praxis, whereas the latter will not. The former will also be more amenable to claims that the Church needs to change with the times.

The first fundamental position in Catholic theology on nature-grace is described as Neo-Thomist. The Suárezian position considers nature as self-subsistent, proportionate to its own end, and is thus prescinded from that which “surpasses nature”. Consequently, human nature is defined without reference to “the Christ event and the gift of grace that flows from his Cross”, even if paradoxically Thomists defend Cyrillian Christology. That is, nature and grace subsist on entirely different


On the taxonomy regarding the alternative readings of the nature-grace relationships, consisting of Neo-Thomist (which corresponds to the Suárezian position), Transcendental Thomist (Rahnerian) and Augustinian-Thomist (or neo-Augustinian: Lubacian/Balthasarian), see Tracey Rowland, “Natural Law in Catholic Christianity,” in The Cambridge Companion to Natural Law Ethics, ed. Tom Angier (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019) citing Fergus Kerr OP, After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), n1 and text accompanying. See further Chapter 4.


Riches, Ecce Homo, 13.
ontological planes and Christ, while understood in orthodox terms, is an extrinsic intervention into nature’s own latent possibilities.

The second option is a Transcendental Thomist or Rahnerian theology of grace, which argues that the transcendental orientation of the human person equates to an ‘always-already’ supernaturalised human existence (see further 1). It relates to a Nestorian Christological tendency in contemporary theology to overplay Christ’s historicity, paralleling the fifth century Nestorian emphasis on the humanity of Christ. Unintended parallels with the Suárezian account, in which pure human nature is emphasised, also appear. Riches points out that there is a “suggestive correlation” between the Suárezian position and the tradition of homo assumptus theology in Latin theology, which derives from ‘Nestorianism’ and is found in contemporary theology’s desire to be “orthodox Nestorian”. There has been a “de facto ‘Nestorianism’” in attempts to construct “the historical Jesus”, which results in a bifurcation between the “Jesus of history” and the “Jesus of Faith”. The human, historical existence of Christ is considered separately from his divinity, that is, not in reference to its “[subsistence] in the Word”, which leads to a focus on the historicity of Christ and his political influence, and not its necessarily divine character. An “ascending Christology” is developed “from below”, which diminishes and questions the relevance of Church teaching regarding Christ’s divinity and descent from heaven, preferring instead to construct the “real Jesus” based on anthropocentric experience consisting of sociology, history and politics.

Common to Suarez and Rahner’s conception of the nature-grace relationship is arguably an emphasis on human nature without reference to Christ. Rahner expressed preference that he would rather be “orthodox Nestorian” over the “crypto-monophysitism” emphasising Christ’s divinity he detected in the pre-conciliar Church. Thus, while Rahner scorned the concept of natura pura and developed a

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37 On the importance of starting Christology from ‘above’ as distinct from a methodology beginning from below, see Riches, *Ecce Homo*, 3-4. See especially 4n7 in which he describes Roger Haight SJ’s development of an ‘ascending Christology’ along these lines, understood as following on from Rahner’s ‘ascending Christology’. Edward Schillebeeckx likewise develops a Christology in which ‘experience’ takes a primary place (1).
theology of grace in response to neo-scholastic accounts of the relationship, the effects of his conception of nature-grace paradoxically correlate to the suggested effects of Suárezian theology. A common argument among scholars that dispute Suárez’s categories – chief among them de Lubac – is that the consequence of the *natura pura* logic is secularisation, resulting from the view that human nature can produce its own natural beatitude independent of Christ.\(^{39}\) An evacuation of the secular from specifically religious content often also appears as a result of the adoption of a Rahnerian theology of grace by theologians, even if not Rahner’s intention.\(^{40}\) The Rahnerian position on nature-grace tends to downplay the novelty and gratuity of Christ, viewing human existence in transcendental terms as in itself ‘always-already’, anonymously supernaturalised and thus as itself containing the possibility of its own fulfilment. In Kantian terms, Christ is viewed in exemplary terms, rather than human nature’s ontological fulfilment.\(^{41}\) An immanentist soteriology soon follows, in which profane and salvation history are conflated. The secular takes on a theological legitimacy and the ‘world’ becomes a leading *locus theologicus*.

The third choice in fundamental theology regarding nature and grace is the Lubacian-Balthasarian position on the relationship. The Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist (see chapter 4 for an explanation of this descriptor) orientation of de Lubac and Balthasar sees Aquinas as holding, in line with the preceding Augustinian, patristic tradition and against the later Suárezian account, that the human person has an innate, natural

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\(^{40}\) Aidan Nichols describes a popularised Rahner, which may be faithful to Rahner’s intention or not and contains, relevantly, the following notions: in fundamental theology, transcendental philosophy anticipates Christian revelation; in soteriology, Christ’s paschal mystery is “exemplary rather than efficacious”; and in the theology of history, “the universal openness of the human spirit to divine transcendence in it supernatural offer of salvation is already deemed to be … ‘the experience of grace’”: Rowland, *Catholic Theology*, 63-64 quoting Aidan Nichols OP, *Beyond the Blue Glass: Catholic Essays on Faith and Culture* (London: St Austin Press, 2002), 112.

\(^{41}\) C.f. Robert Barron, *The Priority of Christ: Toward a Postliberal Catholicism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 32: “In Kant, for instance, it is not Jesus in his uniqueness who determines the content of the categorical imperative; rather, it is the imperative that renders Jesus intelligible as a religious symbol. And in Rahner, it is not the concrete Christ that specifies the nature of absolute mystery but rather the experience of absolute mystery that renders Christ credible”. See also Thomas Sheehan, “Rahner’s Transcendental Project,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner*, eds. Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 41.
desire for supernatural beatitude. The human person has only one, supernatural end, which paradoxically – because supernatural – is beyond his powers to obtain. Consequently, the particularity of Christ in relation to nature is emphasised, which is allied to Chalcedonian Christology. Christ is the unique mediator between God and humanity in whom the sacred exchange occurs: the Divine Word took on our sin in order for us to be justified (c.f. 2 Cor 5:21). He descends “from above” in order to redeem.\textsuperscript{42} He is the incarnation of “valid and binding truth”.\textsuperscript{43} Only in the unity of the divine and human in Christ can the human person find the fulfilment for which he longs.

An Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of nature-grace thus guards against a latent ‘Nestorianism’ prevalent in contemporary Christology. Ratzinger summarises the danger as consisting of:

\begin{quote}
a one-sided separation Christology (Nestorianism) in which, when one reflects on the humanity of Christ, his divinity largely disappears, the unity of his person is dissolved, and reconstructions of merely the human Jesus dominate, which reflect more the ideas of our times than the true figure of the Lord.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

Ratzinger maintains the one subject that is the Word. The humanity of Jesus necessarily takes its contours from the divinity of the Word. When Christ is perceived as descending from above in a totally unexpected way to save fallen humanity, an immanentist soteriology is precluded. Truth and salvation are not immanent to human existence or history as such, which depend upon something outside them for elevation into divine reality, even if the receptivity to this reality is intrinsic to human nature itself.

Questions of Christ’s relationship to nature engage the history-ontology relationship. An immanentist metaphysics raises issues regarding the relationship between human nature and history and, therefore, the possibility or not of the mediation of transcendent grace to the human person. One view of Hegelian historicism sees truth

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{42} C.f. Riches, Ecce Homo, 3.
\textsuperscript{43} Ratzinger, Truth and Tolerance, 120.
\end{footnotes}
and human nature as historically contingent, in which “in his most essential characteristics man [is] undetermined and therefore free to create his own nature”.\textsuperscript{45} It sees history as the immanent increase in the self-consciousness of freedom, with the World and Reason being conflated. Tending to the pantheistic, it conceives of the God-creation relationship in univocal terms, losing sight of the \textit{maior dissimilitudo} between God and creature. Divine reason is seen to be contained within history. Perceiving nature or human existence as already-supernaturalised also arguably tends down this track in its approbation of secularisation and the salvific significance of history as such. At the same time, elements of contemporary Christology arguably exhibit a crypto-Nestorianism, which embodies modernity’s univocal, dualistic tendency to oppose the divine and humanity in competitive, contrastive ways. Truth and grace can be seen to be immanent to the human person and human history and not come from an outside source.

An analogical metaphysics, in contrast, protects the integrity of creation and history, while allowing for the irruption of grace from outside themselves. It does not see the relationship between the divine and created in dialectical terms but as ‘non-contrastive’ and ‘non-competitive’. Christ can then be seen in the unity of his divinity and humanity, as the transcendent source of human desire for supernatural fulfilment. Christ fulfils the capacity for grace inherent to human nature but in a radical, novel way, as the fulfilment promised at the analogical heart of our being, similar but with ever-greater dissimilarity to the divine.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45} Francis Fukuyama, \textit{The End of History and the Last Man} (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 62-63 (quotation on 63; emphasis added). C.f. Frederick Beiser, \textit{Hegel} (New York/Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 262-263, who argues against a relativist reading of Hegel. St John Paul II wrote in \textit{Fides et Ratio}, n87 that the “fundamental claim of historicism … is that the truth of a philosophy is determined on the basis of its appropriateness to a certain period and a certain historical purpose. At least implicitly, therefore, the enduring validity of truth is denied. What was true in one period, historicists claims, may not be true in another” quoted in Charles J Chaput O.F.M, “Believe, That You May Understand,” \textit{First Things} 281 (March 2018): 39. Chaput observes the historicism’s effect on theology, which supports a Hegelian dialectic in contemporary ecclesial rhetoric: “Historicism in theology transforms this organic development into a process of division or arbitrary change”: 39.

3. The Utility of the ‘Incarnationalist’/‘Eschatologist’ Distinction?

A shorthand method in theological literature of describing different approaches to the hope-history relationship, with their parallels for or against a Hegelian approach to history, is to refer to various authors as ‘Incarnationalist’ and or ‘Eschatologist’. According to Rowland, it was Léopold Malavez SJ who “drew a distinction between what he called the incarnational and eschatological approaches to salvation history”. The distinction between an ‘Incarnationalist’ and ‘Eschatologist’ perspective rests on how the relationship between profane history and the eschatological fulfilment of God’s promises at the conclusion of time is conceived. It concerns the soteriological significance of history as such and human activity within it.

Generally speaking, the Incarnationalist approach sees Christ’s first coming as a divine approval of history as such. The Incarnation drives inner-historical change towards the promised future eschatological reality. According to Daniel Minch, the ‘Incarnationalists’ “emphasised the transformative mission of Christ and the church [sic] in history” and so the “continuity between history and the kingdom of God”. The “incarnational approach” says that good action within history prepares for eschatological reality. Action of this kind has eschatological significance as such. The eschaton can in some sense be anticipated through historical, social and political activity bringing about “earthly progress”. Thus, “profane history” and salvation history tend to be conflated in a monist manner (akin to Hegel) and seen as belonging to a single, indivisible reality (1).

As a generalisation, Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez can be placed in relation to the Incarnationalist category. Minch discusses the distinction between the categories

47 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 171. The nature and utility of the distinction could be the subject of another study.
49 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 171.
51 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 171.
in the context of analysing Schillebeeckx’s incarnational approach. According to Rowland, Schillebeeckx’s approach to revelation, in which history is seen as a “locus of revelation”, is important conceptual background to liberation theology’s emphasis on the salvific significance of action within history. Gutiérrez is a chief proponent of liberation theology. As will be shown in Chapter 1, Metz’s political theology also tends to conflate world and salvation history. These authors emphasise inner-historical praxis as having salvific significance. In this regard, there is a danger of ‘secularising the eschaton’ in these authors. They pay attention to promoting active efforts to build a ‘better’ and more just society within history, arguably without sufficient heed to the distinction between history and eschatology. From this, it can be said in relation to the history-hope question that they produce ‘theologies of hope’ or futurity, in which hope is primarily understood to be directed to the ‘future’ realisation of these inner-historical realities.

The ‘Eschatologists’ take a more dialectical view of the relationship between history and eschatological reality. They answer the question Cur Deus Homo by arguing that the Incarnation was God’s descent into history in order to raise humanity and the created order out of itself into God’s eternity in the eschaton. While the historical has consequent significance, Eschatologists consider there to be at some level a radical discontinuity or qualitative difference between history and eschatology. Christ’s revelation is understood as definitively transforming history by directing it from within to something outside itself, which will involve a violent, catastrophic elevation of creation away from its current state.

An eschatological understanding serves as a qualification on anything that can be achieved in history and as a caution on placing eschatological significance on political and social activity. Ironically, it is this vision that can better provide the

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34 C.f. St Athanasius, De inc., 54, 3: PG 25, 192B and St Irenaeus, Adv. Haeres. 3, 19: PG 7/1, 939, quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Strathfield: St Pauls Publications, 2000), 460 (hereafter CCC). Ratzinger, in his “Conclusion to the Discussion with Walter Kasper” published in German in Hochland in the wake of the publication of Ratzinger’s Einführung in das Christentum, notes that his seminal Introduction to Christianity was written to answer, in a contemporary context, the perennial question of Cur Deus Homo. The author is grateful for receiving a translated version by Sebastian Condon OP.
critique of society that Metz’s political theology in particular purports to do. On this view, any earthly projects need to “be converted to the gospel without remainder”.55 The site of eschatological meaning is found in the liturgy, sacraments and sanctifying reality of the Church, not history as such. History is the pregnant, ‘waiting period’ for God’s transformative action in which souls are harvested for God (c.f. Mt 13:24-30). Among the ‘Eschatologists’, Pieper has been numbered and, had he to choose, Ratzinger would likely be sympathetic with the Eschatological end of the spectrum.56 Pieper argues that the end of time will be characterised by catastrophe (2 and 5). As Chapter 5 will show, Ratzinger posits an ‘eschatological attitude’ to politics. An eschatological approach roughly corresponds, moreover, to the characterisation of hope in Pieper and Ratzinger. For them, hope is not directed at a ‘better’, inner-historical future but as receptive patience for God’s definitive and transformative action to take nature and history out of something it cannot be of itself (2).

Although there is intellectual merit in the distinction drawn between the Incarnationalists and Eschatologists, it is nevertheless a distinction with some but limited utility. Characterising certain authors according to this measure can be reductive. For example, Minch describes de Lubac and Teilhard de Chardin as ‘Incarnationalists’, with Louis Bouyer and Jean Daniélou as ‘Eschatologist’ counterparts.57 As Chapter 5 will show, de Lubac possesses a decided scepticism regarding the possibilities of fulfilment being attained on earth. Although de Lubac can be characterised as an ‘intrinsicist’, his concept of the supernatural emphasises the role of the Cross in perfecting nature. There is recognition of the limits of human capacity in his thought.

Ratzinger as an intellectual also generally seeks to reconcile or hold in tension polarities, not divide them irreparably. He would likely agree with Christopher Butler’s argument that the eschatological and incarnational need to be “held in

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56 Henry Novello, “Eschatology Since Vatican II: Saved in Hope,” Australasian Catholic Record, 90(4) (October 2013): 410-423, 417n26 adds to Minch’s list (see n48) A Dondeyne to the former and Guardini and Pieper to the latter, while not including Bouyer.
tension”. On Butler’s view, the Incarnation is to be understood as initiating a liturgical, “‘mystical’, ‘sacramental’ anticipation of the Last Things”. Ratzinger’s view of history as ‘already, not yet’ (3), in which the Liturgy is the situs of the Parousia on earth and the Church is the mediator of eschatological reality, accords with this understanding. Pieper considers that there can be a spes implicita in non-Christians on earth that aims at fostering fraternity among people, a kind of anticipation of hope’s eschatological object (2). Political and liberation theology asserts an ‘eschatological proviso’ that holds it impossible for historical and eschatological reality to be identical (it is another question whether asserting such a proviso is sufficient to avoid the pitfalls of an inner-historical conception of hope) (1). As with all generalisations, the distinction is too general when applied to thinkers whose nuances might be greater than a simple categorisation would suggest.

Moreover, prosecuting a distinction between ‘Incarnationalists’ and ‘Eschatologists’ itself manifests an either/or approach that fails to respect the mystery communicated in revelation. While it is indispensable to use intellectual categories, the danger of overemphasising the distinction can reduce Christian revelation to human mental activity and therefore support a privileging of the ‘world’ and human activity. Implicitly, the distinction can itself manifest an Incarnationalist perspective. Appreciating its limited utility is thus an implicit disagreement with political and liberation theology, which emphasises the impact of the Incarnation in history arguably at the expense of overlooking history’s eschatological goal and limit. Juxtaposing the Incarnation against the eschaton focuses on the inner-historical effects of the Incarnation, which tends to lose sight of eschatological reality. On the other hand, the inner-historical is not entirely devoid of significance and should not be overlooked.

Ultimately, the relationship between history and the eschaton concerns an irresolvable mystery that only eschatological reality itself will reveal. Seeking to understand Christian activity in the world solely under the aspect of the Incarnation or Eschatology pays insufficient heed to that mystery. As RR Reno points out, there

are two perennial temptations concerning the attitude a Christian is to have to the ‘world’, especially the realm of politics. The first is to ignore it completely as irreparably marked by “worldliness” (an extreme ‘Eschatological’ approach). The other is to attempt to “baptise temporal politics” and give particular political projects the veneer of sanctity (an extreme Incarnational approach). Better, as Rowland suggests, is to understand that the Incarnation and eschatological reality “are not mutually exclusive” but is rather a “critical couplet”, an intellectual category in Catholic theology that recognises the distinction between them without separating them.

In terms of the theological task, an important question becomes how to appreciate the significance of the Incarnation without losing sight of the eschaton. Utilising the distinction does enable discernment of where on the spectrum the respective authors sit, and a judgment as to which approach better respects the mystery. A clear demarcation exists between the different sets of authors, which distinguish them as thinkers. Their views on hope and history reveal contrasting emphases and tendencies with significantly different implications for how the theological task is to be understood, what the true significance of Christian revelation is and how the Church is to operate in the world. In short, the distinction is helpful in directing attention to whether Christian hope and activity is primarily directed to ‘building up the world’ or into an encounter with Christ that will sanctify the world.

Although none of the authors examined herein exclude reference to one pole without referring to the other, arguably the ‘Incarnational’ approach embodied in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez fails adequately to balance them in its focus on inner-historical praxis. Unavoidably, such an approach begins from ‘below’ and tends to appreciate insufficiently the higher eschatological calling, which is the human vocation. Arguably, Ratzinger’s approach in particular enables a clearer understanding that operative in history is an eschatological reality that is made present in the sacraments and the liturgy. Such accords history its significance while

pointing to its eschatological destiny. It is a healthier than a too-‘Incarnationalist’ approach. It holds in tension the two poles, always keeping in front of mind that all human effort and human history – valuable as they are in themselves – eventually passes away and that inherent to the concept of history itself is that it is bounded by the all-powerful, all-knowing God.

4. The Concilium/Communio Split in Catholic Theology

Along with being principal protagonists in the hope-history debate and prospectively reflecting somewhat the competing poles of contemporary ecclesial life, the examined authors are also key representatives of two of the principal contemporary Catholic theological schools or groupings, at least in the early instantiations of those groups. The ‘Concilium’ and ‘Communio’ schools respectively arose out of the Second Vatican Council and, along with the neo-Thomists of the United States, are primary players in Catholic thought today.62 Understanding where the different authors sit in relation to these schools is essential context for understanding the contours of the hope and history debate and the dependence of these contours on fundamental theology, and sets convenient prisms through which to understand the differences in perspective in fundamental theology. What distinguish the two schools are the significantly contrasting positions they take in fundamental theology, especially with respect to nature and grace, which relate to metaphysics and the history-ontology relationship.

62 For essential context on the different schools, and their fundamental orientations, see Rowland, Catholic Theology. See also John Milbank, “The New Divide: Romantic Versus Classical Orthodoxy,” Modern Theology 26(1) (January 2010): 26-38. He draws a distinction in general theology between ‘classical’ and ‘romantic’ orthodoxy in light of the decline of liberal theology. The ‘classical’ orthodox position generally corresponds to the Neo-Thomists and the ‘romantic’ to the Communio/Romantic Orthodoxy orientation, which extends beyond Catholic theology. Whether he would also include Concilium-minded scholars today, in light of their apparent increased relevance is moot. On the interaction of Communio scholarship and Romantic Orthodoxy see Rowland, Catholic Theology, 124-126. On Romantic Orthodoxy, see Radical Orthodoxy, wherein Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward argue that the “world” and its “concerns and activities” need to be situated “within a theological framework” and that “The central theological framework of radical orthodoxy is ‘participation’ as developed by Plato and reworked by Christianity, because any alternative configuration perforce reserves a territory independent of God.”: “Suspending the material: the turn of radical orthodoxy” in Radical Orthodoxy, ed. Catherine Pickstock and John Milbank (Taylor and Francis, 2002), 1. 3. Milbank also indicates a mediating role between the classical and romantic orientations, played by the Fribourg school of Thomism among whom would be included Servais-Théodore Pinckaers and JP Torrell: see also Paul Morrissey, “Pinckaers and the Renewal of Thomistic Theology,” Nova et Venera, English edition 12(1) (Winter 2014): 172 citing Milbank, “The New Divide,” 36n1.
Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez belong to the Concilium school named for the journal of that title founded in 1965 by, inter alia, Rahner, Schillebeeckx and Metz.\footnote{Rowland discusses the role of Schillebeeckx and Metz in Concilium, in Catholic Theology, 139ff. Examples of Gutiérrez in Concilium include Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Speaking about God” in Concilium, 1984 (also as co-editor with Claude Geffré and Virgilio P Elizondo, Different theologies, common responsibility: Babel or Pentecost? (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984); co-editor (with Giuseppe Alberigo of Where does the church stand, Concilium, 146 (1981) (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; New York : Seabury Press, 1981); co-editor (with Claude Geffré), The mystical and political dimension of the Christian faith, Concilium, 1974 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1974); co-editor (with Christian Duquoc, Mysticism and the institutional crisis, Concilium, 1994 (4) and Christian Duquoc and Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Introduction: mysticism and the institutional church” (London: SCM Press/Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994).} The journal’s mission is to engage in theology “in the spirit of Vatican II”, while being “sensitive to the challenges of our time” and taking its cues from “cultural and religious experiences and socio-political developments”.\footnote{Quotations obtained from the journal’s website, http://www.concilium.in/about, accessed 19 February 2019 (which appears no longer to be accessible).} It desires to respond “to the longing for a new humanity and for the integrity of creation” in a “critical and constructive discourse”.\footnote{Quoted in Rowland, Catholic Theology, 139.} The mission statement reveals the tendency of Concilium scholars to take a view of secular reality as a starting point, which, it is argued, depends on or relates to a view of human nature or existence in itself as ‘always-already’ supernaturalised. Secular reality tends to be considered apart from the visible Church at the foundations of theology. Their conviction is that theology should begin ‘from below’ with a consideration of these realities or the ‘lived experience’ of the faithful, a legitimacy said to flow from the Incarnation.\footnote{Traces of these impulses can be seen in the magisterium of Pope Francis: c.f. Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World: Evangelii Gaudium, 24 November 2013, n222, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html, last accessed 1 August 2020; and Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today’s World: Gaudete et Exsultate, 19 March 2018, n44, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html, last accessed 1 August 2020.} Their desire is to construct a theology that will help generate a ‘better’ inner-historical future for humanity, based on the view that human beings are capable of changing history according to a dialectical understanding of it. Concilium theology is thus influenced by a progressive dialectics. Key secular thinkers, such as Karl Marx and those of the Frankfurt School, become important in such a task because they theorise critical dialectics as the key to a progressive future (1).

Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez can be said to represent the Concilium position on the hope and history debate. This thesis will endeavour to show that their
contributions to the debate manifest an underlying option of the Concilium school for the ‘world’ and anthropocentricity. With respect to the debate, key intellectual ‘fathers’ from the school are Schillebeeckx and Rahner. The former radicalised the perception of the Church-world relationship, which dovetails with a Rahnerian theology of grace that tends to integrate nature and grace and perceive grace as operating anonymously in the ‘world’. Relatedly, Schillebeeckx and Rahner were pioneers in developing a Christology ‘from below’ or an ‘ascending Christology’ focused on Christ’s historicity, eschatological proclamation and political significance. At the headwaters of a Catholic theological turn to socio-politics and the human person, considered in himself in his transcendent capacity without any necessary reference to the particularity of Christ and manifested in political and liberation theology, can be said to be Schillebeeckx and Rahner.

Political and liberation theology builds on self-consciously political and anthropocentric foundations, flowing from a Schillebeeckxian reading of the Church-world relationship and a Rahnerian theology of grace. Political theology and liberation theology’s inner-historical conception of hope, grounded in praxis and emphasising economic and political concerns, combines with a tendency adopt a dialectical metaphysics indebted to Ernst Bloch (and behind him Hegel and Marx and behind them, Joachim of Fiore), and a low Christology. As John Milbank points out, “[t]he initial theological decision [in political and liberation theology] is…to embrace secularization, and the horizon of the political”.

Aidan Nichols notes that “political engagement [and praxis] functions here as an antecedent epistemological condition for the development of appropriate theology”. Behind this epistemological foundation is “Rahner’s theological starting point”, namely “the person of today in his own self-understanding”.

Metz and Gutiérrez vary the theological themes of Schillebeeckx and Rahner. As Chapter 1 will show, Metz, a student of Rahner’s, radicalised his Transcendental Thomism and applied it to the social-historical. Shunning existentialism and

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personalism, on the grounds of being too individualistic, Metz sought to construct a practical fundamental theology, in which hope is deliberately directed to praxis; that is, a political theology. Moreover, Metz’s political theology is the link between the European headwaters of Schillebeeckx and Rahner and the Latin American context. There Gutiérrez and others developed liberation theology, self-consciously understood as developing a theology with implications for fundamental theology.\(^70\) Liberation theology presents a politically, historically, socially and existentially-inflected concept of liberation that integrates the orders of nature and grace, world history and salvation history, to the point of collapsing the distinction altogether, an integration present also in Metz (1).

In the background to the Concilium scholars’ positions on hope and history is, it is important to add, also the Protestant theologian, Jürgen Moltmann and his Theologie der Hoffnung (1964). Along with Schillebeeckx, Moltmann constructed a theology of hope that eschewed the ‘last things’ and promoted a practical conception of hope seeking to “[transform] the world”.\(^71\) Moltmann helped generate what might be termed the theologies of futurity, a term encompassing the theology of hope, political and liberation theology.\(^72\) Overall, notwithstanding inevitable differences in focus and context, Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez share orientations in fundamental theology.\(^73\) With a low Christology and a latent Joachimitism (1.2.1), they present an inner-historical conception of hope and an immanentist soteriology, in which practical action is emphasised as the locus of hope.

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\(^70\) C.f. Rowland, Catholic Theology, 168-171, Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 3-12.

\(^71\) Ratzinger, Eschatology, 58. As Minch points out, Schillebeeckx (and others) was beginning to concern himself with the theme of hope in the 1950s: Minch, “Eschatology and Theology of Hope,” 275. He also had an “interest and active participation” in “the relationship between the church and political work, … and liberation theology”: Hoveldien, “Edward Schillebeeckx,” 278.


Pieper and Ratzinger are related to the *Communio* orientation in Catholic thought. Balthasar, de Lubac and Ratzinger established a journal by that name in 1972 partly as a counterpart to the *Concilium* thrust in theology. As de Gaál points out, while akin to the *Concilium* approach in accepting the significance of the Second Vatican Council, the *Communio* perspective differs because it does not see the Church as a kind of parliament that can amend Church teaching. Rather, it emphasises the Church’s unity across time and space in “Eucharistic communion with Jesus Christ”, her Head.\(^74\) De Gaál notes that initially Ratzinger was on the editorial board of *Concilium*. It was, however, “too much occupied with system” and downplayed patristics and the historicity of revelation.\(^75\) Consistent with Pieper and Ratzinger’s understanding of hope (2), the journal instead seeks to reclaim the centrality of prayer in the theological enterprise, arguing that the breakdown of this relationship is a cause of “contemporary problems”.\(^76\) *Communio*’s starting point is Jesus Christ, from ‘above’, and not the ‘below’ of praxis and lived experience.

Philosophy, nevertheless, is important to *Communio*’s *modus operandi*. *Communio* scholars generally eschew a contrastive and competitive metaphysics rooted in the voluntarism of Duns Scotus. Thus, it does not ignore or downplay the human person or reason, but does not set the person or human reason against a competitive, external God. An immanentist dualism, such as might be apparent in a Hegelian-Marxist system, is excluded and instead an analogical metaphysics presented. Thus, *Communio* scholars would generally agree with Nichols’ conclusion that starting with praxis in fact threatens the privilege that theology gives its own source – Revelation of the Word as manifested in Scripture and Tradition, interpreted by the


\(^75\) de Gaál, *Christocentric Shift*, 23.

Magisterium – because of its centrality in Marxist thought. They recognise, contra Hegel, the limitations of human theory and, contra Marx, guard against the fallacy that all contradictions can be resolved on earth. Instead, while “[T]heory may instruct the world, and praxis improve it... only a ‘beatific’ vision, and the advent of a different kind of Agent, can redeem it.” As a founder, Ratzinger’s sympathy with the journal is clear, evident in his, as will be argued passim, emphasis on the centrality of Christ and his novelty vis-à-vis nature and history as its divine redeemer, who descends from in heaven in order to bring them into the divine. In Ratzinger’s theology, the ‘initial theological decision’ is the Revelation of Christ understood in Chalcedonian terms (3), allied to an analogical metaphysics (4). His views on hope and history must be considered in light of these theological presuppositions.

Comment regarding Pieper’s place in relation to the Communio group and Ratzinger is necessary. Not a theologian but a philosopher, Pieper’s principal works regarding hope and history were published prior to the Council and the Concilium-Communio split in Catholic theology. Nevertheless, for the purposes of Catholic theological taxonomy, he belongs to the thrust in Catholic theology that Communio embodies. The journal has published work of his. His philosophical work exhibits key philosophical and theological presuppositions of Communio scholarship. As Chapter 4 will show, Pieper anticipates or parallels a Lubacian reading of the

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supernatural – foundational to his philosophy of hope is an understanding of human nature that accords with that reading. Balthasar groups him among the early to mid-twentieth century Catholic thinkers who laid the foundations for the shifts in the understanding of the nature-grace relationship in Catholic thought.

Mainly concerned with the works of Aquinas and Plato, Pieper reads Aquinas through an Augustinian-Dionysian patristic lens and not through the lens of later, especially Baroque, scholastic lens. Pieper was indebted to Étienne Gilson for this reading of Aquinas. Alongside Gilson, he developed a view of the faith-reason relationship analogous to the Lubacian view of the supernatural and foundational to Communio epistemology. He strongly rejects the idea of reading Thomas as the founder of a closed system. Rather, he sees him as uniquely open to the fullness of being, which precludes any rationalistic crypto-Wolffianism or Hegelianism on Aquinas’s part. Moreover, Pieper does not strictly separate the domains of faith and reason. Like Ratzinger, he is interested in the “border zones” between these realms and considers philosophy to depend upon pre-philosophical and specifically theological foundations. Contrary to those theologies that take Marx as its starting point Pieper insists that theology grounded in the Word of God or an ‘original revelation’ are at the foundation of true philosophising.

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81 C.f. Rowland, Catholic Theology, 169.
Although commonly described as a ‘Thomist’, Pieper is thus not a neo-scholastic thinker. He shunned a neo-scholastic epithet and was concerned not with Aquinas as such but with “what is the truth of things”.82 His starting point is Being simpliciter, and not the thought of Aquinas, even if Pieper considers him to be akin to a Mozart who could not be confined to a particular musical category but “[chose] everything”.83 Correctly does Schumacher suggest that Pieper “constantly fought against [Scholastic philosophy]”.84 In contrast, the lineaments of his thought, briefly described here, associate him with the Communio school.


84 Franck, reflecting this shared perception, suggests that “Pieper is usually considered to be basically a Thomistic philosopher”: Franck, “Platonic Inspiration of Pieper’s Philosophy,” 253. Wikipedia – not an academic source but one that, given its nature as a repository of articles written anonymously and in common, nevertheless might reflect commonly held positions – even describes Pieper as being “at the forefront of the Neo-Thomistic wave in twentieth century Catholic philosophy”: entry on Josef Pieper, accessed 12 August 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Pieper.

85 Pieper, Guide, 20-21 (quotation on 21) citing George Bernard Shaw’s description of Mozart and applying it to Aquinas. Denys Turner also compares Mozart to Aquinas and makes an analogous point in a different context. He suggests that while composer Franz Xaver Süssmayr completed Mozart’s Requiem, this product, while following along the lines of Mozart’s style, would in all likelihood not have replicated what Mozart would have produced had he himself finished it. Likewise, the completion of Thomas’s Summa Theologiae – which Thomas did not himself finish – along the lines of what one would predict Thomas would have written, did not capture the essence of Thomas’ decision not to complete his Summa. See Denys Turner, Thomas Aquinas: A Portrait (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013), 232. The point is that Mozart and Thomas’s achievements were so unique as to be unpredictable and irreplaceable, and that the decision not to finish the Summa Theologiae carried theological import, indicating the rootedness of theology in God’s silence and Aquinas’ suspicion of closed systems: Turner, Aquinas, 41-46, 288, Pieper, Guide, 158-159.

The conclusion that Pieper is not a neo-scholastic but is, in a sense, a grandfather of the Communio perspective makes intelligible his influence on Ratzinger. Traces of Pieper’s thought can be found throughout Ratzinger’s corpus, especially in his work on hope and history, as will be argued throughout. Nathan Arends, for example, notes that the younger Ratzinger “is immensely indebted to the ideas” of Pieper. De Gaál states that Pieper was a thinker “to whom Ratzinger is much indebted”. He places Pieper in the generation of scholars that moved away from the intellectualism of neo-scholasticism to a Catholic theology grounded on the “Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ”, which developed the nouvelle théologie and ressourcement that were the intellectual forerunners of Ratzinger. Pieper belonged to the general European Catholic intellectual milieu of the mid-twentieth century in which Ratzinger was formed. Ratzinger’s intellectual genealogy includes nineteenth and twentieth century ‘Romantic Antecedents’, among which Rowland includes Pieper. She notes that Pieper’s influence on Ratzinger is especially visible in the areas of the theological virtues, hope and history, and the relationship between faith and reason, and tradition. Part of Pieper’s appeal for Ratzinger was his concern with “the philosophy of history”, a concern atypical of Thomists. In the background to the plethora of Ratzinger’s works considering hope, she argues, stand Pieper’s treatises on Glaube, Hoffnung and Liebe and his Über das Ende der Zeit.

86 De Gaál, Christocentric Shift, 16.
Ratzinger dedicated meditations on the three theological virtues to Pieper on the occasion of his 85th birthday. As Rowland points out, his aim was to develop theologically the philosophical insights of Pieper with respect to these virtues. He used “Pieper’s philosophical meditations as a kind of textbook” for the retreat that became this volume. 89 The “basic pattern” of his reflections on “Hope and Love” followed Pieper’s, and behind him Aquinas. 90 Alongside de Lubac and Balthasar, Pieper counts as one of the chief sources of Ratzinger’s thought, especially with respect to hope-history.

Ratzinger inherited thus a theological methodology, which was partly indebted to the philosophical work of Pieper. Pieper is a key philosophical source of Ratzinger’s thought, along with Plato, Gottlieb Söhngen and Romano Guardini. Ratzinger recalls as a seminarian that Pieper was one of the “voices that moved us most directly” in the areas of philosophy and theology. 91 His treatises on the cardinal virtues figured among the works of philosophy that Ratzinger first studied as student. Through his career, he would read each new volume of Pieper’s and benefit from them. Importantly, Ratzinger considered Pieper to be “the master” and credits him with arousing in Ratzinger a philosophical interest. 92 Ratzinger was attracted to Pieper’s “[presentation of] a fresh interpretation of Thomas Aquinas”. Later friends and


colleagues, he identifies Pieper and himself initially as belonging to the ‘progressive’
camp attempting to renew the faith and later opposing the destructive radicalism that
followed in the Council’s wake.  

An example of the affinity between Pieper and Ratzinger is seen in Ratzinger’s
similar philosophical appropriation of Aquinas’s epistemology and his place in the
philosophical tradition. Like Pieper, Ratzinger considers Aquinas not to have
produced “the” philosophy or to be “the philosopher”, even if esteeming him as one
of “the originating figures of an enduring approach to the Ground of what is”.  

Contrary to stereotypical views of Ratzinger as an Augustinian, and Augustine and
Aquinas as mutually exclusive, he places high value on Aquinas. Akin to Pieper, he
does not, however, identify the boundaries of permissible Catholic reflection as
beginning and ending with Thomas. As is well recognised, his is a biblical and
patristic theology. Early in his work, he had an inclination for Bonaventure from the
medievals. Nevertheless, Pieper’s philosophical orientation to Being has an
important parallel in Ratzinger’s thought and underscores what they consider to be
the transcendent ontological ground of history, which guards against an immanentist
conception of hope.  

Pieper serves therefore as a philosophical substrate to Ratzinger’s theology.

95 Doyle provides an example of reading of Ratzinger as an Augustinian in contrast to Thomas, even if
his distinction between Aquinas and Augustine is acknowledged as a generalisation: “Thomistic
Critique of an Augustinian Encyclical”, 351-352. On Ratzinger’s Augustinianism see Cyril O’Regan,
“Benedict the Augustinian,” in *Explorations in the Theology of Benedict XVI*, ed. John C Cavadini
(Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press Francis, 2013), 21-60, accessed from
ProQuest Ebook Central, 1 August 2020. Of particular note is O’Regan’s comment that Ratzinger
considers himself to be living in a time of historical crisis analogous to Augustine: 22. See also
Francis Schüssler-Fiorenza, “From Theologian to Pope,” *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 33(2) (Autumn
*Commonweal*, May 26, 2005: [https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/print/31395](https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/print/31395),
accessed 6 June 2016. On Ratzinger’s Augustinianism see O’Regan. On the treatments of Augustine and Aquinas see
Rowland, “Augustinian and Thomist Engagements with the World,” 49-68, Tracey Rowland,
*Ratzinger’s Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 149-
150 and *Aquinas the Augustinian*, ed. Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering
(Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), including Matthew Lamb, “Wisdom
Eschatology in Augustine and Aquinas,” 258-276. On Ratzinger as a biblical theologian see Scott W.
Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Grand Rapids: Baker
Publishing, 2009), 14 citing Ratzinger’s own description of his theology: Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*,
66. For an example of the influence of Bonaventure, see Chapter 4 (on Ratzinger’s conception of
nature). For more on Ratzinger’s ontological orientation, see Chapter 4; good examples are found in
Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 190n172 and 315-322 where he prefers the Thomistic
view of theology as *scientia speculativa* over the Franciscan view that it is *scientia practica*. He sees a
5. Outline of Argument

To examine the hypothesis that different choices in fundamental theology have implications for the hope-history debate, this study will explore in depth Ratzinger’s own contributions to the hope-history debate and their philosophical and theological foundations. Ratzinger will be especially focused upon as he is one of the most important theologians of the twentieth century, especially post-conciliar. His works and significance continue to be studied in depth and his contribution to the hope-history debate, it will be suggested, will endure. His contribution to the debate is valuable because of his insistence on the transcendent, Christological dimension of hope, and history’s supra-historical, eschatological telos. He presents (and reminds the Church of) “basic constant factors about hope and salvation” in times of parallel in this dispute to the one in twentieth century between views prioritising ‘orthodoxy’ over ‘orthopraxis’: see 318. See also, Joseph Lam, “‘We Proclaim the Crucified Christ’ (1 Cor 2:2): Being, Truth, Beauty and the Cross according to Joseph Ratzinger,” The Australasian Catholic Record 92(4) (2015): 419-432. He notes Ratzinger’s interest in Augustine and Bonaventure and raises the “not so straightforward” question of Ratzinger’s attitude to Thomism: 420-421.


historical crisis and change. His understanding of hope as patient orientation to a supra-historical end in Christ and insistence that eschatology is not tied to a particular philosophy of history guard against an immanentist reading of hope, with its attendant dangers. He directs ‘praxis of hope’ to its proper end. Moreover, his metaphysical and theological grounding, it is suggested, is sound.

This thesis will analyse Ratzinger’s offerings to the debate by particular reference to the philosophical work of Pieper. Pieper’s philosophical-theological reflections regarding the relationship between hope and history, and his metaphysics are worth studying in their own right, but are also foundational to Ratzinger’s own views on that relationship, eschatology and theological anthropology. As intimated above, an understanding of Pieper is necessary to appreciate Ratzinger on hope and history.

Examined also will be Ratzinger’s theological rootedness in the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomism of Guardini, Balthasar and de Lubac’s concept of the supernatural. The key link between a Lubacian understanding of the supernatural and Ratzinger’s supra-historical conception of hope (indebted to Pieper) is, moreover, the centrality of a Chalcedonian Christology in Ratzinger’s eschatology. Ratzinger’s maintenance of the importance of Christ’s divinity joined to his humanity makes intelligible both his views on the supra-historical nature of hope and a cruciform soteriology. In Ratzinger is a conception of the nature-grace relationship, which sees the human spirit as possessing a paradoxical orientation to supernatural beatitude beyond its own powers to obtain. A consequent theological anthropology, which conceives a human person’s hope as being oriented to personal fulfilment in eternal life with God, is married to a Christology, which defends the particularity of Christ and his transformative role for the human person and human history. Christ, true God and true man is the stepping stone for humanity to ascend from within history to eschatological reality. It is he who is the fulfilment and anchor of hope. Further, linked to an understanding of the nature-grace relationship, which emphasises Christ’s novelty in relation to nature is Ratzinger’s soteriology. His soteriology focuses upon the Cross of Christ as a kind of ‘renunciation’ nature, especially

98 C.f. Riches, Ecce Homo, 1 citing Pius XII, Sempiternus Rex, 30-31 (DS 3905).
‘sinful’ nature. Pieper’s philosophy, the nature-grace relationship, Christology and soteriology constitute the foundation stones for Ratzinger’s views on hope and history.

To appreciate the import of Ratzinger’s contribution to the hope-history debate, it is also necessary to examine his theological disputants in that debate. Outlining the Concilium authors’ contribution will bring into sharper relief the nature of Ratzinger’s reflections on hope-history and their ramifications for fundamental theology. Chief among his theological targets have been political theology and liberation theology, including Metz and Gutiérrez. To lay bare the contrast between Ratzinger and his theological opponents on the issue of hope and history, it is necessary to compare his eschatology with differing conclusions and emphases regarding the inner-possibilities of history, themselves rooted in different theological starting points. Juxtaposing Ratzinger and his disputants reveals the roots of contemporary ecclesial and theological cleavages and shows what is at stake in the foundational choices made in fundamental theology. On the one hand is a particular inner-historical concept of hope allied to a particular fundamental theology, Christology and soteriology. Against an inner-historical conception of hope is Ratzinger’s supra-historical conception of hope and eschatology, rooted in Chalcedonian Christology and allied to a different option regarding the nature-grace relationship, and soteriology.

Chapter 1 will therefore give an overview of Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez on hope and history, as illustrative of what is described for the purposes of this thesis as the Concilium view of the salvific possibilities of history. It is not an exhaustive exploration but written for the purpose of providing context for Ratzinger. It will do so in reference to four foundation stones in their theology and seek to demonstrate the inner historical inflection they place on hope.

First, it will be shown that their understanding of hope and history possesses on an inner-historical emphasis on praxis, which links them at least implicitly with a philosophy of history that has overtones of Joachim of Fiore, Hegel and Marx in which Christian eschatology is secularised. Consequently, they conceive hope in largely impersonal, social, historical, political, economic terms, reducing the
significance of the ‘last things’. To a significant degree, in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez, hope is immanently framed and focused upon the inner-historical.

Secondly, an inner-historical conception of hope is connected to their adoption of a low Christology. Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez, informed by an approach dominant in twentieth century exegesis, focus on Jesus’s historicity and the understanding of him as an eschatological, prophetic and political figure.

Thirdly, apparent in their understanding of hope and history are overtones of a Rahnerian theology of grace, in which nature or, more accurately, human existence as such is conceived as containing the supernatural existential, ontologically prior to the “Christ event”. They affirm secularisation and human agency in ‘building the future’, and incorporate a dialectical framework in their construction of theologies of hope, which possess a focus on praxis.

From this also comes a fourth and closely related integer of the Concilium perspective on hope-history, namely, an immanentist soteriology, which rests on or is related to Rahner’s view of the coextensive nature of world and salvation history as flowing out of the transcendental orientation of the human person. The coextensive nature of profane and salvation history, which parallels an ‘Incarnationalist’ approach, lends itself to an integrated view of redemption. An immanentist soteriology tends to collapse the distinction between the natural and supernatural, the attainment by human means of earthly goods and eschatological reality.

A principal contention of this thesis is that the Concilium contribution to the hope-history debate marries a Hegelian-Marxist disposition with a Rahnerian theology of grace and a low Christology. Thus, the Concilium inner-historical conception of hope is built upon an immanentist philosophy of history. Christ’s transcendent significance is also reduced and understood in more immanent, historicist terms. His novelty in relation to nature and his divinity are minimised, if not theoretically, at least in practice. Maximised are the claims of human existence in itself, lending itself to an immanentist soteriology in which economic and political liberation are important

components. One’s views on hope and history are thus connected to one’s philosophy of history, eschatology and soteriology, which in turn depend upon one’s view of the nature-grace relationship and Christology.

The alternative, ‘Communio’ contribution to the hope-history debate that Ratzinger represents, rests on contrary philosophical and theological foundations. Ratzinger’s theological reflections on hope and history are grounded in Pieper’s philosophical reflections on hope and history, themselves related to an analogical metaphysics. They are made intelligible by reference to a Chalcedonian Christology and a Lubacian view of the supernatural. Each of the subsequent four chapters contains an exploration of the counterpart in Ratzinger and, where relevant, Pieper’s thought to each of the four pillars of the Concilium viewpoint.

First, in Chapter 2, it will be shown that Pieper and Ratzinger conceive of hope in its most fundamental sense as shorn of reference to earthly hopes and in personalist terms. Hope relates to existential fulfilment in eternal life with God. In Pieper and Ratzinger, hope is theocentric and understood as being directed to a supra-historical end. It has intrinsically salvific, soteriological significance as a theological virtue, imparting the seeds of eternal life.

Of its nature, hope generally and specifically as a theological virtue, belongs to the realm of gift and is oriented to an object that the person who hopes cannot bring about himself. Prayer is thus inherently tied up with the question of hope and an activist account of hope is precluded. Prayer is the expression of the theological virtue of hope, seeking the divine life that it hopes to receive from the Divine Giver. An emphasis on hope as gift distinguishes Pieper and Ratzinger’s conception of it from a Hegelian-Marxist one, represented in the work of twentieth century Marxist thinker Bloch and those theologians influenced by him such as Metz and Gutiérrez. Consistent with a Marxist epistemology, Bloch presents hope as belonging to a laboratory and thus manipulable according to the measure of human reason. According to Ratzinger, history, characterised by human freedom and peccability, cannot however proceed along a pre-determined path. Hope’s object is beyond the control of the one who hopes and beyond history.
Chapter 3 examines how Ratzinger presents Christ as the fulfilment of hope. It explores the consequences of Ratzinger’s insistence on the importance of a Chalcedonian Christology for understanding eschatology. A proper understanding of eschatology flows out of a proper Christology. Christ is the fulfilment of hope and our anchor in hope’s object, eternal life in heaven with God. He is ultimately the object of hope. As possessing a perfected human nature united to the Word, Christ fulfils moreover history, by enabling its transcendence. The intrinsic connection between Christology and eschatology in Ratzinger is analysed to show an ‘already, not yet’ conception of history. Christ’s Resurrection is the eschatological action of God begun in history but pointing to a supra-historical realisation.

A view of history as containing already the seeds of its transcendent fulfilment, made present and communicated through the life of the Church in the ‘Age of the Gentiles’, militates against a critical-dialectic understanding of history as needing human action to usher in an inner-historical period of redeemed history. The transformation of defective history has begun in the Resurrection of Christ and awaits culmination in the realisation of the eschaton. An eschatology that awaits expectantly Christ’s Parousia, anticipated and made present in the liturgy, augments the conclusion that hope is receptively patient and not activist. Hope is not directed to the building up of inner-historical utopia. Rather, history is oriented beyond itself for its perfection.

Chapter 4 will examine in Pieper and Ratzinger the traces of an Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist conception of human nature as congenitally open to grace and directly related to the divine. An Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of the supernatural, exemplified in the thought of Balthasar and particularly de Lubac, undergirds a view of hope as belonging to the realm of gift and beyond human manipulation, and as oriented to personal, existential fulfilment beyond history. Each of Pieper and Ratzinger conceives the rational, spiritual nature of human beings as constitutively, ecstatically but paradoxically related ‘beyond itself’ to a fulfilment achieved only in the receipt of a supernatural gift, that is, the beatific vision. The natural desire for God contrasts with a Rahnerian concept of the supernatural existential and relates to an analogical metaphysics, which views the human person as ‘on-the-way’ to fulfilment. A theological anthropology claiming that the human
person has an innate desire for supernatural fulfilment and is ‘on the way’ relativises inner-historical objects of hope. Fulfilment of this kind consists in the possession of eternal life with God in Christ and those in communion with him, which by definition can only be given by the Divine Giver, beyond history.

Ratzinger nevertheless maintains the distinction between the orders of nature and grace. Chapter 5 presents Ratzinger’s soteriology as cruciform, in which the defects of sin-impaired human nature need to be overcome. Rahner’s claim that redemption consists in humanity’s acceptance of itself is treated with scepticism. Ratzinger is wary of the tendency present in the Concilium authors to collapse the orders of faith and politics, a conflation following on from an antecedent confusion of the orders of nature and grace. It explores Ratzinger’s alternative view of the means by which God fulfils the potential for supernatural life inherent to rational nature. In particular it notes the place of the Cross of Christ in Ratzinger’s soteriology as a precondition for deifying grace to transform human nature. There is a level of ‘renunciation’ of human nature and the wounds of sin and death necessary for it to come into its fulfilment, which is at the level of the supra-historical. Ratzinger, according to the Christology of his elaborated in Chapter 3, defends therefore the particularity and novelty of Christ in relation to nature and history. He presents a soteriology of transformation in “which human beings are redeemed and deified [and thereby perfected] in the Son (filii in Filio)”, in the words of Aaron Riches. As Riches writes, “Jesus is verus homo because he is verus Deus”. For Ratzinger Christ is the fulfilment of humanity. Human nature as such and as marked by sin is incomplete without reference to the particular Jesus of Nazareth.

The Conclusion will briefly recapitulate the themes explored though the thesis and relate the cleavages between the Concilium and Communio schools to the principal cleavage in post-Concilium theology between Balthasar and Rahner. As the understanding of hope and history needs to be anchored to Christ, so too does fundamental theology need to be grounded in and dependent on God’s revelation of himself in Christ.

100 Riches, Ecce Homo, xviii.
101 Riches, Ecce Homo, 15.
The differences revealed in an analysis of the *Concilium* and *Communio* approaches to hope and history, represented in the different sets of authors, thus depend upon the choices made in fundamental theology. How an author conceives nature in relation to grace will determine his understanding of the nature of soteriology. A view of human nature as supernaturally elevated prior to the ‘Christ event’, tends to produce an integrated view of redemption in which economic and political praxis play an important, soteriological role. It also tends to see secularisation and the ‘world’ in positive terms as the site of ‘anonymous’ grace. As Milbank argues, the evacuation of the social-historical-political sphere of anything specifically or institutionally Christian, on the grounds “it is already a grace-imbued sphere”, leads to a “pre-theological” reliance on “sociology or Marxist social theory”. In turn, hope will be conceived in largely inner-historical terms and take its cues from a Hegelian-Marxist dialectic and the Frankfurt School. These see history as defective but capable of immanent change and rest on a social-critical dialectic that understands the Church’s task to change institutions and society, including herself. Because the *Concilium* approach is a theology beginning from below, it will see Christology in ‘ascending’ terms. Its Christology is historicist. Hope is consequently driven by inner-historical praxis.

In the end, differences of approach in the hope-history debate are embodied in the positions a philosopher or theologian take (or do not take) with respect to the Person of Christ. The *Communio* approach of Ratzinger begins and ends with Christ, in his unique and novel grandeur. He sees history as oriented to extra-historical fulfilment ‘beyond itself’ in Christ, grounded on a view of human nature as intrinsically capable of receiving grace but in itself not capable of effecting salvation. Given these foundations, soteriology will emphasise the radical action of Christ on the Cross as its precondition for fulfilment in his Resurrection. The centrality of Christ in this picture is underscored by a Chalcedonian Christology, which begins from ‘above’. An emphasis on the indispensability of the Paschal Mystery lends itself to a conception of hope as a theological virtue, which orients the human person to eternal life with God in Christ. Allied to an analogical, participationist metaphysics that perceives the creature as ‘from and for’ God but as constitutively dissimilar from

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Him (4.3.3), hope is viewed as essentially personal (but not individualistic), relating to the individual’s existential desire for fulfilment in God, transcendent of history and its immanent possibilities.
CHAPTER 1 THE CONCILIUM POSITION ON HOPE AND HISTORY IN FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 will provide a broad, illustrative overview of the Concilium contribution to the hope-history debate. It relates that contribution to its foundations in fundamental theology. It will do so by exploring the marriage in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez of a Joachimite hopeful expectation of an ‘Age of the Spirit’ (see 1.2.1) and a Hegelian-Marxist dialectical philosophy of history which secularise Christian eschatology, on the one hand, and a low Christology, Rahnerian theology of grace and immanentist soteriology, on the other. The combination of these elements drives an understanding of hope as a strategy to improve the world and usher in a ‘new humanity’. To explore the Concilium position on hope and history in fundamental theology, the Chapter will examine the four building blocks of that position, as manifested in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez. The components are complementary, and form a composite framework for an immanent understanding of hope.

First, it will consider the authors’ conception of eschatological hope as focusing on inner-historical praxis. A theological choice emphasising praxis tends to import a Hegelian-Marxist epistemology and philosophy of history. Focus upon praxis entails an understanding of hope that is impersonal and directed in significant ways to social, political, economic and historical ends. There is a tendency to conflate earthly and eschatological hope. An immanent philosophical emphasis relates therefore them

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1 As implied in the Introduction, Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez are taken as representative of the Concilium position. The Chapter does not purport to provide an entire overview of the positions on hope and history contained in the journal Concilium, gleaned across the whole history of the journal. Rather it uses these authors as a means to approach a Concilium perspective, especially in the early years of the journal.

2 The Chapter will not to provide an encyclopaedic description of Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez’s oeuvre or capture every nuance in their thought on hope and history, much less their fundamental theology, but to paint in broad strokes their views on hope and history in fundamental theology, so as better to enable analysis of Ratzinger’s work on hope and history.
to a secularisation of Christian eschatology present in a dialectical philosophy of history.

Secondly, it will explore the role of a low Christology in the formation of an inner-historical conception of hope. In Schillebeeckx is a Christology that claims epistemological priority for experience over-against any transcendent, dogmatic Christological formulation. Consistent with dominant twentieth century exegesis, Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez interpret Jesus of Nazareth in historical terms and as an eschatological-prophetic political figure. Emphasis upon Jesus’s historical and political significance lends itself to an activist account of hope and reduces the import of the ontological unity subsisting in the Word, which grounds the humanity of Christ in his divinity.

The third and fourth, closely related elements of the Concilium perspective on hope and history are a Rahnerian theology of grace and immanent soteriology. The perspective is grounded in theology of grace, which views human existence as supernaturally elevated (1.4.1). It will tend therefore to incorporate the explanatory power of secular and immanent philosophies, such as Marx’s, and apply them to the improvement of historical and social reality. Secularisation itself will be seen positively.

A Rahnerian theology of grace therefore leads into the consideration of the fourth element of the Concilium perspective on hope and history. Rahner’s view that human existence inherently possesses the supernatural existential is joined to the notion that humanity has the capacity to drive history forward in a salvific manner, and leads to a coextensive view of profane history and salvation history. Consequently, there is present in political and liberation theologies the tendency to collapse profane and salvation history. Developed in these theologies is thus an integrated view of redemption, in which social, economic, political and personal redemption are interconnected. An integrated view of redemption also connects to a unitary view of history and being (which echoes a Hegelian historicisation of Being). Hope, as directed to salvation (c.f. 2.3), takes on an inner-historical colour.
The Chapter will conclude with a comment on the relative significance of the foundational metaphysical and theological choices implicitly or explicitly made by Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez in their understanding of the relationship between hope and history. The *Concilium* perspective of hope and history is grounded principally in a Hegelian-Marxist philosophy of history and a Rahnerian theology of grace. Focused on the secular and immanent, a dialectical philosophy of history and a Rahnerian theology of grace minimises the impact of Christ as the novel, divine intervention from ‘above’ and maximises the salvific possibilities inherent to human existence and human history. The starting point of the *Concilium* perspective on hope and history is thus not the Person of Jesus Christ, understood in Chalcedonian terms, but a secularly-framed political, social, historical praxis. Consequently, a low Christology undergirds the *Concilium* position, which presents an alternative and self-consciously understood practical fundamental theology. Entirely different theological foundations ground therefore Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez than the *Communio* approach (2-5).

1.2 Eschatological Hope Immanently Framed: The Place of Joachim, Hegel and Marx in the *Concilium* Position

This section will examine the mix of Joachim, Hegel and Marx, mediated via Bloch and Moltmann, in the *Concilium* view of hope and history. The complex of these factors grounds inner-historical conceptions of eschatological hope. It will ask the question whether these authors fall within the intellectual genealogy beginning in Joachim’s tripartite division of history and extending through Hegel and Marx to Bloch. To answer this question, it will first trace briefly the idea of what Ratzinger describes as the “secularization of Christian eschatological thought” through Joachim, Hegel and Marx and Bloch, in which is present a specifically ultra-mundane, atheist conception of hope. Apparent in the ‘secularisation of Christian

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3 C.f. the title to Metz’s key text of political theology: *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*.  
eschatology’ is an inner-historical conception of hope, in which the energies of eschatological hope and expectation are directed to the achievement of secular aims. It is most marked in modern history in Marx’s expectation of the worker’s paradise. The section will then suggest that the spirit of Joachim animates a Hegelian-Marxist dialectical view of history in these authors, in whom Bloch’s conception of hope and history and a Marxist emphasis on praxis are also present. In this light, the understandings of eschatological hope in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez will be considered. It is apparent that their impersonal, inner-historical conceptions of hope reflect a tendency to place eschatological hope within an immanent framework.\(^5\)

1.2.1 The Secularisation of Christian Eschatology

A characteristic feature of certain strains of modernity is the tendency to place within a secular framework eschatological fervour and expectation. An epistemology, which arrogates to humanity the capacity to manipulate nature, grounds the attitude that humanity can direct and somehow ‘make’ history and accelerate eschatological fulfilment. Eschatological hope is placed in the progress of history and human efforts to realise that progress. Löwith summarises well the tendency: “the moderns elaborate a philosophy of history by secularizing theological principles and applying them to an ever increasing number of empirical facts.”\(^6\) The natural or empirical becomes overlaid with traditional eschatological thought, and the two become conflated.

According to Löwith, the secularisation of Christian eschatology maintains the Hebraic-Christian idea that history has a \textit{finis} and a \textit{telos}. Modernity has inherited the idea that history is directed to the realisation of a goal, which gives history a

\(^5\) Patrick J Deneen has recently described that a fundamental aspect of liberal theory and practice is also to reject the binding authority of the past, which he insightfully examines as part of liberalism’s anti-culture: \textit{Why Liberalism Failed} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018).

universal, eschatological meaning. Generally speaking, history is seen as a linear progression. An “eschatological motivation” determines the “historical consciousness” of diverse figures such as Isaiah, Augustine, Hegel, Marx and Schelling. What was held by Christian faith as a mystery centred “on the supra-historical events of creation, incarnation, and consummation” has, however, morphed. The ultimate end of history has become immanent and inner-worldly, resulting in the “secularization of [Christian faith’s] eschatological pattern”. History’s progress towards a telos has become immanentized. An example is Friedrich Hölderlin’s “blessed hope” in the moral improvement of humanity and his idea that “everything is working toward better days”. With an eschatological consciousness, moreover, a “secularised and degenerate” understanding of the “New Heaven and New Earth” has become a powerful historical agent. According to a secularised eschatological disposition, hope is placed in the development of history, often driven by technological change.

A turn to an inner-historical conception of eschatological hope, in which salvation can be planned according to scientific and political rationality, has a long pre-history. Ratzinger considers that the twelfth century southern Italian Abbot, Joachim of Fiore was the historical instigator of a changed conception of the meaning of history, which resulted in the ‘secularization of Christian eschatological thought’. Joachim, according to Ratzinger, was the one who combined elements of preceding Christian thought and practice by making “the fateful connection between monastic utopia and

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8 Löwith, Meaning in History, 19.

9 Löwith, Meaning in History, 2, 18-19 (quotation on 2).

10 Pieper, End of Time, 73.

11 Pieper, End of Time, 70.

12 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 13, Theology of History in St Bonaventure, v. Ratzinger discusses the effect of Joachim in the world of ideas: Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 235, Eschatology, 13, 211-212, Theology of History, passim. See also Löwith, Meaning in History, 145-159. Nash points out that Voegelin imputed a degree of responsibility for the ‘immanentization of the eschaton’ in the modern period to Joachim of Fiore, a figure likewise treated by Ratzinger: Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, 43-44. See also Chapter 3.
chiliasm”. The ‘utopia’ sought by European monks – that is, the paradise that they endeavoured to anticipate in their life and prayer – and the longstanding chiliastic expectation that God would create a new world within history, was combined and chronologised in Joachim.

Joachim’s thought contained two structural features. It immanetized hope and generated the idea that the object of hope could be known and anticipated through human work. He presented a theory that history can be divided into three stages, reflecting the Trinity. According to his tripartite scheme of history, the triune God was the agent of historical progress. History was understood to consist of three periods or ages (‘days’), corresponding to the Haexameron, or six days of Creation. The third aeon was the Age of the Holy Spirit, which was immanent to history and would consist of the redemption of the history that had continued, scandalously, to be defective after Christ. In the age of the Father, the Jews had been in bondage and in the age of the Son, Christians had only partial freedom. According to Joachim’s theology, however, the Third Age would be characterised by “complete ‘freedom’ of the ‘spirit’” in which “nothing but freedom and love would reign”. Importantly, the Third Age is immanent to history.

In Joachim, hope is immanetized and partly rests on human agency. The ‘Age of the Spirit’ became the object of hope. Joachim “places his hopeful joy and confident expectation” in the coming of this age. Furthermore, the revealing of “final liberation” could be discovered by human reason. Joachim was convinced of the third age’s imminence and prophesied regarding the Apocalyptic meaning of two mendicant orders, understood later as the Franciscans and Dominicans. Moreover, because the third age was immanent to history, it was obligatory to work towards its

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13 Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 235.
14 Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 226, 233, 235, Ratzinger, Eschatology, 212.
15 Löwith, Meaning in History, 148, Ratzinger, Milestones, 110.
17 Löwith, Meaning in History, 148.
instantiation. As Ratzinger says, “utopia was historicized and made into a historical goal to be striven for actively” by Joachim and his monks.\textsuperscript{19} On Joachim’s scheme, supernatural hope thereby becomes mixed in with rational planning and receives systematic expression for the first time.\textsuperscript{20} Hope takes on an intra-historical and rationally-planned character in Joachim.

A key component of Joachim’s theology of history was what can retrospectively be described broadly as its dialectical character. The advent of the Third Age would bring about a qualitative change to history, constituting a rejection or dialectical development from the past, which lacked the conditions of freedom. Hope was driven by disillusionment with the state of history and constituted expectation of a better future to be brought about by human action. In rejecting the past, the ‘not yet’ of Christian salvation embodied in Christ’s first advent (3) is in Joachim translated into an expectation of the Third Age. Ratzinger notes that Joachim expected “a truly good and redeemed history [that was] yet to come since an unredeemed and defective history continue[d] after Christ”.\textsuperscript{21} The scandal of ‘unredeemed and defective history’ was to be overcome by an imminent and immanent “redeemed history”, which thereby became the locus of Joachim’s “joyful hope and his confident expectation”.\textsuperscript{22} Joachim’s dissatisfaction with present history also translated “into something of a program of practical action” in the form of the Orders that worked for the Third Age’s coming.\textsuperscript{23} The scandal of Christianity’s apparent failure to redeem history helped generate Joachim’s periodisation of history and an imminent eschatological expectation of inner-worldly transformation.

The historicisation of Christian hope latent in Joachim’s utopic dreams developed into a full-blown secularisation of Christian eschatology. Hope became increasingly applied to an immanent end of history. Hope’s object coalesced into “concrete utopias”.\textsuperscript{24} From Joachimite thought have thus come a number of “false

\textsuperscript{19} Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 235; see also Ratzinger, Eschatology, 212.
\textsuperscript{20} Ratzinger, Eschatology, 212.
\textsuperscript{22} Ratzinger, Theology of History in St. Bonaventure, 108.
\textsuperscript{23} Ratzinger, Eschatology, 13, Theology of History in St. Bonaventure, 108.
\textsuperscript{24} Ratzinger, Eschatology, 13.
eschatologies or gods” in European thought.25 Expectation of “political utopia” replaced and secularised the religious hope for the Third Age in subsequent centuries, in the context of increased confidence in human reason and the decline of the appeal of religion.26 According to Ratzinger, the secular, intra-historical hope in a “better world” characteristic of the Marxist vision, for example, replaced the biblical Kingdom of God as the object of hope.27 A “secular faith in progress” divorced from a Christian understanding of the meaning of history is present in secularised eschatologies.28 Shorn of a specifically Christian eschatological awareness were progressive philosophies of history.

The structural changes to the understanding of the meaning of history that Joachim initiated were present in Hegel and Marx. They were also evident in “the totalitarian systems of our own century” (2.2.3).29 The structural changes Joachim instigated were, first, the view that history contained its own immanent “forward thrusting process” and, secondly, that human activity can contribute to humanity’s redemption, a redemption assured by the “logic of history”.30 Both of these features can be said to be present in “Hegel’s logic of history and Marx’s historical scheme”, which Ratzinger considers are the end result of Joachim’s musings.31 Hegelian and Marxist philosophies of history took on an eschatological flavour, while immanentizing the telos to which history was travelling.

As intimated in the Introduction, Hegel famously posited that history develops according to an immanent logic. Hegel presents an immanent philosophy of history, which retains an eschatological, progressive consciousness. As Nichols notes, in Hegel there is an “[attempt] to marry Christian theology to secular self-confidence”.32 Beiser observes that Hegel was historicist in the sense that he understood human society, belief and practice to grow organically in relation to

26 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 13, 212 (quotation on 13).
28 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 13.
29 Ratzinger, Milestones, 110, citing de Lubac’s work on Joachim (La Posterite spirituelle de Joachim de Flore (1979)); Eschatology, 212, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 235.
30 Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 235.
31 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 212.
“historical context”, as well as the notion that “history is progressive”. Hegel explains the purpose of his philosophy of history in the following terms:

_The History of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom: a progress whose development according to the necessity of its nature, it is our business to investigate._

‘Capital H’ History is conceptualised as “the process whereby the World-Spirit comes to explicit consciousness of itself as free”, a process that it is rational. History thus progresses according to a logical, dialectical rationale and “culminat[es] in the realization of freedom in concrete political and social institutions”. The telos of history, “the final cause of the World”, is the Spirit’s “consciousness of its own freedom”. Such constitutes the “essential destiny of Reason”. Moreover, the ‘unit’ of the progressive realisation of the _Weltgeist_ is the state. Consequently, present in Hegel are the two structural changes of running through the Joachimite line of thought on the meaning of history. History develops according to its own immanent logic and there is an element of human agency in pushing history along. The novelty of Hegel was, however, to disassociate progress to history’s immanent telos from a specifically Christian eschatological context, and to place it within a political context.

Hegel’s philosophy of history and his philosophical dialecticism were the forerunners for secularised eschatology in materialist, revolutionary form, especially in the thought of Marx. Marx incorporated from Hegel the first structural feature that Joachim introduced to the meaning of history, namely progression to an immanent telos. Roger Scruton describes the effect of Hegel’s _Lectures on the Philosophy of History_ on the subsequent understanding of history as immanently progressive in the following terms:

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33 Beiser, _Hegel_, 262.
34 Hegel, _Philosophy of History_, 19.
36 Francis Fukuyama, _End of History_, 60.
37 Hegel, _Philosophy of History_, 19.
38 Hegel, _Philosophy of History_, 16.
39 Copleston, _History of Philosophy, Volume 7_, 220, 222.
His vision of the inevitable march of history from each epoch to the next, urged on by the same dialectic that governs the spirit in all its spheres, has been one of the most damaging of all philosophically inspired illusions, responsible for the quasi-religious belief in progress and the ‘end of history’, and inspiring the revolution fetishism of the Marxists.\(^{40}\)

The secularised eschatology of Marxism is sheeted home to philosophical foundations in Hegel.

While operating with different concepts and understanding history to progress towards differently understood teloi of reason, Hegel and Marx’s philosophies of history possess a progressive understanding of history. Daniel Bell notes that there is a Hegelian-Marxist view of history, which sees history as following a dialectical “progressive movement of consciousness” and “whose underlying tow [is]… the telos of rationality”.\(^{41}\) Francis Fukuyama notes that Marx took from Hegel, among other things, the notion that the historical process develops according to a dialecticism, which will eventually see the ‘end of history’.\(^{42}\) Hegel and Marx understand history to be teleological, progressing towards a particular goal.

Marxism developed, however, the Hegelian philosophy of history. Where Marx departs from Hegel is that he sees the goal of history not to be the liberal state but “the victory of the true ‘universal class,’ the proletariat, and the subsequent achievement of a global communist utopia that would end class struggle once and for all.”\(^{43}\) History is understood according to the materialist dialectic of a class struggle, at the end of which is the triumph of the workers’ utopia, as the transformation of humanity. The dialectic of class-struggle would result in a “dictatorship of the proletariat”, after which a “new Jerusalem” would eventuate, in which all alienation and division would be removed.\(^{44}\) In such a ‘new Jerusalem’, “historical alienation” is overcome through the creation of a new world in which matter and humanity have

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\(^{44}\) Benedict, *Spe Salvi*, n21.
been transformed.\textsuperscript{45} An “anthropological postulate” of Marxism consists therefore in an inner-historical utopian hope of the ‘new humanity’.\textsuperscript{46} History’s \textit{teles} is the eradication of class conflict and the instantiation of a proletarian kingdom.

The notion of progress is the ultimate form of the Marxist vision of humanity. Such a vision thereby links Marxist thought to a “strange eschatological consciousness” that expects a “perfected state” necessarily arising from the dialectic of history, in which freedom is experienced by all as belonging to human nature.\textsuperscript{47} Marxism replaces the transcendent God with the god of ‘history’.\textsuperscript{48} Marxism’s “[ideological] optimism is a secularization of Christian hope” oriented to the ‘end of history’ and the realisation of the “perfect society”, a manifestation of history’s divinity.\textsuperscript{49} In this context, it does not make sense to speak of a chronological end of time, although the progress of history endemic to the Hegelian-Marxist vision posits a “fulfillment of time”, in which history will have reached its goal and can admit of no further development.\textsuperscript{50} History progresses toward a utopia of transformed humanity.

Progressing history is viewed in the modern philosophies of history to which Marxism relates as being within human power. Ratzinger notes that in the contemporary period, history is seen not as the province of God but as something that humanity can direct; history is material, which can be manipulated. It develops according to rational planning and practical reason, which have evidently mastered nature and the world: “[p]lanning has taken the place of providence”.\textsuperscript{51} Albeit with respect to a liberal, Kantian progressive view of history, Pieper quotes a 1922

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{45} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 193 discussing Bloch and Marcuse’s hope in such a transformation.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Ratzinger, “The End of Time,” 14. Both Pieper and Ratzinger discuss the liberal idea of progress, a detailed discussion of which is beyond the remit of this thesis. Pieper also considers Kant’s hope regarding the continuing progress of history towards the realisation of the “Kingdom of God on earth”, “within history” and the result of “historical forces”: \textit{End of Time}, 109. Ratzinger likewise discusses the Kantian “faith in progress as the new form of human hope”: \textit{Spe Salvi}, nn19-20; see also Ratzinger, “The End of Time,” 13-16.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Ratzinger, \textit{Yes of Jesus Christ}, 46. Rowland, “Variations,” 71.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ratzinger, \textit{Yes of Jesus Christ}, 46.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Ratzinger, “End of Time,” 14. Such an idea of ‘the end of history’ is of course the underlying postulate present in Fukuyama, \textit{End of History and Last Man}.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 209. C.f. Hegel, \textit{Philosophy of History}, 4: “The workman approaches his task with \textit{his own} spirit; a spirit distinct from the element he is to manipulate”.
\end{footnotes}
Dictionary of Philosophy entry on ‘History’. It argues that human activity, entailing the mastery of nature and education, “will remold the conditions of life” and contribute to a “unification of technological, cultural, and moral progress”, such unity being the meaning of history.\(^{52}\) Ratzinger furthermore notes, in terms that apparently allude to Hegel’s Philosophy of History, that there is now a “world history” that takes up all partial histories and is the “single, indivisible” history, for which humanity has responsibility.\(^{53}\) History is unitary and characterised by progress that humanity must push along.

Marxism is thus characterised by a heady mix of the two changes wrought by Joachim and is the epitome of secularised eschatology. Alongside the idea that history progresses to an immanent end, is the Marxist thought that human agency will bring about or accelerate the predetermined end. The proletariat, or working class, possesses historical-eschatological agency. They are characterised in ‘quasi-religious’, eschatological terms. The proletariat is the “chosen people”, who has the task of pushing the historical process along through its action.\(^{54}\) According to Löwith, Marx considered that:

*If this class [the working class] becomes class-conscious, organized, and politically directed, it will change the whole course of history ‘when the class struggle nears the decisive hour’.\(^{55}\)*

Marx’s logic of history contains a call for political mobilisation and revolutionary action. Only in activating the working class in this way, will it undertake its appointed task of bringing history to its destined end. Human activity can thus help bring about the ‘end of history’.

Marxism is an apogee of the changes to the conception of the meaning of history that began in Joachim. It is an amalgam of belief in an eschatological but immanent end to history, and the conceit that human rationality can predict that end and direct human action to bring it about. Löwith characterises, therefore, Marx’s Communist

\(^{52}\) Pieper, *End of Time*, 74-75.


\(^{54}\) Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 38.

\(^{55}\) Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 41.
Manifesto as possessing in its self-understanding scientific content, framed
eschatologically and bearing prophetic witness. Marx is an end product of the trend
beginning in Joachim, in which “we set our hopes for [human salvation] on planning
mechanisms”. Eschatological fervour and gnostic rationality are thus characteristic
of Marx. Joachim leads to Marxism.

A Hegelian-Marxist philosophy of history is importantly predicated on
epistemological confidence. Hegel had advanced the possibility that “pure thinking
alone … [could] give us knowledge of reality in itself, the absolute or the universe as
a whole”. He presented a “closed system”, which purported to comprehend the
entirety of truth. Necessarily, Hegel’s epistemological assuredness extended to
perceiving the meaning of history. He presents “a basic structural formula [regarding
history] whose application … [renders] everything explicable”. Inherent to Hegel’s
claims for total knowledge on the basis of pure reason is that “truth exists … only by
the scientific system of truth”. Knowledge is obtained by human rationality alone,
which encompasses knowledge of the movement of history.

Hegel’s epistemological confidence is apparent in materialist philosophy of history.
Nichols notes that “the total claims of Hegelian speculation” is mirrored “in Marx’s
hopes of revolutionary praxis as the agent of total (secular) salvation”. In the
materialist, Marxist epistemological equivalent to Hegel is Engels’ claim that
“exhaustive knowledge of all natural reality” is possible, a claim premised on
humanity’s capacity to produce things. Foreclosed is an apophaticism that demurs
on the claims of human reason. The notion that “practical experience, i.e.,

36 Löwith, Meaning in History, 38.
37 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 213.
39 Beiser, Hegel, 155.
41 Pieper, Hope and History, 46.
(Hamburg, 1952), 12.
(South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine’s Press, 1999), 92. Behind an epistemology that sees nature as
subject to reason is modernity’s Baconian and Kantian tendency to construct a cleavage between
the human mind and ‘nature’: see Michael Waldstein, “Introduction,” in John Paul II, Man and Woman
He Created Them: A Theology of the Body (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 34-55. See also
Ratzinger’s genealogy concerning the decline of metaphysics: Joseph Ratzinger, Introduction to
Christianity, trans. JR Foster with a New Preface trans. Michael J Miller (San Francisco: Communio
experimental research and industry” can attain to total knowledge applies to material conceptions of history. A contemporary liberal Hegelian example of a scientific materialist reading of history approaching its telos is Fukuyama’s End of History. Deneen explains that Fukuyama “provides a long materialist explanation of the inescapable scientific logic…contributing to the rise of the liberal state”. Although shorn of eschatological fervour, Fukuyama’s work exemplifies the Hegelian-Marxist tendency to amplify the claims of reason to predict or announce the ‘end of history’.

A consequent immanent philosophy of history is developed with eschatological overtones, which simultaneously shrinks human reason’s capacity to attain to the truth while enlarging claims made on its behalf. In contrast to the Christian view expressed by Pieper that the ultimate meaning of history is disclosed by revelation and must take its content from theology, a Hegelian-Marxist sees the human mind as capable of comprehending the entirety of history and its direction. Severing philosophy of history from “true theology”, however, results in “the unrestrained proliferation of Utopian-millenarian expectations of intra-historical salvation”. Tethered to Joachimite periodisation of history but untethered from his Christian context, a Hegelian-Marxist epistemology grounds utopian expectation in the achievement of the ‘end of history’.

Twentieth century thinker Bloch exemplifies a Marxist secularised eschatology originating in Joachim and represents an important application of it to the philosophy of hope. Bloch presents a vision of ultra-mundane and not supra-historical hope. MR Tripole notes that one of Bloch’s inspirations was Joachim, “interpreted in ‘left-wing’ Aristotelian-Marxist categories”. The two structural features originating in Joachim’s theorising concerning the meaning of history – utopia’s historical immanence and humanity’s obligation to work for it – are present in his multi-volume Das Prinzip Hoffnung. First, Bloch’s materialist philosophy of hope is immanently framed. In contrast to extra-worldly understandings of the objects of

65 Pieper, Silence of St Thomas, 92 quoting Friedrich Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie (Berling, 1946), 17ff.
66 Deneen, Why Liberalism Failed, 97.
67 Pieper, End of Time, 19-28, 70 (quotation on 28).
hope, Bloch views hope as exclusively intra-mundane. According to Bloch, objects of hope not realisable in the world are “illusory”; only what can be realised within the world constitute objects of hope. The world is the situs of redemption. Hope cannot be placed in the “great beyond”. For Bloch, hope is only intelligible if it is intra-mundane.

The utopia of the object of inner-worldly hope is, moreover, given socialist content. Not only is hope confined to what is possible within the world, hope can only be realised in the “socialist transformation of the world”. Furthermore, hope in the coming of the socialist regnum humanum takes concrete shape in the political reality of the Soviet Union. In the historical configuration of Communist Russia, the “kingdom of freedom” finds its initial expression. Importantly, Bloch identifies the Soviet Union as the manifestation of the initial stages of Joachim’s Third Age. Explicitly, he places himself within a Joachimite genealogy but applies it according to the Marxist schema of history. The Third Age, immanent to history, is the product of a material-dialectical and socialist progression of history.

An immanent, atheistic materialist framework for hope, enables and obliges humanity to construct utopia, the second Joachimite feature present in Bloch. Bloch interprets hope under the aspect of atheistic dialectical materialism. His materialist conception of hope is informed not by the prophetic tradition of the bible but a Hegelian-Marxist understanding of history. For Bloch, humanity’s “regeneration and reign” is predicated on the non-existence of God. Recognition of God’s non-existence disillusions humanity and directs its energies to history’s improvement. Bloch’s principle of hope obliges humanity to overcome dialectically the empirically

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69 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 78. Bloch’s idea that hope cannot be placed in extra-worldly objects complements an epistemology that confines truth claims to what can be known by pure reason, specifically empirical, scientific knowledge.
72 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 80-81 and references therein.
73 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 81.
75 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 53. It could be added that Bloch’s *Principle of Hope* re-reads biblical revelation under the aspect of a Marxist view of history.
bad state of the world so as to construct a “better world”. Present in Bloch is dialectical materialism that sheds God and seeks to overcome historical injustice.

Grounding Bloch’s claim that human efforts are to push history forward is a Hegelian epistemology in materialist, Marxist form. Material reality is knowable and manipulable according to the dictates of reason. Bloch inherits and applies Marx’s famous statement that the philosopher’s task is not to interpret the world but to change it. Bloch would agree that “Techne has become the real potential and obligation of man”. The world, as the site of redemption, is open to human intervention. It consists of a “laboratory of possible salvation”. Bloch posits a ‘laboratory of hope’, the name of which highlights the joining together of scientific rationality and eschatological hope. Hope is placed thereby in what “can be planned and produced”. It is “the product of human activity” in this “laboratory” alone, as what is beyond humanity’s control and knowledge cannot be the object of hope. According to this intra-historical conception of hope, the object of hope is the creation of a “perfect world”, thought achievable on the basis of scientific rationality and politics. It is social and political activity through the medium of socialism that will bring about all that can be hoped for.

Overall, Bloch combines epistemological confidence in the rational capacity to manipulate material history with an expectation of the immanent realisation of history’s telos. He stands at the end of a tendency to secularise Christian hope originating in Joachim, mediated through Hegel and Marx, and provides an important example of a perspective on hope and history, which is ultra-mundane and contrary to traditional conceptions of Christian hope.

77 Ratzinger, *Turning Point for Europe*, 25.
78 Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 63, 65 (quotation on 65).
80 In fact, the Marxist authorities condemned Bloch’s work because it considered hope was a religious problem and hence precluded from consideration on atheist, materialist grounds: Pieper, *Hope and History*, 18.
81 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 83.
1.2.2 A Dialectical Orientation to the Future in Political and Liberation Theologies

This section will consider the presence of a dialectical orientation to the future in Metz and Gutiérrez. It will provide an overview of the combination in Metz and Gutiérrez of a Moltmannian eschatological consciousness, with a Blochian emphasis on the future and Marxist emphasis on praxis. A dialectical orientation to the future and concomitant rejection of the past as the site of injustice is indebted to a Marxist dialectical reading of history and relates to a metaphysic of futurity. The trend of secularising Christian eschatology that began in Joachim thus found its way into post-War Moltmannian and political and liberation theologies. To a degree, Metz and Gutiérrez choose a Blochian metaphysical approach to history and the future, and emphasise praxis as motivation for social change.

The influence on Metz and Gutiérrez of the Joachimite train of thought culminating in Bloch can be discerned by briefly examining the influence on them of Moltmann, whom Joachim and Bloch impacted. Consideration will then be given to the influence of Bloch and the notion of praxis on these thinkers. Bloch’s thought, and the antecedent Joachimite, Hegelian and Marxist philosophies of history are foundational choices for the theologians. They possess a dialectical view of history, which sees the future as open ground for progress and improvement. Consequently, they along with Schillebeeckx (whose relationship to the Marxist Frankfurt School will be mentioned in 1.3), develop concepts of eschatological hope as impersonal and driving inner-historical change (1.2.3 and 1.2.4).

Moltmann's *Theologie der Hoffnung* encapsulates the impact of Joachimite thinking, particularly found in Bloch, on the *Concilium* understanding of hope and history. He explicitly acknowledges the common provenance of his and Bloch’s ideas in Joachim and their “shared …belief in the Age of the Spirit”.84 He considers, moreover, Joachim to be more influential than Augustine (who contrasted the City of God with

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the City of Man: 5.5) in the contemporary period. The biblical message, for him, is full of “future hope of a messianic kind for the world”. In this sense, his is a ‘worldly’ hope, akin to Bloch’s idea of hope. Against eschatology that pushes the object of hope to the Last Day and “beyond history”, Moltmann emphasises the revolutionary impact of the Christian message of hope in present history. He considers hope to have “mobilizing, revolutionizing, and critical effects upon history as it is now to be lived”. Eschatology is not the doctrine of the last things, which emphasises a break between history and the eschaton, but “the doctrine of the Christian hope” so understood. Moltmann presents Christian hope as not focused on what happens at time’s end, but as driving improvement of the future and amounting dialectically to a decisive break with the past. The traditional emphasis of the Church on the last things is rejected in favour of an interpretation of Christianity driving inner-historical change.

A Blochian emphasis on the historicity and futurity of hope also informs Moltmann. Ratzinger describes Moltmann’s Theology of Hope as developing “a wholly new and different conception of theology from Bloch’s perspective”. Tripoli observes that Bloch’s Das Prinzip Hoffnung “made Moltmann realise that hope in the future of history was a thoroughly biblical principle left undeveloped in Christian theology”. Against a Parmenidean metaphysics emphasising God’s eternal present, Moltmann incorporates a Blochian futurity in the concept of God himself. In an apparent sideswipe at Thomistic metaphysics, which posits that God’s total existence is his nature (4.4), Moltmann quotes Bloch’s statement that God has the “future as his essential nature”. Contrary to an Augustinian-Thomist analogy of being (4.4.3), he argues thus that he is not “in us or over us but always only before us”. God cannot be possessed now but “can only [be awaited] in active hope” because he is encountered “in his promises for the future”. God is to be encountered as promising

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87 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 15.
88 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 15 (emphasis added).
89 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 16.
90 Ratzinger, Milestones, 136, Jesus(1), 53.
91 Tripole, “Theology of Hope”, 925.
92 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 16; see 28-29.
93 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 16.
94 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 16.
the future and cannot be known now. The ‘God of hope’ himself is characterised by futurity and awaits humanity in future. Bloch posits metaphysics of change, an ‘ontology of not yet being’ (see below), which supports Moltmann’s idea of hope as the protagonist for inner-worldly change. The continuum between past, present and future appears sundered, resting on a metaphysics that suggests that Being develops and is not the analogical link between Creator and creation. Akin to Hegel, Being itself is constituted by futurity, directing attention to the future and not the past or God’s eternal present.

A dialectical concept of the relationship between hope and history follows. The promises given by hope “stand in contradiction to the reality which can at present be experienced” and drive “hoped-for transformation” in light of the promised reality’. As Ratzinger observes, Moltmann’s understanding of the disjuncture between what hope promises and present reality leads to an understanding of Christianity as needing to change present reality under the “criterion of hope”. For this reason, theology needs to be read entirely under the aspect of eschatology as “forward looking and forward moving”, which results in the present being revolutionised and transformed. Moltmann argues that faith working itself out in hope should generate “not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience”. On this view, faith-hope “is itself this unquiet in man”; human disquietude is not calmed by it. Hope’s focus, on this account, is on a sharp conflictual, contradistinction to the reality of the world and an attempted amelioration of its ills. The hoping Christian is one who suffers under and contradicts current reality. Hope drives the Church to be a “constant disturbance in human society”, seeking to realise “righteousness, freedom and humanity here in the light of the promised future”. An orientation to the future drives an impatient desire to change present history.

95 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 16.
96 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 18.
97 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 58 discussing the same passage from the German edition of Moltmann, Theologie der Hoffnung (Munich 1964), 13ff.
98 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 16.
99 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 21.
100 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 21. A question arises: if the hoping person is not at peace, how can such a person give the world peace?
101 Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 21, (quotation on 22; emphasis added).
Moltmann’s theology of hope, which possesses an attitude of critical engagement with the world and a revolutionary impulse to change it under a utopian aspect, underlies the *Concilium* perspective on hope and history. It drives a ‘praxis of hope’ restless and impatient for inner-historical change, setting up a dichotomy between the past and the future.\(^{102}\) Impatience with the present state of history connects Moltmann to a Joachimite desire for the Third Age, which is reflected in especially Marxist philosophy of history. It entails a rejection of the salvific significance of the past and focuses on the future.

The political theology of Metz and liberation theology of Gutiérrez possess a dialectical reading of history. Ratzinger characterises Metz’s “enthusiastic option for history” as “an equally decisive rejection of the past…and tradition in favour of program of what is to be done”\(^{103}\). He describes the theology of futurity as “invalidating history as it has been up to the present”\(^{104}\). Collins notes that Metz’s political theology is concerned to address the “concrete needs of the poor and oppressed in the present” based partly on a critique of the history that led to that injustice.\(^{105}\) Albeit with respect the Old Testament prophets, moreover, Gutiérrez refers to these prophets’ “posture toward the future” and “awareness of a break with the past”.\(^{106}\) Gutiérrez characterises eschatology as being opened to the future, even if there remains a prophetic “concern for the present”.\(^{107}\) In a Moltmannian turn of phrase, Gutiérrez argues that a material conception of salvation allows cognisance of

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\(^{106}\) Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 93; emphasis in original.

\(^{107}\) Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 94-95; quotation on 94.
the “human consequences of the eschatological promises and the power to transform unjust social structures”. Metz and Gutiérrez share a dialectical reading of history with Moltmann.

Although Metz to a degree critiques Moltmann’s metaphysics, a crisis in the meaning of history, ontology and tradition is nevertheless apparent in political theology. Ratzinger notes that the futurity of the theologies inspired by the theology of hope is grounded in a questioning of history that it shares with Marxism. Consequently, a “theme of discontinuity” characterises political theology, with the ironic consequence that Metz’s emphasis on the historical is ahistorical. History contains salvific significance only on the basis of hope for the future and a denial of present history. The saving tradition bringing the salvation wrought in the past into the present appears jettisoned in favour of a reading that the present should be changed in light of an eschatological future and the memory of historical suffering (see 1.5.2). Thus, political theology “more or less abandons the ground of theological tradition” and rather “rests on immanently political considerations”. Tradition is replaced by a dialectical reading of history, whose value is found in highlighting the injustices of the past so as to motivate change for the future, the shape of which depends upon political considerations.

Underlying the programmes of the theology of hope and its successors appears to be the scandal that Christ’s Paschal Mystery has not changed history and that hope necessitates a drive to change this history. Salvation is not seen as already having taken place, with its effects communicated through time via the Church, but needs to be brought about within history by human agency. Thus, Metz rejects an ‘already,
not yet’ conception of human history in which salvation has already occurred in the past, with its full realisation yet to be manifested. He thinks the critical question is “how much time do we (still) have anyway?”, not a concern with an end simultaneously ‘beyond’ history but incipiently realised within history.\textsuperscript{112} The aпорiа of Christianity – that Christ’s Resurrection appears not have changed history – motivates a rejection of any suggestion of the salvific significance of the past and generates a desire for inner-historical change in the future, grounded on instead the memory of Christ’s death and Resurrection (3).

Ratzinger’s claim that political theology and a theology of revolution import Marxist features bears examination. The Marxist dialectical view of history, especially the Blochian variant, was an important inspiration for political and liberation theologies. Gutiérrez argues that “Marxian thought exercises a certain amount of influence [on the theology of hope] through the work of Bloch”.\textsuperscript{113} Milbank points out the “unprecedented degree of influence” exercised by Hegelian and Marxist traditions in contemporary Catholic theology, including on political and liberation theologies, a conclusion supported by Gutiérrez.\textsuperscript{114} Milbank discusses their notion of grace in that context (1.4). De Lubac also notes the connection between Bloch and liberation theology, pointing to the attempts of liberation theologians Roger Garaudy and Guilio Girardi to reconcile Marxism and Christianity. He rightly observes the authority of Bloch’s \textit{Principle of Hope} and Moltmann in Gutiérrez’s work.\textsuperscript{115}

Ratzinger also suggests that there is an affinity between Marxist epistemology, and Moltmann’s theology of hope and Metz’s political theology. The Marxist shift from conceiving truth as correlated to being, or even discoverable in already “accomplished deeds”, to “changing [and molding] the world” is paralleled in political theology’s tendency to emphasise faciendum, the “makable”.\textsuperscript{116} Underpinning an emphasis on the makeable is the dialectical desire to change history. The contemporary dominance of Marxist epistemology is reflected in

\textsuperscript{112} Metz, \textit{Faith in History and Society}, 164.
\textsuperscript{113} Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 126.
\textsuperscript{116} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 63, 65, 67. \textit{Introduction to Christianity} was published prior to Gutiérrez’s \textit{Theology of Liberation}. Ratzinger would also include liberation theology in this assessment.
“transposing belief itself to this plane”. Importance is consequently given to the concept of praxis in Concilium thought, a feature recognised by its defenders. As noted in the Introduction, praxis is a key component of Marxist thought and involves epistemological priority being given to it. On the face of it, Marxist approaches have influenced political and liberation theologies.

The influence of Bloch on Metz’s thought further bears out the claim that Marxism has influenced political theology. Ashley notes that decisive in Metz’s theological development was his interaction with the thought of Bloch. Particularly apparent is the impact this encounter had on Metz’s understanding of metaphysics, time and the nature of history. Having already conceived theology, like Moltmann, as beginning from an eschatological perspective, Metz’s interaction with Bloch saw him conceive theology as future-oriented. The future is, moreover, not determined by the past, but involves the “coming into being of that which has not yet existed”. The reference to Bloch’s conception of the “Noch-nicht-gewesene” incorporates his ‘ontology of not yet being’, which echoes Hegel in positing that being itself remains to be determined, albeit in material terms. The future is to be determined by reference to the concept of utopia, which “is what pulls history forward”. In Metz, the future realisation of being plays a key role in determining the content of Christian hope.

While Metz does not uncritically adopt Bloch, his impact remains apparent in Metz’s understanding of the importance of future time. Although Metz fills the content of Bloch’s aetheistic utopia by arguing that God is “what is ‘ahead of us’”, he draws a connection between Bloch’s “apocalyptic wisdom” and his own desire to conceive time under the aspect of “Apocalyptic” and not in evolutionistic terms. An ‘apocalyptic’ perspective “in Christian hope” is designed to “bring Christian praxis

117 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 67. See for example the impulse expressed in Kenneth Vaux, “Technological Utopia and The Theology of Hope,” Theology Today 27(2) (1970): 194: “We cannot believe that God wills that his creation be as it is now...God beckons man towards the future... In this [eschatological] context man is the ‘keeper and transformer’...”.
118 See for example Fiorenza, “Political Theology and Liberation Theology,” 5.
119 The influence of the Frankfurt School should also be noted. See Ashley, “Introduction,” 10-14.
120 Ashley, “Introduction,” 15.
123 Ashley, “Introduction,” 16, Metz, Faith in History and Society, 156. See also 164. As Ashley notes, Chapter 10 (156-165) of Metz’s Faith in History and Society is inspired by the memory of Metz’s encounter with Bloch: “Introduction,” 249n45.
…under the pressure of time”. 124 Metz’s dismissal of an ‘already, not yet’ eschatology and his focus on the time remaining, implies an urgent need to do something in that time. 125 For Metz, like Bloch, future time is the potential subject of free human action. “Imminent expectation” should not, implicitly contra Ratzinger, be “continual expectation” of the end (3.5) but rather should import the “pressure of time and the pressure to act into Christian life”. 126 Similar to Moltmann, Metz understands Christian hope to motivate action in the present, which has significance because of a Blochian conception that the future and therefore history is manipulable. 127 A Blochian concept of time in Metz lends itself to an interpretation of hope that is not a supposedly vague and empty expectation of the end of time, but as a journey with specific historical content. 128 Hope is specifically temporal and therefore secular.

The centrality of praxis and the influence of the Frankfurt School of theology in Metz are additional indicators of the presence of Marxist-inflected thought in his political theology. Metz emphasises the theory-praxis relationship, which is related to the Frankfurt School’s philosophy of history and marks a departure from personalistic and existentialist concepts of faith (1.2.4). Frankfurt School thinkers Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno detect a “dialectic of Enlightenment”, a philosophy of history that considers that theoretical rationality increasingly understands “nature and society” and thus can help practical reason “shape” history such that it “would progress steadily toward the goal of a truly humane society”. 129 However, such reason needs criticism outside of itself, as all reason is contextually determined. Enlightenment reason ends up being “instrumental”. 130 It is unable to determine its goals or ends. In short, there needs to be a social-critical reason operative outside of instrumental reason to address the shortcomings of the effects in society and history of that rationality.

124 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 156.
125 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 164.
126 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 159, 163.
127 C.f. Schumacher, Philosophy of Hope, 43.
130 Ashley, “Introduction”, 11.
Rationality critical of the shortcomings of society, which reflects on the theory-praxis relationship, meshes with Metz’s Joachimite turn against the past. Metz takes from the Frankfurt position the notion that reason is not abstract or universal but shaped by social praxis. Metz posits a “primacy of praxis” in his theology.\(^3\) According to Ashley, Metz uses the concept of praxis to show that “human reason is shaped in advance”.\(^2\) All “critical reflection” is socially conditioned, which demands an overturn of the classic faith-reason relationship and examination of “the relationship between the understanding of faith and socially contextualised praxis”.\(^2\) To escape determinism, reason must reflect critically on itself.

Instead of relying on classic expositions of the faith-reason relationship, in which revelation undergirds reason, Metz relates his theology to a Marxist dialectic of critical reason. Rationality is not understood in relation to revelation but in terms of the dialectic between theory and praxis, resulting in the view that faith is to provide “a critical stance over and against its social environment”.\(^2\) Faith is to change the injustices embedded in the current social-historical matrix. For Metz, political theology “shares with Marxism the Marxist-socialist interest in persons becoming subjects in solidarity, especially the underprivileged and the oppressed”.\(^2\) Although critical of the immanence of historical-dialectical materialism, Metz nevertheless argues that Christianity should promote a praxis that “breaks through the context of social (historical, psychological) determinants”.\(^2\) As we will see, the purpose of this praxis is to promote a vision of hope that is directed to the political imperative of creating ‘subjects’ before God. Faith is aimed at a praxis of political change, from which hope gets its context.

The marriage of Moltmann’s eschatological hope to a Blochian emphasis on futurity and a Marxian focus on praxis is also evident at the foundations of Gutiérrez’s liberation theology. He identifies Marxism and eschatological reflection as two of the key elements of theology’s turn to a critical reflection on praxis. Praxis is a key category for Gutiérrez’s work. As a result of its “direct and fruitful confrontation

\(^1\) Metz, \textit{Faith in History and Society}, 61ff.
\(^2\) Ashley, “Introduction,” 12.
\(^5\) Metz, \textit{Faith in History and Society}, 82.
\(^6\) Metz, \textit{Faith in History and Society}, 84.
with Marxism” and its object of ‘changing the world’, theology has learned “to reflect on the meaning of the transformation of this world and human action in history”. With overtones of Bloch’s ‘laboratory of hope’ and redolent of Schillebeeckx (see below 1.3.2), Gutiérrez describes the “grassroots experiments in social praxis” of Latin America, as “fundamental” and in the nature of “laboratory experiments”. He implies that more of these experiments are needed, presumably to determine how this ‘transformation of this world’ is to take place.

What is more, theology is shaped by its encounter with Marx. The exchange between Marxism and theology enables the latter to realise the contribution that “historical praxis of humankind in history” makes to theological reflection. Theology can then turn greater attention to what implications its reflections have for the “transformation of the world”. As Fiorenza points out, the “Methodic Emphasis” of liberation theology is to develop theory on the basis of praxis. Theory is, however, consequently to serve the ‘transformation of the world’. Akin to Metz, theology is subservient to praxis and the imperative of inner-historical improvement. Like Metz’s political theology, liberation theology becomes secular and temporally framed. The eschatological consciousness of Moltmann combines with a Marxist emphasis on praxis to produce a politically-inflected conception of humanity’s task for the future. From this combination comes a theological emphasis on orthopraxis. The “eschatological dimension” opened up in theology is twinned with a central place for “historical praxis” in theology. According to an eschatological consciousness, “human history” is primarily characterised as openness to the future. As constitutively open to the future, the task of human history is “a political occupation”. The Gospel is understood as a praxis of ‘doing the truth’, in which action is the integral component to changing the future under the aspect of exchatology.

137 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 8.
138 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 180n33.
139 Gutiérrez, Liberation of Theology, 8.
140 Gutiérrez, Liberation of Theology, 8.
141 Fiorenza, “Political Theology,” 330.
142 Gutiérrez, Liberation of Theology, 8.
143 Gutiérrez, Liberation of Theology, 8.
144 Gutiérrez, Liberation of Theology, 8.
The faith-praxis nexus in Gutiérrez entails a shift in focus from dogma to praxis. Importing scientific notions of truth, Gutiérrez argues that faith is only “verified” in the doing of truth, from which comes the notion of orthopraxis.\textsuperscript{145} A concept of orthopraxis is not intended to displace orthodoxy but to change the Church’s emphasis on doctrinal formulation to emphasis on “concrete … praxis in the Christian life”.\textsuperscript{146} Significantly, he quotes Schillebeeckx’s criticism of the Church’s focus on orthodoxy as resulting in the Church doing “almost nothing to better the world”.\textsuperscript{147} For Gutiérrez, orthopraxis, driven by a consciousness of humanity’s openness to the future, is necessary to drive history to a ‘better’ future, and direct faith’s attention to the achievement of that task.

Underlying Gutiérrez’s idea that human history is constitutively open to the future – the construction of which is a political task – is a Blochian metaphysics. A key component of the contemporary development of the theology of hope, according to Gutiérrez, is Bloch’s dialectical conception of hope, which rests on his metaphysics. Although Gabriel Marcel (who was influential on Pieper) contributed to contemporary reflection on hope, his emphasis was the personal dimension of hope. He did not consider hope’s implication for history and politics. It was Bloch’s \textit{Das Prinzip Hoffnung} that brought attention to how human hoping for a better future becomes an “active hope which subverts the existing order”.\textsuperscript{148} Bloch thus accepts the Marxist dialectical imperative to change the world and reject the past through revolution. Like Metz, Gutiérrez describes in apparently favourable terms the ‘ontology of not yet being’ in Bloch. Bloch’s ‘ontology of not yet being’ is encapsulated in the formula “\(S \text{ is not yet } P\), the subject is not yet the predicate”.\textsuperscript{149} The nature of the subject is to be attained in the future; the subject’s essence can ‘not yet’ be predicated of it. Ontology understood in these terms undergirds a revolutionary attitude to the future, manipulable according to rationality.

\textsuperscript{145} Gutiérrez, \textit{Liberation of Theology}, 8. He writes that orthopraxis “still disturbs the sensitivities of some”, thus dismissing offhandedly criticisms of it.
\textsuperscript{146} Gutiérrez, \textit{Liberation of Theology}, 8.
According to Bloch, moreover, a subject’s essence only develops “within a dynamic and utopian historic-temporal process”.\(^{150}\) In other words, essence itself is solely historically conditioned and future-oriented. Being will develop according to a drive towards “its essence or utopia” that, in Bloch’s words, “lies itself on the Front”\(^{151}\). An ontology positing the future fulfillment of being generates a vision of hope as “the [motivating] force of this process”.\(^{152}\) Hope becomes intra-historical because it is connected to a “dialectical process of history, now largely conducted by man, where the ‘not yet’ of the \textit{futurum} is educed purely from the latencies and tendencies of creative matter”.\(^{153}\) Thus, Bloch’s metaphysics of change supports an immanent view of hope as related to a dialectical vision of history, in which the future is emphasised as the site of humanity’s efforts to construct utopia.

Gutiérrez highlights the historicity and futurity of being in Bloch’s metaphysics, which contributes to his own dialectic utopic thinking. He observes that in contrast to a “static ontology of being”, a “dynamic” Blochian metaphysics enables history to be planned in “revolutionary terms”.\(^{154}\) Bloch emphasises the potentiality of being and the “open-ended” nature of what is real.\(^{155}\) That Gutiérrez notices the plasticity of being and its manipulability according to the dictates of planning is telling. He appears to glean from Bloch a metaphysical approach that supports a view of history as subject to revolutionary planning.

From Bloch’s metaphysics, along with the developments in the theology of hope and political theology (see further 1.2.3), Gutiérrez thus incorporates dialectical utopian thinking into his theology. A new, different historical epoch is desired. For Gutiérrez, utopia refers “to a historical plan for a qualitatively different society”, in which there will be new social relations.\(^{156}\) In terms redolent of Bloch, Gutiérrez argues that utopia dynamically drives the “historical becoming of humanity”.\(^{157}\) Utopia has

\(^{150}\) Schumacher, \textit{Philosophy of Hope}, 45.


\(^{152}\) Schumacher, \textit{Philosophy of Hope}, 45.

\(^{153}\) Tripoli, “Theology of Hope,” 925.

\(^{154}\) Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 123.

\(^{155}\) Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 123.

\(^{156}\) Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 135. In at least three places, Gutiérrez uses the phrase “qualitatively different”, revealing his Joachimite tendencies: see also 1.3.4 and 1.5.3.

become viable, moreover, in the revolutionary fervour of the twentieth century. Consequently, utopia serves as a “subversive … and a driving force of history”.\textsuperscript{158} It involves “denunciation of the existing order”, as well as an “annunciation for what is not yet”.\textsuperscript{159} Between the two poles of denunciation and annunciation is “historical praxis”, which is the opportunity for “building”.\textsuperscript{160} Utopia also belongs to the order of rationality. Scientific thinking undergirds the “real and effective transforming political action” in the present while “historical projections” are driven by utopia.\textsuperscript{161} Utopia involves a dialectical rejection of the current state of history and an orientation to an immanently realised, through praxis, future utopic state.

In conclusion, at the foundation of Metz’s political theology and Gutiérrez’s liberation theology is a joining of a Blochian metaphysics and dialectical view of history, and a Moltmannian view of eschatological hope as driving historical change. Clearly present in Gutiérrez is a utopic imagination. For him, scientific rationality enables political improvement in the present, while a utopian ontology presents the opportunity to plan for “a new humanity in a new society of solidarity”.\textsuperscript{162} These are two components of Gutiérrez’s integrated view of liberation (1.5.3), which posits a direct relationship between faith and politics.\textsuperscript{163} In Metz, Blochian apocalyptic expectation focuses humanity’s efforts on the future, efforts informed by the exigencies of time. Temporality frames his political theology, which has in common with Marxism a concern to alleviate conditions of oppression and create subjects. A foundation stone for the nexus between faith and politics in Metz and Gutiérrez is thus the combination of Blochian metaphysical focus on the future and dialectical rejection of the past, an emphasis on praxis, and a reading of theology under the aspect of eschatology conceived as driving concern for history.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 135.
\item Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 136.
\item Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 136.
\item Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 136-137 (quotations on 137).
\item Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 137.
\item Gutiérrez, \textit{Theology of Liberation}, 138.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
1.2.3 Inner-Historical Eschatological Hope in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez

Revealing the impact of the mix of Joachim, Hegel and Marx (especially as mediated via Bloch and Moltmann), Metz and Gutiérrez, as well as Schillebeeckx, is how they tend to conceive hope in inner-historical terms. It would be erroneous to sheet home to Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez a simplistic adoption of the Joachimite spirit, Hegel and Marx’s philosophies of history and a Moltmannian eschatological consciousness. It can be argued, however, that in communion with these they possess the tendency to place hope in the inner-historical realisation of a better world, which relates to a Blochian metaphysics and emphasis on praxis as the means by which such an object can be brought about.  

This section explores how the Concilium authors understand hope, which reveals a tendency to understand Christian eschatology in a secular framework.

Eschatological hope is understood to motivate inner-historical activity in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez. The aim of human action is to construct a better future for humanity, premised on the possibility that history can develop dialectically in this way. A social, historical, political and economic approach characterises thus their visions of hope. The focus of hope largely appears to centre on the immanent realisation of these projects and not their transcendent overcoming in the Parousia or the personal sanctification of Christians. The thread connecting Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez, from the general to the particular, is the conviction that Christianity must get ‘its hands dirty’ and contribute to the realisation of progressive inner-historical, improvement.  

Aligned to a certain reading of conciliar theology, these authors consider that new understandings of the human person and humanity at large motivate social and political action to work for the future. Moreover, they tend to fall on the ‘Incarnationalist’ end of the spectrum concerning the relationship between history and eschatological reality.

Evident in Schillebeeckx is the notion that Christian hope concerns the historical future. Although Schillebeeckx considers hope’s object ultimately to be the Parousia, hope nevertheless possesses an inner-worldly focus. While vision of the end

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encourages “actual devotion”, an eschatological attitude motivates “the up-building of a Christian culture which also hopes in its transcendent final realization”. Against a purely eschatological understanding of history in which there is no nexus between “earthly efforts and Christian hope”, Schillebeeckx preferred “a social-communal vision of the Rule of God that must be worked for together and in the present world”. The hope for Christ’s return is linked “to the various humanist efforts at renewing the world in the present time”. In this regard, there “is a clear preference for socially oriented action towards renewing the world” and a focus on “the incarnational aspect of Christian hope as part and parcel of human life in the world”. Thus Schillebeeckx considers hope to be directed to the humanisation of the world, “for a better world to come, more worthy of men”. He considers that Gaudium et Spes confirmed that “Man’s [sic] aim is to build a new world”. A utopic, dialectical imagination animates Schillebeeckx, who views hope as involving inner-historical improvement.

Despite recognising that God is the final actor in realising this hope, in Schillebeeckx is present the idea of a fundamental continuity between human action within history and such action’s eschatological realisation. Schillebeeckx gives human historicity a privileged place and salvation history is understood “as a still-unfolding reality”. Arguing for continuity between history and its eschatological realisation places Schillebeeckx at the ‘Incarnationalist’ pole of the spectrum identified in the Introduction and relates him to a Rahnerian view of the coextensive nature of profane and salvation history (1.4-1.5). In a sense, the continuity secularises or immanentizes the eschaton by imputing a salvific significance to historical action.

In Metz’s political theology, hope is given a decidedly inner-historical, social-political cast and is directed to inner-historical progress. In his *Faith in History and Society*, he offers the following programmatic definition of faith-hope for his political theology:

*The faith of Christians is a praxis in history and society that understands itself as a solidaristic hope in the God of Jesus as the God of the living and the dead, who calls all to be subjects in God’s presence.*

On this view, faith’s object is the God’s action in creating subjects. Subject-hood in this context is not understood as divine filiation (5.4.3) but with social-historical overtones. Thus, in formulating a Christian *apologia* for hope (c.f. 1 Pt 3:15), Metz considers important the concrete historical and social situation of subjects. The experience of “their suffering, struggles, and obstacles” is a central ingredient to the understanding of hope. In Metz’s account of Christian faith-hope, faith possesses an “historical-social” emphasis. As an inner-historical and socially-constituted praxis, faith’s object is the creation of subjects through practical action. Christianity cannot remain neutral in the face of “the historical struggle for global solidarity”. Instead, it must “throw itself into this struggle with its motto of all persons becoming subjects in solidarity before God”. Christian faith for Metz is, consequently, an “apocalyptically expectant praxis (of discipleship)”. Discipleship entails an active construction of the future under the aspect of eschatology.

Faith as inner-historical praxis is thus defined as a hope that all may together respond to God’s call and become subjects before him, overcoming historical struggle and oppression. Underlying the hope that ‘all may become subjects’ is a view, which echoes Hegel, that history contains a dynamic that points to a “freedom that is to come” in the “future”. Joined to a view of history as progressing towards freedom, is the notion that Christian discipleship can and must involve work in solidarity to

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173 Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 81. Metz emphasises this text.
175 Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 23.
176 Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 213.
177 Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 213.
178 Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 81; see also, 23.
180 Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 104
overcome oppression and injustice. A nexus between hope and earthly efforts to construct an improved future thus exists in the political theology of Metz. Christian hope involves historical activity seeking to construct a better society.

An understanding of hope as driven by eschatological expectation towards inner-historical future progress, under the direction of ‘human hands’, is also visible in Gutiérrez. He places himself in an intellectual line descending from Rahner and Schillebeeckx, through Bloch and Moltmann. Indicating his agreement with Rahner’s anthropocentrism, he understands that humanity has entered “a new era”, which is characterised by an “anthropophany” or “human epiphany”. He also cites Schillebeeckx’s notion that eschatology drives a “future-oriented” history, noting that eschatology’s orientation to the future is “inseparably joined” to attention to “historical contemporaneity and urgency”, a view present additionally in Moltmann. Siding himself with Bloch’s philosophy of hope, Moltmann’s theology of hope (1.3.2) and political theology against the ‘eschatologists’, he considers that eschatological awareness does not “escape from history”. Instead, eschatology is “the driving force of future-oriented history” and implicates politics and social praxis. One of Moltmann’s chief contributions, for Gutiérrez, is that he distanced Christianity from “fear of the future”. Instead, hope is the acceptance of the future as a gift. Gutiérrez aligns therefore his theology of liberation with the intellectual movement originating in Schillebeeckx that considered eschatological hope to be oriented to the inner-historical future.

Gutiérrez’s relationship with his Concilium intellectual forebears is further evident in the content he gives hope. For Gutiérrez, because eschatological hope is oriented to the future, its content has a political and economic hue. Gutiérrez argues that the gift of hope:

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...is accepted in the negation of injustice, in the protest against trampled human rights, and in the struggle of for peace and fellowship. Thus hope fulfils a mobilizing and liberating function in history.\textsuperscript{186}

Gutiérrez correlates hope to a political rhetoric particularly prevalent in the second half of the twentieth century, namely that of human rights, peace and fellowship. Hope is aimed at protesting current historical injustice and offences against human rights in order to bring about peace and fellowship, which is a historical process of emancipation.\textsuperscript{187}

By referring to human rights rhetoric, the goal of inner-historical progress is more specifically defined in Gutiérrez than in Schillebeeckx and Metz. Whereas political theology is concerned with a general “constant critique” of prevailing conditions undergirded by critical reason, liberation theology is concerned with “[o]vercoming relations of dependence” and seeking conditions of equality.\textsuperscript{188} Nevertheless, Gutiérrez’s understanding of hope is connected to Schillebeeckx and Metz’s more general desire to construct a better future. Gutiérrez lauds political theology because it is less “tradition” oriented, emphasising instead “living and urgent issues”.\textsuperscript{189} Hope is worked out not in works of charity, but in prosecution of a struggle in history to overcome historical oppression. Like Metz, Gutiérrez understands Christianity to involve an imperative “to participate in the liberation of oppressed peoples and exploited social classes”.\textsuperscript{190} Consistent with Schillebeeckx’s reading of \textit{Gaudium et
Spes, Gutiérrez argues that the goal of the “struggle against misery, injustice, and exploitation is the creation of a new humanity”.\textsuperscript{191} A drive towards emancipation aligns Gutiérrez with Schillebeeckx’s reading of the Second Vatican Council and Metz’s view of an impending freedom. Futurity drives hope as inner-historical activity seeking to achieve the realisation of earthly projects directed to liberation.

1.2.4 Rejection of Personalism and Personalistic Hope

The argument that hope is directed to the inner-historical future and centres on human activity involves a rejection of a personally-conceived hope primarily oriented to eternity. A rejection of personalism distinguishes the Concilium position on hope and history from Ratzinger (2.2.4). Contained in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez’s future-oriented theology of hope is a critique of twentieth century existentialist theology, including Rudolf Bultmann’s, and the personalism associated with Martin Buber. Apparent in their work is a suspicion of personalism, with an attendant focus upon the social, historical and therefore political. For political and liberation theology, individual, personal sanctification leading to eternal life is relatively minimised in importance, as political and economic liberation is proportionally maximised.

A critique of personalism is most strongly present in Metz’s political theology. Metz turned away from a privatised theology and the transcendentalism of his teacher Rahner (although its effect remains apparent – 1.4.2), which he detected in existentialism and personalism. He developed a political, “futurist eschatology”.\textsuperscript{192} As Ashley notes, his encounter with Marxist thinkers of the 1960s, including the Frankfurt School, caused him to turn to the political dimensions of faith and move away from theology’s focus on one’s personal relationship with God and others. He thus directed Rahner’s transcendentalism into a more social-historical trajectory (see further 1.4-1.5). Consequently, he distanced himself from Buber’s ‘I-Thou’ dynamic, which distinguishes him from Ratzinger’s Buber-inspired “dialogical personalism”.\textsuperscript{193} He considers that the “inter-subjective experience of the I-Thou”

\textsuperscript{191} Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 81.
\textsuperscript{192} Marsden, “Political Theology of Metz,” 443, 449 (quotation on 449).
\textsuperscript{193} Collins, Word Made Love. See also Rowland, Guide, 13-14 and 2.2.4.
minimises the significance of society and history and is thus too “apolitical”.\textsuperscript{194} In contrast, the concept of “solidaristic hope” that Metz develops is universal, concerned not primarily with the self but others.\textsuperscript{195} Only through others, does it concern the self. In contrast to Ratzinger’s view that hope begins with the person and involves others as are related to the person, for Metz, only when hope is universal does hope become personal. Hope is directed to the social and historical. Consequently, tied up into Metz’s political theology is a rejection of the ‘last things’. An “individual eschatology” reduces the significance of history and society, focusing instead on personal death.\textsuperscript{196} Individual eschatology contradicts Metz’s conception of the nature of hope as ‘solidaristic’ and directed to the making of subjects before God.

An impersonal account of hope is also present in Schillebeeckx. Schillebeeckx argues against “a false, namely abstract, personalism”, preferring instead an integrated view of salvation and an institutional setting for the operation of grace (1.4).\textsuperscript{197} He considered that an earlier draft of Gaudium et Spes presented an outdated Christian anthropology, which was “individualistic”.\textsuperscript{198} Consistent with his eschatological option for the future and shift away from consideration of the ‘last things’ in favour of an integrated view of redemption, Schillebeeckx does not conceive hope in primarily personal or individual terms.\textsuperscript{199}

Likewise, Gutiérrez’s integrated understanding of liberation also accords with a minimisation of the importance of the personal dimension of faith. While questioning the applicability of the secularised context of Metz’s political theology in a Latin American context, Gutiérrez commends Metz’s critique of privatised faith. He applauds political theology’s emphasis on the “political dimension of faith”.\textsuperscript{200} As seen, hope for Gutiérrez performs an important, liberating role within history and

\textsuperscript{194} Metz, Faith in History and Society, 73. Fiorenza, “Political Theology and Liberation Theology,” 9. See Martin Buber, I and Thou, second edition, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), e.g. 3. First published in 1923.
\textsuperscript{195} Metz, Faith in History and Society, 84, Ashley, “Introduction,” 9-10.
\textsuperscript{196} Metz, Faith in History and Society, 72, 84 (quotation on 72).
\textsuperscript{197} Schillebeeckx, Christian Experience in the Modern World, 744, 745. Fiorenza, “Political Theology and Liberation Theology,” 8, 11.
\textsuperscript{198} Minch, “Eschatology and Theology of Hope,” 279.
\textsuperscript{199} C.F. Minch, “Eschatology and Theology of Hope,” 275, 279.
\textsuperscript{200} Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 129-130 (quotation on 130).
counters injustice by serving ‘fellowship’. He directs hope’s attention away from individual salvation to include social liberation.

1.2.5 Conclusion

Underlying Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez’s social, historical, political and impersonal conceptions of hope is an understanding that history is capable of immanent progress. Their versions of hope consider that eschatology should drive inner-historical change. A view that history can dialectically proceed connects these authors to a Joachimite expectation of a new history and new humanity, an essentially Hegelian view of the dialectical meaning of history and a Marxist privileging of praxis and the oppressed as the beneficiaries of historical action. The combination of these factors reveals a tendency to secularise Christian eschatology and to incorporate a-personal, political, social and historical elements into the conception of hope.

1.3 Christology from Below: Eschatology as Imminent Expectation and the Minimisation of the Last Things

The second building block of the Concilium position on hope and history concerns Christology. In their reflections on hope and history, Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez join a dialectical reading of history to a low Christology, which emphasises the humanity, historicity and political significance of Jesus. A low Christology is one of the bases of their largely inner-historical and utopian conception of hope, in which hope is oriented at least in part to the attainment of earthly political and social goals.

As intimated in the Introduction, there was a ‘paradigm shift’ in Catholic Christology in the twentieth century away from traditional, supposedly ‘monophysite’, Christology. Typical is a Rahnerian Christology from ‘below’, which possesses an anthropological focus. According to Barron, “Rahner [insists] that Christology is fully realized anthropology”. Consistent with a Rahnerian theology of grace (1.4),

a low Christology perceives Christ through anthropocentric lens. An ‘ascending Christology’ begins by reference to Christ’s humanity. A Chalcedonian high Christology presupposing the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the one Person in Christ is thereby minimised (see further 3). Consequently, the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which involves “the predicing of divine and human attributes of one and the same person – the Son [of God]”, is underutilised.\(^{202}\) Especially, the predication of the divinity of the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, to his humanity, appears overlooked in these theologies.

Schillebeeckx, who developed his own innovative Christology, and the political theology of Metz and liberation theology of Gutiérrez share Rahner’s anthropological focus. Entailed in their low Christology is, moreover, adoption of a common contemporary exegetical picture of Jesus that privileges modern biblical critical methods. A strand of contemporary exegesis interprets Jesus as an eschatological, prophetic figure, who chiefly announced an imminent Kingdom. On this view, he did not understand himself as the divine Head of a Church he was establishing. Consistent with a view of eschatological hope as driving social and historical change (1.2.3), Jesus’s preaching regarding social justice appears paramount. Jesus is primarily understood as a harbinger of social change, not as promising and pointing to eternal life and an alien God ‘above us’, but to a “purposeful future”.\(^{203}\)

This section will first describe the exegetical reading of Jesus as a prophetic, eschatological figure. It will then provide an overview of how each *Concilium* Christology as belonging to the works representative of this ‘paradigm shift’. He also mentions in this context Karl Rahner’s *Foundations of Christian Faith* (1976), Jon Sobrino’s *Christology at the Crossroads* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1976) and *Jesus in Latin America* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987), and Juan Luis Segundo, *The Historical Jesus of the Synoptics* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985). C.f. Ratzinger, *Jesus* (2), 312 (Glossary prepared by Publisher).


author’s Christology contributes to an immanentist understanding of hope in their theology.

1.3.1 Exegetical Context

Undergirding the low Christological focus of the Concilium position on hope and history is the eschatological exegesis initiated by Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer at the turn of the twentieth century. These authors’ exegesis resulted in a minimisation of traditional eschatology’s focus on the individual’s death and the state which it subsequently entered, the end of time, Christ’s return and the general judgment. 204 With the minimisation of the last things came a corresponding increase in the importance given to present historical reality (reflected in Moltmann’s theology of hope with its influence on the Concilium position – 1.2.2). Acceptance of biblical criticism’s picture of Jesus, or at least its methodology, informs the authors’ view of the meaning of Christianity in a contemporary context. Inner-historical, political and social significance is, according to this view, given to the Kingdom of God.

The eschatological exegesis that Weiss and Schweitzer introduced argued that the most dominant aspect of Jesus’s preaching was eschatology. Jesus’ proclamation concerned an imminent end to the world and irruption of the Kingdom of God, in which “God would reign”. 205 Jesus’s proclamation of this Kingdom must be seen exclusively in reference to the end times. The idea that the parable of the mustard seed and like parables refer to a growing Kingdom is contrary to this hermeneutic. 206 As Ratzinger observes, however, in the secular mutation of the eschatological exegesis, Jesus’s proclamation of the Kingdom should be interpreted according to a ‘regnocentric’ hermeneutic. The Kingdom does not refer Christ as the Kingdom-in-person (the autobasileia) mediated through the Church (3.4.4). Rather, ‘regnocentrism’ suggests that the Kingdom itself understood in a particular way, and not a high Christological emphasis on Christ’s divinity and the founding of the Church, is central to Jesus’ preaching and mission. The Kingdom refers to the

204 C.f. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, 15.
205 Ratzinger, Jesus(1), 52. Ratzinger, Eschatology, 2.
206 C.f. Ratzinger, Jesus(1), 52.
directing of humanity’s energies towards a future “world governed by peace, justice, and the conservation of creation”. The Kingdom is thus a driver of ‘eschatological change’, in which the eschatological reality of a ‘new humanity’ is created within history.

Eschatological exegesis posits that the history of the Church amounted to a fall from eschatological consciousness. The early Christians are said to have possessed an eschatological consciousness, praying in the Pater Noster for the end and definitive in-breaking of the reign of God, which is God’s action alone. As a result, the Church’s subsequent institutional and eschatological history was the “history of an apostasy”, a process of “de-eschatologizing” in which the focus switched from “a praxis of hope” to “a doctrine of the last things”. A switch from praxis to the last things amounted to “a systematic reversal of the original intention” of Christ’s preaching. Akin to Joachim’s hope in an impending Age of the Spirit, early Christian spirituality was characterised by “a joyful hope” for the imminent coming of Christ, which was a “confident, corporate hope for the imminent salvation of all the world”; Christianity subsequently deteriorated into a mere concern for individuals. Hope became individualistic and fearful, directed ‘beyond history’ and not to hope’s inner-historical implications (c.f. 1.2.2).

Allied with this “alleged gulf” between Jesus’s preaching and the Christological developments of the New Testament, was the rise of the Church in the place of the Kingdom of God. The juridical, institutional Church was set against the aboriginal eschatological consciousness of Christianity. As Ratzinger expresses it:

207 Ratzinger, Jesus(1), 49-53 (quotation on 53).
209 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 2, 5. The supposed decline from Christianity’s pristine condition is said to be manifest in a comparison of the plea in the second-century Didache for grace to come and the “world to pass away”; the medieval Dies Irae’s emphasis on the perils of the last judgment, and nineteenth and twentieth century exhortations to “Save your soul”: see Ratzinger, Eschatology, 5.
210 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 5.
211 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 5.
212 Ratzinger, Jesus (1), 48.
Instead of the great expectation of God’s own Kingdom, of a new world transformed by God himself, we got something quite different – and what a pathetic substitute it is: the Church.\textsuperscript{214}

An aboriginal eschatological consciousness is opposed to the apparent institutional and juridical hardening of the Church in her history. A perception of the Church as embedded in a corrupt world amounted to a loss of an eschatological consciousness that drove historical change (Moltmann’s reading of eschatology – 1.2.2). It contributes to a dialectical reading of history in which even the Church is subject to criticism and encouraged to lose its satisfaction with the present state of history. The real message of Jesus is supposedly lost under the weight of history.

Reading the biblical witness under the rubric of eschatological expectation runs through the inner-historical conceptions of hope in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez. Attendant upon the adoption of this exegetical reading is the concomitant rejection or reduction in impact of individual eschatology and the traditional doctrine of the last things. As part of a Christology focused upon Jesus’s humanity, significantly, it increases the relevance of, and scope of action within, human history. As Ratzinger says of Moltmann’s argument concerning the significance of Jesus’ eschatological preaching for Christian faith, “faith [entails] an active involvement in the shaping of the future”.\textsuperscript{215} Such an eschatological reading of Jesus promotes in the Concilium perspective an orientation to future historical change and the minimisation of traditional eschatological categories. Eschatological expectation drives the desire to bring about eschatological reality within history, or to emphasise the continuity between history and eschatology.

\textit{1.3.2 Schillebeeckx: The Primacy of Experience as the Christological Hermeneutic}

A theology of hope focused on contemporary inner-historical action is evident in the work of Schillebeeckx. An eschatological reading of the ‘historical Jesus’ and a low

\textsuperscript{214} Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(1)}, 48.
\textsuperscript{215} Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(1)}, 53.
Christological method are also key components of Schillebeeckx’s theology of hope. This subsection will explore these themes.

A low Christological reading of Jesus and the Kingdom underpins Schillebeeckx’s commitment to contemporary notions of critical praxis. Revealing sympathy with the Frankfurt School and redolent of Gutiérrez’s emphasis on lived praxis, Schillebeeckx explores what contemporary ‘Christian critical communities’ can learn from and contribute towards modern critical theory’s desire for emancipation and freedom. In this context, he observes that “a new understanding of Jesus of Nazareth and the Kingdom of God” enables a “specifically Christian” criticism of Church and society. Although rejecting some depictions of Jesus as a political revolutionary, Schillebeeckx insists that sound exegesis demonstrated Jesus to be a “political figure” with political significance. Significantly, exegetical focus on the historicity of Jesus in the particular historical moment of twentieth century modernity led the “critical communities…to long for freedom, humanity, peace and justice in society”. Simultaneously, they resist repressive or oppressive “power structures” that “threaten[ed] these values”. Focus on the “Kingdom of God mindful of humanity” for Schillebeeckx led to an identity between Christians and “contemporary emancipation movements”, even if one tempered by opposition to revolutionary violence. An overlap exists thus between contemporary critical consciousness and a Christianity dependent upon a view of Jesus as a political protagonist. The Kingdom of God is perceived in ‘regnocentric’ terms. Praxis is promoted to ameliorate social ills.

Schillebeeckx’s well known Christological volumes exhibit a further nexus between an eschatological reading of Jesus’ preaching and inner-historical hope actualised in present action. Apparent within these volumes is a low Christology that reorients hope to worldly activity. Kereszty notes that in the Christology of Schillebeeckx “Jesus is primarily the eschatological prophet”. Impliedly, he is not principally the Son of God. Hovdelen points out that in Schillebeeckx’s first Christological volume,

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216 Edward Schillebeeckx, “Critical Theories and Christian Political Commitment,” Concilium 4 (1973): 54-55. The phrase “Kingdom of God mindful of reality” Schillebeeckx adopts from J Jüngel. For an examination of the claims that Jesus was a revolutionary see Martin Hengel, Was Jesus a Revolutionary? e.g. 3 in Martin Hengel, Victory Over Violence & Was Jesus A Revolutionist? (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003).

217 Kereszty, Jesus Christ, 10.
"Jezus, het verhaal van een levende (Jesus. An Experiment in Christology), the
“historical Jesus” is presented, consistent with “leading New Testament scholarship,
as an eschatological prophetic figure”, whose concern was to proclaim “an imminent
kingdom of God”.218 Jesus is placed within his Jewish, historical context.219 His
preaching and deeds are seen to direct attention to the eschatological arrival of God’s
kingdom.

Consistent with eschatological exegesis, early Christianity was seen to understand
Jesus’s preaching regarding the Kingdom of God to presage the irruption of an inner-
worldly utopia. Schillebeeckx argues that the early Christian communities interpreted
Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom to entail “the creation of a better society on
earth, a society in which righteousness prevails”.220 New Testament Christians
understood the significance of “Jesus’ proclamation of the approaching rule of God”
in this light.221 In Moltmannian terms, the impending, eschatological rule of God was
to inspire inner-worldly action here and now. A regnocentrism is again apparent in
Schillebeeckx, understood in light of an eschatological interpretation of Jesus’s
preaching. Evident is a vision of Christian discipleship focused on the inner-
historical.

Underlying the connection between an eschatological frame of thought and inner-
historical praxis are methodological assumptions apparent in Schillebeeckx’s
Christology. A primary hermeneutical category for Schillebeeckx is the subjective
experience of God, not dogmatic formulation expressing objective truth, which
precedes experience. According to White, Schillebeeckx understands Christology
exclusively as a historical science. All Christological content must perforce be
historical, dependent upon the particular historical context in which it is formed. In
Hegelian terms, as historical, it is constantly evolving. As a result, there can be no
“trans-historical truths of Christology” accessible in every age, as proposed in the

220 Louis Dupré, “Experience and Interpretation: A Philosophical Reflection on Schillebeeckx’ Jesus
and Christ,” Theological Studies 43(1) (1982): 50 quoting Schillebeeckx’s Christ: The Experience of
Jesus as Lord (New York: Seabury, 1980), 559 (emphasis in original).
221 Dupré, “Experience and Interpretation,” 50 quoting Schillebeeckx’s Christ: The Experience of
Jesus as Lord, 559.
New Testament and ecumenical councils.\textsuperscript{222} The focus in Schillebeeckx’s Christology is then the Christian community’s “basic evangelical experience of God”, upon which is constructed speculative Christology.\textsuperscript{223} Hermeneutically, the experience of God is paramount in Christology, not what unchanging dogmatic Christological definitions relate regarding the natures and Person of Christ. Experience of God is historically constant across historical epochs, the formulation of which in historicist terms is necessarily dependent on context. Consequently, speculative Christological constructions are secondary and relative to historical circumstances. There can be no high Christology. We can experience God but not reduce that experience to Christological dogma which endures.

Schillebeeckx’s methodological focus upon experience of God and historically-conditioned speculative elaboration supports a theology of hope filled with practical, inner-worldly content. Relevant in each generation is the experiential, practical content attached to the experience of God, not whether it accords with speculative or dogmatic formulation. Schillebeeckx interprets the ‘historical Jesus’ himself through this hermeneutic. Jesus’s ministry was inspired by his own “Abba experience” of the Father.\textsuperscript{224} Filial confidence in God as Father led Jesus to emphasise forgiveness, associate with the socially marginalised and challenge Jewish and Roman authorities. The speculative construction attached to this experience was Jesus’s proclamation of the Kingdom of the God, understood under the aspect of eschatology. What Jesus proclaimed was eschatologically inflected and focused upon the Kingdom of God as bringing about social change. White summarises the position well:

\textit{Thus Schillebeeckx perceives in Jesus’s theological praxis a quasi-socialist, politically liberationist form of ministry grounded in a prior religious experience, but he also thinks it was articulated theoretically through the medium of the Judaic, eschatological idioms of his era.}\textsuperscript{225}

Praxis and an eschatological consciousness are combined in Jesus’s preaching, the essential content of which is ‘politically liberationist’.

\textsuperscript{223} White, \textit{Incarnate Lord}, 477-478.
\textsuperscript{224} White, \textit{Incarnate Lord}, 478.
\textsuperscript{225} White, \textit{Incarnate Lord}, 478.
Paramount in Jesus’s life is thus his filial experience of God, which caused him to identify with the oppressed and challenge those in authority. While the ‘eschatological idioms of his era’ might have been historically contingent, Jesus’s experience of God inspires social change as the basis for hope. Hence Schillebeeckx’s idea that Jesus’s eschatological preaching should inspire ‘critical Christian communities’ (refer above) to be protagonists for change. Not relevant, seemingly, in Schillebeeckx’s methodology is the communicatio idiomatum, in which it is presupposed that, as the Son of God, Christ knew he was presenting enduring doctrine relevant for all time (c.f. Mt 24:35, Mk 13:31, Lk 21:33). Instead, his historically conditioned eschatological formulation of his filial experience of God leads to an emphasis on praxis, which is promoted as the Grundnorm of Jesus’s eschatological preaching.

Two key theological affirmations underpin Schillebeeckx’s Christological focus on praxis. The affirmations reveal Schillebeeckx’s low Christology, and connects it to the immanent metaphysical framework described in 1.2. As White notes, first is Schillebeeckx’s metaphysical claim regarding “the radically kenotic historicization of God himself”.226 In the Incarnation, God is joined radically to the politically oppressed in history. Hence, Jesus had solidarity with the marginalised in his life. Subsequently, the Church’s activity in history has been constantly to highlight this identification (and act upon it). The task of the theologian is to illumine core Gospel practices and God’s presence within history in relation to this identification. Apparent in the idea of God’s kenosis, however, is the risk of predating to the divine nature – rather than the Person of the Word – a ‘historicization’ of being in the manner of Hegel. It can place an immanent metaphysical framework around God’s eternity and suggest that the identification itself is paramount. It is true that the Word joined himself to (the whole of) humanity and entered history. He did so, however, to

226 White, *Incarnate Lord*, 479. White elsewhere points out that kenotic theology is innovative, peculiar to modern theology and rests on an exegetical view that Christ’s cry from the Cross is a more authentic, because pre-redaction, saying of Christ. He notes the origin of this idea in Enlightenment historical revisionism. Samuel Reimarus, for example, argued in 1788 that Christ’s cry from the cross represented “the Nazarene’s disillusioned apocalypticism”, an idea picked up, significantly, in Weiss and Schwietzer: Thomas Joseph White OP, “Jesus’ Cry on the Cross and His Beatific Vision,” *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, 5(3) (2007): 555.
draw suffering humanity out of temporality and historicity into the eternity of his Being, as the means to remove that suffering (c.f. 3).

Secondly, and as a consequence, Christological reflection in a post-metaphysical period such as ours is, according to the Schillebeeckxian position, to move from an ontological understanding of Christ to one focused on politics and praxis within an ecclesial and sacramental setting. The Church’s life is to be characterised by solidarity with the oppressed, involving inclusion of these into “corporate, political and sacramental life”.227 Hermeneutics is oriented to the future and grounded on “new horizons of political praxis”.228 In short, “[t]he Church must offer the solace of religious and political hope to modern human beings bewildered in the face of the existential problems of suffering and evil.”229 Theological affirmations of a radical identity of God with the marginalised and Christological focus on political praxis lay bare the inner-historical, political focus of Schillebeeckx’s theology of hope, and his departure from a high Christology. Hope is ‘religious and political’. An accident of Schillebeeckx’s low Christology is thus a shift of faith and reason from Christ himself to what he as a historical figure means for the world.

In summary, Schillebeeckx understands Jesus’s significance as carrying strongly political and inner-historical implications. Schillebeeckx’s theology of hope does not align with traditional Catholic eschatology’s focus on the last ‘things’ but with the theologies that adopted the modern eschatological exegetical view that the early Christians expected an imminent Parousia.230 He possesses a regnocentrism and a politically-inflected understanding of hope. Longed for are distinctly inner-historical aspirations sought to be instantiated within a social-historical context. Ratzinger’s observations, noted above, regarding the shift in focus from the Person of Christ to the Kingdom of God understood under the aspect of inner-historical values is therefore strongly apparent in Schillebeeckx. Instead of a high Christology reflected in the faith formulations of the Church, which are only ever secondary on his scheme, Schillebeeckx presents a Christology in which the experience of God is

228 White, *Incarnate Lord*, 480.
primary. A hermeneutic of experience enables Schillebeeckx to focus on contemporary efforts to promote social justice.

1.3.3 Metz: Understanding Jesus through the Lens of Eschatological Proclamation and Praxis

Foundational to Metz’s Christology is an eschatological reading of Jesus’s preaching and the New Testament message, which is built upon a dialectical, critical use of reason. A subsequent political theology in which hope is focused upon imminent expectation and the striving towards the attainment of inner-historical aspirations with political implications, is thereby formed. Minimised is reference to the hypostatic union or the *communicatio idiomatum*. Maximised in relative importance is the inner-historical significance of Christ.

Metz combines an eschatological reading of Jesus with a politically-inflected social criticism. An indication of the importance of the biblical critics’ view of Jesus to Metz’s political theology is his statement that “everything” in political theology is connected to Jesus’s “eschatological message”.231 Metz shares therefore Moltmann’s idea that all theology needs to be considered under the aspect of eschatology (1.2). He accepts that Jesus’s eschatological preaching is the principal significance of the biblical message. However, he also connects a focus upon critical reason and social praxis to an understanding of Jesus as an eschatological figure.232 Implicit in the “theory-praxis dialectic” of Metz indebted to the Frankfurt School, which emphasises the connection between socially embodied reason and faith (see 1.2.2), is a notion that an understanding of Jesus’s eschatological preaching drives reflection upon praxis.233 However, reflection on the eschatological colour of Jesus’s preaching is itself dependent upon a social context. Akin to Schillebeeckx’s bifurcation between experience and speculation, it can be said that Jesus’s eschatology in Metz is taken out of its original context and applied to contemporary concerns, often of a political hue.

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Metz’s focus on the theory-praxis dialectic in relation to the figure of Jesus applies eschatological exegesis to a concern with political and social action. Religion is understood as generating practical action. Fiorenza notes that Metz critiqued twentieth century existential theology for failing to bring together “faith and social praxis, religion and society.” Jesus’s eschatological message was not applied to praxis. Metz was surprised that the form criticism employed in contemporary biblical research, which the existential theologians adopted, did not lead to an emphasis on “the social, public and communal nature of the gospel message today”. Metz’s political theology, in contrast, aims to reconsider the relationship between religion and society, and theory and praxis, in a modern setting.

Reconceptualising the relationship between theory and praxis supports a political reading of the Gospel, and a future-orientation of theology. Intrinsic to political theology’s undertaking to connect faith to contemporary praxis is to promote the notion that “the biblical eschatological promise includes images of liberty, peace, justice, and reconciliation…images that are necessarily public”. Metz writes, moreover, that the biblical message generated “a historically engaged future orientation”, combining a sense of transcendence and the future. As such, the gospel proclamation cannot be interpreted in an individualistic or personalist manner. The biblical message inevitably contains, according to the Metzian view, public, social and political significance in its promotion of freedom, peace, justice and reconciliation. Metz highlights contemporary motifs of emancipation as central to the biblical message. Attached to a biblical exegesis, which reads Jesus as a political figure interpreted under the aspect of an eschatological horizon, it evidences a theological orientation towards the realisation of inner-historical, political ends. It upholds the immanent understanding of hope described in 1.2.3.

Connecting praxis and eschatology leads to Christ’s significance being understood in political terms, and manifests a low Christological emphasis in Metz. According to Ashley, Bloch’s interpretation of the figure of Jesus and his relationship to utopia
impressed Metz. Bloch considers that Jesus, and the Old Testament figure Job, rebelled against the tendency of “institutionalized religion” to replace a utopia, which drives history forward, with an “oppressive God”. In this light, Jesus is understood as an embodiment of rebellion and an expression of utopian thinking. Jesus is construed according to a Joachimite-Blochian reading of dialectical history, which moves towards inner-historical utopia. Implicitly, the reading of Christian history as involving a ‘downfall’ from an eschatological consciousness is invoked. At the least, Jesus is identified with the margins of society. An implicit contrast thus exists between a high Christological view of Christ as mediated through the Church and Bloch’s view of Jesus. The former, emphasising the hypostatic union, understands Jesus as history’s turning-point and transcendent purpose. A low Christology sees Jesus as an historical expression of a desire for a better, utopian future, represented in his critical stance towards prevailing organised religion, which suppresses this desire.

The idea that Christ particularly identified himself with the poor and suffering underpins the nexus in Metz between reading Jesus through political lens and an attendant focus upon praxis. Jesus’s identification with the marginalised is loaded with political significance for Metz. According to Marsden, present in Metz is a “spirituality of protest” based upon Christ’s plea from the Cross in St Mark’s Gospel (Mk 15:34: E’loi, E’loi, la’ma sabbach-tha’ni), which he dubbed “Leiden an Gott” (‘suffering unto God’). Jesus’s cry from the Cross is seen as a “protest on behalf of suffering humanity with whom Christ is joined irrevocably in shared suffering and grief”. Jesus’s actions on the Cross are understood as a protective (and implicitly dialectical-critical) historical joining with those who have suffered in history.

241 As we have seen, this notion is present in Schillebeeckx’s Christology, and will be shown to be apparent in Gutiérrez’s.
242 Marsden, “Political Theology of Metz,” 445. Cohering with the reading of Jesus as a rebellious figures, Metz’s emphasis on protestive suffering on the part of Christ reveals an implicit difference from the mainstream theological tradition. White argues, appealing to Aquinas, that Christ’s cry of dereliction from the Cross is best understood not as a cry of abandonment, separation or despair inconsistent with the possession of the Beatific Vision in Christ. Rather, it actually represents a hopeful cry of abandonment that “introduce[s] humanity into the eschatological gift of redemption”: White, “Jesus’ Cry,” 557. It is a cry of desire and hope for deliverance and invokes the whole of Psalm 22, including the promise of triumph: 562, 567. In Christ’s soul was present hope for his exaltation and the salvation of humanity. Moreover, Christ is an “eschatological figure” whose suffering contained also the expectation of Resurrection: 565, 567 (quotation on 567). His death brings about the beginning of the eschaton and his suffering and agony offers eschatological life in the Spirit. Importantly, White equates eschatological life with eternal life. Christ’s death results in the
As a consequence of Jesus’s identification with the suffering, political theology’s conception of the Kingdom of God is understood in immanent, protestive, political terms. A political reading of the Kingdom is connected, moreover, to Metz’s notion of the ‘dangerous memory’ of Christ’s passion, death and resurrection. The ‘dangerous memory’ is central to a political Christology. For Metz, the memory of Christ “[commemorates] the advent of the Kingdom of God in the love of Jesus towards marginated persons.” The memory of Christ’s suffering, in promising a future liberation of the oppressed, carries political implications for history today. Remembrance of Jesus’s identification with the “oppressed and rejected”, and Jesus’s proclamation regarding “the coming of the Kingdom of God”, continues to have a “liberating and redemptive” impact upon the present. Remembering the historical suffering of the ‘marginated’ should result, in Metz’s words, in “uncalculating partisanship on behalf of the weak and unrepresented”. The kerygma is thus seen in unashamedly contemporary terms: the “proclamation of the saving message is translated into promises of freedom, justice, and peace”. Jesus’s significance is understood in regnocentric terms and in light of twentieth century political terminology.

In summary, intrinsic to Metz’s Christology is to link the figure of Jesus, and his eschatological preaching, to contemporary praxis and its concerns for liberation. Jesus is read through the lens of twentieth century political concerns. Despite the

world’s redemption, and through the Spirit, “we enter into an eschatological continuum with the event of the Paschal mystery itself”: 568, 571, 572 (quotation on 571). White then represents a High Christology that maintains Christ’s continuous possession of the Beatific Vision. Redemption is understood as opening up the eschatological prospect of eternal life, which the tradition generally understands as the possession of the Beatific Vision. The hope of Christ was for this reality of the prospect of eternal life to be communicated to humanity. Ratzinger interprets Christ’s cry from the Cross as “no ordinary cry of abandonment” but as invoking the whole of Ps 22, which involves “the certainty of salvation”: Jesus(2), 214. Christ is praying corporately and not individualistically, as ‘head’ and ‘body, bringing to God our “struggles”, “voices”, “anguish” and “hope”: 215. It reveals his Passion as “Messianic”, bearing suffering but also the redemption that includes the “victory of love”: 216. White’s and Ratzinger’s readings work against an immanentist soteriology (see further 1.4 and 1.5, 5).


244 Marsden, “Political Theology of Metz,” 444-445.


‘eschatological proviso’ of Metz (see 1.5.2), which maintains a distinction between the Kingdom of God and all historical societies, is an apparent reduction of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God to contemporary political issues nevertheless manifests itself in Metz. The saving message of Christ is ‘translated’ into a ‘memory’ that drives concern for freedom, justice and peace on behalf of the poor with whom Christ especially identifies. Historical ‘suffering and grief’ is overcome through the Church serving (political) liberation. A political Christology underpins therefore a view of hope focused upon immanent historical action desirous of creating conditions for a more humane way of life (1.2.3). Jesus is seen under the aspect of utopia, that which drives history forward. A low Christology is thus joined to a dialectical view of hope and history, as directed towards the realisation of inner-historical, social and political improvement.

1.3.4 Gutierrez and Christ the Liberator

Joined to the futurity of Gutiérrez’s utopic and eschatological emphasis on inner-historical praxis, described in 1.2, is his low Christology, which focuses upon the humanity and historicity of Jesus. While Chalcedonian dogma is not necessarily abandoned in Gutiérrez, his Christology arguably minimises the centrality of Christ’s divinity to his identity, with a consequent emphasis on inner-historical praxis as the real significance of Jesus’ life and message. Consequently, the promise of eternity is downplayed and an eschatological aspect of Christ’s significance highlighted to serve a particular understanding of liberation and to support a view of hope as driving that liberation.

Liberation theology shares with Schillebeeckx and political theology, a low Christological focus on the historicity of Jesus, which results in emphasis on the plight of the poor. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith considered that Jon Sobrino’s emphasis on Jesus’s humanity and historicity attenuated the New Testament’s testimony regarding Christ’s divinity. Stålsett argues, however, that Jesus’ humanity and historicity are linked to liberation theology’s “specific starting

point”, namely its “contextual and victimological shift”.248 In this regard, liberation theology begins from the perspective of the victims’ experience of “suffering and exclusion”; in Schillebeeckx’s language, their “contrast experience[s]”.249 The divinity of Christ is not the Christological starting point for liberation theology. Instead, consistent with an ‘ascending Christology’ applied to the suffering of historical victims, Christ is seen through the perspective of his humanity and his identification with the oppressed.

Liberation theology’s Christology depends on the ‘victimological shift’. Christ is is especially viewed as ‘Christ the Liberator’, an idea that takes its colour from the suffering of historical victims. Fiorenza’s description of Leonardo Boff’s Christology and his argument that the most apt title for Christ is that of ‘liberator’ illuminates this Christological orientation. Although Boff and other liberation theologians do not see Jesus as a revolutionary or Zealot, they see his preaching and mission as merely carrying an implicit Christology. Impliedly, later theology must fill out Christological understanding.250 Boff does so by applying the title Liberator to Christ, which signifies that Jesus liberated people from human restraints, alienating forces and death. Included in these are realities such as law, convention, authoritarianism, sin, illness, and devils.251 The New Testament witness did not present the foundation of an organically developing Christology recognising Christ’s divinity but see Jesus as a political, antinomian and, it is conceded, supernatural liberator.

249 Stålsett, “Liberation Theology,” 590.
250 This argument is redolent of Schillebeeckx’s distinction between the experience of God in Jesus and later historically-conditioned accounts of that experience, which minimises New Testament claims regarding Christ’s divinity: 1.3.2.
251 Fiorenza, “Political Theology and Liberation Theology,” 21.
In liberation theology, the idea of Christ the Liberator is linked to other politically-inspired notions, including with respect to the Kingdom of God. Jesus is connected with the Exodus account, interpreted as God’s intervention on behalf of the oppressed through the provision of liberation in a new land. Jesus’s persecution, torture and death were emphasised and seen in connection with the Latin American poor’s fight for ‘liberation’. Distinguishing itself from traditional theology, liberation theology saw Christ’s Resurrection not as the promise that poverty and suffering would be overcome in the afterlife but that God, in raising Jesus who had been crucified, showed himself to be on the victims’ side.252 According to this interpretation of the figure of Jesus, the Kingdom of God presages, “here and now”, a society characterised by freedom for the oppressed.253 A historical struggle on behalf of victims is thereby implied in this Christology, as well as an understanding of the Kingdom of God as immanently political.

Along the same trajectory as Schillebeeckx and Metz and within the general context of liberation theology, Gutiérrez pays particular attention to the ‘historical Jesus’ and his political significance in his theology of liberation. Gutiérrez contends with a reading that Jesus possessed an “apolitical attitude”, arguing that this is inconsistent with the import of the bible and Jesus’s preaching.254 Like other liberation theologians, Gutiérrez warns against a simple identification of Christ with a “contemporary political militant”.255 Doing so would read into the “historical Jesus” contemporary concerns particular to the contemporary age.256 Reading Jesus’s solely through contemporary lens would fail to respect the reality of the historical Jesus and ignore what was universally “valid and concrete for today” about his “life and witness”.257 Although Gutiérrez’s desire not to read anachronistically and simplistically current issues into Jesus is to be commended, he nevertheless reveals himself to possess a low Christology similar to Schillebeeckx and Metz. His answer to anachronism is not to emphasise the Chalcedonian claim regarding the hypostatic union and therefore the eternity of Christ. Rather, it is to emphasise the historicity of

256 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 131.
257 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 131.
Jesus and those elements of his life and work – at least as interpreted by Gutiérrez – that have significance for the contemporary liberation movement.  

While Gutiérrez does mention that God was made flesh in Christ, he works to situate Jesus historically and contextually. He constructs a picture of Jesus’ significance based on that historical context. It is Jesus’s message and action within the historical context that appears to have universal significance for Gutiérrez. In this regard, he considers Jesus’ relationship to the Zealot movement. While Jesus was not a member of the Zealots, aspects of their attitudes overlapped with his, including his proclamation of the Kingdom’s arrival and his part in that arrival. What distinguished Jesus from the Zealots was his supra-nationalist opposition to “politico-religious messianism”, advocacy of “justice and peace”, and the “universal and integral” liberation that he offers. Akin to Metz’s Blochian-inspired reading of Christ as a rebellious figure, Jesus is stripped from a religious, institutional setting. Instead, he is seen as proclaiming a universal message of opposition to powerful groups. Jesus opposed Herod, the Sadducees and Pharisees, not as a nationalist but as such. He had “a head-on opposition to the rich and powerful and a radical option for the poor”. His death is also to be seen in political terms – Gutiérrez cites Oscar Cullman’s conclusion that Jesus was condemned as a Zealot. Gutiérrez thereby perceives Jesus’s import by reference to his historical proclamation and opposition to institutional groups (which overlaps with a Marxist revolutionary consciousness – c.f. 1.2.1). There is little reference to Christ’s eternity.

An eschatological exegetical and non-dogmatic reading of Christ, in which the proclamation of the Kingdom takes prominence, is thus relevant to Gutiérrez’s treatment of the political significance of Jesus. Gutiérrez discusses Cullmann’s idea that Jesus’ political behaviour is to be understood in light of an “eschatological radicalism”, which hoped for an imminent coming of the Kingdom of God. On this view, eschatological radicalism caused Jesus to relativise historical and temporal

258 This is an approach analogous somewhat to Schillebeeckx’s distinction between experience and its subsequent Christological formulation.
259 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 131.
261 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 133.
262 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 133, quoting Cullman, Jesus and the Revolutionaries.
realities. He was interested simply with individual conversion and not the improvement of social structures, which was put off for subsequent history. Gutiérrez also discusses “consequent eschatology”, the line begun by Schweitzer which considered Jesus was mistaken in announcing an imminent advent of the Kingdom. Gutiérrez describes this as “a difficult and controversial exegetical point”. Gutiérrez’s focus is not necessarily to resolve the point. He does not advert to the Church’s tradition of interpretation regarding the intermingled eschatological Gospel passages concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of time (he refers to twentieth century exegete Rudolf Schnackenburg instead). Nor does he refer to doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum, which would preclude a conclusion that Christ could be wrong about the imminence of the Kingdom. An eschatological reading of Christ in Gutiérrez is not determined by dogmatic understanding of Christ.

Rather, Gutiérrez’s Christological concern is to draw out the universal, political implications of Jesus’ eschatological attitude. According to Gutiérrez, Jesus’s work possesses a “universality and totality” affecting the core of political behaviour, which thereby receives its true character. Jesus, in liberating humanity from sin, attacks the source of “misery and social injustice”.

263 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 133.
264 In the endnotes, Gutiérrez discusses Rudolf Schnackenburg’s conclusion that the puzzles raised by biblical passages predicting an imminent end, such as Mt 10:23, Mk 9:1 and 13:30, may not be resolvable and that the best attitude may be that of the Church, “namely, to nourish a living eschatological hope from the urgent prophetic preaching of Jesus without drawing false conclusions about that prophecy from individual passages”: Theology of Liberation, 240n100, quoting God’s Rule and Kingdom, 212. The Navarre Bible: The Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, Reader’s Edition, second ed., (Dublin/Princeton, NJ: Four Courts Press/Scepter Publishers: 2008), 186-187 quotes as an example of the tradition, St John Chrysostom’s Hom. on St Matthew, 76 on Mt 24:32-35: “the Lord was speaking not only of the generation then living, but also of the generation of the believers; for he knows that a generation is distinguished not only by time but also by its mode of religious worship and practice: this is what the Psalmist means when he says that ‘such is the generation of those who seek him’ (Ps 24:6)”. The destruction of Jerusalem, a symbol of the end, is understood to be what occurred in the generation of Christ.
265 The question of the human knowledge of Christ is vexed. As noted above, however, the International Theological Commission expressed the view that “When he preaches the Kingdom of God, Christ is not simply announcing the imminence of a great eschatological change[,] he is, first of all, calling mankind to enter the Kingdom”: “The Consciousness of Christ Concerning Himself and His Mission,” 322.
266 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 134.
267 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 134.
For Jesus, the liberation of the Jewish people was only one aspect of a universal permanent revolution. Far from showing no interest in this liberation, Jesus rather placed it on a deeper level, with far-reaching consequences.\textsuperscript{268}

Although Gutiérrez is correct to portray redemption as directed at sin, he presents the significance of Christ in terms of his implications for liberation in subsequent history, contrary to Cullman’s ‘eschatological radicalism’. Jesus began a ‘universal permanent revolution’, language that evokes a Marxist view of history as being propelled towards a liberated future.

Gutiérrez also paints a picture of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God in which its political implications are at its heart. A dialectical, inner-historical conception of hope is thereby wedded to a low Christology. He opposes a ‘spiritualist’ understanding of the redemption in favour of a materialist one (see further 1.5).\textsuperscript{269}

The Gospel message, in being directed to the relationship between God and among people, is socially transformative. Gutiérrez argues that the Gospel message is subversive and that the Kingdom needs to be understood in political, material terms. The Gospel adopts and gives full meaning to Israel’s hope for a Kingdom in which domination is ended. The Kingdom is an advocate for humanity that opposes political powers. Israel’s hope is understood as calling for a ‘new creation’ and the “unceasing search for a new kind of humanity in a qualitatively different society”.\textsuperscript{270}

Thus, a liberationist reading of the Kingdom, resting on a revolutionary reading of Christ, supports a dialectical view of hope and history.

Moreover, although Gutiérrez in line with traditional soteriology places the elimination of sin at the centre of his conception of liberation, this elimination is understood in light of the consequences it has for society within history. Hope in the realisation of communion among God and persons is seemingly effected through the medium of politics. Eschatological expectation regarding the transformation of humanity and the new heaven and earth are closely linked to the striving for a more just society. Gutiérrez distinguishes between the Kingdom and the establishment of such a society, but argues that the former is not indifferent to the latter. The

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{268} Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 134.
  \item \textsuperscript{269} C.f. Müller, “Liberation Theology in Context,” 72.
  \item \textsuperscript{270} Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 134.
\end{itemize}
Kingdom’s announcement “reveals to society itself aspiration for a just society”, which generates new avenues of pursuit of this aspiration. The revelation of the Kingdom in Jesus is interpreted in historico-social terms and as the motivator of political action.

Revelation, at least in this context, is for Gutiérrez not directed so much to the Church as to society as such, and what it reveals is salvation or liberation in the form of the promise of a better society. For Gutiérrez, a society characterised by “fellowship and justice” is an embodiment or bringing about of the Kingdom. Hope is tied up with an interpretation of the Gospel as instigating political action: “to preach the universal love of the Father is inevitably to go against all injustice, privilege, oppression, or narrow nationalism”. Christ’s coming is perceived through a low Christological lens as the instigation of inner-historical change, the basis, therefore, of hope.

Gutiérrez shares the Concilium penchant for emphasising the historicity and humanity of Jesus. Within the context of liberation theology’s victimological shift, in which Christ is seen as liberator, an ‘ascending Christology’ in Gutiérrez begins with the inner-historical implications of Jesus’s life and preaching. He is interpreted through political lens, as the beginning of an ongoing revolution against historical injustice and towards the promises of utopian society. The liberation he brings involves not just freedom from sin but material progress. His low Christology thus sits with a dialectical conception of history at the foundations of his views on hope and history.

1.3.5 Conclusion

How Jesus is viewed is a chief determinant of how the hope-history relationship is perceived. Resting on the methodology of modern, historical biblical criticism unmoored from the high Christology of the tradition, the low Christology of Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez supports a political, inner-conception of hope.

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272 Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 135. C.f. Ratzinger’s notion of the believing subject that is the Church: see e.g. Milestones, 107-108.
Resulting from the adoption of an historical approach to Jesus is a low Christology, which pays scant heed to Christ’s divinity and eternity. It emphasises the political and intra-worldly implications of Jesus’s ministry.

The *Concilium* authors do not necessarily jettison the high Christology of the Church’s tradition. The dominance of their adoption of a low Christology has, however, implications for their understanding of content of hope and the significance of history, and reveals a key contrast with Pieper and Ratzinger’s conception of hope and history.274 If Jesus is to be understood primarily under the aspect of eschatology, then the mainstream of the Christian tradition has been wrong to focus on the ‘last things’ as the real promise wrought by Christ’s coming. A low Christology, on the other hand, leads to a focus on praxis as the content of Christian hope. Christ is especially identified with the poor, with the implication that he instigated a historical movement to liberate the oppressed. A political Christology complements therefore a view of history’s immanent progress. A *Concilium* Christology is joined to a dialectical view of history, with overtones of Joachim, Hegel and Marx.

1.4 An Immanent Theology of Grace

Another principal building block of the *Concilium* position on the relationship between hope and history is the Rahnerian theology of grace, which informs the inner-historical conception of hope of that position.275 Rahner presented one of the three main perspectives on the nature-grace relationship in the twentieth century (Introduction). He considers the human person to possess a ‘supernatural existential’, an already-given human transcendental orientation to God. Adoption of the ‘supernatural existential’ can tend to minimise, however, the novelty of Christ and his salvific work in relation to human nature. An approbation of human existence in these terms also lays the foundations for an affirmation of secular reality, a tendency present in the *Concilium* authors.

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274 Ratzinger even says that despite being “naïve” in presenting his political theology, Metz “Certainly viewed the essentials correctly”: Ratzinger, *Last Testament*, 149. E.g. Metz describes the eschatological reality of appearing “before the end-time tribunal of Christ himself”, but goes on to say that one’s justification before this tribunal will be a praxis: *Faith in History and Society*, 28.

275 For further on Rahner’s influence on political and liberation theology, see Milbank, *Beyond Secular Reason*, 206-256.
This and the following section, which are closely related, will describe a Rahnerian theology of grace and how it grounds an integrated view of redemption, which accompanies the views of hope and history described in 1.2. It will briefly describe Rahner’s theology of grace and how that theology relates to the Concilium authors’ affirmation of secularisation and their tendency to maximise human agency at the expense of the direct mediation of the Church. It will then turn, in 1.5, to a description of the integrated view of redemption present in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez in which natural and earthly goods are conflated with eschatological ends. Nature and grace tend to collapse into each other, supporting the inner-historical definitions of hope described in 1.2.3. The objects of hope become historicised and the subject of human planning and action.

1.4.1 Rahner’s Theology of Grace Briefly Described

The purpose of discussing Rahner, who is recognised as a highly sophisticated and intentionally ecclesial theologian, is not to make a case one way or another concerning the validity of Rahner’s theology of grace. A danger always exists with highly prolific and dense thinkers that their work is cherry-picked, misunderstood or misappropriated. Rather, it is to highlight certain parallels that exist between Rahner’s work and certain aspects of the work of Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez. Thus, its focus remains not so much on Rahner himself but on the way in which his views are echoed and applied in the Concilium authors and how therefore a Rahnerian theology of grace, at least as interpreted or adopted, is at the foundations of the Concilium position on hope and history. Arguably, the transcendent basis of Rahner’s theology and his supernatural existential lend themselves to the adoption of an anthropocentric starting point in theology, and the heightening of the importance of universal philosophy (a tendency that Rahner’s method itself exhibits). They may also lead to an immanentist reading of the nature-grace relationship, in which the supernatural becomes, even if contrary to Rahner’s design, naturalised and

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276 This is not the place for a detailed description of Rahner’s theology of grace or his supernatural existential, which can be found *inter alia* in the sources cited herein and in 4.2.2.

277 See Kerr, *Twentieth Century Theologians*, 93-94 for a description of the cases in brief terms for and against Rahner. Against the criticism of Balthasar and Marshall, namely that Rahner promotes an anthropocentrism at the expense of emphasising the novelty of Christ, Kerr himself suggests Rahner is somewhat of an “ecclesial theologian”. It is however possible to intend to be an ecclesial theologian while undermining ecclesial theology from within, even if unintentionally.
anonymised. The orders of nature and grace, and the incarnational and eschatological, become insufficiently differentiated in the *Concilium* perspective. Such an anthropocentric shift may tend to lead to an over-emphasis on the human capacity to contribute to redemptive liberation, or the notion that the achievement of earthly goals contributes to and is part of that liberation.

According to several commentators Rahner’s theology of grace is grounded in anthropology. He “commenc[es], in the modern mode, with theological anthropology”.278 His theology begins from “our shared human experience”.279 He starts “from below”, that is, “with something universal for every person, inscribed into the *a priori* structure of knowledge”.280 Rahner’s strategy is to justify Christian belief by showing first the credibility and possibility of belief in general. Belief shorn of any specific reference to Christian revelation is so justified “by an appeal to general criteria of religious and moral meaningfulness”.281 Rahner’s approach can be described therefore as bringing Christian doctrine “before the bar of subjective experience for adjudication, explanation, and evaluation”.282 It seeks consequently to ‘correlate’ Christianity to a universal and prior “religious experience”.283 Thus, the Christian religion is tethered or matched to the prevailing philosophy, inverting the relationship between faith and reason. Universal philosophy becomes the determinant of religion (see further 5.5.2).284

In Rahner, the ‘general criteria of religious and moral meaningfulness’ are found in the Kantian, transcendental method, which he adopts and develops. His theology is

284 C.f. Barron, “Reflection on Christ,” 15: “I was so accustomed to doing ‘epic’ theology – controlling revelation from the standpoint of some higher interpretive vantage point”.

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indebted to the philosophy of Kant, Heidegger and Joseph Maréchal. According to Oakes, Rahner answers Kant’s questions regarding what a priori structure of the human mind is necessary to enable knowledge of the categorical, by arguing that the human mind, in its knowledge of “any particular thing[,]… implicitly operates within a horizon of being whose ultimate determinant is God”.\textsuperscript{285} Rahner uses the concept of Vorgriff to denote “an active longing for God that is present in the human pre-apprehension (Vorgriff) of everything”.\textsuperscript{286} The transcendental a priori present in each act of knowing contains an implicit longing for God’s infinite being.\textsuperscript{287}

While Rahner recognises the importance of the revelation of Christ, arguably it takes on a different significance under a Kantian, transcendental aspect. The transcendental horizon in which the human person operates, according to the philosophy of religion that is universal and “transhistorical”, gives him an “aural capacity to recognize revelation”.\textsuperscript{288} Because the human person has the capacity, religion “is basically independent of any historical event… [and is] available to everyone, at every moment of one’s existence in history”.\textsuperscript{289} Historical revelation is thus relativised in import. It “is not a miraculous bursting through of God’s word into history”.\textsuperscript{290} Rather, revelation ‘merely’ is the “realisation” or affirmation “in concrete terms of an already unnamed but implicit faith”.\textsuperscript{291} It is viewed as confirming the anterior supernatural existential, and its ordination to God and his communication of love, that is, universal religious experience. Thus, the metaphysical justification for adhering to the historical revelation of Christ is grounded not in the particular

\textsuperscript{285} Oakes, \textit{Infinity Dwindled to Infancy}, 351; Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”. Consistent with Kant’s rejection of metaphysical knowledge of God, Thomas Sheehan notes that Rahner’s transcendental method does not offer a proof of the conceptual knowledge of God: it shows rather “that we have no grasp of God at all”: “Rahner’s transcendental project” in \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner}, eds. Declan Marmion and Mary E Hines (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 37; see also Frederick Copleston, \textit{A History of Philosophy, Volume 6: The Enlightenment, Voltaire to Kant} (London/New York: Continuum, 2003), 301.
\textsuperscript{286} Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.
\textsuperscript{287} As O’Shea says, the “vorgriff is an a priori structure within the knowing subject, providing an openness to the transcendental dimension”: “Nature and Grace, Revelation and Catholic Education,” 162.
\textsuperscript{288} Oakes, \textit{Infinity Dwindled to Infancy}, 351.
\textsuperscript{289} Oakes, \textit{Infinity Dwindled to Infancy}, 351 quoting Rahner, \textit{Hearer of the Word}, 7 (first emphasis is Oakes’, the second is the author’s).
revelation of Christ itself but the human person’s capacity to hear it in the first place. Religion becomes tied to a particular anthropology, which is its ruling guide.  

For Rahner, the supernatural existential is universal and affects the daily, secular and historical existence of the person. The supernatural existential is itself the “abiding existential” of the “real man”, which consists in an “ordination to the Trinity”. In arguing that the human person is the “subject [of]… the event of God’s self-communication”, Rahner argues that the supernatural existential is an “existential of every person” and his “concrete existence”; antecedent to all “freedom”, “self-understanding” or “experience” is the supernatural existential as an “existential of their concrete existence”. It “influence[s]” the human person’s life, with its “concrete yearning for eternal Truth and pure and infinite Love”. It affects thus every person in his real life, “at least in the mode of offer” of a “fulfillment essentially transcending the natural”. Although the offer may be rejected, “every person [as such] must be understood as the event of the supernatural self-communication of God”. Fulfilment is offered in the very fact of the human person’s existence, in itself.

Rahner apparently holds that the human person, in his concrete existential situation, is necessarily supernatural (if not graced). The human person lives in a state of “supernaturally elevated transcendentality”. He is himself “God’s self-communication as an offer” of God’s love. So entwined is “God’s self-communication in grace” with the “basic structures of human transcendence” that it is difficult to abstract that grace from those structures. The “[t]ranscendental experience” of the human person includes a “modality of grace” and “is operative in

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298 A phrase from a sub-heading in Rahner’s *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 129: “Man’s Supernaturally Elevated Transcendentality”.
Although Rahner considers the concept of pure nature to “necessary and objectively justified” (4.2.2), it is impossible to observe or know the concept of nature “separated from its supernatural existential”.\(^\text{302}\) The supernatural existential is fundamental to the existence of the human person as he has been created, who is ‘always-already’ transcendentally elevated.

Implicitly present, perhaps, in Rahner’s conception of the anteriorly elevated transcendentality of the human person is a view that justification or salvation can be achieved immanently, or at least the supernatural is present in human existence as such, without necessary reference to the particular grace of Christ. The human subject contains “an infinity” such that “possession of God” is not “outside...the infinite possibility of transcendence”.\(^\text{303}\) Rahner insists on the gratuity of the “absolute self-communication” of God in the supernatural existential. However, dependent on Kant’s transcendentalism, he argues that the human person finds full realisation in the acceptance of the offer of God as he himself already is.\(^\text{304}\) Fulfilment of the ordination to God is the human person’s acceptance of himself as the “divine self-communication”.\(^\text{305}\) Consequently, realisation is the human subject’s acceptance of himself, because such amounts to acceptance of God, independent of any specific historical revelation. We are redeemed through the acceptance of ourselves as we are, because we are God’s Self-communication.

The secular becomes the expression of the transcendent. The human person’s own experience of himself – and experience in this context is not limited to specifically religious activities – reveals himself to be “the subject of unlimited transcendence”.\(^\text{306}\) In turn, the human person is revealed to be “God’s absolute and radical self-communication”.\(^\text{307}\) Because such implicit knowledge of God’s ‘self-communication’ flows from experience of the human person qua human person, it is

\(^{305}\) Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 129. The view that the person is the ‘divine self-communication’ proceeds on the basis that the human person as he is in concrete existence is “the event of a supernatural self-communication of God”: Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 127 (emphasis added).
not explicitly religious or Christian. Rahner acknowledges that, because each person experiences this transcendence anterior to any specific religious conduct, it can come in non-religious form and can in fact be so “unthematic” as to occur “in our secular dealings”. As ‘every person … is the event of the supernatural self-communication of God’ (quoted above), the person’s experience of himself is necessarily and ‘anonymously’ religious, whatever the context.

That human existence is said to contain within itself the offer of supernatural fulfilment is arguably to immanentise the operation of grace and relativise the importance of eschatological fulfilment. Although Rahner acknowledges an eschatological tension between “God’s self-communication” in the human person as such and the “not yet” of the beatific vision, “in grace the spirit moves within its goal (because of God’s self-communication) towards its goal (the beatific vision)”. Human existence in itself is informed ‘always-already’ by the supernatural (“if not of grace”). As Garver notes, the natural potency for the supernatural existential is “one already laced with the traces of actual grace”. What “transforms human being” is not revelation but the anterior supernatural experience of God. Transformation does not come at the hands of the external grace announced by revelation. Elevation of nature has always already occurred within an immanent framework.

The revelation of supernatural fulfilment in the grace of Christ is a confirmation of what is existential to the human person. Grace in Rahner arguably is ‘naturalised’, contrary to his intentions, or at least severed from specifically Christian revelation (c.f. 4.2.2). It, or at least the supernatural, is brought down to the human existential level (4.3). Grace, although gratuitous, is not seen in a paradoxical paradigm as it would be according to the view of de Lubac (4), by which it extends the human person beyond himself. Instead, the revelation of Christianity enables the person

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311 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.  
313 Ratzinger argues that, although Rahner recognises the principle “of ec-stasy [Ek-stase], of self-transcendence”, which refers to the human person coming out from himself, he does not give sufficient attention to it: Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 169 (discussed in 5.5.2).
“to recognize his own experience in it”.

The human person’s “existentiell decision” affirms, after the fact, the person’s “original, transcendental experience”. Rather than drawing him out of himself, revelation (and the grace it brings) confirms the anterior existential situation of the human person.

According to a Rahnerian theology of grace, revelation and the particular grace it augurs can thus be seen to be extrinsic and not intrinsic to human fulfilment. The acceptance of the supernatural call, which is an existential, does not require anything other than the human person accepting himself as he is, as God’s self-communication. Ironically, as Garver points out, Rahner comes close to creating another two-tiered system, this time with a “transcendental philosophy rather than neo-scholastic metaphysics”. Most crucially, the second tier, representing the grace mediated specifically through the visible Church, becomes less relevant. Garver argues that the supernatural existential is “scarcely distinguishable” from the Vorgriff natural to the human person. Grace becomes reduced to the fulfilment of “natural expectations”. To put it in language closer to Rahner, the human person existentially has the offer of God’s love built into his very existence, as he is constituted. Christ and the historical-eschatological events of the Paschal Mystery (3.3), which are the bases of the sanctifying grace that revelation promises, would “remain extrinsic to us” according to a Rahnerian theology of grace. At least, they tend to be seen as the mere confirmation of what is latent to the transcendental character of human existence as such. Thus, instead of fulfilling the natural desire for the supernatural (4), the events of Christ’s “life, death and resurrection” are incidental to our fulfilment. A caricature with a grain of truth may be to say that a Rahnerian theology of grace makes Christ in his novelty and particularity less necessary for justification than a view that emphasises that novelty and particularity.

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316 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”; c.f. Milbank, Suspended Middle, 71.
317 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.
318 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.
319 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.
320 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”. Garver quotes Balthasar’s “caricature” of Rahner that the Resurrection of Christ would be met with the comment that this is what “I have actually been expecting all along”.
Thus, by virtue of the ‘supernatural existential’, the human person in his ‘existential state’ (the ‘anonymous Christian’) in some way is already supernaturally elevated, simply as a human person and without necessary reference to the novel action of the unique Jesus of Nazareth. According to Reno’s appraisal of Rahner’s account of nature and grace, a person is given “from the very outset… an intrinsic, anticipatory grace”.\(^{321}\) To be sure, such a grace is supernatural and does not conceptually belong to human nature as such. Nevertheless, it is a “supernatural existential” embedded in the experience of being human as such prior to and independent of any specific revelation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ.\(^{322}\) The human being “always already experiences the infinite horizon of being”.\(^{323}\) Rahner argues that nature and grace are not “two phases in the life of the individual that follow each other in time”.\(^{324}\) In opposition to extrinsicism, nature and grace in a sense co-mingle in the existence of the human person. From this flows an immanent understanding of grace. Conceptually, the ‘natural’ is not understood shorn of grace, but is “radically graced”.\(^{325}\) Rosenthal suggests therefore that a Rahnerian conception of the supernatural has the character of “immanence”, according to which “human nature as such is always in a condition of being supernaturally elevated” and “(man) is already redeemed” prior to “justification by grace”.\(^{326}\) On this view, the grace of redemption is immanent to human experience itself. Grace is operative within a human framework because it is a given of earthly existence. It does not depend on the novel action of God or his irruption into human history.

\(^{322}\) Reno, “Rahner the Restorationist,” 48.
\(^{323}\) Reno, “Rahner the Restorationist,” 47.
1.4.2 John Milbank on the Apparent Approbation of the Secular and Contemporary Notions of Liberation in the Concilium Perspective

True or not to Rahner’s intentions, connected to a Rahnerian trajectory in fundamental theology is a Concilium affirmation of secularism, which minimises reference to God and maximises human agency. If human existence in itself contains the possibility of its own redemptive justification, it is a short step to perceiving an inherent “harmony” between “religious and secular” tendencies.\(^{327}\) Milbank suggests the Rahnerian, “German version” of the nature-grace relationship, which he (in his own words) “crudely” and “misleadingly” summarises as “naturalising the supernatural”, tends “in the direction of a mediating theology, a universal humanism, a rapprochement with the Enlightenment and an autonomous secular order”\(^{328}\). In contrast to the Frenchman, de Lubac’s argument that humanism needs to be ‘converted’ (5.4.5), on this view a Rahnerian theology of grace approbates ‘a universal humanism’ and a rationality that is unashamedly secular. It seeks to ‘correlate’ faith to the lineaments of secular culture. A Rahnerian understanding of nature and grace tends therefore to result in a “‘baptism’ of secularisation”\(^{329}\).

Milbank argues that the major political and liberation theologians have at the foundations of their theology the Rahnerian approach to nature and grace. Taking:

\[\text{[the Rahnerian] option in fundamental theology…ensures that their theology of the political realm remains trapped within the terms of ‘secular reason’ and its unwarranted foundationalist presuppositions.}\(^{330}\)

Political and liberation theology posit an “autonomous [secular] sphere” which is understood in terms of “pre-theological sociology or Marxist social theory” and not by reference to theology\(^{331}\). A secular idiom in the form especially of the Marxism of

\(^{327}\) Reno, “Rahner the Restorationist,” 48.
\(^{328}\) Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 207. Rowland, Catholic Theology, 169 discussing Milbank’s criticism of liberation theology in Beyond Secular Reason.
\(^{330}\) Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 207.
\(^{331}\) Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 208.
the Frankfurt School becomes the ruling guide for theology. The secular is separated from specific Christian doctrine.

The liberation theology of Gutiérrez provides a particular example of the tendency of theologies influenced by Rahner to adopt prevailing so-called universal philosophy as the guiding norm for understanding Christianity’s content. Ratzinger notes the “unexpected conversion of [Rahner’s] transcendental deduction into Marx-inspired theologies in the generation after Rahner”. A “popularization” of Rahner shows Christianity to be “interchangeable with the universal knowledge of mankind as a whole”. Although not Rahner’s intent, Ratzinger detects a “certain logic” in this reading of Rahner. The attempt by Rahner to justify Christianity by reference to transcendental philosophy morphs in Gutiérrez into the utilisation of Marxism as a “science” and “real moral postulate of mankind”. Although Rahner cannot be held responsible for Gutiérrez’s adoption of Marxism, Rahner’s epistemological decision to ground Christianity in an anterior universal philosophy is paralleled in the favourable place of Marxism in Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez’s theology of liberation, which we have seen privileges praxis, is an example of a Rahnerian-influenced theology’s use of a ‘universal humanism’.

Approbation of the secular as such follows from the tendency of a Rahnerian theology of grace to ‘naturalise the supernatural’. The secular sphere is “already a grace-imbued sphere” in these theologies because of the transcendental nature of the person. Despite political theology and liberation theology’s concern with the social and disaffection with individualism, the former is nevertheless treated in terms of Rahner’s (individually-grounded) “transcendentalism”. The transcendental orientation of the human person is applied to the social, which is peopled by individuals with a “transcending impulse” or is treated as such as the “site of transience”. The social and the political are understood as being the “anonymous site(s) of divine saving action” or are the media through which

332 Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 208, 244.
333 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 168.
334 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 168.
335 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 168.
336 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 168.
337 Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 208.
338 Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 208.
339 Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 208, 232.
supernaturally-elevated human persons operate.\textsuperscript{340} The social and political take on subsequent significance.

An immanently framed view of salvation and liberation is accordingly developed. Milbank explains that political and liberation theology splits salvation into “an ineffable, transcendental, ‘religious’ aspect” that is only anonymously Christian, and a “purely secular” “social aspect”.\textsuperscript{341} In both its individual and social aspects, liberation is understood in Kantian, liberal transcendental terms. The social is perceived either as the site where the individual’s transcendental freedom is expanded or as itself a “process of ‘liberation’”, which involves the “[gradual removal] of restrictions upon the human spirit”.\textsuperscript{342} A process of emancipation in terms of the latter is “purely human”, according to which all “human needs … [can] be immanently met”.\textsuperscript{343} Liberation is thus conceptualised, even in the case of Marxism, as the maximisation of human freedom, understood in a voluntarist sense as the removal of impediments on the will. The removal of such obstacles can be achieved immanently through human action. Thus, when Metz and Gutiérrez (and, it can be added, Schillebeeckx) speak of liberation (or emancipation) as an impulse for which Christians are to work, they are incorporating notions of freedom developed in liberal and Marxist philosophy. Salvation’s “content … is decided at the level of a Kantian principle of practical reason” and, it can be added, is mediated through Marxist means.\textsuperscript{344} Salvific liberation becomes devoid of specifically Christian content.\textsuperscript{345} Moreover, they can be achieved immanently as the working out of the transcendental impulse for freedom, which is ‘always-already’ embedded in human nature.

As a result, nature and grace tend to be conflated. Whereas in Pieper and Ratzinger, the natural and historical is in need of transformation and points ‘beyond itself’ (4 and 5), in Rahnerian-inflected theologies of hope, the secular is ‘already’ ‘imbued’ with grace. Application of a Rahnerian transcendental theology of grace to the social underpins in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez an approbation of the secular as only

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{340} Milbank, \textit{Beyond Secular Reason}, 232.
\item \textsuperscript{341} Milbank, \textit{Beyond Secular Reason}, 244.
\item \textsuperscript{342} Milbank, \textit{Beyond Secular Reason}, 232.
\item \textsuperscript{343} Milbank, \textit{Beyond Secular Reason}, 232.
\item \textsuperscript{344} Milbank, \textit{Beyond Secular Reason}, 232.
\item \textsuperscript{345} Milbank, \textit{Beyond Secular Reason}, 232.
\end{itemize}
anonymously Christian. In contrast to Ratzinger’s view that the natural is the potential recipient of grace, which involves in some senses an overcoming of nature (5), the natural, secular and political become paramount in the theologies of hope, as we have seen. Faith and politics become mingled. In a strange reprisal of extrinsicism, the natural is devoid of reference to God.

1.4.3 Approbation of Secularisation as Maximising Human Agency in the Directing of Human History

The Concilium authors approve consequently secularisation. Consistent with Hegelian-Marxist epistemology (1.2.1), they place primacy on human activity as governing the world, directing history and contributing to liberation. Rahner, for example, approves secularisation as the assumption by humanity of directing “(the world’s) evolutionary development”, which means “that God no longer needs to be involved to maintain the world’s stability”. Schillebeeckx likewise identifies secularisation and the growth of human self-understanding, which occurs in history, “with the growth of humanity itself”. Fiorenza notes that the determinative context for Metz’s political theology was contemporary secularisation and the privatisation of faith, whereas for liberation theology it was oppression and injustice in Latin America. Both the early Metz and Gutiérrez welcomed the separation of action and knowledge from religion, such that “ethical and political norms can now be deduced etsi Deus non dare tur”. Generally speaking, the Concilium school approves secularisation as the process whereby humanity takes primary responsibility for the direction of history.

Political theology particularly appreciates secularisation’s value. The early Metz argues that the secular world and its history need to be confirmed in itself: Christian responsibility begins with “the world in its permanent and growing worldliness”. In a phrase redolent of Hegel, Metz suggests that “the world determines itself” and

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348 Fiorenza, “Political Theology and Liberation Theology,” 5.
349 Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 244. See also 232.
“sets itself its own goals, which emerge automatically from within itself” (necessarily without any reference to theology from ‘above’ and ‘outside’ creation). Acknowledging (and implicitly agreeing) that such a process is inherent to Christianity itself, Metz quotes Rahner’s comment that the human person now “creates the world himself”. According to Metz, he has become “homo creator, or, to put it more carefully, homo manipulator”, the form of which is “technological hominization and manipulation of the world”. The world and humanity’s future is thus increasingly subject to “rationalized planning”, belonging to the realm of politics. He observes that “the world …has fallen more and more into our hands and projections”. The use of the phrase homo creator, even if qualified, is revealing. The human person has taken on for himself the direction of secular history that has its own immanent goals, which in Metz’s scheme, is taken up into salvation history (see 1.5).

An analogous affirmation of secularisation is present in liberation theology. In Müller’s defence of liberation theology, he argues that history itself is a “transforming process”. Although recognising that this liberative process is a “history of liberation by God”, he echoes Metz in suggesting that “God’s liberating action” allows “the poor, oppressed and suffering” to become “personal subjects” and active co-operators and participants in God’s liberating process. Significantly, he argues that it is the action of these ‘personal subjects’ that “drive[s] history forward to the goal of fully realized freedom”. In Gutiérrez’s words, humanity has “a liberating and protagonistic role”. The Church does not simply “[administer]
salvation” but is “actively the sacrament of God’s kingdom”. Significant agency for the future of the world and liberation of humanity is on the view of these theologians arrogated to humanity.

1.4.4 A Rahnerian Theology of Grace and a Secular View of the Hope

Rahner’s ‘anonymous Christianity’ can arguably lead to an immanentist understanding of the hope-history relationship. The profane and the secular tend to be collapsed into one another, and religious content and expectation is matched to a predetermined philosophy. In liberation theology and to a degree in Schillebeeckx and Metz, the supposedly universal philosophy of Marx is adopted as the paradigm by which to understand the movement and content of hope. The realisation of earthly projects becomes part of the realisation of eschatological hope (1.5.3).

The tendency to separate Christ and hope is evident in the work of Thomas Sheehan, a favourable interpreter of Rahner. He teases out some of the implications of Rahner’s transcendental method. He suggests that “Rahner…is telling us: Give up trying to transcend yourself”.

He warns against a “religion”, “faith”, “church [sic] or theology… that would alienate” the individual from his “this-worldly” self. Instead, we are to remain content within the particular “world” in which we find ourselves, that is the human community. Explicitly, the human community in which we should remain “does not demand anything of you that lies beyond nature” (in contrast to a Lubacian view of the supernatural). Rather, it demands of the individual to “follow [his] own light” and “tend the human fire lest it burn low”. The person is then to “[l]ive out [his] own personal and social becoming”. Signally, in so doing, we “will find a hope that is already blessed with fulfilment”,

See further 5.5.2 on Ratzinger’s critique of Rahner, which the author’s analysis echoes.
Sheehan, “Rahner’s transcendental project,” 41.
Sheehan, “Rahner’s transcendental project,” 41.
Sheehan, “Rahner’s transcendental project,” 41.
Sheehan, “Rahner’s transcendental project,” 41.
Sheehan, “Rahner’s transcendental project,” 41.
Sheehan, “Rahner’s transcendental project,” 41.
even if such a path is not religious or apparently atheist.\textsuperscript{368} Such a path contains having “already arrived at the goal”.\textsuperscript{369}

Sheehan’s passage is telling. It reveals implications attaching to a Rahnerian theology, whether fair to Rahner’s intentions or not. A Rahner scholar presents here a picture of “Rahner’s transcendental project” (the title of the essay) in unashamedly secular terms, which follows on from Rahner’s own anthropological, transcendental framework. Very rapidly it becomes an affirmation of ourselves as we are, to the extent that forms of religion, including perhaps Christianity, can be seen to be useless or antithetical to human flourishing and actualisation. Importantly it presents a vision of hope as containing already its own fulfilment.

If Rahner’s theology of grace might arguably tend to immanentize the operation of the supernatural, in certain hands, it can tend to secularise hope and separate it from reference to Christ, understood Chalcedonian terms (3). If revelation is extrinsic to human fulfilment, which is instead the acceptance of the self as it is, hope is not directed to the communication of the fruits of Christ’s life, in which the human person is drawn out of himself to participate mystically in Christ’s Paschal Mystery. As we have seen, in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez hope tends to become immanentised and dependent upon the realisation of what we can do for ourselves. A Hegelian-Marxist dialectic in which the expectations of praxis constitute what is hoped for, takes the place of a Christo-centric view of hope. Such a view of hope meshes with a Rahnerian theology of grace.

\subsection*{1.4.5 Conclusion}

A transcendental or Rahnerian understanding of the supernatural manifests itself in the immanentist tendency of the theologies of futurity to ‘baptise’ secularism and maximise human agency. The maximisation of human agency in directing history and a view of hope in a secular idiom, depends on and relates to, even in bastardised form, Rahner’s view of the person as supernaturally-elevated. In his theology, the human person in his secular existence becomes the site of redemption. From this, it is

\textsuperscript{368} Sheehan, “Rahner’s transcendental project,” 41.  
\textsuperscript{369} Sheehan, “Rahner’s transcendental project,” 41.
a short step to viewing redemption in immanent terms according to non-Christian philosophy. A Rahnerian theology of grace tends to support a view of hope, therefore, in which humanity is the directing agent and in which the inner-historical future is significant.

1.5 An Immanent Soteriology

A *Concilium* affirmation of secularisation leads to an immanent soteriology in which redemption is seen to include the realisation of earthly progress. Opposition to extrinsicism and a tendency to conflate nature and grace makes explicable Schillebeeckx, Metz’s and Gutiérrez’s focus on, and optimism regarding, the historical future. Paralleling the general thrust of Rahner’s concept of the ‘supernatural existential’, a generally incarnational and anthropological attitude in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez emphasises the unity of the secular and the sacred, and world and salvation history. It leads to a soteriological emphasis on inner-historical activity. An inner-historical conception of hope, in which the attainment of earthly goals and the building up of the inner-historical future are set as objects of hope, matches such an immanent soteriology. An integrated view of the nature-grace relationship and soteriology follows, in which salvation history is coextensive with world history. As world history develops, so does the salvation of humanity advance. A natural complement to a Hegelian dialectic of history, in which history immanently proceeds to its *telos*, is thus present in the *Concilium* position on hope and history. An immanent conception of grace, to a degree at least, places salvation, and hope as oriented to salvation, within an immanent framework. Hope is then directed to the realisation of immanent ends. The notion that world history (as a history of the human person’s transcendentality) is coterminous with salvation history (as the working out of that transcendentality) forms the groundwork for the development of an immanentist soteriology and integrated view of liberation in Rahner’s followers.

A view that humanity can accelerate or contribute to such liberation itself depends on one of the aspects of Rahner’s thought, which is central to political theology and liberation theology, namely the view of the coextensive relationship between
salvation and world histories. The tendency to collapse the distinction between the profane and redemptive can lead to a version of hope that emphasises the immanent at the expense of the transcendent. It can lead to an immanentist soteriology that downplays the novelty of Christ and promotes an idealist, Hegelian view of freedom. A Rahnerian tendency to conflate the orders of nature and grace (also 4.2.2) is visible in the corresponding tendency to collapse of the distinction between world or profane history and salvation history. Rahner argues that there is “a single meaning and a single dynamism running through the whole history of mankind”. Using his transcendental anthropology as the basis for his position on the meaning of history, he suggests that “history is ultimately the history of transcendentality itself”, that is, “man’s transcendentality”. Consequently, the supernatural existential “is at once the single history of both salvation and revelation”. Although recognising that salvation history and the “whole history of the human race” are not “identical” because of the reality of sin and “rejection of God”, Rahner nevertheless argues that these are “coextensive” and “coexistent”. A singular understanding of history is thus present in Rahner.

Rahner’s idea of the coextensive nature of human and salvation history depends on his transcendental conception of the human person. An important component of a Rahnerian conception of the supernatural is the notion that world history is itself the history of revelation because the human as he is in himself contains the seeds of his own fulfilment. According to Rahner, the “history of the world” is “the history of salvation” because it contains God’s communication of himself to the freedom of the human person. Because the human person in his existence as such possesses the supernatural existential, in which God communicates and offers himself to the person, all of human history is necessarily the history of this salvation. Revelation is likewise not confined to the record of revelation contained in the Old and New

370 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 169-170.
373 Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith, 141.
374 Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith, 142.
Testaments but comprehends “God’s self-communication”.

World history and the history of God’s salvation of humanity, although not one and the same thing, are coterminous because the human person ‘always already’ has the supernatural existential. The history of humanity is ipso facto the history of salvation, supporting a view of hope of at least partially directed to the realisation of earthly goals. A view of the coextensivity of world and salvation history is present in the Concilium authors. This section is concerned with setting out the traces of Rahner in this regard in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez, whose immanent soteriology supports an inner-historical conception of hope. An inner-historical conception of hope tends to blur the distinction between history and eschatology, conflate nature and grace and integrate earthly liberation and supernatural redemption.

1.5.1 Schillebeeckx’s Soteriology

A tendency to place soteriology within an immanent framework, which thereby serves inner-historical ends, is present in Schillebeeckx. In contrast to the ‘eschatological attitude’ of Ratzinger (5.5), a dominant theme in Schillebeeckx is what Minch calls the “incarnational principle”. Schillebeeckx’s focus on the ‘incarnational principle’ and a rejection of an extrinsic reading of the nature-grace relationship complements an integrated view of liberation. The world’s history and salvation history are seen to be intermingled. Efforts to ‘humanise’ the world take precedence over a patient watchfulness directed to the presence of Christ (3).

For Schillebeeckx, the hypostatic union means that there is a “secular meaning of history”. A denial of, inter alia, “an extrinsic view of grace”, in which grace is understood to be mediated through the institutional structures of the Church and not found in the ‘world’, leads to an orientation away from the past and to the future “humanization of the world”, even if that future is utopian and cannot thus be realised. Although recognising that final consummation remains eschatological and solely in God’s power, the dominant ‘incarnational principle’ in Schillebeeckx is

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376 Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith, 144, 145-146 (quotation on 144).
378 Minch, “Eschatology and Theology of Hope,” 277. Thus, ironically, high Christological dogma is said to support an inner-historical concept of soteriology.
said to require an “even more radical” commitment to the world. In this way, the Church “can have the same orientation” as “social and political movements” in seeking to “make the world a better place for others”. Such an attitude explains Schillebeeckx’s approbation of critical Christian communities (1.3.2). The Church is thus engaged in a “flight with the world towards the future”, instead of from the world. For Schillebeeckx, flowing from a rejection of an extrinsic reading of the nature-grace relationship is the view that the incarnation demands that the Church’s attention be directed to the future and the ‘humanization of the world’, and her identification with particular social and political projects.

An understanding of the Church’s functions as involving political tasks relates to Schillebeeckx’s reappraisal of the Church-world relationship, which depends on or parallels a Rahnerian view of grace and Concilium approval of secularism. Minch points out that Schillebeeckx thought “the old distinction between nature and supernature” to be redundant in setting out the relationship between the Church and the world. In contrast to Ratzinger’s liturgical emphasis in eschatology (3), the Church is not simply to be identified with the hierarchy or her liturgical functions. Rather, in a phrase redolent of Rahner, Schillebeeckx argues that “anonymous grace” operates outside the visible Church and hierarchy. Signally, Schillebeeckx argues that the “immanence” of grace must not be forgotten in the face of its “transcendence”. Grace’s operation within the world appears to have as much significance in Schillebeeckx’s scheme as its transcendence. Schillebeeckx is correct to say that grace operates both immanently and transcendentally but the risk of emphasising its immanence is to consider that it is solely for immanent ends, rather than transcendent ones.

A Rahnerian notion of anonymous grace thus underpins a conception of the Church-world relationship that detects the operation of grace in the ‘world’. The ‘world’

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becomes therefore the ground of a dynamic and secular drive to the future. In itself, the “world” is “a locus theologicus” and the “lived experience” of the laity ought to ground the Church’s relationship to the world.\textsuperscript{386} In contrast to Pieper and Ratzinger’s approbation of a living tradition (4.4), a focus upon the experience of Christians in the world entails a dialectical rejection of the “absolute” normativity of “past tradition” in favour of understanding the present and future in a dynamic way.\textsuperscript{387} According to Schillebeeckx, the world retains its own theological significance, and present and future history has its own dynamic and salvific significance.

The intermingling of the Church’s efforts with those of political agitators matches an integrated view of nature and grace and a social view of redemption. Resting on a benign, “new image of humanity” humanity’s “aim is to build a new world”.\textsuperscript{388} If not entirely conflating the orders of nature and grace, the overlap of the Church’s and humanity’s functions in building a ‘new world’, leads to an emancipatory impulse and a hope focused not on personal but social and historical fulfilment. In presenting “social liberation as an integral ingredient of eschatological salvation from God”, Schillebeeckx argues against “a false, namely abstract, personalism”.\textsuperscript{389} Evidently, grace is not simply personal but is rather addressed to “the institutional element in human life”.\textsuperscript{390} Eschatological hope rests on a view of salvation as involving ‘social liberation’, which is necessarily inner-historical.

In Schillebeeckx, Christian discipleship is also seen through the lens of an immanent soteriology. In his second volume of Christology, \textit{Gerechtigheid end liefde, genade en bevrijding (Christ. The Christian Experience in the Modern World)}, Schillebeeckx turns to a discussion of the early Christians’ experience of “salvation as a reality”.\textsuperscript{391} In this discussion, Schillebeeckx touches on the idea of grace and the nature of salvation. Schillebeeckx’s soteriology emphasises Christian “social-ethical responsibility”, especially “in the encounter with suffering and injustice in the

\textsuperscript{386} Minch, “Eschatology and Theology of Hope,” 277.
\textsuperscript{387} Minch, “Eschatology and Theology of Hope,” 277.
\textsuperscript{388} Minch, “Eschatology and Theology of Hope,” 282 quoting Schillebeeckx .C.f. Rowland, \textit{Catholic Theology}, 139 quoting the Concilium’s website (\url{www.concilium.in}) and its professed desire “to respond to the signs of our times, to the longing for a new humanity and for the integrity of creation”.
\textsuperscript{391} Hovdelien, “Edward Schillebeeckx,” 277-278.
world”. Being a Christian means imitating Jesus’s life, which is paradigmatic for us, and being involved in “the struggle for the humanum”. Salvation consists in experiencing Jesus through imitation, an imitation that leads to inner-historical improvement and struggle on behalf of the oppressed. Paramount is the subjective experience of salvation as generating inner-historical action to improve the world and participate in humanity’s struggle.

In contrast to Pieper and Ratzinger’s emphasis that hope is personal and oriented to eternal life, and Ratzinger’s argument that subject-hood needs primarily to be understood in terms of the response to grace (5.4.3), Schillebeeckx considers that an integral notion of nature and grace leads to an emphasis on social, integral redemption. Paralleling a Rahnerian-type recognition of the grace latent to human existence, history and creation, Schillebeeckx’s understanding of nature and grace, the Church and the world results in an especial focus on social and political action in changing the world, rather than personal sanctification. According to this scheme, nature appears not to need ‘renunciation’ in the manner of an Augustinian-Thomist account (5) but to be developed according to its own principles.

### 1.5.2 The Political Theology of Metz

Schillebeeckx’s notion that ‘eschatological salvation’ includes ‘social liberation’ is replicated in Metz’s political theology, which argues that a principal element of redemption concerns the social and political order. Consequently, Metz views secular and salvation history as integrated, which parallels a Rahnerian account of the coextensive nature of world history and salvation history. A political concept of soteriology that tends to confine the significance of Christ’s redemptive work within an immanent frame is thereby present in Metz. Although Metz insists that his ‘eschatological proviso’ protects against a simple identification of political aspirations with eschatology, his soteriology has distinctly worldly, political and inner-historical implications.

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393 E.g. Metz, Faith in History and Society, 79, see also Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 128.
Metz’s soteriology is linked to his low Christology. He argues that the memory of Jesus’s suffering enables “soteriology” to be understood “as a political theology of redemption”. According to Metz, the memory of Christ-crucified is the basis of the promise of eschatological freedom for everyone. In a phrase revealing Metz’s tendency to secularise the eschaton, he suggests that the new in the “eschatological Reign of God has to be expressed in a carefully warranted and focused goal for changing things”. In sharp contrast with Ratzinger’s understanding of Christ’s death and resurrection (3) and an emphasis on Christ’s novelty in transforming human nature (5), the memory of Christ’s passion and resurrection does not constitute a “total leap into the eschatological existence of the ‘new human being’”. Rather, it represents concrete human suffering, which serves as the basis for the drive to create “a more human way of life”. The memory of Christ’s passion and resurrection, and the eschatological promise of a new freedom support, therefore, not a “passive expectation of the Parousia”, but “a productive and militant eschatology”. Belief in the general resurrection possesses a political significance, which recalls history’s accumulated suffering with the purpose of informing “our action and our hope”. Christ’s passion and resurrection appears not to be soteriologically significant as the eschatological realisation of the ‘new Adam’ (3, 5). Soteriology is rather directed to historical, political action.

Christ’s Paschal Mystery has present significance as a memory, which is the driver of historical change towards a better, promised future. It does not constitute a leap into humanity’s eschatological future. Metz does not separate the memory of Christ’s passion from his resurrection, and opposes therefore the traditional distinction drawn between world history and salvation history, and the juxtaposition of inner-worldly suffering with supra-worldly glory. He gives therefore qualified approval to the shift in philosophical and “theological consciousness” apparent in Moltmann’s Theologie Der Hoffnung and certain strands of modern philosophy, from a focus on the

394 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 122 (emphasis in original).
395 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 107 (emphasis added).
396 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 108.
397 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 108.
398 Johann B Metz, “Creative Hope,” Cross Currents 17(2) (Spring, 1967): 176. Schall notes in respect of this article of Metz that “[e]ven the last things are subject to conquest”: “Political Theory and Political Theology,” 37. C.F. Hengel, Victory over Violence, 12.
399 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 109.
“hereafter” to one focused on “later”. He is concerned to avoid an “argumentative soteriology”, which a-historically ignores historical suffering and focuses upon the irrevocable salvation wrought by Christ. Metz differently emphasises the significance of Christ and his redemptive activity for hope and history than the general tradition. His soteriology is focused upon the memory of human suffering. He critiques a soteriology that ignores historical suffering because centred on the past event of salvation, which promises the ‘hereafter’.

Metz’s politically-inflected soteriology is instead concerned with ameliorating the ills of the past in order to improve the ‘later’. He discusses recent theology’s tendency to identify suffering in God as a result of kenosis. He suggests that a speculative theology needs to be accomplished narratively, in “a memorative-narrative soteriology” that does not suspend or condition “the event of redemption”. He thus applies kenotic theology to historical suffering and its memory. While he does not think Christ’s cry from the Cross was atheistic, he approbates a view of it as a “protest on behalf of suffering humanity”, that is, he focuses on Christ’s historical identity with the suffering. Implicitly, he critiques traditional, speculative theological understandings of soteriology as being too a-historical and not focused sufficiently on the narrative of Christ’s identification with the suffering.

Arguably, Metz’s emphasis on the historicity of Christ and his suffering is at the expense of an emphasis on the Beatific Vision in Christ and the promise of the extension of this vision to humanity (although this is not made explicit). In his political theology, soteriology and therefore hope do not appear to be centred on the possession of the Beatific Vision. His understanding of Christ’s redemptive activity is not primarily the communication of promised eschatological life through the

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400 Metz, “God Before Us,” 297-298.
401 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 125.
402 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 127. While Metz warns against a theology of kenosis within the Trinity or Godhead that might fail to preserve the specific historicity of humanity’s suffering, he is generally laudatory of this theology, citing inter alia Balthasar’s *Mysterium Paschale* (1970) and Moltmann’s work on the crucified God: Metz, Faith in History and Society, 126.
403 Marsden, “Political Theology of Metz,” 445.
404 Such a critique perhaps includes the traditional Thomistic view of Christ’s cry from the Cross described in n242 above.
Spirit. The redemption of the world appears not to be framed by the prospect of eternal life but is focused immanently on ameliorating historical evils.

Removing suffering appears to be an objective of a memorative-narrative soteriology, implicitly linking Metz to a Marxist view of redemption. For example, Marsden in his review of Metz’s political theology cites as apposite the liberation theologian, Jon Sobrino’s idea that the purpose of discussion about the identification of Christ and the suffering, the “crucified peoples”, is to remove them from the Cross. In this regard, redolent of Schillebeeckx’s work on ‘Christian Political Commitment’ (1.3.2) is Metz’s analysis of the relationship between the contemporary desire for emancipation, which Metz’s considers is “epochal”. Emancipation is understood in the basic Marxist sense of the restoration to humanity, of the human world and human relationships as developed in the “dialectic of emancipation” of the Frankfurt School. Theology must not fall into “pre-modern” attempts of construing the relationship between the Christian idea of redemption and emancipation, but must “enter into critical dialogue with [the modern] history [of emancipation]”. Christ’s redemption must then be understood in light of “the human history of suffering…as the medium for a history of liberation that is redemptive and emancipatory”. Metz does not simply equate emancipation with redemption. He seeks to correct or complement emancipatory theory in reference to Christian redemption. However, he understands redemption and emancipation under the aspect of liberation from guilt, finitude, mortality and nihilism, as well as political oppression and violence. Liberation, understood as intermingled political and theological aspiration, emphasises the overcoming of earthly suffering the taking possession by humanity of the world and human relationships.

Accordingly, an integrated view of world history and salvation history is present in Metz. He argues that:

405 Marsden, “Political Theology of Metz,” 445.
406 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 115.
407 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 115-116.
408 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 117.
409 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 118.
410 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 118-119, c.f. 116-117.
salvation history is the world’s history in which space is made for defeated and repressed hopes and suffering to have meaning. Salvation history is that history of the world in which meaning is promised to the vanquished and forgotten possibilities of human existence – to which we give the name death.\footnote{Metz, \textit{Faith in History and Society}, 109-110 (emphasis added).}

Metz’s formulation that ‘salvation history is the world’s history’ has noticeable overlap with Rahner’s notion that world history is coextensive with salvation history. Consistent with Milbank’s comments above, Metz develops Rahner’s transcendentalism, by appropriating it and applying it to a social-political-historical context, in which Hegelian-Marxism has a place. World history is salvation history as directed to the removal of suffering. On display in Metz is a clear collapsing of the orders of creation and redemption/soteriology, nature and grace. Secular history and profane history intermingle.

An integrated view of nature is relevant to the hope-history debate. According to Metz, politics concern for the future and Christian hope cannot be neatly separated. The transcendent and inner-historical mingle, even if Christianity’s role in the inner-historical is indirect. Christianity’s role is to offer “a liberating critique of the social and political reality” of the rational planning that is present in the secularised space.\footnote{Metz, \textit{Theology of the World}, 150-151 (quoting J Moltmann, “Die Zukunft als Drohung und Chance,” in \textit{Der Kreiss}, 55), 152 (quotation on 152).} In this way, eschatology is read as serving dialectical ends, and an inner-historical soteriology. Relating Metz to the Marxist-inspired Frankfurt School is his comment that the ‘eschatological proviso’ provides “a dialectical and critical attitude” to contemporary society.\footnote{Metz, \textit{Theology of the World}, 153. Rowland, \textit{Catholic Theology}, 173. Schall, “Political Theory and Political Theology,” 35, notes the overlap of the concepts of ‘development’ and ‘liberation’ in those theologies of the twentieth century in which the holy and politics intermingle. The Church has consequently an active role in politics. An instructive quotation, at n42, is from Jesus Garcia Gonzalez, “development and/or Liberation,” \textit{Lumen Vitae}, Louvain, #1, 1972, p. 26: “If the construction of the just society is part of salvation history, the Church has her proper role to play in building this new order”. He also quotes Metz: “the task of the Church is not a systematic social doctrine, but a social criticism”: “The Church and ‘Political Theology’,” \textit{Concilium}, #36, p. 17.} Loaded with Hegelian and Marxist significance, and distinguishing him from Ratzinger’s view of eschatology is Metz’s argument that eschatology is seen not primarily as proclaiming the intrinsic imperfectability of history (2.2.3), but to mobilise “the socially critical and… ‘political’ potentiality of

its faith and its hope and love”.  

Notwithstanding the ‘eschatological proviso’, Metz’s soteriology has an inner-worldly focus. Echoing Moltmann, he says that the eschatological promises have “a critical and liberating imperative for our own present time”. An inner-worldly dynamic is at play in Metz’s political theology, flowing from a view in which the salvific implications of Christianity are tied up with inner-historical social and political concerns, which relates to a view of eschatological hope as containing an inner-historical thrust.

In conclusion, it cannot be gainsaid that Christ in the Incarnation joined with suffering humanity in order to relieve that suffering. The principal issues in soteriology concern, however, what suffering is being relieved and how it is taken away. Metz’s apparent soteriological imperative to remove suffering contrasts with a traditional understanding that it is precisely incorporation into Christ’s suffering on the Cross that is the means for participation in Christ’s exaltation in the Resurrection. On the traditional view eternal life in the ‘hereafter’ is the object of this suffering hope, an eschatological vision that transcends history (a view, as will be seen, present in Pieper and Ratzinger). Metz, on the other hand, tends to confine the implications of the identification of Christ with humanity’s suffering to an inner-historical framework driving political change. The hope that is the object of Christ’s redemption tends not to be eternal life but appears coloured by contemporary understandings of emancipation.

1.5.3 Integrated Liberation

Liberation theology presents a view of liberation as integrated, in which the orders of nature and grace tend to be conflated. Secular aims and ideals are overlain with eschatological significance, which relates to Schillebeeckx and Metz’s integration of the profane and secular. An integration of nature and grace contains traces of Rahner’s theology of grace and reveals an incarnationalist tendency. Liberation theology tends to understand history and all of reality in monist terms. Matching


\textsuperscript{415} Metz, \textit{Theology of the World}, 153.

\textsuperscript{416} Metz, \textit{Theology of the World}, 153.

Schillebeeckx and implicitly paralleling Metz, liberation theology possesses a general “opposition to classical dualism” and its sharp differentiation between “a spiritual and a worldly sphere”. Rather, as in Rahner, salvation and secular history are coterminous, because the human person has a transcendental orientation: the “history of salvation is nothing that is different from or outside the history of human beings”. A monist appreciation of history and salvation is thus a “basic theological fundamentum of Liberation Theology”, in which there is one history alone (una sola historia). According to this view, there is:

the unity of salvation and liberation, redemption and earthly progress, the sacred and the profane. Reality is one. There is no supernatural realm outside of and above the natural realm of human history.

As is apparent, liberation theology evidences the proclivity to collapse the distinction between world and salvation. Liberation theology radicalises or applies Rahner to the Latin American context, seeing ‘earthly progress’ as intimately tied to the redemption. Redemption involves the progress of history.

Apart from arguably expressing a dubious metaphysics – in which natural and supernatural reality are conceived in Hegelian, univocal terms – a unitary understanding of salvation and human history lends itself to an inner-historical focus at the expense of eternity. Soteriology is understood in immanentist terms. Schillebeeckx and Metz’s arguments that the institutional and social is contained within eschatological salvation is paralleled in liberation theology’s notion that liberation involves economic and social progress. For example, Segundo, a liberation theologian with especial incarnational tendencies, argued that salvation needs to be understood in immanentist terms. Salvation for Segundo is located in humanity’s

418 Stålsett, “Liberation Theology,” 590. An equivalent is found in modernity’s tendency to fail to distinguish between artificial things and “immediate reality”: Pieper, Silence of St Thomas, 93.
419 Stålsett, “Liberation Theology,” 590.
420 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 172 quoting Candelaria, Popular Religion and Liberation, 111.
421 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 172 quoting Candelaria, Popular Religion and Liberation, 111.
422 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 168.
“building up of history”, which God has entrusted to it. Another example is Müller’s comment that the attainments of:

*Earthly goods such as freedom, human dignity, justice and the overcoming of hunger and needs are signs, actualizations, and realizations of the one salvation of human beings and humanity on their way in history to the eschaton.*

In Gutiérrez’s words, the “eschatological promises are being fulfilled throughout history”. He argues that the Kingdom’s advent is signified by the “struggle for a just world in which there is no oppression, servitude, or alienated work”. Continuing the Rahner-Schillebeeckx-Metz trajectory and with clear overtones of Marx, liberation theology presents an understanding of history in which human agency within the ‘natural’, historical and secular sphere takes on salvific significance. Redemption is multifaceted yet unified process in which historical achievement is a fundamental component.

Gutiérrez’s idea of ‘integral liberation’ is a principal example of liberation theology’s tendency to integrate nature and grace, human and salvation history. Stålsett explains that Gutiérrez’s *Theology of Liberation* presents a three-layered, integrated understanding of liberation. First, on the “historical-political level”, liberation entails economic, social and political attainment for “oppressed social classes and people”. Thus, according to liberation theology, integral to the Church’s mission as a “sign of salvation” is to confront oppression and injustice in history. Secondly, the “deeper”, “historical-existential” level is aimed at the personal mastery of freedom such that there is “a permanent cultural revolution, to the forming of a new human person, of a society that is qualitatively different”. Evident at this level is a concept of emancipation understood in terms that resembles the Joachimite strain

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429 Fiorenza, “Political Theology and Liberation Theology,” 21.

of thought. History is to see a ‘qualitatively different’ epoch akin to the Age of the Spirit, as a result of dialectical, revolutionary struggle. Liberation involves human activity directed towards the instantiation of a definitively altered human nature and society. Integrated liberation incorporates historical, political and existential concerns and relates them to a narrower understanding of salvation. It is only at the third level that a traditionally soteriological dimension is introduced, in which liberation involves the redemption of the human person by Christ from sin.

The notion of ‘integrated liberation’ presents the attainment of freedom as a multilayered but unitary phenomenon. Gutiérrez emphasises that the three levels are interrelated and part of Christ’s “redeeming work”. Müller is careful to distinguish liberation theology’s understanding of history from a Hegelian one, in which history is “the self-objectification of God”. He suggests that the relationship between profane and salvation history is one of “unity-in-difference” with “neither a pure separation nor a simple identification between earthly well-being and eternal salvation”. Gutiérrez also argues against a ‘simple identification’ between particular social realities with the realisation of God’s “eschatological promises”. However, on liberation theology’s own terms, supernatural redemption contains within itself, inner-historical, social, economic and political liberation. The poor and oppressed become, essentially, ‘masters of history’ moving it towards the realisation of freedom. Liberation theology is not strictly Hegelian. Nevertheless, it bears a family resemblance with it containing within the concept of liberation, the Marxist dialectical, revolutionary impulse to create new political and existential conditions for a ‘new humanity’.

Liberation theology places itself within the theological developments of the twentieth century that opposed extrinsicism. The judgment that a Rahnerian theology of grace has influenced Gutiérrez’s liberation theology accords with its self-understanding. Connected with this self-understanding, however, is the further claim de Lubac needs to be added to Rahner’s place within liberation theology. Müller argues, contestably,
that Rahner belongs to the same intellectual tradition as de Lubac.\textsuperscript{435} He asserts that liberation theology is an application of de Lubac’s “nouvelle théologie” and Rahner’s “theology of grace” to a social-historical context.\textsuperscript{436} In appropriating Rahner and de Lubac for liberation theology, Müller characterises liberation theology as part of the general twentieth century theological move away from neoscholastic extrinsicism. Liberation theology’s suggested place in the mainstream post-conciliar theology, according to Müller, gives it theological credibility and “resolve[s]” the objections brought against it.\textsuperscript{437} Müller thinks therefore that Gutiérrez’s liberation theology is a legitimate expression of the views on nature-grace developed in response to neoscholasticism, specifically as a continuation of de Lubac and Rahner. Liberation theology is seen as a development of the strands of theology that arose in the twentieth century, applied to a particular context.

In seeing liberation theology as a part of a continuing development running through de Lubac and Rahner – as if they were examples of a unified thread – Müller replicates Gutiérrez’s own appreciation of the significance of the nature-grace debate. Gutiérrez’s appropriation of Rahner shows the dependence of his variant of liberation theology on a Rahnerian view of the supernatural (but it will be argued in 4.2.3 not de Lubac’s). Gutiérrez argues thus that contained within de Lubac’s theology (and Yves de Montcheuil’s) are the roots of liberation theology. De Lubac’s rejection of the notion of pure nature allowed “the recovery of the historical and existential viewpoint” and the idea that the human person has “but one vocation”.\textsuperscript{438} A Lubacian account of the supernatural is contained in liberation theology on Gutiérrez’s understanding.

According to Gutiérrez, Rahner is moreover a link between de Lubac’s view of nature and grace, and liberation theology. Rahner “continued thinking along [Lubacian] lines”.\textsuperscript{439} His ‘supernatural existential’ showed that “the universal salvific will of God creates in the human being a deep affinity which becomes a gratuitous

\textsuperscript{435} Refer further to 4.2.2 where this claim is tested more fully.
\textsuperscript{436} Müller, “Liberation Theology in Context,” 81. The author first came across this quotation in Rowland, Catholic Theology, 190, which appears there in full.
\textsuperscript{437} Müller, “Liberation Theology in Context,” 81.
\textsuperscript{438} Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 44. See also 100.
\textsuperscript{439} Gutiérrez, Theology of Liberation, 44.
ontologico-real determinant of human nature”. Human nature as such, in the human person’s “concrete” and “existential condition”, possesses the ‘supernatural existential’, which Gutiérrez considers relates to the claim of Blondel (influential on de Lubac) that the human person is “oriented to [supernatural life] by necessity”. The concreteness of God’s call to the supernatural life, which de Lubac’s (and Balthasar’s) conception of the supernatural recognises, is transposed into Rahner’s ‘supernatural existential’. The ‘supernatural existential’ is the theological framework for Gutiérrez’s theology of integrated liberation.

Importantly, moreover, Gutiérrez links what he considers to be the continuity between de Lubac and Rahner with Schillebeeckx and Metz’s rejection of extrinsicism. He connects de Lubac and Rahner’s reading of the intrinsic nature of the human person’s supernatural vocation with Schillebeeckx’s rejection of an extrinsic reading of the Church-world relationship. Consistent with the analysis of Schillebeeckx above, Gutiérrez argues that Rahner’s idea of “anonymous Christianity” lends itself to Schillebeeckx’s view that there is “a Christianity beyond the visible frontiers of the Church”. In line with Schillebeeckx’s reading of Gaudium et Spes, which forms an important basis of his interpretation of the nature-grace relationship discussed above, Gutiérrez argues that the Conciliar document promotes an integral understanding of the human vocation and development.

A consequence of Schillebeeckx’s reading of Gaudium et Spes is the breakdown of the barriers between “faith and temporal works, Church and world”. Gutiérrez quotes Schillebeeckx’s argument that the fluidity of the boundaries between the Church and the world are also not one-way, because “mankind and the world” flows into the life of the Church. Gutiérrez also quotes Metz’s similar suggestion that “in a certain sense the Church is the world”. An understanding of the nature-grace

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440 Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 44.
441 Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 44.
relationship in these terms “gives religious value in a completely new way to human action in history”. Evident in Gutiérrez (as well as Schillebeeckx and Metz) is the Rahnerian view that grace operates outside the visible structures of the Church as a pre-existent human reality. A view of ‘anonymous’ grace – that is, not bearing the name ‘Christian’ or relating explicitly to the Church – grounds the view that the ‘world’ contains its own salvific significance. Related to the view that inner-historical struggles for justice and so on can anticipate and actualise eschatological reality.

In line with a Rahnerian view of nature-grace present in Schillebeeckx and Metz, Gutiérrez presents therefore the view of ‘integral liberation’ briefly outlined above. An integral view of liberation possesses a “profound integration” of the orders of nature and grace. “Political liberation” has “economic roots” and is understood as the means of overcoming the gap between the two orders. Liberation from sin “implies a political liberation”. Christ’s Passover involves the “transition …from justice to injustice”. Consequently, there cannot be liberation from sin without political and human liberation. While distinct, political and human liberation form “part of a single, all-encompassing salvific process” in which the growth of the Kingdom is the “ultimate precondition for a just society and a new humanity”. Gutiérrez identifies historical examples of liberation as instantiations of the Kingdom’s growth and as “salvific event[s]”. Christ’s “saving work” thus involves the “creation of a more just and fraternal world”. The integration between the

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448 Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 100-102 (quotation on 102).
452 Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 103. It is important to note that Gutiérrez does not equate eschatological reality with the Kingdom. He argues that the Kingdom is present already within history but will reach fulfilment “beyond history”: *Theology of Liberation*, 227n103 referring to his *El Dios de la vida* (1988). Understanding the Kingdom in this way resembles Ratzinger’s understanding of history as ‘already, not yet. Nevertheless, as quoted above, Gutiérrez correlates the Kingdom’s arrival to the ‘struggle for a just world in which there is no oppression, servitude, or alienated work’ (text surrounding n426). Such a regnocratic reading of the Kingdom does not accord with Ratzinger’s personalist reading of the Kingdom (3.4.4).
454 Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 104-5 quoting a “Latin American text on the missions”: *La pastoral en las misiones de América Latina*, 16
orders of nature and grace are such that historical ‘progress’ is seen as a working-out of God’s salvific work. In Guteriérrez is clearly an immanent soteriology indebted to Rahner’s theology of grace.

1.5.4 Conclusion

A Rahnerian theology of grace, or Transcendental Thomist configuration of the nature-grace relationship, is a foundational component of Schillebeeckx’s theology of hope, Metz’s political theology and Gutiérrez’s liberation theology. Its notion of the intimate connection between the profane and salvific, history and eschatological is present in Schillebeeckx’s conflation of the Church and the world, Metz’s political soteriology and Gutiérrez’s integrated notion of liberation. A consequent, immanent soteriology undergirds their inner-historical conceptions of hope. The historical is given soteriological, eschatological significance because the secular is the realm of an ‘always-already’ ‘supernatural existential’. The mere fact of being human carries soteriological potential. An evacuation from the secular of a specific, institutional religious content leaves a conceptual space for praxis, often linked to a Marxist view of political and social progress as redemptive. A ‘baptism of secularisation’ thus undergirds the view of history as being the site of redemptive human action. Eschatological hope, which is necessarily directed to salvation, is at least partly placed in the realisation of inner-historical earthly projects. Soteriology is aimed at the achievement of immanent ends. An inner-historical conception of hope depends therefore upon an immanent, Rahnerian theology of grace, which leaves theology open to the influence of immanent philosophies of hope.

1.6 Conclusion

Chapter 1 has argued that Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez present an inner-historical conception of hope. The Concilium authors answer the question of whether hope at least partially can be realised within history largely in the positive. Although not adopting an immanent framework for hope in toto, they nevertheless conceive hope’s energies to be directed towards earthly, historical projects and goals.
Eschatological hope is not oriented according to traditional eschatology’s framework of the ‘hereafter’ but to the (historical) future.

This Chapter has argued that an immanent conception of hope depends upon the choices Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez make in fundamental theology. First, the Chapter related political theology and liberation theology to a Joachimite genealogy, the line of thought originating in Joachim of Fiore, extending through Hegel and Marx, resulting in Bloch’s philosophy of hope. It did so by exploring the role of Moltmann and Bloch in Metz and Gutiérrez. The Concilium position on hope and history is informed by a drive towards an open-ended future and contemporary praxis. It was then able to show how Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez offer versions of eschatological hope that drive inner-historical action and are impersonal. Political and impersonal versions of hope distinguish the Concilium authors from classic eschatology and contemporary personalist strains in theology. Hope is related to dialectic expectations of a ‘new humanity’ and society.

Secondly, it explored the low Christologies of the Concilium authors. It showed that each of Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez generally adopt the perspective of an ‘ascending Christology’. The biblical witness and Jesus of Nazareth are read through the lens of modern biblical criticism. Jesus is viewed from ‘below’ and the historicity of his life given especial focus. Consequently, a picture of Jesus is presented in which classical Christologies emphasising his divinity are minimised and his inner-historical import considered. His eschatological proclamation of the Kingdom is, rather, seen as instigating inner-historical, immanent change.

Thirdly and fourthly, the Chapter examined the role of a Rahnerian, or Transcendental Thomist, theology of grace in the formation of an immanent soteriology in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez. An opposition to extrinsicism, combined with a transcendental view of the human person and history tends, in the words of Milbank, to ‘naturalise the supernatural’. An affirmation of secularisation and an integrated view of nature and grace follow. Earthly, inner-historical realities take on salvific significance, complementing a dialectical view of historical and political progress.
Overall, an inner-historical view of hope is rooted in certain claims of fundamental theology, with varying degrees of influence. A principal choice grounding the *Concilium* position on hope and history is the adoption of a Rahnerian view of the nature-grace relationship. The ‘supernatural existential’, perceiving human existence as ‘always-already’ transcendentally elevated, maximises the salvific import of human existence, and secular reality and history as such. Necessarily, the novelty of the particular Jesus Christ of Nazareth (and therefore the Church) is downplayed in relation to creation. Christ is not primarily the divine irruption into human history, pointing to an eschatological reality beyond it. Rather, he is the divine affirmation of the latent salvific possibilities of human person and human history in themselves. Consequently, the secular becomes a chief reference point for the *Concilium* authors. Allied to a Rahnerian theology of grace, a dialectical reading of history and contemporary norms of praxis are imported into theology. Hope becomes placed in history’s movement towards liberation and emancipation.

As a result, the eschaton, although not completely identified with the historical, tends to be secularised in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez. The Incarnationalist propensity of the *Concilium* position emphasises the continuity between the historical and eschatological reality. Discontinuity between the realities, while acknowledged, is not prominent. The blurring of the lines between the profane and the salvific, nature and grace, and the Church and the world, and the incorporation of Joachimite and dialectical impulses into the *Concilium* perspective, result in eschatological reality being secularised, at least to a degree. On its own terms, especially in liberation theology, the realisation of earthly projects is a fundamental component of liberation. Eschatology entails, in Metz’s words, an imperative *‘for changing things’* (quoted in 1.5.2). Focus upon contemporary praxis incorporates dialectical notions of history’s progress towards utopia and a ‘new humanity’. Praxis is thus overlaid with eschatological notions. To a degree, the imperative for liberation and emancipation is a secular variant of eschatological reality. The eschaton is placed in an immanent framework.
CHAPTER 2 THE COMMUNIO PERSPECTIVE: HOPE UNDER THE ASPECT OF ETERNITY

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 concerns the counterpoint in Communio – as represented by Ratzinger – to the first component of the Concilium contribution to the hope-history debate. As shown in Chapter 1, Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez define hope as directed to inner-historical expectations and with reference to contemporary variants on the Joachimite tendency to secularise Christian hope. In contrast, Ratzinger considers hope’s object to be personal participation in eternal life. Hope is most true to its character as the theological virtue of hope, which is infused in baptism and gives eternal life, if incipiently, to the believer. Consequently, Ratzinger argues that inner-historical, social and political conceptions of hope are misconceived and in fact dangerous. He is deeply suspicious of any tendency to secularise eschatological reality and is sceptical regarding the claim of philosophies of history to comprehend the meaning of history.¹

Ratzinger does not paint an individualistic picture of hope, ignorant of its social or inner-historical dimensions. His conception of hope does not avoid the questions raised by the theologies of futurity in the twentieth century.² His theology regarding hope is not simply a reprisal of the traditional categories of eschatology (the ‘last things’). Nevertheless, underpinned by Pieper’s philosophical analyses of the nature of hope and the relationship between hope and history, he understands hope to be related to the human person’s desire for existential fulfilment in an extra-historical, eternal life of love. Ratzinger’s is thus a personalist and in that sense a-political

¹ This Chapter does not give an exhaustive overview of Ratzinger’s views on hope, much less Pieper’s, but focus on those elements regarding it that show hope’s object to be eternal life. Schumacher gives an exhaustive account of the philosophical nuances of Pieper’s philosophy in his *Philosophy of Hope*.
² In fact, Ratzinger’s conception of salvation history as ‘already, not yet’ (3.4) gives present history its significance, precisely because it is considered under the aspect of eternity.
account of hope, conscious of contemporary questions about the person and the meaning of history.³

The Chapter is divided into two broad sections. The first concerns Ratzinger’s critique of inner-historical conceptions of hope, especially as manifest in the Marxist thinker Bloch, who was influential to the Concilium perspective (see 1.2.1). Grounded in Pieper’s philosophical view that hope’s object is not subject to the control of the one who hopes, Ratzinger considers secularised eschatology to be mistaken, including as manifest in the Concilium perspective. Views of hope as resting on the perfectibility of history misapprehend the nature of history, which cannot immanently be perfected. Moreover, they wrongly present hope as impersonal and political. Hope oriented to a ‘later’ stage of historical perfection not personally concerning the one who hopes is unintelligible for Pieper and Ratzinger. Instead, hope is intrinsically personal and must answer the question of what occurs to the individual in the ‘hereafter’. Thus, a compelling account of hope will treat and answer the issue of death. Many inner-historical understandings of hope tend not to focus on the importance of this question and inadequately deal with it.

Whereas the first section of this Chapter to a degree considers what hope is not, the second shows how Ratzinger positively accounts for the content of hope. It considers the theocentric content of fundamental hope. The notion of fundamental hope depends on a distinction he draws from Pieper between everyday hopes and a singular, more fundamental hope. The fundamental or authentic hope points beyond the everyday and intra-mundane to eternal life in God. Eternal life is what fulfils the human person and thus, ultimately, is the object of his hope. Ratzinger, again dependent upon Pieper, gives a definition of eternal life as supra-historical and a definitive participation in God’s eternal being.

Eternal life as an object of hope is an intrinsically theological notion. Hope is a theological virtue, a gift imparted in baptism orienting the person to eternal beatitude in God. In baptism, eternal life is inchoately but substantially present in the soul of the believer. As such, hope has a ‘performative’, inner-historical aspect. It affects the

³ C.f. Rowland, Guide, ch 1, esp. 11, 15-17. See also ch 1 of her “Beyond Baroque Scholasticism”.
present. However, unlike intra-mundane conceptions of hope, its effect on the present is not as an impatient impulse to change history in the name of rejecting the past. Rather, hope is receptive, patient and fundamentally prayerful. The ‘active’ nature of hope is precisely in opening up the world to God’s eternal presence, as the hope that points history beyond itself.

2.2 Distinguishing Ratzinger from an Inner-Historical Conception of Hope

This section begins with a brief elaboration of Pieper’s philosophical principle that the one who hopes cannot manufacture the object he wishes to attain. It will then consider Ratzinger’s critique of modernity’s tendency to secularise Christian hope and his proposition that history cannot be perfected. Instead, it is personal and contains an imperative to transcend death and history.

2.2.1 Critiquing Bloch: Hope’s Object Cannot be Manufactured

For Pieper and Ratzinger, the notion that hope’s object is attainable by the capacity and efforts of the person who hopes is contrary to the nature of hope. In reference to ordinary, living, everyday language, Pieper argues that the object of hope, strictly speaking, “is beyond the control of the one who hopes”, because the language of hope does not refer to what can be effected by one’s own power. For Pieper, everyday language shows that hope’s object is beyond the capacity of the person who hopes to achieve.

To establish the idea that hope depends on causes outside the power of the hoping person, Pieper gives the example of a craftsman who hopes to complete a particular

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project on time. Completion on time is dependent upon variables beyond the craftsman’s control. The craftsman might be ill; the weather might be bad; and so on. If the craftsman says, however, that he hopes to complete the project according to specification, then it might be doubted whether he was capable of completing the project at all. A craftsman does not rely on hope to complete tasks he can by his own powers. If he does, he is a poor craftsman. From these considerations, Pieper draws a “very serious and highly momentous” conclusion, as formulated by Gabriel Marcel: the “only genuine hope is one directed toward something that does not depend on us”.

Hope characteristically involves relying on someone else or circumstances outside of our control. Hope is not controllable or subject to planning.

That hope is necessarily reliant on circumstances beyond the control of the person who hopes is what distinguishes a Christian vision of hope, as espoused by Pieper and Ratzinger, from a Marxist-inspired one. Both critique in particular Bloch’s reading of hope under the aspect of dialectical-materialism. Consistent with a Marxist epistemology and contrary to Pieper and Ratzinger, it is not possible, on Bloch’s view, to hope for things beyond the control of the one who hopes. Rather, hope belongs in a ‘laboratory’ and can be manufactured according to dialectical rationality. Hope, for Bloch, is ‘the product of human activity’ (quoted in 1.2.1). Bloch’s view of hope as being controllable is underpinned by the Marxist view that history inevitably progresses. As seen in Chapter 1, the dialecticism of Hegel and Marx forecasts an inner-historical fulfilment or salvation for humanity within a universal history, which can be brought about at least partially through human rationality.

Pieper and Ratzinger contend that a materialist conception of hope, evident especially in Marxism, which posits that history’s fulfilment will necessarily follow the law of history, is necessarily inconsistent with the nature of human hope. Intrinsic to the character of hope is that its object has the possibility of not being realised. Thus Pieper says that it is nonsense to speak of hope “for something that occurs

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Those who consider that a classless society will inevitably result from natural laws are not, “strictly speaking”, discussing an object of hope. The idea that history inevitably progresses to its telos contradicts the character of hope as belonging to the realm of the possible, not the certain. Marxist views of history and hope as politically manipulable contradict the concept of hope. Pieper considers the notion that the object of hope can be brought about by the “purely political and thus …what can be planned and produced” through a “program of practical action” to be mistaken. Pieper appeals to an anthropological claim: “it is obviously characteristic of men by nature, as those who truly hope, to be directed toward fulfilment of just the kind that they cannot bring about themselves”. Any attempt to manufacture hope, especially in the realms of politics and rational planning, misconceives it and the nature of human hope. Not only daily objects of hope but also the larger, transcendent hope are beyond the control of the one who hopes.

Ratzinger likewise considers that to plan practically and politically for hope’s objects misunderstands the nature of hope. He follows Pieper’s criticism of Bloch closely. He notes that Pieper’s “rigorous analysis demonstrates” that hope is anthropologically necessary “because what is done and feasible does not satisfy”. Hope, as a human reality, exists in order to point the human person beyond what he can do himself. Hope belongs to the realm of gift and is an “absolutely gratuitous gift of God”, which is not owed to us, but “transcends every law of justice”. The human person is not satisfied with the intra-mundane and controllable but searches for transcendent fulfilment. Versions of hope that confine its object to the level of the feasible anthropologically mistake hope. The confused anthropology of modernity presents man as “self-sufficient” and capable of eradicating evil by his own

10 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 22.
12 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 83.
13 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 84. As will be suggested in Chapter 4, Pieper appeals to a particular theological anthropology that sees the human person as naturally oriented to a fulfilment beyond his own powers to effect, which matches an Augustinian-Thomist account of the supernatural.
resources. Furthermore “it confuse[s] happiness and salvation with immanent forms of material prosperity and social action”. What can be achieved ourselves cannot be the object of hope because, implicitly, we only hope in what will satisfy us and provide existential fulfilment. Such existential satisfaction is beyond our power to bring about. Hope does not belong on the level of the feasible and the makeable.

2.2.2 Ratzinger’s Critique of Blochian-Inspired Theologies

Ratzinger critiques the theologies of futurity informed by Bloch’s thought and Moltmann’s *Theologie der Hoffnung* (1.2.2). Ratzinger describes a line of thought running through Bloch and the “many theologians” influenced by him. Included in this line of thinking is Gutiérrez’s *Theology of Liberation*. Thus, he groups together, Metz and Gutiérrez (and it can be added implicitly Schillebeeckx), along with Moltmann, into “a generalised theology of hope” and political theology that have its antecedents in Joachim. Although he is careful to commend certain aspects of Moltmann’s theology, and liberation and revolution theology, he opposes the intermingling of Hegelian-Marxism and Christian theology, which he detects in Blochian inspired theologies of futurity.

Ratzinger argues that the Blochian view of hope posits a deification of history, resting on the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic that history itself will contain its own eschatological telos. Undergirded by the new theological virtue of optimism, it works for the revolutionary liberation that will usher in the promised utopia. In contrast

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16 Benedict, *Caritas in Veritate*, n34.
17 Benedict, *Caritas in Veritate*, n34.
18 Like Pieper’s, Ratzinger’s claim rests on a particular theological anthropology to be explored in Chapter 4 and a positive conception of hope, the content of which needs to be filled out further below in this Chapter.
22 Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 58. See also Heim, *Life in the Church*, 172. De Lubac is another *Communio* scholar who detected the influence of Bloch on the theology of hope and its successors. De Lubac’s *La Postérité spirituelle de Joachim de Flore* argued that Bloch belonged to the Joachimite lineage and had deleterious impact on contemporary theology. The intention of his study was to describe “the farrago of theological nonsense unleashed by Bloch”: Sutton, “The Progeny of Joachim of Fiore,” 730.
the Blochian perspective considers, the notion that history is under the guidance of providence and for hope therefore to be placed in benevolent providence to a “perilous and irresponsible anachronism”.24 Hope should not be based on faith but rather should consist of a “strategy of hope” based on rational calculation.25 Such rational calculation consists of the control or manipulation of the direction of history that is now explicable on a rational basis.26 Hope in history belongs to the realm of human action, precisely that which can be achieved by our own power.

Ratzinger is however especially suspicious of the Marxism underpinning elements of theologies of hope. He considers that Marxism destroys theology “through its politicization as conceived by Marxist messianism”.27 The mixing of Christianity and Marxism is especially destructive because it maintained a biblical hope but replaced God’s power to effect what is hoped for with political activity: “Hope remains, but the party takes the place of God”.28 Christianity is politicised and eschatological energies are wrongly directed to immanent ends, resulting in totalitarianism (see below). Indeed, his chief criticism of a “secular-utopian idea of the Kingdom [is] that it pushes God off the stage”.29 In Blochian-inspired theologies of hope, hope tends to be reduced to the Marxist, immanent level of what can be worked towards in the historical future. Ratzinger argues that a general theology of hope and “present-day political theology…comes close to dissolving the Eschaton into Utopia”.30 According to Ratzinger, the danger of conceiving hope in inner-historical concerns is, however, that Christian hope becomes denuded of its “essential content”.31 A “deceptive surrogate” (political utopianism) takes its place.32 Ersatz hope based upon what we ourselves can achieve in the political, historical realm replaces transcendent Christian hope in eternal life (see 2.3).

26 C.f. Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 228: Marx replaces God with the “logic of history”.
29 Ratzinger, *Jesus(1)*, 55.
Ratzinger considers that Christian hope is emasculated by “the transformation of eschatology into political utopianism”.\footnote{Ratzinger, Eschatology, 59.} Theologies of futurity effectively answer the question of ‘which hope?’ wrongly by positing as the answer, the immanent, if not complete realisation of the Kingdom of God through political, social and historical means. In these theologies, Christianity is thus characterised as a “strategy of hope”, in which “Christian… hope is simply being re-expressed in humanly realistic terms”.\footnote{Ratzinger, Eschatology, 58-59, quotation on 59.} Bearing the mark of Bloch’s philosophy of hope, the theologies of hope reduce Christian hope to the level of what is feasible, that is, what can be achieved through human power.

2.2.3 History cannot be Immanently Perfected

A key element of Pieper and Ratzinger’s critique of inner-historical conceptions of hope is their rejection of the idea that history immanently progresses towards a perfect state. They exclude the idea of an “intra-historical perfectibility of the world” at the hands of humanity.\footnote{Ratzinger, Eschatology, 213.} Ratzinger and Pieper argue that any idea that humanity can construct, or at least work towards, a utopia within history misunderstands the nature of history and hope as ultimately oriented to a supra-historical object, and the limits of human rationality.

There are two bases on which Pieper and Ratzinger rest their analyses of history’s imperfectability: theological and philosophical. The theological basis of their argument relies on the Church’s tradition and biblical revelation. Ratzinger notes that the Church has opposed as contrary to the faith chiliasm. The Church sought to “preserve biblical tradition in its proper form” against chiliasm, which was based upon John’s Apocalypse and Christ’s thousand-year reign prior to the end and final judgment their foretold. The “triumph of orthodox dogma” countered Joachim’s idea that history was divided into three significant ages.\footnote{Ratzinger, Eschatology, 212, Theology of History, 107.} Ratzinger places the theologies of liberation in a chiliast context and implicitly condemns them on the basis that orthodox Catholic faith has resisted chiliasm.\footnote{See Ratzinger, Eschatology, 212, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 228, 230-255, 252-69.}
The consequence of the Church’s rejection of chiliasm was the denial of the notion of “definitive intra-historical fulfilment”.\textsuperscript{38} Christian hope and “eschatological expectation” do not entail a concept of historically immanent perfection and, in fact, claim as impossible the idea that world can be fulfilled immanently. “Faith in Christ’s return” from ‘outside’ history, which Ratzinger considers to be the genuine content of Christian hope, is inconsistent with this idea.\textsuperscript{39} Moreover, Christian social teaching, according to Ratzinger, demonstrates its greatest bite in “promis[ing] no earthly paradise, no irreversibly and definitively positive society within this history”.\textsuperscript{40} Catholic social teaching opposes revolution, but rather promotes reform as the path to the improvement of society.\textsuperscript{41} The Christian faith, as understood by Ratzinger, relativises any claim to historical utopia.

The Church has rejected a notion of intra-historical perfection because it contradicts biblical revelation. The Scriptural depiction of the end of the world denies, according to Ratzinger, any “expectation of definitive salvation within history”.\textsuperscript{42} The catastrophe prophesied as characterising the end of time, confounds an idea of inner-historical success. The ‘signs’ of “war, catastrophe and the persecution of the faith by the ‘world’” demonstrate that the historical preparation for the end of time does not depend upon “some consummate ripeness of the historical process”.\textsuperscript{43} The divine action comes, rather, in response to history’s inner-decadence and incapacity for, and resistance to, the divine. Far from containing the seeds of historical regeneration, history is instead marked permanently by the eschatological signs of wars and catastrophe. Ratzinger is thus sceptical regarding the capacity of ‘peace research’ to constitute the basis of a hope that such strife can be overcome.\textsuperscript{44} For Ratzinger, the Bible precludes the idea of inner-historical perfectibility.

Pieper also argues against the notion that history can be perfected from within, by reference to revelation concerning the End. For Pieper, “the revealed prophecy of the End” implies that, while history is approaching its goal, it does so not as an effect or

\textsuperscript{38} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 213.
\textsuperscript{40} Ratzinger, \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 252.
\textsuperscript{41} Ratzinger, \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 253.
\textsuperscript{42} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 213, see very similar quotation in \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 232.
\textsuperscript{43} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 198.
result of the historical process, but only in the mode of “deliverance”. The End will be therefore characterised by “an extreme crisis… [which] will be utterly catastrophic”. The End’s historical dimension will involve “a downfall”. Human history will not end with the victory of goodness, truth, reason and justice, but something akin to catastrophe understood as “a monstrous intensification of power…a universal tyranny of evil”. The revelation in “apocalyptic prophecy” of the reign of the antichrist underscores history’s catastrophic end. Moreover, history is “always” directed to this “catastrophic end”. History is constituted by the fact that it will end and end catastrophically. The book of Revelation reveals that history will not continue, but rather terminate. The historical end of time will involve not success but failure.

An affirmation of biblical prophecy concerning the catastrophic end of time sharply opposes a progressive logic of history. Pieper thus critiques the tendency of modern philosophy to overlook the mystery of the Apocalypse and its revelation regarding the state of history before ‘the End’. Consistent with a Hegelian epistemology arrogating to itself claims of total knowledge, these philosophies fail to refer to biblical revelation. Consequently, these philosophies proposed inadequate and erroneous conceptions regarding the shape of future history. He says that “[h]uman history will not arrive at its fulfillment by way of an unbroken, continuously progressing developmental process”. History gives no immanent indication that human society is able to reach fulfilment, but is characterised by catastrophe. The biblical witness to the continuing presence of evil within history, and at its end, suggests an incapacity for this evil to be overcome immanently. Contrary to immanent philosophies of progress, history’s end will be marked by rupture and not immanent perfection.

What revelation discloses to be the perpetual presence of evil within history relates closely to the philosophical bases upon which Pieper and Ratzinger reject the

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48 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 103.
52 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 100.
possibility of an inner-fulfilment of history. Ratzinger specifically contends against hope in “a definitive intra-historical fulfilment” on rational as well as theological grounds.\textsuperscript{53} Broadly speaking, it can be said that Pieper and Ratzinger philosophically contradict the notion of an immanent perfection of history on anthropological grounds. Ratzinger identifies two anthropological grounds for holding that history cannot be perfected from within. First, history itself is characterised by “perpetual” or “permanent” freedom. Secondly, humanity is marked by freedom, openness, and constrained by limits and peccability, which suggests the possibility of historical failure.\textsuperscript{54} Both bases are interrelated and preclude a definitive state of intra-historical perfection. They can be treated together.

To fill out what Ratzinger means by the openness of history and humanity, reference to Pieper’s philosophy of history is necessary. As Pieper argues, the question of whether human hope can be satisfied within history depends on what history is understood to be. According to Pieper, an event only becomes ‘historical’ when human agency is brought to bear upon it. Otherwise, it is simply a natural process. ‘Human history’ only arises therefore when a “personal response” is engaged, that is, “when what is specifically human comes into play”.\textsuperscript{55} As a result, the historical involves “freedom, responsibility, decision, and therefore also the possibility of willful blunder and guilt”.\textsuperscript{56} The possibility of inner-historical failure is characteristic of history because the genuinely historical is the human. The human involves freedom, choice, responsibility and sin.\textsuperscript{57} Each historical event is therefore singular, unrepeatably and non-interchangeable.

Consequently, for Pieper and Ratzinger, history does not proceed according to human rational calculation. No historical event can be predicted or deduced from what has preceded it.\textsuperscript{58} To the contrary, only “prophetic” intelligence is able to say anything regarding the historical future.\textsuperscript{59} The future, because it will involve the

\textsuperscript{53} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 213.
\textsuperscript{55} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 32, quotations on 34.
\textsuperscript{56} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 34.
\textsuperscript{57} The specifically theological element that Ratzinger introduces into this conception is reference to the peccability of humanity, that is, its tendency to sin.
\textsuperscript{58} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 34-35.
\textsuperscript{59} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 93.
‘historical’, “resists any kind of advance calculation or speculation”.

A philosophy of history cannot derive “from the course of history anything like a basic structural formula whose application would then render everything explicable”. The notion that hope and history can be planned overestimates humanity’s rational capacities. As Ratzinger says, “human planners can never anticipate the fresh concepts and insights of a new generation”. Human knowledge and technological advancement cannot be predicted as they are unknowable to the present generation.

Perfected history also cannot be expected on the basis of a materialist philosophy of history, which overlooks human freedom. Ratzinger argues that the fundamental error of Marx was his assumption that the ‘New Jerusalem’ would remove all alienation and division. Marx – and “Marxist-inspired liberation practices” – ignored, however, that the human person remains free and possesses the freedom to commit evil as long as history persists. A planned, inner-historical hope opposes freedom because each generation must choose the good anew. It cannot be chosen ahead of time for it. Underlying Marx’s erroneous philosophy of history is the materialism on which his philosophy ultimately rests, which mistakenly asserts that improvement of economic conditions will result in the liberation of humanity. Material improvement does not necessarily result in moral improvement and revolution cannot create a new humanity. There can, in other words, be “no definitive human condition within history” or “definitively stable irreversible social order”. A materialist conception of redemption that expects a transformation of matter and humanity and therefore history based upon economic conditions is false.

The underlying materialism of Blochian Marxism – the idea that the human person can hope in what he himself can bring about within history – is in fact an “anthropological perversion” and a “profound error”. The ‘perversion’ and ‘error’

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60 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 47.
64 Benedict, *Spe Salvi*, n30.
rests on the belief that the object of human hope belongs not to the human person’s moral dignity and personality but to “planning mechanisms”, even if these contradict or do not support what is truly human.68 The construction of “an irreversibly positive, definitive society” would paralyse freedom, because in such a scenario, it is the structures supposedly guaranteeing the perfect society that determine the human person, who will then act according to the structures. They will act with no real freedom and happiness will be an external imposition. ‘Liberated’ humanity will in fact be enslaved.69 Genuine human values are thereby inverted: the planning mechanism becomes supreme and the human person secondary. Planning for hope, far from bringing about genuinely human salvation, will bring about tyranny and totalitarianism.70 Ratzinger thus links his critique of Marxist understanding of history to a deeper anthropological crisis regarding the depersonalisation of humanity. The moral freedom of humanity has been replaced by a belief in ‘scientism’ and technologically wrought salvation, a revolutionary deus ex machina that will “inexplicably” result in the “new man and new society”.71 Marxism condemns the human person to enslavement.

For Ratzinger a hope that does not proceed from and respect the dignity of the human person, which rests on his moral freedom, is a false hope. A Blochian ‘laboratory of hope’ contradicts the philosophical idea that hoping for things we can bring about ourselves is unintelligible. Even more so, it contradicts the human person’s spiritual nature and openness to a transcendent, supra-historical destiny which can be brought about not by human effort, but correspondence with grace (4). It also contradicts the necessity for salvation to consist in a definitive removal of sin and the need for the human person to overcome himself – the ‘new humanity’ can only arise as a result of transformative, deifying grace (5). If hope is understood entirely in impersonal and inner-historical and therefore social, historical and political terms, then the personal, transcendent destiny of the human person is forgotten. The individual is sacrificed at the altar of the god of history in the name of revolutionary liberation.72 Ratzinger sees this with penetrating clarity, which perhaps explains his opposition to an

68 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 213, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 232.
69 Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 253; see also 241.
72 C.f. Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 42-43.
impersonally-cast and socially-inflected hope, such as is present in Marxism generally, but also in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez (1).

2.2.4 The Personalist Nature of Hope

For Pieper and Ratzinger, hope is only intelligible if spoken of in personalist terms and if its object transcends death, that is, is supra-historical. A personalist conception of hope links Pieper and Ratzinger to the ‘I-Thou’ personalism of Buber, providing sharp contrast to a Metzian-inspired political theology, which deliberately distanced itself from an existentialist, personalist theology. Although personalism and existentialism need to be differentiated and understood as multifaceted, and Pieper and Ratzinger by no means accept existentialism in toto, their conceptions of hope and history nevertheless are grounded in the view that the human person possesses a need for existential fulfilment, a fulfilment that extends beyond time and history.73

Hope is characteristically personal. Ratzinger suggests that “by its very essence hope refers to the person” and that its object is a personal need.74 Pieper argues that it is only an “individual … particular person” that has the capacity to hope.75 He also observes that hope aims at “true fulfilment”.76 An orientation to ‘true fulfilment’ must be understood in personal terms: it is unintelligible to hope for the fulfilment of others if it does not include my own fulfilment. Thus, characteristic of hope is not simply that “[i]t will turn out well for mankind” but, more so, that “[i]t will turn out well for us, for me myself”.77 Hope begins in the human person’s own desire for fulfilment and is unintelligible if the promised object does not affect that individual personally. It involves concern for the personal fulfilment of others but not at the

73 As Rowland points out, the relationality embedded in the ‘I-Thou’ structure of Buber’s personalism was emphasised by Ratzinger in his Introduction to Christianity. Rowland, Guide, 15, Buber, I and Thou, 3. In Ratzinger’s Introduction to Christianity, he emphasises that the “most fundamental feature of the Christian faith … [is] its personal character”, in which the important point is “encounter with the man Jesus”: Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 79. On Ratzinger’s encounter with Buber see his Milestones, 44. For an implicit association of the ‘I-Thou’ in Ratzinger’s estimation of Augustine see Pope Benedict XVI’s first entry on St Augustine of Hippo in the collection of his papal addresses on great intellectual figures of the Church, Great Christian Thinkers: From the Early Church Through the Middle Ages (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 102: Augustine paid “attention to the mystery of God who is concealed in the ‘I’”.
75 Pieper, Hope and History, 87.
76 Pieper, Problems of Modern Faith, 187.
77 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 114.
expense of one’s own fulfilment, so that, for example, a human person cannot sin for
the sake of someone else’s salvation. Romanus Cessario notes thus that Pieper’s
conception of hope is cast according to “the language of personal fulfilment”. Indeed, “[h]ope, like love, is one of the very simple, primordial dispositions of the living person”. Hope is necessarily personal.

As personal, hope relates to the desire of the heart for God. Pieper and Ratzinger share a theological anthropology, which understands this desire of the heart as ultimately the desire for God. Cessario quotes Pieper’s claim that hope involves the human person reaching out, “‘with restless heart,’ with confidence and patient expectation toward…the arduous ‘not yet’ of fulfilment”. Reference to the ‘restless heart’ invokes the Augustinian motif central to the Christian tradition regarding the restlessness of the human heart, a restlessness that derives from its orientation, and need, to rest in God. Hope is based on a desire for existential fulfilment, which is necessarily personal.

Personally-cast hope in Pieper and Ratzinger does not equate to individualism. Unlike Metz, where hope seems to begin in hoping for others’ success in becoming ‘subjects before God’ and only then does it become hope for the person (1.2.4), hope in Pieper and Ratzinger’s understanding begins in the person and then extends to others. The successful outcome for others is relevant to oneself because he is personally affected by their success as a relational being. Contrary to the conclusion’s dismissal of personalism, Ratzinger considers the human person to be essentially relational (see 4). Hope is not for Pieper and Ratzinger simply about whether ‘I, myself’ will enjoy the beatific vision without regard to whether anybody else will. For Ratzinger, such would not be beatitude; beatitude is essentially

78 C.f. St Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, II-II, 26, 4 where Thomas argues, prima facie surprisingly, that the human person should have greater charity towards himself than his neighbour (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Notre Dame, Indiana: Christian Classics, 1948)).

79 Romanus Cessario OP, The Virtues, Or the Examined Life (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 34.

80 Cessario, The Virtues, 34 quoting Pieper, Hope, 27: see Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 100 (emphasis added).


corporate. As noted above, Pieper considers hope to be salvation for ‘us/for me’. Hope is for ‘us’ but, as personal, begins in the ‘I’.

When hope is understood in personalist terms, inner-historical hope is shown to be inadequate. Impersonal hope in the bettering of society or the eventual advent of inner-worldly, eschatological utopia is relativised. Ratzinger says that “a hope that does not concern me personally is not a real hope”. 84 Hope for “anyone else anywhere else”, that is, someone else not especially connected to the person geographically, by friendship or the bonds of charity, is not really hope.85 As Pieper observes, even if a person might speculate as to the technical and other possibilities that might arise in the future – for example, longer life expectancy or those arising from “electronic information technology” (!) – these have no strict relevance to the speculating person.86 Because hope is personal, it becomes unintelligible to speak of a ‘laboratory of hope’ whose objective is the “restoration of utopia” at some point, no matter how distant, in the future under the guidance of a logic of history.87 Thus, Ratzinger observes that although it is incumbent upon the Christian to improve the world, a “better world” in the future “cannot be the proper and sufficient content of our hope”.88 Hope, instead, concerns the person, which necessarily precludes a perfected history he will not enjoy.

### 2.2.5 The Imperative for Hope to Transcend Death and the Historical

An important element of a personally-conceived hope is that it addresses death. Pieper argues that a significant problem with progressive expectations regarding the future is that they fail to account for the issue of death, rarely discussing its reality. His pungent criticism of Blochian schemes of hope is contained in the simple but

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86 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 87.
telling rhetorical question, which asks how some future historical state can be the object of the hope of a person who will not see its realisation, because he will likely be dead. In short, the hoping person will not live to see the dawning of the “golden age”. For Pieper such a fact contradicts the nature of hope itself. According to his conception of hope, a person who hopes “anticipates some real thing”. Such a person hopes for the personal possession of something substantial that is understood as good. Hope in some impersonal future historical state is therefore rendered meaningless in the face of the fact of death because it can contain no personal possession of the good. The good must be capable of being possessed beyond death.

Ratzinger adds theological depth to Pieper’s observations by exploring how Marxist-inspired liberation theologies are deficient with respect to the question of death. Their inner-worldly conception of the achievement of justice and freedom contains an inadequate treatment of the desire for these goods. Ratzinger observes that a conception of justice and freedom, which fails to account for the reality of death, will remain insufficient. Those who have already died will be “cheated” if justice will only be wrought at some point in the far-off, inner-historical future. In other words, desire for these goods is unintelligible if it does not answer the problem of death. Nor is it helpful to argue that these people may have contributed to the achievement of such future liberation, if they themselves do not enjoy it. Such people have not in fact entered into the state of justice, because they have died not experiencing this state. A greater injustice will in fact follow, because justice will forever remain beyond the reach of those who have died, if justice is conceived solely in inner-historical terms.

As a result, liberation can only be true liberation and hope genuine, if they transcend the boundary of death. As Ratzinger argues, “[w]ithout the solution of the question of death, everything else becomes unreal and contradictory.” He notes that even Marxist thinker Adorno recognised the inadequacy of an inner-historical conception

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89 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 84-87, quotation on 85.
82 Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 254.
83 Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 254.
of justice and the need for past injustices to be overcome. The internal contradictions of Adorno’s position, however, become apparent. Adorno held that, although there needs to be some sort of resurrection of the dead for past injustice to be overcome, such a notion of “the resurrection of the flesh, [is] something that it is totally foreign to idealism and the realm of the Absolute Spirit”. Contained in the Hegelian-Marxist notion of hope for the realisation of justice is an inconsistency, which fails to answer the question of a hope that transcends death.

Recognising the inadequacy of a purely inner-historical conception of hope, the question becomes one regarding which vision of hope adequately ensures justice is given to the dead, and is therefore more compelling. On the one hand, there is the Hegelian-Marxist vision of dialectical historical development that helps inspires Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez’s conception of hope. Even if the theology of hope and political and liberation theologies frame their reflections under the aspect of eschatology, it remains unclear how hope that emphasises political, social and historical development adequately transcends an immanent, inner-historical framework. The alternative to a Hegelian-Marxist vision of hope is, on the other hand, that prosecuted by Pieper and Ratzinger, which sees hope firmly under the aspect of eternity (see further below), including the prospect that there will be a judgement at the end of time, which restores justice.

The question of hope inevitably involves the question of death and what lies ‘beyond’ it, which contrasts with an inner-worldly future-oriented hope. Pieper notes Bloch’s Marx-inspired polemic against an opiate “consolation in the hereafter”, which it is said perpetuated historical injustice and palliated the oppressed into searching for riches in heaven at the expense of striving for justice on earth. Although recognising the possibility of religion being used to numb the masses, Pieper insists that it nevertheless remains imperative to consider the ‘hereafter’, especially in relation to the nature of hope. For Pieper, the term “hereafter” should

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94 To be fair, we have seen that an important part of Metz’s political theology is the need to conceive of a hope that overcomes historical oppression and helps the dead become ‘subjects in God’s presence’: 1.2.3.
95 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n42 quoting Adorno, Negative Dialektik (1966) in Gesammelte Schriften VI, Frankfurt am Main 1973, second part, 207. See also Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 254.
97 Pieper, Hope and History, 88.
not be considered a noun, but rather as an adverb in relation to time and place. The ‘hereafter’ is thus to be considered, not as a “region” or “landscape” capable of description, but as simply that which is beyond death: “What is meant is the other side of death, and nothing else”. For Pieper, this is a personal and deeply relevant question for each individual because it “concerns the concrete future that awaits us all”. Self-evidently, the ‘concrete future’ for each individual involves the question of what happens after death (see 2.3.4).

The question of what happens in the “hereafter” drives the question of the object of hope. An individual who hopes wants a “realist-oriented understanding” of what awaits him at death, not some “abstract speculation and fantasy” regarding the future. Pieper points out that hope must have a legitimate basis in order to be something more than wish-fulfilment. In reality, Pieper argues, abstract “‘this-worldly’ and purely intra-historical expectations about the future”, which sideline the question of death, are the real deceptions because they do not concern the “concrete existences” of individuals and are thus truly ‘beyond’ the hope of these people. Related is Ratzinger’s comment that inner-worldly versions of hope offer a ‘deceptive surrogate’ (2.2.2). Hope in the improvement of society, Pieper says, is “no hope at all”. In contrast, true fulfilment can only occur, if at all, “‘beyond’ our corporeal and historical existence” (a possibility that can only be known through faith). As a corollary, an object of hope is only real when it is realisable beyond death.

Instead of offering hope, by answering the question of death, immanent philosophies of history mask an underlying despair. The “forced optimism” (Pieper) of the general contemporary bourgeois culture connects to the “ideological optimism” (Ratzinger) of the philosophy of history, which underpins secularised Christian hope. Ratzinger argues that “ideological optimism” of progressive liberalism and Marxism, despite the recognition of its importance by some Marxist thinkers, seeks to elide the

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99 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 89.  
100 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 89.  
101 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 90-93 (quotations on 90).  
102 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 89.  
issue of death. Focus on the supposedly progressive movement of history towards its culmination in the “perfect society” overlooks death.\textsuperscript{105} The philosophy of history characteristic of this ‘ideological optimism’ amounts to “a lie” seeking to cover an underlying despair in the face of death.\textsuperscript{106} For this reason, Ratzinger observes, there is great anxiety and fear that arise when ‘ideological optimism’ is confronted with accidents such as Chernobyl, which give lie to the progressivism inherent in these philosophies. Such accidents also confront people with the reality of death and the questions it generates, that is, “what is really important”.\textsuperscript{107} ‘Ideological optimism’ cannot, however, offer any hope for a future realisable beyond death because it rests on nothing more than we can produce.\textsuperscript{108} By definition, this cannot extend beyond death.

The contrast between a Christian vision of hope and an inner-historical conception of hope, in its failure to account adequately for hope as extending beyond death, is thrown into relief in the case of martyrdom. For Pieper and Ratzinger, hope is unintelligible if cannot account for those willing to die as martyrs (or to endure worldly failure). A conception of hope must render explicable the hope of those whose earthly prospects, including even in the search for truth and justice, have vanished. It must explain the possibility of hope in those in “absolutely despairing situations”, including those who await execution.\textsuperscript{109} Indeed, genuine hope remains unperturbed by the threat of this “catastrophic end” whether manifested in death, the reign of evil or martyrdom.\textsuperscript{110} Contrary to versions of hope, in which hope’s object is placed in earthly success, genuine hope persists in the face of the destruction of all earthly prospects. Martyrs can only have hope to the extent that it is hope for a supra-historical object, the promise of which affects them personally. Aligned to a view of hope as supra historical is the view that genuine hope exists outside the framework of historical success.

\textsuperscript{105} Ratzinger, \textit{Yes of Jesus Christ}, 49.
\textsuperscript{106} Ratzinger, \textit{Yes of Jesus Christ}, 49.
\textsuperscript{108} C.f. Ratzinger, \textit{Yes of Jesus Christ}, 48-49.
\textsuperscript{110} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 107.
2.2.6 Conclusion

Pieper and Ratzinger argue that history cannot know its own fulfilment. This section has explored the argument of Pieper and Ratzinger that history is not immanently perfectible and that hope cannot be placed in a ‘laboratory’. Hope’s object is not controllable. To secularise Christian hope and subject it to human manipulation is thus to misapprehend its nature. Hope, instead, must transcend the historical and intra-mundane, including the spectre of death. Pieper lays the philosophical foundations for treatment of the theocentric nature of hope in arguing, convincingly, that hope must be concerned with what happens after death, as flowing from the personal nature of hope itself. Both Pieper and Ratzinger show the shortcomings of expecting inner-historical fulfilment. To the content and shape of fundamental hope, left open by a philosophical and theological critique of inner-historical conceptions of hope, we will now turn.

2.3 The Theocentric Content of Fundamental Hope

To answer to the question of what happens in the ‘hereafter’ beyond death is to give specific content to the vision of hope in Pieper and Ratzinger. This section explores how Pieper and Ratzinger provide theocentric and Christian content to what they describe as ‘fundamental hope’, which is oriented to eternal life beyond death. First, it will explore the distinction in Pieper, which Ratzinger adopts, between everyday hopes and a singular, fundamental hope. Separate from the realm of the everyday and intra-mundane, fundamental hope’s object is unspecifiable, beyond human knowledge and a transcendent reality. Related to hope’s transcendent and non-specifiable character is its ‘not yet’ character. The human person is in the status viatoris, the state of ‘being on the way’, which precludes any possibility of the earthly fulfilment of hope. Hope, rather, is connected to the human person’s desire for a transcendent fulfilment beyond death, which relates to the transcendent nature of the human person.

For Pieper and Ratzinger, hope has a theocentric content. Eternal life in God fulfils the person’s longing and therefore hope for existential fulfilment. Pieper and Ratzinger’s similar descriptions of eternal life as participation in God’s eternity will
thus be explored. As oriented to eternal life, hope reaches its summit as a theological virtue, which gives the believer a foretaste of the eternal life it anticipates. As a theological virtue, hope is given by God to direct the human person back to him. God is thus the ultimate object of human hope. As oriented to the gift of eternal life in God, hope is directed to a possession that cannot be obtained by human efforts. Consequently, hope is connected to prayer. Moreover, only as prayerful can hope impact upon current history. Hope is ‘performative’ to the extent that, with faith and charity, it seeks to make present God on earth. Thus, hope is not activist and impatient, but patient and receptive, awaiting God’s action to fulfil human hope.

2.3.1 The Distinction between Everyday Hopes and Fundamental Hope

‘Fundamental hope’, according to Pieper and Ratzinger, is characteristically oriented to what transcends history and everyday reality. Pieper and Ratzinger each draw a distinction between everyday, temporal hopes and a single, fundamental hope.\(^{111}\) The singularity and authenticity of fundamental hope distinguishes it from the realm of everyday hopes and point to infinity beyond death and the transcendence of temporality. The reality of fundamental hope is the basis of their claim that hope is essentially oriented to a supernatural and extra-historical object.

To examine the distinction between everyday hopes and fundamental hopes, Pieper analyses the difference drawn in language between ‘hopes’ and ‘hope’.\(^{112}\) He focuses attention on the relative lack of subtlety in the English and German languages, as compared to the French, in denoting the phenomenon of the distinction between lesser hopes and fundamental hope. Perceptively pointing to the difference between the French espoir and espérance, he notes that the former tends to be used in the plural – the “thousands of things” for which people hope in their everyday lives. The latter in contrast, appears to exclude such plurality.\(^{113}\)

\(^{111}\) The distinction between everyday hopes and a fundamental hope is roughly analogous to the distinction between natural hopes and supernatural hope, a distinction that will not explicitly be examined herein. On the relationship between natural and supernatural hopes, refer to Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, 110-111; C.f. Doyle, “Thomistic Critique of an Augustinian Encyclical,” 351n2. Neither will the passion of hope be discussed: see Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 40, Schumacher, *Philosophy of Hope*, 105-108.

\(^{112}\) Pieper, *Hope and History*, 26, citing Paul Ludwig Landsberg’s conclusion that there should be a distinction drawn between ‘hopes’ and ‘hope’ in *Die Erfahrung des Todes* (Lucerne, 1937), 48.

In addition to examining everyday language, Pieper refers also to the clinician Herbert Plügge’s phenomenological analysis of people who had attempted suicide or had an incurable illness. Plügge observed that the experience of hope in those people was two-tiered. Along with common hopes, also present was a qualitatively different hope. Plügge described this hope as “fundamental” or “authentic” and contrasted it with the plurality of “ordinary” or “everyday” hopes. Based on Plügge’s analysis Pieper implies two classes of hope. First, the myriad, every day aspirations and motivations of human beings as they live their daily lives and, secondly, a more fundamental, overall hope.

Ratzinger adopts Pieper’s two-tiered approach to the phenomenon of hope. He suggests Pieper “explained in striking fashion” in his *Hoffnung und Geschichte* (*Hope and History*), the nature of hope. He observes that “[d]ay by day, man experiences many greater or lesser hopes, different in kind according to the different periods of his life”, but that there is also a “genuine hope” distinct from these. Like Pieper, Ratzinger acknowledges the presence of everyday hopes and does not seek to deny their legitimacy, but distinguishes them from a singular, ‘non-everyday’ hope.

Underlying the distinction in Pieper and Ratzinger between hopes and a singular hope is recognition of the unique nature of the object of fundamental hope. The object of fundamental hope differs in kind from the objects of everyday hopes. Pieper argues that hope can be understood in terms similar to the way that Plato argues that love and ‘making’ should be understood. While there are different objects of love (parents, country, and friends), the term ‘lover’ in Plato signifies simply erotic lovers (not parents and so on). Likewise, many people make things but only the poet is, according to Plato, a ‘maker’. Similarly, although there is a multitude of genuine “objects of human hope”, such as good weather or world peace, “there appears to be only one single object that, by being hoped for, renders a person simply

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114 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 27.
The one who hopes does not hope for everyday objects but is one who possesses the singular hope.

To establish his claim, Pieper approaches the distinction negatively. Only the person who loses the fundamental hope can be described as “without hope”. Someone can be described, thus, as one who hopes even if his daily objects of hope are disappointed, so long as the underlying hope remains present. An underlying hope is genuine hope, which explains the possibility of the hope of martyrs. Analogously, Ratzinger approaches the distinction by discussing hope’s antonym: fear. Each person has daily fears to confront – Ratzinger gives the examples of a “vicious dog” and “daily annoyances” – which contrast, however, with an ultimate fear that one’s life may become ruined or unbearable, ultimately by descending into loneliness. The latter fear belongs to a different class of fear than the everyday fears that we confront. Similarly, hope has two different classes of object, the disappointment of only one of which constitutes genuine hopelessness. Hope, in its most fundamental or authentic sense, refers to an underlying singular object, the prospect of which ensures the existence of hope.

Pieper takes his analysis a step further and argues that the falling away or disappointment of daily or everyday hopes is the necessary precondition for the realisation of the ‘fundamental hope’. This, he says, is what is “really worth thinking about” concerning Plügge’s results. Plügge found that “true hope” comes into light when the objects of everyday hopes are lost through a process of disillusionment (Enttäuschaung). When one realises that earthly goods such as bodily health are not necessary for “real well-being”, genuine hope for the “other” hope emerges. The disappointment of the daily or everyday hopes serves not merely the correction of a false belief but an existential liberation that overcomes the fact of the terminal illness in those Plügge studied.

118 Pieper, Hope and History, 25. The Plato citation is the Symposium, 205 b-d.
122 Pieper, Hope and History, 29.
Pieper extends Plügge’s conclusions and applies them universally. All of us face the prospect of death and will be eventually confronted with the disappointment of our daily hopes. The disillusionment offered by the prospect of death provides, however, an opportunity for hope to be directed to its proper object. It can liberate the person by expanding his existential horizons beyond the intra-mundane. The disappointment of natural hopes allows the person to realise that only “one’s orientation to being” remains.\(^{123}\) Pieper even suggests that the process of disillusionment that is necessary for one to experience genuine hope.\(^{124}\) In any event, in Pieper’s understanding, it is in light of the failure of the everyday hopes that fundamental hope emerges, which is suggestively connected to an orientation to the possession of being (see further 4).

In a theological context, Ratzinger makes similar claims regarding the abiding presence of an underlying hope in the face of the loss of the objects of everyday hope, which reveals the true tenor of hope as directed to the object of faith. He refers to the Letter to the Hebrews (10:34) and the author’s statement to persecuted Christians that, even though they have lost their _ta hyparchonta_, that is, their property on which they depend to live, they have a “better possession” (_hyparxin/hyparxis_) (namely, faith), which endures despite the loss of the daily possessions.\(^{125}\) Faith can endure even in the face of dispossession and, at the extreme, martyrdom.

Although Ratzinger writes about the definition of faith, his argument is relevant to a discussion of the two-tiered nature hope and reveals fundamental hope’s object to be the object of faith. He considers faith and hope to be closely connected. Consequently, if faith endures, so then does hope, even if the possessions in which one formerly placed faith and hope for a secure life are taken away. Ratzinger argues “that it is precisely through the loss” of these things that Christians recognise the “better possession” they have gained through faith, and the hope that corresponds to that faith.\(^{126}\) In a theological context, which parallels Pieper’s philosophical

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\(^{123}\) Pieper, *Christian Idea of Man*, 42.


discussion, Ratzinger considers that it is through the falling away of those things in which we place hope for a secure life, that the underlying hope corresponding to faith remains. Moreover, in another analogue to Pieper, Ratzinger argues that this dispossession is liberating. A “freedom” is gained relative to everyday property, exhibited for example in martyrdom or the vow of poverty of religious. Similarly, Ratzinger argues that “the great hope” cannot be extinguished even in the face of smaller or larger historical failures. The hope that faith promises is, on this account, the fundamental hope, which endures the exigencies of temporal, historical existence.

An important corollary to the idea that an underlying authentic hope can perdure when temporal (and therefore historical) objects of hope are lost, is the notion that these temporal goods will not ultimately satisfy a person’s hope. For Ratzinger, faith “relativizes the habitual foundation, the reliability of material income”. Ratzinger, referring to the existential lack that drives the phenomenon of human hoping, observes that no moment in life will fulfil expectation: more always will be expected. With the human person’s supernatural end in mind, he argues that “[w]e cannot stop reaching out for [true life], and yet we know that all we can experience or accomplish is not what we yearn for”. Daily hopes that drive human activity, especially the hopes Ratzinger describes as pertaining to youth (such as meeting the ‘right person’, career or other success), give way to the realisation that satisfaction of such hopes is insufficient for fulfilment. Attainment of the daily objects of hope may give the appearance of being totally satisfying. In their fulfilment the person realises however that these objects did not constitute “the whole [of that for which there is

127 There is an issue here as to what extent baptism solidifies the content of the object of genuine hope: Ratzinger’s discussion relates to Christian faith, whereas Pieper’s discussion is more generally philosophical, and so concerns the continuing presence of a general hope in the face of the loss of the objects of daily hope, without necessarily referring to the theological virtue of faith. As will be discussed below, Pieper considers hope as virtue only to be a theological virtue. As a believing Christian, he would consider that existential hope can only be fulfilled in Christ, even as he is silent in Hope and History regarding the presence of existential hope in non-believers. It may be that such a hope is the result of the desire for God that Pieper would consider belongs to the human person by nature. The genuine hope corresponds to this existential desire for fulfilment. See further below in this Chapter and Chapters 3 and 4.
128 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n8.
129 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n35.
130 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n8.
132 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n12. A parallel is shown here with Pieper’s Thomas-inspired thought that the human person cannot but help desire happiness: see Chapter 3.
hope]”. What will satisfy is, rather, the object of the true hope. Impliedly, as will be filled out below, hope’s object is infinite. It transcends temporal or historical objects of hope, which cannot satisfy the human person’s longing. Only eternity will satisfy infinite human longing. The hope underlying the human experience is thus distinct from everyday hopes and points to a transcendent fulfilment.

2.3.2 The Transcendent Nature of Fundamental Hope

Two elements of Pieper and Ratzinger’s description regarding ‘fundamental’ hope, which they contrast with everyday hopes, make the transcendent nature of hope apparent. First is the singularity of the fundamental hope. Second is the description of fundamental hope as authentic.

As is implicit in the preceding discussion, for Pieper and Ratzinger, real or genuine hope is a single hope. Such is clear in their language regarding this hope. In Pieper’s elaboration of Plügge’s conclusions regarding the loss of everyday hopes and the emergence of fundamental hope, he uses the phrases “true hope”, “hope per se” and “existential hope”. Pieper quotes Plügge’s findings concerning “fundamental hope” and the “authentic hope” that arises when “ordinary, everyday hope” is lost. Pieper’s language classes fundamental hope as singular.

133 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n30. We can see here an interesting point of contact with the so-called ‘new natural law theory’, which argues that all of human activity is motivated by a set of basic human goods, such as life, art, religion, knowledge and so on: see the explanation in Anthony Fisher OP, “Bioethics After Finnis” in Reason, Morality, and Law: The Philosophy of John Finnis, ed. John Keown and Robert P. George (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 271-272. See also Rowland, Catholic Theology, 75-79 for an overview of a critique of this theory, especially at 76-77, particularly on the ground that these human goods are considered as pre-moral in the theory and that the Christocentrism of Gaudium et Spes, n22, is not “infrastructural” but merely accidental to their theory. In this sense, there is distance between what this study argues is the Christocentrism of the account of hope set out in Ratzinger (3). Note, however, that Fisher observes that some argue that “integrity and religion have a certain supernatural or metaphysical priority” within the order of basic human goods, which suggests a possible recognition of the ordering of the goods to a supernatural end: 275 (emphasis in original); c.f. Russell Hittinger, A Critique of the New Natural Law Theory (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 65-92.

134 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n30. On Ratzinger’s understanding of hope as being directed to an infinite object see more below in this Chapter. Such a claim depends, moreover, on a particular Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist theological anthropology, which sees the human person as possessing a desire for supernatural fulfilment: see Chapter 4.

135 To be clear, they do not on this account argue that the everyday hopes are not genuine, only that they obtain their true colour in light of the ultimate, genuine, hope and fall away in the face of death: c.f. Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 110.

136 Pieper, Hope and History, 28, 30, 31n30.

137 Pieper, Hope and History, 29; see also 27 (emphasis added).
Ratzinger’s description of hope likewise emphasises the singularity of fundamental hope and its connection to Christian faith. He refers to the “genuine hope” studied by Plügge and likewise quotes his use of the phrase “fundamental hope”.138 Throughout his encyclical Spe Salvi, Ratzinger uses the expression, “the [or ‘this’ or ‘that’] great hope”.139 He also adds the adjective “true” to the phrase: “that true, great hope”.140 Perhaps most significantly, in his Eschatology, Ratzinger utilises the phrase, “the Christian hope” to describe what he considers to be genuine, Christian hope.141 “Christian hope” is also used throughout Spe Salvi. Although used without the article, hope is understood in the singular. The adjective ‘Christian’ indicates moreover that he considers this to be what authentically Christian hope is.142 Hope refers to a singular, authentic reality, which is specifically the object of Christian hope.

The adjectives that Pieper and Ratzinger use to describe hope thus indicate the transcendent nature of fundamental hope and that it has a particular object, which alone can answer hope. Ratzinger argues that, “the great hope…must surpass everything else”, including the “greater or lesser hopes that keep us going day by day”.143 Implied, moreover, is that there is only one particular object that corresponds to the ‘fundamental’ or ‘authentic’ hope. Pieper suggests that, in the disillusionment of everyday hopes, hope turns “toward its true object”.144 Genuine hope has only one object, which will satisfy hope’s longing.

An important characteristic of the object of ‘true hope’, which reveals its transcendent character, is that philosophically speaking it cannot be known in itself. This marks out Pieper and Ratzinger’s conceptions of hope from a Blochian-inspired idea of hope, which as noted sees hope as belonging to what can be known and manipulated in a ‘laboratory’. If hope concerns what is beyond our powers to bring about, it is also relates to an object that cannot be completely understood by human

139 Benedict, Spe Salvi, nn3, 27, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35.
140 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n39.
141 Ratzinger, Eschatology, e.g. 8, 21, 174, 245, 258. Interestingly, Moltmann uses the expression, “the Christian hope”, but with differing implications: Theology of Hope, 16.
142 Benedict, Spe Salvi, passim.
143 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n31.
144 Pieper, Hope and History, 30.
reasoning. Particular to the Christian understanding of hope is “the non-specifiability of the object of hope”. The person who genuinely hopes knows not the time of its fulfilment, its form or scope, and in fact concedes the potential for hope to be fulfilled in a manner that transcends any human conception of this fulfilment. Human rationality cannot grasp the object of fundamental hope. It could be said that its contents can only be known negatively: we know that ultimate hope cannot be satisfied intra-mundanely and that therefore it is transcendent of history. We know what is hope’s object is not, but its positive description needs revelation.

As unspecifiable, the object of fundamental hope is almost entirely distinct from the realm of everyday objects of hope, which can be classified according to human knowledge. These latter objects, in Pieper's summary of Plügge’s observations, pertain to the “worldly future” or objects to be found within the world. ‘Fundamental’ hope, however, is not oriented to any worldly thing that can be specified in an “‘objectlike’ way”. The object of fundamental hope, in contrast to something that can be so named and conceptualised, is “‘indefinite’, ‘nebulous’, ‘formless, ‘unnamable’”. According to Gabriel Marcel, “‘absolute’ hope” transcends “‘particular objects’”, cannot be conceptually grasped and perhaps can be said not to have an object at all. Hope in other words is not directed to a scientifically knowable or classifiable object that is intra-mundane.

The object of fundamental hope thus cannot be possessed in the manner of an object. It is not confined, à la Bloch, to the worldly and historical, something that can be manipulated like an object. Rather, “[t]rue hope” transcends the everyday objects.

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145 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 111. As Schumacher implies, in *Hope and History* – originally lectures given in 1966 – Pieper does not define the content of the ‘true object’ of hope by reference to Christian revelation, which it is suggested consists in a departure from his earlier, more explicit theological treatment of the content of hope in the 1930s: Schumacher, *Philosophy of Hope*, 117-118, 131n114. Schumacher may be implying that Pieper withdrew from his explicit theological commitment in his later philosophical treatments of hope. What Pieper is doing is, however, demonstrating that philosophically speaking, there is a particular reality that is hope’s proper object and that there can only be one, adequate object of hope that satisfies the human person’s longing for hope. See also Chapter 3n5.

146 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 31, 112

147 Pieper, *Hope and History*, 27.


from which the experience of hope initially springs.\textsuperscript{151} Importantly, for Pieper, the person who possesses genuine hope does not engage in projects directed “to militant implementation of predefined plans and goals or eschatological images of order”, which often end up destroying human solidarity (see 2.2.3).\textsuperscript{152} Once someone tries to control the object of hope or even imagine it concretely, hope loses something of its nature.\textsuperscript{153} We can complement thus the conclusion that hope is not controllable with the claim that fundamental hope is not manipulable because it pertains to an object beyond human ken. In fact, as Ratzinger observed above, it is dangerous to do because it tries to coerce into human categories a reality beyond them.

Pieper and Ratzinger argue, however, that the unspecifiability of hope does not mean that the object of hope is nothing. Hope is oriented to a reality, even as that reality extends beyond everyday experience. For Pieper, in language redolent of an analogical metaphysics (4), the genuine object of hope belongs to a “mode of being quite different from that of all objective goods and all conceivable changes in the external world”.\textsuperscript{154} Hope in its most authentic sense refers to an object beyond human knowledge, even if it can be known that there is an object of hope. Fundamental hope, in a sense, refers to an object of greater dissimilarity than similarity to the objects of everyday hope, which must therefore be sought beyond the historical.

Ratzinger, likewise refers to the non-specifiability of hope and, in connecting it to human desire, argues that it is oriented to a real object. In Spe Salvi, he refers to St Augustine’s description of docta ignorantia. This “learned ignorance” is the knowledge that one does not know the essence of what is ultimately desired.\textsuperscript{155} Nevertheless, the human person is certain a reality exists that will in fact satisfy the urge for happiness.\textsuperscript{156} The very fact of the desire suggests the possibility, and grounds an expectation, of its fulfilment.

\textsuperscript{151} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 112.
\textsuperscript{152} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 112.
\textsuperscript{153} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 112.
\textsuperscript{154} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 28.
\textsuperscript{155} Benedict, \textit{Spe Salvi}, n11 citing Ep. 130 \textit{Ad Probam} 14, 25-15, 28: CSEL 44, 68-73. C.f. St Thomas Aquinas’s claim that the summit of human knowledge is to know that we cannot know God in his essence: discussed in Pieper, \textit{Guide}, 159.
\textsuperscript{156} Benedict, \textit{Spe Salvi}, n11.
Elsewhere, Ratzinger suggests that the experience of human limitation (“despair over self and over the rationality of being”), coupled with the never-satiated desire of human longing, transforms hope paradoxically into a “secret joy”. In realising the paucity of earthly experience, the human person’s imperative for happiness causes him to perceive the possibility of possessing a hitherto unthought-of happiness. Such happiness will transcend any experience of earthly happiness. In conceiving its possibility, moreover, the human person comes to a kind of certitude regarding its attainment. Hope goes “beyond all human accomplishment” but can be presently possessed in the knowledge of the potential happiness that lies beyond earthly life. Fundamental hope’s object is dissimilar to anything that can be known on earth, but is grounded in a present desire for and taste of transcendent fulfilment.

2.3.3 **Hope is Oriented to what is ‘Not Yet’**

Complementing the notion that fundamental hope is transcendent is the idea that hope is oriented to what is ‘not yet’. Both Pieper and Ratzinger consider hope to possess in its basic structure a ‘not yet’ character. Ratzinger argues that hope self-evidently concerns the future and the human person’s expectation of the possession of a future happiness and joy, which he does not currently possess. Even if, for Ratzinger, it is possible for hope to anticipate the future happiness to come, it remains “not yet” while the human person remains in a temporal state. Ratzinger’s language of ‘not yet’ relates him to Pieper’s conception of hope. Pieper’s philosophy of hope is undergirded by the concept of *status viatoris*, in which the human person is understood as “being on the way” to an existential fulfilment ‘not yet’ possessed. For Pieper, hope is the “[preeminent] …virtue of the *status viatoris*” and thereby “the proper virtue of the ‘not yet’” because it orients the human person

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157 Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 33. The experience of the limited capacity for human persons to possess joy through earthly attainment relates to the disillusionment that comes from the stripping away of earthly joys, which paradoxically point to the existence of the underlying hope: c.f. 2.3.1.
158 Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 34. In this regard, Ratzinger differs slightly from Pieper, who argued that any anticipation of its object is contrary to the nature of hope. Ratzinger argues, however, that there is a kind of anticipation of hope’s object, which is not presumption: “On Hope,” 34n10 referring to Pieper, *Hoffnung und Geschichte*, 35ff.
159 Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 29, quotation on 33. It should be noted that Bloch also considered a ‘ontology of not yet being’ as the basis for hope (1.2.2) – the difference is that Pieper’s ‘ontology of not yet being’ is not immanently but transcendentally framed: Schumacher, *Philosophy of Hope*, 40-46, esp. 41.
to the comprehensive fulfilment of what is ‘not yet’ in the temporal sphere. Both Pieper and Ratzinger consider that the reality of the human person’s temporality grounds the ‘not yet’ character of hope. While bounded by history, hope’s object will always ‘not yet’ be possessed.

Consideration of the ‘not yet’ character of hope reveals it to possess a dynamic, forward-looking character related to the human desire for fulfilment. For Ratzinger, hope belongs to the “dynamism of the provisional”, transcending “human accomplishment”. Hope is connected to the dynamism of human desire which drives the hoping person beyond himself to obtain what is not yet possessed (c.f. 4). In relation to St Augustine’s linking of prayer, desire and hope, Ratzinger comments on his reference to St Paul’s description “of himself as straining forward to the things that are to come” (Phil 3:13). The use of this phrase evokes the ‘not yet’-oriented character of hope and the human person’s striving to possess the object of hope, not yet obtained. While the ‘not yet’ of hope subsists, the hoping person cannot remain satisfied. Ratzinger quotes Goethe’s Faust, “Linger a while: you are so beautiful” and argues that the dynamism of hope stops this diabolic attitude. An attitude preventing rest in the temporal relativises any everyday hope or good as being ultimately unsatisfying. Hope drives the human person forward to what is beyond history.

The dynamic ‘not yet’ of hope, which motivates the person to desire more, to strain forward, is opposed to worldly satisfaction and reaches out to eternal life. Pieper quotes the Vulgate of the first half of the same verse of St Paul referred to by Augustine (Phil 3:13): “Brethren, I do not consider that I have laid hold [comprehendisse] of the [the goal] already”. He links the ‘not yet’ character of the human person as viator (that is, a wayfarer or pilgrim) with the possession of the

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162 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 95, 96, 98 (quotations on 98).
163 Interestingly, Ratzinger considers the human person’s temporality to extend even beyond death. In a sense, beyond death, hope’s object is ‘not yet’ realised while the soul awaits the resurrection of the flesh, even if possessing the beatific vision: see Ratzinger, Eschatology, 182 and further 4.2.2.
167 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 92.
goal of that striving, “to be a comprehensor, [which] means to possess beatitude”.

Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch note that the “prize of salvation has yet to be won since the competition is still in progress”. St Paul, as the archetype of Christian living, is a wayfarer ‘not yet’ in possession of eternal life, and the salvation that is the “resurrection from the dead” (Phil 3:11). He does not yet grasp or comprehend what he is working towards, eternal life. The appropriate response to this state of affairs is, moreover, not despair but hope in eventual fulfilment. Intrinsic to hope, then, is a dynamic orientation outside of oneself and the possession of earthly goods towards the ownership of beatitude and salvation. Hope keeps us driving forward for a better, eternal life that cannot be found on earth.

2.3.4 Hope Relates to Personal Fulfilment outside Time and History

The object of fundamental hope touches on the being of the human person, who is directed to extra-historical fulfilment. It therefore concerns existential fulfilment. Pieper argues that hope pertains to something transcendent of the realm of objects, that is, one’s being and “what one ‘is’”. Hope tends thus to personal, existential fulfilment and is, in the words of Plügge’s provisional conclusions, oriented to “self-realization in the future” and the “well-being of the person”. As a result, Pieper connects fundamental hope to the “rightness” of the person’s life because it is oriented towards “true fulfilment”, a fulfilment that can only be realised beyond history and death. “Christian hope” is not resignation that nothing but supernatural hope can provide happiness but:

...is first and foremost an existential orientation of man to his fulfilment in being, to the fulfilment of his essence, to his ultimate fulfilment, to the fullness of existence (to which, of course, the fullness of happiness – or rather, bliss – corresponds).

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170 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 98.
171 Pieper, Hope and History, 28.
172 Pieper, Hope and History, 28.
174 Pieper, Christian Idea of Man, 42.
Thus, hope orients the person to the (only) reality that will fulfil him. Virtue, of which a certain type of hope is a kind, ensures that the “person is right”. Hope, on this transcendent, authentic level, helps the person live the right way, according to reality. The reality Pieper refers to is God as the ground of all being and the supra-historical destiny of the human person, as oriented to participation in God’s being. Hope orients the person to that participation.

The claim that hope belongs not to the realm of the intra-mundane, but to personal fulfilment rests on the creaturely metaphysics of Pieper and Ratzinger and the human person’s desire for the supernatural good (4). Hope is tied into a theological anthropology of transcendent desire, which sees the human person as having a supernatural destiny. Cessario, having utilised Pieper to introduce a discussion of the “anthropological presuppositions that undergird the classical treatment of the theological virtue of hope,” explains that the passion of hope belongs to the context of “the general dynamics of human longing”. The anthropological presupposition for understanding hope is the human person’s desire for God as the ultimate Good. For Pieper, contained in the concept of hope is “[l]onging, yearning, desiring, wishing, hungering and thirsting” for the “good”, understood in the Aristotelian and Thomistic sense of “all that one longs for”. Pieper argues that personal “well-being” involves the fundamental hope springing “from the very depths of our soul, with a much more vital, a truly unconquerable, intensity” than possession of a particular thing. Hope thus “presumes the existence of desire” to which it is oriented, a desire that is connected to the human person’s “self-realization”. Ultimately, hope directs the person to the possession of the Good that is God.

For Pieper and Ratzinger, hope relates to a personal desire for fulfilment outside of space and time. For Pieper, genuine or authentic hope must consist of a hope in

salvation “whose ground is not intra-mundane”. Hope concerns a desire for love. Tied into the transcendent nature of the object of hope is the human desire for a gift of love, which overcomes death. Ratzinger argues that the greatest fear of the human person is the fear of irrevocably “losing love”. Conversely, hope is only possible when love is present. Further, the fundamental hope that surpasses everyday hopes is the certainty of receiving “the gift of a great love”. As suggested in 2.2.1, hope orients the human person to an object that cannot be controlled and as such, can only be received in the manner of a gift. That gift is the receipt of a love, which surpasses the limitations of death and creaturely finitude.

The kind of love, therefore, toward which genuine hope is oriented, is not simply human love, essential as that is. It consists of a desire that reaches “toward the infinite” and “toward a world redeemed”. According to Ratzinger’s anthropology, every human person cannot but desire a “true life” that death does not touch, even if we cannot conceptualise of what this life consists. In Pieper’s words, Christian hope has as its object “the abundant reality of life”. Significantly, while “unknown”, this life consists of the “true ‘hope’” that motivates human activity. Genuine hope seeks the possession of an eternal life, which conquers finitude.

181 Pieper, End of Time, 147.
185 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n12. The experience of the saints reveals a similar experience of desiring something whose content remains unknown: hence, St Josemaría Escrivá says that his apostolic work was driven by “that wanting something while not yet knowing what it was”, Andrés Vázquez de Prada, The Founder of Opus Dei: The Life of Josemaría Escrivá, Volume I: The Early Years, trans. Bernard Browne, (Princeton, NJ: Scepter Publishers, 2001), 200.
186 Pieper, Christian Idea of Man, 42.
187 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n12.
2.3.5 Eternal Life as the Object of Hope

The issue of hope as directed beyond history and the worldly to an infinite love and existential fulfilment inevitably raises the issue of eternal life. Eternal life exists in the ‘beyond’ or ‘hereafter’, which is minimised in significance in the schemes of Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez (c.f. 2.2.4). Pieper and Ratzinger both argue that the object of authentic or fundamental hope is ultimately eternal life and salvation.

For Pieper, the ‘abundant reality of life’ (2.3.4), that is the object of hope is salvation. Supernatural hope assures the person in grace that his life will end in “eternal life”. Relying on the “classical theology” of Aquinas, Pieper argues that one of the defining characteristics of a Christian is that he “looks forward – in hope – to the ultimate fulfilment of his being in eternal life”. Such a fulfilment consists of “ultimate ‘success’ in life”, what the tradition terms “‘salvation’ (Heil)”. Pieper groups the possession of eternal life together with a cluster of ideas denoting personal (and communal) fulfilment: “the perfection of man”, “bliss”, “salvation”, “a New Heaven and a New Earth” and “Paradise”. He refers to the traditional appellation given to this perfection of the human person’s being, viz. “the visio beatifica, the ‘seeing that confers bliss’”. The beatific vision is that in which eternal life consists, the cognitive grasp of God. Pieper, quotes St John’s Gospel to bear this out: “Eternal life is knowing Thee”.

Ratzinger also argues that eternal life in God is the object of fundamental human hope. He observes that that the label ‘eternal life’ intends to signify the “true ‘hope’”

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188 Pieper, Christian Idea of Man, 41-42.
190 Pieper, “Hope – of What?”, 117. It is interesting that the German word Pieper uses to denote salvation, ‘Heil’, is related to the meaning of the verb, heilen, to heal, to be cured, to grow well: Ziefle, Modern Theological German, Dictionary, 130. To be healed of our wretchedness, our existential lack, is to be redeemed. See further 5.2.
192 Pieper, In Tune with the World, 15.
driving the human person’s desire to possess “true life”. This true life is eternal life because it is whole and incapable of being disturbed. It is life ‘to the full’. To Pieper’s *prima facie* more traditionally Thomist understanding of eternal life as the beatific vision, Ratzinger also adds a more explicitly voluntarist dimension. The desire for love, which he says is a chief attribute of the fundamental hope that the human person possesses, is linked to eternity. He argues that human love contains “an implicit appeal to eternity”, even if such love will be insufficient for that purpose. The human person hopes in a love that cannot be defeated or extinguished by death. Hope is oriented to the possession of an eternal life of love in God.

Pieper and Ratzinger provide strikingly similar descriptions of eternal life as the object of hope. They acknowledge that the shape and content of eternal life as the object of hope is “unknown” to us because necessarily transcendent of earthly experience. Ratzinger argues that conceptualising eternal life involves attempting to “imagine ourselves outside the temporality that imprisons us”. So understood, eternal life can only be described analogically:

*Eternity...is something more like the supreme moment of satisfaction, in which totality embraces us and we embrace totality...It would be like plunging in the ocean of infinite love, a moment in which time – the before and after – no longer exists...such a moment is life in the full sense, a plunging ever anew into the vastness of being, in which we are simply overwhelmed with joy.*

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196 Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 159. Relevant here is his discussion of Plato’s description of how hope is enkindled by the love of a man and a woman, but searches out for salvation and relationship with the divine: “On Hope,” 31-32. A closer inspection of Pieper’s anthropology also reveals him to suggest that the desire for the beatific vision involves the whole person, including, presumably, the will: he would appear not simply to possess an intellectualist idea of salvation. Rausch suggests that Ratzinger has a more voluntarist than intellectualist account of faith (and implicitly perhaps beatitude): Thomas P Rausch SJ, *Faith, Hope, and Charity: Benedict XVI on the Theological Virtues* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2015), 1. Any claim that Ratzinger possesses a voluntarist conception of beatitude needs to be nuanced too: Ratzinger argues that in the end personal fulfilment consists in being permeated entirely by God, whether that best be described as the vision of God, as the Thomists do, or the love of God, as the Scotists do: *Eschatology*, 234-235.  
198 Benedict, *Spe Salvi*, n12. See also, Ratzinger, *Last Testament*, 12: “one is immersed in a great ocean of joy and love, so to speak”.

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For Ratzinger, true life awaits the human person beyond the horizon of temporality and history. Eternal life will satiate the desire for existential fulfilment in the eternity of God.

Pieper also provides a description of eternal life. He discusses the notion that contemplation will satisfy the human thirst for happiness. Instead of conceptualising the object of this thirst as the satisfaction of mere intellectual curiosity, he asks rhetorically: “Would it not be more to the point to speak of love, of becoming one with the Infinite, of drowning ourselves in an ocean of joy?” The “ultimate happiness” that is the contemplation of the beatific vision relates to eternal life as the object of human hope. The eternal life Pieper describes refers to a satiation of human longing for love and joy, which will not die. The parallels between Pieper and Ratzinger’s descriptions of the end of human hope are striking. Apparent in each description are references to ‘ocean’, ‘love’, and ‘joy’. Comparable are the references in each to ‘totality’ and ‘Infinite’. The similarities suggest an influence of Pieper on Ratzinger’s conception of eternal life.

Ratzinger argues that it is under the aspect of eternal life, sought to be conceptualised in these terms, that Christian hope and its object, and what Christian faith teaches the Christian to expect, is to be understood. Christian hope is hope in the possession of eternal life as personal ‘fulfilment of his being in eternal life’, in the words of Pieper (quoted earlier in this sub-section). Fundamental hope is oriented to the life of love and joy that is the divine life.

### 2.3.6 Hope as a Theological Virtue

Pieper and Ratzinger’s conceptions of hope as oriented to eternal life connect them to the Church’s traditional understanding that hope is a theological virtue oriented to the possession of eternal life. Their descriptions of eternal life as the object of hope correspond to the Catechism’s description of Heaven. The Catechism quotes Benedict XII’s Benedictus Deus of A.D. 1336 as describing what the souls in heaven

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possess, even before the final judgment: they “see the divine essence with an intuitive vision”. \(^{202}\) Heaven is the end of and fulfils human longing, and is “supreme, definitive happiness”. \(^{203}\) The *Catechism* links the state of heaven with the possession of everlasting or eternal life. The theological virtue of hope, moreover, is necessarily connected to possession of this eternal life. It is the “virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our own happiness … [and] it opens up [the human heart] in expectation of eternal beatitude”. \(^{204}\) The theological virtue of hope orients the human person to the possession of his fundamental hope, namely eternal life understood as participation in God.

As a theological virtue, hope in its primary aspect has God and his eternal Being as its object. Pieper goes so far as to quote St Ambrose’s comment that the one “who does not hope in God” is inhuman; human hope properly has God as its object. \(^{205}\) Paralleling Pieper’s description of hope (2.3.4), Ratzinger argues that the theological virtue of hope recognises that God is necessary “for the realization and fulfilment of one’s own being”. \(^{206}\) Pieper argues that hope is only a virtue if it is a theological virtue, because it orients the person to “supernatural happiness in God”. \(^{207}\) Thus, “the great hope, which must surpass everything else … can only be God” and the “great, true hope which [endures] …can only be God”. \(^{208}\) God alone, the infinite, eternal ground of all being can enable the human person to obtain the object of its desire for infinite happiness. He only can be the object of true hope.

All the other descriptors and elements of hope that Pieper and Ratzinger identify find their unity in God as the proper object of human hope. For Ratzinger, hope has as its

\(^{202}\) CCC, 1023 quoting DS 1000. Ratzinger considers *Bendictus Deus* in the context of defending the immortality of the soul: *Eschatology*, 136-150.

\(^{203}\) CCC, 1024.

\(^{204}\) CCC, 988, 1020. quotations at 1817-1818, Glossary definition of ‘Eternal Life’. C.f. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 17, 2: “the good which we ought to hope for…is eternal life, which consists in the enjoyment of God himself”.

\(^{205}\) Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, 113-114.

\(^{206}\) Ratzinger, *Yes of Jesus Christ*, 81.


\(^{208}\) Benedict, *Spe Salvi*, nn 31, 27 respectively.
object “unbounded love”, which is “unbounded power”.

As a result, “God and hope go together”, in Ratzinger’s words, because Christian revelation teaches that “God is love” (1 Jn 4:16). Ultimately, all hopes for Ratzinger point to the great hope of possessing “the great and boundless love”, which amounts to “hope in paradise, the kingdom of God, being God and like God, sharing his nature (2 Pet 1:4)”.

If love is hoped for, God, as love, is that which will satisfy this desire for love. Hope depends, in Ratzinger’s words, upon the “indestructible power of Love”. Christian hope aims for a “gift of love…given us beyond all our activity” by the only one capable of giving such gift.

The possession of God, ultimately, is the object of fundamental hope, because only his indestructible love, which belongs to him by nature, will provide the love the human person hopes to receive and which will be for him eternal life.

As a theological virtue, hope also has God as its principal subject. By this is meant that God is the agent who brings hope’s object about. God is the final cause of hope and that on which hope depends for its object to be obtained. Ratzinger explains how the revelation of the name YHWH (‘I AM WHO I AM’) showed God to be transcendent of the contingent and historical, and the source of supra-historical hope. In the revelation of God’s name, “new hope” was given to the enslaved Israelites because this name constituted “the call of hope”. In this encounter, Moses was able to see that God is “the personal Being, [who] deals with man as man”. As personal, God is on the level of I-Thou and not space, and consequently transcends the numen locale limited to particular locations. He is the “near-at-hand God”, close to each person.

He “who is”, is superior to all pagan deities and

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209 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 48.
211 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 68.
212 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n35.
213 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, quotation on 47, 48. The parallels between this idea of hope as oriented to an object beyond the power of the person hoping and a conception of a natural desire for a supernatural end will be discussed in Chapter 4.
216 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 121.
217 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 123 (quotation on 126). See also Chapter 4 on the transcendent nature of the human spirit.
powers, which fall away.\textsuperscript{218} The powers of the world pass away and what remains is God’s eternal being (c.f. Mt 24:35 and parallels). He transcends space, time and all contingent powers. He deals with humanity on a personal level, which means that he is concerned with human issues.

Personal and transcendent of space-time, God alone can offer life that overcomes the contingency of created reality and of history. He is supra-historical and the “God of the Promise”, who draws humanity out of cosmic recurrence and points it towards future events, which will culminate in the goal of salvation history.\textsuperscript{219} Thus, God is the “God of hope in the future” and the guarantor of history’s meaning with history having an irrevocable direction towards its “meaning and goal”.\textsuperscript{220} As Being Itself, God transcends all becoming. The Personal God who is the source of all being, transcendent of history and space, can be the only genuine ground of hope. The ‘God who is’, relativises all inner-historical claims to salvation and utopia, as well the despotic claims of Baal and Moloch.\textsuperscript{221} History is made meaningful through the revelation of God’s name as he who is. History becomes oriented to a telos and escapes being confined to a recurrent circle. However, unlike inner-historical conceptions of hope, a teleological understanding of history grounded on hope in God’s eternity is not immanentist. God promises eternal life and the consummation of history, because he is Eternity. He is the ground of hope, who gives history meaning precisely by transcending it. Hope is placed in the name of the eternal Lord, not history’s immanent perfection (c.f. Ps 33:20-22). The ‘future’ object of hope is extra-historical.

With God as its agent and object, the theological virtue of hope transcends the natural plane and is oriented to the gratuitous gift by God of himself. Its object, eternal life, is “salvation that cannot be had in the natural world”.\textsuperscript{222} Hope in eternal life is ultimately hope in possession of the supra-historical, eternal God, that is, that

\textsuperscript{218} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 131, 132.
\textsuperscript{219} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 124.
\textsuperscript{220} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 124.
\textsuperscript{221} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 126.
which exists beyond all human “potential and possibilities”. Conceiving hope as a theological virtue thus distinguishes Pieper and Ratzinger’s conception of hope from a Blochian immanent idea of hope as belonging to the realm of what is knowable and doable at the human level (see also 2.2.1). As indicated in 2.2.1, Ratzinger understands hope as belonging to the realm of gratuity. As Schumacher notes, for Pieper, that hope as a virtue can only be theological is of “capital importance” and indicates that it is a “gratuitous gift”. The theological virtue gives the person “hope of divine salvation, eternal life”, which itself is characterised by gratuity. Pieper quotes Cajetan, “hope expects from God’s hand the eternal life that is God himself: ‘sperat Deum a Deo’”. Despite our best efforts, divinity cannot be obtained by the power of the human person but depends solely upon the gift of the only one capable of granting the gift, the transcendent God.

As a theological virtue, hope involves also salvific redemption at the hands of God. As a result, it involves personal grace and sanctification. Hope conceived as a theological virtue relates to the promise of the salvation of the human person in eternal life with God, brought about through grace. Ratzinger argues that the Christian is saved in hope (Rom 8:24) because Christian faith-hope offers “trustworthy hope” oriented to the possession of eternal life. Redemption is not brought about by human action but by the love of God revealed and made efficacious in Christ. Hope involves the elevation by God alone of the human person into a supernatural, sacramental life, which exceeds his historical and natural capabilities and the reality of sin (see further 4 and 5). Pieper comments that the “‘greatest hope’ [that is, in eternal life] can only be fulfilled through initiation into the mysteries”, an insight sensed by Plato but which refers fully to the Christian sacraments. Theological virtue involves a “supernatural potentiality for being”, which “entirely surpasses” the human person’s natural capacities and is based on “a real grace-filled

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224 Schumacher, Philosophy of Hope, 117, 119 (quotations on 117); the quotation ‘capital importance’ comes from Pieper, “Sur l’Espérance des Martyrs,” 82. See also Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 99.
226 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 103 quoting Cajetan, Commentary on Summa Theologiae, II, II, 17, 5; no. 7.
228 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n26.
participation in the divine nature” (citing 2 Pet 1:4). Theological virtue derives its character from a “truly divine substance in man, in grace”. The hoping person possesses “the grace-filled impetus of the hope of eternal life”. The virtue of hope is “wholly supernatural” and is based solely upon grace. Access to the divine life in eternal life, to which hope is oriented, is opened up to the person based on the reality of God’s gift of grace, which consists of a participation in that divine life.

The participation in the divine life that is the end of hope is initiated through baptism. Ratzinger argues that baptism gives the baptised ‘faith’, and through faith, ‘eternal life’; baptism gives (the beginnings of) eternal life to the baptised. Ratzinger comments that “faith is the substance of hope”. Ratzinger’s argument that faith makes substantially present in the baptised soul eternal, divine life, and therefore hope’s object, depends upon his interpretation of Heb 11:1. According to Ratzinger’s reading of this verse, faith gives the believer an objective proof of the things for which they hope, that is, eternal life. Referring to Aquinas’s understanding of habitus, Ratzinger argues that faith gives the believer a “stable disposition of the spirit” such that “eternal life takes root in us and reason is led to consent to what it does not see”. In giving faith to the baptised, the human person is given the object of his fundamental hope, eternal life.

As a result, the faith given in baptism should not be understood as projecting the object of hope entirely into the future. Faith is not simply a “not yet” but involves the objective reality of eternal life being present within the soul of the baptised ‘already’, even if only in embryonic form. The “essence” of what is hoped for, namely the happiness of eternal life, is present in faith as a habitus in the believer’s soul. Hope thus involves the presence of the divine life in the soul in the form of grace, grace...
that already gives the baptised possession of that for which he hopes and prepares him for the definitive imparting of that gift. The theological virtue of hope is thereby necessarily redemptive. It makes a person apt to receive the definitive gift of eternal life beyond death, because that life is already present within him through the gift of faith given in baptism. It is that life to which the virtue of hope and fundamental hope is directed.

2.3.7 Hope as Performative

The theological virtue of hope, in making present the object of hope in the believer, affects present history. In presenting hope as oriented to eternal life, Pieper and Ratzinger do not depict it as jettisoning the significance of the present. Hope in the ‘hereafter’ does not ignore history. Pieper and Ratzinger’s conception of hope should not be seen as entirely oriented to eternity or disinterested in history or the present. Eschatological hope is not severed from concern for the present or the state of the world (see also 3).

Because baptism makes present the eternal future that lies ahead of the human person, the lines between future and present become blurred. The (promised) future – eternal life – is made present in the believer’s soul, thus changing the present, because future realities are brought into it. Likewise, present things are taken into the things of the future. Consequently, the present is overlain with the reality and promise of eternal life. Ratzinger comments that what is unique regarding

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240 As a theological virtue, hope is therefore intrinsically related to faith (and charity). The theological virtues have an intimate connection to each other. Pieper suggests an “existential relationship” between faith, hope and love: Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 103. In Deus Caritas Est, Ratzinger argues that “[f]aith, hope and charity go together”, because faith “gives us the victorious certainty that…God is love”, which enables us to possess “sure hope” that God will emerge victorious: (see further 2.3.8): Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter on Christian Love: Deus Caritas Est, 25 December 2005 (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2006), n39. As Rowland explains in the context of exploring Ratzinger’s work on the theological virtues, there is an indispensable element of perichoresis in the relationship of the three theological virtues. Each depends upon the other: Rowland, Guide, 82. Ratzinger considers therefore that hope cannot be understood properly without reference to the other theological virtues, especially in this context faith: it is faith that gives the substance of things hoped for. Ratzinger argues that to a degree they are “interchangeable” in the New Testament and the apostolic fathers: what Christians possess is faith-hope; hope, for example, is that for which an accounting is to be given: Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 33, Benedict, Spe Salvi, n2; 1 Pet 3:15. In Caritas in Veritate, he argues that hope is “already present in faith … [and] is called forth by faith”: n34. In a sense, “Faith is Hope”, to quote a subtitle of Spe Salvi: Benedict, Spe Salvi, nn2-3. What is hoped for is eternal life, and the reality and promise of this eternal life is given through the faith imparted in baptism.
“Christianity’s place in the world and its openness” to the future is an “interweaving of present and future”.241 The “not yet” of eternal life “is in a certain sense already here”.242 In this regard, Pieper argues that the Incarnation has “in a certain sense” crossed the “boundary of death separating this world and the next”.243 Invoking Plato, he writes that the object of hope is a “Great Banquet” beyond time, at which the human soul contemplates “true being” and so satiates itself.244 In Christian terms, the Eucharist begins and pledges this “blessed life at God’s table”.245 Pieper points out the necessarily communal aspect of this hope and argues that there is implicit hope (“spes implicita”) in human attempts to build up fraternity, including those motivated by an “image of a perfect human society”, which is thus linked in a hidden way with Christian hope.246 All that is good in “earthly history” will not be lost.247 Hope in eternal life, which is made real in the sacraments, transforms the present.

Ratzinger considers thus that hope is ‘performative’ and not just ‘informative’. Christianity does not simply provide information about certain things, which can be apprehended in the intellect. It impacts how life is lived in the present. It is, or should be, “life-changing”, transforming the manner in which time and the future are perceived. Hope causes the hoping person to live in a new way, because he has been given “the gift of a new life”.248 Because hope objectively changes the baptised through the gift of eternal life, it changes the human person’s life from one of dark hopelessness to a life of true hope. Hope is ‘life-changing’ because the ‘thing’ hoped for, is “already present”, and being present, gives the hoping person “certainty” regarding this eternal or new life, even if it has not yet ‘appeared’.249 As a result, present life takes on a “dynamism”, orienting the person beyond himself.250 Hope allows us to go beyond ourselves because we no longer worry about everyday

241 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 203.
244 Pieper, Hope and History, 109.
245 Pieper, Hope and History, 109.
247 Pieper, Hope and History, 108. The discussion here shows the limits of the Incarnationalist vs Eschatologist distinction discussed in the Introduction.
248 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n2.
249 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n7; see n2.
possessions.²⁵¹ Hope can direct the human person away from selfish insecurity towards security, which enables charity and concern for the other to flourish.

As a result, there is some overlap between the theologies of futurity and Pieper and Ratzinger’s conception of hope. Ratzinger acknowledges the importance of the questions raised by the theologies of hope: that is, questions of the future and the praxis that is joined to hope. Ratzinger acknowledges that hope has a bearing on the “transitory” and that “hope for heaven” does not exclude “loyalty to the earth.”²⁵² Hope is cosmic, involving “hope for the earth”.²⁵³ Pieper and Ratzinger share some of the concerns of the theologies of futurity. Hope is not self-centred expectation of a good outcome for the individual person but involves the making-present of, and preparing for, eternity here and now.²⁵⁴

What distinguishes Pieper and Ratzinger from the theologies of futurity, however, is the manner in which hope is conceived to be ‘performative’. As Collins points out, in Ratzinger’s terms, hope is ‘performative’ because it is personally redemptive, involving coming into relationship with Christ. What hope achieves (or promises in the manner of a substantial pledge, as it were) is the redemption of the person. In reference to Spe Salvi, Collins writes that:

...hope is not a mere idea of progress that one assents to in the intellectual realm, but an experience of the whole person as one comes into contact with the God who has come close in Jesus Christ.²⁵⁵

In orienting the person beyond himself to an object outside himself, viz., the redemption of eternal life as communion with God, a person’s present behaviour is changed. It will become animated by a charity founded on encounter with Christ, which hopes that others will likewise find redemption – eternal life – in him. Ratzinger illustrates hope’s redemptive effect on the person through the example of St Josephine Bakhita, the Sudanese slave who eventually became a Canossian Sister, and her encounter with Christ. Ratzinger explains that as a result of St Josephine’s

²⁵³ Ratzinger, Faith and Politics, 151.
liberating encounter with God in Christ, she was motivated to promote missionary activity, convinced of the need to bring such liberation to as many people as possible. Redemptive hope needed to be passed onto all people. St Josephine had experienced the freedom to hope for a future beyond earthly well-being and wanted to communicate that hope to others.\(^{256}\)

The action of the Christian, especially through the virtue of charity, should thus be seen as an outflow from this redemptive encounter with Christ and understood in personalist terms. Hope, and the liberation that it promises and already if embryonically effects, ought not to be primarily understood under the rubric of activism or political action, a view that the theologies of futurity risk adopting. Even if Gutiérrez’s presentation of ‘integral liberation’ involves an understanding of redemption from sin, such an understanding of redemption and liberation is starkly in contrast to a Ratzingerian notion of redemption (see further 5). It tends not to differentiate the political from the notion of redemption. Contrariwise, liberation in the case of St Josephine entails the hope that “Love” awaits us in the person of Jesus Christ.\(^{257}\) Although St Josephine was liberated from slavery, Ratzinger’s presentation of the hope in her focuses not on this emancipation but the liberation brought about through her relationship with Christ and the missionary attitude that this encounter generated. The figure of Christ brings hope in himself, a hope stronger than, and transcendent of, historical struggle and oppression.

Moreover, as Pieper notes, while there are commonalities between hope directed merely to the creation of a just society and Christian hope, there are differences. Hope understood in the latter sense takes on the colour of religion or the eschatological and is aimed at a reality that activity “to change the world” cannot effect.\(^{258}\) The genuinely hoping person does not engage militantly in an attempt to bring about “eschatological images of order” but rather seeks “what is wise, good, and just” (that is, what is eternal) in any given moment.\(^{259}\) Furthermore, genuine progress, Ratzinger avers, occurs only under the aspect of a hope that promises a

\(^{256}\) Benedict, Spe Salvi, n3.
\(^{258}\) Pieper, Hope and History, 111.
\(^{259}\) Pieper, Hope and History, 111-112 (quotations on 112). C.f. Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 235. As we saw in Chapter 1, ‘militant eschatology’ is a phrase used by Metz: 1.5.2. Pieper is anticipating and critiquing Metz’s political theology.
“true future beyond death”. Such a claim can be said to be true because it does not attempt to colour inner-earthly activity with a primarily eschatological flavour, and so recognises the limits and possibilities of such activity (see also 5). At the same time, it is free from an immanently grounded despair that cannot seek an object transcendent of history but is motivated by a promise of eternal life that in itself seeks to bring others along with it. Referring to the close relationship between the theological virtues, it can be argued that redemptive hope generates a charity seeking eternal life, both for oneself and for others. Genuine hope drives action not primarily under the rubric of eschatology and the desire to build a better society, contra the Concilium position on hope and history, but to achieve God’s will in a relationship established in faith and hope, which open up to a future eternal life beyond death.

2.3.8 Hope as Prayer

The Communio perspective on hope and history is further distinguished from the Concilium position by its emphasis on prayerful receptivity as an appropriate attitude of hope. Pieper and Ratzinger unearth a relationship between hope and prayer, especially supplicatory prayer. Hope as prayer to a degree synthesises Pieper and Ratzinger on hope as a theological virtue and performative but directed to an eternal life that only God can grant. In Pieper and Ratzinger’s accounts of hope, (understood also in connection with the conception of the supernatural that undergirds the account, which will be elaborated in Chapter 4) prayer is a fundamental aspect of hope and one of its key manifestations. If the object of hope is beyond the power of the one who hopes to bring about himself and is oriented to eternal life – and thereby to be understood as a theological virtue oriented to God and given its power by him – prayer (and relatedly, the sacraments and the liturgy) and not activism is perhaps the

260 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 49.
261 Both Pieper and Ratzinger consider that inner-historical accounts of hope are ultimately hopeless and generate despair. See, for example, Pieper, End of Time, 147, Faith, Hope, Love, 113-123, esp. 114-115, 118, 121-122, “The Hidden Nature of Hope and Despair,” 122-123, Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 236, Yes of Jesus Christ, 48, Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 48, 75-76. C.f. Ratzinger, Turning Point for Europe, 24-26 and the discussion there of the despair underlying contemporary drug use, a problem Ratzinger claims was not apparent in the Middle Ages because an answer was given to the needs of soul. Ratzinger reports the shock of Mrs Ernst Bloch at his claim, because such a claim would contradict dialectical materialism’s philosophy of history and its claim that past ages are necessarily inferior to the present. C.f. Benedict, Spe Salvi, n35. On the relationship between the theological virtues, see n240.
most appropriate or primary response to the hope of eternal life. Prayer asks for what cannot be obtained by one’s power.

An important link between hope and prayer is the virtue of humility. According to Pieper, supernatural hope depends upon the natural virtues of magnanimity and humility. Humility acknowledges the “inexpressible distance between Creator and creature”. Such humility is tied into prayerful hope because it recognises the difference in being between God and creature (4), which only God can span, and places hope in God’s action to grant the human desire to participate in the divine life. Ratzinger likewise considers humility and dependence on God to be essential to prayerful hope. Hope depends upon “the humility to be able to receive what we are given over and above what we have deserved and achieved”. He argues that prayer begins in what grounds hope, namely, the “longing for paradise” and that the hopeful person is one who prays, because this person does not yet possess all things. Prayer is predicated on the humble recognition of our inadequacy and the lack in us that grounds hope. It is directed to the one whose goodness and power can bridge this gap.

Prayer expresses hope and dependence on God, rather than one’s own powers. Hope relies on “God’s goodness”, and is not a pious, Pelagian desire for security. Unlike those who hope, the person who despairs does not pray, because he relies on his own capacity to bring about what he wants. Ratzinger quotes Pieper’s comment that the praying person on the contrary, remains open to receiving the unknown gift (of eternal life) and is certain that his prayer is efficacious, even if what he seeks is not specifically granted. Prayer, especially as supplication directed towards the omnibenevolent and omnipotent God, expresses hope. In fact, such prayer may be hope’s “most adequate” expression. Prayer is the appropriate response to the

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263 Ratzinger, *Yes of Jesus Christ*, 82.
266 Ratzinger, *Yes of Jesus Christ*, 67.
paradox of our human situation, because in it we ask for the gift we cannot give ourselves from the One who can (4).

A key parallel in Pieper and Ratzinger’s understandings of prayer as the practical expression of hope concerns their treatment of the Our Father, as interpreted by Aquinas and presented in the Roman Catechism. The imprint of Pieper on Ratzinger is clearly apparent in this context. Ratzinger writes of his initial surprise that the Catechismus Romanus contained the claim that the Our Father teaches the Christian what the object of hope is. Upon reflection, Ratzinger realised that hope and the Lord’s Prayer belong closely together: “[j]ust what hope is becomes clear in the prayer”, which is the measure of the connection between prayer and hope.268 The Our Father is “an exposition of hope”.269 In it, daily fears, including the ultimate fear of hopelessness and of losing faith and communion with God, are transformed into (everyday) hopes and the great hope that has the Kingdom of God as its object.

Understanding the Lord’s Prayer as an expression of hope reveals hope’s ‘performative’ character. In the Our Father, prayer becomes “hope in action”.270 It has as its subject everyday concerns that are taken up into the ultimate hope for God to reign. They are thereby placed under the aspect of eternity. Ratzinger refers to Aquinas as being the inspiration of the Roman Catechism’s connection between hope and prayer. Thomas argued in the Summa Theologiae that “prayer is the interpretation of hope” and, according to Ratzinger, in Thomas’s uncompleted Compendium of Theology, that the “Our Father is the school of hope – its actual practice”.271 Prayer, as the expression of hope, is its practical, performative manifestation. Prayer becomes ‘hope in action’ because in it are placed people’s daily concerns, which are then turned over to God’s providential action. Hope is placed in God’s providence and not human planning.

269 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 67.
271 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 66-67 citing Summa Theologiae II-II, 17. 4 and, significantly, Pieper, Lieben-hoffen-glauben, 213.
Thomas’s idea that prayer interprets hope is also present in Pieper. He notes Thomas’s expression “petitio est interpretativa spei”. In his treatise on Hope, Pieper expands upon Thomas’s treatment of prayer and hope in his unfinished Compendium. Prayer is “interpretativa spei” because “[p]rayer and hope are naturally ordered to each other” and prayer expresses and proclaims hope. Pieper quotes Thomas as saying that Christ taught the Our Father, which guides us to “living hope” and directs Christian hope “especially…to God”. In other words, prayer is ‘hope in action’. It brings into daily life, through the human action of prayer, the reality hoped for. Ratzinger says that “[p]raying is the language of hope” and that “[p]rayer is hope in execution”. Pieper writes that hope “speaks” through prayer. Prayer and hope are thus intimately connected. Prayer is hope’s expression. Prayer itself is the action of hope because it expresses trustful reliance on the Creator. Likewise, hope becomes active in prayer because prayer is the human action that most seeks to make hope’s object (which is also prayer’s object) a reality.

In Spe Salvi, Ratzinger expounds further on his the notion that prayer is ‘hope in action’ by explaining that prayer is the ‘school of hope’. He refers to Augustine’s view of the close connection between prayer and hope, and his idea that “prayer [is] an exercise of desire”. For Augustine, and Ratzinger following him, prayer is the site in which the hope that matches existential desire is expanded. Prayer purifies hope and desire, and grows the person’s capacity to receive the gift of God, which is the “great hope”. As Ratzinger writes, prayer “actualizes and deepens our communion of being with God”. In prayer is learnt that desire for mediocre comfort is a “misplaced hope”. Consequently, prayer makes the person more apt to hope for that which transcends even legitimate everyday hopes. In the Our Father, worries become wishes, which in turn become hopes and ultimately hope in the

272 Pieper, Hope and History, 112n32, citing a different article from the same question as Ratzinger in the Summa Theologiae: II-II, 17, 2, obj. 2.
275 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 66.
277 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n33 citing Augustine, In 1 Ioannis 4, 6: PL 35, 208f. Augustine’s Epistle to Proba (Ep. 130 cited above at n177), which Benedict cites earlier in Spe Salvi, contains similar themes. Spe Salvi, nn32-34 has the sub-heading, “Prayer as a school of hope”. This theme also links back to the connection between hope and the desire for existential fulfillment.
278 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n34.
279 Ratzinger, Jesus(1), 130.
280 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n33.
realisation of God’s Kingdom and of participating in the divine nature, that is, eternal life. Thus, prayer expresses “the one hope” that God’s kingdom will come and his will be done on earth as in heaven: here is re-expressed the ‘great hope’ that can be summarised in one word, ‘God’.\(^{281}\) Prayer makes us apt to receive this object and thereby causes hope to grow.

An interpretation of prayer as ‘hope in action’ distinguishes Pieper and Ratzinger’s accounts of hope from an activist one. According to Ratzinger, the masters of prayer are the “true teachers of hope” and do not peddle “false hopes”.\(^{282}\) Implicit in this claim is the idea that those who do not pray cannot communicate genuine hope. It is only in prayer that genuine hope can be discovered and nurtured. Without it, hope is mere activism, devoid of God. Ratzinger affirms therefore the necessity of prayer in guarding against “activism” and “growing secularism” in many Christians undertaking charitable activities.\(^{283}\) He warns against the temptation of seeking to resolve all the problems that God’s providence has apparently failed to resolve, arguably a temptation to which inner-historical conceptions of hope can fall prey.\(^{284}\) In connecting hope and prayer, hope becomes prayerful and receptive, contrary to an activist desire to change the future according to the dictates of rationality.

Underscoring the contrast between an activist hope and prayerful hope is that the latter possesses a personalist, contemplative and receptive character. Ratzinger argues that prayer consists of “being in silent inward communion with God”.\(^{285}\) Prayer springs from personal interiority. It begins in the heart and concerns personal communion with God. Thus, Ratzinger argues that for prayer to purify, it must be personal. In its personal dimension, “it must …be very personal, an encounter between my intimate self and God, the living God”.\(^{286}\) The fruit of such prayer is

\(^{281}\) Ratzinger, *Yes of Jesus Christ*, 68.


\(^{283}\) Benedict, *Deus Caritas Est*, n37.

\(^{284}\) Benedict, *Deus Caritas Est*, n36. Caritas Australia’s slogan “End Poverty” (see its website, https://www.caritas.org.au/, accessed 30 August 2018) might count as an example of this, relating as it does to the secular variant, “Make Poverty History”. The very use of the word ‘history’ in this context shows the intention to eradicate poverty within history, which contradicts Pieper and Ratzinger’s understanding of history as ‘peccable’ (there will always be evil) and the Lord’s words to Judas Iscariot: “The poor you will always have with you” (Jn 12:8)

\(^{285}\) Ratzinger, *Jesus(1)*, 130.

\(^{286}\) Benedict, *Spe Salvi*, n34. Ratzinger, *Jesus(1)*, 130; c.f. *CCC*, 2562-2564 on prayer being an action of the heart.
greater openness to God as well as a greater capacity to serve others. In praying like this, the person praying is made “capable of the great hope”, that is, eternal life (because the one who prays touches God). Ratzinger considers ‘active hope’ to be the fruit of prayer. Prayer and hope are active by keeping the ‘world open to God’. Ratzinger uses the felicitous phrase, “ministers of hope”, to describe the fruit of the personal encounter with God. Prayer generates an “active hope” that seeks to minimise evil, but also to “keep the world open to God”, the precondition for genuine human hope. As Ratzinger describes, in a different context:

A man open to the presence of God [in prayer] discovers that God is always working and still works today: We should, then, let him enter and let him work. And so things are born which open to the future and renew mankind.

‘Active hope’ then does not primarily consist in a generic agitation for a ‘better society’ but has as its object that ‘God’s will be done’, whatever shape that may take. The future is genuinely and only opened up when God is acting through the prayer and work of his saints. Hope clearly has an active dimension; it is not quietest fatalism ignorant of the needs of others. But it is active precisely in being a channel for God’s life and work to enter into the world, in which God is recognised as the principal actor.

Ratzinger considers the hope expressed in the Our Father to be performative by making God present on earth in this way. In the ‘active hope’ of prayer that God’s kingdom come, Ratzinger argues that “earth…will itself become heaven”. Such a statement needs to be qualified by the Pieperian insight, with which Ratzinger would

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287 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n34.
288 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n34.
289 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n34.
291 C.f. Benedict, Spe Salvi, n35.
292 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 68.
readily agree, that the instantiation of the New Heaven and Earth requires the 
transposition of temporality into eternity (4). Hope is however theocentrically 
grounded. In a sense, wherever God is, is heaven. He is present in the world in an 
intense way where “faith and hope and love are”. His Kingdom is present, 
moreover, insofar as he is loved and his love is able to penetrate us. The earth 
‘becomes’ to the extent that humanity allows God to be present to it, and to operate 
in it with humanity’s cooperation. The earth will become heaven, moreover, when 
that presence becomes definitive at the cosmos’s transformation at the end of 
time (4.4.3).

A theocentric understanding of hope, which an understanding of hope as prayerful 
reveals, focuses therefore on God and the doing of his will here and now, with the 
promise of its future fulfilment. For Ratzinger, all human hoping is centred on God’s 
will – that it be ‘done according to thy word’ (c.f. Lk 1:38). Seeking to do God’s 
will in the present manifests hope. Consequently, God’s Kingdom does not belong to 
an “imaginary hereafter…in a future that will never arrive”. God is not, contra 
Bloch, Moltmann, Metz and Gutiérrez, the ‘God of the (historical) future’, but the 
God of the “today, yesterday and forever” (4). Hope is not directed to an imprecise 
future historical or utopian state, or even eschatology stripped of its theo- 
and Christo-centric meaning. Rather, hope is oriented to God and the manifestation of his 
will in the present, which promises a future eschatological, heavenly state. Hope is 
active in being centred on the God immanent to and yet transcendent of history.

Prayer fosters, therefore, hope and charity. In prayer, the person learns to hope in the 
‘great hope’ that is God and his love, and its constituent manifestations: the Kingdom 
and promise of paradise; and that his will be done, which includes fundamentally that 
the human person becomes united to him in the divine life, eternal life (2 Pet 1:4; c.f.

293 Ratzinger argues that the “world …by its very nature is imperfect” (and hence can only be 
perfected by a Source outside itself): Benedict, Spe Salvi, n31.
294 Joseph Ratzinger, God and the World, Believing and Living in Our Time: A Conversation with 
296 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n31.
297 C.F. Ratzinger, New Song for the Lord, 11. Ratzinger uses this phrase as a sub-heading with respect 
to Christ. However, it is utile in this context as well, precisely because Christ is God.
1 Thess 4:3). Prayer enables a person “[to enter] into [God’s] special closeness”. The person who prays is in communion with the object of hope, and participates in charity in the life of God.

In becoming so connected to God, the praying person then becomes a ‘minister of hope’. He possesses a desire that the world, like him, becomes ‘open to God’ and that, it could be added, others may be filled likewise with the life of God – that God may be all in all, the great hope expressed in another way (1 Cor 15:28). In the words of the *Catechism*, prayer allows the person “to share in the power of God’s love that saves the multitude”. The charity that bonds the person with God is transformed into an outward desire that others be brought into the divine life. In this way, it can be suggested that ‘active hope’ is principally driven by an encounter with God and a subsequent charitable impulse to spread the life of God – and therefore salvation – among souls and society, an essential part of which involves opposition to evil. If this interpretation of Ratzinger is right, hope needs to be understood not in an activist way, but as humble and receptive awaiting God’s action to impart his life, a promise of divine life amplified through the prayer of the saints.

### 2.3.9 Hope is Patient for Eternity and Receptive of God’s Action

If hope has prayer as its main expression and God as its object, it recognises that it depends on God’s action. The human person is only ever able to cor-respond to (‘respond with’) God’s initiative. Hope is active only as a response. Consequently, hope can only ever be patient and receptive, because it awaits Someone else’s initiative, and what God’s will, and not our own, dictates. Characterising hope as patient marks out Pieper and Ratzinger from a more activist, ‘impatient’ account of hope apparent in a Moltmann-inspired theology of hope (1). They would heartily agree that the world cannot be left as it is and that the hoping Christian needs to

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299 C.f. Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 192, where he discusses this Pauline hope in connection with the resurrection of the flesh.
300 CCC, 2572.
oppose evil and use his time well under God’s providence. They do not, however, consider impatient hope as the means to effect, or as that which motivates, social change.

Hope is characterised, rather, by humble patience relative to the ills of the world. When Ratzinger asks in the words of Scripture “Lord, holy and true, how long will it be?” (Rv 6:10), he affirms God’s power and love for us, even in the face of “incomprehensible and apparently unjustified suffering in the world”. The primary actor presumed in this question is God – ‘how long will it be?’ until you do something about it. The question is not Metz’s, ‘how much time do we (still) have anyway?’ for us to act based on an impatient hope restlessly seeking a ‘better society’ (1.2.2). Consequently:

[Hope is practised through the virtue of patience, which continues to do good even in the face of apparent failure, and through the virtue of humility, which accepts God’s mystery and trusts him even at times of darkness.]

In this way, hope is related to faith in God and charity. Faith assures us of God’s love for us, manifested in the sending of his Son. Faith generates the love of God in Christ and becomes a light in the darkness (c.f. Jn 1:5). Love is that which responds to the darkness of evil, although hope also struggles against the triumph of evil. Importantly, faith “transforms our impatience and our doubts into the sure hope” that God governs the cosmos and will ultimately emerge victorious. Ratzinger thus presents hope as dependent upon faith in the love of God. Hope is patient endurance in the face of evil (but not a resigned, hopeless Stoicism), which is manifested in charity and which recognises God as the sovereign. Hope is not urgent in the sense of impatient activism, but is expressed through steadfast commitment to doing good, even while aware that only God can definitively eradicate the evil present in creation and human hearts.

303 Benedict, Deus Caritas Est, n38. See also Benedict, Spe Salvi, n34. Indeed, Ratzinger critiques Rahner and those that follow him, including Gutiérrez, for failing insufficiently differentiating world and salvation history, on the basis that world history needs redemption – see 5.5.2.

304 Benedict, Deus Caritas Est, n39.

305 Benedict, Deus Caritas Est, n39.
Pieper and Ratzinger consider hope to persist in the face of evil and its apparent triumphs. It is no accident that Pieper gives as an epitaph to his 1930s treatise on hope a quotation from the Book of Job (13:13): “Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.” Pieper, who wrote this treatise in tyrannous 1930s Nazi Germany, considers that the genuine nature of hope consists in trust in the Lord, amidst all the difficulties of life and even to the point of death and martyrdom (2.2.5). Likewise, Ratzinger cites the example of Job in the context of humanity’s cry to God in the face of evil, to point out the immensity and power of the Almighty. Ratzinger also quotes St Augustine’s dictum to the effect that we cannot comprehend God’s ways; if we do understand someone, it is not God. Hope persists in scenarios that perplex believers, grounded in faith in God’s impenetrable wisdom.

Related to the disillusionment necessary for true hope to emerge (2.3.1), those suffering evil do not ultimately hope in the definitive, inner-historical creation of a just society (even if everyday hope is placed in the ending of war and so on). The person may not live to see such peace, because he is ‘slain’ and lived in a murderous regime. Consequently, Pieper and Ratzinger’s depiction of suffering Job as hoping patiently in God’s providence amid the trials and evils of history contrasts sharply with the Blochian view, which influenced Metz, of Job as a rebellious, utopian figure (1.3.3). Patient, suffering and hoping Job does not seek the overturn unjust structures. Rather, in Pieper and Ratzinger, God, as the object of hope, is understood to be its principal source and the means by which evil is addressed. Hope is humble and patient acceptance that God’s inscrutable ‘will be done’.

The presentation of hope as patient awaiting God’s action in the face of evil recalls Pieper and Ratzinger’s views that hope is fundamentally oriented to the supra-historical. Pieper states that: “Hope is the confidently patient expectation of eternal beatitude in a contemplative and comprehensive sharing of the triune life of God.” Hope consists of awaiting an eternal life of contemplation beyond the travails of history. As the object of eternal life, moreover, how Pieper characterises contemplation reveals how he conceives hope (which links also to hope’s prayerful

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306 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 87, No One Could Have Known, 100. Benedict, Spe Salvi, n34.
307 Benedict, Deus Caritas Est, n38 citing Job 23:3, 5-6, 15-16 and St Augustine, Sermo 52, 16: PL 38, 360.
308 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 103.
dimension). He argues that contemplation refers to a “purely receptive approach to reality” and consists in a “silent perception of reality”, although such receptivity should not be construed as passivity but rather active clarification of the truth so perceived.\textsuperscript{309} Such contemplation belongs to intellectus, the cognitive power of “simple intuition”; it is thus distinguished from discursive ratio (4.3.8).\textsuperscript{310} If eternal life consists in the receptive looking at the eternal truth, which is God, and eternal life is the object of hope, it is unlikely hope would consist in restless activism and protestive agitation for social change. Hope, like the contemplation it presages, waits for contemplative participation in the divine life.

Pieper’s notion of hope as patient expectation of eternal life links to Ratzinger’s conception of hope. For Ratzinger, characterising hope as patience rests on the ‘substance’ of eternal life incipiently present in the baptised soul. The ‘sure hope’ that God governs the universe of which Ratzinger speaks, is connected to patience and circles back to the distinction between everyday goods and the substance of eternal, that is, divine life. Ratzinger contrasts the distinction drawn in the Letter to the Hebrews between hypomone (10:36) and hypostole (10:39). Hypomone, according to Ratzinger usually rendered as ‘patience’ (in the RSVCE it is ‘endurance’), is “perseverance” and “constancy” in the face of trials, and the precondition to “receive what is promised” (10:36).\textsuperscript{311} The character of hopeful endurance contrasts with the “dissimulation” and worldliness, or even pusillanimity (the RSVCE has ‘shrink back’), expressed in the term hypostole.\textsuperscript{312} Christian hope is based on the possession of a better reality, which “relativises” everyday possessions as the basis for living.\textsuperscript{313} It rests on an entirely different “mode of being”, a “solid foundation” that even death cannot defeat.\textsuperscript{314} Thus, the Christian possesses a “lived hope” that is certain of the promise it already contains.\textsuperscript{315} Hope endures in expectation of the gift of eternal life, which overcomes dependence on worldly

\textsuperscript{309} Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, 73.
\textsuperscript{310} Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, 74 quoting Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, 59, 1 ad 1: “Intellectus et ratio differunt quantum ad modum cognoscendi, quia scil. intellectus cognoscit simplici intuiti, ratio vero discurrendo de uno in aliud”.
\textsuperscript{311} Benedict, Spe Salvi, n8.
\textsuperscript{312} Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 35.
\textsuperscript{313} Benedict, Spe Salvi, n8, Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 35.
\textsuperscript{314} Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 35.
\textsuperscript{315} Benedict, Spe Salvi, n9.
Thus, for Ratzinger, hope is patient expectation because it links to the eternal beatitude it promises, in contrast to the flimsy hope that possession of worldly goods can provide.

2.3.10 Conclusion

Pieper and Ratzinger conceive hope in theocentric terms, as oriented beyond history to eternal life in God. In its ultimate form, hope is a theological virtue oriented to life in God, underpinned by an existential longing for an infinite, undying love, which transcends death and the historical. Fundamental hope is thus oriented to participation in the divine life, which is made substantially present in the soul through baptism. Baptism gives the believer the theological virtues, which makes him apt to receive the gift that is the object of his hope, God’s own life, which can only be received. Hope is characterised by prayerful, receptive patience for the gift of God’s action, in contrast to an activist, planned strategy of hope.

2.4 Conclusion

As representative of the Communio position on hope and history, Ratzinger presents a view of hope as primarily oriented to eternal life in God. Dependent on Pieper’s views on the relationship between hope and history, his view of hope thus contrasts with the Concilium view of hope as possessing an inner-historical orientation.

Chapter 2 has shown negatively and positively what Pieper and Ratzinger consider hope to be. The first part of the Chapter discussed their critique of a Hegelian-Marxist conception of hope. As hope’s object cannot be controlled, it cannot be manipulated according to human rationality or a logic of history discernible to human reason. Rather, history is characterised by freedom and peccability. It must

316 Although Ratzinger does not refer to St Paul’s Letter to the Romans, reference to its theology of hope augments his argument that hope is characterised by contrast between eternal life and earthly life. Romans also uses hypomonē (ὑπομονή), translated in the RSCVE as ‘endurance’, in connection with hope in the face of suffering (Rom 5:4). Suffering produces endurance, endurance character and character the hope that does not disappoint, because the presence of God’s love already present in the Christian through the justifying grace of the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:1-5). Suffering is apt to produce endurance because it ‘hopes against hope’ for the overcoming of the world and promises true life beyond death (Rom 4:18, Jn 16:33).
look ‘beyond itself’ for perfection. Hope cannot therefore be placed in history’s immanent realisation, contrary to the Joachimite impulse underlying Hegelian and Marxist inner-historical conceptions of hope, which inform the Concilium position. Contrary to the deliberately impersonal understanding of hope of the Concilium perspective, Pieper and Ratzinger consider hope to be intrinsically personal. Hope belongs to the realm of the ‘I-Thou’ and is unintelligible if it is simply oriented to future earthly progress. Hope must overcome death and is explicable only in relation to the person.

As personal and oriented beyond death, hope has eternal life as its principal object. The second part of the Chapter showed the theocentric shape of fundamental hope. For Pieper and Ratzinger, there is a distinction between ‘everyday hopes’, which may or may not be realised on earth, and a singular, fundamental object whose content is unknown and unrealisable on earth. The Christian faith helps fill out the content of this fundamental hope in eternal life and links hope’s personal character with the transcendental destiny of the human person. As Ratzinger argues, it is the “hope of faith” and not intra-historical conceptions of hope that “reveals to us the true future beyond death”.\(^\text{317}\) Hope is connected to human desire and longing for existential fulfilment in being, characterised as the infinite joy of eternal life. Fundamental hope has as its object eternal life in God, that is, salvation and redemption.

As a theological virtue, hope is a gift and cannot, therefore, be conceived as something manipulable according to human rationality. Because hope’s fundamental object is by definition not within the power of the one who hopes to achieve by his own powers and oriented to a supernatural reality, hope is most true to itself as a theological virtue. As a theological virtue, hope is a gracious gift from God given in baptism, which justifies the person and orients him to eternal life in God. Belonging to the realm of gift, moreover, hope is intrinsically connected to prayer. Hopeful prayer is the humble, receptive patience for God’s initiative. Only in this way does hope become active, in the sense of opening the world to God’s initiative and

presence. Hope is the prayerful endurance in the face of the world’s evil. As endurance, hope fits the person for the possession of eternal life, hope’s true object.

Grounded in a choice for an extra-historical conception of hope and Pieper’s philosophical treatment of hope and history, Ratzinger presents thus a view of fundamental hope under the aspect of eternity. The object of hope is necessarily tied into what happens ‘beyond’ death and cannot be limited to what is immanent to history and society. Eternity drives an understanding of hope as ultimately oriented to what is supra-historical, an infinite reality that alone can be the fulfilment of human aspiration and history.

Accordingly, hope is intrinsically bound up with the ‘last things’ and the ‘hereafter’, as traditionally conceived in eschatology. Unlike Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez, Ratzinger does not see this as problematic. He explicitly defends the need to discuss in eschatology those elements that traditionally constitute discussion of the ‘last things’, namely, heaven, hell, purgatory, judgment and immortality of the soul. This is so even if it also necessary to discuss hope and praxis in connection with the future and how the present relates to it, as do theologies of futurity. A discussion of the ‘last things’ is not necessary simply as a result of the weight given to them by traditional treatments, but because they are central to an understanding of the ‘beyond’ and its effect on the present.\textsuperscript{318} It is under the aspect of eternity, and not simply the future or an eschatological horizon understood as a future utopia, that the present and praxis must be conceived. Hope is best considered as generating action in the light of God’s eternity. A theocentric understanding of hope precludes an immanentist understanding of hope, which focuses on the historical future, but points the human person to its eschatological future, made present in history in Christ, the God-man.

\textsuperscript{318} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 4.
CHAPTER 3 THE CHRISTOLOGICAL SHAPE OF HOPE AND ESCHATOLOGY IN
THE COMMUNIO PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

The theocentric nature of hope and its supra-historical orientation, which were
considered in Chapter 2, become fully intelligible for the Communio perspective on
hope and history only under the aspect of Christ. For Ratzinger, Christ, understood in
Chalcedonian terms, is the bridge between history and eternity. He is the means,
through the Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery of his death, Resurrection and
Ascension, by which fundamental hope’s object – eternal life – is made available to
the human person. With Pieper, Ratzinger would argue that Christ, “in whom dwells
the fullness of the Godhead”, is the source of supernatural life and, therefore, hope.
He is, therefore “the only true hope of the world”. In him, through the working of
the Holy Spirit, humanity accesses the divine, its deepest hope. Christ is thus the
principle and source of fundamental hope and the theological virtue of hope.

Chapter 3 explores the Christological foundation of Ratzinger’s position on hope and
history, and the unity that he considers exists between Christology and eschatology.
Eschatological hope must be treated with, and get its shape from, Christology. It
constitutes thus the Communio response to the second element of the Concilium view
on hope and history. In the Communio position, a low Christology appears to serve an

1 C.f. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum, 18
November 1965, 2 (in Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, new revised
2 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 105 quoting Col 2:9; c.f. also 99.
translated from the German by Tracey Rowland in 2019 and published in the Christmas edition of the
4 C.f. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium, 21 November
Austin Flannery OP (Northport, NY/Dublin: Costello Publishing Company/Dominican Publications,
1975), 4.
already-formed inner-historical emphasis and eschatological hope, which are
dependent upon immanent philosophies and theologies, and not Christology. A
Chalcedonian Christology seemingly does not determine their understanding of hope
and history.

Ratzinger eschews, contrariwise, an exclusive concentration upon the historicity of
Christ and the inner-historical, social and political implications of his mission.
Rather, he insists upon the importance of Chalcedonian Christology, as relating to
“the divine-human mystery of Jesus”, for an appropriate understanding of salvation
history, eschatology and hope.\(^5\) The hypostatic union of Christ’s humanity to the
divine nature in the one Word definitively underpins his Christology and his views


Especially in Ratzinger is the Christological dimension of hope made present. It is here that
Ratzinger’s more specifically theological understanding of hope is brought to the fore and can be
considered as a theological departure from Pieper’s more philosophical reflections on the nature of
hope and history. Even in this apparent difference, however, it is argued that there remains a
substantial concordance between Pieper and Ratzinger and that Pieper’s philosophical reflections find
their full meaning in Christological reflection. He would not dispute the general thrust of Ratzinger’s
theological reflections. Pieper explicitly relates his philosophical work to a theological framework,
stating for example that “[i]t would never occur to a philosopher, unless he were also a Christian
theologian, to describe hope as a virtue”: Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, 99, Schumacher, *Philosophy of
Hope*, 117. Schumacher agrees with this reading of Pieper’s early work but suggests that such an
explicitly theological approach left Pieper exposed to the possible charge of being insufficiently
philosophical. Schumacher argues that this criticism is ameliorated to some degree by reference to
Pieper’s evolving thought after 1935, in which Christ is connected only three times to hope and a
specifically Christological reading of hope, in which “Christ is the true reason for our hope and its
fulfillment”, is not present: Schumacher, *Philosophy of Hope*, 117-118, 131n114 (quotation on 117)
(Schumacher’s argument is alluded to at 2.3.2).

Although it is true that Pieper’s later work, including his *Hoffnung und Geschichte*, does not
specifically refer to Christ as the object of hope, such a lack of reference to Christ should not be taken
to indicate that Pieper necessarily resiles from his earlier Christological reading of hope. His
comments regarding the Christological shape of hope in his 1930s treatise have enduring relevance for
his understanding of hope. So much is apparent in the Preface of the omnibus edition of *Faith, Hope,
Love*, written in 1986, in which Pieper notes that *Über die Hoffnung* is “changed…only a little”, albeit
with the need for considerable supplementation by other works: Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, 10. The
supplementation by his later work does not cancel out the Christological dimension of his account of
hope in the earlier treatise, but adds philosophical depth to his earlier reflections, especially
concerning the hope-history relationship. As will be argued in the next chapter, Pieper does not
conceive of nature and grace in extrinsic terms; for him, hope is specifically theological and cannot be
considered apart from Christologically-indexed grace. Moreover, in a reflection cited by Schumacher
as one of the few instances after 1935 in which Christ is mentioned in connection with hope, Pieper
argues that the “main” or fundamental hope only has a solid basis if Christ has been risen from the
dead (c.f. 1 Cor 15:14). That Pieper does so specifically in reference to “Christendom’s sacred book”
shows that hope can only be understood fully – as being something more than wish fulfilment – in
Christ is thus necessary for hope to be comprehended ‘in its depths’. It can be suggested, then, that for
Pieper, hope – at least with respect to the underlying, existential fundamental hope – must be read
Christologically.
regarding the relationship between hope and history, and history and ontology. The Incarnation, in which humanity and the historical are taken up into the divine, and Resurrection of Christ, as the harbinger of humanity’s glorious future in the eschatological Adam, supports a vision of hope as oriented to definitive, eternal communion with God outside of history, with its roots within history. Christological eschatology insists therefore upon the limits of history. History is not the site for the perfection of humanity but of the sacramental communication and anticipation through the Church of the promise of eternal life to it.

Only in Christ, therefore, do the relationship between hope and history, and the meaning of the Kingdom of God, become explicable. Congruent with a Chalcedonian Christology, which points to the future glorification of humanity by its participation in the divinity of Christ, Ratzinger argues that history is to be characterised under the aspect of ‘already, not yet’. The “eschatological action” of God begins in the Resurrection of Christ, who in his Ascension participates definitively in the life of God.\(^6\) Salvation has ‘already’ been wrought in Christ’s Paschal Mystery, the fruits of which continue to be communicated through history “until he comes”.\(^7\) Nevertheless, the full realisation of eschatological reality remains incomplete. It is ‘not yet’ apparent. It will only become so in the perfection of history outside itself. Hope is thus centred on the eschatological work of God in Christ, incipient to history but definitively consummated outside of it. Hope is directed to Christ, as the sign and fulfilment of eternal life and cosmic redemption, not the realisation of immanent, inner-historical goals.

To explore these issues, the Chapter is divided into a number of sections. The first discusses the Chalcedonian Christology, which frames Ratzinger’s treatment of eschatology and salvation history, and therefore hope and history. Ratzinger insists on an underlying unity between Christology and eschatology, which distinguishes his view of Christ from the Concilium perspective. Secondly, it will explore the relationship between eschatology and the Paschal Mystery, and how the eschatological Adam is humanity’s genuine future, anticipated in the Risen Christ. Thirdly, it will explore the implications of conceiving the Resurrection as

\(^6\) Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 186.

\(^7\) *CCC*, 1076 quoting 1 Cor 11:26.
eschatological for understanding the meaning of history and the Kingdom of God. The Resurrection, rooted in history, makes eschatological reality already present in history in the ‘Age of the Gentiles’, while pointing beyond it. Fourthly, it will explore more specifically the Christological content of eschatology, and the effect this has conceiving hope and history. Of a piece with a conception of hope as patient and receptive, hope consists of waiting on the Lord, who is the turning point of history. Finally, it will consider how the union between Christology and eschatology differentiates Ratzinger from the *Concilium* view of hope and history.

### 3.2 The Unity of Christology and Eschatology

Key for Ratzinger is his claim that eschatology cannot be separated from Christology. He argues that there is an “internal unity of christology and eschatology”. Ratzinger implicitly opposes an exclusive focus on eschatology and, therefore, the tendency of Moltmann and Metz to place all of theology under its perspective (1). Unlike the *Concilium* perspective on hope and history, in which immanent theology and philosophy are central, Ratzinger places Christology at the centre of his conception of hope and history. He argues that the legitimacy of positions taken on hope and eschatology depend upon the “integrity of Christology” and that “the truly constant factor [in the Church’s eschatological attitude across history] is Christology”. Eschatology takes its shape from Christology, not Christology from eschatology.

As eschatology is to be determined by Christology, it is important to understand exactly which Christology informs Ratzinger’s theology. Ratzinger affirms a Chalcedonian Christology, in which Christ’s divinity is expressly recognised, as normative for theology. An insistence on the divinity of Christ does not, however, lead Ratzinger to jettison the humanity of Christ. The Chalcedonian expression of the mystery of Christ contends that his humanity needs to be read under the aspect of his divinity, but not to the extent of a Monophysite absorption of that humanity. Acknowledgment of the humanity of Christ supports Ratzinger’s view of the

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importance of history and it as ‘already, not yet’, as humanity awaits its eschatological perfection. Nevertheless, acknowledging the centrality of Christ’s divinity to Christology reveals the limited theological utility of the ‘historical Jesus’, and allows a criticism of immanentist readings of Jesus.

3.2.1 The Chalcedonian Shape of Ratzinger’s Christology

Ratzinger employs a Christology dependent upon the definitions of the Christological Councils of the first millennium. As has been implied, there is particular recognition in his work of the significance of the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451). Chalcedon dogmatically defined that Christ possesses both a divine and human nature, which are, “without confusion or change, without division or separation”, united in the “same Only-begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ”. Ratzinger argues that “Chalcedon continues to indicate, to the Church of all ages, the necessary pathway into the mystery of Jesus Christ”, even if it needs to be reappropriated today in light of differing notions regarding its key concepts of ‘nature’ and ‘person’. He states that “Chalcedon [is] the definitive ecclesial formulation of Jesus’ Divine Sonship, [and] still … the pivotal truth that decides everything”. Thus, Chalcedon is of crucial significance in Ratzinger’s Christology and, indeed, the whole of his theology. It opens up the mystery of Jesus Christ, by pointing to his ontological unity with the Father, and therefore his divinity.

Ratzinger’s insistence on the divinity of Christ – and the corollary notion that his humanity needs to be perceived in light of his divinity – is one of his chief

12 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 159. He also argues the Chalcedon cannot be understood properly without reference to the ‘Neo-Chalcedonian’ theology of the Third Council of Constantinople, which grapples with the nature of the unity of the divine and human natures in Christ and the relationship between being, and consciousness and experience in Christ: Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Behold The Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 37-38; see also Kerestzy, Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology, 256. On what Ratzinger considers are the limits of the historical method and the need for exegesis to be undertaken with a correct hermeneutic, see Ratzinger, Behold the Pierced One, 42ff and 3.2.2.
Christological principles. It has led critics such as Lieven Boeve, a Belgian theologian in the mould of Schillebeeckx, to accuse Ratzinger of “[subordinating] the historical to the eternal, the human to the divine, nature to grace”. As Rowland observes, Boeve may be correct to argue that Ratzinger “[holds] to a high Christology”. She rightly argues, however, that Ratzinger as a theologian tends to hold in tension “critical couplets”, such as “history and eternity, humanity and divinity”, which might otherwise appear irreconcilable. Ratzinger does not oppose categories so much as tries to unify them, while respecting their differentiation.

A Chalcedonian Christology guards against the construction of an irresolvable chasm between humanity and divinity, or the absorption of the former by the latter. With respect to Christology, Ratzinger cannot be accused of Monophysitism or Nestorianism. The former would overplay the divinity of Christ such that his humanity is subsumed. The latter would overemphasise the distinctness of his humanity such that his divinity becomes separated from his humanity (a tendency arguably apparent in Concilium Christology). In fact, a Chalcedonian Christology precludes Ratzinger from the charge of being a Monophysite or Nestorian. As noted in the Introduction, a Christology emphasising the unity of the divine and human, such as developed recently by Aaron Riches, insists that the human and divine can be conceived together as a unity, and not as representing poles that cannot be breached. Ratzinger’s insistence on the enduring value of Chalcedon, which recognises the divinity and humanity (and therefore the eternal and historical) are held in unity in the Person of Christ, enables the human and divine to be conceived together as a unity without detracting from either.

Ratzinger’s adoption of a Chalcedonian Christology does not, therefore, mean an exclusion of historical considerations in reference to the divine Christ, who possesses

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18 C.f. Riches, *Ecce Homo*, 3: “Therefore, the only tenable starting point for Christology lies in the absolute unitas of the human Jesus with the divine Son. This opposes any alternative starting point that would begin from a theoretical or ontological separatio of divinity and humanity in Christ in order to proceed discretely ‘from below’”.
a human nature. Ratzinger’s Christology can be described as a unity in duality of both the high and low elements of Christology. According to Ratzinger, supposedly more Johannine ‘high’ Christology focused upon ontology and the Incarnation “form[s] an inseparable whole” with a more Pauline ‘low’ Christology emphasising history and the Cross.19 Although there exist between the theologies of the Incarnation and the Cross insurmountable “polarities”, these polarities are not “contradictions” but point to an underlying unity.20 For Ratzinger, this unity is glimpsed in the identity in Christ between his being and his actualitas. In his being as Son, Christ serves and possesses an exodus pattern of going out beyond himself. Christ’s “doing” on earth coincides with his “being” as Son of God.21 The purpose of the Incarnation is the offering of Christ on the Cross, the going out beyond himself in the offering of his life, a historical pattern that replicates the Trinitarian processions. As a result, as Rowland points out, Ratzinger “eschews any kind of dualistic choice between the being-Christology of Chalcedon and the event-Christology of the New Testament” (see further 3.2.2).22 The divine and human natures in the historical mission of Christ need to be read together in a unity.

Chalcedon permits furthermore Ratzinger to underscore the underlying unity of the ontological and biblical in the proclamation of Christ’s divinity. He considers that Chalcedon (as well as Nicæa (A.D. 325) and Constantinople I and II (A.D. 381, 681)) expresses a synthesis between Hebrew and Greek thought, which allows the historical and ontological to be united (the ‘human’ and ‘divine’). He argues that the Council of Nicæa’s use of the phrase “of one substance with the Father” when applied to Jesus, to be the philosophical expression of the biblical term “Son”, showing that we are to understand Jesus as ‘Son’, not metaphorically, but literally.23 In so doing, we can have confidence that Jesus “is the Son of God”, which means

21 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 230.
23 Ratzinger, Behold the Pierced One, 36, Journey to Easter, 96, 99.
that the God (‘of the Promise’ – 2.3.6) has come close in the Person of Jesus and that we can stand, live and die by (and therefore hope in) the truth signified in the biblical term ‘Son’. For Ratzinger, then, the ontological language used in the early Councils does not distort Christian faith but indispensably reveals the heart of the biblical message concerning the Person of Jesus Christ and his possession of divine and human natures. Jesus is not an adopted son of God or his avatar, but his Son by nature – he “is God” – which marks him out in the history of religion and makes him uniquely capable of being the object of faith, and therefore hope.  

An intrinsic relationship exists therefore between salvation history and Chalcedonian Christology, history and ontology. Rowland points out that for Ratzinger, Chalcedonian Christology expresses “the core of salvation history” and that, in fact, such dogma is “nothing less than the ‘definition of the term ‘salvation history’’. For Ratzinger, salvation history as involving God’s dealing with humanity and humanity’s “transitus”, or Passover into God, must be read under the rubric of Chalcedonian Christology. Everything that Ratzinger says regarding hope and history is consequently conditioned by reference to his concern to consider together, ‘without confusion and without separation’, the union of the divine and the human meeting in the Person of Jesus Christ. Christ possessed a ‘divinised’ humanity and, as Son of God, descended from on “high” in order “to rescue the perishing” and enable humanity to ascend to the Father. Salvation history is the process by which the historical is taken up into God’s eternal being through the Passover of Christ’s existence, as a free response of humanity to God’s offer of salvation. Chalcedon expresses precisely this notion of salvation history. It does not simply state the divinity of Christ but how this divinity was joined to humanity in order to elevate the latter into eternity. It clarifies that humanity is brought into the divine, and thus grounds hope in the possibility of eternal life, the object of fundamental hope (2.3.5).

24 Ratzinger, Behold the Pierced One, 36.
25 Ratzinger, Truth and Tolerance, 104-105, Behold the Pierced One, 36.
26 Rowland, “Beyond Baroque Scholasticism,” 47 citing Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” 54 (see n18 therein). C.f. also Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 190n172, 320: “On the contrary, if theology will remain true to its historical beginnings, to the salvation event in Christ to which the Bible bears witness, it must transcend history and speak ultimately of God himself”.
27 Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” 54, Journey to Easter, 96.
28 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 158, Journey to Easter, 75, 78. C.f. Riches, Ecce Homo, 3.
29 C.f. Ratzinger, Eschatology, 196.
3.2.2 The Importance of Dogma and the Limits of Emphasising the ‘Historical Jesus’

Congruent with a methodology, which does not sunder ‘ontological’, Johannine and ‘historical’, Pauline Christologies, Ratzinger is concerned to incorporate relevant exegetical findings in his theology. Nevertheless, he argues that the historical method has limited utility and that the figure of Jesus needs to be read within the Chalcedonian dogmatic tradition of faith. Ratzinger maintains that the ‘historical Jesus’ cannot be theologically neutered and placed within the confines of historical methodology. The ‘historical Jesus’ of the historians is not the ‘historical Jesus’, which is the object of faith.30 Jesus is a historical figure but as the “Son” of God transcends his historical limits and cannot be confined to historians’ categories.31 Instead, a theologian needs to look to the tradition of faith, as expressed in the Christological Councils, and not simply historical exegesis, to appreciate Jesus correctly.

The ‘historical Jesus’ and the ‘Christ of faith’ are not to be juxtaposed as if two different people. The Gospels present an authentic picture of the ‘historical Jesus’. Moreover, Ratzinger is convinced that faith in Christ is historically defensible, even if such a conclusion transcends what historical exegesis can discern. He compellingly suggests that the fully-developed biblical Christology evident in St Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, which postulates Lordship for Christ based on his divinity and obedience (Phil 2:6-11, Is 45:23), must have been based on an initial greatness in the figure and activity of Jesus. The biblical depiction of Christ is not a concoction but flows from an encounter with Jesus of Nazareth. As a result, the biblical testimony

30 For example, he argues – against Walter Kasper’s interpretation of his Introduction to Christianity – that Jesus’s historically irrefutable death on the Cross is the basis of his theological reflection. From consideration of the Cross proceeds his argument that ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ need to be considered together as the foundation of all theology. In other words, the ‘historical Jesus’ should be seen as opening the way to the Christ revealed as the Son (of God). Joseph Ratzinger, “Faith, History and Philosophy: On the response to My ‘Introduction to Christianity’”, trans. Sebastian Condon OP, provided to the author.
31 C.f. Ratzinger, Journey to Easter, 95, Principles of Catholic Theology, 190n172, 320.
regarding Christ is consonant with the later dogmatic definitions concerning the
divinity and humanity of Christ. Faith can thus be placed in the divinity of Christ.

As indicated in 3.2.1, Ratzinger recognises the mutually corrective roles of the
theology of the Incarnation and the theology of the Cross, and ontology and history
and that dogma and history need to be read together. A theology of the Cross seeks to
overcome a static conception of being, which ignores or downplays history and the
reality of sin. It lends itself to an understanding of Christianity as critical of society
and even the Church. A Concilium criticism of society, Church and the sin endemic
in social structures, and political theology and liberation theology’s practical
orientation to overcome these injustices can in that sense be read under the rubric of
the theology of the Cross. A theology of the Incarnation, on the other hand, focuses
on the being of God and how the divine sanctifies humanity in the Incarnation, which
thereby becomes “the real future of man” (and therefore his hope). Ratzinger’s
attempt to see the unity in these polarities underscores his insistence on the
importance of ontology and the need to consider the figure of Christ within the
parameters of orthodox Christian faith, even while maintaining the relevance of
historical considerations and avoiding a static ontology. He eschews a one-sided
focus on history.

The unity of the ‘high’ and ‘low’ in Ratzinger’s Christology has important
consequences for his theology and his conception of hope. In bringing the historical
and ontological together, Ratzinger’s Christology corrects an overemphasis on
history and criticism – arguably evident in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez – at
the expense of Christ’s being and eternity. Contrary to Schillebeeckx’s Christological
focus on experience, he reorients attention to what is perennially valid regarding the
saving figure of Christ. Nevertheless, he recognises that theology has a properly
practical element. Significantly, the practical import of theology is, however, to
facilitate the growth of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love, not per se to
change ecclesial practices, even if these might be necessary in order to serve the

32 Ratzinger, Jesus(1), xi, xxii-xxiii, Journey to Easter, 96-97, Behold the Pierced One, 32-33.
Rodrigo Polanco F. “Ontología e historia en el pensamiento de Joseph Ratzinger,” Teología y vida
accessed 10 October 2018.
33 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 229, 230 (quotation in 229), “Faith, History and
Philosophy,” 4, 5; Rowland, “Ratzinger on the Timelessness of Truth,” 254.
higher priority of facilitating the divine life in the Christian. Theology as an ecclesial science, rather, offers something greater than sociological improvement. What it offers is distinctive, a unique object that grounds genuine hope and takes faith out of the realm of the purely inner-worldly. Hope is thereby not based upon sociological improvement.\(^3^4\) That theology can offer supra-historical hope depends, instead, upon the enduring legitimacy of dogma, which indicates a transcendent, timeless reality. To approach the authentic Jesus, and how he can therefore be a source of hope, faith as dogmatically defined is necessary. Dogma teaches, consistent with the testimony of the bible, that Christ is the incarnate Son of God and, as such, the meeting point of humanity and eternity. He is humanity’s destiny and, therefore, object of hope, precisely as transcendent of history even while joining humanity and history to eternity (see 3.3).\(^3^5\)

Privileging Chalcedon differentiates Ratzinger from an exclusive focus on the historical Jesus, which he considers is futile. As Rowland points out, his biblical exegesis and fundamental theology do not consider the “historical-critical method of biblical exegesis [to be] the only valid foundation for theology”\(^3^6\). He is not confined to questions merely regarding praxis and the political significance of the figure of Jesus and the Gospel generally. Ratzinger thus differentiates himself from “an empty Jesuanism” that sought to drive a wedge between ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’, and focused on ‘event-Christology’ over against ‘being-Christology’\(^3^7\). Such a distinction for Ratzinger is self-defeating and inconsistent with Chalcedon. Jesus as a man only has “decisive [relevance] for all times” if he is the Christ of God.\(^3^8\) Only if “Jesus is the Son of God” can the ‘event’ of Jesus have any consequence.\(^3^9\) The unrepeatable event of the Incarnation rests on the “Is” of “Being” and “is God’s deed”\(^4^0\). Faith


\(^3^5\) C.f. Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 320.

\(^3^6\) Rowland, “Reception of Einführung”.

\(^3^7\) Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” 42.

\(^3^8\) Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” 42.

\(^3^9\) Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” 43.

\(^4^0\) Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” 43.
assures us that “Jesus is Christ, God is man”.41 Emphasising Jesus’ Divine Sonship enables therefore Christology to escape historicism and assures genuine Christocentrism. Christocentrism is unintelligible unless it is theocentric and “acknowledges the Christ in Jesus”.42 Without such recognition of the divinity of Christ, “allegiance to a merely historical Jesus is hopeless escapism”.43 There remains a 2000 year gap between the historian and Jesus, which cannot be spanned by historical method. Only the Church as a believing subject enables the person today to seek the figure of Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord and Son of God.44 The Risen Lord alone can ground hope, not the historians’ Jesus, who would remain confined to his historical context.

Historical readings of Jesus, which do not pay sufficient heed to his ontological status as Son of God, can also risk erroneously mixing politics and eschatology. Ratzinger is sceptical of the capacity for political readings of Jesus, which confine his significance to the inner-historical, to ground hope. In contrast to Gutiérrez’s avowed political reading of Jesus, albeit one that does not simply identify Jesus with the contemporaneous Zealot movement (1.3.4), he argues that Jesus was himself a historical failure in the prophetic line of Jeremiah, and therefore cannot be interpreted to support expectation of inner-historical fulfilment (or, it could be added, liberation). Ratzinger sees Jesus as prophesying Jerusalem’s final destruction. Jesus predicted Jerusalem’s end because of an impermissible, chiliast mixture of faith and politics present in the Qumran War Scroll, which was the historical background to Jesus’s ministry. A chiliast “synthesis of eschatology and politics” is thus foreclosed to the follower of Christ.45 For Ratzinger, Jesus cannot be read through a political lens. He was a political failure who preached against mixing eschatology and politics.

Hope for the early Christians was not understood in political terms or directed to the realisation of political goals, such as the removal of Roman rule of Jerusalem. Instead, early Christian hope pointed to a supra-historical end. Ratzinger sees the

41 Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 190 (emphases in original).
42 Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” quotations on 42, 43, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 320
43 Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” 42.
44 Ratzinger, “Christocentrism in Preaching?” 43-44.
45 Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 227-228 (quotation on 228).
Christians’ flight to Pella, Jordan to escape the Jewish War of A.D. 66-70 as clear evidence of their distance from the ‘Zealot’ movement, and its interpretation of the biblical message and Jesus’ life and teaching. Significantly, he suggests that the early Christians’ “hope is of an altogether different kind” from that of the Zealots.\textsuperscript{46} They saw that the dispensation of the Temple and its sacrifices were ended in “salvation-historical terms”, with the “crucified and risen Christ” in their place.\textsuperscript{47} As such, Ratzinger argues that Christianity cannot be understood as “bring[ing] a message of social revolution”.\textsuperscript{48} Christ was “not engaged in a fight for political liberation”.\textsuperscript{49} Christ did not proclaim himself as the Messiah who would politically bridge the gap between the current aeon and the aeon of God’s direct rule. He did not associate himself with a Davidic dynasty.\textsuperscript{50} The figure of Jesus needs thus to be understood apart from the Zealots’ expectation of God’s direct intervention, which politicised Israel’s eschatology in its understanding that hope equated to a political instantiation of a messianic kingdom. Instead, as the divine Son of God, his mission heralded a new stage of salvation history, in which the limits of political aspiration are transcended.

3.2.3 Conclusion

A feature of Ratzinger’s theology is his understanding of the irreplaceable importance of the Council of Chalcedon and its synthesis of the ontological and historical in Christ for appreciating salvation history. If salvation history is the historical process by which humanity is redeemed through reconciliation and participation in God, the simultaneously divine and human Christ, as defined in Chalcedon, is centrally significant. In him does humanity enter into the divine in the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery (see further 3.3). History thereby pivots on and finds its meaning in the Risen Christ, who becomes humanity’s hope (3.5). Understanding hope as oriented to eternal life with God is thus incomplete without reference to the place of Christ, as perfect God and perfect man, in salvation history. He is the Redeemer who opens up the prospect of eternal life with the Father, which

\textsuperscript{48} Benedict, \textit{Spe Salvi}, n4.
\textsuperscript{49} Benedict, \textit{Spe Salvi}, n4.
\textsuperscript{50} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 27-28.
is the ground of hope in salvation. He is the situs in which humanity passes over into the divine.

An emphasis on the joining of the human to the divine in Christ marks out Ratzinger’s Christology from the low Christology prevalent in Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez. A privileging of Christ as the Incarnate Word in Ratzinger grounds a competing understanding of the hope-history relationship. As suggested in Chapter 1, it may be that Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez do not specifically abandon Chalcedonian Christology. If such Christology is, however, not at the forefront of any considerations of hope and history, those considerations risk floundering on their own immanence and rest on nothing but historical research and human activity. A ground of hope is instead sought in contemporary notions of praxis, a Joachimite hope in a ‘new humanity’ or an always-already supernaturally elevated human existence.

An exclusive focus on low Christology turns out to be of limited utility. Pace Schillebeeckx, who argued that Christology cannot light on enduring ontological formulations but can only rest on historical appropriation of the experience God (1.3.2), if Christ is not God, he can have no abiding political or critical relevance. In short, if Christ is not divine, it becomes unclear what about him can ground genuine hope other than a vague, subjective experience of God. If hope is, as argued in Chapter 2, oriented to an eternal reality outside the control of the hoping person then a mere historical figure, no matter how politically relevant or morally inspiring, cannot ground hope. He or she will always remain historically conditioned and therefore in some way inaccessible to the contemporary person. Hope cannot be placed in a mere human person.

3.3 Eschatology and the Paschal Mystery

Ratzinger’s notion that Chalcedonian Christology expresses salvation history is important in perceiving the manner in which Jesus can ground hope. He can be a source of hope only if he is ontologically the Son of God, who nevertheless embraces history and joins humanity to divinity. The joining of the historical to the ontological
expressed in Chalcedon is apparent in the notion of the ‘eschatological Adam’, which is a key motif in Ratzinger. The story of salvation is the tale of humanity’s recapitulation in him, in which humanity is brought into its genuine divinised future, a process reflected in the notion of the eschatological Adam. The concept of Christ as the eschatological Adam therefore unlocks the Christocentric key to salvation history and how Christ is the source of hope. It reveals eschatological reality to be fundamentally Christological in shape, underscoring the unity of Christology and eschatology. Rather than being merely a political figure, Christ is the eschatological Adam, in whom humanity is taken up into the divine. He becomes humanity’s future, the ‘new Adam’ and the object of human hope.

The notion of the eschatological Adam is, moreover, intrinsically connected to the Passover of Christ. Christ’s own death, Resurrection and Ascension accomplishes the ‘transitus’ of humanity into the divine, which captures the essence of salvation history (3.2.1). Christ’s Resurrection itself is eschatological because it represents the beginning of the culmination of God’s saving plan, which is to incorporate humanity into the life of God. In Christ is this drawing-in achieved (c.f. Jn 12:32). His Ascension consists of this participation by humanity in divinity and anticipates the eschatological reality of the eschatological Adam, in which all of redeemed humanity participates in the life of God. The Risen and Ascended Jesus is thus the ‘new humanity’ to which humanity and its hope are directed as humanity’s eschatological realisation.

This section will outline the place of the eschatological Adam in Ratzinger’s theology. It will then explore the importance of the Paschal Mystery in conceiving Christ as the ‘last man’, who is thereby the end of Christian hope. In the Passover of Christ, humanity enter into the life of God, the object of human hope.

3.3.1 Christ, the Eschatological Adam

An understanding of Christ as the ‘eschatological Adam’ is strongly present in Ratzinger. In reference to his theology, Rowland explains that “Christ is the

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eschatological Adam to whom the first Adam already pointed, the true image of God who transforms man once more into a likeness of God”.\(^{52}\) In respect of Christ, Ratzinger invokes the Pauline concept of the “last man”, the rendering of which in the original Greek is the suggestive εσχατός Αδαμ (eschatos Adam) (1 Cor 15:45).\(^{53}\) For Ratzinger, the ‘last man’ is “the final man, who takes man into his future, which consists of his being, not just man, but one with God”.\(^{54}\) Ratzinger summarises his eschatological vision in the following way: “Hence man’s future means being one with God and so being one with mankind, which will be a single, final man in the manifold unity that is created by the exodus of love.”\(^{55}\) Manifest in Ratzinger is a recurrent appeal to the notion of the ‘last’ or ‘final man’ or ‘eschatological Adam’ to describe the telos of humanity as being joined irrevocably to the divine, through a passing over from mere humanity, into a humanity wedded to God.

Christology and eschatology, as the culmination of salvation history, are thus interrelated. Ratzinger refers to Patristic and Scholastic theology’s tendency to see Christology as containing two elements: one, looking back to original sin’s overcoming in Christ; the other looking forward to humanity’s future realisation in Christ as the ‘last man’. In this ‘last man’ is “the revelation and the beginning of the definitive mode of human existence”.\(^{56}\) Therefore Christology “is most deeply concerned with the future of man, which can be accomplished only as the future of the whole human race”.\(^{57}\) In the claim that Christ is the ‘final man’, in whom humanity is to be drawn, humanity’s eschatological and Christological future is revealed.

The unity between Chalcedonian Christology and eschatological hope is thus evident in the concept of the eschatological Adam. Humanity’s eschatological hope is for it to be divinised, which takes place in the Passover of Christ and is expressed in

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\(^{53}\) Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 234.

\(^{54}\) Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 234.


Chalcedonian dogma. Communion between God and humanity, and among humanity, is achieved through the incorporation of humanity into the ‘single, final man’, that is, the ‘eschatological Adam’. Humanity’s eschatological hope is for it to be recapitulated in the Person of Christ, who reveals humanity’s future to itself and, in showing that “God ‘is’ man”, already promises a cosmic redemption.58

Underlying Ratzinger’s vision of Christ as the ‘final man’ is a theological vision of humanity’s eschatological future as the culmination of salvation history, in which Pauline and Patristic view of the Mystical Body of Christ is important. Referring to St Paul and the thought of Teilhard de Chardin (even as he is aware of the limits of its biological terminology), Ratzinger describes Jesus as taking “the next evolutionary leap, as it were” for humanity, by taking humanity out of selfishness and into the unity of the body of Christ, by being one in Christ (Gal 3:28).59 In Christ, humanity touches its future, and is in fact its future already realised. Faith in him constitutes the drawing in of humanity into “one single Adam, one single ‘body’ (who is) the man to come”.60 St John’s Gospel likewise records Christ’s proclamation that he will draw all of humanity to himself when he is lifted up on the Cross (Jn 12:32). The “man of the future” is the man who is for others, who sacrifices himself.61 The eschatological Adam will be the body of humanity as the Mystical Body of Christ.62

Apparent in Ratzinger’s analysis of the eschatological Adam is the Christological basis for his conception of hope. Like the theologies of futurity, Ratzinger considers

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58 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 190. C.f. Lumen Gentium, 1.
59 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 239.
60 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 239.
61 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 240-241, quotation on 240.
62 Mention should be made here also of the deeply biblical and patristic account that de Lubac gives in Catholicisme of the plan of salvation history, in which the formerly unified human race is reunited through the nuptial marriage of Christ to his Church, “the ‘whole human race”: Henri de Lubac, Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man, trans. Lancelot C Sheppard and Sr Elizabeth Englund, OCD (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 27 quoting Pseudo-Chrysostom (Hippolytus?), In Pascha, sermo I (PG 59, 725). Ratzinger expressly acknowledges the significance of de Lubac’s work in his theological formation, describing it as “an essential milestone”: Ratzinger, “Foreword,” to de Lubac, Catholicism, 11. See also Rowland, Faith, 3. His vision of the eschatological horizon for humanity is deeply impressed with the Patristic notion that humanity’s destiny is to be re-drawn up into the Person of Christ through the union flowing from love in the Mystical Body of Christ, a unity that had been damaged through sin: C.f. Augustine, On Psalm 195, n15 (PL 37, 1236) in de Lubac, Catholicism, 376: “But the Divine Mercy gathered up the fragments from every side (of the world), forged them in the fire of love and welded into one what had been broken”.

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that Christian faith involves “a looking forward”, in which hope consists. Unlike these theologies, however, he considers that the mere looking out to the future runs the risk of utopianism, when it bases its aims on nothing more than human ingenuity. Rather, Christian hope is based on the past of Christ’s saving action on the Cross, the eternal present of God’s being, and the “Omega of history” who is the man to come, “in whom God and world will touch each other, and, thus, (constitutes) God in world, world in God” (c.f. also 1 Cor 15:28). Hope finds its zenith in the God-man, Jesus Christ, who is humanity’s (already) future realisation.

An eschatological conception of Christ guards therefore against a secular humanist reading of him. Ratzinger’s use of the concept of the eschatological Adam underscores that he considers being drawn into the Body of Christ to be humanity’s true future. It distinguishes his conception of hope from a nebulous orientation to a historical future grounded in human activity and anchors it in the concrete Christ, who as the Son of God and Son of Man draws humanity into the divine life. The ‘better humanity’ of which Schillebeeckx, Metz and Gutiérrez speak as the hope of human is taken over in Ratzinger by the concept of Christ as the ‘new man’. The eschatological hope to which we are directed is ineluctably related to Christ, understood as Son of God, and involves the divinisation of humanity that has already occurred in the Incarnation and glorification of Christ, and which is the object of hope.

3.3.2 The Paschal Mystery as the Ground of Hope

The Passover of Christ is central to Ratzinger’s eschatological-Christological account of hope and understanding of Christ as the ‘last man’. Christ’s Passover is the (sole) means by which humanity enters into its eschatological future because it is itself intrinsically eschatological. For Ratzinger, the Resurrection stands at the heart of the Gospel and proclaims that the power of death has been overcome by God’s power. Such action of God gives history “an entirely new hope”. History, hitherto

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63 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 242.
64 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 242.
66 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 185.
characterised by death, is given a ‘new hope’ because the Cross and Resurrection of Christ are God’s ‘eschatological action’, that is, the eschaton, which is God’s “final action”.67 The Gospels thus present the Cross and Resurrection of Christ as “the final hour” of history, involving the singular Resurrection that conquers death.68 God’s final act is to overcome death for humanity, which is recapitulated in the final man, whose death and Resurrection makes this possible. The Resurrection is therefore eschatological because it contains “a cosmic and future-oriented character”; faith in the Resurrection “is a faith of hope in the fullness of a promise that encompasses the whole cosmos”.69 The Resurrection of Christ grounds eschatological hope because it anticipates the cosmic redemption and the triumph of life over death at the end of time.

Ratzinger understands salvation history through the lens of the Paschal Mystery. For him, all of salvation history needs to be read under the rubric of the “Passover of Jesus Christ”.70 In the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, the “inner meaning” of Israel’s Passover is revealed; the Cross and Resurrection constitute the “ultimate Passover”, in which is taken up all of salvation history, giving it its full meaning.71 Salvation history is thus “an exodus history”, begun in Abraham’s departure from his land, through the liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt, culminating in the αγάπη εις τέλος of Christ, his radical loving into the end (c.f. Jn 13:1). Concordant with the Christology that detects a unity between the Son’s ‘being’ and ‘doing’ (3.2.1), Christ’s death entails the “total exodus from himself, a going-out-from himself toward the other”.72 Christ’s Passover is the meaning of salvation history. Joined to Ratzinger’s claim that Chalcedon likewise expresses the meaning of salvation history (3.2), it can be suggested that the Paschal Mystery and Chalcedon are intimately connected. Ratzinger’s Christological reading of salvation history and eschatology are amplified in reference to the Passover of Christ. The Paschal Mystery represents

the exodus of humanity “pass[ing] from former ways to newness of life”.73 Chalcedon expresses that this reality is present in Christ, eschatologically so in the Resurrection. Christ’s Passover inaugurates the eschatological future of humanity as joined to divinity, and is the source of hope.

Christ’s entry into the sanctuary through the obedient offering of his flesh on the Cross (Heb 10:20), is the summation of the exoduses through history and the capstone of salvation history. Christ has gone out from himself into the reality of God. His death rends the Temple veil separating God from the people and opens the path for humanity to enter into God through the reconciling sacrifice of Christ.74 Thus, in Christ’s Cross and Resurrection, which is his Passover that constitutes a “mystery of transition” from death to life, is the new humanity constituted.75 The Resurrection “gathers all salvation within itself”.76 Christ’s piercing in the side echoes the opening of the first Adam’s side and offers divine life, through blood and water, Baptism and Eucharist, to the Church, which is the sacramental sign of this new humanity. In the sacrifice of the Cross are therefore present atonement for humanity and the basis for the possibility of being drawn up into “his body”.77 In Christ’s reconciling sacrifice on the Cross, and in his Resurrection and Ascension, the Passover of Jesus Christ is the culmination of salvation history and anticipates humanity’s eschatological destiny.

The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ mean that, contrary to the Apostles’ expectations, Christ did not usher in a new messianic, inner-historical Davidic kingdom. The messianic, eschatological reality constituted in Christ is not exclusively intra-mundane. Christ’s destiny, and the future of humanity, was rather to enter into God’s “dominion over space”, a dominion grounded in God’s analogical relationship to creation as its “premise” and “ground”.78 Consequently, Resurrection

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73 Prayer after Communion, Fifth Sunday of Easter (MR 2000). Also used, for example, on Thursday, Second Week of Easter (MR 2000).
75 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 240.
76 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 189.
77 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 237, see 224-226; 229-240, Introduction to Christianity, 240-241.
78 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 283.
and Ascension hope entails a supra-historical destiny for humanity, joined to the Creator’s transcendent governance over creation.

In the Resurrection, an entirely new order has thus been instituted. In Jesus(2), Ratzinger relates the concept of “evolutionary leap” with the Resurrection of Christ. Earlier, he had utilised the concept in his Introduction to Christianity in connection with Christ as the ‘last man’, to describe him as constituting that ‘leap’ in human development. The eschatological Adam is the ‘final man’ because he is Risen and participates in God’s life, which is the qualitative ‘leap’ for humanity. In doing so, he creates a “space” for the immortal soul to fulfil its natural orientation to immortality (see further 4). The “cosmic body of Christ”, which is the Risen Christ, thereby becomes the situs in which humanity enters definitive communion with God and one another. In the Risen, Eschatological Christ, humanity participates in eternity, which is its quantum leap.

The Resurrection and Ascension thus consists in humanity’s participation in the divine life. For Ratzinger, the Resurrection constitutes an “ontological leap”, in which Jesus’ humanity “…touches being as such, opening up a new dimension that affects us all, creating for all of us a new space of life, a new space of being in union with God.” In the Resurrection, Jesus “entered the vast breadth of God himself”. In Tertullian’s evocative terminology, with Christ’s Resurrection, “spirit and blood” are now located ‘within’ the divinity. In the Ascension, moreover, Jesus “was taken up into God’s very being”. Suggestive of the Chalcedonian expression of the mystery of Christ, Ratzinger claims that the ‘evolutionary leap’ allows “for the union of the finite with the infinite, for the union of man and God” and for the subsequent “conquest of death”. Humanity has been taken irrevocably up in to the divine life in the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus of Nazareth. In referring to the ‘leap’ of the Resurrection as the anticipation of humanity’s eschatological fulfilment, Ratzinger describes therefore humanity’s hope as ontological participation in God’s eternity. In

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79 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 274.
80 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 274.
81 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 274.
82 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 274.
83 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 244-245.
84 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 274 citing De Resurrect. Mort. 51:3, CCSL II, 994.
85 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 287.
86 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 247.
the Resurrection, Christ enables humanity to attain to “a new possibility of human existence…that affects everyone and that opens up a future, a new kind of future, for mankind”. The Resurrection grounds hope in a definitively better future, which consists not in the improvement of history but the instantiation of a new humanity through the eschatological Resurrection of Christ.

As the culmination of the Paschal Mystery, the Ascension is the manifestation of hope. It represents humanity’s definitive, ontological participation in the life of God. Ratzinger argues that the liturgical feast of Christ’s Ascension expresses “the essence of Christian hope”. He refers to the closing prayer’s plea that the faithful’s heart be turned to “where our substance already dwells”, in Christ who is in heaven with the Father. Through Christ’s Ascension, humanity dwells with God: as a result, “our substance is already in paradise”, which is the hope of humanity. The humanity of Christ has entered definitively into the divine power through the Resurrection and Ascension. Because of the ontological unity of humanity, moreover, through the hypostatic union of Christ’s humanity to his divinity, as expressed at Chalcedon, the human race as it were is united to God. One who hopes is, as a result of the Ascension, one whose “life enter[s] into reality itself, to live in and by the body of Christ”. Through the Ascension, in Christ, humankind is with God. The ‘better future’ in which we hope is the joining of humanity to the divinity, and the promise of an eternal life that conquers death and consists of a new, ontological reality for humanity.

It is consequently Christ’s Resurrection and Ascension, which unlocks the key to eschatological hope. The Paschal Mystery effects the mystery of salvation history, in which humanity is taken up into divinity. Ratzinger would affirm with the Christian

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87 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 244.
89 Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 36 citing “the closing prayer of the Gelasianum Vetus” used in the prayers for the Ascension.
91 Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 36-37. The English translation of the Post Communion prayer on the feast of the Ascension (MR 2000) translates “substantia” as “nature” and thus correlates human ‘nature’ with ‘substance’, which is united to the Godhead: “Almighty ever-living God, who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries, grant, we pray, that Christian hope may draw us onward to where our nature is united with you. Through Christ our Lord”; “Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui in terra constitutos divina tractare concedes, presta, quæsumus, ut illuc tendat christianæ devotionis affectus, quo tecum est nostra substantia. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.” (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2012.)
tradition that without the Resurrection, Christian faith is meaningless and that it is the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, and the promise of the General Resurrection, that constitute the object of human hope (1 Cor 15:12-34). Only Christ’s Resurrection grounds the existence of the “main” (which can be read as a reference to ‘fundamental’) hope in eternal life and divine salvation.92

3.3.3 Conclusion

Eschatological hope is thus grounded in the Paschal Mystery, in which humanity passes over into the divinity. In the eschatological Adam is this reality present. The Risen and Ascended Lord is the future of humanity that is divinised, and the end of human history.

3.4 Salvation History is to be read as ‘Already, Not Yet’

Conceiving the Resurrection as eschatological and centring eschatological hope on the Risen and Ascended Christ carries implications for the way Ratzinger conceives history. The Communio position understands history from the time of Christ as bearing the mark of the eschatological. Salvation history is simultaneously ‘already’ and ‘not yet’. The Church and the Kingdom of God do not drive history according to its own immanent potentiality but within history bear witness to, and communicate, eschatological reality, which stands outside history.

This section describes the ‘already, not yet’ nature of salvation history by exploring the eschatological and historical character of the Resurrection. It will then explore the implications of conceiving salvation history in this way, and the importance of the concept of the ‘Age of Gentiles’ and a Chalcedonian Christological reading of the Kingdom in Ratzinger’s conception of history as ‘already, not yet’.

3.4.1 The Resurrection as Eschatological and Historical

As noted in 3.3.2, Jesus’s Resurrection is eschatological because, in anticipating humanity’s participation in divinity and glorification, it is God’s ‘final action’. The Resurrection is, therefore, by definition supra-historical. Having been raised into the divine life, the Risen Christ now “stands above” history.93 His Resurrection, as eschatological, “transcends history” and is not a historical occurrence like his birth or crucifixion.94 The end-state of history is thus instituted in Christ’s Resurrection. It represents humanity’s transcendence of death and becoming. The Resurrection is the humanity’s definitive entry into divine life and not a mere return to the historical existence and death that preceded it.

The eschatological Resurrection of Jesus nevertheless bears on, and is bound up in, history.95 History is altered through the eschatological action of the Resurrection. The Resurrection “burst[s] open history and usher[s] in a new dimension commonly described as eschatological”.96 Ratzinger notes that Jewish faith expected a resurrection of the dead. However, it did not expect such a “new mode of life” and an associated “inbreaking of a new world” to occur in the “midst of the continuing old world”, that is, in historical existence.97 Rather, the eschaton expected by the Jewish faith at the end of time happened “in history”.98 Despite its transcendent dimension, the Resurrection is rooted in history because it concerns a historical personage who died (within history). The Resurrection simultaneously “reaches above history and is founded and anchored in history” and “up to a certain point still belongs there”.99 Ratzinger consequently makes the apparently bold claim that the Resurrection entails the “transposition into history” of eschatology.100 God’s eschatological activity

95 This is why hope in eternal life brings eternity into the present: see 2.3.7.
97 Ratzinger, *Jesus*(2), 245.
98 Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 187. Incidentally, Ratzinger’s affirmation that God’s eschatological action occurred within history works against the conclusion that he is a strict ‘eschatologist’ and indeed the utility of that distinction: refer to the Introduction.

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possesses “historicity”. In a sense, through the Resurrection and, we will see, the Church and the liturgy, the historical becomes a receptacle of the eschatological.

Nevertheless, even as the Resurrection is rooted in history, Ratzinger’s understanding of the simultaneously eschatological and historical nature of the Resurrection is not a secularisation of the eschaton. The eschatological is not confined to the historical. The Resurrection, while historical in a sense, is eschatological precisely because it points to a trans-historical reality, the utterly new eschaton in which humanity is taken up into the divine reality. It is only intelligible, moreover in light of a Chalcedonian Christology, which sees the union of the divine and human in Christ. Precisely as Chalcedonian, however, the historical is implicated in the eschatological because of the joining of the human to the divine. It shows the Paschal Mystery as taking humanity into the divinity immanent to but also transcendent of creation.

3.4.2 The Implications of the Resurrection as Eschatological for Conceiving History as ‘Already, Not Yet’

Understanding God’s eschatological action in the Resurrection as implicating the historical has consequences for conceptualising the relationship between eschatology and history. It affects the meaning of eschatology and the salvific import of history after the Resurrection and the possibilities thereby implicit in historical action and change for the future. For Ratzinger, that the “eschaton already takes place in history rather than just at its end considerably alters the nature of the eschatological as such.” The eschatological does not belong entirely to the future, consisting of the establishment of God’s Reign at the end of time. That the eschatological has happened in (and beyond) history, in the Resurrection of Christ means eschatology is not predicated on a dialectical view of history, which rejects the past and expectant of a future utopia. Rather, it is grounded in the historical life and death, and eschatological Resurrection, of Jesus Christ, who in rising from the dead, ushered in humanity’s glorified future.

101 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 187.
102 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 188.
The meaning of salvation history is thus affected by the Resurrection’s character as simultaneously historical and eschatological. Related to Oscar Cullman’s conception of salvation history, Ratzinger considers that it is to be read “under the double sign of ‘already’ and ‘not yet’”. He avers that the “separation between middle and end” (see further below) signified in an understanding of history as ‘already, not yet’ affects “both the idea and reality of what we call salvation”. Salvation is rooted in the change that the Resurrection makes to history. The eschaton has incipiently, ‘already’ begun in Christ’s saving Paschal Mystery, which makes available the means of salvation within history, while anticipating eschatological reality outside history, which is ‘not yet’ realised.

In construing salvation history as ‘already, not yet’, Ratzinger relies on two key figures: Cullmann and Jean Daniélou. To explain salvation history as ‘already, not yet’, Cullmann uses a metaphor drawn from the Second World War. He compares Christ’s (first) coming with ‘D-Day’, the determinative military battle which put the Allies on the course to victory. There was, however, a gap between ‘D-Day’ and ‘victory day’, the moment of the victory’s realisation. Likewise, Christ’s advent is the “turning point” of history (the “mid-point” in Cullmann’s scheme), even if it did “not coincide with the end of world history”. In Schnackenburg’s lapidary terms, “[t]he time of fulfilment was not yet the time of completion”. As a result, history may continue for an indefinite duration even if the ‘victory’ has already been won.

According to Cullmann’s idea of salvation history then, there is an important distinction between Jesus’s advent and the definitive realisation of victory.

Ratzinger detects a parallel between Cullmann and Daniélou. Daniélou distinguishes between “middle and end, τέλος [telos] and πέρας [peras]”. Referring both these terms to Christ, Daniélou distinguishes between Christ as the “end” or “goal” of

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history (telos) and Christ as its “boundary” or “limit” (peras).\textsuperscript{109} The former refers to history’s fulfilment, whereas the latter refers to its chronological limit or end.\textsuperscript{110} Christ is simultaneously the fulfilment and end of time, yet there remains a separation between Christ’s fulfilment of history as its telos, in his first coming, and the end of time, at his Second Coming.

A conception of salvation history as ‘already, not yet’ signifies that Christ has ‘already’ won the decisive battle. Referring to the “true meaning of Christmas”, Ratzinger states that it “is the birthday of the undefeated Light”.\textsuperscript{111} In the darkness of history and the seasonal recurrence of the death of winter and the growth of spring, there is now “certainty … [that] the light will not die, but has already achieved final victory”.\textsuperscript{112} He has “dethrone[d]…the world elements”, a reference to the eschatological signs anticipated in the Gospels.\textsuperscript{113} The victory of Christ is seen in his eschatological glorification in the Resurrection and Ascension, stemming from his revelation in the flesh at Christmas.

The ‘already’ element of salvation history needs, however, to be paired with the ‘not yet’ component. ‘Not yet’ has Christ’s victory been consummated. Sin and death seemingly continue their dominion in our historical existence. In Ratzinger’s words, “from a worldly perspective, nothing has been changed” in Christ’s first coming; Christianity apparently “makes no difference” to the nature of world history.\textsuperscript{114} The “messianic hope” promising the relinquishment of the tools of war and an uninterrupted peace has “not been fulfilled, but remain[s] an expectation of the future” (Is 2:4, Mi 4:3f).\textsuperscript{115} The past Christian event did not, seemingly, cure history of its defects. As discussed in Chapter 2, history remains peccable. Life in God has not been communicated definitively to the Body of Christ. Thus, while Christ himself participates in eschatological reality, his followers do not while history remains to be completed.

\textsuperscript{110} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 195.
\textsuperscript{111} Ratzinger, “The Undefeated Light”.
\textsuperscript{112} Ratzinger, “The Undefeated Light”.
\textsuperscript{113} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 203.
\textsuperscript{115} Benedict, “Grace and Vocation without Remorse,” 174.
3.4.3 The ‘Age of Gentiles’

The distinction between ‘victory’ and ‘end’ implies a distinct and necessary stage in salvation history, which is characterised by the reality of victory without its full actualisation. An important stage, it allows the body of Christ through history to be drawn into the eschatological Adam. Ratzinger describes Cullmann’s “vital distinction” between the victory and its realisation, stating that the Gospel pronounces a “new epoch: the age of the ‘already’ and ‘not yet,’ the already realized midpoint and the still future end.”

A distinction between victory and its full realisation creates therefore an “intermediate age”, an “interval … [which] is a decisive factor in Jesus’ message”. In this intermediate period, “not yet [is] the arrival of open veritas”, the culmination of history’s movement from umbra-imago-veritas. Instead, it is the age of the imago, in which the light is more clearly seen but still as image rather than in verity. The age corresponds not to the arrival of paradise but the Israelites forty-year exodus, a period of simultaneous exile and liberation. Christ’s Paschal Mystery inaugurates thus a new age in salvation history, which bears the character of a won but unrealised victory.

Ratzinger’s insistence on the notion of an ‘intermediate age’ as integral to the Gospel proclamation distinguishes his eschatology from one that reads Jesus’s proclamation through a lens of ‘imminent expectation’. He contends against the exegetical argument that Luke’s Gospel invented an ‘age of the Gentiles’ in the eschatological discourses of Christ (Lk 21:24). Positing an ‘interim period’ in such a way purportedly recast the “temporal axis of the Gospels and of Jesus’ original message” and created “the time of the Church as a new phase of salvation history”. An imminent chronological expectation of the end of the world was displaced with the fabrication of a new period in which the Church is to operate and was the Church’s reading back into Christ’s message the “delay” it experienced in the arrival of the Parousia.

116 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 53.
117 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 53, 60.
118 Benedict, “Grace and Vocation without Remorse,” 176.
119 Benedict, “Grace and Vocation without Remorse,” 176-177.
120 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 42.
121 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 35-36.
Against an exegesis of imminent end, Ratzinger argues that all Synoptic Gospels proclaim a period of the Gentiles, during which the Gospel is to be taken to all nations (Mt 24:14, Mk 13:10). Thus, contrary to Gutiérrez’s interpretive hesitations regarding the ‘eschatological discourses’ (1.3.4), he considers Luke’s historical account of the fall of Jerusalem to be separate from a description of the world’s end. Rather, Jerusalem’s fall signified the beginning of “the dispersion of Israel”, “the hour of the Gentiles” and an “open-ended future for the world”. Moreover, Mark’s use of “in illo tempore” to connect Jerusalem’s fall with the end is but an editor’s construction and not a chronological account of the relationship between the events. Similarly, Matthew’s use of the Greek euthys to describe the manner of the Parousia should not be interpreted as “immediately” but “suddenly”.

For Ratzinger, entirely consistent with the message of the Gospel is an Age of the Gentiles, with no pre-determined end or immediate chronological connection to the fall of Jerusalem.

Ratzinger’s reading of the Synoptic tradition as proclaiming not an imminent end of the world but an Age of the Church or Gentiles is congruent with a broader Communio reading of history. Daniéelou argued that the content or meaning of history in the ‘already, not yet’ period is the Church’s missionary task to build up sacramentally the body of Christ. Missionary charity is directed to the evangelisation of peoples in expectation of the Parousia, with the Parousia dependent in some way on the proclamation of the Gospel to the nations. A similar vision of the meaning of history after Christ animates John Henry Cardinal Newman, who argued, with reference to a high Christology, that “once the Christ [the high Priest] had come…nothing remained but to gather in His Saints…and nothing more was left to do”.

The purpose of history – what ‘we’ are ‘doing’ as ‘Church’ – is not to build a

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124 Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 40. But c.f. *Jesus*(1), 60 where Ratzinger critiques the idea of an imminent expectation of the advent of the Kingdom on the basis that it will “suddenly” appear. The distinction might lie in the expectation of the imminent eschatology that the Kingdom of God will ‘suddenly’ and definitively be manifested within history, whereas Ratzinger might read St Matthew’s Gospel as saying that its definitive manifestation will occur ‘suddenly’ at the end of time.
better future but draw people sacramentally into the mystical body of Christ, in order for them to become saints.

Recognition of a period of the Church also relates to the Augustinian view of two societies remaining present within history, the City of God and the City of Man. Between the two cities is “dramatic tension”, because of the transition between the historical epochs of “total history” brought about by Christ’s victory.\textsuperscript{126} History has entered a new phase, which could be described as eschatological, while continuing to bear the marks of sin. In Daniélou’s words, the “true society is today the people of God, the church [sic]”.\textsuperscript{127} In this people of God subsists the Kingdom of God, which has already come with Christ (see 3.4.4). The Christian is thus a citizen of the City of God, which has not yet won total victory, while living in a passing world (c.f. 1 Jn 2:17). In this period of waiting, the Christian is called to expand Christianity with a “missionary charity” that “hasten[s] the day of the Parousia for themselves”.\textsuperscript{128} There is an ‘interim period’ of world history in which the Church is to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Mt 28:19).

An idea of there being an “interim time” between victory and fulfilment is therefore crucial to Ratzinger’s conceptions of eschatology and the kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{129} The eschatological nature of the Resurrection, which was also historical, continues to be present in history in the Church from the first advent of Christ. Ratzinger argues that the New Testament does not present an eschatology that merely projects the eschaton’s realisation long into the future. Instead, “the ‘eschatological’ is always also somehow present”.\textsuperscript{130} Ratzinger thus develops “an eschatology of the present”, which, although retaining the expectation of a definitive, transformative coming of Christ that has not yet occurred, gives eschatological significance to the “adventus...
medius, the middle coming”. Ratzinger borrows the concept of adventius medius from St Bernard of Clairvaux, who distinguishes it from the first and second comings. The ‘middle coming’ refers to Christ’s presence in the world now through the sacraments, circumstances and saints.

The adventius medius has eschatological significance as the period in which the Gospel is communicated across space and time prior to its definitive realisation at the end of time. Ratzinger considers that the concept of a time of the Gentiles as a necessary “prelude to the End” belongs to the heart of the Gospels – because eschatology aims at the universal “salvation of all” – and is not an arbitrary addition. The “time of the Gentiles” is “essential” to “the history of God and man”. He argues “that Jesus did not want to bring the perfected new world of peace in an immediate way”. Implicitly, he intended to establish the interval as the space in which humanity chooses for or against God. It is the period of “God’s patience”, in which he “reigns from a tree” (Regnavit a ligno Deus). The Age of the Church is not characterised by definitive “cosmic transformation” but is the “time of freedom”, in which the “crucified love of Jesus Christ” is offered to humanity, the free response to which allows humanity to be gathered into God’s Kingdom. For Ratzinger, the interval between Christ’s first and second comings forms a fundamental component of salvation history. It enables the universalisation of the offer of salvation, which will not be coerced but offered freely.

Ratzinger rejects therefore an eschatology of ‘imminent end’. He acknowledges “the unmistakeable traces of an expectation that the world will end soon” present in the New Testament. He argues, however, that an interpretation of imminent end fails to explain early Christianity’s self-understanding, as well as its continuing appeal once such an imminent end did not occur. Ratzinger points to parables in the Gospels such as the catch of the good and bad fish (Mt 13:47) and the wheat and darnel (Mt

131 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 291.
133 Benedict, “Grace and Vocation without Remorse,” 175.
134 Benedict, “Grace and Vocation without Remorse,” 175.
137 C.F. Benedict, “Grace and Vocation without Remorse,” 175.
138 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 35.
13:24-30), as well as references to the Kingdom of God being like a mustard seed, which grows into a large tree (Mk 4:30-32), or a leaven (Mt 13:33, Lk 13:20). These parables preclude an “apocalyptic interpretation of Jesus’ Kingdom proclamation” and thus “a purely imminent eschatology”. The Gospel does not proclaim an imminent and conclusive irruption of the Kingdom with the first coming of Christ. To speak of a growth of the Kingdom would therefore be unintelligible if Christ’s message exclusively is to be interpreted under the lens of imminent expectation.

Rather than Christ’s proclamation regarding the Kingdom giving rise to expectation of an imminent irruption of God’s reign on earth, Ratzinger suggests that his statements regarding the Kingdom expressed “its meagre dimension within history”. Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was to exist within history and to grow throughout time, being paltry in scope. Christ’s proclamation regarding the closeness of the Kingdom and its presence among us shows “a process of coming that has already begun and extends over the whole of history” (Mk 1:15, Mt 12:28, Lk 17:21). Although certain Gospel passages give rise to the theory of imminent expectation, Ratzinger suggests that the countervailing passages concerning the growth of God’s Kingdom necessitates an alternative conclusion. God’s Kingdom is already here incipiently and is to spread throughout history in the Age of the Gentiles, not in the form of utopia but as the City of God on earth.

3.4.4 A Chalcedonian Christological Reading of the Kingdom

An ‘already’, ‘not yet’ view of salvation history supports Ratzinger’s interpretation of Christ’s proclamation of the Kingdom as already present within history and operative in the Age of the Gentiles but not definitively realised. Relevant in this regard is the Chalcedonian and therefore Christocentric, theocentric, pneumatological and Trinitarian reading of the Kingdom of God that Ratzinger presents. Ratzinger tends to identify Christ with the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom with the Lordship of the one Trinitarian, God. The Kingdom is not therefore to be definitively instantiated within history and understood in temporal,

139 Ratzinger, Jesus(1), 52, 58 (quotation on 58), Jesus(2), 47, 279 (quotation on 47).
140 Ratzinger, Jesus(1), 52, 58 (quotation on 58), Jesus (2), 47.
141 Ratzinger, Jesus(1), 58.
geographic or political terms. Expectation of a political inner-historical Kingdom of God is therefore mistaken.

Ratzinger casts the Kingdom in Christocentric and therefore personalist terms. He refers to a concept deriving from a “splendid coinage of Origen’s”, that is, the idea that “Jesus is ἡ ἀυτοβασιλεία, ‘the Kingdom in Person’.” He, Jesus himself, constitutes the Kingdom. Thus, Ratzinger does not think that the Kingdom is a geographical notion comparable to political jurisdictions, which have a concern to modify “earthly circumstances”. For Ratzinger, eschatology’s “departure-point is a person, not a program”. If the Son is the “answer to the question of the Kingdom”, Jesus’ proclamation concerning the Kingdom cannot be reduced to “(merely) changed living conditions”. It does not fundamentally concern sociological improvement but must always be referred back to Christ and his soteriological significance (5). The Kingdom is, therefore, not a “space-time” concept, but a Christological one. The Kingdom is centred on Christ the person (and those drawn into his Body).

Ratzinger prefers Christological, and in turn theocentric and pneumatological, interpretations of the Kingdom. The supposed distinction between the pre-Easter proclamation of the Kingdom and the post-Easter proclamation of Christology is rendered nugatory by the notion that the Kingdom is present in Christ. The proclamation of the Kingdom is a proclamation of Christ, and so concerns Christology and is continuous with the post-Easter proclamation. In being an intrinsically Christological notion, moreover, the Kingdom of God is theocentric and pneumatological, and therefore Trinitarian. In Jesus’ message concerning the Kingdom, he is proclaiming the presence of God’s action in the “midst of them”.

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142 Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 34 quoting K.L. Schmidt, “basileia,” TWNT I, 591. See also Ratzinger, *Jesus(I)*, 49, 55-56. Ratzinger qualifies his enthusiastic approbation of Origen’s idea somewhat in *Jesus(I)* but the general thrust of the position remains the same: c.f. 60-62. He also mentions the Origenist idea of the interiority of the Kingdom, which centres the Kingdom in the praying “man’s inner being”, from which it grows. Again, the Kingdom is not a geographical notion: *Jesus(I)*, 50. An interesting parallel is seen in Mustafa Akyol’s notion of the “The Caliphate is within You”, which is an appropriation of elements of Jesus’ message for Islam: Gabriel Said Reynolds, “Jesus for Muslims,” *First Things* 279 (January 2018), 56 reviewing Mustafa Akyol, *The Islamic Jesus: How the King of the Jews Became a Prophet of the Muslims* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 2017).


meaning that God is proximate to humanity.\textsuperscript{147} Precisely because Christ is God, God in Christ is working in “history in a wholly new way”.\textsuperscript{148} Furthermore, because Jesus’ action is divine, the Kingdom is pneumatological. The Kingdom is not simply to be equated with Jesus’ physical presence, but also with “his action, accomplished in the Holy Spirit”.\textsuperscript{149} Jesus constitutes the Kingdom because it is “through him that the Spirit of God acts in the world”.\textsuperscript{150} Consequently, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God is fundamentally theocentric and trinitarian. It concerns God because it points to the mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ and refers to “God’s presence in his own action and being”.\textsuperscript{151} God comes into history in a novel way and establishes his reign in the Person of Jesus Christ, through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Understanding the Kingdom according to Chalcedonian Christology unlocks, moreover, the meaning of salvation history as ‘already, not yet’. Ratzinger argues that the “answer to the question of the Kingdom is… no other than the Son” because he bridges “the unbridgeable gulf between already and not yet”.\textsuperscript{152} Old Testament hopes in historical signs of God’s eschatological activity in a human Messiah and the incommensurability of an eschatological transformation within that history find an “inner unity” in the God-man Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{153} His coming at the end of time, as “a pure act of God”, is not a historical development but is “without precedent”, yet entails also humanity’s redemption with its cooperation, which occurs from history.\textsuperscript{154} The split between telos and peras, victory and consummation, middle and end, finds its answer in the Person of Christ, to whom humanity and divinity is predicated and into whom humanity is being drawn.

Christ is the simultaneously ‘already’ directing humanity to its ‘not yet’ realised future. In Christ, whose Resurrection as has been noted is God’s eschatological

\textsuperscript{147} Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(1)}, 48, 56, 59, 60-61 (quotation on 59), \textit{Eschatology}, 25, 35.
\textsuperscript{148} Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(1)}, 60, 63 (quotation on 60).
\textsuperscript{149} Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(1)}, 60.
\textsuperscript{150} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 35.
\textsuperscript{151} Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(1)}, 63.
\textsuperscript{152} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 65.
\textsuperscript{153} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 195.
activity and humanity’s glorification, “the future is present”. Already’ is the “Kingdom at hand”. Christ in his humanity mediates God’s eschatological action in history; in his divinity, he acts immediately as God. There is thus an incipient realisation ‘already’ of the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God here and now in the proximity of God’s action in the Church through the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, precisely as God, Christ’s reign is not confined to history and points to eschatological fulfilment ‘not yet’ present. God’s reign “transcends and reaches beyond the whole of history”. Christ as the eschatological telos of history reveals that it cannot be perfected within itself but that its consummation will occur outside of history, even while he is that telos come within history and marks its boundary as its peras. Thus, in Christ, the Kingdom is already present in history and thereby anticipates the uninterrupted reign of God that will be instantiated outside of history.

3.4.5 Conclusion

This section has presented Ratzinger’s view of salvation history as simultaneously ‘already’ bearing the traces of victory, while that victory has not yet been realised. His ‘already, not yet’ of history depends upon a view of the Resurrection as eschatological and historical. Through the Resurrection, the eschaton has already been effected, even as the Resurrection touches on but is not confined by history. Although victory has been accomplished in Christ’s Paschal Mystery, its fruits remain to be communicated through history in the Age of the Gentiles. As essential to eschatology is to universalise Christ’s victory, the Church is through history to seek to draw into the Body of Christ the saints of God. In this regard, the Kingdom is to be understood in Christological and Trinitarian terms, not spatial-temporal terms.

3.5 Eschatological Hope is Centred on Christ

A view of salvation history as bearing ‘already’ the eschatological reality manifested in the Resurrection transmitted in an ‘eschatology of the present’, which itself points to a ‘not yet’ realised fulfilment outside history, is comprehensible only in reference to the Person of Christ. Relatedly, eschatological hope, as directed to the eternal life

155 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 34.
156 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 34.
promised by Christ’s victory finds its source and direction in the Person of Christ, who is human and divine and who has gone ahead of us into God, and who bears within himself the ‘already, not yet’ of salvation history. Hope is intrinsically Christological.

This section will outline Ratzinger’s view that it is Christ himself who is the object of hope, not inner historical improvement. The object of hope is not chronological but as the divine-human Christ ever-present to history. Hope is thereby directed to him, and involves waiting on him, who is the turning point of history.

### 3.5.1 Christ the ‘Skandalon’ is the Basis for Hope as ‘Already, Not Yet’

A Christocentric, personalist understanding of the Kingdom and salvation history as ‘already, not yet’ reveals Christ as the answer to the *aporia* arising from the gap between victory and its consummation. For Ratzinger, it is precisely in the scandal of the difference between victory and realisation, and the history that continues to be marked by sin and death, that the centrality of Christ to eschatology becomes manifest. Paradoxically, as a result of the scandal, Christianity “directs man, beyond all his relationships, to what is essentially himself”, namely his incorporation into the ‘single, final man’, which is the eschatological Adam.\(^{158}\) Christ himself is the “*skandolon*”, the stumbling block that enables humanity to realise that the “essential thing” is not historical progress, economic or political liberation, but Christ the “Cornerstone”.\(^{159}\) In the “impatience and embarrassment” of waiting for worldly transformation, the Christian realises that Christ is the object of Christian hope and eschatological expectation, not a “religiously grounded *shangri-la*”.\(^{160}\) In this way, Christ becomes the object of eschatological expectation, a conclusion which relativises all other claims on hope.

The object of hope and eschatological expectation is Christ present in the Church, whose victory thus exists within history, but who awaits humanity as history’s goal outside of that history. For Ratzinger, the important content of the Gospel and

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158 Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 188, 190 (quotation on 188).
therefore of Gospel hope is that Christ “is alive now, that he is Life itself, in whom we, too, come alive”. The New Testament shows that Christ, in whom “paradise is opened”, is “paradise, light, fresh water, [and] the secure peace” to which human hope is directed. According to Ratzinger, “…lived hope…is a looking-forward in Christ’s presence, with Christ who is present, to the perfecting of his Body, to his definitive coming.” Ratzinger thus describes hope’s object as involving “being with Christ”, which opens up participation in the eternal bliss of heaven. Significantly, it is this abiding relationship that is the “lasting motive of Christian joy”. Hopeful joy is grounded in an already present communion with Christ, which is oriented to the perfection of his mystical Body at the end of time.

Hope in Christ contains therefore the character of ‘already, not yet’. The ‘already’ nature of hope is based upon the future eschatological reality that Christ communicates in the “present”, based on his past saving actions. Ratzinger argues that “the future is hidden in the present”. There is a “continuing relationship” that Christ has with his followers and the world, an abiding relationship grounded in the “perfect tense” of God’s historical-eschatological action in the Resurrection. The perfect tense’s signification of a “past event with present effect” in relation to the Passover of Christ is the authentic “present tense” for the Christian, who enjoys now the fruits of that eschatological action while awaiting the fulfilment of “its promise and its future”. Evident is, however, the “living eschatological tension” constitutive of Christian hope’s expectation of the Parousia in the ‘already, not yet’ intermediate stage of salvation history. Ratzinger (and Pieper) cites Augustine’s claim that “[o]f course we do not yet see what we hope for”. Christian hope in the future reality already won by Christ possesses the tension of eschatological expectation for an as yet unrealised consummation.

161 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 279, Eschatology, 53.
162 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 124-125.
163 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n9.
164 Benedict, Spe Salvi, n12 citing CCC, 1015; Ratzinger, Eschatology, 166.
165 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 293.
166 C.f. Benedict, Spe Salvi, n9.
167 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 63.
168 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 293, Principles of Catholic Theology, 190.
170 Ratzinger, Theology of History in St Bonaventure, 115, Jesus(2), 290.
171 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 64, Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 106 quoting Augustine, Contra Faustum 11, 7: “As yet we do not see that for which we hope”.

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The communion with Christ, which forms the basis of the ‘already, not yet’ Christian hope, is based on the sacramental communication of the fruits of the Paschal Mystery. Baptism imparts the substance of eternal life to the believer (2.3.6), enabling the baptised to participate in Christ’s death, Resurrection and Ascension (c.f. Rom 6), and anticipate heavenly glory. The baptised possess an “already hidden” life with Christ, who is in God, which means that even in historical existence we are “raised” with him at the Father’s right hand (c.f. Col 3:1-3). The union of the divine and human in Christ means humanity is joined to Christ’s victory in heaven ‘now’. Christology and hope are intrinsically related because in Jesus’ entry into the inner sanctum, the “sure and steadfast anchor of our life” has entered into the dwelling of God. Through union with the victorious Christ the human person anticipates his own victory. ‘Already’ does the believer lays a claim on the object of hope – to be united with Christ and enjoy heavenly bliss in the ‘final man’ – even if he cannot claim that object definitively.

The abiding relationship with Christ given in Baptism and which grounds the believer’s hope is perpetuated in and nourished by the Church’s liturgy. The liturgy communicates the fruits of the Paschal Mystery through time, anticipates the fulfilment of redemptive hope and reveals the Christocentric nature of hope. The Church’s liturgy, especially the Eucharist, contains the mystery of Christ and is thus itself the ‘already, not yet’ of salvation history. It makes present Christ in the Church in history but points to history’s transcendent culmination in the Heavenly Banquet when Christ returns.

In this regard, Pieper’s observations that the ‘Great Banquet’, in which the person feasts and communes with divinity outside time, is the object of hope (2), resonates with the Christocentric nature of Ratzinger’s concept of hope. For Ratzinger, the New Testament speaks of what is “unspeakable” – Christ’s Parousia – in the

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172 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 286.
173 Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 64. Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 106 quoting In Hebr. 6, 4. Aquinas writes: “Hanc ibi fixit praecursor noster, qui ibi ingressus est: This, our forerunner, who has entered there, has fixed there”; Commentary on Hebrews, C.6, L.4, 141. Pieper quotes the same passage from Hebrews, which included the important adjective “forerunner” in reference to Christ, which is missing from Ratzinger’s paraphrase. Christ has gone ahead of us as our high priest into the sanctuary and, to quote Aquinas, “there made firm [fixit] our hope”. 

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language and imagery of liturgy.\textsuperscript{174} The liturgy is the graced sphere “in the world” in which God is touched.\textsuperscript{175} Consequently, Christ’s Second Coming intensifies and fulfills what is already made present in the liturgy. As a corollary, the Liturgy is “a Parousia-like event taking place in our midst”; hence, “[e]very Eucharist is Parousia”.\textsuperscript{176} The liturgy, therefore, simultaneously contains the trumpet call announcing Christ’s Second Coming (c.f. Mt 24:31, 1 Cor 15:52), while also “even more truly” bearing within it “the tensed yearning” for the manifestation of “Christ’s hidden Glory”.\textsuperscript{177} The liturgy is the ‘already, not yet’ of Christian hope because it actualises Christ’s presence, which is to be definitively revealed.

Understood in this way, the liturgy both is an act of hope and grounds hope in the Lord’s return. It is an act of hope because it orients the Church to what is to come, while making it also present. The “cultic event” of the liturgy, which involves encountering God, is an “anticipation that points beyond itself”.\textsuperscript{178} It fosters hope because it is the space in which “Christ’s coming occurs as an ‘eschatological event’ in the midst of the world” even as it is directed to a future fulfilment.\textsuperscript{179} The hoping Christian is “to live the Liturgy as a feast of hope-filled presence directed towards Christ, the universal ruler”.\textsuperscript{180} Christ is the “true temple”, who is simultaneously “the world’s future in the world’s present”.\textsuperscript{181} As a result, he is the “‘true Israelite’ (cf. Jn 1:47)” in whom God’s Kingdom inheres and whose reign is made “present in the liturgy”.\textsuperscript{182} The Eucharist is a central element, therefore, of Christ’s “coming that has already begun and extends over the whole of history”.\textsuperscript{183} Jesus returned from death in the Resurrection, continues to come to the Church in the Eucharistic liturgy, and is

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\textsuperscript{175} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 203.
\textsuperscript{176} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 203.
\textsuperscript{177} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 203.
\textsuperscript{179} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 204.
\textsuperscript{180} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 204.
\textsuperscript{181} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 7.
\textsuperscript{182} C.f. Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(1)}, 57.
\textsuperscript{183} Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(1)}, 58.
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the one whose future coming is proclaimed in the liturgy. He is thus “the hope of the world”.\textsuperscript{184} Christ, made present in the liturgy, grounds and is the Christian’s hope.

3.5.2 Eschatological Hope is Not Chronological

As oriented to the Person of Jesus Christ, conceived in Chalcedonian terms, eschatology – like the Kingdom – is not chronological. Its emphasis is not the spatial-temporal dimension but rather the Parousia personified in Christ, who is transcendentally present to history. In Ratzinger’s pithy words, “Christian hope is not some news item about tomorrow or the day after tomorrow”.\textsuperscript{185} The Lord’s response to the Apostles at the moment of his Ascension (“It is not for you to know times or seasons…”) (Acts 1:7) rules out any “[s]peculation over history” and “looking ahead into the unknown future”.\textsuperscript{186} Rather, the union of the historical and ontological in the God-man, Christ who ascended into heaven and participates in God’s dominion, orients eschatology away from any need to calculate or ‘chronologise’ the End.

Nevertheless, the historical has significance for the End precisely in pointing beyond it. In his humanity, Christ bears within himself the historical. Consequently, the ‘signs’ of Christ’s coming, which presage the end of time (Mt 24:3), amount to “historical preconditions” of the End.\textsuperscript{187} In consideration of the End, historical events such as war, catastrophe and persecution are relevant. However, the signs are universal and recur throughout history, preventing “a dating of the End”.\textsuperscript{188} Rather than allowing speculation regarding “where” or “when” the End will be, these signs direct people in all times and places to cast their attention to the End as such.\textsuperscript{189} Through the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Christ, history is pointed towards an incommensurable end by the existence of the historical signs of the End.

Instead of seeking to chronologise the end, eschatology is concerned with the reality that has been actualised in Christ’s Resurrection and Ascension. The End is not far

\textsuperscript{185} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 8.
\textsuperscript{186} Ratzinger, \textit{Jesus(2)}, 282.
\textsuperscript{187} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 197-198.
\textsuperscript{188} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 199.
\textsuperscript{189} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 8, 199 (quotations on 8).
off in the distant future but is immediately present to all of history. As God is present to creation, so is the dominion eschatologically realised in Christ’s Ascension (3.3.2). To quote Newman:

When He says that He will come soon, ‘soon’ is not a word of time but of natural order. This present state of things, ‘the present distress,’ as St Paul calls it [1 Cor 7:26], is ever close upon the next world and resolves itself into it.190

The End, manifest in historical crisis and catastrophe, has an “ever present” bearing on historical reality because historico-temporal reality, speaking analogically, ‘always’ touches up against the “wholly other”.191 The ‘wholly other’ refers to Christ’s relationship to history as the Divine Word. As God, he stands entirely outside history and yet is immanent to it. Consequently, his “coming is quite incommensurable with historical time and its immanent laws of development”.192 Revelation teaches us that Christ’s Second Coming, which constitutes the unknown hour of fulfilment, will come suddenly and confound human plans (Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32; Lk 17:26-30, 21:34-36).193 It cannot be dated or calculated according to historical logic, because the eschatological is not in itself historical. Rather, as a consequence of the Paschal Mystery, it is now part of God’s simultaneous radical transcendence from, and immanence to, history.

Ratzinger’s conception of eschatology as not being chronological also aligns with Pieper’s understanding of the import of the theological tradition concerning the apocalypse. As we saw in Chapter 2, according to Pieper’s more general conception of the non-specifiability of hope, ‘the time and date of fulfilment [of hope is] unknown to us’.194 He argues, moreover, that contained in the prophecy of the Apocalypse is a claim regarding the “non-datability of the events” of the End.195 It is

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191 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 199. Here Ratzinger, without explicitly citing Pieper and in the context of Christology, is utilising an understanding of the relationship between creation (including history and time) and eternity that coincides strongly with Pieper’s; see Pieper, End of Time, 68-69, discussed further in 4.4.3.
192 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 194, 198 (quotation on 194).
193 C.f. Ratzinger, Eschatology, 199.
194 See also Vincent Wargo, “Festivity, Tradition, and Hope: Josef Pieper and the Historical Meaning of Human Praxis,” Logos 21(4) (Fall 2018), 67.
195 Pieper, Hope and History, 98.
“spurious apocalyptics” to try to predict the moment of the End based on historical “omens”.196 ‘Impatient’ desire to know the chronology of the end distracts attention from the main point of prophetic apocalyptics, namely that it involves trans-historical deliverance and, in Ratzinger’s conception, revolves around Christ. Pieper quotes Aquinas that neither short nor long durations of time can be described to identify the moment of the End.197 Hope’s object and its fulfilment are outside our prognostications because it is directed to the Person of Christ.

Underlying Pieper and Ratzinger’s position regarding the non-possibility and non-necessity of calculating the moment of the end is a classical, analogical metaphysics (see further 4), and a Chalcedonian Christology.198 The End is ‘ever-present’ because God is immanent to but transcendent of history, a reality disclosed in the understanding that God is similar but ever-greater than creation. In an argument directly contrary to Hegel’s immanent ontology (and Darwinian evolutionism), Ratzinger argues that Christ “is not the product of evolution or a dialectical stage in the processive self-expression of reason”.199 That is, Christ is not the end result of immanent historical laws or logic of reason. Instead, he is “the Other” who stands outside time and death, and opens them from that position.200 Through Christ, moreover, God will come in a human and divine manner, in a manner that thus transcends history’s logic but which nevertheless “concerns all history”.201 Christ, as God, is ever-greater than history but more intrinsic to it than itself. In him, moreover, is recapitulated the historical. However, as Chapter 4 will argue, the transposition of history into eternity will be cataclysmic and beyond human reckoning because temporality and eternity belong to different orders of being.

For Ratzinger, history stands immediately in relationship to the eternal God, who has already wrought eschatological victory in the Passover of Christ. In summary, therefore, the “final hour” described in the New Testament as applicable to the

196 Pieper, Hope and History, 98.
197 Pieper, Hope and History, 98 quoting Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem, 3, 3, 5, no 531.
198 Connected to this are Pieper and Ratzinger’s views concerning the limits of human reason and the impossibility of comprehending the meaning of history without recourse to revelation. C.f. Pieper, End of Time, 19-28, Leisure, the Basis of Culture, 120-121, Ratzinger, Eschatology, 214.
199 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 194, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 235-236 (c.f. 1.2.1).
200 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 194.
201 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 200-201.
present age (the RSVCE has “last hour” – 1 Jn 2:18) expresses not “chronological content”, but a constant, universal “certain inner closeness to the end”. The Church is thus close to the Christ who is “coming” and “going” in his Passover and whose Resurrection “stands above” history but “nevertheless in relationship to it” (1 Jn 2:18-22, 2 Jn 7, Jn 14:15-31). In doing so, the Church is near to the End, not necessarily chronologically but as actualised in Christ’s Incarnation and Paschal Mystery, the ever-greater God immanently present to creation and whose humanity has already been divinised. Christ will come again at a time not known, but he has come in the Resurrection and keeps coming in the life of the Church in the Age of the Gentiles. These consideration underscore that eschatological hope is thus not chronological but Christological, centred on the presence of Christ.

3.5.3 Hope as Waiting on the Lord in the Present

Centred on Christ, the eschatological Adam, Christian hope consists in a joyful, vigilant awareness of the presence of Christ in the Church and the promise of the full apocalyptic ‘un-covering’ of that presence. Eschatology involves looking towards the Risen and Ascended Lord especially present in the Eucharist, whose Second Coming cannot be calculated according to a logic of history or upon a chronological basis. Ratzinger’s eschatology finds its locus in the personal presence of Christ. Eschatology has a personalist orientation. It is characterised by a posture of “looking to our Lord”. Understood in this way, Christian hope consists of “relationship with Christ’s person and longing for him to come close”. In Ratzinger’s words and evocative of an ‘eschatology of the present’, “Christianity is the present”. The appropriate Christian eschatological attitude can thus be summed up with the catchword “watchfulness”, which entails “openness for the wholly other God”, both at the end of time and amid the exigencies of history, towards the Christ who is

202 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 197.
203 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 204, Principles of Catholic Theology, 186.
204 An argument similar to this has been made in the meditations of Fr Justin Gillespie: https://www.spiritualbatteries.com/, last accessed 14 August 2020.
205 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 8, 11 (quotation on 11) (emphasis in original).
206 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 8.
eschatologically ‘ever present’. The early Christian cry of “Marana tha” or “Maran atha” captures for Ratzinger the multilayered nature of expectant watchfulness for the Lord’s manifold coming, including in the Eucharist. It can be interpreted as, “Lord, come! /Come, Lord Jesus” or “the Lord/he has come”. Contained in this attitude of watchfulness, as opposed to misdirected emphasis on the future, moment of the End or periodisation of history, is thus a readiness to be called to account by the returning Lord, who remains proximate (c.f. Lk 12:35-40).

Parallels can be seen between Ratzinger’s view of the appropriate eschatological attitude and Pieper’s view of hope. Analogously to Ratzinger, Pieper argues that “the vigilant resistance of an alert and steady watchfulness” is necessary to protect against the antonyms of hope, acedia and despair. Despair, and especially acedia, can be characterised as a forgetfulness of the general promises of Christian hope but also of the proximity of the Lord, whose coming is proclaimed in historical events. It can be argued that necessary for hope is vigilance. It protects the hope in the possession of the hoping person and has ever in mind the Second Coming of the Lord, a Coming that the travails of history always announce and which is anticipated in the Eucharistic coming of the Lord. Thus, the early Christians possessed the joy attendant on hope that comes from knowledge of the Risen Christ and his “closeness”, while remaining aware that they lived in the Age of the Gentiles, which had to run its course. Consequently, they were simultaneously subject to afflictions, while participating in the growth of the fruits of the Paschal Mystery through time and space. Hope overcomes tribulation by vigilantly keeping in mind Christ’s constant presence.

A watchful awareness of Christ’s coming does not generate eschatological fervour that displaces concern for inner-historical activity. Precisely by being directed to the Christ who is present, historical action is significant. Consistent with a view that the Resurrection is simultaneously of history but fundamentally eschatological, Ratzinger notes, in reference to what is of enduring significance in the work of

208 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 195, 198, 199.
209 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 289, Eschatology, 5-6.
210 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 289, Eschatology, 5-6.
212 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 45. C.f. Ratzinger, Theology of History in St Bonaventure, 112.
213 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 45.
Joachim, that “the work of Christ is seen to be firmly rooted in history”.\(^\text{214}\) With reference to the example of Aquinas, Pieper argues that he counted as “self-evident” the need to be prepared for the global reign of the antichrist at the end of time and the possible necessity of being martyred.\(^\text{215}\) The Christian’s attitude to history should, however, not be marked by disproportionate focus on eschatological cataclysm but a “mute readiness” for the End, which does not distract from the tasks in front of the person, that is, “activity within history”.\(^\text{216}\) Eschatology, as directed to Christ’s immanent and transcendent presence for Pieper and Ratzinger does not amount to a single-minded focus on the end of time at the expense of attention to the matters of history.

For Ratzinger, further, eschatology takes on a missionary character in the historical present. In the context of consideration of the Liturgy as Parousia, he argues that the attitude of watchfulness for the Lord’s coming takes on “the character of a mission”.\(^\text{217}\) He suggests that the Liturgy should “prepare for [Christ] a dwelling in the world”.\(^\text{218}\) The Liturgy is, therefore, not an act of navel-gazing. Rather, it is an act “where the Church enters into the heart of the world, and works actively for the latter’s liberating transformation”.\(^\text{219}\) The Church’s mission in the interim period, then, is “to let the Liturgy be real”, namely to manifest the ‘eschatological event’ that comes to the world in the Liturgy as an anticipation of that “final reality”, which in the ‘already, not yet’ period can only ever be an “image”.\(^\text{220}\) It prepares humanity for the coming of the Lord by preparing a dwelling for him in the Church and in people’s hearts. Thus, concordant with the Communio understanding of the Age of the Gentiles as the drawing-in of the body of Christ, the historical anticipates its promised eschatological transformation. The Liturgy, as the world’s “[gracious] point of contact with God”, makes present the eschatological reality of Christ’s Parousia to the world, and so prepares it to be freed it from its historicity and to be joined to Christ’s liberating victory.\(^\text{221}\)
The focus of eschatological hope is therefore on the manifold coming of Christ and the preparation, in history, of eschatological fullness. In the ‘interim period’ between victory and culmination, arguably the locus for this hope is the Liturgy. It is the privileged setting for the *adventus medius* and allows the presence of Christ in the Liturgy to be magnified while preparing a ‘place’ for the Second Coming. Inner-worldly action is to be directed to manifesting to the world Christ’s eschatological coming in the Liturgy and the sober performance of historical tasks under the aspect of his eschatological presence. More generally, the Christian is always close to the end and Christ, the *telos* and *peras* of history is always near. The Christian is thus to watch for him and his presence, and prepare for his manifold coming by remaining close to him, by doing his will in the world.

Ratzinger does not therefore place hope simply under the aspect of the future à la the theologies of futurity, or even the full realisation of the eschaton at the conclusion of history, but directs it to Christ’s resurrected presence in which future realisation is incipiently present. It is worth quoting Ratzinger at some length to relay the pith of his position:

*By gazing on the risen Christ, Christianity knew that a most significant coming had already taken place. It no longer proclaimed a pure theology of hope, living from mere expectation of the future, but pointed to a ‘now’ in which the promise had already become presence. Such a presence was, of course, itself hope, for it bears the future within itself.*

A conception of hope that expects an inner-historical redemption of history and which dialectically draws a line through the present to reject the past in the name of a hoped-for future overlooks this Christological perspective. The eschaton is ‘already, not yet’ present in the Person of Christ, whose presence itself contains the promise of the future glory embodied and anticipated in his Resurrection and Ascension. As de Gaál notes in reference to Ratzinger’s Christology, the Paschal Mystery is not simply

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222 C.f. Pieper, *End of Time*, 152. In this sense, the activities of the world are ordered towards the celebration of the liturgy; c.f. Kevin W. Irwin, “A Sacramental World – Sacramentality as the Primary Language for Sacraments,” *Worship* 76(3) (May 2002): 198 [197-211], who argues that “liturgy and life are correlatives, are intrinsically interconnected and mutually enriching”. Arguably, Ratzinger draws a sharper distinction between the sacred and secular than Irwin. Irwin suggests, for example, that the “world [as such] is the locus of where the incarnate God is experienced”: 199.

a past event, “but abides in heaven”. Made present on earth through the Church, it promises future glory. Ratzinger argues, therefore, that the true content of the Gospel renders expectation and calculation of imminent end as of secondary importance. The Gospel’s focus is, rather, the Person of Christ, understood in a Trinitarian way, who is in heaven and in whom victory and the Kingdom has already come, but the moment of whose definitive realisation is in the hands of God.

3.5.4 Christ is the Turning Point of History

The determinative significance of Christ to a conception of eschatological hope is extended to history, with the important consequence that history is not to be periodised and hope not placed in history’s dialectical progression. Ratzinger interprets history through Christological lens, a position resting on a view of the centrality of Christ to time, as presented in the Church’s theological tradition. As Dawson puts it in connection with Augustine’s view of history, the “coming of Christ is the turning-point of history”. Ratzinger likewise perceives Christ as history’s axis. For Bonaventure and, it could be said, Ratzinger, “Christ is the true center and the turning point of history”. Notwithstanding differences between Bonaventure and Aquinas, Ratzinger detects in both of them a view of the history of creation in which there is a “two directional” movement of time and creation from God and back to God. Bonaventure uses the terms egressus and regressus to capture this movement, whereas the terms commonly applied to Thomas’ scheme are exitus-reditus. Paralleled in both, however, is the central place given to Christ in the schema. He is the turning point at, and through, which history, time and creation returns to God, the source of all being. Thus, in an etymological connection to Bonaventure’s egressus, Aquinas argues that in the Incarnation, the “rivers” of creation are turned back to God. Ratzinger invokes therefore prominent medieval

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224 De Gaál, Christocentric Shift, 283.
225 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 53.
226 Dawson, “St Augustine and the City of God,” 313.
227 Ratzinger, Theology of History, 110, 118 (quotation on 118).
229 Ratzinger, “End of Time,” 17 quoting Thomas Aquinas, Liber Sententiarum III, Prologue. One definition of egressus is that it is a river mouth: Oxford Latin Minidictionary entry on ‘egressus’ (ed. James Morwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)). Jean-Pierre Torrell OP, another text of whose Ratzinger cites approvingly in this context, sees Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae as following an exitus-reditus scheme in its sequential treatments of God, creation, humanity and the return of creation
theology’s positing of Christ as history’s axis, the point at which creation turns back to God, its source.

A Chalcedonian Christology predicated on the joining of the Word to humanity underpins the view of Christ as history’s turning point. An anthropology, which understands the human person as the bridge or “mean” “between spiritual and corporeal nature”, is also relevant. Ratzinger considers the human person to be a “bridge”, where the material and spiritual “meet and mingle” and in which “the material world is lifted up into the spiritual realm”. In the mystery of the Incarnation, this human nature is joined to the divine nature and in this way humanity, and therefore the whole of creation, is turned back to God. Thus, in a circular understanding of time and history, creation reaches its perfection by ‘rising to its source’ and returning to the Origin. In Ratzinger’s understanding of history, Christ is the lynchpin of creation’s turn back to God.

On the basis that Christ is the turning point of history, Ratzinger departs from Joachimite eschatology and its parallels in twentieth century theology. Joachim’s eschatological joy, stemming from an imminent expectation of a Third Age of the Holy Spirit, is misplaced. Instead, Christ is the meaning of history, in whom the historical and its transcendence are found, and also the source of eschatological joy. A periodisation of history and joyful expectation of inner-historical fulfilment direct attention away from the centrality of Christ, and chronologises hope. Christ is the answer to Joachim’s periodisation of history.

231 Ratzinger, God and the World, 89. See also, Jean-Pierre Torrell OP, St Thomas Aquinas, Volume 2: Spiritual Master, trans. Robert Roral (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 253 on Aquinas’s anthropology, which sees the human person “as the pivotal point between two worlds [spiritual and corporeal] at the same time that he sums up in himself the totality of the universe”. In the human person is recapitulated the material and spiritual. Likewise, the human person draws up material reality while itself being drawn up into the spiritual. C.f. 4.3.9.
232 Ratzinger, “End of Time,” 17-18 quoting Thomas Aquinas, Liber Sententiarum III, Prologue. See also, “End of Time,” 17 and Theology of History in St Bonaventure, 143 where Ratzinger discusses the difference between the stereotypical view that the Christian understanding of time is linear and the pagan antiquity’s view that history is eternal recurrence, arguing that the Christian view is more nuanced and that history consists not of recurring events but events that occur once and are not repeated.
Instead of positing a periodised history, Ratzinger reads the chief proponents of medieval theology as pointing to Christ as the centre of history. According to Ratzinger, Aquinas rejected Joachim’s method of application of the Old Testament to the New Testament. The Old Testament was seen by Joachim to “point to a similar course of events in the New Testament”.²³³ For Aquinas, however, the Old Testament did not point to a parallel sequence of events culminating in an Age of the Holy Spirit in the Age of the Church, but to Christ. Thus, Aquinas’s “solution to the problem [of Joachim’s “historical speculation”] is simply ‘Christ’”.²³⁴ Bonaventure also rejected Joachim’s idea of “an age of the Holy Spirit” because the final age, even if it bears the marks of the Spirit’s power, is nevertheless in itself “an age of Christ”.²³⁵ The final age is Jesus’s “own time”.²³⁶ In Bonaventure’s *Hexaemeron*, the seventh and final age is “the New Testament Christ-time”.²³⁷ Consequently, as Christ is the “axis of world history” and the fulfilment of the Old Testament, there can be no separate inner-historical Age of the Holy Spirit consisting of a radical, eschatological transformation of that history.²³⁸ Rather, history has already found its meaning with Christ, who has ushered the ‘already, not yet’ stage of salvation history. The ‘age of Christ’ and his Church will persist until the end of time.

The Christological reading of history apparent in Thomas, Bonaventure and Ratzinger opposes a rejection of supposedly unredeemed history in the Age of Christ and the cleavage between an attitude of eschatological imminent expectation and the juridicalisation of the Church, evident in an eschatological exegesis. Instead of being “untrue to her mission” and capitulating to the “spirit of the anti-Christ”, by replacing eschatological expectation with an ‘institutional’ Church (see also 1.3.1), the Church proclaims Christ-crucified, God and man, as the centre of history (1 Cor 1:23).²³⁹ He is the *skandolon*, which points to himself as the victory, the object of Israel and humanity’s hope. In him creation turns back to its source and already contains the promise of the Parousia. It has definitively arrived in the eschatological

²³⁸ Ratzinger, *Theology of History in St Bonaventure*, 118.
event that is the Resurrection even as that event points to a trans-historical reality. The victory that has already been won in Christ will not develop into another historical stage or ‘paradigm shift’ but will only be consummated outside of time in the eschaton.

Moreover, in emphasising Christ as the lynchpin of history, Ratzinger does not in that way overlook the Trinitarian or pneumatological meaning of history. There is an intrinsic connection between pneumatology and Christology, because it is the Holy Spirit that communicates the “once-for-all event” of Christ’s Incarnation and Paschal Mystery through history. As we have seen, in Christ’s Resurrection and Ascension, Christ’s humanity becomes a participant in God’s divinity. In this way, he is a participant in the life of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the actions of the Persons of the Trinity are “at once common and personal”. There is no separation between Christ’s saving action and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. There can thus be no inner-historical eschaton or periodisation of history in the expectation of an Age of the Holy Spirit distinct from the eschatological Adam in whom all of humanity and history will be recapitulated through the Holy Spirit. There will be no definitively new historical epoch. We are in the ‘last age’.

3.5.5 Conclusion

For Ratzinger, Christ is the fulfilment and object of hope. Centred on Christ, eschatological hope is not directed to inner-historical improvement. Instead, his apparent historical failure points to himself as the transcendent object of hope, actualised and nourished in the Liturgy-as-Parousia. Centred on Christ, eschatological hope is not periodised or historicised, but consists in steadfast orientation to the Lord, because he is the centre and meaning of history.

242 CCC, 258-259.
3.6 Differentiating a Chalcedonian Eschatology from Inner-Historical Conceptions of Hope

The centrality of Christ to Ratzinger’s eschatology and the unity he detects between eschatology and Christology differentiates them from inner-historical conceptions of hope centred on praxis and a dialectical reading of history. For Ratzinger, instead of being found in inner-historical perfection, hope and history’s fulfilment is in the Risen and Ascended Christ, simultaneously victorious and pointing to that victory’s full unveiling at the end of time. In linking humanity’s future to its glorification with God in the eschatological Adam, Ratzinger presents moreover a supra-historical, divine reality as the human destiny to which hope is oriented.

An affirmation of Christ’s divinity and the reality of his Resurrection distinguish Ratzinger’s eschatological hope from the Concilium tendency to see hope as driving inner-historical change. As noted above (3.2), he is not merely interested in the historical figure of Jesus, who would “remain purely human”. While Concilium authors may affirm the reality of Christ’s Resurrection, it appears not to be their Christological focus. For example, Metz’s comment that the memory of Christ’s death and resurrection does not entail a “total leap into the eschatological existence of the ‘new human being’” directly contradicts Ratzinger, who argued that the Resurrection did entail such a leap (3). Whatever Metz’s meaning regarding the nature of Christ’s Resurrection, seemingly paramount is that it signifies for humanity, not a participation in Christ’s ‘ontological leap’ forward into the life of God, but a memory that drives social change (1.5.3). The Resurrection does not constitute a qualitative leap for humanity: for Gutiérrez at least, that leap occurs on the basis of a dialectical historical jump (1 passim). For Ratzinger, however, the Resurrection and Ascension promises precisely an ‘eschatological leap’ into the ‘existence of the ‘new human being’” (3.3). A low Christology focusing on the social and political ramifications of the historical figure of Jesus, thereby grounding hope in inner-historical change, is contrasted against a view that it is the Resurrection, which is the basis for a new scenario for humanity and is in fact that new scenario.

243 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 242.
244 Metz, Faith in History and Society, 108 (quoted also at 1.5.3).
245 Ratzinger, Jesus(2), 241-242.
The Resurrection underpins Ratzinger’s notion that salvation history bears the character of ‘already, not yet’, a notion which separates him from eschatological theologies of futurity. Metz rejects reading salvation history in this way because it supposedly involves a search for the amount of salvation ‘already’ but ‘not yet’ obtained, thus distracting from what he considers to be the central question of how much time is left. To characterise an ‘already, not yet’ reading of history as treating salvation in a mathematical way is curious. It posits as mutually exclusive the concepts of ‘already’ and ‘not yet’, without acknowledging that they can coexist simultaneously by virtue of the analogical joining of humanity (the historical) and divinity (the ontological) in Christ. Doing so overlooks the Christological locus of hope and salvation, which undergirds the notion of ‘already, not yet’, and places it instead exclusively on the future. In Christ, who is God and man, it has been made possible for humanity in history to partake in the divinity which transcends history. In his Resurrection, hope’s object, salvation, has entirely been won. Christ goes before humanity and participates in the life of God, even if it is not yet realised for the rest of humanity.

Conceiving the Ascended Christ as the anchor of hope, in whom hope’s object is actualised in the victory already won, differentiates Ratzinger’s conception of hope from an inner-historical notion. Hope does not belong in the realm of future utopia but is present in the Person of Jesus Christ. To the extent the believer is united with Christ, he already enjoys the object of hope. Aquinas suggests that the metaphor of anchor, when applied to Christ as our hope, shows that “hope secures the soul in God in this world”. Christ is the “foundation” of hope while also being its “actual fulfilment”. Through Christ, “we are [already] saved” (Rom 8:24). Thus, the fulfilment of our hope is actualised already in the Ascended and Risen Christ to whom the believer is joined through the theological virtue of hope.

246 C.f. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 164. See also 1.2.2.
A Christocentric conception of hope guards also against utopian projections of hope in the historical future. Ratzinger argues that the “new man is not utopian”.\(^{251}\) He exists in the Person of Jesus Christ and thus hope becomes not “merely future”.\(^{252}\) Apposite is Augustine’s comment that we are (already) the body of Christ the Head, who is the fulfillment of our hope and thus in whom “everything [we hope for] is already present”.\(^{253}\) The objects of genuine hope – eternal life, communion and liberation – are not “mere expectation[s] of utopia” but are real and present “today” insofar as there is communion with Christ.\(^{254}\) In Christ Ascended, the genuinely new humanity is present. He is not the result of historical dialectical change, but God’s eschatological action in Christ.

Ratzinger’s Christological eschatology opposes a mixing of eschatology and utopia, which appears to underwrite the impatient desire to change history and exclusive orientation to the future of inner-historical conceptions of hope. He argues that “utopia”, conceived in a narrow sense as practical reason’s search for justice, should be what drives practical action. ‘Utopia’ in this sense is not to be confused with eschatology, which speaks to the “receptive patience of faith”\(^{255}\). Utopian and eschatological thought are oriented to different objects. By referring eschatology to Christ, in whom the ‘already, not yet’ is spanned, Ratzinger answers thus differently the aporia regarding the scandalously unchanged state of history. The ‘scandal’ points to Christ as the object of patient and vigilant watchfulness, a state entirely in contrast to a Moltmann-inspired dialectical vision of hope, which impatiently seeks to change history in the light of utopia (1.2.2). It contradicts, for example, Metz’s rejection of a ‘passive expectation of the Parousia’ in favour of ‘a productive and militant eschatology’.\(^{256}\) Militancy and productivity are opposed to the patience of Christian eschatology grounded in a watchful attitude directed to the Lord.

\(^{251}\) Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 64.
\(^{252}\) Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 64.
\(^{253}\) Both Pieper and Ratzinger quote Augustine in this regard. Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 64 citing Augustine, Contra Faustum 11, 7, PL 42:251; Pieper, Leben-hoffen-glauben, 212; Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 106 citing Sermones 157, 3. The quotation in Pieper to which Ratzinger refers seems also to include primarily the one from Sermones 157, 3 and not Contra Faustum, which Pieper also quotes. In Contra Faustum, 11, 7 Augustine states: “This hope is in Christ, in whom what we hope for as promised to us has already been fulfilled. He is risen, and death has no more dominion over Him.” (http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/140611.htm, accessed 5 October 2018).
\(^{254}\) Ratzinger, Yes of Jesus Christ, 64.
\(^{255}\) Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism, and Politics, 225.
\(^{256}\) Metz, “Creative Hope,” 176.
For Ratzinger, a Chalcedonian Christology underscores his conviction that hope and eschatology are fundamentally supra-historical and beyond the reach of human manipulation (refer to 2). Hope’s “proper realm”, according to Ratzinger is not concerned with manufacturing objects of hope in the worldly sphere. Eschatological orientation to the presence of Christ does not involve the “working out of a philosophy or theology of history”. Ratzinger suggests that human rationality is “finite and feeble” and gains significance only in light of the Risen Christ. God’s reign, present in the Church, “is not within man’s capabilities to achieve …or even merely to hasten its coming”. The perfection of history will not be a consequence of inner-historical “rational planning”. Its perfection, rather, will occur outside of history in its eschatological transformation (4.4.3).

Ratzinger argues therefore that secularising Christian eschatology is in direct conflict with genuinely Christian understanding of hope and history. The critique of inner-historical conceptions of hope is, indeed, heightened by bringing into it a discussion of the antichrist, which Ratzinger correlates with immanentizing tendencies. As Christ is the transcendent saviour of history, so the antichrist is the one purporting to save history according to its own logic. Ratzinger thus opposes, as constituting “the ‘antichrist’”, an “unconditional enclosure of history within its own logic”. The conflation of Hegelian-Marxist philosophies and theologies of history to the principle of evil is here unmistakeable. Failure to attend to the transcendent source and goal of history, and the corollary confinement of history’s significance to an immanent plane opposes Christ. Supreme evil is the intensification of an attitude that looks to history’s own resources, grounded in a logic of history supposedly discernible to human rationality, to bring about salvation.

In this regard, an attitude of dependence on human rationality to manufacture hope is the zenith of pride and presumption, an attitude that purports to fix the ‘not yet’ into

‘yet’ by its own powers. As Ratzinger says such a planned salvation is “the salvation proper to a concentration camp and so the end of humanity”. In this regard, Pieper notices the striking similarity between medieval symbology regarding the antichrist and the contemporary mid-twentieth century context: the medievals understood the antichrist as “bring[ing] with him a cremation furnace”. One only need think of the crematoria of the Holocaust, the incendiary effect of atomic weaponry or the gulags of Soviet Russia to discern the prophetic foresight of the medieval understanding of the reign of evil that the antichrist will instantiate. The wickedness of the twentieth century bears witness to the pernicious effects of deifying history and conceiving the object of hope as capable of being produced by human means.

That eschatology takes its character in reference to a Chalcedonian Christology demonstrates that history is perfected only outside itself and not immanently. As has been argued, eschatology “is not a scenario for the rest of history” but has a Christo- and therefore theocentric form. History is oriented and “perfected beyond itself” in the return of Christ, a return that will be ‘incommensurable’ with history’s own immanent laws. As a result, only “that indestructible love which triumphed in the risen Christ” can give history its perfection. Ratzinger argues that it is “faith in Christ’s return” from outside history, which guarantees that history will be consummated. Consequently, eschatology oriented to, and in fact absorbed by, a Christology, in turn subsumed into a doctrine of God, guarantees the perfectibility of history. God in Christ is the telos of history. Only from a divine source outside can history reach its fulfilment. Thus, for Ratzinger, eschatology claims that history is intrinsically imperfectible but extrinsically perfectible. Moreover, solely in recognising this extrinsic perfectibility can history itself be considered meaningful and thereby become open to the possibility of its perfection. Because history cannot hold the source of its own goodness, it must look to an exterior, divine,

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266 Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 233.
270 C.f. 2.3.7.
ground of its own significance, namely, Christ, the Word who has entered history to point ‘beyond itself’.

Viewing eschatology through a Christological lens means that hope is not merely directed to expectation of future historical action of God, accelerated by human effort, but his action now mediated through the life of the Church, which contains the promise of future heavenly glory. Christian hope and eschatology contradict therefore an arrogation of the divine guidance of history to its conclusion, to human ingenuity or discernment of a rational logic of history. The ‘interim time’ between victory and consummation does not concern the building up of inner-historical utopia. A reading of the historical epoch following Christ’s first coming as a ‘middle coming’ renders as misconceived and in some senses irrelevant the ‘imminent expectation’ interpretation of Christ’s message. Ratzinger’s reading of the Kingdom is not that it augurs inner-historical utopia but is historically limited, and concerns the Church’s mission in the ‘middle coming’ to draw people into Christ’s Body. In Ratzinger’s eschatology, the world and history is given significance, but relative to the promises of eternal life and the Parousia of the Christ. Only God’s action outside of time will give history its consummation, when the pierced Christ, who entered behind the curtain separating humanity from divinity “through his flesh” (Heb 10:20), will come from beyond history “with clouds” to perfect that history.271 As we cannot hope in ourselves, we place hope instead in the “One”, who is our everlasting Saviour.272 In him alone, should our hope be placed.

3.7 Conclusion

Rooted in a Chalcedonian Christology, Ratzinger presents a view of hope that is Christocentric in form, completing the theocentric picture of hope presented in Chapter 2. To claim that Christ is the anchor and fulfilment of hope (3.5) depends upon apprehending him as perfect God and perfect man. The Risen Christ is the ground of human hope. In his Resurrection, humanity is taken up into divinity. As shown in Chapter 2, participation in the eternity of divine life is that for which the

272 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 11.
human person hopes. For Ratzinger, the human race’s destiny is to participate in the
divinity through being recapitulated in the eschatological Adam, the Christ who is
simultaneously divine and human. Hope is thus intrinsically supra-historical and
eschatological. Eschatology and therefore hope are Christologically-indexed.

Resting on the Chalcedonian axiom of the union of the human and divine natures in
the Word, Ratzinger offers a synthesis of Christology and eschatology, which affects
how hope and history are to be related to one another. Contrary to a strict
‘Eschatologist’ reading of Ratzinger, grounding hope in the Risen Lord does not
jettison the significance of history. The Resurrection is the eschatological action of
God, which means the ground of hope is present within history while pointing
beyond it. Eschatological hope and expectation are centred in the Risen Lord who
remains present within history in the liturgy and the sacraments, a Parousia that itself
points to the definitive Parousia.

History is thus to be read under the double sign of ‘already, not yet’. ‘Already’ has
salvation been won, but ‘not yet’ has the victory been definitively realised. An
‘already, not yet’ conception of history moves the locus of hope away from inner-
historical activity geared towards the future. Instead, it centres on the Risen Lord
present among us. The Incarnation and the eschaton are thus intrinsically linked: the
Incarnation does not drive historical change to a new historical epoch, but joins
humanity to divinity and points to humanity’s future in the eschatological Adam.
Conclusions regarding hope and history are therefore only intelligible under the
aspect of a Chalcedonian Christology, which treats as axiomatic the unity of the
divine and human in the Word.

The unity of eschatology and Christology in Ratzinger distinguishes him from inner-
historical conceptions of hope. The Concilium position on hope and history explored
in Chapter 1 tends to expect future historical utopia, and depicts Jesus, in his
historicity, solely or predominantly as the generator of political and social
improvement, and the secular as the graced sphere in which humanity can work for
the future. A low Christology of this sort emphasises the ‘historical Jesus’ and the
political dimensions of the Gospel and is directed to praxis, with a consequent
marginalisation of the being (and therefore divinity) of Christ. In contrast,
Ratzinger’s views on hope and history are predicated on a Chalcedonian Christology, which emphasises the ontological, divine nature of Christ, and understands the humanity of Christ in reference to his divinity, without sacrificing its integrity. Contrary to the political theology of Metz, the Resurrection is understood as constituting the ‘eschatological leap’ of humanity. The ‘new humanity’, which is the object of dialectical expectation in the Concilium perspective is contrasted against Ratzinger’s emphasis on the Resurrection as the ground of hope. Christ is perceived eschatologically as the divinised man, who already reigns in glory. For Ratzinger, humanity’s hope is centred on this divinisation. Its future is already realised in the Risen Lord, who ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Participation in this reign of glory, not primarily the historical future, is the object of human hope.
CHAPTER 4 HOPE IS ORIENTED ‘BEYOND ITSELF’ – THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATURE-GRACE RELATIONSHIP

4.1 Introduction

In 3.6, Ratzinger’s comment that history is oriented ‘beyond itself’ was noted. The phrase ‘beyond itself’ is suggestive of a key theological and philosophical insight underlying Ratzinger’s claim that fundamental hope has a supra-historical, extra-mundane object in eternal life in Christ. It captures his conviction that human nature and history must look to a source outside itself for fulfilment. A theological anthropology, which argues that the human person has a natural desire for a supernatural end, underpins Ratzinger’s view that the fulfilment of each of nature and history is ‘beyond itself’. This Chapter will examine therefore how Ratzinger conceives the rational spirit as oriented ‘beyond itself’ to a supernatural end, which it cannot itself give.

The Chapter focuses on the conception of the nature-grace relationship in Ratzinger’s theology. It argues that Ratzinger’s account of the relationship between nature and grace depends upon or parallels de Lubac’s (and related Communio thinkers, including Balthasar’s) “Aegidian Thomist” account of the supernatural and Pieper’s related understanding of the human person.¹ Ratzinger’s understanding of the

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¹ As is well known, debates regarding the nature-grace relationship remerged with some heat in the middle of the twentieth century in 1946 with the publication of Henri de Lubac’s Surnaturel: Etudes historiques: see e.g. Nichols, “Thomism and the Nouvelle Théologie”.

For a recent interpretation of de Lubac’s work on the “natural desire for a supernatural end”, see Jacob W Wood, To Stir a Restless Heart: Thomas Aquinas and Henri de Lubac on Nature, Grace, and the Desire for God (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2019). It is to him that the expression “Aegidian Thomist” is indebted. In that work, he has shown that the Thomistic understanding of the natural desire to see God in de Lubac has been mediated through the tradition of the Augustinian Order, particularly via Giles of Rome (“Aegidius Romanus”), Thomas’s student: 20-22. Giles insisted that in human “nature itself [there is] a desire for the vision of God, and who therefore saw Christ and the Church as indispensable mediators of human happiness.” Wood notes that this tradition was never condemned by the Church, even if other Thomists “confused [it]…with heterodox Augustinianism of one form or another”: Restless Heart, 19-20. He argues the publication of de Lubac written most closely to 1950, the essay “Le mystère du surnaturel” (1949) (evident also in Augustinisme et théologie (1965) and Le mystère du surnaturel (1965)), aligns with Fulgence Lafosse OESA (c. 1640 – post-1684) and thus, strictly speaking, does not offend against Pope Pius XII’s
insistence on the gratuity of grace in *Humani Generis* (1950): 417-418. Lafosse argued that the call to the beatific vision is contingent but, having been made “in the present, historical state” (emphasis in original), necessitates that “human nature has a natural desire for its supernatural end”. Consequently, it is possible to posit a human nature that is not “called by desire nor ordered by grace to the beatific vision”: 403. This contrasts with the view of Michelangelo Marcelli OESA (d. 1804), who argued that God was “‘bound’ (tenebatur)” to grant the possibility of the beatific vision to rational creatures: 404.

In de Lubac’s early work, it is suggested that present is the influence of Giovanni Berti OESA (1696-1766), who argued that the gifts of “grace and glory lay outside our natural faculties” and thus cannot be claimed as of right. Berti acknowledges the possibility that God could create humanity in a state that desires the vision of God but is “not ordered by grace to do so”. However, this is not the providential arrangement by which all is ordered to the good: 402. 416 (quotations on 402).

Wood suggests that de Lubac’s view of the supernatural “bears an important relationship to the Augustinianism of Joseph Ratzinger” (including in the latter’s magisterial interventions as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Pope), the *Communio* school more generally, as well as *Lumen Gentium: Restless Heart*, 24; see also his “Henri de Lubac, *Humani Generis*, and the Natural Desire for a Supernatural End,” *Nova et VETERA*, English Edition, 15(4) (2017): 1209. He notes that in the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which was published under the auspices of Benedict XVI, is described a human “desire to see God” (nn2, 533, emphasis added). Unlike St John Paul II’s *Catechism*, which speaks of a “desire for God” (CCC, 27), Ratzinger – Wood implies – is intervening in the debates between the schools concerning the natural desire for God on the side of those who posit a natural desire for the beatific vision in the human person: 24n87. Wood’s assessment is, it is argued, correct with respect to Ratzinger and also Pieper, to whom Ratzinger is generally aligned. As this Chapter will endeavour to show, Ratzinger argues that the human person has a natural desire, greater than an intellectual curiosity and in fact a longing, to be in communion with God. Arguably, there are Lafossian and Bertian strains in Pieper and Ratzinger because each emphasises that humanity’s end is beyond its powers but that that human person has a natural desire to see God as he has been created in the concrete, historical order. Ratzinger of course came to theological prominence in the latter half of the century. Neither he nor Pieper intervene directly at length in the *Surnaturel* controversy. The issue with which this Chapter is concerned is the extent to which Pieper and Ratzinger may be characterised as taking on the thrust of the Lubacian position in an architectonic way in their conception of the human spirit, even if in the case of Pieper, it could be said that he anticipated the Lubacian position. To be clear, the thesis is not concerned with suggesting that Pieper and Ratzinger would necessarily have agreed with the entirety of the Lubacian position (although they may indeed have done so), only that their understanding of the human person takes on or parallels key aspects of de Lubac’s reading of human nature, with important consequences for conceiving the hope-history relationship. It is not a study such as on the relationship between de Lubac and Ratzinger on nature and grace, important though that relationship is.

relationship falls therefore within the general framework of a *Communio* fundamental theology and is thus distinguished from a *Concilium* account, which tends to depend on a theology of grace that immanentizes or ‘naturalises’ grace’s operation (1.4). True it is that both the *Communio* and *Concilium* thrusts in theology reject an extrinsic reading of the relationship. Their accounts of the relationship, however, turn on different appreciations of the imperative of human nature to look ‘beyond itself’ for fulfilment, with vastly different implications for an inner or extra-historical conception of hope.

Ratzinger’s conceptions of hope and eschatology (2 and 3), as directed to a supra-historical end in Christ, are thus not fully intelligible without reference to de Lubac and Balthasar’s Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist reading of the nature-grace relationship. Fundamental hope is oriented to the fulfilment of an innate orientation

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Serge-Thomas Bonino OP in a balanced introduction to the *Surnatural* controversy, suggests that de Lubac’s exegesis of Thomas is at times only “partial”, to which some Lubacians might respond by questioning why Aquinas’s writings are cast as dispositive: “Foreword” in *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth Century Thomistic Thought*, ed. Serge-Thomas Bonino OP, trans. Robert Williams, trans. revised by Matthew Levering (Ave Maria: Sapienta Press, 2009), viii. C.f. Milbank, *Suspended Middle*, 28, who argues that Lawrence Feingold’s methodology in his *The Natural Desire to See God according to St Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* is flawed because it sees Aquinas as an initiator of a commentarial theological tradition rather than as a participant in an already living theological tradition.

Nevertheless, Bonino notes that one of the “irreversible acquisitions” for traditional Thomism in light of de Lubac’s work was the recognition of “the congenital openness of the mind to the supernatural”, “Foreword”, viii (emphasis added). Thomas Joseph White OP, writing today from an Aristotelian-Thomistic perspective, which differs from de Lubac and Milbank by rejecting an innate and natural inclination or proportionality between nature and grace, accepts that “there exists a natural point of contact in us such that grace is not alien to human nature and can lead human nature without violence through the ascent upward in to the supernatural life of God”:


Despite the apparent concordance of views on de Lubac in the post-conciliar period, his position has been challenged in the twenty-first century. Wood notes two directions of critique: one, coming from a Neo-Thomist origin, arguing that de Lubac “went too far” in positing a natural desire for the supernatural, which threatens the integrity of the natural order and imposes a “debitum naturae” on God. Two of the chief proponents of this strand that Wood cites are Lawrence Feingold, *Natural Desire to See God According to St Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*, 2nd ed. (Ave Maria: Sapienta Press, 2010) and Steven Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham, 2010). The other direction of critique comes from the Radical Orthodoxy direction, chiefly John Milbank’s *Suspended Middle*, which argued that de Lubac did not go far enough because bound by circumstances: *Restless Heart*, 25-26. Milbank, *Suspended Middle* engages some of the criticisms from the Neo-Thomist direction as well as draws out what he considers are the full and radical implications for theology of de Lubac’s views. See especially Chapter 9 of that work. See also Guerrerio, *Benedict XVI*, 77.

Despite any difference that might exist between de Lubac and Balthasar, a topic worthy of further investigation – c.f. Milbank, *Suspended Middle*, 72-73. Balthasar, *Theology of Barth*, 267n1 remarks that de Lubac’s *Surnaturel* “discussed this issue [of the single, supernatural end of the created spirit] … [such] that we no longer need to recapitulate the main lines of his argument”.

In this Chapter, the expression ‘Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist’ is preferred to describe Ratzinger’s view because Pieper’s understanding of the innate capacity and desire for God in the
of the human person to eternity, which surpasses his natural capacities and any potential of politics and history. Ratzinger’s insistence that hope belongs to the realm of gift and not human ingenuity relates to an appreciation of the supernatural, in which human nature is said to possess a desire for a supernatural end unobtainable by human power. The fundamental hope that surpasses all other hopes, and transcends all possibilities and expectations (2.3), has as its object a supernatural reality, which the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of the nature-grace relationship and a consequent soteriology (5) helps explain is beyond the control of the hoping person. Salvation or eternal life exists in the order of the supernatural and is made accessible to the human person only through the supernatural life offered via the gifts of the theological virtues in baptism, which mediates the fruits of the Paschal Mystery to humanity.

The Chapter first summarises the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of natural desire, as exemplified by twentieth century Communio scholars, and differentiates it from a Rahnerian theology of grace. Secondly, it will explore how Pieper and Ratzinger conceive the human spirit as constitutively oriented ‘beyond itself’, possessing a natural desire for a supernatural end. Thirdly, the Chapter will explore the connection between the theological anthropology thus described and Pieper and Ratzinger’s conceptions of hope and the hope-history relationship.

4.2 The Communio Reading of the Supernatural in Theological Context

This section summarises one of the principal reactions against an extrinsic reading of the nature-grace relationship: the Lubacian critique of the concept of pure nature and his presentation of natural desire as indicative of the human person’s ordination to God. Although not the place to delve deeply into the nuances of the debate generated human person relates to his reading of Thomas, whereas Ratzinger’s could be described as Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist as mediated by de Lubac, with an important amount of Bonaventure. The point is to read Augustine and Thomas in continuity with each other and as representative of the Christian tradition: c.f. De Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 112-113; see also 113n64. Wood, Restless Heart, also reads Thomas in continuity with Augustine: 35. As seen in the Introduction, Pieper and Ratzinger also prefer to read Thomas through a Patristic and not scholastic lens, which is consistent with a Communio approach.

3 The phrase ‘natural desire’ will be used at times herein as shorthand for the notion of the natural desire for a supernatural end. The appellation Communio is given even if many of these arguments were formulated before the founding of the journal, because the orientations are often found in Communio circles.
by de Lubac, a brief explication of his Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist position of (along with figures such as Balthasar and Romano Guardini) is necessary to contextualise Ratzinger’s view of the human person. It is also necessary briefly to contrast the Lubacian perspective with the alternative response to an extrinsic reading of nature and grace offered by Rahner, both in order to respond to the claim of some liberation theologians that these authors belong together and to highlight the implications of the differences in fundamental theology that they represent.

4.2.1 Summary of the Twentieth Century Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist Account of the Nature-Grace Relationship

The Communio Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of the nature-grace relationship rejects the notion of *natura pura* and the “[t]heological dualism”, which had hitherto prevailed. It is distinguished from a Suarezian presentation of the human creature as theoretically possessing a ‘pure nature’ (*natura pura*) closed in, and complete of, itself. It sought to supersede the idea that there is a ‘twofold human beatitude’ (*duplex hominis beatitudo*), namely, that human beings can possess a state of natural beatitude apart from supernatural beatitude, achieved by its own powers. Although grace on this view might “[assist] nature to realize its own finality”, natural and supernatural ends stand separately in their own realm and only come into contact adventitiously, as it were. On a neo-scholastic view, nature and the beatitude offered

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4 The purpose of this Chapter is not to determine the correctness of de Lubac’s interpretation of Thomas. The central point, as Balthasar puts it, is the adoption by Ratzinger that the human person only has a single end, a supernatural fulfilment that responds to an intrinsic orientation of his nature, which is nevertheless only gratuitously given. De Lubac insisted on the gratuity of grace and that supernatural fulfilment is unmerited, which makes him consistent with *Humani Generis*, at least by intention (4.2.2): Rowland, *Catholic Theology*, 33; c.f. de Gaál, *Christocentric Shift*, 38, Wood, “Natural Desire for a Supernatural End,” 1229-1237; at 1236: de Lubac “agrees with Lefebvre that the calling of human nature to the beatific vision is contingent and that this calling creates in man a natural desire for the vision of God”. Riches, “Christology and *duplex hominis beatitudo*,” 44-45n1 collects some of the recent contributions to the debate surrounding de Lubac’s *Surnaturel*.


by grace are extrinsically related, with grace being possible merely because of the obediential potency of the creature.  

Contrastingly, the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account argues that human nature has an innate orientation to a supernatural end, and must be understood in light of the intrinsic unity of nature and grace in an undivided cosmic order. Balthasar argues that there is “one, indivisible world order”. Guardini suggests that human life’s “movement, its growth, are directed from man to God and back from God to man” and “[t]he whole realm of created being …come[s] from God’s grace”. Nature is in a sense “always already” graced because the whole of creation is a gratuitous gift. 

A close correlation and an organic connection is therefore observed between the rational, spiritual nature and the graced end to which it is directed. There exists a unitary (but not monist), “symbiotic and intrinsic” relationship between nature and grace, in which “nature exists for the sake of grace and is ordered to it, having its

Wood, “Rebuilding the City of God: Locating the Politics of Virtue within the Politics of Sin and Grace,” Nova et Vetera, English edition, 16(4) (2018), 1375n18 citing Milbank, Suspended Middle, 1st ed., 104-108. C.f. Wood, Restless Heart, 35 on his proposed via media between de Lubac and his critics, and his distinction between our first, active nature, which correlates with natural reason and our second passive nature of which our first nature implicitly seeks fulfilment, but which cannot be fulfilled without reference to Christ. This relates to the Augustinian analysis of natural desire (see 1-15, esp at 10), which suggests that we have a “natural desire for happiness and implicitly a natural desire for the vision of God”: 33. Although the movement towards God can only be a grace, the restlessness of the human heart shows the human desire for happiness that can only ultimately be fulfilled by that grace, even as happiness is sought in the possession of created goods, which generates a lack of fulfilment that seeks ever more fulfilment: 9-10. Arguably, parallels can be found between this and Ratzinger and Pieper’s thought, although it is perhaps unlikely Ratzinger would accept the notion of a purely natural beatitude. The distinction between ratio and intellectus suggests a human discursive rationality, proper to human rational nature as such (ratio), which can nevertheless be elevated through the intellectus into ‘superhuman’ perception and remain properly human: 4.3.8. The unity in differentiation that Ratzinger maintains between the orders of nature and grace, faith and politics (5), might be said to correspond to the capacity of “first nature” to elaborate philosophical ethics, even as our “second nature” needs Christ for fulfilment: Wood, Restless Heart, 35. Against this, it must be observed however that Ratzinger is sceptical of claims of a purely “philosophical anthropology” based on pure reason arising from the “first nature”, instead presenting a Christological and theological ethics: c.f. Wood, Restless Heart, 35, see e.g. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “The Renewal of Moral Theology: Perspectives of Vatican II and Veritatis Splendor,” Communio 32(2) (Summer 2005): 357-368, eg. 361, 364, 367.

2 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 267 (emphasis in original).
4 C.f. Milbank, Suspended Middle, 45, 71 and Schindler, “Introduction”, xvi.
ultimate finality in it.” Nature, whatever can be said of it abstractly, in reality belongs in a unitary cosmic order in which it is directed to a graced telos.

Balthasar argues that the order of creation is intrinsically Christocentric. While the “order of creation” (nature/ontology) remains prior to the “order of redemption” (grace/soteriology), there is a “deeper [..] true and lasting priority” grounded on Christ, who “is the presupposition of creation”. Even if the “first Adam” was created first, he derives his being from Christ, and was in fact “created … for the sake of the second Adam”. While the natural realm is distinct from the sacred, it nevertheless “everywhere and always retains an ordering that is first from within, toward the end which is God in Jesus Christ”. The significance of human nature and its relationship to grace can only be grasped by reference to an undivided world order, in which creation is itself grounded in and ordered to the supernatural in Christ.

The Communion position is thus an ‘intrinsicist’ expression of the nature-grace relationship. The relationship between nature and grace is summarised as “organic-paradoxical” and not extrinsic. It holds “the concept and the reality of a supernatural vocation to be intrinsic to a full description of the human person”. The human person, simply, is “designed and intended to encounter God” and is created

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12 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 353. Related are Ratzinger’s reading of humanity’s eschatological destiny being the ‘eschatological Adam’ (3) and his Christological reading of human nature (5).

13 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 353. He also quotes Przywara to the effect that between God and creature exist “only one, single, concrete existing order between God and creature” and that “the grace of redemption in Christ” is the “final form” of being (nature) and history (which is also a creature): 256 quoting Erich Przywara, “Philosophy,” Philosophisches Jahrbuch (1949), 1-9. C.f. Ratzinger’s discussion of the absolute priority of Christ: 5.4.5.

14 Schindler, Heart of the World, 78 (emphasis in original). According to Schindler, de Lubac relatedly holds that nature, including “all of its penultimate ends”, is “ordered internally and from its creation toward the God revealed in Jesus Christ”.


16 Nichols, Hermes to Benedict XVI, 147. Nichols refers to this test in the course of discussing Maurice Blondel’s philosophy of action. Blondel was an influence on de Lubac. Nichols describes the debate as occurring in the first half of the twentieth century; he would have had in mind de Lubac’s Surnaturel and the responses of neo-scholastic scholars such as Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange.
“out of” grace for that intended end. Theological disputes over the true meaning of Aquinas’ views are “secondary” to his insight that “as a created being of nature, man has no other goal than the supernatural vision of God... Thomas never entertains, *even hypothetically*, a final goal that could be unmoored from [that vision]”. Nature and grace are to be understood as forming a unity because the concrete subject of the nature-grace relationship is:

*the real man [who] is the man himself, a profound unity, not dissociable into juxtaposed elements as fragments of a mosaic would be, [but] a unity in which nature and grace, reason and faith cannot function each one on its own...*

This human person has therefore “only one end, a *supernatural* one”. The human person possesses an intrinsic supernatural vocation.

In short, the human person has a natural desire for a supernatural end. In Kerr’s words, the human person possesses a “natural desire for the vision of God”. Proper to the nature of created spirits is the longing for God on the level of consciousness, cognition and the will. By virtue of their own natures, human persons “are innately called to the beatific vision” as integrated persons in which will, intellect and feeling operate together. For de Lubac, the “desire to see God” is not accidental to the human person or dependent upon individual or historical variables. The call is constitutive of human nature; the desire for our destined end in God is “inscribed upon [our] very being”. He quotes Aquinas that “[e]very intellect [spiritual in nature] naturally desires the vision of the divine substance” and that the human

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17 Balthasar, *Theology of Barth*, 345 summarising Guardini’s conception of the nature-grace relationship in Guardini, *Freiheit, Gnade, Schicksal* (Munich, 1948), 163-166; see also the quotations extracted 345-346 from that work. Balthasar provides an extensive overview of Catholic thinkers who generally agreed with this position: *Theology of Barth*, 343ff. See his summation of their view, at 353, as being grounded on the “historical, nay Christian experience – from man as he has been created in the actual world as an answer to God’s creative and redemptive Word of grace, a word that by definition is a dialogic word.”

18 Balthasar, *Theology of Barth*, 269 (emphasis in original). Balthasar is aware of the interpretive disputes over the intended significance of Aquinas’s position on this issue: n1.


22 Milbank, *Suspended Middle*, 33.

person’s desire to behold God is “the desire of his nature”. The desire for God inheres in human nature.

The human spirit is uniquely situated in the order of creation as immediately ordered to God (and who, in contrast to the angels, have a body). Against Cajetan’s Aristotelian view of nature as being a “closed whole” and necessarily “an essence which rests content in the good that is proportionate to it”, the rational spirit is viewed as “different, and structured differently” from other (non-angelic) created natures. According to Aquinas, the rational creature is “superior to every creature in its capacity for the highest good through the divine vision and enjoyment”. The created spirit “has a direct relationship with God” and “a certain capacity for the infinite”. The rational human creature is unique in creation because ‘capable’ of encounter with God.

The Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist position strives to avoid collapsing the orders of nature and grace, and the extremes of an intrinsicist position. The human person has a strong and innate but paradoxical desire beyond itself for the vision of God, attainment of which exceeds its powers. The spiritual ‘capacity’ for the infinite is by definition not proportionate to the human person’s faculties. Such a capacity “surpasses the powers of his nature” and divine grace is needed to bring the supernatural end of the spirit to fruition. For de Lubac, the rational spirit can only “be fulfilled by getting beyond itself” and “[m]an is only man when he surpasses

24 De Lubac, The Mystery of the Supernatural, 56 citing Summa contra Gentiles, bk 3, c. 57 (emphasis in de Lubac), and 58 citing Summa Theologiae I, 12, 1, Summa contra Gentiles, bk 3, c 48. For commentary on article 1 of question 12 of the Prima Pars see Davies, Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae, 60. While not touching on the nature-grace debate, Davies points out that it would have been reasonable to expect Aquinas not to conclude that it was possible for the human creature to see God given his “claim that we cannot know what God is”. However, appealing to the claims of faith, Aquinas concludes that it possible to possess the beatific vision by God’s power. This would correlate to the idea that the human spirit receives a gift that exceeds its own natural capacity.


26 De Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 117 quoting De Malo, q. 5, a. 1. See also 116 citing Scotus Ordinatio, prol.

27 De Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 110, 111. He also quotes Bonaventure to similar effect: the “soul [is] the image of God, and is born to be carried into God immediately and to be beatified in him…”: 113n67 citing In 2 Sent., dist. 18, a. 2, q. 3.

28 De Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 111, 117 citing De Malo, q. 5, a. 1. See also 116 citing Scotus, Ordinatio, prol. (quotation on 11). See also Riches’s Christological reading of the paradoxical character of the natural desire: Riches, “Christology and duplex hominis beatitude,” e.g. 64-65.
himself”. Balthasar likewise summarises Aquinas’ view that “the nature of the created spirit is directed beyond itself” and that “it is [thereby] a nature that cannot be fulfilled through its natural possibilities alone”. Every nature reaches its perfection according to an interior and superior reality, such that there can be “a fundamental end beyond ourselves”. Fulfilment occurs as a consequence of “actual grace”, which fulfils the human person’s “truest essence” but does not flow from “any natural necessity”. In short, the human person is oriented beyond himself to the beatific vision, a call to which belongs to him by nature but which is beyond the human person’s power of fulfilment. As a consequence, God’s grace is necessary for the human spirit to reach its destined end ‘beyond itself’.

In summary, de Lubac, Balthasar and Guardini offered a reappraisal of the nature-grace relationship. Against an extrinsic reading of the relationship, they reject the concept of pure nature and purely natural beatitude. They advocate the unity (understood not in a monist way) of the orders of nature and grace, in which the single cosmic order is given a Christocentric reading. The human person has a single, supernatural vocation or calling to a life of grace in Christ. He possesses a natural desire for a supernatural beatitude, beyond human capacity to realise. The human person is called ‘beyond itself’.

29 De Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 102 quoting Bulletin thomiste 4 (1934-36): 587, 109 quoting Maurice Blondel, Dialogues sur la Pensée, dialogie 8 (Paléonés), in Etudes blondéliennes 3 (1954): 72 (emphasis added). Thus, de Lubac quotes Thomas: “[t]he final end of the rational creature exceeds the faculty of the nature itself”: de Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 111 noting that the quotation comes from Thomas’s Compendium of Theology, c.144. This is slightly incorrect; the correct citation is c.143 of the Compendium (trans. Cyril Vollert SJ (Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 2012)). In Bonaventure’s words, the human person is in the paradoxical position of having to “[ascend] above himself…by an ascension of the heart” to attain his end: de Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 117 citing Bonaventure, Itinerarium mentis, c. 1, n. 1. See also de Lubac, Catechesis, 14 quoting Claude Bruaire, L’Affirmation de Dieu (Paris: Seuil, 1964): “Man is that being whose norm is nature, but who goes beyond nature. Yes, but can he do this entirely?”

30 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 268 citing Summa Theologiae III, 9, 2 ad 3 (emphasis on ‘beyond itself’ added, emphasis on ‘nature’ in original).

31 Milbank, Suspended Middle, 106-107 citing Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 147 [3] [6]; In Rom. Chap II, lect. 3; Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 282n27 citing Summa Theologiae II-II, 2, 3.

32 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 345 discussing Romano Guardini’s, Freiheit, Gnade, Schicksal (Munich, 1948).
4.2.2 Who Claims the Legacy of the Nouvelle Théologie in Fundamental Theology?

Gutiérrez and Müller argue that liberation theology inherits both de Lubac’s view of the supernatural and Rahner’s theology of grace (1.5.4). They view de Lubac’s nouvelle théologie and Rahner’s theology of grace as similar if distinct expressions of a rejection of neo-scholastic extrinsicism. Against the view of their fundamental similarity is the recognition that de Lubac, along with Balthasar, and Rahner offer important and contrasting views of the nature-grace configuration, with subsequently different implications for conceiving the hope and history relationship. As Rowland points out, Müller “says nothing about the significance of the difference” between de Lubac and Rahner.33 It is not the purpose of the sub-section necessarily to adjudicate between de Lubac and Rahner, an open question with which theology continues to grapple. Rather, its purpose is to underscore that de Lubac and Rahner offer different perspectives in fundamental theology, especially concerning the nature-grace relationship. In so doing, they provide contrasting starting off-points for theologians, the adoption of which has implications for the hope-history debate (1.4, 1.5, 4.4).

The participants in the debate themselves understand their contributions to that debate to differ in important if subtle respects. Responding to Surnaturel, Rahner’s theology of grace offers a critique of de Lubac, a different solution to the problem of nature and grace, and a contrasting understanding of human existence.34 He argues that “grace and beatific vision can no longer be said to be unexacted” (i.e. not due or to be ‘exacted’ or demanded from someone) if it is suggested that in nature the person has an essential ordination to grace such that God in his “wisdom and goodness” will unconditionally fulfil it.35 According to Rahner’s reading of the Lubacian position, once an unexacted grace of creation is seen to be given to the creature, God must fulfil the natural desire for the supernatural end. To posit a desire

33 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 190.
34 This section takes as representative of Rahner’s position on de Lubac his essay regarding the relationship of nature and grace: Rahner, “Concerning Nature and Grace,” 298f.
35 Rahner takes the Lubacian position to be expressed in the anonymous article of ‘D’, published in German during the Surnaturel controversy. He appears content to take D as representative of the Lubacian position, because of D’s intention so to represent the perspective, without necessarily analysing whether it fact D does so: “Concerning Nature and Grace,” 303n2, 303-304 (quotation on 304: ‘unexacted’ of course is the translator’s English expression). De Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 107.
for grace necessitates a *debitum* that the desire be met by grace, which thereby renders it unfree. The Lubacian refusal to acknowledge a hypothetical pure nature supposedly vitiates the gratuity and conditionality of grace and revelation.36

For Rahner, the Lubacian position naturalises grace’s operation. Grace “perhaps” becomes no more than an auxiliary means by which the “reality already desired and called for in the constitutive depths of the self” is realised.37 Grace is the ‘exacted’ fulfilment of the potentiality of human nature and, “if too literally interpreted, becomes shackled by the very naturalism it wants badly to be free of”.38 Rahner fears therefore that de Lubac’s position can “[level] the two orders” of nature and grace, by failing to posit a pure nature.39 Grace becomes less the free intervention of God than the simple realisation of the possibilities inherent to human nature.40

To protect the gratuity and unconditional character of grace as a “free gift” of God, Rahner first insists on the continuing utility of a hypothetical pure (human) nature, without any reference to humanity’s supernatural destiny.41 Pure nature is “a remainder concept (*Restbegriff*)”, which denotes “what he [the human being] always is” when “the supernatural existential as unexacted is subtracted”.42 The call to eternal life must remain an unexacted, conditional feature of human existence. To posit a “natural existential immediately ordered to grace itself”, as Rahner says the Lubacian position does, would be to demand a “supernatural existential”.43 The concept of ‘pure nature’ enables a human nature to be postulated without an intrinsic ordination to grace and so does not require grace to be ‘exacted’.

40 Duffy, *Graced Horizon*, 104.
Secondly, Rahner also insists on the utility of the *potentia oboedientialis*, which he says is “scorned by de Lubac”. He says:

*Man should be able to receive this Love which is God himself; he must have congeniality for it. He must be able to accept (and hence grace, the beatific vision) as one who has room and scope, understanding and desire for it. Thus, he must have a real ‘potency’ for it. He must have it always. He is indeed someone always addressed and claimed by this Love. For, as he is now in fact, he is created for it; he is thought and called into being so that Love might bestow itself. To this extent, this ‘potency’ is what is inmost and most authentic in him, the centre and root of what he is absolutely.*

The potency is more than “non repugnance” to God’s intervention but a positive, “inner ordination” to the supernatural existential, while at the same time being “unconditional”. As Garver points out, the “potentia” is “an active longing for God that is present in the human pre-apprehension (Vorgriff) of everything”. The longing is present in each act of knowing, which makes the person self-transcendent and open to God’s “self-communication and summons”. In contrast with the neo-scholastic view of obediential potency as being no more than a velleity for God, Rahner considers it to be a strong ordination to God. However, unlike de Lubac, this potency is ordered to the supernatural existential and not directly to God.

Thirdly, Rahner argues that the human person possesses a supernatural existential distinct from his potency (1.4). The “natural self-transcendence [in which the potency consists] and the supernatural existential are to be held as formally distinct”. The ordination of the supernatural existential to the Trinity contrasts with the potency’s ordination to the supernatural existential. The former is “unexacted”
and therefore “‘supernatural’”.

An insistence on the supernatural existential’s unexacted character ensures that grace is unexact. Grace ‘responds’ as it were to the supernatural existential and not natural desire or potency. The gratuity of the supernatural existential ensures the gratuity of grace itself. What is natural to the human person is a potency for God, but not the supernatural existential itself. Only the latter is ordered to grace.

Although respectful of Rahner as theologian, thinker and friend, de Lubac detects differences between himself and Rahner. Against Rahner’s accusation that he naturalises grace’s operation, de Lubac maintains the gratuity of grace. His intention at least is to distinguish between the given natural desire and its supernatural fulfilment of it. He argues that “the supernatural end can in no case be the object of any requirement or debt”. It is possible to insist upon the gratuity of grace without the need to posit a pure nature “that could get along without grace”. Instead, the human spirit is in the position of paradox, “made for God” without being able to obtain vision of him using “[its] natural powers alone”. De Lubac advocates a twofold gratuity and a “double movement of grace” in creation and its elevation. De Lubac argues for the paradoxical contingency of the initial call but also its intrinsic and determinative quality to the human spirit as it has been created.

Importantly, de Lubac questions also the utility of interposing a supernatural existential between the natural openness to God (whether natural desire or obediential potency) and the potential fulfilment of that desire. He expresses

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33 Quoted in Oakes, “Surnaturel Controversy,” 632-633 (quotation on 632). As pointed out by Garver, de Lubac distances himself from the work of D, claiming that he was not the author and not aware of it: Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac,” citing de Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 107n36.
35 Oakes, “Surnaturel Controversy,” 633 (emphasis in original). Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 296: “The certainty of the natural striving for the goal of our life and the gratuity of grace do not rule each other out” (emphases in original).
36 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.
37 De Lubac also makes explicit that he does not scorn the potentia oboedientialis, as Rahner so accuses him. Like Rahner, he merely thinks that the concept of the obediential potency, as understood by Baroque scholasticism, underestimates the power of the spirit’s ordination to God. He denies with Rahner that it amounts to a mere “non-repugnance” to God’s action on the creature: Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac,” citing de Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 107n36. Therefore, the position of D, which may or may not be guilty of the error of Marcelli (see n1 above) by positing a debitum payable by God in virtue of making the human spirit with a necessary desire for God, is not the position of de Lubac.
impatience with the concept of the supernatural existential. According to de Lubac, Rahner reformulates the problem of nature and grace, without answering the paradox of the necessarily gratuitous character of grace and the “constitutive” nature of God’s call as a predicate of human nature or existence as it has in fact been created.

Balthasar also critiques Rahner’s formulation of the nature-grace relationship. For Balthasar, Rahner cannot conceive God as giving an “unconditional dynamism” to the spirit without effectively tying his own hands and fulfilling it as the payment of a debt. Instead “we must try out a difficult experiment in conceptual distinctions” by envisaging a hypothetical pure nature. Although “the supernatural existential openness to grace…is man’s most intimate and unique feature”, because supernatural, it “must [be] disregarded” when considering the hypothetical pure nature. Implicitly, such mental gymnastics is of dubious utility. Most importantly, it distracts attention from the most important feature of the human person, namely that he has been created for God. Positing a pure nature insufficiently notices that the natural desire’s signal feature is precisely to point beyond itself for fulfilment in God. Minimising the fact of the natural desire downplays the centrality of Christ in human flourishing. Instead the supernatural existential, unlike the natural desire, is an anticipation of that fulfilment, which might unduly limit the interplay of divine and human freedom. Although acknowledging the need to recognise a theological concept of ‘nature’, Balthasar implicitly aligns therefore himself with de Lubac’s criticism of Rahner. Adding the element of the supernatural existential to a description of the human person fails adequately to describe the relationship between nature and grace and also attempts to prescind from God’s all-determinative and constitutive call.

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58 De Lubac, Mystery of the Supernatural, 101-102 (n2): “Really, to the extent that this ‘existential’ is conceived as a kind of ‘medium’ or ‘linking reality,’ one may object that this is a useless supposition whereby the problem of the relationship between nature and the supernatural is not resolved, but only set aside”. Interestingly, de Lubac cites Schillebeeckx as agreeing with himself: Reve des sc. Philos. Et théol. 48 (1964): 397.
60 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 298.
61 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 298-299 (quotation on 299).
62 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 298 (emphasis in original).
64 Balthasar, Theology of Barth, 299.
Balthasar raises an even more fundamental objection. Rahner’s attempt to posit a pure nature actually runs the risk of “equating the invisible residual product with man’s spirit-nature”. There might be very little difference between the rational pre-apprehension of the infinite (obediential potency) and the ordination and longing for God of which the supernatural existential consists. Proposing the supernatural existential as an existential of the concrete person unintentionally risks conflating the orders of nature and grace and immanentizing the latter’s operation. Implicitly, de Lubac’s paradox of the natural desire better protects the gratuity of grace. The orders of nature and grace are kept distinct, even as their intrinsic relationship is recognised.

Balthasar’s fear of conflating the natural with the supernatural is indebted to Przywara’s analogical mode of thinking, which emphasised the difference between Creator and creature (4.3.3). Rhetorically, Balthasar asks with respect to Rahner, “Are we not really trying to unite the incompatible?” Ouellet notes the different metaphysical starting points of Balthasar and Rahner. The former believes the transcendentalism of the latter to thematise “esse” too much. Implicitly, the transcendental philosophy of Rahner understands Being in too univocal a manner, and fails to attend to the difference in being as between Creator and creature. Unlike de Lubac, who begins from a theological *a priori*, Rahner’s insistence on the concept of pure nature is a creaturely theology, beginning from below. Balthasar’s analogical mode of thinking contends, in contrast, that “finite freedom is called beyond itself”. Inadequately noticing the analogical difference between finite and infinite being results in “transform[ing] this offer [the supernatural existential] into a constitutive part of [the created spirit’s] finitude”. Thus, according to Ouellet, it is Balthasar’s reliance on Lateran IV’s insistence on the greater difference (in-similarity) between Creator and creature that forms his understanding of the creature’s orientation ‘beyond itself’ and grounds his critique of a “formal-material anticipation of grace in transcendental subjectivity”. On this view, Rahner ends up insufficiently

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66 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.
68 Ouellet, “Paradox and/or supernatural existential,” 260.
71 Ouellet, “Paradox and/or supernatural existential,” 270 citing Lateran IV, *DS* 806, quoted in 4.3.3.
recognising the radically different characters of nature and grace, and the reality that
the order of grace can only ever be known analogically.

Underlying fundamental differences between a Rahnerian theology of grace, and de
Lubac and Balthasar’s nouvelle théologie exist. Arguably there is a failure of
analogical thinking in a Rahnerian theology of grace.72 His criticism that de Lubac
conceives grace to be exacted by a natural desire appears to overlook the analogical
difference between God and creature, and would have greater bite if de Lubac
understood God and creature to belong to the same “ontic realm”.73 A kind of
contractual analysis, which assumes parties on an equal footing, might then have
force (see also 4.3.3). A univocal metaphysic remains however alien to the
Communio mode of analogical thinking.74 To suggest that grace’s operation is
‘naturalised’ in de Lubac, because fulfilment is mere realisation of the latent
potential inherent to nature, is to underappreciate the paradoxical character of the
supernatural in de Lubac’s understanding. To argue that the fact of a natural
ordination to God necessarily leads to grace’s exaction is a failure to acknowledge
the paradox in which grace can be desired but not demanded as a debitum. Rahner
perhaps does not therefore pay sufficient regard to the need for the human spirit, in
the created order, to be extended beyond itself to receive a fulfilment of which he is
not the author.

Rahner’s presentation of the human person as being existentially in a state of
supernatural elevation contrasts with the Lubacian view of a natural desire for an end
beyond the creature’s power. Although the desiderium naturale is in a sense grace
(although, like Rahner’s supernatural existential not sanctifying grace), the natural
desire reveals the human person to be in need of elevation. The Lubacian position
argues that transformative, elevating grace is mediated through Christ. Revelation is
instead confirmatory in Rahner of an ‘already elevated transcendentality’ (1.4). Thus,
salvation for de Lubac is “situate[d] …historically in relation to human events” and

72 This is despite Rahner’s praise of Przywara: see John R Betz, “Translator’s Introduction,” in Erich
Przywara, Analogia Entis: Metaphysics, Original Strucæ and Universal Rhythm, trans. John Ratzinger
Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William Benedict Eerdmans
Publishing Company, 2014), 5; see also White, “Introduction,” 14-15 who notes the affinity between
Rahner and Przywara, but that Rahner owes more to Kant than Przywara.
73 Milbank, Suspended Middle, 48.
74 C.f. Rowland, Catholic Theology, 118-119.
“the historical event of Christ”. For Rahner, it is the “anonymous’ free response to grace”, which can occur “apart from membership in the church or any religious organization”. Even if Christianity is “necessary”, it is an “addition …to what is true of us most fundamentally apart from them”. Different appreciations of the relative necessity of the Church in mediating grace are thus evident between de Lubac and Rahner.

Moreover, Rahner’s solution is arguably guilty of the naturalism of which he accuses the Lubacian position. The presuppositions underlying his view that a natural desire necessarily exacts grace might imply that the ordination of the supernatural existential to grace itself demands an exaction of grace. On this view, grace’s extraction, based on an existential of the human person would be to ‘naturalise’ grace. Grace is exacted for the human person not because of acceptance of God’s specific revelation of himself in Christ but because of his acceptance of himself (1.4). Arguably, grace is anticipated in the supernatural existential. Human nature is seen as not needing to be extended ‘beyond itself’ on a Rahnerian view, in contrast with the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist perspective. In de Lubac, the natural desire for grace remains unfulfilled without the novel irruption of God in Christ into the natural order. The Rahnerian view can diminish the necessity of revelation and the Church for human personal and social fulfilment, a necessity promoted in the Lubacian view of the supernatural.

Thus, the argument that de Lubac’s nouvelle théologie is connected in fundamental theology to Rahner’s ‘theology of grace’ – and by extension Schillebeeckx, Metz, and Gutiérrez’s – is contestable. A common opposition to extrinsicism does not mean that their readings of human existence or ‘nature’ are the same. Treating de Lubac and Rahner’s views of the supernatural as belonging to the same fundamental theology, misses the important differences between them and the implications flowing from their adoption. Rowland observes that that the difference between them actually goes to the heart of the cleavages in fundamental theology after the Council. The immanentist framework adopted in liberation theology resulted from going

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75 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.
76 Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”.
down the “Rahner-Schillebeeckx bus” and not a de Lubac-Balthasarian one. As Milbank points out, Balthasar uses de Lubac’s account of supernatural and combines it with a Przywarian analogical metaphysics to refute liberal theology’s choice to begin ‘below’ from a humanist foundation (i.e. Rahnerianism). Arguing that the supernatural existential is an existent reality given as part of human existence itself can tend, at least as adopted in the Concilium perspective, to the “baptism” of human nature, history and “secular society” as such, independent of any reference to Christ. Sin, in its social dimension, is dealt with by reference to a dialectical philosophy rather than primarily by reference to the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Rahner’s ‘supernatural existential’ should then not be understood as a necessary development of de Lubac but arguably a rupture, a rupture rooted in differing conceptions of how grace relates to nature and differing philosophical frameworks.

Ratzinger, who as we will see below broadly inherits the Lubacian position, thus operates according to a different fundamental theology from Rahner and his Concilium inheritors (1). Contrasting views of the hope-history debate, grounded in different views of the supernatural, consequently emerge (4.4). Adoption of a Lubacian perspective leads to a view of hope in Ratzinger, which locates fulfilment in a reality exterior to history, whereas the Rahnerian option, as adopted by his followers, can include in eschatological hope’s prospect, the fulfilment of political, earthly goals (1.4 and 1.5).

4.3 The Human Spirit’s Orientation ‘Beyond Itself’ in Pieper and Ratzinger

The Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist reading of the supernatural forms a key part of the background to Ratzinger’s conception of the human person. Pieper’s anthropology also constitutes an essential contextual component. Pieper and Ratzinger share with de Lubac the view that there is a “fundamental orientation of the soul to the beatific vision”. Intrinsic to the human spirit is an ineluctable calling.

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78 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 190 discussing Milbank, Beyond Secular Reason, 232.
79 Milbank, Suspended Middle, 36.
80 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 190 quoting Milbank Beyond Secular Reason, 232.
81 Rowland, Catholic Theology, 190 quoting Milbank Beyond Secular Reason, 232.
to supernatural beatitude. The human spirit has a paradoxical desire ‘beyond itself’ for an end it cannot effect, which must then be received as gift. The natural desire is grounded in nature and an analogical metaphysics, giving the human creature the capax Dei. The person possesses a soul, the capacity for dialogical immortality, which shows the human spirit to exist in the order of freedom, with an ecstatic orientation ‘beyond itself’, all in the context of a view of creation as gift.

This section will first present summary evidence in Pieper and Ratzinger for the claim that the human person possesses the natural desire. It will then explore the theology of creation and analogical metaphysics employed by Pieper and Ratzinger, which support the predication of the natural desire. Thereafter, it will focus on the different characteristics of the spirit, which they consider constitute it as oriented beyond itself to the receipt of a gift that it cannot manufacture itself. The human spirit, grounded in God and possessing a nature by virtue of being a creature, has an analogical, erotic and reflexive desire for dialogue and communion with God. Bearing the influence of Przywara, de Lubac and Balthasar, Pieper and Ratzinger present a picture of the human mind as spirit and inherently directed to the vision of God, a vision that is not alien to human capacity but nevertheless a stretching beyond any natural power.

### 4.3.1 The Natural Desire for Supernatural Beatitude

Ratzinger presents a view of the human person as possessing a natural desire for supernatural beatitude, even if not necessarily formulated in those terms. He would agree with the claim that God has created the human person to enjoy happiness with him. The innate vocation for eternal beatitude rests on the immortality of the human soul. Ratzinger observes that “[t]he only thing that lasts forever is the human soul, the human person created by God for eternity”. He argues that “man by his nature is created for immortality”. The human person is intended to enjoy eternal life with God. His existence raises a question, the “deepest” of human life, which keeps the human person alert “for God, for a gratification that is limitless, for the

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84 Ratzinger, “Homily at Mass Pro Eligendo Romano Pontifice”.
85 Ratzinger, *Jesus*(2), 274.
infinite”.86 In “the heart of every man and every woman” is therefore an “innate desire for happiness”, which relates to the human person’s telos in infinity.87 Significantly, this last comment was given in one of Benedict’s General Audiences on St Thomas Aquinas, implying a general agreement with the Lubacian-Balthasarian reading of Thomas on the desiderium naturale. The human person longs for the infinite, for supernatural beatitude.

Pieper likewise reads Thomas as presenting the human person with a natural desire for beatitude, which extends beyond the satisfaction of a general, natural curiosity for knowledge of the First Cause. According to Pieper, Aquinas understood beatitude as the “ultimate goal of human life”.88 The desire for beatitude is the telos of human existence. As a rational creature, “[m]an craves by nature happiness and bliss…we want happiness by nature”.89 There is a “nature-dictated desire for happiness”.90 Moreover, a person’s “directing of the will” to his happiness “has the quality of a natural process”.91 The desire for, and movement of the will towards, happiness is natural to the human person. That it concerns the ‘ultimate goal’ of human life, and refers to the human person’s natural desire for ‘bliss’ (c.f. 2.3) suggests a constitutive desire greater than curiosity for knowledge of God as First Cause.

Because the desire of the rational spirit for happiness is natural, it contains a givenness that cannot be erased. The desire for beatitude arises “naturally and by necessity”.92 To desire happiness is to obey a “gravitational impulse” within the human heart, an impulse over which “we have no power”.93 In fact, we “[are] this gravitational impulse”.94 Because we are our very yearning, so strong is the natural desire for happiness that, in Pieper’s words, “the entire energy of human nature is

86 Ratzinger, On the Way to Jesus Christ, 8; precisely that plunging into joy in which eternal life consists (2.3.5).
87 Benedict, Great Christian Thinkers, 291.
89 Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, 20 (emphasis in original).
90 Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, 25 (emphasis added).
91 Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, 20 (emphasis added).
92 Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, 20 quoting Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, 94, 1. This is not necessarily to oppose the contingency of the call to beatitude but to suggest God has chosen to inscribe the human nature with this desire: c.f. Wood, “Desire for a Supernatural End,” 1236.
94 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 235; Happiness and Contemplation, 24; ‘are’ is emphasised in Faith, Hope, Love, and not Happiness and Contemplation. There are striking parallels in Pieper’s analysis in these two sources.
considered a hunger which demands satiation, a thirst that requires quenching”. Desire for happiness is not mere velleity or a vague curiosity for knowledge of God naturally obtainable, but a strong orientation which embraces the whole of the human person, intellect, will and passion. All striving flowing from the character of the human person as created spirit, impels the spirit to reach beyond itself and desire to attain happiness.

The completion of human nature is the beatific vision, the vision of God, which is a fulfilment of and not alien or extrinsic to human nature. Rather, such vision is “the fulfilment objectively appropriate to our nature”. The “visio beatifica” is “the fulfilment of [the human person’s] being” and “human life”. The human being “by nature craves the appeasement of his yearnings through seeing.” Each creature possesses a “natural orientation toward fulfilment”. Resting on a theological anthropology given in “the tradition of humanity’s wisdom” is thus the view that there is a close concordance between seeing God as the transcendent ground of all being in the beatific vision and human nature. To see God is to satiate the desire for happiness, appropriate to our nature.

Pieper and Ratzinger’s view that the human creature has a dynamic orientation to an end in God aligns with an Augustinian view that the human person has been created ‘towards’ God for happiness in him. Commenting upon Augustine’s statement, Wood notes that “we are made to praise God and long to do so”. As translated by Robert McMahon, Augustine at the beginning of his Confessions famously comments, “You have made us toward yourself and our heart is restless until it rests

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96 C.f. the view of Suarez that the human person has an “innate, absolute, and non-free” desire to attain to “philosophical knowledge of God as first cause,” which “can [be] naturally achieve[d]”: Wood, Restless Desire, 19.
97 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 92 (emphasis added).
98 Pieper, In Tune with the World, 15.
99 Pieper, In Tune with the World, 16, emphasis added. Worth noting is that Pieper goes on to say that “utmost happiness” in the “present life” consists of contemplation, suggesting a satiation somewhat of desire on earth.
100 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 93 (emphasis added).
101 Pieper, In Tune with the World, 15.
102 Wood, Restless Heart, 1.
in you”. McMahon admits his use of ‘toward’ to be awkward English. Nevertheless, its use captures more accurately the natural orientation of the rational spirit towards God: “Augustine’s ‘toward yourself’ implies an innate inclination in human nature. Human beings are innately, by our very nature, drawn toward God.” The human being has been created ‘facing’ God and looking towards him as part of his very nature. He can attempt to look away from God but of necessity is oriented to him in a dynamic, non-static way. As Ratzinger says, the human person, “being towards others”, is “a traveller on the way of knowing and loving”. We are moving towards him in a manner natural to the human being.

Pieper and Ratzinger argue, therefore, along Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist lines that constitutive of our essence is an inescapable orientation to a supernatural end. Pieper argues “that in the act of being created we are – without being asked and without even the possibility of being asked – shot toward our destination like an arrow.” His use of the metaphor ‘arrow’ is suggestive of the ineluctable directedness the human person has towards God as his final end. It is a metaphor picked up also in Ratzinger, who argues that the spirit “bear[s] within itself the arrow pointing beyond itself. Human existence is “like an arrow in flight”. In virtue of its nature, the spirit is drawn and directed back to the Creator.


104 McMahon, Medieval Meditative Ascent, 67.

105 In an analogous way, the opening verse in St John’s Gospel includes in Greek ὁ λόγος προς τον θεον, “the Word is ‘towards’ God”. McMahon, Medieval Meditative Ascent, 67 connects Augustine’s phrase with the Vulgate’s description in Genesis of the human being made ad imaginam, ‘toward’ the image of God. The Son/Word, who is the image of the Father, likewise is ‘towards’ the Father and we, who are made in God’s image, are ‘towards’ the Father in, through baptism, the Son. Schindler connects an ontology of relation to Pieper’s philosophical method: Heart of the World, 201n12.

106 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 183-184, 232, see also 190 (quotation on 183-184).


109 Ratzinger, God and the World, 112.

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4.3.2 The Theology of Creation and the Possession of a Nature as Supporting the Natural Capacity for Relationship with God

Pieper and Ratzinger’s view of the natural desire is grounded in their theology of creation, and the link they detect between creation and the human person’s possession of a nature. The natural desire for God depends upon the fact that the human person is a creature. Ratzinger relies on Pieper’s elaboration of Aquinas’s theology of creation and the nexus between having a nature and being created to argue that as a creature, the human has a natural capacity to be open to “Another”, namely God (the capax Dei: 4.3.4 and 4.3.5).\textsuperscript{110} For Pieper, the consequence of being a creature is to possess a nature. As Ratzinger points out in respect of this argument, the corollary of this is that without a Creator, there can be no nature. To have a nature simply means to have been created by God and implies an anterior, ontological relationship with the Creator. The Western tradition equated ‘nature’ with the idea of “by virtue of the created state”.\textsuperscript{111} What “happens ‘by nature’ happens ‘by virtue of creation’”.\textsuperscript{112} To have a nature is to be created; what occurs ‘naturally’ (and what flows from a natural capacity) arises because of creation.\textsuperscript{113} The concept of nature is thus necessarily linked to creation in Pieper and Ratzinger, and natural capacity is grounded in the fact of being a creature.

The possession of an anterior nature constitutes the person as what he is and can be. Pieper argues that the “datum prior to all others, which most decisively affects our existence, is we ourselves, i.e., that which we are by virtue of our created state.”\textsuperscript{114} Human nature is “the irrevocable origin and precondition” of what we can achieve naturally, as well as the “newness of life” offered in the gift of grace that God in Christ offers us.\textsuperscript{115} Nature is prior to the operation of grace and what makes it possible.

\textsuperscript{110} Ratzinger, Eschatology, 155 citing Pieper, Tod und Unsterblichkeit (Munich 1968), 96 (translated into English as Death and Immortality).
\textsuperscript{111} Pieper, Problems of Modern Faith, 161, Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 72.
\textsuperscript{112} Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 233.
\textsuperscript{114} Pieper, Problems of Modern Faith, 160.
\textsuperscript{115} Pieper, Problems of Modern Faith, 160-163 (quotation on 161).
A theology of creation argues that the human person is the product of a communication of God’s Being to him. Pieper understands creation as involving God “truly” giving and sharing Being such that the creature has its own existence and essence as belonging to it.\textsuperscript{116} Consistent with Pieper, Ratzinger argues that such a communication is what makes the possession of a nature possible. Paradoxically, while entirely dependent on God’s creative act, creation gives the human creature a nature, which is simultaneously existence “in its own right” and participation in God’s Being.\textsuperscript{117} In the case of the human person, what is natural involves immortality. For Ratzinger, this “immortality belongs to man by nature”, which is a reality that flows from being a creature.\textsuperscript{118} Likewise, Pieper contends that the “imperishability” of the human soul “is given to us as really our own…a permanent part of our beings” because the human person has been created.\textsuperscript{119} What the human person has “by virtue of Creation”, he has “by nature”.\textsuperscript{120} By nature, human beings have an immortal or imperishable soul.

A theology of creation has also implications for conceiving the human person’s natural capacity for God, the supernatural and grace, and therefore the nature-grace relationship (see further 4.3.4). The human person has been given a natural capacity, as his own ‘possession’, to be open to God. He ‘owns’, by nature, immortality, which in Ratzinger’s personalist language entails the capacity for dialogue with God. For Ratzinger, the human person’s “essential immortality” rests on the love of God and the reality of his being called to a “dialogic relationship with” God, on whom he depends as creature.\textsuperscript{121} A human being’s immortality arises from “his relatedness, or capacity for relatedness, to God” (4.3.5).\textsuperscript{122} An individual and “inviolable [soul that]… can persist and be preserved in being beyond death” belongs to him intimately (4.3.3).\textsuperscript{123} A capacity for God belongs to the human creature as his own possession by nature.

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\textsuperscript{116} Josef Pieper, \textit{Death and Immortality}, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine’s Press, 2000), 111.
\textsuperscript{117} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 155.
\textsuperscript{118} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 155 (emphasis added).
\textsuperscript{119} Pieper, \textit{Death and Immortality}, 106, 110-111 (quotation on 111). Pieper prefers the term “imperishability” to immortality.
\textsuperscript{120} Pieper, \textit{Death and Immortality}, 111.
\textsuperscript{121} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 355.
\textsuperscript{122} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 155.
\textsuperscript{123} Josef Pieper, \textit{Death and Immortality}, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine’s Press, 2000), 110.
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4.3.3 Nature, Natural Desire and Analogy

Intimately tied to the nexus between nature and creation is an analogical metaphysics, which recognises God as the ground of all being, in whose existence all creatures’ own being is but a participation, and to whom the human person is called to enter into the fullness of existence. The orientation to the fullness of being overlaps thus with and helps make philosophically intelligible the natural desire. In contrast arguably to Rahner’s supernatural existential (4.2.2), an analogical metaphysics supports the notion that the natural desire is oriented ‘beyond itself’ for fulfilment. Such an analogical metaphysics is present in Ratzinger and Pieper.

The analogy of being, on which an analogical metaphysics rests, expresses Lateran IV’s claim in 1215 that “No similarity can be observed between Creator and creature, however great, that would not require one to observe greater dissimilarity between them.”\(^{124}\) That there is ‘greater dissimilarity’ between God and creature rests on the recognition that “Deus semper maius – God is always greater” than the creature, which, according to Ratzinger, belongs to the “Platonic-Augustinian tradition” and is found also in Aquinas.\(^{125}\) God’s ever-greater reality is most evident in his “wholly other mode” of existence as compared to that of the creature.\(^ {126}\) God possesses a ‘wholly other mode’ of existence because, in Aquinas’s analogical terms, God is “the sheer act of to-be itself (ipsum esse subsistens)”, a mode of reality that remains


\(^{125}\) Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 345. See also White, “The Analogia Entis Controversy and Its Contemporary Significance,” 5-6. C.f. discussion of maior dissimilitudo in relation to the unity of Christ in Riches, Ecce Homo, 6-9

\(^{126}\) Przywara, Analogia Entis, 232.
“inescapably mysterious to the human intellect”. The human mind can only know the ever-greater God’s existence by analogy.

God’s ever-greater mode of being is articulated in the claim that God’s essence is his existence. Pieper and Ratzinger would generally agree that the divine name revealed in Exodus 3:14 shows God to be “He [who] just is, without qualification”. God’s nature is the act of sheer existence. What he is, is to exist. In Pieper’s words, only God, “who is absolute being”, possesses an identity of “essence and existence”. Consequently, God possesses the perfection and fullness of existence, a mode of existence that the finite mind can only analogically grasp.

Arguably, Ratzinger develops the analogy of being theologically by positing what could be described as a ‘metaphysical personalism’. Acknowledging that the human person’s relationship to God cannot be reductively described as “I-Thou”, he nevertheless synthesises profoundly the metaphysical and the personalist. He alludes to the convergence of God as the ground of all that is – “the ground of being per se” – and God as the “ground of my [personal] being”. The ground of all being is “a relationship”, revealed as Father, but at the same time is the “absolute”.


128 Ratzinger, *Jesus(1)*, 347 (emphasis in original). On Pieper and Ratzinger’s understanding of God as he who is, a view taken with reference to Ex 3:14 and in Pieper’s case especially, Gilson’s reading of the revelation of the divine name, see Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 116-136, Pieper, *Guide*, ix, 137. Rowland points out that one reviewer of *Introduction to Christianity*, Hubertus Mynarek, found it to be too ontological: “The Reception of *Einführung in das Christentum* among the Reviewers”. C.f. Étienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 38-42, who argued, as Kerr points out, that there was “the metaphysics of Exodus”: Kerr, *Twentieth Century Theologians*, 191. Gilson argues that the revelation of God’s name to Moses in Exodus answered the questions that Greek philosophy had asked regarding God. In reference to Ex 3:13-14: “Hence the universally known name of Yahweh, for Yahweh means ‘He who is’”: 40. He says “any Christian philosopher had to posit ‘I am’ as his first principle and supreme cause of all things, even in philosophy. To use our own modern terminology, let us say that a Christian’s philosophy is ‘existential’ in its own right”: 41. See the description of this ‘existential Thomism’in Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 80-85. See also Ouellet, “Paradox and/or supernatural existential,” 270, Rowland, *Catholic Theology*, 68ff. Ratzinger affirms the vital importance of ontology in *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 190n172, 315-322. On his views concerning “the priority of logos over ethos” (to use the phrase of Rowland in “Timelessness of Truth, 261), with respect to which he specifically invokes the authority of Guardini and Pieper, see *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 319n7 and accompanying text; see also Tracey Rowland and Conor Sweeney, “The Elephants at the Synod: Logos, Ethos and Sacramentality,” *Anthropotes* 30 (2014): 493-494.


130 In contrast to an impersonalist political theology: 1.2.4.


132 Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 72, 74 (quotation on 74).

The human person has “personal knowledge” of the “objective” ground of reality, and in this way can “entrust [himself] absolutely” to it. The human person does not relate to God as an ontological equal. He trustingly abandons himself to the God who reveals himself as “Person”, but who is simultaneously ever-greater Being as such, and subsequently the source itself of the human person.

The interiority of God to the human person, implicit in Ratzinger’s metaphysical personalism, forms an important integer in his conception of human nature and its orientation to supernatural fulfilment. He employs the Augustinian motif that God is “interior intimo meo et superior summon meo”, simultaneously transcendent of creation but also immanent to it in a profound way. Contrary to a univocal conception of being’s “competitive” understanding of the relationship between God and creation, Ratzinger argues that when the human person grows in love of God, his will becomes not an alien, external imposition, but converges with the person’s own will. A union of wills is possible because “God is in fact more deeply present to me than I am to myself”. God is not a separate ens ‘outside’ the human person but the esse who is ‘within’ (and simultaneously without) the human person as its ground.

The Thomistic metaphysics of Pieper complements Ratzinger’s Augustinian understanding of the relationship between God and the person. Against the Enlightenment notion of God as Deus extramundanus (God exclusively external to or ‘outside’ the world) Pieper argues that all creatures are in God as archetypes and that God “is necessarily in all things, in the most intrinsic manner”. According to

134 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 74.
135 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 73.
138 These observations follow from an analogical conception of being, as opposed to a univocal one in which God is understood as belonging to the same ontological level as the human person, because both belonged “to the same basic metaphysical category, the genus of being”: Barron, Priority of Christ, 13. A univocal conception of being overlooks Étienne Gilson’s (followed by de Lubac) reminder that “God is esse itself, not an ens but the eminent reality of all entia”: Milbank, Suspended Middle, 48.
139 Josef Pieper, Living the Truth: The Truth of All Things and Reality and the Good (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 46, 48 quoting Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, 8, 1. The notion of archetypes is analogous to the Platonic notion of the eternal Ideas, to which Pieper relates the Christian “doctrine of
Pieper, therefore, there is an “indwelling of creation in God and of God in creation”.\textsuperscript{140} The creature exists in God as God’s idea, according to which he communicates existence to the creature as its ground, creating an intimate nexus between God and creature.\textsuperscript{141} God’s interiority to the creature derives from the identity of essence and existence in him, with the consequence that any existent subsists as “a producing peculiar to His essence”.\textsuperscript{142} God is the most interior reality of creature because existence as such – “the act-of-being” – “is the innermost thing for every being”.\textsuperscript{143} What is ‘closest’ to the creature is the fact of its own existence. Because its existence derives from the One whose nature is simply ‘to-be’, God is what is ‘closest’ to the creature.\textsuperscript{144} God is ‘within’ as the creature’s source of existence.

God is the human person’s inmost reality but also his transcendent source and destiny. Even more than being grounded in nothing, “[t]o be a creature…means being grounded in absolute being and having an existential orientation toward being, toward one’s own being and, at the same time, toward the Divine Being”.\textsuperscript{145}

Consistent with Ratzinger’s metaphysical personalism, Pieper argues that personal existential fulfilment consists in participation in God’s plenitude. That there is a deep convergence between existential fulfilment and participation in the life of God flows from understanding the creature as participating in God’s \textit{esse}, per a Thomistic “participation metaphysics”.\textsuperscript{146} The orientation to the fulfilment of one’s own being necessarily involves the orientation to God, who is the ‘sheer act of to-be’ as such, the plenitude and source of being.

That the human person possesses an ‘existential orientation toward being’ can be said to equate with an innate but paradoxical orientation to supernatural beatitude.

\textsuperscript{140} Pieper, \textit{Living the Truth}, 48-49.
\textsuperscript{141} C.f. Pieper, \textit{Guide}, 141.
\textsuperscript{142} Pieper, \textit{Guide}, 141-142.
\textsuperscript{143} Pieper, \textit{Guide}, 140.
\textsuperscript{144} C.f. Aquinas, \textit{Summa Theologiae}, II-II, 26, 4.
\textsuperscript{145} Pieper, \textit{Faith, Hope, Love}, 96-97.
The existential orientation depends upon God’s will for the human creature to enjoy life with him. Following Aquinas, Pieper argues that God “created all things that they might be” (Wis 1:14).\(^{147}\) According to Pieper, creatures have a natural tendency “toward a good”.\(^{148}\) Adopting the scholastic notion of the convertibility of good and existence, he argues thus that the “proper orientation of the ‘way’ is toward being”.\(^{149}\) Existence itself is good. The human creature has been created for supernatural fulfilment consisting of the enjoyment of the fullness of being in God.

Creaturely desire for being derives from the creature’s participation in the Essence that is Existence. God, whose nature is ‘to be’, imparts a strong inclination in the creature likewise ‘to be’. Possessing existence analogically, the creature is in the paradoxical position of always desiring a greater share in existence. Embedded in the notion of creatureliness is that the creature comes:

\[
\text{from the being-creating power of the Creator, who holds the creatura above nothingness with such an absolute strength of realization that this urge, to be, becomes simply identical with the inmost nature of the created entity.}^{150}
\]

In an analogical sense, we “are life” (\textit{vita sunt}) by nature because we are made in the Word and “[dwell] in God as creative essence”.\(^{151}\) An impetus to exist and to have the fullness of being is given the creature, such that this impetus is synonymous with the nature of the creature itself.

An analogical conception of being present in Pieper and Ratzinger intersects therefore with an Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist understanding of the supernatural, with which they are generally aligned. The general orientation of the creature is ‘to be’, to the good that is existence. Even more so, the human person’s natural orientation to supernatural fulfilment – that is, ‘the fullness of happiness – or rather,

\[^{147}\text{Even if the Creator could undo the act of creation if it pleased him: Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 97, Death and Immortality, 108-109. See also Pieper, End of Time, 63 quoting Aquinas, Quaestiones quodlibetales, 4, 4.}\]
\[^{148}\text{Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 97.}\]
\[^{149}\text{Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 97. The ‘way’ referred to is in reference to the journey of human existence: 4.4.2.}\]
\[^{150}\text{Pieper, End of Time, 66-67; c.f. Josef Pieper, The Concept of Sin, trans. Edward T Oakes SJ (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine’s Press, 2001), 37.}\]
\[^{151}\text{Pieper, Living the Truth, 45 quoting Aquinas, Joh, 1, 2.}\]
bliss’ in Pieper’s words (2.3.4) – corresponds with definitive participation the fullness of being, that is, eternal life. The desire for definitive existence equates to the desire for supernatural happiness, and is implanted in the creature’s ‘inmost nature’. God gives the human person not only existence but a natural orientation to the fullness of existence as such.

4.3.4 Capax Dei

Also bound up with the connection between creation and the possession of a nature is the human person’s capax Dei, a capacity to be acted upon by God in virtue of being a creature. In Pieper, like de Lubac, the capax Dei is understood to extend beyond a mere non-repugnance to God’s action. It is one of the key characteristics of the human spirit as oriented beyond itself.

The neo-scholastic account of Cajetan suggested that the obediential faculty in man referred to a “passive non-repugnance to miraculous change”.152 For the human person, “supernatural elevation” is merely “not repugnant to human nature”, in contrast to the view that the human has a natural desire for the supernatural.153 Consistent with a neo-scholastic account of obediential potency, Pieper affirms that the human creature can be subject to God’s intervention. The power to receive God’s action in the soul belongs to the human person by nature as creature. As creature, the human being constantly receives its “being and essence from the divine Source and Creator” and is “never to be finally completed”.154 Dependent on God, the creature is ever open to a “new intervention by God”, either in the form of grace or revelation for the human being.155 For Pieper, the term potentia oboedientialis of the creature refers therefore to a natural, ontological state of openness to divine intervention.

Arguably, Pieper’s understanding of obediential potency extends beyond Cajetan. He uses language redolent of natural desire (4.3.1). The human spirit’s orientation to the

supernatural depends first of all on a natural capacity to receive the supernatural (capax Dei) and the spirit’s immediate relationship to the Creator. In his treatment of the theological virtue of faith, Pieper argues that “the soul is by nature capable of receiving the ‘supernatural’ new life of grace (‘naturaliter anima est gratiae capax’).”\textsuperscript{156} The capacity to be able to believe or exercise charity is ‘natural’ to the human person even if the actual possession of faith or charity arises as a result of grace.\textsuperscript{157} Moreover, he recognises the unique nature of the mind as being immediately related to God and, in this way, ‘naturally’ oriented to him. For Pieper it is in the mind that the capacity of divine intervention is especially situated. Pieper observes that ‘mind’ in itself can be understood as “receptivity to Being”\textsuperscript{158} Although belonging to it by virtue of being a creature rather than as a consequence of its spirituality (which might suggest that Pieper confines the capacity for the supernatural to an obediential potency), the human being possesses a power “inherent to the human mind by nature” to comprehend God’s revelation and the supernatural, which extends beyond an “openness to… ‘natural’ revelation of God in the created order”.\textsuperscript{159} Pieper argues that this inherent power is natural to the human person, and stems from mentality being immediatum ordinem ad Deum, in an unmediated “ontological openness” to God.\textsuperscript{160} Rational creatures possess an innate receptivity to God’s supernatural action.

4.3.5 Dialogical Immortality as Natural Desire

Ratzinger develops the idea of the capax Dei and refers, in a more personalist and less conceptualist manner, to the immediate relationship between the human person and God. He develops a dialogical conception of immortality, in which the human person is called in his nature to have a relationship with God. A unitary and not


\textsuperscript{157} Pieper, \textit{Faith, Hope, Love}, 63 citing Aquinas, \textit{Summa Theologiae} I, II, 113, 10. Recognising the contingency of revelation, Pieper does not ‘naturalise’ the supernatural in arguing that belief is somehow natural. Refer below (4.3.8) to the distinction he emphasises between intellectus and ratio. Arguably, his work parallels the Lubacian understanding of the paradoxical nature of natural desire, in which the reception of grace can be simultaneously ‘natural’ and supernatural.

\textsuperscript{158} Pieper, \textit{Faith, Hope, Love}, 61.

\textsuperscript{159} Pieper, \textit{Faith, Hope, Love}, 61-63 (quotations on 61, 62).

\textsuperscript{160} Pieper, \textit{Faith, Hope, Love}, 63n16 citing Aquinas, \textit{Summa Theologiae}, II-II, 2, 3. That article discusses that the “created rational nature alone is immediately subordinate to God” (translation of Fathers of the English Dominican Province).
extrinsic reading of the nature-grace relationship, a picture of the human spirit as oriented beyond itself, follows.

For Ratzinger, the possessor of a spiritual nature is proximately related to the Creator. He links the capability to know and reply to God to the possession of “a spiritual, immortal soul”. Preferring to use “historical, actual language” over such “substantialist language”, the early Ratzinger nevertheless sees no opposition between what it connotes and seeks to elaborate its “concrete meaning”. The human possession of a soul simply signifies that God has “willed, known and loved” the human person in a “special way”. The human person has a “special dependence of being” on God and has been created by him “in a more specific, more direct way”. The human creature does not exist in the same mode as other creatures, a natural mode “that ‘is there’” subsisting in a determined way and which does not relate directly in consciousness or cognitive capacity to God. Rather, the human creature “has the ability to be immediately in relation to God”. As a spiritual creature, he can think of God and respond to him by addressing him as Thou in eternity. He is thereby “opened onto transcendence”. Unique to the human person is therefore that God calls him “to an eternal dialogue” and has been given the capacity to be “God’s partner in a dialogue”. The capax Dei relates thus to human persons’ “capacity for truth and their call to freedom”. Using biblical language, Ratzinger presents a dialogical personalism in which the human person, by nature, has a supernatural vocation to relationship with God, a relationship predicated on call and response. The call in a sense supersedes the order of created nature, and extends beyond the mere non-repugnance to God’s action of the obediential potency shared by all creatures.

Ratzinger relates his dialogic personalism to a Thomistic hylomorphism. He interprets the Thomistic account of the soul in light of the human person’s unique and natural dialogic capacity to know and enter into communion with God. Ratzinger connects Thomas’s concept of the soul to the latter’s “account of the dynamic movement of all creation towards God”.\textsuperscript{170} The soul belongs completely “to the material world, yet also goes beyond this world in going beyond itself”.\textsuperscript{171} He argues thus that when the human person is conceived as \textit{anima forma corporis}, his “relationship to God” is seen not simply as “some optional pleasurable diversion for the intellect” but “express[es] the core of his very essence”.\textsuperscript{172} In other words, the human person’s orientation to relationship with God is more than a simple intellectual curiosity to know the First Cause. The human person is instead the “creature…for whom the vision of God is \textit{part and parcel} of his very being”.\textsuperscript{173} As the human person can grasp the “truth in its most comprehensive meaning, it also belongs \textit{intrinsically to his being} to participate in life”.\textsuperscript{174} The human person’s relationality to God for Ratzinger is not accidental to the human person such that he can exist independently of God, but “is deepest in man’s being”.\textsuperscript{175} Significantly, Ratzinger identifies this capacity as consisting of “what we call ‘soul’”.\textsuperscript{176} To possess an immortal soul means the human person is open to relationship to God. The ability for relationship with God and a supernatural vocation for knowledge of truth in its ultimate significance (the beatific vision) constitute the soul and are innate to a description of the human person.

The immortality that belongs to the human person by nature is, by being constituted as relatedness to God, closely related to the order of grace. The capacity to ‘awaken’

\textsuperscript{170} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 153. Ratzinger earlier argues that the concept of soul “found its final and definitive form only in the work of Thomas Aquinas”: \textit{Eschatology}, 148.

\textsuperscript{171} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 153.

\textsuperscript{172} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 154, “Belief in Creation and the Theory of Evolution,” 142. Healy discusses the passage in \textit{Eschatology} in the context of seeking to reconcile, to a degree, the Neo-Thomist and Lubacian account of ‘penultimate end’, while arguing that this end remains relative to the supernatural such that “the autonomy of nature is creaturely dependence on the Creator”; “Henri de Lubac on Nature and Grace,” 563 (emphasis in original). Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 154-155 is quoted at 546n26.

\textsuperscript{173} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 154 (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{174} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 154-155 (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{175} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 155.

\textsuperscript{176} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 155.
(after death) into dialogical relationship with God is possessed by “every” person.\textsuperscript{177} The immortality of the human person is therefore “not some secondary ‘supernatural’ addition” but belongs to “man as man”.\textsuperscript{178} Immortality and an eternal dialogue of love with God is not the “special destiny for the pious” but inheres in every human \textit{qua} human.\textsuperscript{179} Moreover, because the capacity for dialogue with God is natural to every man, it is impossible to “make a neat distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’”.\textsuperscript{180} Ratzinger argues that there is a “smooth transition” between the “basic dialogue” to which the human being is called in being created and “the dialogue of grace known as Jesus Christ”.\textsuperscript{181} Christ is, after all, the “second Adam” which fulfils the “infinite longing” of the first Adam, who possessed a created human nature.\textsuperscript{182} Ratzinger places therefore human nature within a supernatural context ordered to grace in Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{183} That human nature is created for dialogue with God and that there is a ‘smooth transition’ between ‘natural’ dialogue with God, as effected in the grace of Christ, evidences a unitary relationship between nature and grace, in which human nature is ordered intrinsically to the supernatural.

\textbf{4.3.6 Human Spiritual Nature as Surpassing the Natural Order}

The human person possesses a ‘nature’ ordered to dialogue with God, which constitutes the human as spirit having a vocation ‘beyond itself’. As such, he is situated uniquely in the order of creation. As constitutively immortal and called into dialogue with God, the human spirit subsists in an order between mere ‘nature’ and God. In an early essay, Ratzinger describes thus the human rational spirit as existing in the order of freedom, in the space ‘between’ God and nature. According to Bonaventure’s voluntaristic concept of the nature-grace relationship, which Ratzinger affirmatively explores in an early essay, the human will exists “as a separate middle order between mere nature and God’s own freedom”.\textsuperscript{184} In Ratzinger

\textsuperscript{177} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 354.
\textsuperscript{178} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 354, 355, c.f. 349-350 (emphasis in original).
\textsuperscript{179} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 355.
\textsuperscript{180} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 356.
\textsuperscript{181} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 356.
\textsuperscript{182} Ratzinger, \textit{Introduction to Christianity}, 356.
\textsuperscript{183} As Ratzinger’s conception of the nature-grace relationship rests on a concept of immortality that is indebted in some respects at least to Pieper, we can speculate that Pieper also shares this intrinsicist understanding of nature-grace.
\textsuperscript{184} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 151.
also present is the idea of the human person as bridge-maker, existing – to use a phrase of Balthasar – “on the border between the [natural and supernatural] orders”.\textsuperscript{185} The character of personhood is such that it occupies a “separate order” between nature and “God’s revelatory actions”, that is, grace.\textsuperscript{186} As spirit, the human person exists on the plane of freedom between the merely natural and God.

Ratzinger shares with de Lubac a suspicion of the concept of pure nature. Intrinsic to the human soul is that it “surpasses pure nature”.\textsuperscript{187} Ratzinger argues that a “merely natural soul is inconceivable”.\textsuperscript{188} According to Ratzinger’s interpretation of Bonaventure, “the human soul is entirely beyond the realm of mere nature” and, importantly, “cannot subsist in itself alone”.\textsuperscript{189} Unlike a nature that by Aristotelian definition operates according to its own principles or powers, a soul is preserved by the “supernatural” in “a freely given grace”, a reality greater than and above itself.\textsuperscript{190} Ratzinger argues, moreover, that such preservation does not deny the gratuity of grace because, contrary to “naturalism”, the “category of the spirit is precisely freedom”.\textsuperscript{191} Rather, the soul is in a sense ‘always-already’ graced as belonging to the spiritual order of freedom.

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\textsuperscript{185} Balthasar, \textit{Theology of Barth}, 268; see also 296. C.f. Rowland’s characterisation of Pieper and Ratzinger’s corresponding focus regarding the faith-reason relationship on “the border zones between philosophy and theology”, \textit{Guide}, 16 (c.f. n80 of the Introduction). In 3.5.4, this idea of ‘bridge’ was seen to be important to Thomas’s idea of \textit{exitus-redivitius}.

\textsuperscript{186} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 152.

\textsuperscript{187} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 153. Reference to the spirit being ‘always-already’ graced does not imply necessarily that Rahner and Ratzinger’s views of the supernatural coincide. Although the natural desire for God may be described as a calling, or the ‘first grace’, Ratzinger does not naturalise grace. As Chapter 5 will argue, Ratzinger considers that nature needs the transformation of the Cross for fulfilment. Moreover, as we will see, Ratzinger’s insistence on the importance of freedom in considering the nature-grace relationship is the basis for his critique of Rahner’s view of that relationship: 5.5.2.

\textsuperscript{188} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 153.

\textsuperscript{189} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 153. According to Wood, \textit{Restless Heart}, 31, Bonaventure “taught that our natural desire tends \textit{beyond the limits} of our nature towards its complete perfection in the vision of God” (emphasis added); in this he contrasted with Albert the Great, who considered the object of natural desire to be “analogical knowledge of God as first cause”.

\textsuperscript{190} C.f. John W Carlson, \textit{Words of Wisdom: A Philosophical Dictionary for the Perennial Tradition} (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), definition (3) of ‘nature’, 184. Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 153. C.f. Rowland, \textit{Guide}, 85 quoting Healy’s comment that Ratzinger’s \textit{Eschatology} and its reading of Thomas’s “theology of creation” (see n172 above) represents a “complete transformation of Aristotelianism”. The fact that the spirit is in this way ‘supernatural’ also makes description of it difficult. The human spirit, as constitutive of the person, and in that way ‘natural’ belongs to the level of mystery.

\textsuperscript{191} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 153.
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The spiritual as related to God in the order of freedom is intrinsic to the mode of the existence of the human person. Unless “preserved immediately by God” in “every moment”, the person could not “exist properly”.¹⁹² The human soul “can exist only in the manner of dialogue and freedom”.¹⁹³ God has freely created the human person and has given him, as a call to human freedom, the vocation “to surpass himself”.¹⁹⁴ A vocation for the spirit to go ‘beyond itself’ allows it to be truly authentic and relates to Ratzinger’s idea that the soul is immortal by virtue of being called to dialogue with the Thou of God.¹⁹⁵ Possessing a spiritual nature, the human person is fundamentally upheld by, and turned as it were toward God.

According to Ratzinger’s theological anthropology, human spiritual ‘nature’ has an intrinsic ordination to grace. He argues that “from God’s perspective…in the end all nature is ‘grace’”.¹⁹⁶ In reference to the axiom ‘gratia praesupponit naturam’ Ratzinger suggests that ‘naturam’ refers to a particular human person “in his humanness”, that is, in what constitutes his humanity.¹⁹⁷ Importantly, the naturam is the reference point “for the grace event”.¹⁹⁸ As its own entity, nature refers to a subject, which is “the formal capacity to become the bearer of qualities and the goal of actions”.¹⁹⁹ Human nature is conceived as being congenitally open to the action of the supernatural and the subject of divine activity. Relativity to the divine is constitutive of the spirit and to be human is to be the possible subject of grace. Nowhere, seemingly, is there room for a residual concept of pure nature.

Ratzinger does not use the term ‘person’ in his early essay on nature and grace. Relevant however to the conception of the human spirit as the possible recipient of grace is his idea that what constitutes ‘personhood’ is a particular receptivity and relationality to divine activity. For Ratzinger, a human being is a personal subject

¹⁹⁶ Ratzinger, “Gratia Praesupponit Naturam,” 154. Ratzinger’s use of the phrase ‘from God’s perspective’ echoes Balthasar’s critique of Rahner’s insistence on the use of the concept of pure nature as a residual concept: 4.2.2.
¹⁹⁹ Ratzinger, “Gratia Praesupponit Naturam,” 150. Implicit here, arguably, is a kind Lafossian view of the relativity of the spirit. The rational creature as such need not be in relationship with God but is called to that, a call that is constitutive of the nature of the soul as it has in fact been created. C.f. n1 above.
capable of dialogue and relationship with the Creator.\textsuperscript{200} Analogous to the Divine Persons, each of whom is “not a substance” closed in on itself, but are “complete relativity”, the human person is intrinsically open to relationship.\textsuperscript{201} For Ratzinger, the human person only becomes a ‘self’ to the extent he is “open to all being, in its wholeness and in its Ground”.\textsuperscript{202} Essential to the nature of spirit is a reflexive “openness, [and] relatedness to the whole”, to all that is.\textsuperscript{203} Personality, for Ratzinger, is constituted by relationship to the Divine as the ground of being. Relationality enables the human person to be oriented ‘beyond itself’. The purpose of our existence is to say, in Ratzinger’s words, “Thou to God in eternity”.\textsuperscript{204} The human person is created as a subject, an ‘I’, who can address the subject, ‘Thou’, person to person. The capacity to address God on personal terms stems from our nature as spirit. The spirit, by nature, “is to put itself in relation…to see itself and the other”.\textsuperscript{205} The spirit has the natural capacity to take cognisance of another as conscious subject. Human nature is the personal capacity to receive and, in receiving, relate back ‘beyond itself’.

A key component of personhood and the spiritual nature of the human person is therefore possession of the fundamental capacity and inclination to reach ‘beyond-itself’, ultimately to a knowledge of and participation in a higher principle of being. The essential nature of the spirit is to reach fulfilment only by “going away from itself”.\textsuperscript{206} The human spirit does not subsist in itself. It not simply “is” (as a self-enclosed nature) but “reaches beyond itself” and in so doing, comes “to itself”.\textsuperscript{207}
Self-possession comes from communion with the other. The human spirit is not meant to be left alone (c.f. Gen 2:18). It is to depart from itself, by knowing itself and existence generally, and “the wholly other, the transcendent God”208. What constitutes spirit qua spirit is that it exists as “being related beyond oneself”.209 Intrinsic to human existence is a call to go beyond itself.

4.3.7 Eros and the Supernatural

Another key element of the human spirit as directed ‘beyond itself’ and linked to its unique situation in the realm of freedom is its ecstatic constitution. The natural desire for God involves the whole person’s movement towards God and carries an ‘erotic’ dimension. According to Milbank the natural desire for knowledge of God as the source of all things is part of the “general ontological and erotic drawing back of all creatures towards God”.210 The term ‘eros’ in this context carries overtones of sexuality but refers more deeply to the longing for happiness that arises when the human person is touched by the divine and drawn out of himself.

Erotic love involves the human person coming out from himself, transcending contingency and ascending to God. Ratzinger describes ecstasy as the “fundamental” or “truly basic law of human existence”.211 Love is an ecstatic “journey”, which involves an “ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving”, leading to genuine discovery of self and God.212 An ‘exodus’ patterned on Christ involves the human person going “out from himself”, losing himself and in that way finding himself (Mt 10:39).213 In a passage directly indebted to Pieper, Ratzinger argues that the experience of encountering beauty is a

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208 Ratzinger, “Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology,” 115.
210 Milbank, Suspended Middle, 32-33.
211 Ratzinger, “Concerning the Nature of the Person in Theology,” 115. Principles of Catholic Theology, 189. This ‘law’ relates also to soteriology, which will be discussed in at 5.4.4.
212 Benedict, Deus Caritas Est, n6.
“salutary emotional shock” that draws the person out of himself.\textsuperscript{214} Purified, \textit{eros} involves thus “an ascent in ‘ecstasy’ towards the Divine” and provides “a certain foretaste of the pinnacle of our existence, of that beatitude for which our whole being yearns”.\textsuperscript{215} Erotic experience of this sort is directly related to the supernatural happiness that is the human person’s end. For Ratzinger, erotic “love promises infinity, eternity”.\textsuperscript{216} It “awakens man to his ultimate destiny”.\textsuperscript{217} In love’s ascent, erotic love promises and points to its “definitive goal”, namely an eternal, indestructible love.\textsuperscript{218} In Pieper’s words, love’s goal is the “great banquet” at which the soul contemplates “true Being”.\textsuperscript{219} Grounded in the natural experience of the human person’s encounter with beauty, \textit{eros} points to a fulfilment in the eternal vision of God.

Reference to Pieper’s work on \textit{eros} provides philosophical support to Ratzinger’s view of the spirit as having as ‘erotic’ longing for the divine grounded in its nature. According to Pieper’s interpretation of Plato’s \textit{Phaedrus}, the soul’s erotic ascent to God depends upon its natural capacity to do so and the unique immortal and rational character of the soul. Pieper argues that in the “overpowering emotion” experienced in \textit{eros}, the human person is taken out of the present and “becomes unborn and imperishable”, with a desire that can only be satiated with “the Whole, the Totality of being, truth, goodness, beauty”.\textsuperscript{220} He argues that “the soul has the power to ascend to the place of the gods”.\textsuperscript{221} Nevertheless this capacity in turn depends upon the strength offered by “the nearness of the divine” to the soul.\textsuperscript{222} The human soul shares

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{216} Benedict, \textit{Deus Caritas Est}, n5.
\bibitem{217} Ratzinger, \textit{On the Way to Jesus Christ}, 35. Pope Benedict XVI, “Address at Meeting with Representatives of the World of Culture,” 12 September 2008: “The Word which opens the path of that search, and is to be identified with this path, is a shared word. True, it pierces every individual to the heart (cf. Acts 2:37). Gregory the Great describes this as a sharp stabbing pain, which tears open our sleeping soul and awakens us, making us attentive to the essential reality, to God (cf. Leclercq, p. 35).” \url{https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080912_parigi-cultura.html}, last accessed, 8 August 2020.
\bibitem{218} Benedict, \textit{Deus Caritas Est}, n6.
\bibitem{219} Pieper, \textit{Enthusiasm and Divine Madness}, 80.
\bibitem{220} Pieper, \textit{Enthusiasm and Divine Madness}, 76.
\bibitem{221} Pieper, \textit{Enthusiasm and Divine Madness}, 80.
\bibitem{222} Pieper, \textit{Enthusiasm and Divine Madness}, 80.
\end{thebibliography}

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with God, a spiritual character and a non-corporeal “breath of life”. \(^{223}\) The soul is immortal and it is “immediately ‘created’” by God and, in a sense, “unborn”.\(^{224}\) It does not have a genetic origin and come into existence as the product of natural growth, but springs directly into existence at the hands of God. In a sense, the soul is “both ‘divine and human’”.\(^{225}\) It is this immediate relationship to God that gives the human creature its unique character and erotic capacity for the divine. Thus, Pieper’s conception of *eros* echoes Ratzinger’s notion of the spirit as immediately related to God and in an order surpassing mere nature.

The spirit desires and longs for fulfilment. The vocation given to the human person “to surpass himself” is entailed in the desire for beatitude, quickened and heightened in ecstasy. In the experience of *eros*, the human person has “a longing so great that it surpasses human nature”, giving an impetus to achieve insight “beyond human thought”.\(^{226}\) The human spirit’s orientation ‘beyond itself’ is the ecstatic constitution of the human person and is itself the desire for beatitude.

### 4.3.8 The Significance of the Ratio-Intellectus Distinction

Pieper’s analysis of the distinction between *ratio* and *intellectus* provides further insight into Ratzinger’s conception of the human spirit as oriented ‘beyond itself’. It also highlights the importance of the notion of ‘gift’ to understanding human supernatural fulfilment. It underscores the unitary character of the nature-grace relationship, in which the spirit is elevated beyond itself in a manner proper to its nature.

An understanding of the spirit as being oriented ‘beyond itself’ animates Pieper’s conception of the human mind, which is evident in his discussion of *ratio* and *intellectus*. In elaborating how the human mind, can be elevated beyond its natural power to engage in discursive thought, Pieper sought to resurrect the medieval

\(^{223}\) Pieper, *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, 73.

\(^{224}\) Pieper, *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, 74 (emphasis in original). The ‘unborn’ character of the soul relates to Ratzinger’s analysis of it as belonging in the realm of freedom between nature and grace: 4.3.6.

\(^{225}\) Pieper, *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, 73-74 (quotation on 73).

distinction drawn between these intellective faculties. He considers that human knowing engages two faculties, which give the human mind two corresponding layers of knowledge. The first (ratio) follows from human intellectual effort and the second (intellectus) comes in the form of a gift. The two layers of knowledge can be said generally to correspond to the orders of nature and grace. Pieper’s understanding of their interplay reflects an important dynamic in the nature-grace relationship, namely that it is properly human for the mind or spirit to be elevated ‘beyond itself’, even as that elevation remains an extension beyond what is merely natural.²²⁷

According to Pieper, modernity and especially Kant lost sight of the important distinction between ratio and intellectus in their reduction of thought to ratio, discursive reasoning. Necessarily, the mind’s capacity to know the whole was overlooked. In the context of defending the primacy of leisure to the formation of culture, Pieper mentions Aristotle’s Metaphysics, which claims that “[b]y nature, all men long to know”.²²⁸ What is desired to be known is however not just technical knowledge the result of discursive reasoning. Rather, knowledge of the whole and that which transcends creation is desired, precisely the knowledge that Ratzinger considers the spirit’s unique object (4.3.5).

Intellectus makes possible vision of the whole. It gives to the human mind the power of simplex intuitus, “simply looking” at the reality confronting it.²²⁹ To that capacity, “truth presents itself as a landscape presents itself to the eye”.²³⁰ Intellectus gives “direct intuition”, and is the contemplative perception of the mind’s object, such that the mind “rests in it”.²³¹ Intuition is thus “the perfect form of knowledge” because it

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²²⁷ More could be said about Pieper’s epistemology. The possible connection between modernity’s focus on ratio and Baroque scholasticism’s ‘conceptualist route to reality’ is a suggestive avenue of research: c.f. Murphy, “Keep it Real,” quoted above in n161. The focus here is on what it says about the nature-grace relationship.


²²⁹ Pieper, Leisure, the Basis of Culture, 11; on Pieper’s treatment of Kant in this context see 13-16.

²³⁰ Pieper, Leisure, the Basis of Culture, 11.

²³¹ Pieper, Happiness and Contemplation, 74, discussed in Rik Van Nieuwenhove, “Art, contemplation and intellectus: Aquinas and Gadamer in conversation,” in Art and Mysticism: Interfaces in the Medieval and Modern
gives knowledge of what is present.\textsuperscript{232} The capacity of \textit{intellectus} is therefore distinct from \textit{ratio}, the discursive nature of which concerns “knowledge of what is absent”.\textsuperscript{233} \textit{Ratio} refers to the human intellectual development of thought from premises, based on observation and logic, whereas \textit{intellectus} is concerned simply with the perception of reality as such. For Pieper, human knowing consists of not merely the intellectual ‘work’ of abstract thinking, but also the receptive capacity to receive an overall vision of truth and reality.

Pieper’s treatment of the distinction between \textit{ratio} and \textit{intellectus} supplements treatment of Ratzinger’s view of the human spirit as oriented ‘beyond itself’ to a grasp of ‘truth in its most comprehensive meaning’ (4.3.5). It suggests a picture of the nature-grace relationship in which what is humanly natural is extended and elevated into a supernatural realm. Following the “ancients”, Pieper suggests that \textit{ratio} is “the essentially human element of knowing”.\textsuperscript{234} Strictly human or ‘natural’ cognition, significant though it is, is confined to discursive reasoning. \textit{Intellectus}, in contrast, relates to “what surpasses human limits”.\textsuperscript{235} Tellingly, even if \textit{intellectus} is a “super-human” power, this capacity “nevertheless does belong to man”.\textsuperscript{236} Paradoxically the “knowing power of human nature” is not exhausted by the discursive thinking proper to human rationality. Instead “it is essential to the human person to reach beyond the province of the human and into the order of angels, the truly intellectual beings”.\textsuperscript{237} In the \textit{intellectus}, the human person partakes in the angels’ vision of spiritual reality. Nevertheless, such participation remains “truly human” because it is “the highest fulfilment of what it is to be human”, even if it involves “receptive seeing”, which transcends what is human as such.\textsuperscript{238} The vision involved in the \textit{intellectus} is “\textit{non proprie humana, sed superhumana}”.\textsuperscript{239}

\begin{itemize}
\item Pieper, \textit{Happiness and Contemplation}, 74.
\item Pieper, \textit{Happiness and Contemplation}, 74.
\item Pieper, \textit{Leisure, the Basis of Culture}, 12.
\item Pieper, \textit{Leisure, the Basis of Culture}, 12.
\item Pieper, \textit{Leisure, the Basis of Culture}, 12.
\item Pieper, \textit{Leisure, the Basis of Culture}, 13 quoting Aquinas, \textit{Quaestio disputata de virtutibus cardinalibus}, 1.
\end{itemize}
‘super-human’ transcends what is solely and “essentially human”.

It remains essentially human for the mind to be elevated beyond what it can reason for itself, even if capacity for that elevation is proper to humanity. Rationality as such does not necessarily lead to knowledge of the whole but human nature nevertheless has been created to extend ‘beyond itself’ to such knowledge.

The intellective process in which the human person’s mind is taken out of itself into a vision of spiritual reality relates to the natural desire. The human person possesses a capax universi, a capacity “to comprehend the sum total of existing things”, which extends beyond “normal” technical knowledge and proficiency. The human spirit is capable of receiving vision of the entirety of being, including its ground. Common with other spiritual beings, the human mind “is by its very nature a receptacle for the whole of reality”. Pieper does not simply refer to created reality, but the “undiminished totality of being”, which necessarily includes God. The end of human existence entails a “seeing awareness of the divine ground of the universe”. The vision of God, the source of all being, is that for which the human mind is made and to which it is open.

Pieper’s analysis of the ratio-intellectus distinction serves therefore as a distinct expression of the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist view of the supernatural, and supplements Ratzinger’s view of the human spirit as oriented to fulfilment ‘beyond itself’. It reveals an important feature of the human spirit. Elevation into the ‘seeing’ of the angelic orders is paradoxically above human nature but entirely in accordance with it. Analogous to the organic connection Ratzinger detects between the spirit’s

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240 Pieper, Leisure, the Basis of Culture, 12.
241 Arguably, in this regard, Pieper is aligned with Lafosse: see above n1.
242 Pieper, Leisure, the Basis of Culture, 24.
244 Pieper, “Business of Teaching,” 152. Later in this essay (156-157), he quotes St Augustine’s comment, “No one should claim to be a teacher if he does not speak of God”. Earlier, he had claimed that the teaching task involves the presentation of the “whole of reality to the gaze of the student and listener” (148). Considered syllogistically, if the task of teaching is to present the whole of reality to the student’s mind, and the teacher must, if he is properly to be considered a teacher, speak of God, it is clear that the whole of reality includes God.
245 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 92; Pieper, In Tune with the World, 15.
natural capacity to enter into dialogue with God and the ‘dialogue of grace’ made possible in Christ (4.3.5.), there is in Pieper a ‘smooth transition’ between the natural inclination of the mind to a vision of the whole and its reception as gift (4.3.9). The *intellectus* is connected to the ‘openness, relatedness to the whole’ that Ratzinger considers to be intrinsic to the nature of spirit (4.3.6). Ratzinger’s understanding of this openness to the whole accords thus with Pieper’s conception of the human mind’s orientation beyond itself, which is grounded in a simultaneous capacity to comprehend the whole and dependence on a superhuman elevation to achieve such vision.

### 4.3.9 Nature and Fulfilment in the Context of Gift

A significant feature of Ratzinger’s view of the human person is revealed in discussion of the distinction between *ratio* and *intellectus* which has implications for conceiving the nature-grace relationship. Underlying Pieper and Ratzinger’s notions of the human mind’s capacity to reach ‘beyond itself’ is the notion that gift is required for the mind (and the human person) to reach its full knowing capacity. Pieper and Ratzinger’s view of human nature and the achievement of its end are therefore distinct from various strains of modernity’s view that the human end and eschatological fulfilment can be achieved according to human rationality (c.f. 1.2.1). Instead, human fulfilment ultimately comes as the result of gift.

Knowing in the fullest sense, that is, as the result of the operation of *intellectus*, does not arise from effort. It intrinsically belongs to the realm of gift. Pieper argues that knowledge does not consist “in the effort of thought as such” but in the grasping and discovering of reality.\(^{246}\) Even if intellectual effort might be a pre-condition for obtaining insight, the “lightening-like insight, true insight” itself is not the product of thought but “comes to one like a gift”.\(^{247}\) Contemplation is intrinsically connected to play (leisure), which are juxtaposed against a Kantian conception of “intellectual

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\(^{246}\) Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, 18.

\(^{247}\) Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, 18-19 (quotation on 18).
work”. Ratzinger likewise, but from a more specifically Augustinian perspective, considers cognition ultimately to operate in the realm of gift:

_In every cognitive process, truth is not something we produce, it is always found, or better, received. Truth, like love, ‘is neither planned nor willed, but somehow imposes itself upon human beings’._

Authentic insight comes from contemplative receptivity and is not itself the product of human rational activity.

Pieper connects his claims regarding the _intellectus_’s capacity to receive vision of the truth to a view of creation as subsisting in the context of gift. The fundament of Christian existence is that “life is based on the reality of ‘Grace’”, that the Holy Spirit is “Gift” and that God’s Justice is grounded in “Love”. All that is achieved or claimed by the human mind rests on the prior reality “that what is first is always something received”, a reality exceeding any claims of justice and which is entirely gratuitous. Akin to hope and charity, which “[transcend] every law of justice”, truth is a “gift” and “greater than we are”. As Ratzinger argues, “every good thing is a gift on loan from [God]” and that “Everything is grace”. Knowledge of the truth in its fullness is received from outside ourselves and as transcending natural capacity in the manner of a gift.

An understanding of creation as itself a grace reveals an important element of the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist, and therefore Ratzinger’s, view of the supernatural.

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248 Pieper, _Leisure, the Basis of Culture_, 19. C.f. Rik Van Nieuwenhove, “Art, contemplation and _intellectus_”.
249 Benedict, _Caritas in Veritate_, n34 quoting his _Deus Caritas Est_, n3. The author is indebted to Tracey Rowland for pointing out this paragraph, which goes to the heart of Ratzinger’s (and Pieper’s) conception of the nature-grace relationship. See Rowland, _Catholic Theology_, 103 which quotes the same passage and also points out the Augustinian nature of Ratzinger’s epistemology. See also her “Faith, Reason and Love” and _Guide_, 84.
250 Pieper, _Leisure, the Basis of Culture_, 20 citing Aquinas, _Summa contra gentiles_, IV, 23, _Summa Theologicae_, I, 38, 2 and I, 21, 4.
251 Pieper, _Leisure, the Basis of Culture_, 20.
252 Benedict, _Caritas in Veritate_, n34 citing St Augustine, _De libero arbitrio_, II, 3, 8ff. Quoted also in at 2.2.1.
253 Ratzinger, _Faith and Politics_, 25, _Introduction to Christianity_, 280. This relates to St Thérèse of Lisieux’s famous insight that “Everything is a grace”: _St Thérèse of Lisieux, Her Last Conversations_ (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1977) 57; c.f. the conclusion to Georges Bernanos, _The Diary of a Country Priest_, 2nd edition, trans. Pamela Morris (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2002), 298: “Grace is everywhere,” which is mentioned in _Introduction to Christianity_.

That the whole of truth itself is imparted to the mind via gift supports the claim that the object of the innate desire for beatitude is beyond the control of the person desiring it. That a “creature’s power is not as great as its desire”, dictates that the end desired is beyond our natural power to obtain.\textsuperscript{254} A creature \textit{qua} creature cannot make itself God, and is only ‘made so’ through participation in the divine nature received as a gift (5). For Ratzinger, the human person’s “powers are insufficient to lift him up to God”.\textsuperscript{255} Earlier, Pieper’s quotation of Aquinas’s comment that the very desire for happiness is not subject to human control was noted. Even more beyond human capacity is the fulfilment of that desire. He argues thus that happiness comes as a gift and that “we are not the forgers of our own felicity”.\textsuperscript{256} Even if the human person can “establish, by his own effort, a ‘claim’ to the happy outcome of his pilgrimage” with “meritorious action”, the claim rests on the “pre-existence” of something unmerited.\textsuperscript{257} Any ‘claim’ and ‘merit’ to fulfilment are not absolute and depend upon a prior unmerited conferral of a nature which is oriented to a fulfilment that humans “cannot bring about themselves”.\textsuperscript{258} Human fulfilment is received as a gift and is not the product of human effort.

The human person thus finds his happiness outside himself. For Pieper, following Aquinas, an agent outside of the soul produces its happiness and the soul must therefore look “elsewhere” for fulfilment.\textsuperscript{259} Ratzinger likewise contends that the human person’s “center of gravity” is outside himself, in the God who calls him in his nature “to go out of itself in order to find itself”.\textsuperscript{260} Human nature being related beyond itself to an external source of fulfilment necessitates that what is sought is

\textsuperscript{254} This is an expression of a saint’s that captures the essence of the paradoxical position in which the rational spirit finds itself: St Josemaria, \textit{Christ is Passing By}, 195 (83)
\textsuperscript{256} Pieper, \textit{Happiness and Contemplation}, 20 quoting \textit{Summa Theologiae}, I, 82, 1 ad 3 and 25 (quotation on 25).
\textsuperscript{257} Pieper, \textit{Faith, Hope, Love}, 93-94 (quotations on 93).
\textsuperscript{258} Pieper, \textit{Hope and History}, 84, quoted in Chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{260} Rowland, “Ratzinger on the Timelessness of Truth,” 255 quoting Ratzinger, \textit{Principles of Catholic Theology}, 171. C.f. the theme in creation of a lower nature being elevated into a higher order of being: Thomas discusses the effect of the “alien” or external moon on the oceans, which are “naturally tidal” because of this effect: Milbank, \textit{Suspended Middle}, 106-107 citing \textit{Summa Contra Gentiles}, III, 147 [3] [6]; \textit{In Rom.} Chap II, lect. 3; Balthasar, \textit{Theology of Barth}, 282n27 citing \textit{Summa Theologiae} II-II, 2, 3.
beyond its capacity and cannot be earned. In the context of an anterior graced creation, beatitude results from grace.

4.3.10 Conclusion

That the supernatural vocation of the human person is intrinsic to a description of him means that his nature is oriented ‘beyond itself’. The notion of ‘beyond itself’ is fundamental to Ratzinger’s conception of the rational spirit and connects him closely to an Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of nature and grace. His language aligns with both de Lubac and Balthasar, who use the phrase ‘beyond itself’ to describe the rational spirit’s directedness to a reality that surpasses its own powers (4.2). Ratzinger considers that it is constitutive of the human spirit to reach to a reality beyond its own nature. He conceives the human spirit as possessing an innate, ‘natural’ capacity for dialogue with God, on which immortality rests. The natural desire for God extends beyond a mere velleity and obediential potency for God but goes to the essence of the human spirit as constitutively, reflexively and erotically oriented to union with God. The human mind is paradoxically made for knowledge of God, even if such knowledge is beyond purely natural human intellectual capabilities. The superhuman knowledge that is the object of the intellectus is received as gift. Beatitude comes from a source outside the human person, even as a creaturely metaphysics shows the creature to have an intrinsic desire to be.

4.4 The Supernatural, Metaphysics and Hope

The natural desire at the heart of every human person is for eternal life, for immortality, for indestructible happiness and love. It is therefore intrinsically connected to Pieper’s and Ratzinger’s idea of eternal life as the object of human hope. Fundamental hope, as oriented to eternal life, bliss or happiness in God and not merely to the attainment of inner-worldly goods, is grounded in the human person’s innate capacity and desire for eternity. The human person’s constitutive orientation to participation in the infinite matches the orientation of authentic hope, fulfilment of which is its object (2.3).
The appreciation that hope’s object is beyond human control is linked to the call inscribed in the human spirit for a supernatural end paradoxically elevated above human capacity. Pieper and Ratzinger’s accounts of hope as directed ultimately to an extra-historical object of eternal life given by God, thus depend upon the theological anthropology, outlined in 4.3, which recognises that the human person “can come to salvation and to himself only through the gift of love – through grace”.261 Hope as oriented to salvation consisting of the participation in eternal love and joy rests upon a view of rational, spiritual nature as oriented reflexively ‘beyond itself’ to the reception of an unmerited and uncontrollable gift. Ratzinger’s understanding of the hope-history relationship is thus underpinned by the positions he takes in fundamental theology concerning the nature-grace relationship.

Ratzinger’s conception of the hope-history relationship can also be supplemented by reference to an analogical metaphysics and its reference to an existential fulfilment in the plenitude of being, which relates to the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist view of natural desire. An analogical view of creation and the human person also distinguishes Pieper and Ratzinger from the theology of hope’s emphasis on futurity and the realisation of inner-historical goals. Grounded in an analogical dissonance in the mode of creaturely being vis-à-vis God’s being, the historical human creature is only ‘on the way’ to an eternal supra-historical participation in infinite being. Such participation can only be effected through the violent transposition of history outside of itself. Claims of inner-historical fulfilment are therefore relativised. The theologies of futurity arguably pay insufficient attention to the metaphysical dimension of hope by inordinately historicising it and exclusively focusing upon the ‘future’. The revelation that is communicated in sacred tradition, and the created nature that conditions and provides the content of the object of hope are paid scant heed.

4.4.1 Natural Desire and Hope

Pieper and Ratzinger’s understanding of hope is connected to the natural desire. The Augustinian conception of the restless human heart, an important component of the

261 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 280.
Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist tradition (4.3.1), is important to Ratzinger’s analysis of hope. Ratzinger argues that the anticipated happiness of the human person resists (or ought to resist) settling on any created good (Goethe) but yearns for an unknown happiness. Hope is grounded in this Augustinian restlessness for a happiness that only God can fulfil. The lack “at the heart of the human condition” means the human heart ultimately finds unsatisfying any experience the moment can give. It strives and hopes instead for a permanent happiness, which can only ever be anticipated on earth. The restless Augustinian heart finds unsatisfying any created good and hopes instead to rest in God.

The restlessness of the human heart recalls the ecstatic constitution of the human spirit (4.3.7) and is related to hope. Rowland observes that traditionally “hope [is especially related] to the memory and its experience of beauty”. Connecting the experience of eros to hope, Ratzinger suggests that “memory and longing” sets the person searching for fulfilment and that in the experience and memory of beauty, an “arrow of longing pierces… and wounds” the human person. Ratzinger cites Nicholas Cabasilas’s comment that the arrow of beauty originates in the beauty of the “Bridegroom himself”, which wounds the recipient, who thereby longs for the Bridegroom. Such longing constitutes an ‘erotic’ desire for God in Christ and quickens hope in the “fullness of satisfied desire”. Hope in fulfilment is nourished by the memory of beauty, which promises a fulfilment in eternal beauty.

The restless desire of the human heart is for an object surpassing human capability. Pieper and Ratzinger’s view of hope’s object as beyond human control aligns with de Lubac against a neo-scholastic reading of the supernatural. De Lubac argued that Suarez and the tradition following him “unduly restricted humanity’s innate, non-free desire to a naturally achievable end” (4.3.1). The natural non-free desire for

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262 Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 33. Ratzinger quotation of Goethe’s comment is recorded at 2.3.3.
265 Rowland, Guide, 71.
269 Wood, Restless Heart, 23.
happiness, which Pieper considers the human person to possess, matches the hope for unmerited beatitude, which Pieper and Ratzinger consider to be the object of fundamental hope (2.3; 4.3.1). Hope involves an object hoped for from “the very depths of our soul, with a much more vital, a truly unconquerable, intensity”. Moreover, it is a hope possessed by the human person “by nature” for a “fulfilment of just the kind they cannot bring about themselves”. The reception of happiness to which hope is oriented is “unforeseen” and “unforeseeable”. It comes to the human person as a surprise and is something unexpected. Consequently, like the reception of truth (4.3.9), “[h]appiness is essentially a gift”. A view of the human spirit as oriented ‘beyond itself’ thus accords with Pieper’s claim that “we cannot make ourselves happy”. Happiness is not under our control and involves gratitude, something by definition that “we do not owe…to ourselves”. Implicitly, gratitude is offered to the gift giver outside ourselves. Hope is grounded in the necessary desire for happiness inscribed in the human spirit for an end not ‘naturally achievable’. Hope’s object is the happiness that fulfils the innate desire for a supernatural beatitude, given at the hands of God.

By positing as intrinsic to the human person an inordinate and necessary desire for supernatural happiness beyond its control, Pieper and Ratzinger distinguish themselves from an immanentist epistemology, which undergirds inner-historical conceptions of hope (1.2.1). So too does an epistemology, which sees the reception of the fullness of truth as a gift, contrast with a Hegelian-Blochian conception of hope, in which what is hoped for is produced and manufactured. The object of the human desire and hope for fulfilment cannot be so manufactured due to an epistemological want. As a consequence of happiness being an uncontrolled gift, the production of happiness cannot be made “subject to planning and intention”. Although the possibility of perfect happiness is understood, the nature of that

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perfection remains “hidden” to the human mind.\textsuperscript{277} It is therefore impossible for the human mind to construct an object it cannot understand.

Pieper’s use of the language of ‘planning and intention’ with respect to the production of happiness, replicates his and Ratzinger’s critiques of immanentist understandings of hope. Against the view that the objects of hope can be manufactured according to rational planning, they argue that hope of its nature cannot be produced according to the dictates of human rationality (2). Tied into an epistemology that sees reason as “finite and feeble” and a view of hope’s objects as being beyond the control of the hoping person, are thus Pieper and Ratzinger’s views of the supernatural.\textsuperscript{278} They serve as a basis of the critique of the ‘strategies of hope’ in a Blochian conception of hope, which purports to subject the production of human hope to a laboratory. The human person cannot fabricate the object of his hope, because the beatitude for which he hopes is satiated by God alone.

Any claims to the definitive inner-historical attainment of the object of fundamental hope are rendered nugatory in light of an Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist view of nature’s inner-ordination to the supernatural. De Lubac states that “the destiny of man being eternal, he is not meant to find ultimate repose here below”.\textsuperscript{279} Christian faith, rather, points to an “ever-present and ever-demanding transcendence… [of] a world that perpetually tends to close in upon itself”.\textsuperscript{280} The harmony that God promises will only be achieved through “cleavages and struggles”, which remain constant throughout time.\textsuperscript{281} The eschaton will not follow as a matter of course according to a dialectical logic of history. While the Christian Gospel compels attempts at the solution of earthly problems, the world remains “the magnificent and painful field where our eternal being is worked out”.\textsuperscript{282} The world is the site for decisions about eternity to be made, not for that eternity to be manufactured. Consequently, in the words of Ratzinger made in commenting on de Lubac’s

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{277} Pieper, \textit{Happiness and Contemplation}, 25 quoting Aquinas, 2 d. 38, 1, 2 ad 2, discussing also Plato’s \textit{Symposium}, 192 c-d.
\item\textsuperscript{278} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 214, quoted in Chapter 3. C.f. John Finnis, \textit{Moral Absolutes} (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 101: “The end of human existence is not a goal producible by human artifice; it simply lacks the particularity of a determinative objective”.
\item\textsuperscript{279} Henri de Lubac, \textit{The Drama of Atheistic Humanism} (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 14
\item\textsuperscript{280} De Lubac, \textit{Drama}, 14.
\item\textsuperscript{281} De Lubac, \textit{Drama}, 14.
\item\textsuperscript{282} De Lubac, \textit{Drama}, 14.
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Surnaturel, rational attempts to construct “a self-contained, adequate ordo naturalis” are limited.\(^\text{283}\) The natural order needs something, Someone, outside itself to perfect it.

Fundamental hope concerns the transcendence of what can be naturally attained. Its object is existential fulfilment in eternity, the longing for which matches the orientation to beatitude that de Lubac’s conception of the supernatural argues belongs to the human person by nature. The paradoxical desire to be stretched beyond oneself in the search for happiness matches an account of hope presenting eternal fulfilment and bliss as its object. An inner-historical account of hope as dependent on human activity is shown to be flawed in reference to a desire for the gift of supernatural, eternal life. The human person naturally desires and hopes for a fulfilment outside of himself and of history. Such fulfilment must come in the form of a gift from the divine to whom the person is constitutively related. A Lubacian account thus supports a view of hope as expressed in prayer and patiently reliant on God’s providence (2.3.8). An object of this type, non-specifiable and not capable of being conceptualised and manufactured, can only ever be asked for and awaited as the joyfully expected but non-contingent gift.

4.4.2 **Metaphysics and Hope**

An analogical conception of the human creature and history complements analysis of the role of a Lubacian fundamental theology in Ratzinger’s views on hope and history. Pieper’s analogical analysis of the creature forms an important basis for his philosophy of hope, which in turn influences Ratzinger’s theological reflections on hope. It helps the latter to view the human person as being ‘on the way’ to a supra-historical, existential fulfilment, in light of which the inner-historical will only ever be transitory or temporal. Analogical metaphysics also preclude a theology of futurity, by revealing the rootedness of the human creature in the Creator. The ‘on

\(^{283}\) Ratzinger, *Faith and Politics*, 18. Healy notes that Ratzinger takes a positive view of the impact of de Lubac on contemporary theology in contrast to a figure such as Romanus Cessario, whose views are negative: “De Lubac on Nature and Grace,” 536n2 citing Romanus Cessario, “Neo-Neo-Thomism,” *First Things* (2007): 51 and Ratzinger’s *Milestones*, 98, 142. On Ratzinger’s appreciation of de Lubac see also Ratzinger, *Last Testament*, 123-125, Guerrerio, *Benedict XVI*, 15: along with de Lubac and Balthasar, “at Vatican II Ratzinger was a staunch adversary of the naturalistic vision of Scholasticism that was still dominant in the congregations and in the pontifical universities of Rome”.

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the way’ of the person is grounded in the reality that he is a creature, a created, analogical participant in the eternity of God. History is simultaneously from and oriented to the eternity of God. The ‘on the way’ character of creation to fulfilment relativises history and parallels the natural desire for beatitude as an innate, irresistible urge that can only be satisfied in eternity, not history.

The human person is, within history, embedded in a historico-temporal framework ‘on the way’ to supra-historical fulfilment. A key notion in Ratzinger’s conception of hope (as in Pieper) is that the human person is thus not bound for an earthly destination. For Ratzinger, contemporary experience demonstrates the insufficiency of the historico-temporal framework for fulfilment, generating the view “that we are not where we actually belong”. Instead, we are ‘wayfarers’ and “homeless” on earth, a universal experience that Israel’s religion underscored. The feast of the Passover reminded humanity that “we are never really at home, as men we are always on the way”. Ratzinger considers therefore that creation and human nature remain in the state of “being on the way” until culminating in Christ. The human person, within the travail of history, is a pilgrim, an ‘alien’ sojourner not truly at home.

A “dynamic” anthropology, in which the human person’s historicity is seen as transitory and relative to eternity, is thus evident in Ratzinger’s work. He views the historical human person as a “[being] en route” and “characterized by transition”.

The human person is in a state of becoming: according to Ratzinger, human persons

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284 Benedict, *New Song for the Lord*, 16. As noted in the Introduction, a key driver of the philosophical and theological attention given to hope in the twentieth century has been the experience of civilisational crisis in Europe and the West generally.
288 Peter Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of St Augustine* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 37-38. Brown notes Augustine’s use of the term *peregrini* to describe Christians, that is, not merely as “pilgrims” but “registered aliens, existing on sufferance, *in hoc maligno saeculo*”: 38.
289 Joseph Ratzinger, *In the Beginning… A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, trans. Boniface Ramsey OP (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 49. Betz notes the creaturely metaphysics behind Ratzinger’s understanding of the person as being ‘en route’ and links him with Przywara’s *analogia entis*: “Erich Przywara and the *Analogia Entis*,” 81-82. The link he overlooks is perhaps, Pieper, whose conception of the *status viatoris* is indebted to an analogical metaphysics and the distinction in the creature between essence and existence, which is identical in God.
“are not yet themselves; they must ultimately become themselves”.

They will only become so in the Body of Christ, the Head of which “is the directional arrow that indicates what being human tends toward”. Importantly, Ratzinger emphasises that humanity’s goal in Christ (5.4.2) “is never fully reached” so long as “history is still on the way”.

The human person’s historicity is revealed as being ‘on the way’ to eternity. As creature analogically grounded in God, he is constituted by “relativity toward the eternal”. According to Ratzinger, such “relativity implies ‘being on the way’ in the manner of human history”. Oriented to eternity, historical human nature is provisional until it rests in fulfilment in Christ.

The notion that the human person while on earth is in a state of pilgrimage, key to Ratzinger, is foundational to Pieper’s anthropology and his philosophy of hope. Ratzinger replicates Pieper’s phrase, “being on the way”, which the latter uses to describe the human person’s temporal existence as homo viator. The concept status viatoris captures the human person’s state of temporality, which Pieper employs to denote the existential situation of the human person as pilgrim and ‘wayfarer’, as ‘not yet’ possessing the status comprehensoris of beatitude (2.3.3).

The human person in a temporal framework is constitutively oriented to the future, because ‘not yet’ does he possess that for which he longs, supernatural fulfilment and the “fullness of existence”. He is ‘on the way’ to the fulfilment for which he hopes.

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290 Ratzinger, In the Beginning, 49.
291 Ratzinger, “Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology,” 116. Use, again, of ‘arrow’ in this context shows the connection between the ecstatic constitution of the human spirit and the idea that it is ‘on the way’.
293 Ratzinger, “Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology,” 116.
294 Ratzinger, “Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology,” 116.
296 Pieper, Christian Idea of Man, 42, Faith, Hope, Love, 97-98. As noted in 2.3.3, Ratzinger suggests that the human person’s state of temporality continues to subsist in some manner even after death, such that he continues to have a deep interest in the occurrences of history, which he has affected and which has affected him, and can undergo the purification of purgatory. In so doing, he rejects the idea of an immediate resurrection after death, which some theologians have posited, with the consequence that an intermediate state after death is eliminated as being possible. Consequently, the temporality conditioning the human continues even after death in some way, although the person’s eternal destiny has become fixed. Even in heaven, the fullness of God’s existence will be ever-unfolding to the human person’s mind. See Ratzinger, Eschatology, 182, Last Testament, 11-12.
An ontology of “not-yet-existing-being” underlies Pieper and Ratzinger’s anthropology. According to such ontology, the human person is ‘on the way’ to possessing the ‘fullness of existence’ and experiences temporality as a kind of homelessness. For Ratzinger, hope for future happiness is based on the human person’s “experience of temporality[,] according to which man never totally possesses his own being”. He continually experiences in the present “tension between the past and the future”, what he has been and will be, and temporality as a ‘prison’. Consequently, the human person exists, in Przywara’s terms, in a “suspended middle”, “between the shores of being and nothingness”, between the plenitude of God’s being and the nothingness from which he has been created. The ‘suspended middle’ of creaturely existence contains “an end-directedness”. What the human person will become belongs to the future. The human person is driven or oriented toward a fullness of being of which he is not yet in possession.

Pieper’s analogical analysis mode of creaturely being, itself indebted to Przywara, underpins the view of the human person as being ‘on the way’ to the fulfilment of being. According to Pieper, the “deep differentiation of being [the human creature has] with regard to God” follows from the dissonance in the creature between its essence and existence. The human person’s “essential creatureliness”, means he “is not ipso facto his own essence”. His nature is not to possess existence as such or necessarily but ‘only’ as a participation in the Ground of Being. For Pieper, and it may be implied Ratzinger, the status viatoris is constitutively temporal, grounded in the analogical distinction between essence and existence in the human person vis-à-vis God. As Barth says, “the creaturely mode of existence…bears only an analogical resemblance to the divine mode of being”. In Betz’s words, the full possession of essence “is never fully given… but is always on the horizon of its existence as

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297 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 98. At 2.3.3, noted was the correlation and difference in this regard between Pieper and Bloch’s metaphysics.
300 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 96. On the ‘suspended middle’ in Przywara, see e.g., Przywara, Analogia Entis, 159
301 Przywara, Analogia Entis, 216. In line with the Lubacian position, he argues that the beatific “vision is the ultimate defining and intrinsic to the spiritual life” and that while the spirit has a certain “aptitude” for grace it is beyond a person’s “own power”: 290-291, citations omitted.
303 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 96, 98.
something to be attained”. God has given the creature the urge ‘to be’ (4.3.3), but by nature the creature is not God, and therefore does not possess the fullness of existence as its essence. He is ‘on the way’ to that fullness of being in which he can only participate.

The fullness of being to which the human person is directed and for which he hopes can solely be experienced beyond history and death. The “dynamic state of not-yet-being”, in which being is “unfulfilled and incomplete”, subsists until death. Even a person on the “threshold of death” cannot say that fulfilment “does not lie in the future for me”. Prior to death, the state of self-possession still awaits the definitive participation in eternal life, which cannot occur in free and peccable historical-temporal existence (2.2.3). The choice for (or against) God, for “fulfilment” (or “nonfulfillment”, in which damnation consists), is the human person’s “last decision” and occurs only in death, “the uttermost step on the road to self-realization”. Death itself is not the end of existence but terminates the state of “being-on-the-way” by opening up the prospect of eternal life made possible by the immortal nature of the soul. In Ratzinger’s words, in death, “we step beyond history”. Death does not dissolve existence but contains within it the “new beginning” which consists in the “arrival” at the goal “towards which we have been on the way”. In short, the ‘on the way’ of earthly existence finds its terminus “beyond death”, which the person “can gain …only in dying”. The choice for life with Christ becomes definitive on death and not before.

305 Betz, “Translator’s Introduction”, 63.
306 Pieper, Death and Immortality, 76.
307 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 94; Death and Immortality, 76-77.
308 Pieper, Death and Immortality, 93-94 (quotation on 93).
309 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 184.
310 Pieper, Death and Immortality, 94. A quibble might be that language of ‘arrival’ and the idea that an ontology of not-yet-being precludes the possibility of an intermediate state between death and resurrection, as well as that of purgation, in which there is not yet the fulfilment in being. Pieper does, however, note that there is an element of futurity even after death and a ‘new beginning’. What terminates the status viatoris is the choice for or against God, which confers a definitive union with God in Christ. As implicit in Ratzinger’s Christological defence of the intermediate state between death and the General Resurrection, ‘heaven’ is possible even before the Last Day because of the immortality of the soul and because “true life is found is the risen Christ” and can be anticipated even on earth: Ratzinger, Eschatology, 160; see 136-140 on the papal bull of Pope Benedict XII of 1336 affirming that souls in the intermediate state after purification possess the beatific vision against Pope John XXII’s (1316-1334) bastardised Christological view that the dead sheltered under the humanity of Jesus until the General Resurrection.
311 Pieper, Death and Immortality, 94. Ratzinger, Eschatology, 219 citing DS 1000 (Benedictus Deus), 226, 227, 229.
While ‘imprisoned’ in temporality, the creature, including the human person and human history, can only ever provisionally experience the fullness of being. God’s utter transcendence of all created reality necessitates that human experience of creation can only ever point to God. Creation is sacramental and the human encounter with God occurs through “words and signs”, which point to the greater reality. Consequently, it is only when earthly experience is regarded “as a road…to set out upon”, that God can be approached. Journeying along the status viatoris and never standing still is constitutive of creaturely existence. Such a journey is predicated on the greater dissimilarity between God’s mode of being and the creature’s, and includes the metaphysical proposition that nature and history can never be more than transitory.

4.4.3 Analogy Precludes a Theology of Futurity

Reliance on an analogical metaphysics distinguishes Pieper and Ratzinger’s conceptions of hope from the focus of a Moltmann-inspired theology of futurity and political theology on the inner-historical future and their adoption of a dialectical view of history. Pieper and Ratzinger insist upon the transitoriness of the temporal, historical state, while simultaneously grounding the human person in sacred tradition and ultimately the Creator. Although insisting upon the historical nature of the human person, they reject an exclusive focus upon the future and the tendency to collapse the immanent and the eschatological together. They point to sacred tradition as providing the content of hope, with its promise of the eschatological future in Christ, to whom the tradition connects past, present and future. They insist upon the possession of a nature as delimiting what can be hoped for, and orienting it ultimately to the future possession of eternity. Eternal life, that towards which the natural desire for a supernatural end is orientated is underscored as the object and source of hope, even as analogical metaphysics shows that entry into eternity

312 C.f. Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 186.
313 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 345-346. See his quotation n346 of R. Brague, “Was heist christliche Erfahrung?” in IKZ 5 (1976), 481-482 (quotation on 482). Incidentally, the view that experience can only ever point to God contradicts a psychological approach satisfied in the mere experience of God (an approach having some resonance with Schillebeeckx’s focus on experience in his Christology (1.3.2)).
depends upon the violent, cataclysmic passage at the hands of God into the eternity revealed in revelation.

Reliance on metaphysics does not result in a static understanding of the human person, contrary to Moltmann’s critique of Pieper’s supposedly too-metaphysical philosophy of hope. A Moltmannian concern “about the future, about hope and eschatology”, tends to label caution about the reduction of Christianity and theology to its future implications as a “traditional, archaic position”. However, German theological interest in Romanticism and its concept of Bildung, which denotes personal, cultural and inevitably historical development for the human person was the context of Ratzinger’s theological work. For his part, Pieper defends likewise Aquinas against the charge of elaborating a “purely static concept of being” and an extra-historical view of the world and existence”. Metaphysical accounts impressed with “the rationalistic stamp of the Enlightenment” (such as Christian Wolff’s) are guilty of being “undynamic”, and not Aquinas. Instead, Aquinas considers as characteristic of “created existence”, that creatures are “always ‘on the way’ toward something”, with the consequence that “existence [possesses] the structure of a journey, a dynamic orientation toward the future”. Thomas turns out to be the basis for Pieper and, in turn, Ratzinger’s adoption of a dynamic view of the human person as being ‘on the way’. The nature of human existence as being ‘on the way’ necessarily involves historical processes of change and orientation to future development. Its recognition demonstrates that Pieper and Ratzinger are not archaically traditional in the manner described in a theology of futurity.

316 Pieper, Problems, 159-160. Frederick Copleston characterises Christian Wolff (1679-1754) as a German Enlightenment thinker, remarking that he developed “a complete rational system of philosophy” that insisted on the capacity of human reason to attain to certain metaphysical truths, including “metaphysical knowledge of God”: The Enlightenment, Voltaire to Kant, 105-106. On the role of Wollfian rationalism in the history of Thomism see Kerr, After Aquinas, 54-56 and Benedict M Ashley OP, The Way Toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Introduction to Metaphysics (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 23, 45, 48.
318 Pieper acknowledges the role of Aquinas in the formation of his views on the characteristic nature of the status viatoris in Faith, Hope, Love, 91. An example of Aquinas’s use of the distinction between “wayfarer” and “comprehensor” is given in Faith, Hope, Love, 92 citing Summa Theologiae, III, 15, 10.
Nevertheless, dependence on metaphysics means that Pieper and Ratzinger do not consider the human person’s nature to be historically relative or solely oriented to the future. Contrary to what Fukuyama suggests is the relativist position of Hegel, according to which human nature is relative to historical circumstances (1.2.1), they argue that the human person has a necessary link to the past, which grounds his orientation to the future.\(^\text{319}\) What the future can and will be depends upon the past and the created nature of the person, which points to the Creator who precedes and not just follows our hope. They oppose the theologies of futurity’s exclusive orientation to the future and dialectical rejection of the past.\(^\text{320}\) That the past contains salvific significance and is not to be rejected in the name of a dialectical reading of history is instead affirmed.

A signal feature of Pieper and Ratzinger’s respective thought is the constitutive importance they give sacred tradition to the human person as such. Against the “emancipated rationality” characteristic of modernity, which rejects the authority of tradition, Pieper and Ratzinger defend the concept of tradition as a unique and fundamental to human nature and existence.\(^\text{321}\) Tradition, as what distinguishes human beings from animals, is the act of the intellect via the medium of *memoria*, which perpetuates the past for the sake of the future and constitutes him as a historical being. The historicity of the human person does not mean he is entirely future-oriented, but rooted in a past that is grounded in and points to transcendence. Moreover, sacred tradition grounds the human person as the receiver of divine revelation, connecting the promise of future realisation contained therein to the past revelation of Christ. Christianity does not simply concern “openness toward the future” but also an “acceptance, as true and real, of something which has already happened in the past” (even if not confined to the past).\(^\text{322}\)


\(^{322}\) Pieper, *Problems of Modern Faith*, 159.
An exclusive orientation to the future misunderstands, therefore, human nature. According to Ratzinger, standing at the heart of the “humanum” as such is to be “rooted in tradition”, which means “the ability to hear the Other (whom we call God)”. The dialogue to which the human person has capacity to enter is mediated through tradition. For Pieper “not before us but behind us”, is “a horizon of the past whence all things are derived”, reaching to the origins of history and “beyond that” to timeless eternity. Human nature qua nature is ‘traditional’, by being embedded within a history connected to the past and present through tradition, which facilitates the encounter with the eternal God. The mediatory function of tradition thus distinguishes Pieper and Ratzinger from a Moltmann-inspired theology of hope, in which connection with God tends to be seen as entirely futuristic and severed from reference to sacred tradition.

The theology of futurity’s over-emphasis on the future at the expense of sacred tradition misunderstands also the theological task as the transmitter of revelation via the medium of tradition. For Pieper, theology should not take its cues from changing, historical human experience. Its task is, rather, to perpetuate a sacred tradition which is essentially rooted to the past, that is:

...to recall, proclaim, preserve from oblivion, maintain the identity of, and keep alive in the present moment, something pre-existent: namely the revelation, the word of God, which was spoken at some time in the past.

Sacred tradition communicates the ‘pre-existent’ revelation, which conditions humanity’s connection to God. For Pieper against Moltmann, “revelation stands at the beginning of tradition”, first in the form of an original revelation to the “ancients” – what Ratzinger refers to as “primordial revelation”. Secondly, Christian

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323 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 89.
324 Pieper, Problems of Modern Faith, 169 (emphasis in original).
326 The primordial revelation included data such as God’s creation of the world, the “primordial human being[‘s]” original state of “perfection” and subsequent “fall”, the prospect of judgment after death and even generated the fides implicita that God might redeem humanity: Pieper, Problems of Modern Faith, 167-169 (quotations on 167, 168) quoting Moltmann, Theologie der Hoffnung, 272ff.
revelation involves the novel revelation of Christ communicated directly to the Apostles, as the starting points (the ‘ancients’) of Christian sacred tradition. Theology is intrinsically bound to tradition, even if oriented to the future, because its role is to interpret the revelation mediated by tradition. It assists therefore in the dialogic encounter between humanity and God.

Because tradition and revelation are constitutive of humanity’s dialogue with God, they are centrally important to any understanding of the nature of hope. For Pieper and Ratzinger, the revelation heard by the tradition-constituted human being, as mediated through sacred tradition, forms the content of Christian hope. Sacred tradition gives hope its “content and meaning”. Moltmann criticises Ratzinger’s Spe Salvi on the basis that it conflates hope with the faith of the Church and points out that those without faith in God are without hope. In linking hope closely with faith and the eternal life it promises, and praising the humility of Mary, Ratzinger allegedly overlooks the “revolutionary God of the prophets” and begins not with the world but the Church. For Ratzinger, however, the revelation to which sacred tradition bears witness and which the Church mediates, is the ground of true hope. The “Gospel message” responds “to the restless yearnings of the human heart”. The Church’s responsibility is “to show that Christian faith is the true answer to the human quest for meaning” and the genuine source of “a hope that saves from despair”. Hope is made “concrete through faith in Christ”, access to whom is not given through historical reason, “but through the plenary authority of the communitarian history of faith, that is, in the Church”. The sacred tradition of the Church alone mediates the genuine source of hope, Christ. Moltmann is right to point out the connection Ratzinger makes between faith and hope. However, the genuine

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and citing Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 2, 7, reply 3. Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 89. It can be added that the fullness of revelation in Christ was intimated in the original revelation, which has an analogical connection with Christian revelation.

331 On the relationship between revelation, scripture and sacred tradition in Ratzinger see Jared Wicks, “Six Texts by Prof. Joseph Ratzinger as peritus before and during Vatican Council II,” *Gregorianum* 89(2) (2008): e.g. 252.
332 Wicks, “Six Texts,” 252(1).
333 Wicks, “Six Texts,” 259(iii).
source of hope for the historical, tradition-bound creature is not revolution but the revelation mediated through the Church’s sacred tradition.

The hope to which Christian revelation bears witness is eternal life in Christ. An analogical metaphysics highlights further the centrality of eternity to Pieper and Ratzinger’s conceptions of hope, compared to the theology of hope’s emphasis on the inner-historical future. Contrary to a traditional metaphysic, Moltmann argues along Blochian lines that God is “only ever before us” (1.2.2).³³⁵ God “‘is’ not eternal presence” and hope is not focused on “the reality which exists”.³³⁶ Metz’s political theology echoes Moltmann. It is true that Metz acknowledges that God is Deus semper major and “uniquely absolute”.³³⁷ Marsden notes that Metz, in his later Theology of the World, distinguishes himself from Moltmann’s “severing of the future from the past”.³³⁸ Moreover, Metz does not fully adopt Moltmann’s metaphysical idea that the “‘future’ [is] ‘the mode of God’s being’”.³³⁹ Arguably, however, Metz’s avoidance of “allowing his eschatology to get too tied up with metaphysics” amounts to a problematic failure to engage fully the metaphysical issue and results in an over-emphasis on inner-historical praxis at the expense of logos.³⁴⁰ Milbank notes that as a consequence of the early Metz’s approval of the secularisation process, “physics has gradually replaced metaphysics, and ethical and political norms can be deduced etsi Deus non daretur”.³⁴¹ Traditional metaphysics is either overturned or downplayed in significance with the theologies of futurity, which relate to the minimisation of the importance of eternity to hope.

An analogical metaphysics refers instead back to the eternal God as the ground of all being and ‘physics’. Pieper qualifies thus the Blochian metaphysics underpinning Moltmann-inspired theologies of hope.³⁴² God is not simply “the absolute future” but is “at the same time the absolute origin of man and all created things”.³⁴³ Theology that misses a metaphysical appreciation of God “as a central Now… [encompassing]
all the dimensions of temporal duration” is, taken to its radical, logical extremes, in
danger of overlooking the importance of human nature.\textsuperscript{344} It “might reveal” also a
tendency to conceive theology not as the safeguarding of sacred tradition and
revelation of eternity but as needing to take its cues from contemporary “religious”
or “utopian” impulses.\textsuperscript{345} God is rather the eternal “nunc stans” an eternity which is
“the perfect and complete simultaneous possession of unlimited life” (Boethius) or
“whose being is simultaneously the whole” (Aquinas), from which theological and
philosophical conceptions of hope need to take their bearing.\textsuperscript{346} Everything created,
including our natures, has been “ordained” from all eternity from him whose essence
is the fullness of existence, and unfolds not sequentially but from eternity in God’s
‘eternal present’.\textsuperscript{347} God stands at the origin as well as the end of all things. In Christ,
he is the Alpha and the Omega and dwells already with us in Word and sacrament.\textsuperscript{348}
Pieper (and Ratzinger) would argue that it is thus mistaken for theology to conceive
God as ahead of us and focus on what is “still to come”, when the reality of nature
and grace exists now and in the past, even as they point to future fulfilment.\textsuperscript{349}
Eternal logos always ontologically precedes ethos, praxis follows from metaphysical
reality, and God simultaneously grounds our existence and constitutes the promise of
its fulfilment.\textsuperscript{350}

Eternity at the same time is the basis for creation’s existence and its destined end.
Creation is placed up against, as it were, the eternal God who dwells within creation.
Analogical metaphysics show:

\textit{that temporal-historical reality in toto, by virtue of it character of being creature, is
situated in an absolutely immediate operational relationship to a non-temporal being
and operating, in an uninterrupted and most intimate permeation, without which
creature cannot be conceived.}\textsuperscript{351}

\textsuperscript{344} Pieper, \textit{Problems of Modern Faith}, 170, 171.
\textsuperscript{345} Pieper, \textit{Problems of Modern Faith}, 170, 171.
4.
\textsuperscript{348} This forms an important parallel to Ratzinger’s Christological conception of Christ’s presence in
the Church in the ‘Age of the Gentiles’ (3.4.3).
\textsuperscript{349} Pieper, \textit{Problems of Modern Faith}, 170.
\textsuperscript{350} C.f. n 128 above.
\textsuperscript{351} Pieper, \textit{End of Time}, 68 (emphasis in original).
As a result, “the temporal is inwardly sustained, saturated, pervaded by the untemporal”. For Ratzinger, creation “never ceases to touch” God. All of creation is thus characterised by relationship to eternity (4.4.2). Applying the notions of eternity’s permeation of temporality and God’s creative will that creatures ‘might be’ (4.3.3) to the concept of the *status viatoris*, means that creation, including human history and the human person, is ‘on the way’ to eternity. The *status viatoris* is oriented “toward fulfilment beyond time”. Reference to the transcendent source of the human person, who gives him an “a priori” nature that orients him to supernatural fulfilment of being, shows the pilgrim character of historical existence as it has been created to have an end in the eternity in which he participates as a creature.

Despite creation ‘touching upon’ God, the analogical dissonance between the eternity of the Creator and the temporality of the historical creature implies a need for transformation from a historical to eternal state for humanity’s desire for eternity to be fulfilled. Humanity cannot undertake such transformation from its own resources. Creation, as analogically participating in God’s plenitude of Being, does not possess its own eternal perfection. For Pieper, the phrase ‘New Heaven and New Earth’, the biblical representation of personal and cosmic hope, is theological shorthand for the “… ‘transposition’ of the temporal being of the historical world into the state of direct participation in the untemporal mode of being of the Creator.” The Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist claim that fulfilment is beyond human control is thus matched by Pieper’s analogical argument that no “historical, temporal power” can effect the transposition from temporality into eternity. Only the “direct intervention of the Creator” can enable creation to participate in eternity. Moreover, the “dichotomy” between the directional orientation of history towards its end outside itself and the reality that nothing within history can bring about the ‘transposition’ into eternity, means that an “utterly catastrophic”, “extreme crisis”

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358 Pieper, *End of Time*, 70. Pieper argues that the ‘New Heaven and New Earth’ cannot be understood apart from consideration of the Incarnation but considers sufficient to point out that his conclusion follows from the doctrine of creation.
Analogically speaking, this crisis will not be exterior to creation but come from its “innermost ground of being”. Creation from within will be stretched beyond its own natural capacities at the hand of the Creator God and elevated into eternity as an inherent fulfilment but simultaneous transposition of its nature.

An analogical metaphysics supports therefore Ratzinger’s understanding of the hope-history relationship and critiques the metaphysically thin account of Moltmann, which is oriented to the historical future and relates to the *Concilium* view of the hope-history relationship. Any claims of definitive inner-historical, temporal fulfilment are excluded by reference to temporality’s grounding in and orientation towards eternity. The necessary violence of its transposition into eternity matches moreover Ratzinger’s claim that history’s perfection comes from outside it. An analogical metaphysical understanding also underpins Ratzinger’s eschatological claim, discussed in Chapter 3, that “the End is ever present” and his idea that salvation is ‘already’, ‘not yet’. It thus shows the possibility of salvation already to have irrupted into temporality, while pointing to that temporality’s future fulfilment. It rules out, it is suggested, Moltmann’s exclusive focus on the future as hope’s significance, as well as a dialectical exclusion of the past.

4.5 Conclusion

This Chapter has argued that Ratzinger’s conception of the supernatural is grounded in the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist tradition and is connected to Pieper’s analogical metaphysics and anthropology. The human person, as creature of the ever-greater God, is seen to possess an innate and not merely non-repugnant desire for a beatitude and fulfilment of being that it cannot manufacture for itself. The spirit is thus naturally ‘erotically’ oriented ‘beyond itself’. Ratzinger presents a view of the human spirit as uniquely capable, in its possession of an immortal soul, to enter into dialogue with God. The human being, as spirit, is open to relationship with God as such, and immortal for that reason, grounded in the mind’s capacity to comprehend

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361 C.F. Ouellet, “Paradox and/or supernatural existential,” 278.
the whole. The *ratio-intellectus* distinction demonstrates moreover that the vision of
the whole is proper to the human mind, while nevertheless constituting a
‘superhuman’ extension of human capacity ‘beyond itself’. There is thus a ‘smooth
transition’ from nature to grace (even if that needs to be qualified somewhat: 5).

Ultimately, human beatitude as an elevation of the mind into comprehension of the
whole is a gift, not manipulable by human ingenuity but received by God.
Ratzinger’s vision of the human spirit as existing in the order of freedom between
mere ‘nature’ and God, receives its context from a view that all of creation is graced.
Nature comes from the creative freedom of God and all its possibilities are
determined in the context of that gift. Ratzinger’s view of the supernatural is thus
distinct from a Rahnerian theology of grace and represents the *Communio* caution
regarding the conflation of the order of nature and grace, an argument to be
developed further in Chapter 5. The call and fulfilment depend upon the freedom of
God, and can be said to be non-contingent and not exacted. Grace is not ‘owed’ to
the human spirit, nor can it be considered to be naturalised, arguably the albeit
unintended result of Rahner’s work. Ratzinger’s view of the spirit is that fulfilment
occurs outside human control and what is latent to human existence and history.
Allied to an analogical metaphysics, it shows the human spirit, and correspondingly
creation and human history, to require transformation for the temporality of the
creature to ‘passover’ to eternity. The creature, whose participation in being is
only ever analogical, is ‘on the way’ to fulfilment in eternal life beyond time. The
call to communion of God is precisely for the spirit to go ‘beyond itself’.

A view of the human spirit as oriented ‘beyond itself’ provides the foundation stone
for the *Communio* view of hope and distinguishes it from a Rahnerian theology of
grace and *Concilium* view of the hope-history relationship. The personal hope for
eternal life in Christ, which is the object of Christian hope described in Chapters 2
and 3, is based in the natural desire for a supernatural end. As restlessly oriented to a
happiness that no creature can provide, the rational spirit desires and hopes beyond
itself for eternal fulfilment. Happiness is beyond natural capacity and control. It can

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363 The reference to ‘passover’ is not incidental; the passage from earthly life/history to eternity is
effected by the Passover of Christ, which underscores the importance of a high Christology (3) and a
soteriology emphasising the ‘renunciation’ of nature and Cross of Christ (5).
only be received as a gift. Anything that human ingenuity can accomplish is not the object of fundamental hope. The natural desire for a gift surpassing any attempt at conceptualisation supports the view that the human person desires God as such, and will not be content to hope for anything less than him.

Another building block of Ratzinger’s fundamental theology which contributes to his view of hope is an analogical metaphysics. It affirms nature and created being while recognising that nature can be nothing of itself and in fact needs something outside of itself (which is also inmost to it) for fulfilment. It supports the view that the human person is oriented ‘beyond itself’ to a supra-historical happiness. Intersecting with an Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist view of the supernatural is the conviction that the creature has been implanted by the ‘ever greater’ God the urge ‘to be’, to share in the plenitude of being that God Who Is possesses. At the same time, an analogical metaphysics highlights the dissonance in the mode of being that the creature possesses as compared to God, demonstrating the insufficiency of the temporal mode of being to satisfy. The creature is only ever ‘on the way’ to a fulfilment that must be wrought through the violent, catastrophic transposition from temporality to eternity.

The adoption of an Augustinian-Thomist view of the supernatural, in combination with an analogical metaphysics, relativises therefore any inner-historical claims for hope which can be evident in political theology and liberation theology. It guards against any Concilium tendency to secularise the eschaton or naturalise grace’s operation. The analogical experience of being, in which the human person is ‘on the way’ to a fulfilment not yet given, corresponds to a view of the supernatural in which the human person is oriented to union with God in the beatific vision. Moreover, theologies of futurity arguably do not pay sufficient attention to the fact that human beings possess a nature and more broadly to the metaphysical question. Underestimating the importance of metaphysics elides the significance of eternity to hope. Fundamental hope is oriented to eternal life and not the realisation of earthly projects. Nature is in a state of transition and relative to eternity, which precludes an absolutist view of the immanent possibilities of human nature and history or the tendency to conflate the orders of nature and grace. Hope is the longing of the spirit for the transformative grace of eternal life.
CHAPTER 5 SOTERIOLOGY AND CHRISTOLOGY – A COMMUNIO REJECTION OF AN IMMANENTIST SOTERIOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

Consideration of spiritual nature’s orientation ‘beyond itself’ raises questions concerning how grace fulfils or perfects nature. In short, it asks how the human person is saved (the concern of soteriology). An Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of the natural desire as oriented ‘beyond itself’ is matched by a soteriology, which projects salvation and eschatological realisation beyond history at the hands of the eternal God in Christ. Beatitude, which entails the gift of supernatural elevation, necessarily relates and depends upon the grace offered by Jesus Christ. The conceptually ‘smooth transition’, which Ratzinger posits between the spirit and the grace of Jesus Christ (4.3.5), is nevertheless cruciform in shape. Human redemption involves transformation of human nature and its elevation above itself through beatification in the Cross of Christ.

The Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of nature and grace insists therefore on the transformative particularity and novelty of Christ.1 Radical transformation of human nature comes at the hands of the unique Jesus Christ, who is seen as a “disturber”.2 He is not a Kantian exemplar of pure reason or a Rahnerian “realization of transcendental anthropology”, but the unique and indispensable saviour of humanity, who is “somehow else”.3 Ratzinger – who describes himself as “a sort of Barthian, if also critical” and focuses therefore on the particularity of Christ – poses the question of what it was that Christ brought that was new, given that the human soul is “created immortal” and thus apparently contains within itself the grounds of

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1 As pointed out in the Introduction, this is what Healy considers to be the test that differentiates various accounts of the relationship: n28.
2 De Lubac, Drama, 14.
its own imperishability.\(^4\) He argues that it is “[o]nly the Risen Christ [who] can bring us to complete union with God, to the place where our own powers are unable to bring us”.\(^5\) Christ stands as the novel fulfilment of the human spirit’s yearning for beatitude. The Divine Word made flesh entered history from above to heal wounded humanity and elevate creation and history beyond themselves. He alone is humanity’s saviour.

Ratzinger’s work contrasts thus with the arguably implicit if not necessarily intended immanentism in Rahner’s theology of grace (1.4). Even if there is an intrinsic continuity between creation’s possibilities and the fulfilment offered in grace, Ratzinger considers that human nature is in need of radical transformation. As Wood notes, there is an “infinite distance” between the *capax Dei*, and the sanctifying grace that orders the human person to his supernatural end.\(^6\) The natural desire does not equate to salvation. Contained in the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist view of the supernatural is that the supernatural, desired end nevertheless remains contingent (4). It depends upon the free, historical action of God in Christ.\(^7\)

The Chapter attempts thus to describe the *Communio* response to the *Concilium* authors’ insufficiently differentiated account of nature and grace, and integrated view of redemption. Present in the latter is a view of history as immanently containing and establishing somewhat eschatological salvation. Ratzinger insists, on the contrary, that redemption is not the acceptance of what is already contained within human existence or implicitly contained within a universal history. What saves, instead, is the entry of God into history and the eschatology he has inaugurated in Christ. Necessary to human salvation is the Church, which receives the Revelation of Christ

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\(^7\) C.f. Milbank, *Suspended Middle*, 106. To be sure, Rahner insists on the ‘unexacted’ nature of grace but the hinge of the supernatural existential that he posits between pure nature and its obediential potency, and sanctifying grace arguably militates against the recognition that human nature or existence as such is need of transformation: (4.2.2).
and communicates it through history. Divine Revelation bears witness to Christ, the unexpected fulfilment of the natural desire for beatitude.\(^8\)

The *Communio* school’s insistence on the necessity of Christ and the Church to human salvation and the novelty of Revelation arguably most distinguishes it from the *Concilium* perspective.\(^9\) Salvation is not a product of human ingenuity or the logic of history but given in the Person of Jesus Christ. Inner-historical conceptions of hope, which rest on the potentialities inherent to nature, reason and history, instead of drawing attention to God in Christ mistake those potentialities. Fundamental hope, rather, cannot be directed to inner-historical improvement. Human activity has salvific meaning insofar as it is oriented beyond itself to the divine. The worldly realm, to be saved, needs its own inherent possibilities to be transcended by a super-abundant divine gift of grace. That is the Christian hope.

This Chapter sets out how Ratzinger conceives Christ’s relationship to nature and the character of his saving work as the key to understanding the nature-grace relationship and the hope-history relationship. First it will describe in what Pieper and Ratzinger consider salvation to consist, namely the healing and elevation of wounded humanity. Secondly, it will differentiate what can be identified as Ratzinger’s ‘soteriology of deification’ from immanentist notions of redemption, such as found in Marxism, which are unable to account for humanity’s need to be redeemed from death. Thirdly, it will outline the relationship between Christology and soteriology in Ratzinger. Redemption is communicated through Christ, understood in Chalcedonian terms (3). It involves divine filiation as a rejection of the purely natural, in favour of the need of the human person to go beyond himself by embracing Christ’s Cross. Finally, it explores some ramifications of Ratzinger’s soteriology for the hope-

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\(^8\) C.f. Garver, “Rahner and de Lubac”, de Lubac, *Catholicisme*. Compare also Oakes, *Infinity Dwindled to Infancy*, 355: “So, not surprisingly, Catholic theologians influenced by Barth found much to object to in Rahner, especially the Barth-influenced Hans Urs von Balthasar [and, it may be added, Ratzinger], who insisted on that the revelation of God’s glory needs no justification but itself. And this means that there will be no question in his theology, as Aidan Nichols rightly points out, ‘of dismembering the divine self-manifestation into, on the one hand, “categorial” and on the other ‘transcendental’ aspects, such that…Christian truth becomes at best a key to, and at worst simply an illustration of, what is in any case already given in the universal God-world relationship,” quoting Nichols, *Say It Is Pentecost: A Guide Through Balthasar’s Logic* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 5.

\(^9\) C.f. the comment of Wood, noted in Chapter 4, that Giles “saw Christ and the Church as indispensable mediators of human happiness”: *Restless Heart*, 19-20.
history debate, particularly how he conceives the relationship between faith and politics and his critique of Rahner’s conception of salvation history, which is present in the *Concilium* perspective on hope and history.

### 5.2 Redemption as Requiring Healing and Elevation

Present in Ratzinger is what could be called a ‘soteriology of deification’, which involves transformative transcendence of human nature and history beyond themselves, and the view that human fulfilment is necessarily supernatural. The following quotation encapsulates Ratzinger’s view of nature’s ordination to grace and how redemption involves that nature moving ‘beyond itself’:

> *The disciple who walks with Jesus is thus caught up with him into communion with God. And that is what redemption means: this stepping beyond the limits of human nature, which had been there as a possibility and an expectation in man, God’s image and likeness, since the moment of creation.*

Human nature, while intrinsically ordered to the grace of supernatural communion with God, is in need of an external and divine principle, which elevates it into a higher order of being. Redemption is allowing that elevation to occur, such that one is in communion with God.

Salvation is simultaneously healing and elevation. Human nature is in itself incomplete and lacking wholeness. As noted in Chapter 2, the German word for ‘salvation’ is ‘heil’, which relates to the verb *heilen*, to heal. For Pieper, what is sought in Christian virtue and in knowledge generally is “a higher bliss, a healing, and the fullness of existence, and thereby the fullness of happiness”. The bliss of fullness of existence, of which salvation consists, involves healing and elevation. An example in Ratzinger of salvation considered as healing and elevation is the experience of *eros*. The ascent of the human person in ecstatic love is salvation because it consists in healing. Ratzinger refers to the human person’s experience of beauty as causing a “salutary emotional shock”, which draws the person out of

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10 Ratzinger, *Jesus(1)*, 8 (emphasis added), Rowland, *Catholic Theology*, 32.
himself.\textsuperscript{13} Beauty wounds the person but this very wound is what draws “him upward”.\textsuperscript{14} Experience of beauty is healing, a \textit{salus} or salve.\textsuperscript{15} The ecstatic constitution of the human spirit is enlivened, as it were, through the experience of beauty, which takes the spirit out of itself and in that way ‘heals’ it.

Just as human nature needs ‘healing’ in the form of being drawn out of itself, there is a second element of human existence that requires curing, namely sin and its effects. According to Pieper, sin consists in the absence of the state of ‘‘salvation’ [\textit{Heil}] and ‘being whole’’.\textsuperscript{16} Ratzinger importantly states:

\textit{By birth according to one’s natural origins alone, no one is saved [im \textit{Heil}], but, rather, everything is in ruins [im Un\textit{Heil}]. This means that concrete nature, as it is in fact bestowed on man in his birth, is not a salvific order.}\textsuperscript{17}

Sin leaves the person in a state of woundedness, lacking salvation, a lack into which the human person is born and which reveals nature’s salvific inadequacy.

The reality of sin is something that Pieper and Ratzinger acknowledge as ‘part’ of human nature. Sin is not proper to human nature as such but has become a constant in human existence. Ratzinger argues that, although the “truly human” orientation of the spirit to the divine cannot be eliminated, it is not present “without warping or falsification”.\textsuperscript{18} He refers to Pascal’s notion that the human person has obtained a “second nature” as a result of sin, a concupiscent “susceptibility to egoism”.\textsuperscript{19} The concept of ‘second nature’ makes intelligible the simultaneously “noble and base” characteristics commonly attributed to human nature, in which the phrase “that’s only human” is used to excuse bad behaviour.\textsuperscript{20} Thus, in the human experience is a “mysterious polarity … between ‘granduer’ and ‘misère’”, such that the human person simultaneously contains “greatness and baseness”, the “highest aspiration”

\textsuperscript{13} Ratzinger, \textit{On the Way to Jesus Christ}, 34.
\textsuperscript{14} Ratzinger, \textit{On the Way to Jesus Christ}, 34.
\textsuperscript{15} Bishop Robert Barron has pointed out in his podcasts the etymological roots of the words ‘salvation’ and ‘salve’ is the Latin word \textit{salus}. An archive of his podcasts can be found here: \url{http://wordonfireshow.com/podcast-archive/} (last accessed 9 March 2019).
\textsuperscript{16} Pieper, \textit{Concept of Sin}, 52. The bracketed \textit{Heil} is in the original.
\textsuperscript{17} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 157.
\textsuperscript{18} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 158, Pieper, \textit{Concept of Sin}, 51-52, 64, 77.
\textsuperscript{19} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 158.
\textsuperscript{20} Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 158-159. The phrase “that’s only human” comes from a quotation of Jules-Géraud Cardinal Saliège provided by Ratzinger.

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and the capacity for descent into an “abyss that may be one of despair”.

Sin has become such an integral part of human experience that it is understood as an inevitable accident of human nature, even while the underlying orientation to eternity remains un effaced. It is a bar, however, to that salvation being obtained, unless that barrier is removed.

The effects of sin include two realities that need healing and overcoming, namely death and guilt. An account of redemption must answer the problem of death to be convincing. Death and guilt stand as obstacles to the experience of infinite, assured love. For redemption to be genuine, it needs to fulfil this “yearning for love” and take away the uncertainty inherent to it. The human person needs “to be able to know inviolably that he is accepted, that someone says Yes to him” and that he is not a “random product of evolution”, but is willed and, in some sense, needed. As such, he wants a “determined freedom”, in which there exists a certain love, offering the possibility of communion and matching his “yearning for fulfilment”. In short, the human person desires to possess a love that transcends and conquers death and guilt.

Salvation transcends death and temporality. It responds to the human person’s innate thirst for imperishability. As creatures that are immortal, the question of redemption involving transcendence of death and history is thus vital to the human person. For Ratzinger, “real life” truly begins in the “awakening” that occurs in death and therefore “beyond the historical existence of man”. Material and inner-worldly success, unavoidably conditioned by temporality, are insufficient to provide genuine happiness. Significantly, Ratzinger argues that “[r]ighteousness”, which is the “godly

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living” that amounts to the deification or justification central to Christianity’s understanding of itself, “by its very nature points beyond” material and temporal earthly existence. Redemption, on Ratzinger’s view, necessarily entails a transcendence of death and temporality, and healing and elevation beyond historical, sinful existence.

5.3 Distinguishing Ratzinger’s Account of Redemption from Marxist Variants

Ratzinger’s view of redemption as involving healing and elevation opposes an expectation of a historically immanent eschatological state. His notion of salvation contrasts with the Marxist tendency to promote and expect inner-historical liberation. To the extent that such ideas are present in the Concilium authors, especially Gutiérrez (1.5). Ratzinger can be distinguished from their account. Instead, for him, redemption involves deification as true liberation. He contends that immanentist conceptions of redemption overlook the incapacity of humanity to redeem itself.

A historically immanent collective does not contain within itself the power to absolve or heal the guilt arising from the exercise of human freedom. Merely human acts of reparation and forgiveness cannot atone for the “outstanding debt of guilt” that has accrued through history. Similarly, human nature is incapable of overcoming the “insecurity of our existence that is grasping for love”. For these reasons, attempts to construct a “new world” in which the concepts of “God, love, guilt, and death” are eliminated, such as materialist atheism purports to do, are misconceived. Authentic redemption requires “an authority of transformation that goes beyond human ability”. Transformative redemption heals the evils beyond human power to eliminate, and elevates human nature into God’s love.

26 Ratzinger, On the Way to Jesus Christ, 22.
28 Ratzinger, “Salvation’ More than a Cliché?” 40. This insecurity can be said to arise from the analogical nature of creaturely existence itself and the reality of sin.
A Marxist-inspired understanding of redemption contradicts a theological anthropology and creaturely metaphysics of gift. Pieper and Ratzinger’s view that happiness cannot be manufactured but must be awaited as redemptive gift is juxtaposed against a view of redemption in which praxis is primary. Opposing a too-neat dichotomy between seeing redemption as simply “otherworldly or this worldly”, Ratzinger considers that the genuine question concerning the meaning of redemption is whether it entails liberation from dependence (the Marxist view, which has some resonance in political and liberation theology) or whether “its sole path [is] the complete dependence of love”, which is what provides “true freedom”. He clearly adopts the latter in arguing that liberating happiness, in which redemption ultimately consists, is given in a context of dependence. Liberation for Ratzinger means dependence on God.

The connection that Ratzinger detects between freedom and truth also distinguishes his view of redemption from a Marxist one. As dependence on God, liberation entails living in the truth that is God, a truth that is greater than and prior to the human person. For Ratzinger, “truth and freedom are inseparable”. The truth about the human person is that he is a creature, dependent upon God for existence but also on his gift for the elevation of his spirit into the beatific vision. To find “liberating fulfilment”, the human person must then be open to “true love” and ultimately to grace, the gratuitous imparting of the divine life in the soul. Ratzinger argues thus that the human person “can come to salvation and to himself only through the gift of love – through grace”. Becoming “like God” does not consist in “anarchic” attempts to overthrow the Creator but participating in his life. Human effort at removal of the conditions of dependence does not produce redemption.

Redemption is communion in the divine nature as a result of grace. For Ratzinger, authentic liberation entails deifying “transformation in God”. Against Hans Küng’s reluctance to claim that Christianity offers deification, Ratzinger strongly affirms that

31 It also opposes a Christian emphasis on gratuity and gift in the economic-political order: c.f. Caritas in Veritate.
33 Benedict, New Song for the Lord, 23, Values, 76.
35 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 280.
36 C.f. Ratzinger, Behold the Pierced One, 33-34.
37 Ratzinger, Journey to Easter, 98-99
it answers the person’s “deepest longing” for divinization.38 The Council of Trent, the Second Vatican Council, Baptism, the Eucharist and the professions of faith all concern the central Christian idea of justification or salvation, which involves the human person “Eritis sicut Deus”.39 Fulfilment is the satisfaction of the thirst for the infinite, through participation in the life of God, that is “life in the bosom of the Blessed Trinity”.40 While claiming to offer a freedom eliminating human limitations and dependence, Marxist claims of deification within an immanent framework deceive, to the contrary, the human person and frustrate his genuine “desire [for] the infinite”.41 Although Marxism is right to suggest that the human person needs to become as God to find satisfaction, it is only Christianity that provides the means for the human person to obtain “the status of divinity”.42 Liberation comes from genuine deification, salvific communion in God.

Ratzinger suggests therefore that the true path of freedom is not in the direct transformation of history and society by human means. Rather, liberation is the transformation of the person through grace. Genuine liberation involves the supernatural transcendence of the sinful state of the human person, history and society and the overcoming of the limitations inherent to human nature. Redemption is essentially deification, which amounts to participation in the life of God, here and now in the sacraments and the liturgy of the Church, but ultimately in the definitive gift of eternal life after death.

5.4 Christology and Soteriology

There is an intrinsic connection between soteriology and Christology. To understand Ratzinger’s claim that redemption is the discipleship of Jesus, which entails communion with him and the consequent surpassing of oneself (5.2), who and what Jesus is must be understood. This in turn depends upon Chalcedonian dogma, which show Christ to be perfectus Deis, perfectus homo united in the Word. Salvation is

39 Ratzinger, “Le Christianisme sans peine”.
40 De Lubac, *Brief Catechesis*, 173; Ratzinger, “Le Christianisme sans peine”.

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participation in the divinity of Christ, mediated by his humanity. He is the end to which the natural desire for supernatural fulfilment is directed. Christ is the perfection of humanity and participation with him as the second Adam confers divine Sonship upon the participant. Adoption as a ‘son’ of God gives the child of God genuine subject-hood, which is not political. Instead, redemption involves in some way the renunciation of nature and its limits. By entering history, Christ’s redemption was not static but led to the Cross, the means by which natural deficiency, and sin and death are overcome. The Cross is central to the redemption and to be redeemed means participation in it.

5.4.1 Chalcedonian Christology and Soteriology

The Christology presupposed in Ratzinger’s soteriology is the Chalcedonian Christology elaborated in Chapter 3. To step beyond one’s natural limit in communion with Christ is to participate in his divinity via the medium of his humanity. It is to be joined to the service of Christ, which follows from his nature as Son of God, incarnated in his life, death, resurrection and ascension.

The connection between soteriology and Christology is evident in the unity of the theologies of the Incarnation and the Cross (3.2.1 and 3.2.2). Salvation depends on what Christ is and what he does (in the paschal mystery). The theology of the incarnation focuses on Christ’s nature as Son, whereas that of the Cross on his action. For Ratzinger, there is an intrinsic unity to what these reveal concerning the Redemption. According to Ratzinger, Christ’s being as Son is to serve in an “actualitas of pure service”, which in the Incarnation culminates in being the “sacrificed man”. As Word, Jesus is moreover a communication deriving from another and is to be heard by others. The Son, is a thus “totality of ‘from’ and ‘for’”, which becomes manifested in his death on the Cross. Christ is Proexistenz and the

43 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 210-211, 241. On the unity of Christology and soteriology see Ratzinger, Journey to Easter, 96, Behold the Pierced One, 32. See Pieper, “Hope – of What?” 117-118 for a pithy example of the connection between eternal life and the Resurrection of Christ in his account of hope.
44 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 210, 241; quotation on 210.
“completely loving one whose being is both existence for others and existence for life itself”. 45 To be Son is to be oriented to service, incarnated in the Cross.

The unity between the theologies of the Incarnation and the Cross invokes a Trinitarian theocentrism, which makes explicable the Christological foundation of soteriology. Ratzinger argues “that the radical Christship of Jesus presupposes the Sonship and that the Sonship includes the Godship”. 46 Jesus is Son and Christ. He is Son, who derives everything from the Father. He is the Incarnate Saviour, who sacrifices himself for humanity as the manifestation in the ‘flesh’ of the Son’s mission of being ‘from’ and ‘for’. Understanding Jesus as Messiah depends upon him being conceived as Son of the Eternal Father.

Chalcedonian dogma is thus centrally relevant to understanding the nature of the redemption. If salvation consists in participating in the divine nature, humanity’s participation in it is through being joined to Christ, whose existence as Son made flesh culminated in the Cross. We ‘become ‘God’ by participating in Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross. Soteriology, Christology and Trinitarian theology are all interrelated. If Jesus’ being is characterised as pure service, then he is also love, which is uniquely God’s life. Consequently, he is to be seen as the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father in the Holy Spirit.

5.4.2 Human Nature is Perfected in Christ

Christ, as perfect God, is the perfection of humanity. He is the end to which human nature is directed. He is the site of the redemption of humanity. Communion with God is participation in the Christ, who is the glorification and full realisation of humanity. Human nature, which is congenitally open to God, is directed to and fulfilled in Christ.

Ratzinger sees the human person as fully intelligible only in the light of Christ. As Rowland points out in respect of Ratzinger’s reading of Gaudium et Spes, 22,

45 Benedict, New Song for the Lord, 15.
46 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 211
“Christology is deemed necessary for any adequate anthropology”.

True insight into the nature of the human person, his supernatural end and the means by which that is brought about only arises in the light of Christ. Ratzinger rejects – and thus distances himself from an anthropocentrism which focuses on the historical Jesus to the exclusion of his divinity – the suggestion that Christology should be sundered apart from theology in the name of “humanism and anthropology”. For him, the human person becomes fully such to the extent that he is united to God. Consequently, “radical humanism and faith in the God who reveals himself” should not be contrasted but “meet and even merge” in consideration of Christ. Genuine anthropology is Christological. Christ, understood in Chalcedonian terms, is the mediator of salvation and the means by which human nature is transformed, simultaneously healed and elevated.

Human nature is incomplete without reference to Christ. Against a neo-scholastic view positing a human nature complete in itself, Ratzinger rejects the idea of natura pura. He suggests that the Genesian idea of the human person as in the image of God “only receives its full meaning” in the New Testament’s presentation of “Christ as the definitive Adam”. Christ is recognised as the “the definitive human being”. The “two-Adams doctrine” underlying Ratzinger’s anthropology understands the first Adam to be oriented to fulfilment in the Second Adam, the “Body of Christ” and the state in which God will be ‘all in all’. The consequence of the ‘two Adams doctrine’ is that “creation is, as it were, a preliminary sketch that points to him”. Human nature is oriented to Christ as the perfection of humanity. The innate orientation to beatitude is fulfilled in the concrete form in the figure of Christ the eschatological Adam (3.3.1).

Human nature is thus given an eschatological, Christo-centric reading. It is only made “intelligible in eschatology” and humanity’s future is only fully realised in the

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47 Rowland, Faith, 32.
48 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 211.
50 Ratzinger, In the Beginning, 48.
51 Ratzinger, Unity of Nations, 13, In the Beginning, 49.
52 Ratzinger, In the Beginning, 48.
final Adam.53 Christ alone is “the complete answer to the question about what the human being is”.54 Christ is the means by which “the human race may come into its future”, which it cannot do “unaider”.55 In him does the “deepest meaning” of the “rough draft” that is created humanity appear.56 Therefore, Christ as the Second Adam is the “true fulfilment of the idea of the human person”, the “exemplary man” and the “fulfillment of the whole concept of humanity”.57 Human life, made for communion with God, “comes to its highest possibility” when joined to God, who in the Person of Jesus Christ is joined to humanity.58 In Christ so perfecting nature, the ‘smooth transition’ between the immortality that belongs to the human person by nature and communion in Christ, is realised in grace through Christ.

A Christological, and necessarily Trinitarian, conception of personhood reveals how the human person is perfected in Christ. Ratzinger argues the human being only “truly” becomes a “person” or a “self” when open to the fullness of being and “its Ground”, in its “relatedness …to God”.59 The means for this natural, spiritual relatedness to become dialogue with the Father is Christ.60 Christ is the Word who receives his entire “being from someone and [is communicated] toward someone”.61 As such, his existence is characterised by “the absolute openness of existence”.62 The Person par excellence, who is open to the ground of all being, is the very ground of all being. In his Person, he is characterised by “complete relativity of existence toward the one who sent him” and is open to the reception of divine Being from the Father and its communication in the Holy Spirit back to the Father.63 The human person made in the image of God possesses a constitutive openness towards God which is perfected by grace. Through Christ the human person is given a “grace-
filled participation in the divine nature”. Grace enables the person to participate in Christ the Son’s personhood, who is ‘toward’ God the Father by nature, and in that way find salvation (c.f. 4.3.1).

The grace of baptism enables the human to become a ‘person’ in a Christological and Trinitarian sense. Tracey Rowland and Conor Sweeney write from a Communio perspective on human personhood. While recognising that the human being by nature is already a person made for God, they suggest with only an element of hyperbole that it is in baptism that the human being first becomes a “real person…a theological person because now a Christological person”. They argue that the spousal union of Christ with his Church bears fruit in the begetting of children of the Father through baptism. In such begetting they become “who [they] are meant to be”. What can be described as a natural desire for ‘personhood’ is fulfilled in baptism. As de Gaál points out in respect of Ratzinger’s eschatology, human beings have a heavenly destiny, becoming “fully what they are” in the heaven that baptism foreshadows. In baptism, the human being is “I, but no longer I”: the human individual remains but is “transformed” in Christ. The person is “re-birthed”, becoming a new creation. He becomes another Christ, another ‘son’ of the Father.

Ratzinger adopts therefore the basic Christian claim that Christian life involves divine filiation and incorporation, by adoption, into Christ and his relationship with the Father, and his Body. A Christian possesses the concomitant ‘right’ to claim what is proper to Christ by nature, namely to receive the divine life from the Father. Genuine deification and therefore redemption occurs, not by ourselves claiming divinity through a Promethean violence and our rationality, work and supposed independence, but through a “praxis of receiving” (as opposed to a praxis of activism), in which we allow ourselves to be claimed as ‘sons’ in a dialogical

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64 Pieper, Faith, Hope, Love, 99.
65 Rowland and Sweeney, “Elephants at the Synod,” 506, see also n19 (emphases in original).
66 Rowland and Sweeney, “Elephants at the Synod,” 505-506 (quotation on 506) (emphasis in original).
67 De Gaál, Christocentric Shift, 283.
69 Rowland and Sweeney, “Elephants at the Synod,” 505.
relationship with the Father. Only by such divine adoption as heirs of God can the human person claim equality with God, because in the Son, God became man, allowing humanity to claim sonship in God. If immortal life consists in dialogue with God, the manner by which such dialogue occurs is through participation in the eternal dialogue of the Son with the Father, in the Holy Spirit. This occurs in the communal “We” of the ‘body of Christ’, in which each person is united by “becoming a son with the Son”, the filii in Filio of a soteriology of transformative deification. Authentic deification occurs in the reception of divine life via incorporation into the sonship of the Divine Son.

5.4.3 Genuine Subject-hood is Christological and not Political

Casting redemption as participation in the divinity of the Son leads Ratzinger to conceive personal subject-hood in Christological terms, revealing a cleavage between himself and political and liberation theologies. Those theologies emphasised becoming a subject, implicitly understood as a political intra-historical notion, as the object of hope. Ratzinger acknowledges that the human person is “a true subject in his own right”. Contrary to a political notion of the subject, however, the basis for “genuine subjecthood” is divine filiation, the process of grace whereby the person “has become a son”. One is a subject to the extent that one is incorporated into Christ’s filial relationship with the Father.

Being a subject is cast by Ratzinger in personalist terms and not within a political or inner-historical framework. Directly contrary to the Concilium animus directed against personalism (1.2.4), for Ratzinger the ‘rights’ attaching to the human being as a child of God derives “from the ‘Thou’ of God”. The grace of divine adoption is what entails authentic “[d]ivinization”, an “emancipation” involving participation in

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70 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 64-65, 157 (quotation on 157).
71 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 65, 159 (quotation on 159). C.f. Introduction The expression “sons with the Son” is in Gaudium et Spes, 22. See Burkhardt and Lopez, Ordinary Life and Holiness, 89, and generally 88n94. In this context, ‘son’ evidently refers to both male and female human persons. Reference to ‘sonship’ relates to the Pauline terminology of divine adoption, which involves the transference of the rights of inheritance belonging to Christ.
72 Metz considers hope to be a praxis oriented to human beings becoming ‘subjects in God’s presence’ and that Gutiérrez considered God’s liberating action to involve enabling the poor and oppressed to become ‘personal subjects’, who thereby take charge of history (1.2.3).
73 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 66.
74 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 66.
75 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 66.
the Kingdom, itself understood in Christo-centric terms. Ratzinger’s use of ‘emancipation’ is deliberate and sets him apart from immanentist understandings of that term (1). Consistent with a view of nature and grace in which the notion of gift is given conceptual priority, Ratzinger argues that such participation in the Kingdom is the result of a gift and not the product of human politics. ‘Emancipation’ is not to be seen as a consequence of historical, social and political liberation. Rather it is a grace incorporating people into the life of God and hence his sovereign reign, in which the Kingdom consists (3.3.2).

Being a subject is soteriological, which reveals the non-political and gracious character of the Kingdom. Although the human person is a genuine subject of the Kingdom, he does not “produce the Kingdom of God from his own resources”. Instead, the human person “inhabits time” as “an acting subject”, where acting is understood in terms of the acceptance or rejection of grace. The primary significance of our historical existence is to accept or reject grace. Consequently, the principal categories of the Kingdom’s proclamation are the urgency of the call to repentance and response to the offer of grace, centred on Christ and not political action. So understood, the Kingdom “does not consist in a modification of our earthly circumstances” but is, rather, found in those who have been touched by the “finger of God” and have “allowed themselves to be made God’s sons and daughters”. The Kingdom cannot be conceptualised in political terms and be realised, therefore, in a “political process”, such as a political reading of the Kingdom might suggest. The Christian ‘subject’ is a member of the Kingdom of Christ, the major concern of which is to call the sinner to repentance. It is not to establish definitively the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

76 Ratzinger, _Eschatology_, 66.
77 Ratzinger, _Eschatology_, 66.
78 Which is why Our Lady is the fullness of grace; in her ‘Yes’ is grace concretised: c.f. Ratzinger, _Introduction to Christianity_, 280.
79 Ratzinger, _Eschatology_, 29-30, 62 (quotations on 62).
80 Ratzinger, _Eschatology_, 58.
5.4.4  Death and the Cross in the Redemption

Consistent with a Christological notion of the subject and a view that the Kingdom cannot be brought about through human effort, Ratzinger presents a cruciform and not a political soteriology. At the centre of Ratzinger’s soteriology is the Cross, understood as the instrument by which the grace of repentance and divine adoption finds its fullness. It is also the means by which death and limitations of history are overcome, a reality that relativises the possibilities of inner-historical improvement.

Ratzinger considers there to be an intrinsic connection between authentic redemption and the passage from life to death through the Cross. The “transformation” involved in becoming a child of God, according to Ratzinger, “can only take place through death”. Consequently, the realisation of “salvation in its fullness” in the Kingdom of God is inextricably linked with the question of dying and the Cross, in which the Son’s “gesture of gratitude and self-offering”, as constitutive of his very nature as Son, is radically actualised. Liberation and divinisation for humanity is achieved through Christ’s “obedience on the Cross”. Ratzinger quotes the Christological hymn of Philippians, which relays Christ’s renunciation of the prerogatives of his divinity in the act of loving obedience to the Father (2:5-11). Authentic equality with the Godhead for humanity comes through the Death that conquers death through love.

Nature’s perfection in grace occurs thus via the medium of Christ’s Cross. The ‘smooth transition’ that Ratzinger detects between the natural spiritual orientation to beatitude and fulfilment in divine adoption ought not, as a result, be understood as an immanentist rendering of the nature-grace relationship. The genuine “salvation of the world”, being focused on the crucified Christ, does not derive “from a transformation of the world or a political system that sets itself up as absolute and divine”, irrespective of how necessary sober political and economic improvements are. The novelty of Christ in relation to nature lies instead in the Cross as the means by which

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81 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 62.
82 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 62, 64.
83 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 64.
84 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 63-64.
liberation is wrought. The natural desire remains unfulfilled without the transformation of death and the Cross.

The importance of the Cross for genuine human fulfilment is connected to the reality of original sin, which needs to be overcome. A precondition for the human person’s natural desire for the supernatural to find fulfilment in a postlapsarian world is the Cross. According to Ratzinger, Christ’s Cross, as “the humanly effected death of God”, is “the shocking revelation of the sinister destructive power of human wickedness”. The human person’s ‘second nature’ (5.2) is a concupiscent “vainglory”, which masks the “divine glory” within the human person. The pointless counter-‘glory’ constructed by human pride constitutes a barrier between the spirit’s innate proximity and orientation to God, and the divine life offered to the human person. The ‘smooth transition’ between nature and grace is the barrier of sinful ‘nature’. For grace to elevate the human person above his natural capacity to the divine life, it must travel through and crack the “hard shell” of this ‘second nature’. Ratzinger argues thus that there can be “no grace without the Cross”. For the human person to come into his destiny, “the endless promise that lies within him”, he must undergo the Cross. The Cross defeats the sin that mars but does not destroy the spirit’s orientation to God.

The perfection of human nature in Christ occurs through the Cross. Christ, via the Paschal Mystery, is the means by which humanity ‘passes over’ from death to eternal life. The human person must participate in Christ’s Passover in order for his ‘second nature’ to be overcome and victory to be won, which provides the “victorious gladness” that is the fruit of Christian hope. Only in the “humanity of the Second Adam”, which underwent the Cross, can “true humanity” be uncovered. The “true humanity of man” is the “humanity of God”, taken on in the Incarnation. However,

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86 Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 187-188 (quotation on 188). There is an open question regarding whether the Word would have become incarnate if Adam had not sinned: c.f. 187-188n167.
87 Ratzinger, “*Gratia Praesupponit Naturam*,” 159.
88 Ratzinger, “*Gratia Praesupponit Naturam*,” 159.
89 Ratzinger, “*Gratia Praesupponit Naturam*,” 159.
90 Ratzinger, “*Gratia Praesupponit Naturam*,” 159, 161 (quotation on 161).
91 Ratzinger, “*Gratia Praesupponit Naturam*,” 160.
92 Ratzinger, “*Gratia Praesupponit Naturam*,” 159. At play again in this soteriology is the mystery expressed at Ephesus and Chalcedon concerning the ontological unity of Christ, in which his humanity subsists in the ontological density of the Word (Introduction, Chapter 3).
93 Ratzinger, “*Gratia Praesupponit Naturam*,” 161.
The mystery of Christ, as de Lubac points out, involves not just the Resurrection but his death. Resurrection comes solely after the death of Christ.

The claim that human nature finds its perfection through the Paschal Mystery reveals that redemption comes via a kind of turning away from ‘nature’ through death to self. It rests on what Ratzinger describes as the “fundamental law of the spirit”, in which the human person can only come to himself by going forth (the Latin \( \textit{exi} \)) from himself in an ‘exodus’.\(^{95}\) This ‘fundamental law’, given incohe shape in the erotic experience of ecstasy (4.3.7), crystallises in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, who tells his followers that salvation depends upon losing oneself (Mt 10:39; c.f. Mt 16:25). Thus, the ‘basic law of human existence’ is paralleled in “the definitive fundamental law of revelation”, which concerns the exodus of humanity out of its sinful state into the divine life.\(^{96}\)

The Cross of Christ and his Resurrection give meaning to “the age-old wisdom of humans” concerning the need to die to oneself with a hope that true life will thereby be realised.\(^{97}\) For human beings “to be themselves” and find fulfilment, they “must die with Christ like a grain of wheat” (Jn 12:24).\(^{98}\) Participation in the Paschal Mystery entails the denial of oneself and the picking up of one’s Cross in following Jesus.\(^{99}\) The ‘meaning of one’s own dying’ is thus found in the death of Christ, who is “the grain of wheat which fell into the ground” and bears fruit in the life of the Church.\(^{100}\) The fulfilled human person is the one who participates in Christ’s Cross and thereby the Resurrection.

The notion that the human spirit must undergo the Cross to reach its supernatural end ‘beyond itself’ is contrary to a naturalistic ethic, which rejects the Cross as the instrument of salvation (c.f. 1 Cor 1:23). Ratzinger contends with Nietzsche’s notion that the Cross represents the “crucifixion of man”, because it denies humanity and

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95 Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 160-161 (quotation on 161).
96 Ratzinger, “\textit{Gratia Praesupponit Naturam},” 161.
97 Benedict, \textit{New Song for the Lord}, 21
98 Ratzinger, \textit{In the Beginning}, 49, “Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology,” 115.
100 Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 45.
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as characterised by sin, needs to be surpassed, in order to overcome the fall and to enter into the divine-human life of Christ, who transposes the ‘merely natural’ into its state of fulfilment.

Ratzinger is indebted to de Lubac for the idea that human nature follows a pattern of exodus and requires conversion in order to come to fulfilment. He quotes de Lubac’s comment that there “is no smooth transition from a natural to a supernatural love”. 108 De Lubac’s use of ‘smooth transition’ contrasts with Ratzinger’s employment of the very same phrase in suggesting that there is an organic connection between nature and grace (4.3.5). Ratzinger shares however with de Lubac the “spiritual dialectic”, which suggests that supernatural love is only possible through a process of “Exodus and ecstasy”. 109 The spiritual dialectic claims that for the human person “[t]o find himself, man must lose himself”, consisting in the letting go of ‘self-sufficiency’. 110 Despite recognising an intrinsic openness to grace in the human person, Ratzinger evidently considers human nature to be in need of radical conversion beyond itself.

Intrinsic to a spiritual exodus pattern is an almost violent renunciation of nature. According to de Lubac, entailed in the “passing over” of Christ’s Pasch:

*is a transmutation of the whole being, a complete separation from oneself...[and] a denial of all natural values in their natural existence and a renunciation even of all that had previously raised the individual above himself.* 111

Ratzinger shares the ecstatic view of the exodus which Christ undergoes on the Cross, and the transmutation and separation it involves. The passion of Christ’s love involves the “pain of being torn apart”, and contains “the ec-stasy of man outside himself, in which he is stretched out infinitely beyond himself, torn apart, as is it were, far beyond his capacity for being stretched”. 112 The Cross is the instrument which effects the spirit’s movement ‘beyond itself’. It is the means by which human

112 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 289.
nature is turned ‘inside out’, as it were, and opened to the fulfilment of the spirit’s innate orientation ‘beyond itself’.  

Entailed in the doctrine of the Cross is the claim therefore that nature in some way must be renounced, not to the point of denying its integrity, but so as to perfect it by radically surpassing its limits. The arguable tension between Ratzinger’s defence of the continuing integrity of nature and his apparent adoption of a Lubacian renunciation and surpassing of nature, which might superficially have Barthian overtones, is overcome in the realisation that grace perfects and does not destroy it. Grace perfects the nature of the spirit because, according to the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist view, the spirit’s own latent orientation is to surpass itself and find supernatural fulfilment in participation in the life of God. The first Adam necessarily points to the Second Adam, the ‘last man’. Human nature in itself reaches its ultimate perfection only in Christ, which implies an imperfection on the part of the first Adam. His preternatural gifts were not supernatural, in the sense of the possession of definitive eternal, divine life (he was free to sin and suffer its consequences). In this regard, Ratzinger leaves open the question of whether the Incarnation would have occurred without sin (Scotus’s idea of the praedestinatio absoluta Christi). Nevertheless, he quotes the comment of Aquinas that, prior to the Fall, “man believed, explicitly in Christ’s Incarnation, in so far as it was intended for the consummation of glory.” As Ratzinger avers, perfected humanity is God’s humanity, the joining of human nature to the divine in Christ as expressed at Chalcedon. The grace of the Incarnation is thus what perfects humanity. Only in union with the divinity does human nature surpass and perfect itself.

Ratzinger does not however merely adopt a theology of the Incarnation. The renunciation of nature entails especially a rejection of sinful nature. In Aquinas, who according to Ratzinger “[sees] a strong relationship between the Incarnation of Christ and man’s fall into sin”, is the notion that Christ’s Passion and Resurrection were

113 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 289.
necessary to deliver humanity from sin. Although what is purely natural to the human person needs elevation and completion, and is perfected in Christ the Second Adam, what needs destruction is the ‘second nature’ of sin, which occurs in the Cross. Ratzinger may not think that the ‘tearing apart’ involved in the Cross would have been necessary for natural spirit without sin to find its perfection, although the logic of his position is that the spirit constitutively needs to surpass itself in some sort of ecstatic exodus. In the concrete historical order, in which sin is part of reality, such a ‘transmutation of being’ is, however, necessary. Human nature and human existence as it is cannot be left in itself to find fulfilment. It is perfected in Christ and his Cross, which involves a violent letting-go of merely natural values and an acceptance of death as the means of passing from life to death.

5.5 Soteriology and the Hope-History Relationship

Pieper and Ratzinger’s accounts of hope present it as oriented to redemption (2.3.5). In positing deification as the transformative redemption of the human person, Ratzinger offers a soteriology, which matches his account of hope. Thus redemption for Pieper and Ratzinger involves salvation and deification, the object of genuine human hoping. It responds to the human person’s natural desire, and corresponding hope, for immortality (2). A soteriology of this sort is necessarily eschatological. Seeking God’s face, the vision of which is the fullness of immortality and therefore beatitude, is an “eschatological orientation” that contains the “transcendence of time and eschatological hope”.

Eschatological hope is thus directed towards trans-historical, eternal deification grounded in a soteriology, which ‘renounces’ the merely natural.

116 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 187-188n167: Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, II-II, 2, 7, “…before the state of sin, man believed, explicitly in Christ’s Incarnation, in so far as it was intended for the consummation of glory, but not as it was intended to deliver man from sin by the Passion and Resurrection, since man had no foreknowledge of his future sin”: “Nam ante statum peccati homo habuit explicitam fidem de Christi incarnazione secundum quod ordinabatur ad liberationem a peccato per passionem et resurrectionem, quia homo non fuit praescius peccati future.” Oakes, Infinity Dwindled to Infancy, 205-209.
117 C.f. St Catherine of Siena, The Dialogue of St Catherine of Siena (Vancouver: Eremitical Press, 2009), 73: “Every perfection and every virtue proceeds from charity, and charity is nourished by humility, which results from the knowledge and holy hatred of self, that is, sensuality.” Quoted in John Senior, The Restoration of Christian Culture (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 86.
118 Ratzinger, On the Way to Jesus Christ, 22.
What Pieper and Ratzinger consider is the content of fundamental hope as oriented to an extra-worldly object, is matched in a view of the supernatural in which human fulfilment involves the overcoming of worldly promises of happiness through the Cross. Economy and politics are therefore not the basis for hope. Instead, hope is connected to the Cross, which necessarily limits the claims that politics can make regarding the liberation of the human person and points, rather, to a path of liberation as flowing from renunciation of self. Christian hope “points less and less to an earthly and political power”.\textsuperscript{119} Rather “the passion [is] an essential element of hope”.\textsuperscript{120} The hope for undying love, which conquers death, is quenched on the Cross, in which an “act of love” given divine power and communicated to humanity, “prevailed and death fled vanquished”.\textsuperscript{121} Genuine hope and eschatological expectation is therefore centred on the crucified Christ, foolishness to the Greeks and scandal to the Jews (1 Cor 1:23).

Immanentist understandings of salvation history underappreciate the necessity of the Cross for genuine salvation. For Ratzinger, “an exodus without the cross” does not lead “to the resurrection but to an earthly utopia”.\textsuperscript{122} Christ’s liberating work in his Passover “neither refers to a geographical nor to a political way”.\textsuperscript{123} Contrary to a view of liberation seen as purely political, which understands the Old Testament Exodus in political terms, Christ universalises the Exodus undertaken by Moses. He is not a political parallel of him.\textsuperscript{124} The means by which the object of hope is achieved is the Cross, not economy or politics. This section explores, therefore, Ratzinger’s theology of politics as bounded by eschatology, and his critique of a Rahnerian view of salvation history, which informs the \textit{Concilium} view of the hope-history relationship and its tendency to conflate politics with eschatology.

\textsuperscript{119} Ratzinger, “Grace and Vocation without Remorse,” 173.  
\textsuperscript{120} Ratzinger, “Grace and Vocation without Remorse,” 173.  
\textsuperscript{122} Benedict, \textit{New Song for the Lord}, 20.  
\textsuperscript{123} Benedict, \textit{New Song for the Lord}, 17.  
\textsuperscript{124} Ratzinger, \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 251. See also \textit{Jesus(1)}, 1-6, in which Christ is understood as the ‘new Moses’ because he encounters God ‘face-to-face’ in a unique way.


5.5.1 Politics as Bounded by Eschatology

Ratzinger’s theology of politics is informed by his understanding of the nature and grace relationship, in which the limits of human nature as such and as marked by sin, and the consequent necessity of the Cross to redemption, are recognised. Ratzinger elaborates a theology of politics, which although not extrinsicist respects the relative autonomy of faith and politics, and delimits their respective spheres. He opposes a collapsing of the orders of nature and grace, and a conception of the Kingdom of God as realisable by political means. As seen, he detects in political theology a mingling of faith and politics, which runs the risk of turning the eschaton into utopia.\footnote{Peter Samuel Kucer argues that Ratzinger “while acknowledging an interplay of nature with grace, seeks to maintain … each’s integrity”: *Truth and Politics: A Theological Comparison of Joseph Ratzinger and John Milbank* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), text accompanying n142 in Chapter 5 of that work.} He presents instead a view of politics as relativised by eschatology. He does not see politics as effecting eschatological reality.

To be clear, Ratzinger does not promote an entirely extrinsic reading of the relationship between faith and politics. He presents a reading of the relationship between eschatology and utopia, which acknowledges an underlying unity in differentiation between faith and politics. Politics, like nature (and reason), ultimately must transcend and ‘renounce’ itself for fulfilment.\footnote{C.f. Rodney Howsare, “Not Peace, but a Sword: How Balthasar Changed My Mind,” in *How Balthasar Changed My Mind: Fifteen Scholars Reflect on the Meaning of Balthasar for Their Own Work*, eds. Rodney A Howsare and Larry S Chapp (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2008), 12.} For Ratzinger, eschatology bounds any human, earthly activity including politics, and reminds humanity of its transcendent destiny. Eschatology is a “statement of faith”, involving theological reason.\footnote{Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 224-225 (quotation on 224).} Eschatology is therefore not itself a “political goal” but assures history of its meaning, by pointing to the prospect of its perfection outside itself.\footnote{Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 232.} Eschatology, as theological and Christological (and therefore ontological), is allied to “the tradition of Platonic thought”.\footnote{Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, 233.} For Ratzinger, an apocalyptic theology of history – and it could be added, eschatologically driven theologies of hope – recedes in importance when it is understood that eschatology, in proclaiming Christ’s Resurrection and the promised sharing of creation in that Resurrection, is primarily...
concerned with belief in Christ.\textsuperscript{130} Eschatology concerns not any particular philosophy of history, but, as seen above, is theocentric and Christological (3).

Politics is informed by faith, even if politics is not itself eschatological. Eschatology points to “values as realities” by encouraging reason to extend beyond the merely empirical and to search for the ontological reality that transcends it.\textsuperscript{131} In this way, faith reminds the political realm of an underlying “core of humanity” and “the genuine common good” – that is, the \textit{mores} essential to a healthy polity – and the supra-historical destiny of nature.\textsuperscript{132} Faith does not however address politics in the manner of dictating specific outcomes. It avoids thus the “irrationality” of chiliasm, by insisting that the eschaton is a trans-historical reality.\textsuperscript{133} In reminding politics that it does not contain immanently the seeds of its own perfection, eschatology ensures that politics remains within its own bounds and does not seek to arrogate eschatological claims for itself. Thus, in contrast to political theology, Ratzinger argues that politics is not part of eschatology but a subset rather of moral theology. It is concerned with the moral life and development of persons and communities, and is not an attempt to instantiate eschatological reality.\textsuperscript{134}

In the light of eschatology, a genuine understanding of ‘utopia’ emerges. For Ratzinger, ‘utopia’ involves an ongoing search for justice, a search not ever fully achieved but only “asymptotically” touched.\textsuperscript{135} Contrary to Bloch’s and popular notions of utopia, Ratzinger argues that ‘utopia’, strictly considered, is not future-directed or revolutionary. Rather, it is the philosophical attempt in the present to direct “practical reason within the framework of ontological thought”.\textsuperscript{136} Utopia relates to ontology and seeks God’s justice, revealing the ultimate origin of all things in him. Ratzinger is, however, careful to limit the claims of utopia because the norms it seeks can never be perfectly realised on earth. Utopia is not an attempt to realise the supra-historical ‘future’ promised in Christian eschatology but the never-ending search for justice.

\textsuperscript{130} Ratzinger, \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 233.
\textsuperscript{131} Ratzinger, \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 232-233, 236 (quotation on 236).
\textsuperscript{132} Ratzinger, \textit{Faith and Politics}, 104, 150 (quotation on 104), \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 237-238.
\textsuperscript{133} Ratzinger, \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 236.
\textsuperscript{134} Ratzinger, \textit{Eschatology}, 59.
\textsuperscript{135} Ratzinger, \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 224, 237 (quotation on 237).
\textsuperscript{136} Ratzinger, \textit{Church, Ecumenism, and Politics}, 223-224 (quotation on 224).
Present in Ratzinger is also an Augustinian dialectic between the City of Man and the City of God, which denies that eschatological fulfilment can be found within the merely natural or historical. For Ratzinger, the City of God is an incipient, historical reality, pointing to a “heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22), which is the eschatological realisation of human, corporate unity.\(^{137}\) That unity cannot be found in history. From the time of Christ, within history, are “two poleis”.\(^ {138}\) Against the ancient, Orphic, pantheist notion that Zeus’s body included the universe and a Roman identification of the cosmos with the polis (and it can be suggested a Hegelian pantheistic understanding of history), Christianity suggested that the Church was “the new cosmopolis”.\(^ {139}\) The Church is, however, a reality transcendent of history. Incorporation into the Church involves participation in the “death-destiny of the Crucified One” and thus entails the “overcoming [of] the former merely natural human condition” and embrace of “the new ‘second’ humanness of the incarnate God”.\(^ {140}\) In short, the “two-poleis” doctrine relates to the ‘two Adams’ doctrine, in which nature is understood as pointing to Christ. The fulfilment of natural desire in Christ can only be realised in the surpassing and ‘renunciation’ of nature through the Paschal Mystery and the definitive establishment of the heavenly Jerusalem. The ‘new cosmopolis’ is announced in the Church and begun on earth eventually to replace the old earth.\(^ {141}\) It promises, however, a fulfilment not to be found on earth.

Matching a theology of hope, which posits the status viatoris and a supra-historical object of human hope and is grounded in an Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist account of the supernatural, is the insight that Christians are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem and while on earth, are pilgrims (4.4.2). Acknowledgment of the pilgrim state of Christian existence shows Christians to be in exile on earth. Simultaneously they are, however, members of the “new society which is the goal of their common pilgrimage and which is anticipated in the course of that pilgrimage”.\(^ {142}\) As a pilgrim, the Christian “is not therefore bound for an earthly city, but for the new City of God

\(^{141}\) Ratzinger, *Unity of Nations*, 17, 20 (quotation on 17).  
\(^{142}\) Benedict, *Spe Salvi*, n4.
that develops in the midst of this world”. Christians are “still en route” towards a heavenly commonwealth, “which is to come” (Heb 13:14; c.f. Phil 3:20). Consequently, Christians have taken on the mantle of Israel’s patriarchs in being “foreigners and resident aliens” whose orientation is “toward[s] their future fatherland”. Due to its exilic character, for Ratzinger, the Christian’s pilgrimage involves participation in the Cross as a necessary element of the “ascent to the heights of God” and “the realization of one’s own humanity”. Paralleling Ratzinger’s soteriology and consequential to the doctrine of the heavenly Jerusalem, in which the Cross takes a central place in the surpassing of nature, is the view that the Christian’s place in history is one of exile.

Being a citizen of a City whose consummation remains an eschatological promise relativises the possibility of historical fulfilment for Christians and to a degree sets the Christian in opposition to the City of Man. Entailed in the recognition that the Christian is in exile on earth is an “eschatological’ attitude”, which limits the claims of the state as well as the possibilities of history. To this extent, Ratzinger can be described as an “Eschatologist”, understood as one who reminds the Church that her ultimate destiny is eschatological and not historical, and warns against the totalising tendencies of an inner-historical focus. He sets himself against the reticence on the part of Christians to cite texts regarding the destination of humanity in a heavenly Jerusalem, in the face of Nietzschean and Marxist arguments “that time devoted to heaven is time wasted”. A hesitation to proclaim a heavenly destiny is grounded in a fear that to do so would be to distract humanity from fulfilling its “political”, “innerworldly task” and “alienate [him] from the earth”. For Ratzinger, this misconceives however the pilgrim character of the Church’s existence.

144 Ratzinger, Faith and Politics, 149.
146 Benedict XVI, “Homily for Palm Sunday”.
147 Ratzinger, Faith and Politics, 150. To this degree, Doyle applauds Ratzinger’s eschatological focus in Spe Salvi: “Thomistic Critique of an Augustinian Encyclical,” 352.
148 Ratzinger, Faith and Politics, 150.
Exclusive focus on the inner-historical can tend to a dangerous humanism. Ratzinger rejects a mere affirmation of humanism, even of what is highest in ‘natural’ humanity and rejects a humanism denuded of specific reference to Christ. He shares thus with de Lubac a suspicion of a humanism that avoids reference to the Christian mystery. De Lubac argues that “Christian humanism must be a converted humanism”. Following de Lubac, Ratzinger argues that humanism cannot simply be grounded on “what is noble about man”. Without conversion through Christ’s Cross, affirmation of the merely natural “eventually leads to man’s self-assertion and self-idolization and the refusal of God’s new reality”. Failure to recognise the ‘new reality’ of God’s action in Christ, can lead to humanity arrogating to itself or to history divine status. Instead, it is necessary to accept the new humanity found in Christ in order to “[unmask] as false the humanness that merely divinizes itself”. In short, any earthly political instantiation cannot claim divinity but remains always relative to the genuinely heavenly city. To hold otherwise creates a dangerous polity concerned with enforcing eschatological “purity”. A belief that human nature or human existence as such is perfectible can lead to an idolatrous elevation of human nature and eschatological view of politics. Politics instead is a task of moral theology, limited by the eschatological destiny of humanity.

5.5.2 Ratzinger’s Critique of a Rahnerian View of Salvation History in the Concilium Perspective on Hope and History

Ratzinger’s account of politics, informed by a view of natural desire as oriented beyond itself to a fulfilment in the Cross, contrasts with the failure of the theologies of futurity adequately to differentiate faith and politics. Arguably, this failure conceptually rests on the Rahnerian tendency to correlate the universal with the particularity of Christianity. Detecting dangers inherent to an unconverted humanism distinguishes Ratzinger’s soteriology from a Rahnerian-inflected one, which informs the Concilium position on hope and history. The privileged place given to the unique Christ by Ratzinger contrasts with the immanentalist tendency of Rahner’s theology of

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150 C.f. Ratzinger, Faith and Politics, 150.
151 Ratzinger, “Gratia Praesupponit Naturam,” 160 quoting de Lubac, Catholicism, 368.
154 Ratzinger, Unity of Nations, 14-15.
155 Meilaender, “Virtuous Evildoers”, 41. For Ratzinger, an “eschatological’ attitude” actually guarantees the health of the polity by establishing the boundaries of the Church and state: Faith and Politics, 150.
grace to conflate Christianity with the universal claims of philosophical reason. This section sets out Ratzinger’s critique of the Rahnerian theology of grace from soteriological and Christological perspectives. It will then suggest some ramifications of this criticism for the Concilium tendency to integrate world history and salvation history, and what can be achieved by politics.

Ratzinger’s soteriology is grounded in his view of the supernatural and is predicated on the recognition that humanity is in need of radical transformation to attain salvation. Ratzinger specifically critiques Rahner for acknowledging but failing in Foundations of Christian Faith to explore fully the implications of the principle of “Ek-stase”.156 According to Ratzinger, a Rahnerian theology of grace argues that redemption consists in the human person accepting “his [own] existence” (1.4).157 Against this view and the “Marxist-inspired theologies” that followed on from Rahner, Ratzinger argues that “reality as such – man as he is – cannot be the object of unconditional acceptance but rather bears within itself the seeds of a profound nonacceptance”.158 Accepting humanity “as it is in itself … is not redemption; it is damnation”.159 Instead, an ecstatic “spirituality of conversion” expresses the essence of soteriology.160 He argues that the “world’s salvation rests on the transcending of the world in its worldly aspect”, an argument that contrasts with Metz’s affirmation of the world in its worldliness (1.4.3).161 The insufficiency characteristic of human nature, and sin and death need to be overcome. Ratzinger possesses a view of redemption that accepts the radical novelty and transformative character of grace mediated through Christ, in contrast to a soteriology and Christology resting on the immanent capabilities of human nature and reason.

The tendency to equate salvation with the acceptance of the human person as he is, follows from Rahner’s use of transcendental philosophy, which relates to a Hegelian

156 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 169.
157 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 165.
158 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 168: “Granted, all this cannot be imputed to Rahner, and it would be unfair to hold an author responsible for the conclusion that others draw from his works unilaterally and against the whole tenor of his thought”. Nevertheless, “there is a certain logic” in the conflation of universal reason and Christianity flowing from Rahner’s work to liberation theology.
159 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 167.
160 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 169.
161 Ratzinger, Eschatology, 214.
philosophy of history. Ratzinger critiques Rahner and Gutiérrez on the grounds that they equate the universal with salvation and thus deify history in Hegelian terms. Ratzinger detects in Rahner an “intermingling of the universal and particular, of history and being”. 162 The supernatural existential is thus a form of what Ratzinger describes as the totalising “claim of gnosis”. 163 Ratzinger critiques Rahner for attempting to explain all of salvation history, God’s dealings with humanity, by reference to an all-encompassing philosophical system. Ratzinger argues that the transcendental lens through which Rahner understands human existence leads to an identification between Christianity and natural reason. He suspects that Rahner’s application of the “transcendental deduction” to a spiritual context, such that the human person comes into contact with Christ simply by “accept[ing] his [own] existence”, consists in “a resolution of the particular into the universal that is at variance with the newness of Christianity”. 164 He points out that Rahner constructs a “world formula” based on “necessary causes”. 165 To do so, however, is to commit “Hegel’s basic error” by suggesting that there is a “spiritual world formula”. 166 In Gutiérrez’s liberation theology, this Hegelian thrust is seen in the perception that Marxism is the expression of human reason. Its philosophy of history thus becomes determinative of the meaning of history, and its references to praxis become incorporated into liberation theology (1.4.2). It is paralleled also in Schillebeeckx’s understanding of the Church-world relationship and Metz’s political theology, in which world history and salvation history are seen in unitary terms. In contrast to the Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist view of the supernatural and analogical metaphysics, there is insufficient differentiation of nature and grace, history and being.

Ratzinger’s view of the nature-grace relationship, soteriology and Christology stands therefore opposed to a Rahnerian theology of grace. A Rahnerian account of grace misunderstands human freedom, at least as used by the Concilium perspective, because it “reduces Christian liberation to pseudoliberation” and downplays the

162 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 166.
163 Ratzinger, Nature and Mission of Theology, 29; c.f. 4.2.2 and Balthasar’s view of the supernatural existential: Ouellet, “Paradox and/or supernatural existential,” 269 quoting Balthasar, Theodramatik III, 354.
164 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 167.
165 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 169.
166 Ratzinger, Principles of Catholic Theology, 169.
novelty of Christ.\textsuperscript{167} It is tempted to view redemption as the confirmation of the dynamic of offer and acceptance inherent to human existence as such, grounded in the supernatural existential. Consequently, a popularised Rahnerianism sees Christ’s Paschal Mystery as “exemplary rather than efficacious”.\textsuperscript{168} The particular is seen merely as a confirmation of the universal and not the cause of redemption. Salvation is not the ‘renunciation’ of what is there in human existence as it is but rather its affirmation.

The result is the minimisation of the peculiarly Christian. As Balthasar avers, while Rahner remains affectively committed to the particularity of the Church, his transcendental, philosophical orientation “demands the relativisation of everything ecclesiastical in the name of an all-pervading grace”.\textsuperscript{169} Justifying grace is present anonymously in the human person without any consciously explicit connection to Christ and his Church.\textsuperscript{170} In contrast, for Ratzinger Christ is “the Event of the new and unexpected”.\textsuperscript{171} The human person “does not find salvation in a reflective finding of himself” but in undergoing the exodus of the Cross.\textsuperscript{172} Ratzinger would argue thus that grace is not an anonymous aspect of our being but is uniquely present in the Church, based on the singular mediation of Christ.

The \textit{Concilium} account of hope does not pay sufficient regard to the spirit’s orientation beyond itself and the particularity of Christianity. The Rahnerian tendency to identify the universal with Christianity is arguably reflected in its approach to hope and history, especially in liberation theology. An integrated view of liberation, in which the achievement of earthly goods is seen as part of salvation (1.5.3), contrasts with Ratzinger’s Christological soteriology, as well as his view of salvation as ‘already, not yet’. It also contrasts with Pieper’s notion that true hope might only emerge precisely when little hopes, directed to the attainment of earthly goods, are disappointed (2.3.1).

\textsuperscript{167} Ratzinger, \textit{Principles of Catholic Theology}, 167.
\textsuperscript{168} Rowland, \textit{Catholic Theology}, 63 quoting Nichols, \textit{Beyond the Blue Glass}, 112.
\textsuperscript{170} Balthasar, “Current Trends in Catholic Theology,” 80.
\textsuperscript{171} Ratzinger, \textit{Principles of Catholic Theology}, 170.
\textsuperscript{172} Ratzinger, \textit{Principles of Catholic Theology}, 171.
Despite their insistence on the distinction between history and eschatological reality, the *Concilium* perspective on hope and history conflates eschatology and history. In Metz’s political theology and Gutiérrez’s liberation theology, there is a risk eschatological reality is secularised, which relates to the “intermingling of history and being” in Rahner. Metz and Gutiérrez clearly adopt the Rahnerian tendency to conflate world history and salvation history (1.5), in which it can be said that the historical and ontological impermissibly converge. For example, Müller and Gutiérrez’s understanding of the relationship between the historical and eschatological conceives soteriology by reference to an immanent framework. Instead of being oriented to Christ and his Parousia in the liturgy and at the end of time, Müller and Gutiérrez consider that eschatological reality is manifested in the achievement of openly described ‘earthly goods’ (1.5.3). It is true that the achievement of earthly goods can be signs of God’s reign (c.f. Lk 4:16-21). Placing freedom, human dignity and so on as goals to be realised on earth runs however the risk of ‘immanentizing the eschaton’ and politicising Christianity in the name of utopia. It is but a short step from arguing that salvation is to be understood in integral terms, to the inappropriate politicisation of faith. Müller, for example, suggests that those involved “in groups that work for liberation [stand] on the side of the divine liberator”. Respectfully, this is too large a claim to be made in the realm of politics. It may not leave space for prudential disagreement over the merits of particular efforts to achieve ‘liberation’ understood in integrated terms. Moreover, concepts such as freedom, human dignity and justice are concepts whose content are not and cannot be definitively or exhaustively understood this side of eschaton. Accordingly, they can be filled by contestable secular idioms. In this regard, the interest of liberation theology, as well as Metz and Schillebeeckx, in political communities and praxis reveals a conflation of faith and politics, eschatology and history.

Despite this, Fiorenza defends political and liberation theology from the charge of immanentising soteriology based on the ‘eschatological proviso’ said to be utilised by these theologies (1.3.3, 1.5.2). In seeking to defend Gutiérrez against the charge 

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174 Gutiérrez and Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, 80.
175 C.f. Rowland, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition*. 

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of “politico-religious messianism”, he actually ends up however revealing the immanentist tendencies of liberation theology.\textsuperscript{176} According to Fiorenza, Gutiérrez argues that faith can only be a norm solely based on “a rational analysis of reality and through the mediation of a utopian ideal of what man should be”.\textsuperscript{177} Faith is conflated with immanent rationality and measured against a utopian ideal. The implicit reliance on Enlightenment ideals of rationality and appeals to utopia and the ‘new man’, lack any specific or necessary reference to a Christological reading of reason or the perfection of the human person. Instead, redolent of Rahner’s transcendental deduction of the particularity of Christianity into universal reason, utopia, understood as an ideal future state for society, is the rationalist guiding principle.

5.5.3 Conclusion

In summary, Ratzinger rejects a conflation of nature and grace, faith and politics. Although faith has something to say to politics, it does so by pointing out the limitations of the political and merely ‘natural’ realm. An Augustinian-Aegidian Thomist view of the nature-grace relationship and soteriology, in which the particularity of Christ and the need for nature’s transcendence is emphasised, contrast with the Rahnerian-inflected \textit{Concilium} view of the hope-history relationship, which overlays politics with specifically eschatological significance.

5.6 Conclusion

Ratzinger’s soteriology argues that it is Christ alone, in his novelty and particularity, who can draw human nature and history outside of themselves to fulfilment. Although asserting that human nature is directed to supernatural fulfilment, he maintains the distinction between the two orders of nature and grace, and between world history and salvation history. Necessary for their fulfilment is a salvific gift that can only be given at the hands of the divine, which heals wounded nature, and draws up and elevates the potentialities inherent to nature into participation in a new,

\textsuperscript{176} Fiorenza, “Political Theology and Liberation Theology,” 23.
\textsuperscript{177} Fiorenza, “Political Theology and Liberation Theology,” 23.
higher order of being. Ratzinger’s soteriology recognises that human nature as wounded by sin needs renunciation in a spirituality of the Cross to find fulfilment. Being Christological in shape, Ratzinger’s soteriology is allied to a Johannine incarnational (not Incarnationalist) theology, according to which human nature is consummated only in the joining of the human with the divine in the Incarnation of the Word. In itself, and not just as a result of sin, human nature needs surpassing in an Exodus pattern to come to its fullness. Christ is the embodiment of the distinctly novel action of the divine that perfects human nature’s orientation to supernatural fulfilment, an orientation that nevertheless depends upon something outside of itself for beatitude. In the real world of nature and grace, the passage to fulfilment is cruciform. For Ratzinger, the notion of the Passover, as involving death, entails a kind of denial of nature and the possibilities of profane history and politics. His view of nature and grace leads to a suspicion of any soteriological claims emphasising human capacity and immanentist means to achieve liberation. He rejects Marxist understandings of redemption and presents soteriology in a-political personalist terms, in which salvation consists in being adopted into the filiation of Christ. Politics is bounded by eschatology, which points history to its transcendent fulfilment outside itself.

Ratzinger thus avoids the problematic *Concilium* tendency to collapse the orders of nature and grace, downplay the need for Christ, elide the problem of death and give to human existence (and history, politics and reason) a capacity (the power to redeem) that it does not possess. Unlike the tendency of those who utilise Rahner’s theology of grace, in which the supernatural existential is a component, Ratzinger recognises that the natural inclination for supernatural fulfilment requires grace to be mediated through the Church. The revelation of God in Christ is not the confirmation of a dynamic operating within human existence already but the non-contingent, free and surpassingly unexpected act of God.
CONCLUSION

Tracey Rowland points out that the principal cleavage in post-conciliar theology turns on whether one prefers Balthasar or Rahner and the fundamental theologies they embody.1 Although not the principal foci of the current thesis, these authors can be taken generally to represent the competing ‘schools’ of theology dominant in the post-conciliar period, the Communio and Concilium perspectives. The thesis has not been specifically engaged in resolving the debate between the two, but has sought to offer from the Communio perspective an examination of the implications that flow from an adoption of one or the other starting point in fundamental theology represented in these schools and particular authors from them. Chief of those authors has been Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, whose work in important respects is indebted to Josef Pieper. They represent the Communio perspective. Arrayed against them are Edward Schillebeeckx, Johann-Baptist Metz and Gustavo Gutiérrez, as representative of an alternative Concilium fundamental theology. Behind each set are often the luminaries Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Karl Rahner respectively.

An examination of the ramifications flowing from the particular starting points in fundamental theology reveals the significance of which starting point is chosen. The thesis has examined such implications in reference to the hope-history debate, which has animated contemporary philosophy and theology, and has broader ramifications

1 Tracey Rowland, “A Catholic Appropriation of Romantic Themes,” in How Balthasar Changed My Mind: Fifteen Scholars Reflect on the Meaning of Balthasar for Their Own Work, eds. Rodney A Howsare and Larry S Chapp (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2008), 195: “When I arrived in Cambridge [to commence doctoral studies], I had a meeting with my supervisor, who asked me what type of Catholic I was, and before I had time to answer the general question, he asked specifically whether I preferred Rahner or Balthasar. This was the first time anyone had suggested to me that this really is the key question of post-conciliar Catholicism”. Ratzinger describes Balthasar’s Cordula, in which the Rahnerian tendency in theology is critiqued, as “…a classic of impartial polemics. This work worthily joins the great polemical works of the Fathers, which taught us to differentiate gnosis from Christianity.” See Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, “Communio: A program,” Communio 19(3) (Fall, 1992): 437, Hans Urs von Balthasar, The Moment of Christian Witness, trans. Richard Beckley (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), e.g. 100-113 and Kerr, Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians, 92.
in a culture intent in destroying the past for the sake of a utopian future. The hope-history debate concerns: how to conceive eschatological hope, its object and the extent of its possible realisation within history; human agency in bringing it about; the importance of metaphysics vis-à-vis praxis in understanding the nature of hope; the limitations of a Hegelian-Marxist dialectical view of history in theology; and the role of revelation and Christ, viewed in light of Chalcedonian dogma, in conceiving the content of eschatological hope as ‘already’ but ‘not yet’ fully realised. The *Communio* and *Concilium* perspectives offer vastly different answers to these questions. The former, rooted in a *Communio* fundamental theology, offers a vision of hope as oriented to extra-historical eternity and grounded in Christ, in which human nature is joined to the divine in the Person of the Word. The latter, founded on a marriage of Hegelian-Marxist emphasis on praxis, a low Christology and immanentist Rahnerian theology of grace, does not eschew the eschatological character of hope but view history and the secular as an important site for the realisation of eschatological goals, which become necessarily political and materialist.

Principal among the issues in fundamental theology touched upon herein has been the relationship between nature and grace, and the capacity for and manner in which the human being can receive revelation and the grace it promises. Present in the competing understandings of the hope-history debate are implicit appeals to a Lubacian view of the *Surnaturel* and a Rahnerian theology of grace. The author takes the view that these represent conflicting and importantly different reactions to the extrinsic reading of the relationship between nature and grace offered in the dominant pre-conciliar theology. Although both are ‘intrinsicist’ in recognising an intrinsic ordination to God in the human person (as he has been created in the natural desire or supernatural existential), they contribute ultimately different pictures of the human person, the nature of his capacity for God and how his orientation to fulfilment is realised. Positing a natural desire, combined with an analogical metaphysics, reveals the human person to be oriented ‘beyond himself’ to the ever-greater God. The supernatural existential, allied to a transcendental philosophy, tends to reveal the person to be fulfilled in simply accepting himself as God’s primary or ontologically prior ‘revelation’. Taking either as the starting point filters through to a view of whether hope is grounded in a restless desire for eschatological, eternal
fulfilment realised only in and through Christ, against the view that hope is mingled with the realisation of human, earthly goals.

The implications of the hope and history debate – and its connection to contemporary calls for ‘paradigm shifts’ and the application of a Hegelian dialectic in the ecclesiastical environment – call for a renewed discussion of the importance of fundamental theology and its importance for theology and the Church. The thesis should not be treated as an exhaustive treatment of the nature-grace relationship and the continuing debates swirling around de Lubac’s *Surnaturel*. Nor even should it be understood as a comprehensive resolution of the hope-history debate – although the preferred perspective of the author is apparent. Rather it should be taken as an illustration of the importance to all areas of theology of the positions taken in metaphysics, Christology and the nature-grace debate, with its necessarily corollary question of the role of Christ vis-à-vis nature. The foundational question in all theology ultimately concerns whether to begin with Christ in the particularity and singularity of the revelation of him or to begin with the human person in himself as he is and the universal philosophy (be it Kantian, Hegelian or Marxist) that such a starting point supposedly brings. It is hoped that the thesis has indicated the importance of the question and suggested the necessity of beginning with Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the measure of all human nature and fulfilment. +AMDG
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