

ASPECTS OF HOPE

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Abstract. In my paper, I am going to analyse some aspects of Jürgen Moltmann's reflections on the central position of eschatology for Christianity and on the essential dimension of hope for Christian believers. I shall show that in Moltmann's interpretation God is, first of all, the God of the promise. God reveals Himself as the God of the promise of resurrection for everybody, of the promise of the fulfilment of the kingdom of God, and of the promise of the renewal of the world. God's promise of the resurrection represents as such the opposition against the present dimension of death. The resulting emergence in the Christian believers of hope connected to a promise of a completely new dimension of future entails, in Moltmann's view, both a critical disposition of Christian believers towards the current conditions of the world and the strong intent to change it. Christian theology is, therefore, a theology implying a message of renewal of reality. For the individuals, the awareness that the new reality will come implies that the whole present dimension is exclusively a temporary state. The fullness of reality is not yet here; reality is waiting for its fulfilment. Thus, the central attitude of the individual who has hope is his living in the expectation of God's new creation. Through his living in the expectation of the new creation, the individual is able to see the shortcomings of the present and of the past. As a consequence of his capacity to see the shortcomings of reality, the hoping individual receives the impulse to modify reality itself. Hence, hope proves to be both the orientation for the individual's evaluation of reality and the source of the individual's action in reality.

Keywords: hope; Christian eschatology; theology of hope; Moltmann; God's promise.

1. INTRODUCTION

In my study, I would like to discuss the meaning and the implications of hope in the resurrection from the dead for the orientation and disposition of the individual towards himself and towards reality. The text I am going to refer to is Jürgen Moltmann's *Theology of Hope. On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian*

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Eschatology.¹ Throughout the investigation, we shall see that hope in the resurrection from the dead implies a transformation of the believer's mind:

- the individual believing in God's promise of the resurrection from the dead implies a complete modification of the individual's mind;
- the belief in the resurrection implies a change in the individual's interpretation of time, of reality and of history;
- this belief implies a modification of the interpretation of the position of the individual in reality;
- this belief implies a modification of the self-understanding of the individual.

Through the promise of resurrection from the dead, the individual becomes aware that his condition in reality is the condition of the wayfarer: the individual learns that his own nature is heading for the fulfilment of history. The individual is on the way towards his own fulfilment. He is not the contemplator of an already fulfilled reality, he is not the inhabitant of an already fulfilled destiny.

In order to clarify some of the subjects of the inquiry, I would like to begin my analysis with a quotation from Moltmann's work *Theology of Hope. On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*. Through the following quotation we can see that hope in the resurrection from the dead as such means, for the individual, a condition of conflict, of disagreement, of disharmony with reality as it is given. Hope in the future resurrection from the dead turns out to be, for the believer, an enlightenment as regards the failures of the present reality:

Present and future, experience and hope, stand in contradiction to each other in Christian eschatology², with the result that man is not brought into harmony and agree-

¹ For the original text see Jürgen Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung. Untersuchungen zur Begründung und zu den Konsequenzen einer christlichen Eschatologie*, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1977 [1964].

² As regards the meaning of eschatology for Christianity, Moltmann states that eschatology is the essence of Christianity: "[...] eschatology means the doctrine of the Christian hope, which embraces both the object hoped for and also the hope inspired by it. From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present. The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium of Christian faith as such, the key in which everything in it is set, the glow that suffuses everything here in the dawn of an expected new day. For Christian faith lives from the raising of the crucified Christ, and strains after the promises of the universal future of Christ. Eschatology is the passionate suffering and passionate longing kindled by the Messiah. Hence eschatology cannot really be only a part of Christian doctrine. Rather, the eschatological outlook is characteristic of all Christian proclamation, of every Christian existence and of the whole Church. There is therefore only one real problem in Christian theology, which its own object forces upon it and which it in turn forces on mankind and on human thought: the problem of the future. For the element of otherness that encounters us in the hope of the Old and New Testaments – the thing we cannot already think out and picture for ourselves on the basis of the given world and of the experiences we already have of that world – is one that confronts us with a promise of something new and with the hope of a future given by God." (*Theology of Hope. On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, New York, Harper & Row, 1991 [1967], p. 16; for the original text see *Theologie der Hoffnung. Untersuchungen zur Begründung und zu den Konsequenzen einer christlichen Eschatologie*, pp. 11–12). Christianity is in its own essence eschatology: eschatology opens, for the believer, the perspective of change in reality. The message of Christianity consists in the announcement that reality will radically change.

ment with the given situation, but is drawn into the conflict between hope and experience. 'We are saved by hope. But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it' (Rom. 8.24, 25). Everywhere in the New Testament the Christian hope is directed towards what is not yet visible; it is consequently a 'hoping against hope' and thereby brands the visible realm of present experience as a god-forsaken, transient reality that is to be left behind. The contradiction to the existing reality of himself and his world in which man is placed by hope is the very contradiction out of which this hope itself is born – it is the contradiction between the resurrection and the cross. Christian hope is resurrection hope, and it proves its truth in the contradiction of the future prospects thereby offered and guaranteed for righteousness as opposed to sin, life as opposed to death, glory as opposed to suffering, peace as opposed to dissension.³

The Christian eschatology expresses a contradiction between present and future; it contains a contradiction between the individual's experience and the individual's hope: hope in the new kingdom of God contradicts one's own life experience, and the new dimension of the future contradicts the present conditions of the world. The dimension of the promised future represents God's opposition to the conditions of the present. This opposition has consequences for the believer's mind orientation: the message of eschatology brings about the transformation of the individual's mind as regards the interpretation of the individual and the interpretation of reality. The contradiction expressed by the Christian eschatology means, for the individual's mind, the birth of the opposition between the individual's disposition of hope, on the one hand, and the experience of the individual, on the other hand. Eschatology produces hope, and hope is the source of the caesura between the individual and reality as reality is given to him. God's promise of the resurrection from the dead proves to be the message of negation of the given reality. Christian hope is resurrection hope. Since it is resurrection hope, Christian hope is as such the negation of the dimension of death. Hope places the individual in a disposition of contradiction to the reality in which he lives; it places the individual in a state of contradiction to his own condition. Hope implies a conflict with the experience: it is as such directed towards a dimension different from the present reality. The essence of hope therefore consists in transposing the individual towards that which is not yet realised. The effect of this transposition is that the individual learns to consider the dimension of the present experience as something which is to be left behind. Hope implies contradiction between righteousness and sin, life and death, glory and suffering, peace and dissension. Therefore, the very nature of hope proves to be opposition to the present.

2. THESES

As illustrated by the initial quotation of the analysis, my interests will centre on the theological field, but they are extensible to the general analysis of the mind. The

³ *Theology of Hope*, p. 18; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 14.

individual changes as a consequence of his faith in God's promise. The individual is transformed through the birth of hope. The mind is enlightened as regards time, history and reality by God's promise of the resurrection from the dead. The concept of hope with which I shall be dealing corresponds therefore to the disposition of the mind originating in the individual due to the individual's meeting with the contents of the revelation. Hope deriving from revelation means hope in the resurrection from the dead, in the new coming of Christ, in God's new creation and in the new kingdom of God. The promise of the resurrection from the dead brings about hope; hope implies a completely new orientation of the individual's mind. The mind completely changes through God's promise of the resurrection from the dead.⁴ The individual who receives the revelation becomes and remains completely different in comparison with the individual who ignores God's promise of the resurrection.

For the individual, hope in the contents of revelation implies the awareness that the present reality and the course of history are as such not complete: reality and history are not fulfilled. Moreover, reality and history are not senseless; they are, on the contrary, in a process which leads to the emergence of the new creation. The authentic dimension of God's creation is not the past, it is the future since the future is the dimension of the new creation and of the fulfilment of God's action in reality. The action of creation is not concluded, is not finished. On the contrary, the fulfilled aspect of the creation is announced, but it is not already present. Thus, for the individual, to have hope in the new creation is to have a formation and a disposition of mind involving a general orientation in life and in history. Moreover, Christian hope is, for the believer, the constitutive factor of the mind orientation in life. Hope is not an isolated mind disposition. It implies, on the contrary, an overall outlook on life, reality and history. It directs the whole orientation of the hoping mind in reality. Christian hope becomes and remains the mind shape as such of the individual since it is, for the individual's mind, the source of the individual's interpretation of the whole reality. Hope is the principle itself for the way of life of the individual who has hope. The main theses of my study are as follows:

– The Christian God reveals Himself in history, He leads history. He is the God of the new future to come, of the change in reality, of the renewal of the world.⁵

⁴ Moltmann describes the shift of the believer's interest due to God's promise in the following way: "A promise is a declaration which announces the coming of a reality that does not yet exist. Thus promise sets man's heart on a future history in which the fulfilling of the promise is to be expected." (*Theology of Hope*, p. 103; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 92). God's promise is as such the declaration that reality is not fulfilled, and that reality will have a fulfilment. The interest of the believer is consequently shifted towards the future. The future becomes the referent of the believer's interest. The effect of God's promise on the believer is confirmed by the following statement of Moltmann: "The promise binds man to the future and gives him a sense for history." (*Theology of Hope*, p. 103; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 92). Receiving God's promise means, for the individual, being shifted to the future. Furthermore, God's promise lets the believer perceive the flowing of time as history, i.e. lets the believer interpret time as an entity with a precise development, sense and direction.

⁵ The God of the Bible is not an atemporal, unhistorical Highest Being. God is connected to the history of the people to which He reveals Himself (see Moltmann's essay "Einführung in die *Theologie der Hoffnung*", in *Das Experiment Hoffnung. Einführungen*, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1974, pp. 64–81).

– The revelation of God, for the Christian believer, means opening the perspective of the future, a future of change, of reality renewal and of new creation. The revelation of God means, for the individual's mind, the liberation from being closed in a never-changing present. Hope in God's revelation means and brings about a complete transformation of the mind.

– Thanks to God's promise of a complete change in reality, the believer is enabled to transcend his own present condition and becomes able to understand that he is something different from the present in which he is living. He understands that he transcends the dimension in which he is living.

– Reality is as such not complete. The fulfilment of reality has not yet come about. The future is the authentic dimension of this fulfilment. Not the present, but the promised future is the dimension of God's revelation. The not yet of the coming future is the key to interpreting the present and the past.⁶

– God's promise of the resurrection from the dead, of the coming of Christ, of the new kingdom, of the new creation represents the direction of reality and the very sense of the whole history; it is both the goal and the meaning as such of reality and of history.

Thus, time is not a repetition of events; it is a development of events which are passages towards the final fulfilment of God's promise.

⁶ The future is not the repetition of immutable laws which are already present. The God of Christianity is a God of hope. God is a God of promise of the reality which will come. The faith in the God of Christianity does not imply the consideration of reality as an already perfect reality. The Christian faith is faith in a new creation. The Christian faith is not a faith in the repetition of reality, but in the change of reality; it is not an adequation to reality as it is given now, but, on the contrary, it is a negation, a denial and a refusal of the world as it is. The attitude of contradiction of the present reality produces, in the individual, the tension for modifying and the will to modify the given reality. To be in the reality does not mean accepting reality. In order to make the peculiarity of this revelation of God clear, Moltmann compares the Christian God with Aristotle's God. On this theme see *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 13 (*Theology of Hope*, p. 17); *Der gekreuzigte Gott. Das Kreuz Christi als Grund und Kritik christlicher Theologie*, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1972, pp. 256–267; *Kirche in der Kraft des Geistes. Ein Beitrag zur messianischen Ekklesiologie*, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1975, pp. 138–139, p. 213; *Trinität und Reich Gottes. Zur Gotteslehre*, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1980, pp. 26–35, pp. 38–40; *Gott in der Schöpfung. Ökologische Schöpfungslehre*, München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1985, pp. 116–150; *Das Kommen Gottes. Christliche Eschatologie* Gütersloh, Chr. Kaiser/Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995, pp. 29–30 and 351–367; *Der lebendige Gott und die Fülle des Lebens. Auch ein Beitrag zur Atheismusdebatte unserer Zeit*, Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2014, pp. 36–38, pp. 44–45, pp. 125–127, pp. 139–141. Moreover, for the comparison between Parmenides' interpretation of reality as a God of an eternal present and the Christian God as a God of promise and of future, see *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 21–27 (*Theology of Hope*, pp. 26–32), *Gott in der Schöpfung. Ökologische Schöpfungslehre*, pp. 116–150. The difference between kinds of faith implies a different disposition towards the world. Faith in God as an eternal present implies a reality which is already given. If reality is already given, the individual has no other perspective at his disposal than that which is represented by the given reality. Faith in a God of promise is, on the contrary, faith in a God of change. The dimension of the Christian believer is the dimension of the wayfarer, of the viator, of the individual who is heading for a new goal, a new dimension of life, a new condition of reality; reality is not given, is not complete and is not fulfilled. As a consequence, the Christian believer ought not conform to the present reality, to the actuality of reality since the present condition is a condition which is only transitory. As such, it has no absolute value. The Christian believer directs and ought to direct his attention towards that which is to come. He lives in the dimension of the not yet since he is aware that reality is not fulfilled.

– The God of hope is a God corresponding to a radical break with reality as it is given in the present condition; the God of hope is not a God of eternal and immutable reality laws.

– The individuals who hope in God's promise are people whose psychological and mental constitution becomes hope, so, their essence, their nature becomes hope.⁷ Hope becomes the fundamental disposition of mind. Hope is the way in which the believer reads reality and interprets the sense of reality.

– The believer is moving towards a new dimension of his own self and towards a new condition of reality.

– Thanks to the hope in God's promise, Christian believers live in the condition of the not-yet, of the expectation, of the tension for the coming reality; they are aware that the dimension of the present does not correspond to the whole reality.

– The interpretation of reality, the interpretation of the individual condition and the behaviour of the individual in relation to reality are mutually correlated since God's promise of resurrection modifies the individual's vision of reality and, therewith, the whole orientation, both theoretical and practical, of the individual in reality.

– Reality is neither a decadence from a golden age nor is a repetition of events.⁸ The mind is not imprisoned in the past or in the present, it is open to a future of renewal. The authentic reality is yet to come.

– The Christian theological virtue of hope⁹ does not only concern the dimension of the afterlife: Moltmann interprets Christian hope as directed towards a complete renewal of reality. Hence, hope is connected indistinguishably with the eschatology; eschatology is related to the new creation of reality. Christianity under the aspect of its

⁷ See Moltmann's essay "Wo Hoffnung ist, ist Religion" in *Das Experiment Hoffnung. Einführungen*, pp. 28–47. Moltmann defines human beings as 'Hoffnungswesen' (p. 35). On the one hand, human beings appear to be directed to hope, with a predisposition for hope; on the other hand, revelation and promise direct this predisposition to a new constitution of the mind. The mind acquires a new general orientation on time, life, history and reality; therewith the mind acquires a new constitution.

⁸ The following statement can give an example of this aspect: "The history which is initiated and determined by promise does not consist in cyclic recurrence, but has a definite trend towards the promised and outstanding fulfilment." (*Theology of Hope*, p.103; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 92). Reality is not a cycle of events, it has a line of development towards its fulfilment.

⁹ The particular subject of the influence exercised by Ernst Bloch on Moltmann's thought cannot be dealt with in this paper, since this subject represents an independent piece of research. For an autobiographical description of Moltmann's dealing with Bloch's positions, I refer to Moltmann's article "Theologie der Hoffnung", in Johannes B. Bauer (ed.), *Entwürfe der Theologie*, Graz–Wien–Köln, Verlag Styria, 1985, pp. 235–258 (I find, in particular, very efficacious Moltmann's formulation that Bloch's position is, among other things, a transcending without transcendence, whereas Moltmann's own proposal is a transcending with transcendence – see p. 241). I also wish to refer to paragraph 4, "Begegnung mit Ernst Bloch", pp. 84–87, of the third part "Anfänge", and to the whole fourth part "Theologie der Hoffnung.", pp. 101–132, of Moltmann's autobiography *Weiter Raum. Eine Lebensgeschichte*, Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006. Furthermore, the section "Anhang: „Das Prinzip Hoffnung“ und die „Theologie der Hoffnung“ Ein Gespräch mit Ernst Bloch", of Moltmann's *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 313–334, shows a detailed discussion of Bloch's and of Moltmann's interpretations of hope.

virtue of hope is, essentially, eschatology.¹⁰

– Within the individual's dimension, Christianity as hope is the mainspring for action in the world, for transformation of the world, for the anticipation of God's new creation. For the individual, hope is the driving force and the foundation of the theological thought.¹¹ Hope is an active virtue; it is not a passive expectation. For the individual, having hope means anticipating the new kingdom of God with his own actions. The awareness that the new creation will come, that the present situation is only transitory and that the actual conditions are wrong in comparison with the expected new creation, is the driving force for modifying the conditions in which the believer is living.

– Christianity is not a religion of acceptance of reality as it is, of transposition of the believer towards the afterlife. The Christian faith and the Christian hope do not make a person quiet and patient; the aim of faith and hope does not consist in leading the believer to a conciliation with, an acceptance of and a resignation towards reality. The Christian faith and the Christian hope make people troubled and impatient since faith and hope awaken in the believer the awareness of the opposition between resurrection and world of death, between the dimension of the new creation and the present conditions of reality.¹²

3. HOPE AS INSTRUMENT OF INTERPRETATION OF REALITY

While facing the different aspects of hope in Moltmann's work, we can see that hope opens the individual's outlook on the interpretation of the sense of history; it represents the light on the events of reality. In order to show how hope, in Moltmann's view, is a key for the interpretation of reality, I would like to quote a passage from Jürgen Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*:

In the Middle Ages, Anselm of Canterbury set up what has since been the standard basic principle of theology: *fides quaerens intellectum – credo, ut intelligam*. This principle holds also for eschatology, and it could well be that it is of decisive importance for Christian theology today to follow the basic principle: *spes quaerens intellectum – spero, ut intelligam*. If it is hope that maintains and upholds faith and keeps it moving on, if it is hope that draws the believer into the life of love, then it will also be hope that is the mobilizing and driving force of faith's thinking, of its knowledge of, and reflections on, human nature, history and society. Faith hopes in order to know what it believes. Hence all its knowledge will be anticipatory, fragmentary knowledge forming a prelude to the promised future, and as such is commit-

¹⁰ See *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 12 (*Theology of Hope*, p. 16): Moltmann clearly states there that eschatology cannot be considered as something accidental or marginal for the Christian faith. The future is the central interest for Christianity.

¹¹ See *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 15 (*Theology of Hope*, pp. 19–20). Eschatology and hope will always represent a danger for the established power, since they express that the world can be different from the way it is and, actually, it will be different from the way it now is.

¹² See *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 17 (*Theology of Hope*, pp. 21–22).

ted to hope. Hence also *vice versa* the hope which arises from faith in God's promise will become the ferment in our thinking, its mainspring, the source of its restlessness and torment. The hope that is continually led on further by the promise of God reveals all thinking in history to be eschatologically oriented and eschatologically stamped as provisional.¹³

Hope is the point of view for reflecting on the human nature, on history and on the society. Hope is, for the believer, a constitutive orientation of mind and represents the driving force of the way of thinking about faith. The believer acquires, through the hope in God's promise, a new outlook on history, society and human nature. Hope in God's promise is the principle for the interpretation of the whole reality.¹⁴ Hope is the criterion which gives order to the events in reality, thus becoming the compass of mind for the mind's orientation in reality and in history. Hope becomes a constant disposition and attitude of mind in the mind's relation with reality. Hope gives the form to the events of reality in the sense that it gives to the events of reality their own sense, it unifies the events of the world into the perspective of eschatology. It gives an order and a sense to the events.

Within the mind, hope becomes a kind of second nature, of new nature for the individual. Hope lets the individual read and interpret sense and direction of reality and of history. Hope is not, therefore, a simple temporary emotion of the individual; hope coming from revelation does not amount to a passion of the individual. This kind of hope is not a mere feeling inside the individual. On the contrary, hope is the very foundation of the intellectual activity. The acquirement of hope in the mind and the assimilation of the mind to hope constitute the configuration, the shape and the formation of the mind itself. Hence, the individual led by hope acquires a new essence as regards his mind's orientation. The individual's mind changes through this specific kind of hope. The mind acquires a new constant structure of interpretation of the events and of expectation of the future.

¹³ *Theology of Hope*, p. 33; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 28.

¹⁴ Moltmann's interpretation of hope is a particular interpretation of hope. The interpretations of hope can be different from each other. In order to see an interpretation of hope which is different from the interpretation we shall meet in this study, Spinoza's observations on hope can be considered. Spinoza expresses the following ideas on hope in *Ethics*, Part III, Proposition XVIII, Note II: "For hope is nothing else but an inconstant gladness, arising from the image of something future or past, whereof we doubt the issue (*Spes namque nihil aliud est quam inconstans laetitia orta ex imagine rei futurae vel praeteritae de cuius eventu dubitamus*)." Furthermore, Spinoza defines hope in *Ethics*, Part III, Definitions of the Emotions, Definition XII as follows: "Hope is an inconstant gladness, arising from the idea of something past or future, whereof we to a certain extent doubt the issue. (*Spes est inconstans laetitia orta ex idea rei futurae vel praeteritae de cuius eventu aliquatenus dubitamus*)." Through these statements, we can see that hope is regarded as an inconstant pleasure connected to a condition of incertitude; within Spinoza's interpretation, hope derives from an ignorant condition of the mind, is characterised by inconstancy. It is not a form of mental disposition enabling the individual to give an interpretation of reality, of history and of the human condition. I used the following edition of Spinoza's works: Baruch Spinoza, *Spinoza Opera. Im Auftrag der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, herausgegeben von Carl Gebhardt, 2. Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione. Ethica*, Heidelberg, Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1925.

The principle *Spero ut intelligam* paves the way for the comprehension of the events of reality. It enables the individual to see that reality has a precise development and an established finality. Hope gives the key for the interpretation of reality. Hence, hope constitutes the foundation for the knowledge of reality. The kind of knowledge which faith has through hope is a kind of knowledge of reality and of history which is inspired by the promise of the resurrection from the dead. Knowledge is knowledge of God's promise and, consequently, of history as a connection of events preparing and resulting in the fulfilment of God's promise. Correspondingly, hope is the anticipation in the mind of the new reality which will come about. As a consequence, knowledge of the promise of the new creation leads to a life orientation towards this new reality.¹⁵ The constitutive character of hope consists in its contradiction with reality as reality is given:

The truth of doctrinal statements is found in the fact that they can be shown to agree with the existing reality which we can all experience. Hope's statements of promise, however, must stand in contradiction to the reality which can at present be experienced. They do not result from experiences, but are the condition for the possibility of new experiences. They do not seek to illuminate the reality which exists, but the reality which is coming. They do not seek to make a mental picture of existing reality, but to lead existing reality towards the promised and hoped-for transformation. They do not seek to bear the train of reality, but to carry the torch before it.¹⁶

Through God's promise, the individual becomes a hoping individual. Through hope, the believer knows that reality will be different and, as a consequence, wants to modify reality in the direction of the announcement. Hope as a principle of interpretation of reality gives origin to new experiences since hope is a new orientation for the individual as regards his own life. The hoping individual lives in reality and experiences reality in a completely new way; he sees reality in a new way and interprets reality in a new way. The hoping individual does not aim to give a portrait of reality; he aims to have a knowledge which enables him to change reality. The feature of the hope's statements of promise consists in these statements contradicting the existing reality. Since hope's statements contradict reality, they constitute the condition for the possibility of new experiences. They show that the reality of the future is an open dimension and that the dimension of the future is a dimension which is not conditioned by laws necessitating reality. In order that the future could be open, the future cannot be seen as a dimension which is necessitated by the laws of the present. Hope implies the belief in an open future of reality; it entails the belief that reality is not given once and for all. Therefore, hope is the foundation of the individual's consideration of the future as an undetermined and free dimension. Hope is the condition for the possibility of new experiences since it presupposes that reality is changing and is going towards a precise kind of fulfilment. Consequently, hope as a

¹⁵ The situation is therefore completely different from Spinoza's interpretation of hope.

¹⁶ *Theology of Hope*, p. 18; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 13–14.

disposition of the mind and the individual's consideration of reality as a developing entity are related to each other.

Hope is the driving force for the modification of reality towards the kingdom of God; it is not a picture of reality. Hope is a way of interpreting reality, and it is a way of bringing reality towards the interpretation which has been given of it¹⁷; through hope, the theological concepts become anticipations of the future of reality:

For our knowledge and comprehension of reality, and our reflections on it, that means at least this: that in the medium of hope our theological concepts become not judgments which nail reality down to what it is, but anticipations which show reality its prospects and its future possibilities. Theological concepts do not give a fixed form to reality, but they are expanded by hope and anticipate future being.¹⁸ They do not limp after reality and gaze on it with the night eyes of Minerva's owl, but they illuminate reality by displaying its future. Their knowledge is grounded not in the will to dominate, but in love to the future of things. *Tantum cognoscitur, quantum diligitur* (Augustine). They are thus concepts which are engaged in a process of movement, and which call forth practical movement and change.

‘*Spes quarens intellectum*’ is the first step towards eschatology, and where it is successful it becomes *docta spes*.¹⁹

The passage expresses the difference between the contemplation of the world as it is and the new orientation in the interpretation of reality. Hope orientates the individual's evaluation of reality. The contemplation attitude of reality limits the individual to the contemplation of reality: within a contemplation attitude only that which is, is relevant. For the observation of reality directed by hope, the what is, is not the relevant attitude. It is that which will come which is relevant and which transforms the individual's consideration of the present. The present is seen from the perspective of change; it is something which is not given once and for all, but which will change through the resurrection from the dead and through the new coming of Christ. The evaluation of reality is made through the hope and the contents of hope. The resurrection of Christ means a complete change in reality:

Only if the whole historical picture, contingency and continuity and all, could be shown to be in itself not necessary but contingent, should we come within sight of that which can be called the eschatologically new fact of the resurrection of Christ.

¹⁷ Moltmann's interpretation of hope as connected to eschatology, change of the world, modification of the society is, of course, not the only possible interpretation of hope within Christianity. For a different interpretation of hope, I refer, for instance, to the article of Karl Rahner, “Zur Theologie der Hoffnung”, in *Schriften Zur Theologie. Band VIII*, Einsiedeln–Zürich–Köln, Benziger Verlag, 1967 pp. 561–579. The comparison between Moltmann's and Rahner's interpretation of hope can be useful to better note the specific foundations of Moltmann's interpretation. Whereas Rahner seems to connect hope exclusively to the resurrection in the afterlife, Moltmann interprets hope in the resurrection as God's opposition to evil both in the dimension of the afterlife and in the earthen dimension.

¹⁸ It is not the description of reality as it is which interests the believer. The interest of the believers is directed to the anticipation of future; the believer aims to give an interpretation of the development of reality, therewith including the future, i.e. the dimension of the not yet in the understanding of reality.

¹⁹ *Theology of Hope*, pp. 35–36; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 30.

The resurrection of Christ does not mean a possibility within the world and its history, but a new possibility altogether for the world, for existence and for history. Only when the world can be understood as contingent creation out of the freedom of God and *ex nihilo* – only on the basis of this *contingentia mundi* – does the raising of Christ become intelligible as *nova creatio*. [...] By the raising of Christ we do not mean a possible process in world history, but the eschatological process to which world history is subjected.²⁰

The resurrection of Christ represents a new possibility for the whole world: it means a complete transformation of the world, existence and history. The resurrection of Christ is an announcement of the refusal of the dimension of death. The resurrection of Christ is, actually, the new creation. The resurrection of Christ implies a change for the whole reality. The resurrection of Christ means the defeat of the death in Christ; the resurrection from the dead becomes the eschatological aim of the whole reality. Christ's resurrection means a complete transformation of reality. The coming of Christ means for the believer being able to look beyond the present.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PROMISE

The individual learning and accepting God's promise implies a complete modification in the individual's attitude towards reality. God's promise represents the source of a new disposition and a new orientation of the individual's mind:

The whole force of promise, and of faith in terms of promise, is essentially to keep men on the move in a tense *inadaequatio rei et intellectus* as long as the *promissio* which governs the *intellectus* has not yet found its answer in reality.²¹ It is in promise, which keeps the hoping mind in a 'not yet'²² which transcends all experience and history, that we find the ground for the breakdown of the mythical and magical relations of correspondence, for the 'historicizing' of the nature festivals in terms of the data of the history of promise, and for the futurizing of their content in terms of the future of the promise. It is from promise that there arises that element of unrest which allows of no coming to terms with a present that is unfulfilled.²³ Under the

²⁰ *Theology of Hope*, pp. 179–180; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 162–163.

²¹ The spiritual condition of the believer is not a condition of calmness and of indifference. On the contrary, the believer finds himself in the condition of awareness of the not correspondence between the contents of the promise and the actual situation of reality. His spiritual condition is that of the awareness of the contradiction existing between God's promise of the new future and the present situation of reality. His spiritual condition is therefore at the same time that of the expectation of the new creation, on the one hand, and of the refusal of the present circumstances, on the other hand.

²² The not yet is the constitution of the orientation of the mind towards reality: through the hope in the promise, the mind receives the instrument to transcend history and experience. Hope is, on closer inspection, an attitude of transcendence of the given reality, of the present dimension.

²³ Faith and hope in the promise imply no resignation towards the given reality, no internal conformation towards the given reality. The believer knows that he is something other than the given situation, and that reality is something other than the given circumstances. The refusal of the present implies, furthermore, action for its modification.

guiding star of promise this reality is not experienced as a divinely stabilized cosmos²⁴, but as history²⁵ in terms of moving on, leaving things behind and striking out towards new horizons as yet unseen.²⁶

The fundamental aspect is that the dimension of the not yet in which the hoping individual lives goes beyond history and experience; the not yet transcends history and experience. Faith in the promise transfers the individual in a position of not yet; the individual is aware that reality is not complete, that reality is not fulfilled. The not yet in which the individual finds himself corresponds to a dimension in which the individual's experience and the past are relativised since they cannot have an absolute value. The state of being unfulfilled of reality entails that neither the experience of the individual can be considered as absolute, nor can history be considered as absolute; both experience and history lack their fulfilment.

Knowledge and awareness of the promise bring about in the individual's mind a condition of detachment from experience and from history. Since experience and history do not possess an absolute value, the individual cannot identify with them, analyse them as something complete or consider them as the field in which truth is and in which truth can be discovered. Value, importance and relevance of history and of experience are immediately relativised since they are as such something incomplete. It would make no sense to consider the present reality as the measure of reality since the present is only a transitory dimension of reality. God's promise has an immediate repercussion on the attitude of the individual: the individual considers reality as imperfect, he has an attitude of condemnation of the defects of reality and he sees reality as a dynamic entity which is moving towards completion. Since completion is not here, reality cannot be judged on the basis of the actuality, but it can be understood exclusively on the basis of the future to come, which will give a sense to the whole reality. No unfulfilled dimension can be the foundation of judgment and of evaluation of reality. Reality cannot be understood or interpreted on the basis of the present conditions. God's promise is a driving force for the individuals; the contents of the promise give an address, an orientation to the life of the individuals. The promise can give an orientation and a measure for the judgment of reality in comparison with the contents of the promise. The individual is endowed with a measure of judgment in order to see how the present conditions are defective. The promise lets the individual understand that reality can be measured against something else. In other words, the concept of the promise gives to the individual a measure. Reality as it is, is already relativised in its value by the presence of a promise of something else which opens the way for thinking, for judging and for criticising. The promise means relativisation of reality and of history. There is no absolute value in reality and in history as reality and history have been realised; the absolute value exclusively belongs to the fulfilment of history, to the new creation of God. It belongs to the future dimension of time.

²⁴ God's promise excludes any divinisation of reality as it is given.

²⁵ Opposition between the fulfilled cosmos and the developing history.

²⁶ *Theology of Hope*, p. 102; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 91.

Just as the promises are not descriptive words for existing reality, but dynamic words about acts of faithfulness to be awaited from God²⁷, so knowledge of God cannot consist in a résumé of the language of completed facts.²⁸ The truth of the promise lies not in any demonstrable correspondence with the reality which was or which is. It lies not in *the adaequatio rei et intellectus*. The promise here proves its truth, on the contrary, in the specific *inadaequatio intellectus et rei* in which it places the hearer.²⁹ It stands in a demonstrable contradiction to the historic reality. It has not yet found its answer, and therefore draws the mind to the future, to obedient and creative expectation³⁰, and brings it into opposition to the existing reality which has not the truth in it.³¹ It thus provokes a peculiar incongruence with being, in the consciousness of hoping and trusting. It does not glorify reality in the spirit, but is out for its transformation.³² Hence it does not give rise to powers of accommodation, but sets loose powers that are critical of being.³³ It transcends reality³⁴ not by rising to an unreal realm of dreams, but by pressing forwards to the future of a new reality.³⁵

The essence of God's promise consists in this promise being a contradiction to the given reality. The consequence for the mind of the believer is the believer's opposition to reality. The knowledge of reality given by the promise of the new kingdom does not consist in the description of reality. The promise of the new kingdom is as such the announcement that the fulfilled reality will be different from the way it is. The truth of God's promise consists in this promise being different from the present, from the actual condition of reality. Far from being the description of the given reality, the promise has its truth value in contradicting the actual reality. The announcement of the coming of a different reality transfers the individual into the future. The tension for and the expectation of the future become the authentic dimensions of the individual. The knowledge of reality is not a description of reality; it means understanding the development of reality. Knowledge is not the registration of static structures but the comprehension that reality has a change and a development. God's promise brings about in the individual's mind an attitude of creative expectation. The

²⁷ God's promise is no description, but anticipation of the coming kingdom.

²⁸ God cannot be known through facts since the authentic dimension of God is to be referred to His promise. God is known through His promise, not through His already fulfilled actions.

²⁹ The promise of God as such contradicts the present condition of reality; it is not a confirmation of reality. The attitude of the individual who believes in the promise is not the attitude of finding a confirmation of the promise in the fulfilled reality, but of finding a negation of reality as it is given through the promise. The promise is as such a negation and a criticism of the given reality.

³⁰ Expectation is a creative condition, it is not a passive behaviour.

³¹ Reality as it is given has no truth in itself. Reality as it is given is something which the individual goes beyond thanks to the hope in the promise and thanks to the driving force of transformation of reality produced in the individual's mind by hope.

³² There is no glorification of reality; there is a transformation of reality.

³³ God's promise is the source of the criticism of being, not of accommodation with being.

³⁴ The announcement expressed by God's promise transcends reality so that reality cannot be considered as fulfilled and cannot be considered as a fixed point. The promise does not transcend reality in the form of dream; the promise is not imagination. God's promise leads the individual to the expectation of a new reality.

³⁵ *Theology of Hope*, pp. 118–119; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 106–107.

announcement of the new creation pushes the individual to transform reality as it is; expectation is not a passive attitude. The promise of the new creation brings the individual to transcend reality as reality is given since through the promise of the new creation the individual understands that reality as it is given is only contingency and not necessity. Therefore, the truth of the promise lies in its absence of correspondence with reality. The promise is true since it contradicts reality. The promise brings the individual into a reality to come, it transfers the individual into the future.

The individual's mind is not given. There is not the individual as such. There are different individuals depending on their interpretation of reality and their attitude towards reality. If reality is conceived as a given entity, as a fulfilled entity, the individual will have no alternative reality. He will not be able to give an interpretation of reality which considers reality as something to be transformed and which can be transformed. If reality is not interpreted as given, the individual will see reality as something which can be transformed. The position in reality of the individual which has before himself a reality which cannot be transformed is the position of an individual who is passive in relation to reality. The position in reality of the individual who has before himself a reality which can be transformed is the position of an individual who can be active. The hoping individual is not the same individual as before. Reality for the hoping individual is not the same reality as before. The conception of reality as a changing entity, hope as the disposition of the individual and the impulse to activity for the modification of the world are related to each other. Faith and hope make the space for the interpretation of reality. After and thanks to God's revelation, the Christian believer can see and is no longer blind in relation to reality and to history. The first radical and fundamental modification which the Christian believer experiences through God's revelation consists in the obtained awareness that he is not compelled to accept reality as it is given and that reality is not unchangeable. Therewith, the Christian believer acquires a kind of antidote against all theories which aim to sanctify reality as it is. The Christian believer knows that the nature of reality consists in its changing and going towards the fulfilment of God's promise of a new creation; he is aware that reality is not complete, so he knows that any theory which aims to present reality as it is given is as such false.

5. ENLIGHTENMENT

Hope is as such opposition to the dimension of death:

[...] the man who thus hopes will never be able to reconcile himself with the laws and constraints of this earth, neither with the inevitability of death nor with the evil that constantly bears further evil. The raising of Christ is not merely a consolation to him in a life that is full of distress and doomed to die, but it is also God's contradiction of suffering and death, of humiliation and offence, and of the wickedness of evil. Hope finds in Christ not only a consolation *in* suffering, but also the protest of the divine promise *against* suffering. If Paul calls death the 'last enemy' (I Cor. 15.26), then the opposite is also true: that the risen Christ, and with him the resurrection

hope, must be declared to be the enemy of death and of a world that puts up with death. Faith takes up this contradiction and thus becomes itself a contradiction to the world of death. That is why faith, wherever it develops into hope, causes not rest but unrest, not patience but impatience. It does not calm the unquiet heart, but is itself this unquiet heart in man. Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present. If we had before our eyes only what we see, then we should cheerfully or reluctantly reconcile ourselves with things as they happen to be. That we do not reconcile ourselves, that there is no pleasant harmony between us and reality, is due to our unquenchable hope. This hope keeps man unreconciled, until the great day of the fulfilment of all the promises of God. It keeps him *in statu viatoris*, in that unresolved openness to world questions which has its origin in the promise of God in the resurrection of Christ and can therefore be resolved only when the same God fulfils his promise. This hope makes the Christian Church a constant disturbance in human society, seeking as the latter does to stabilize itself into a 'continuing city'. It makes the Church the source of continual new impulses towards the realization of righteousness, freedom and humanity here in the light of the promised future that is to come.³⁶

The essential feature of faith is that faith is a contradiction to the world of death. Based on these statements, Christianity is not a religion of conciliation or of reconciliation with the existing world. Faith in Christ is as such opposition to the world of death, that is, to all that leads to death. The foundations of Christianity are seen by Moltmann as consisting in the promise made by God of a different future.³⁷ The promise of a different future means, for the Christian believer, the expectation of, the turning to and the tension for something which is to come, for something which will come.³⁸ The present life of the believer is thus being organised on the basis of the expected renewal which the future will bring. To understand, through the hope in the resurrection and in the renewal of the whole world, that the present world does not function, is the first fundamental step towards the awareness that the world as it is ought to be changed. An eschatological outlook, an eschatological way of seeing the world is already a precise and practical attitude towards the present world.³⁹

³⁶ *Theology of Hope*, pp. 21–22; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 17.

³⁷ On this subject, see paragraph 2, "Das Verheißungswort" in chapter II, "Verheißung und Geschichte" of *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 92–95.

³⁸ For an analysis of the subjects 'status viatoris' and of 'hope' in the perspective of the Christian faith, I highly recommend the book of Josef Pieper, *Über die Hoffnung*, Olten, Summa-Verlag, 1948. I refer, in particular, to chapter I, "Bemerkungen über den Begriff des status viatoris", pp. 13–23, and to chapter II, "Hoffnung als Tugend", pp. 27–46. Pieper defines the status viatoris as the state of being a pilgrim. Status viatoris is the condition of a not-yet-being: 'not yet' means that the viator is not in the condition of fulfilment; the life of the viator tends to its fulfilment, it needs its fulfilment, but it is not fulfilled. Hope is the virtue of the not yet fulfilled condition of men. The condition of being on the way represents the very essence of the viator, i.e. of the Christian believer.

³⁹ For Moltmann, hope is connected to a multiplicity of events which are hoped for. If hope were limited only to the dimension of the afterlife, hope would have no relevance for the expectation of a renewal of the society.

Resurrection is God's opposition to all the forms of evil. Christ's resurrection is the symbol of God's promise against evil. Christ's resurrection represents God's opposition against death and against every system of death dominating the world. Faith in the resurrection means, consequently, not only hope in a coming dimension but also opposition to the dimensions of death and of evil. Both the Christian believer and the community of Christian believers are an element of insurrection against the evil components of reality. Through faith in the resurrection and the resulting opposition against evil, the Christian community becomes the centre of the creation of the dimension of right, of freedom and of humanity.⁴⁰ Essentially, faith in a dimension to come stands in opposition to the present dimension; faith in the fulfilment of God's promise is the capability to see that reality, as it is, does not function. The future kingdom of God is the key to understanding that the present conditions of the world are not good. Christ's resurrection is, as such, a criterion for judging reality. The act of God giving resurrection to Christ and promising resurrection to human beings is God's refusal of the whole dimension of death and evil. Therewith the Christian believer finds an orientation for what he ought to do. Hope stands for the foundation itself of the liberation of human beings, since it is connected to the announcement of a new dimension. Reality does not coincide with actuality; reality includes possibility. God's promise is the opening of the interpretation of history as a development. History gains a direction, the direction of the age to come in God's promise. History is not, therefore, a repetition of events in which the past is equal to the future; history is as such a dimension of change towards the fulfilment of God's promise.⁴¹ The individual's mind becomes free from the constraints represented by the present conditions of the world since it knows that reality is not necessity, but possibility and that the new reality will be opposed to the reality of death.

God's promise turns out to be a factor of liberation for the mind since it paves for the mind the outlook on a future opposing the present. The mind is not bound to the present conditions since the mind knows that these conditions are transitory. Nothing in reality can be presented as having an absolute value since all present conditions will disappear. Since the present structures of reality are only contingent structures, the individual knows that his own nature is not bound to any of them. The individual knows that he is something other than the present conditions of the world and that he is something other than the conditions to which others could try to enchain him. The mind is free since the individual knows that the present structures of reality are not eternal. Hence, the individual is not compelled to consider the structures of reality in which he is living as unchangeable structures.

⁴⁰ On this topic see paragraph 2, "Die Hoffnung des Glaubens", and paragraph 3, "Die Sünde der Verzweiflung", of the "Einleitung", in *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 15–21 (*Theology of Hope*, pp. 19–26).

⁴¹ Moltmann strongly distinguishes God's promise from anticipations of the future like those of Cassandra (see *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 93; *Theology of Hope*, p. 104, and *Das Experiment Hoffnung. Einführungen*, p. 69). God's promise does not mean that human beings may remain passive in a state of expectation. God's promise to Abraham is a promise that lets Abraham wander towards the Promised Land; God's promise of the new kingdom is a promise which makes Christian believers anticipate, with their own actions, the coming of the new kingdom of God.

In the light of the differences which the hope of resurrection and of reconciled, perfect life finds in the existing reality of man and of the world as at present experienced, and which it reveals in all their negativity, the positive side of the future for which it hopes for man and the world, for spirit and body, for Israel and the nations, can be expressed in the first instance as negation of the negative. The 'new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (II Peter 3.13), the promise that 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain' (Rev. 21.4), the face unveiled in the glory of God (II Cor. 2.18) and the body glorified by the Spirit of the resurrection (I Cor. 15.35ff.) – these are representations and pictures of this kind, in which the future is re'pre'-sented and 'pro'mised in contrast to the experiences of a negative present. These ideas and pictures are fragments from a life that has been unmasked in all its flaws by hope and is therefore one of suffering. The book of Revelation is the book of the martyrs. These ideas and pictures may well be conditioned by their time – they are, and must be, if they would be critical of their time – yet they are used with the intention of expressing something which goes completely beyond the *status quo* and sets things on the move.⁴²

This passage is particularly clear as regards the believer's disposition of refusal towards the present conditions of reality which originates as a result from the hope in the resurrection. The disposition of the believer corresponds to the negation of the negative. The representation of the future through hope produces a negation of the world of death; it is the contradiction of the whole dimension of death. Hope enlightens the individual as regards the flaws of the present reality. An announcement of the future is an announcement of a new reality which will represent the negation of the present. It is an announcement that reality is not still, but, on the contrary, moving towards a new constitution. The knowledge of God's promise of the new creation enables the individual to interpret the shortcomings of reality as not being an unchangeable destiny of reality, which can only be accepted and may never be discussed. The hoping individual knows that the present situation is not unchangeable. There is no destiny and no necessity in the given reality.

6. THE ATTITUDE OF THE BELIEVER

The disposition of hope forms the believer. The way of interpretation of the believer as regards reality does not consist in the contemplation of reality. The way of interpretation of the believer is directed to the future; his way to relate with reality is that of the expectation:

But how can knowledge of reality and reflection upon it be pursued from the standpoint of eschatological hope? Luther once had a flash of inspiration on this point, although it was not realized either by himself or by Protestant philosophy. In 1516 he writes of the 'earnest expectation of the creature' of which Paul speaks in Rom.

⁴² *Theology of Hope*, p. 215; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 196.

8.19: 'The apostle philosophizes and thinks about things in a different way from the philosophers and metaphysicians.⁴³ For the philosophers fix their eyes on the presence of things and reflect only on their qualities and quiddities. But the apostle drags our gaze away from contemplating the present state of things, away from their essence and attributes, and directs it towards their future.⁴⁴ He does not speak of the essence or the workings of the creature, of *actio*, *passio* or movement, but employs a new, strange, theological term and speaks of the expectation of the creature (*expectatio creaturae*).⁴⁵ The important thing in our present context is, that on the basis of a theological view of the 'expectation of the creature' and its anticipation he demands a new kind of thinking about the world, an expectation-thinking that corresponds to the Christian hope. Hence in the light of the prospects for the whole creation that are promised in the raising of Christ, theology will have to attain to its own, new way of reflecting on the history of men and things.⁴⁵ In the field of the world, of history and of reality as a whole, Christian eschatology cannot renounce the *intellectus fidei et spei*. Creative action⁴⁶ springing from faith is impossible without new thinking and planning that springs from hope.⁴⁷

The difference between the apostle and the philosopher consists in the apostle's attention to the future of the things and in the philosopher's attention to the present quiddity of the things. The vision of the philosopher is a static vision of reality and is directed to the analysis of the present structures of reality. The vision of the apostle is, on the contrary, a dynamic vision of reality; the apostle's interpretation of reality is not interested in the present condition of things but in the development which things will have. Things will have a development. Correspondingly, the believer is interested in the development of things and not in the static essence of the things themselves. The individual's consideration of reality is oriented on the basis of the development of reality in the form that this development is announced by God's promise. Moltmann bases his reflections on Luther's observations. In Luther's view, the philosophers concentrate their own attention exclusively on the present condition of things. They are interested in giving an interpretation of reality as reality is; they are not interested in giving an interpretation of the evolvement of reality, of the direction which reality takes. They concentrate on things as static things; they are not interested in the development of things. Within the Christian interpretation of reality, the future, not the present, is the dimension to which the interest of the believers is directed. Therefore, it is not the contemplation of things that has relevance, but the tension towards the future dimension and future condition of reality. Correspondingly, the attitude of the believer is not the contemplation which belongs to the philosopher but the expectation directed towards the future.

⁴³ There is a complete difference between the way of thought of the philosopher and the way of thought of the apostle.

⁴⁴ Future is the dimension towards which the attention of the apostle is directed. The perspective of the apostle has the future as its own centre.

⁴⁵ The way of interpretation of the history of men and things derives from the prospects promised through the resurrection of Christ.

⁴⁶ Hope is the driving force for new actions since hope, among other things, presupposes a not fulfilled reality.

⁴⁷ *Theology of Hope*, p. 35; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 30.

The individual before the promise is not the individual after the promise. The individual before the promise is not tense about the future to come as something involving his whole personality; he completely ignores the structure of reality and a dimension of his mind. The individual without hope is completely different from the individual with hope since he has a completely different interpretation of time, of reality and of life in comparison with the interpretation which the hoping individual has. The individual after the promise is an individual who is completely taken in by the hope in the fulfilment of the promise, thus building and organising his own life as an anticipation of the fulfilment of the promise. The interpretation of reality ought to be conducted with the orientation towards the future and towards the change of things. The relevant dimension of reality is the future to come; the attitude towards reality is not contemplation of an already given dimension, but, on the contrary, the expectation of a new dimension. The compass applied to reality ought to be modified. The not yet being is the key to interpreting the whole reality; the not yet is the key to the interpretation for that which already is. The hope and expectation of a new future will bring about a creative action directed to the modification of the present following the orientation given by the future and by the expectation of the future. The expectation of a different future represents the driving force for the change in the present. The believer receives from God's promise a new outlook on reality and becomes the source of action for the modification of reality. The condition of the believer is that of a wayfarer, i.e. of a being which is on its way to a goal, of a being not completed but going towards completion. The essence and the nature of the believer are not that of a completed entity. The interpretation of the individual can be given only on the basis of the future of the individual since only the dimension of the future will give the complete outlook on the nature of the individual; the nature itself of the individual is not complete. The individual is as such a wayfarer:

The creature itself is a 'wayfarer', and the *homo viator* is engaged along with reality in a history that is open towards the future. Thus he does not find himself 'in the air', 'between God and the world', but he finds himself along with the world in that process to which the way is opened by the eschatological promise of Christ.⁴⁸ It is not possible to speak of believing existence in hope and in radical openness, and at the same time consider the 'world' to be a mechanism or self-contained system of cause and effect in objective antithesis to man. Hope then fades away to the hope of the solitary soul in the prison of a petrified world, and becomes the expression of a gnostic longing for redemption. Talk of the openness of man is bereft of its ground, if the world itself is not open at all but is a closed shell. Without a cosmic eschatology there can be no assertion of an eschatological existence of man.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The eschatological promise does not mean that the believer is projected outside the world, outside reality. The eschatological promise lets the individual live in the earthen dimension with a different interpretation of the earthen dimension, of society, history and reality. The eschatological promise does not transfer the individual in another dimension, but lets the individual live in the same dimension with a completely different way of interpreting reality. Reality is rightly interpreted for the wayfarer only if the future is included in the whole reality: the future is the dimension which gives the significance to the whole reality.

⁴⁹ *Theology of Hope*, p. 69; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 60.

The concept of hope presupposes and implies a view of reality as an open reality. Faith does not lead away from reality. Faith brings the believer into reality with a different vision of it. The existential and essential dimension of the individual is the dimension of the wayfarer. Both creature and world are the objects for which the future is open. The creature is as such a wayfarer, the man is viator, i.e., he finds himself in a process which is initiated by the eschatological promise of God. The condition of man in the world is completely changed through and thanks to the promise of God. If there is the promise of a different future, the individual finds himself constitutively – since he is the object of God’s announcing promise – in the position of viator. The hoping individual is in the world. Hope is not an attitude bringing the individual into a dimension which is different from the earthly life; hope is an attitude which brings the individual to live his earthly experience in a different way. Faith and hope let the individual transcend the particular condition in which he is; they let the individual understand that he is not to be interpreted with the here and now. However, faith and hope do not bring the individual to abandon reality; they enlarge the individual’s conditions with the dimension of the future, and they lead the individual to interpret reality through the dimension of the future since the future is the dimension of God’s promise. The resurrection from the dead leads the individual to a transformation of the mind and to a transformation of his interpretation of reality. The individual moves with the world towards the new dimension of reality. The new dimension of reality is a new dimension of the individual:

The man who is the recipient of this revelation of God in promise is identified, as what he is – and at the same time differentiated, as what he will be. He comes to ‘himself’ – but in hope, for he is not yet freed from contradiction and death. He finds the way of life – but hidden in the promised future of Christ that has not yet appeared. Thus the believer becomes essentially one who hopes. He is still future to ‘himself’ and is promised to himself. His future depends utterly and entirely on the outcome of the risen Lord’s course, for he has staked his future on the future of Christ. Thus he comes into harmony with himself *in spe*, but into disharmony with himself *in re*. The man who trusts himself to the promise is of all people one who finds himself a riddle and an open question, one who becomes in his own eyes a *homo absconditus*. In pursuit of the promise, he finds he is in search of himself and comes to regard himself as an open question addressed to the future of God. Hence the man who hopes is of all people the one who does not stand harmoniously and concentrically in himself, but stands excentrically to himself in the *facultas standi extra se coram Deo*, as Luther called it. He is ahead of himself in hope in God’s promise.⁵⁰

The hoping individual is an open question since the hoping individual directs his attention to the not yet, to a dimension which is yet to come. The believer is not free from death; he is living in the dimension of death. In actuality, he finds himself in the dimension of death. On the other hand, the believer acquires with the attitude of hope a

⁵⁰ *Theology of Hope*, p. 91; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 80–81.

connection to the dimension of time which will be free from death. He has a present dimension, which is the dimension of death, and will be in a dimension of time which will be free from death. Therefore, there is reference to a dimension in re and in spe. There is the individual who is now, and there is the individual who will be in a different dimension. He lives in a contradiction with the actual condition and lives in harmony with the dimension in which he will live. In re, the individual finds disharmony with himself; in spe, he finds harmony with himself. Through the hope in the promise of God, the individual goes beyond his own present nature. Through hope and through the connected projection into the future, the individual is able to go beyond the limitations which are connected to the present nature of man. Through the faith in the risen Lord and through the promise of the resurrection from the dead, the individual is able to go beyond the present outlook on the reality of death and able to reach the future outlook on the new creation. The condition of the individual is that of not completeness. Reality is not complete, and the individual is not complete:

A Christian anthropology will always insist that a general, philosophic anthropology understand human nature in terms of history and conceive its historic character in the light of its future.⁵¹ What man is in body and soul, in partnership and society, in the domination of nature, is disclosed in its reality only from the direction of the life he lives. Human nature first becomes really determinable in the light of the determination to which it is on the way.⁵² The comparison with nature and with the animals, or the comparison with other men in the present and in history, does not yet bring out what man's nature is, but only the comparison with the future possibilities which are disclosed to him from the direction of his life, from his *intentio vitalis*.⁵³ Man has no subsistence in himself, but is always on the way towards something and realizes himself in the light of some expected future whole.⁵⁴ Man's nature is not sub-sistent, but ex-sistent. It becomes intelligible not on the ground of an underlying *substantia hominis*, but only from the perspectives in which he lives and which derive from his direction in body and soul. Man is 'open towards the world' only in that he is directionally open to determination and to the future. In other words, the *natura hominis* first emerges from the *forma futurae vitae*.⁵⁵

Natura hominis comes from the *forma futurae vitae*. The nature, the essence of the individual, derives from that which the individual will be in future. The future form

⁵¹ Christianity has its own anthropology. History is the dimension of the human nature for the Christian anthropology. Since the historical development is the fundamental way of interpreting reality, the individual is to be put into history; his position in reality cannot be correctly interpreted without reference to history, without seeing him as a historical entity. The historical way of considering the individual ought to be put into the perspective of God's promise.

⁵² The individual's nature cannot be correctly interpreted and correctly understood without reference to the direction of reality, without consideration of the development of reality.

⁵³ The dimension of the individual is that of the possibility. The nature of the individual cannot be understood without the dimension of the possibility.

⁵⁴ The nature of the individual is not given. The nature of the individual is realised in the light of a future whole.

⁵⁵ *Theology of Hope*, p. 287; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 264–265.

of the individual is the nature of man; consequently, the individual is not complete until he reaches the dimension of the future. The anthropology ought to be understood in the light of the future life. Christian anthropology includes both history and future. Human nature cannot be interpreted without the future dimension. The essence of the individual cannot be interpreted without the future to come; there is no given nature of the individual. The essence of the individual includes the future to come and cannot be interpreted without the future. The essence of the individual is not given in the present and includes the future development. The future is the key to the understanding of the nature of the individual. Present and past cannot explain the nature of man since the nature of man will be fulfilled only in the future. The difference between the pure contemplation of reality as it is and the analysis of reality made in order to find ways of changing reality is clearly expressed by Moltmann in the following way:

It is not mere *theoria*, in its investigation of the divine nature of the world as a cosmos, but it is only missionary practice, involved in history and bent on transformation, that first renders the world questionable in a historic way. Its questions are concerned not with the unity and wholeness of the world and with the order in a chaotic reality, but with the transformability of the world. For the eschatological hope shows that which is possible and transformable in the world to be meaningful, and the practical mission embraces that which is now within the bounds of possibility in the world. The theory of world-transforming, future-seeking missionary practice does not search for eternal orders in the existing reality of the world, but for possibilities that exist in the world in the direction of the promised future. The call to obedient moulding of the world would have no object, if this world were immutable. The God who calls and promises would not be God, if he were not the God and Lord of that reality into which his mission leads, and if he could not create real, objective possibilities for his mission.⁵⁶

The world is made questionable through the promise of a new kingdom. If the future will be different, the present world is questionable. The present world does not need to be accepted and submitted to. Moulding of the world has no sense, if the world is immutable. The attitude of the believer consists in his aim of transforming reality; his attention is not directed to the investigation of reality. The believer does not consider reality as an entity with divine character. Reality is here in order to be transformed. The attitude of the believer is not that of the contemplation of a thing which is already complete. The individual does not aim to put order in reality, but to transform reality. The attitude of the believer is not directed to finding immutable laws in reality, but to finding possibilities in order to transform reality:

Thus the transforming mission requires in practice a certain *Weltanschauung*, a confidence in the world and a hope for the world. It seeks for that which is really, objectively possible in this world, in order to grasp it and realize it in the direction of the promised future of the righteousness, the life and the kingdom of God. Hence it regards the world as an open process in which the salvation and destruc-

⁵⁶ *Theology of Hope*, p. 288; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 265–266.

tion, the righteousness and annihilation of the world are at stake. To the eye of the mission, not only man is open to the future, full of all kinds of possibilities, but the world, too, is a vast container full of future and of boundless possibilities for good and evil. Thus it will continually strive to understand world reality in terms of history on the basis of the future that is in prospect. It will therefore not search, like the Greeks, for the nature of history and for the enduring in the midst of change, but on the contrary for the history of nature and for the possibilities of changing the enduring. It does not ask about the hidden wholeness by which this world, as it is, is intrinsically held together, but about the future *totum* in which everything that is here in flux and threatened by annihilation will be complete and whole. The totality of the world is not here seen as a self-dependent cosmos of nature, but as the goal of a world history which can be understood only in dynamic terms. The world thus appears as a correlate of hope. Hope alone really takes into account the 'earnest expectation of the creature' for its freedom and truth.⁵⁷

The foundation of the project of transforming the world needs the conception of a modifiable world. The project of transforming the world analyses the world in order to see how the world is modifiable; the world is considered to be a transformable dimension. The compass for the project of transforming the world is given by God's promise, which gives the orientation for the understanding and modification of the world. The mission is not searching for the enduring, but for the possibility of modification. There is a correlation between the consideration of the world as a changing entity, on the one hand, and hope, on the other hand: hope implies the consideration of the world as an entity which changes.

7. INTERPRETATION OF TIME

An important aspect of the change produced by hope concerns the difference in the interpretation of time in the dimension of hope in comparison with Ancient Greek thought. The interpretation of time within the hope dimension is not that of an eternal present. God's announcement of the new reality transfers the tension of the individual into a dimension which is not yet. Since reality is not complete, the time dimension which is most relevant is the future; the future is the dimension in which reality will be fulfilled. Time is not fulfilled, and the dimension of the not yet is the dimension towards which the individual's attention is directed:

This is not the 'God of hope', for the latter is present in promising the future – his own and man's and the world's future – and in sending men into the history that is not yet.⁵⁸ The God of the exodus and of the resurrection 'is' not eternal presence, but he promises his presence and nearness to him who follows the path on which

⁵⁷ *Theology of Hope*, p. 288–289; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 266.

⁵⁸ The not yet is the dimension to which the believer is directed. It is not the present conditions which are the dimension of the believer; the dimension of the believer is the dimension of the not yet fulfilled.

he is sent into the future.⁵⁹ YHWH, as the name of the God who first of all promises his presence and his kingdom and makes them prospects for the future, is a God 'with future as his essential nature', a God of promise and of leaving the present to face the future, a God whose freedom is the source of new things that are to come.⁶⁰ His name is not a cipher for the 'eternal present', nor can it be rendered by the word *EI*, 'thou art'. His name is a wayfaring name, a name of promise that discloses a new future⁶¹, a name whose truth is experienced in history inasmuch as his promise discloses its future possibilities. He is therefore, as Paul says, the God who raises the dead and calls into being the things that are not (Rom. 4.17). This God is present where we wait upon his promises in hope and transformation. When we have a God who calls into being the things that are not, then the things that are not yet, that are future, also become 'thinkable' because they can be hoped for.⁶²

The God of hope is immediately a God transposing and transferring the believer into a dimension of future. Reality is not complete; history is not complete. The present is not the whole and is not the authentic dimension of the Divinity. Future is the dimension to which the Divinity calls the believers. Since God is the God of the promise, the present has a value only as a preparation of the future; the future will fulfil reality. A conception of God as the eternal present has as such no sense in the perspective of the God of Hope. The future is the essential nature of God. In a dimension of eternal present, change and future have no sense; in a dimension of promise, future and change receive a legitimation. The believer finds himself projected into a new condition, into a dimension which is not yet, but which will nonetheless come. The first modification in the individual through faith in the God of promise and thanks to the hope in the God of promise is that he has the instrument to represent the change to himself and to be able to consider the future as an open dimension. Reality is not given; the fulfilment of reality is yet to come. There will be a new creation; this is the first instrument which the believer has as his own form of thought, namely, that reality is not given since reality is going to change due to God's promise. Hence, all attempts to present reality as given once and for all and to present the structures of society as given once and for all actually have no value at all. The message of God's promise is that reality is not given once and for all. The individual who lives in the eternal 'now' has no open perspectives before himself and do not live in the expectation but in the contemplation of the present. He does not have an alternative at his own disposal. The God of eternal presence is not the God of the new

⁵⁹ God will come, is not already here. He is not eternal presence, since His presence is yet to come.

⁶⁰ The message of God is to leave the present in order to face the future; the present is not an absolute value since it ought to be left behind. The future is the authentic dimension of the believer. The condition of the believer is that of a wayfarer who goes towards a new reality; it is not that of an individual who conforms himself to an already fulfilled reality.

⁶¹ God's feature is represented by His promise of a new future. The self-manifestation of God consists in His action in the past and in His announcement of a new future, of a new reality. Faith and hope of the believer regard, as a consequence, God as a continuous creator of reality. The believer is as believer going towards the new reality.

⁶² *Theology of Hope*, p. 30; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 25–26.

creation. The message of God is a message of change since God is the God of the resurrection from the dead. Therefore this God is the God opposing the present reality of death.

The 'now' and 'today' of the New Testament is a different thing from the 'now' of the eternal presence of being in Parmenides, for it is a 'now' and an 'all of a sudden' in which the newness of the promised future is lit up and seen in a flash.⁶³ Only in this sense is it to be called an 'eschatological' today. 'Parousia' for the Greeks was the epitome of the presence of God, the epitome of the presence of being. The parousia of Christ, however, is conceived in the New Testament only in the categories of expectation, so that it means not *presentia Christi* but *adventus Christi*⁶⁴, and is not his eternal presence bringing time to a standstill, but his 'coming', as our Advent hymns say, opening the road to life in time, for the life of time is hope. The believer is not set at the high noon of life, but at the dawn of a new day at the point where night and day, things passing and things to come, grapple with each other. Hence the believer does not simply take the day as it comes, but looks beyond the day to the things which according to the promise⁶⁵ of him who is the *creator ex nihilo* and raiser of the dead are still⁶⁶ to come.⁶⁷

The interpretation of the now and, in general, the interpretation of time of the New Testament are completely different from conceptions like those of Parmenides. The parousia of Christ is interpreted within the New Testament as an expectation of a future event. There is not a presence of Christ but a coming of Christ. The attitude of the believer does not consist in his being in the age of Christ but in expecting the coming of Christ. Correspondingly, the attitude of the believer does not consist in his contact with the presence of Christ, but in his awareness that the fullness of time is still to come. The attitude of the believer consists in his awareness that the present time is not complete, that reality is not complete. The coming of Christ is not the coming of an event which ends history but of an event which begins a new world, a new dimension; it is not the end of time, but the beginning of a new time. The believer is consequently not expecting the end of the time, but the very beginning of the time. God is continually creating reality. The authentic dimension of reality is still to come. The conception of the eternal presence of being devaluates the change as such in history, time and life:

⁶³ The interpretation of time in general and of present in particular are completely different within an eschatological and within a not eschatological perspective.

⁶⁴ Christ's parousia does not consist in the actual presence of Christ but in the future coming of Christ.

⁶⁵ The promise opens the space for the things to come. It is the promise which gives to the believer the capacity of directing his attention to the future.

⁶⁶ The condition of the believer consists in his being beyond the present. It is constitutive of the believer to be beyond the actual circumstances. The dimension of the believer consists in his being beyond the present and the past, beyond the particular situation in which he lives. He does not coincide with the dimension in which he lives; the believer is something else and something more than his particular history and life. He looks at the future and works on the realisation of the announced future. The hoping believer transcends the particular dimension in which he is living. Hope as expectation and creation of the future is his authentic dimension.

⁶⁷ *Theology of Hope*, p. 31; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 26.

This 'being' does not exist 'always', as it was still said to do in Homer and Hesiod, but it 'is', and is 'now'. It has no extension in time, its truth stands on the 'now', its eternity is present, it 'is' all at once and in one (*tota simul*). In face of the epiphany of the eternal presence of being, the times in which life rises and passes fade away to mere phenomena in which we have a mixture of being and non-being, day and night, abiding and passing away.⁶⁸

The interpretations of time correspond to the interpretations of the Divinity. Within the interpretation of time as eternal present, all that changes is depreciated. What is essential is the eternal present, the unchanging; all that changes belongs to an inferior kind of reality. The conception of the God of promise overturns this consideration of time: the present is only a preparation for a future dimension, is as such something incomplete which goes towards a future dimension in which the fullness of time will come about. Time goes towards its fulfilment in the future. Correspondingly, the believer's attention is directed to the future as the dimension in which the dimension hoped for will come about. The contingency of reality is contraposed to the necessity of reality; the dimension of possibility is contraposed to the dimension of actuality. The attitude of the individual searching for the abiding constitution of reality is completely different from the attitude of the individual who searches for the new. The attitude of the individual who with his own hope contradicts reality as it is, and, therewith, contradicts the abiding in reality too, is completely different from the attitude of the individual who searches for the abiding and eternal elements in the present reality. The individual contradicting reality as it is with his thought, hope and faith is searching for that which breaks the events, not for that which confirms the laws of reality. The search of the hoping believer is not a search for the eternal, the changeless and the abiding. The search of the hoping believer is a search for the possibilities of change, for the way to the future. There is no point, within this perspective, in considering the present as the eternal since God's promise is announcement of the transiency of the present. Since the future is the dimension of the fulfilment, the present is not the dimension of the fulfilment and is not a fulfilled dimension. The hoping believer is mentally already beyond the present. The dimension of the present as such is completely different in a system of eternal presence and in a system oriented to the change in the future. The present is not a complete dimension; it is only preparation for something to come. The believer does not see the present as something perfect, complete and fulfilled but considers it in its connection with the future and with the expectation of the future.

The god of Parmenides is 'thinkable', because he is the eternal, single fullness of being. The non-existent, the past and the future, however, are not 'thinkable'. In the contemplation of the present eternity of this god, non-existence, movement and change, history and future become unthinkable, because they 'are' not. The contemplation of this god does not make a meaningful experience of history possible,

⁶⁸ *Theology of Hope*, p. 28; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 23.

but only the meaningful negation of history. The *logos* of this being liberates and raises us out of the power of history into the eternal present.⁶⁹

The contraposition between the two different interpretations of God and of time is clear. Within the vision of the present eternity, the dimensions of past and future have no relevance, since past and future do not exist. Only that which is, is the centre of reality. The reality that is pleaded for is a reality of presence. Reality coincides with the given condition. There is no space for the not yet, there is no space for that which is simply possible but not actual. Within the interpretation of Parmenides, all which is not being becomes something unthinkable, not-being and not belonging to the authentic reality. All which is not, is not thinkable. Thus, change as such has no relevance for this kind of interpretation. History has no place within this kind of thought; it comes down to something irrelevant for the authentic dimension of being since history is as such the realm of the contingency, of the not abiding elements.

‘Eternal presence’ is therefore the eschatological, future goal of history, not its inmost essence. Creation is therefore not the things that are given and lie to hand, but the future of these things, the resurrection and the new being.⁷⁰

The eternal presence within the hope dimension is the future goal of history. There is no sense in considering eternal presence as the essence of history. The eternal presence is something which is yet to come, not something which is already here. The reference of the eternal presence has shifted from the present to the future of fulfilment. Correspondingly, creation is not referred to the already created things, to the present things; creation is to be referred to the future of things. Creation refers to the resurrection and to the new kingdom of God. Thus, creation is actually not that which has been created but that which will be created. Creation regards the dimension of the future not of the past. Resurrection and new being are the ways of expression of the creation.

It has often been rightly emphasized that ‘history’ was fundamentally foreign to Greek thought. Greek thought was primarily in search of the ever existent, the unchanging, ever true, ever good and ever beautiful.⁷¹ ‘History’, however, is that which rises and passes, unstable and transient, and as such shows no signs of anything that is perpetual and abiding. For that reason it was not possible to discover in the accidental *pragmata* of history any *logos* of eternal, true Being. It was not possible to ‘know’ history, and at bottom there was in history nothing worth knowing either. [...] ‘The ‘divine’ is not seen as that which is ever existent in constant and abiding orders and self-repeating structures, but is expected in the future from the God of the promises. The changes of history are not ‘the changing’,

⁶⁹ *Theology of Hope*, p. 28–29; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 24.

⁷⁰ *Theology of Hope*, p. 164; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 149.

⁷¹ The hoping believer does not search for the abiding structures of reality. He does not search for the constant elements in reality. He has as reference a future which as such contradicts the present and the past; the new dimension will deny any abiding element of reality. His interest is directed to the new creation and therewith to the change in reality. Abiding elements have no space within this perspective. Time and history are interpreted in completely different ways within the two perspectives.

as measured in terms of the abiding, but they contain the possible, as measured in terms of the promise of God. 'History' is not a chaos into which the observer must bring divine order and eternal *logos*, but history is here perceived and sought in the categories of the new and the promised.⁷²

The hoping believer does not consider the features of being constant, abiding and self-repeating as signs of the divine. The divine is located in the dimension of the future since God's promise of the resurrection from the dead will be fulfilled in the future. The constitutive condition of the believer is that of hope since the believer does not see and cannot see the reign of God except for in the form of expectation. The hoping individual is not an individual who ought to conform to an already given reality; since reality is not given in its own fulfilment, there is nothing to which the individual ought to conform. There is an opposition between the adaptation to an already given reality, on the one hand, and the tension to a reality which is not yet here, to a reality which is a possibility, on the other hand. The individual who lives in an already given reality resigns. Because he knows that reality cannot be changed, he gives up the impulse to change reality. He considers any attempt to change reality as something which simply has no sense. The first individual will direct his own attention to the given reality, to the actuality. The second individual will direct his own attention to the announcement, to the promise and to the possibility. The first individual will be taken in by the given reality, the second individual will try to anticipate with his own action the contents of the promise and will try to anticipate the coming of the new creation by denying and refusing the present condition of death. The foundations of the hoping individual consist in the announcement of a dimension which contradicts reality as it is given. The essence of the contents of hope consists in these contents being the contradiction of the actual structures of reality. Hope is directed to a condition of reality which contradicts the conditions and laws of the present reality. Hope in the resurrection means the contradiction as such of the given reality. Moltmann's observations are confirmed in the following passages:

The philosophical presupposition for a knowledge of history cannot then lie in a metaphysics of being, of the idea, of unfathomable life, or of God. As long as our reality has not yet 'completed' itself and not yet become a rounded whole, a metaphysic of the historical universe in the sense of the Greek *logos* is impossible.⁷³

8. CONCLUSIONS

In this inquiry, we have seen that God's promise of the resurrection from the dead means that the actual conditions of reality are transitory. Promise brings about, therefore, a liberation of the mind. Promise means, for the individual, not accepting

⁷² *Theology of Hope*, p. 259–260; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, pp. 237–238.

⁷³ *Theology of Hope*, p. 270; *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 248.

reality, being opposed to reality as it is given. It means a relativisation of the present conditions since the promise of a new future means that the present is not absolute. The individual who learns the announcement of God hopes in the contents of the announcement, sees the incompleteness of reality and of history, and sees the direction of history. The hoping individual regards reality as a changing entity; the change which he sees is a change towards the fulfilment of reality. Since he lives in and thinks with the promise of an alternative reality, the fundamental attitude of the believer consists in the refusal of the present conditions. The promise is a contradiction of reality, and the attitude of the believer is the contradiction of reality. Through the contents of the promise, in the mind of the believer an attitude of will for the transformation of reality comes about. For the believer, the awareness that a new reality will come implies that the whole present dimension is exclusively a temporary state; the fullness of reality is not yet here, and reality is waiting for its fulfilment.

The central attitude of the individual who has hope is his living in the expectation of the new creation. Through his living in the expectation of the new creation, the individual is able to see the shortcomings of the present and of the past. As a consequence of his capacity of seeing the shortcomings of reality, the hoping individual receives the impulse to modify and to better reality itself. Thus, hope turns to be the orientation for the thought and becomes the source of action of the individual. As a consequence of the revelation, the being projected into the future becomes the authentic dimension of the individuals. The revelation produces an entire modification in the mind of the individual who receives the revelation. There is an individual before the revelation and an individual after the revelation. Since the revelation announces the coming of a new creation, the hope coming about as a result of the contents of the revelation entails a whole transformation of the individual's mind. Hope in the new creation entails a completely different orientation in reality from the believer; it implies a shift of his life interest towards the dimension of the future.