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## Theism Today and Tomorrow

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## Review Articles

### *Theism Today and Tomorrow\**

**I**N the maelstrom of present day religious thought it may at times be necessary to come to a halt and review the major trends in terms of what they maintain, what they are reactions to, and whence they come historically. Thus, when reading the modern "Christian atheists,"<sup>1</sup> we shall not necessarily derive profit from what appeals to us, at least not for the sole reason that it does. It will forestall confusion, for example, to recognize that secularism and Christian atheism are not the same, even though they now almost invariably go together; and that both, again, are different from Bonhoeffer's "religionless christianity".<sup>2</sup> We shall then recognize that,

\* **THE FUTURE OF BELIEF: THEISM IN A WORLD COME OF AGE**, by Leslie Dewart. New York: Herder and Herder, 1966. In the present paper I have made use of several studies circulated privately, most of them from the Theologate, Canisianum, Maastricht, The Netherlands. I wish to mention especially L. Bakker, S.J., H. Renckens, S.J., P. Ahsmann, S.J., A. Veerkamp, S.J.; I have also used class notes of courses by the following of the Philosophate Berchmanianum, Nijmegen, The Netherlands: A. van Leeuwen, S.J., M. Marlet, S.J. (now at Innsbruck, Austria), J. Nota, S.J.—I am indebted to Father J. Linskens, C.I.C.M., of San Carlos Seminary, Manila, for the inspiration I derived from consultations with him on certain biblical problems.—I wish to emphasize that none of the above can be responsible for the use I have made of their material.

<sup>1</sup> Paul M. Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, New York, 1963; Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of God*, New York, 1966; Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, Philadelphia, 1966; Gabriel Vahanian, *The Death of God, The Culture of Our Post-Christian Era*, New York, 1957; Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, New York, 1965

<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, New York, 1962.

as reactions, these three trends belong in a crisis typical of the Reformation rather than of Catholicism, and that they have historical connections with such trends as Marxism, existentialism and atheism; that is in that they ultimately go back to what is perhaps the most overall turn in modern Western thought: the departure from Hegel. When Hegel had perpetrated the most comprehensive synthesis of the world, man, religion in general, and Christianity including even the Incarnation, by assigning to all of those mysteries what seemed to him to be their proper places in his dialectic tower of Babel, the way was open to anyone who chose to denounce that blasphemous construction, as Kierkegaard did, or to tear down its ramshackle superstructure, using the foundations for the type of speculation whereby God had supposedly become competitive to individual human greatness (Nietzsche), or to the harmonious unity of Man and Nature (Marx), or to human freedom (Sartre), or again to the (comparatively rare) varieties of atheism that are not (in the expression of de Lubac<sup>3</sup>) "anti-theistic," or hardly so (Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty). However, before most of this happened, one main feature of Hegelian inspiration, that of making man definitely the yardstick of things divine, had worked its way into nineteenth century liberal protestant theology, in an effort to remain one step ahead of the suspicions cast upon Christianity by modern "enlightened" man; here is where we recognize the primary motivations of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, von Harnack. It was not until Karl Barth's denunciations hurled at liberal theology of this description in his commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans that its progress was slowed down, and it did not re-emerge until it was thoroughly modified into a less apologetic form: the theology of Bultmann.<sup>4</sup>

It is instructive to see how Catholic theology, in comparison, fared in the nineteenth century, which, as is well enough known, witnessed the Church's endeavors to maintain a vertiginous balance between rationalism and fideism. Rationalism

<sup>3</sup> Henri de Lubac, S.J., *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, New York, 1963, p. 7. The term goes back to Proudhon.

<sup>4</sup> A. Veerkamp, "Religie in de waagschaal," *Bijdragen*, 26 (1965), 308-33.

was countered in an effort to safeguard the utter transcendence over reason of the *mysteria stricte dicta*, while fideism was rejected to ensure that what *was* reasonable in the faith in a more apologetic sense be duly protected.<sup>5</sup> But soon an enemy of greater resilience was to make its appearance, this time right in the heart of the Church: modernism; it, however, was already largely a twentieth century phenomenon. It never really penetrated Catholic thinking until quite recently. In the meantime, scholasticism had been declared the way of thinking in the Church, and this therefore makes recent history of Catholic theology mainly one of scholasticism.

Scholasticism had had a checkered history. As all Thomists know, the thought of their Master had not been continued in a straight line. Cajetan's deviations from Thomas were followed by those of Suarez, and scholastic thinking had deteriorated into a pointless proliferation of distinctions by the time Descartes decided he would turn his back on it, for that reason, altogether. When Liberatore halfway through the nineteenth century found reason to reinstate Thomism as the best of all choices, he certainly had some reason for this at least as far as Rome was concerned in some of whose Papal Universities philosophers like Hume enjoyed more prestige than Thomas himself. Liberatore's initiative was to lead to *Aeterni Patris* and *Providentissimus Deus*, and we should remember that these documents were issued by a decidedly liberal pope. More importantly, further developments of scholasticism have led to re-emphasis on aspects of Christian dogma virtually forgotten, as in Mersch's drastic turn to christology<sup>6</sup> or, more recently, on the mystery of the Resurrection in the theology of Durrwell.<sup>7</sup> It is surely here unnecessary to enlarge upon the theology of Karl Rahner.

Yet in a sense, and with full recognition of the work of these theologians, it must now be asked if the hope they hold for the immediate future is commensurate with the require-

<sup>5</sup> Robert Aubert, *Le problème de l'acte de foi. Données traditionnelles et résultats des controverses récentes*, Louvain, 1945.

<sup>6</sup> Emile Mersch, S.J., "Filii in Filio," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 65 (1938), 551-82; 681-702; 809-30.

<sup>7</sup> F. X. Durrwell, *The Resurrection*, New York, 1960.

ments of tomorrow, or perhaps even today. Rahner himself recently maintained that the theology of the future would have to be principally "anthropological," a prospect admittedly not entirely in line with his previous thinking; Mersch can now hardly be counted on to meet the problems of today (nor would he ever have claimed this), and only recently was it noted by Schnackenburg that Durrwell had contributed little to the growing biblical concerns of theology.<sup>8</sup> A similar feature of almost overnight change can be noted in the *magisterium*: the greatest scholastic accomplishment of a subject always much neglected in Thomistic thinking, ecclesiology, as appearing in *Mystici Corporis*, has already been largely superseded by the new ecclesiological perspectives of the Second Vatican Council. Last not least, the apparent incommensurability of dogmatic and biblical theology has been staring every theologian in the face in a manner so far not yielding much hope of integration.

It has perhaps been too often suggested that scholastic thinking has been canonized by the teaching Church. Yet the emphasis on scholasticism has been almost entirely disciplinary, and for the teaching in major seminaries and Catholic universities only. Though this no doubt grew to be as much of a problem as the original introduction of scholasticism had been salutary, anyone familiar with the history of Church teaching knows how cautious the *magisterium* has always been not to be committed to any one particular *ratio theologica*. In fact, in Vatican II the need for a reformulation of traditional dogma was repeatedly expressed. And in an unofficial manner the Vatican has repeatedly defended the right of philosophers and theologians to pursue a non-Thomistic course. To mention one example, when Garrigou-Lagrange followed Maurice Blondel, to him a dangerous modernist, wherever that philosopher went, in hopes of catching him in the act of making an unorthodox statement, it was at the personal behest of Pope Pius XII that he gave up his pursuit.

Moreover, it would be wrong to say that Thomism has always been pursued monolithically. Syntheses have been at-

<sup>8</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, *New Testament Theology Today*, London, 1963.

tempted with Kantianism (Maréchal,<sup>9</sup> Thielemans<sup>10</sup>), with Hegelianism (Fessard, de Bruin<sup>11</sup>), with Heidegger (Rahner,<sup>12</sup> Lotz<sup>13</sup>). Yet most of these attempts are already more than a generation old. Also, they did not come off without considerable pain. Maréchal hardly, if ever, survived suspicions about his orthodoxy, Fessard and de Bruin were ordered off the cathedra, and Rahner was eyed, for a while, with suspicion too. Lotz does not seem to have influenced theology much, though perhaps unjustly so. The fate of most of these was shared by de Lubac and Congar. Even an updated Thomism, therefore, did not always have the free development felt to be necessary, and, what is more, the whole trend of thinking seems to be moving now in a quite different direction.

For one thing, Catholic theology must enter into a dialogue with the Reformation, as is already being done on an impressive scale. But also a dialogue with modern atheism is in order, and even necessary. Only one reason for doing this would be the recent influences of non-Christian atheism on what is known as "Christian atheism," so far still mainly a Reformation concern. The time is past when atheism was still a challenge of mainly an intellectual nature: the apologetic age when to fight atheism was to show that it lacked in intelligence has been superseded. The reason for this is not, however, that there is anything wrong with apologetics or, as we now prefer to call it, fundamental theology; neither does it mean that clear-headed theological and philosophical thinking is somehow inadequate for problems of the faith. For theo-

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<sup>9</sup> J. Maréchal, S.J., *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, Cah. V: *Le thomisme devant la philosophie critique*, Louvain, 1926.

<sup>10</sup> H. Thielemans, S.J., "Kant en de scholastiek." *Bijdragen*, 1 (1938), 312-54.

<sup>11</sup> That is, in their teaching. Fessard's and de Bruin's later publications are not directly pertinent to the matter in hand here.

<sup>12</sup> Karl Rahner, S.J., *Hörer des Wortes, Zur Grundlegung einer Religionsphilosophie*, appeared in 1941; rev. ed. by J. B. Metz, Munich, 1963.

<sup>13</sup> J. B. Lotz, S.J., "Ontisch-Ontologisch als Grundspannung des Philosophierens, besonders heute," *Actes du XIème Congrès international de philosophie Bruxelles 1953*, vol. III, Amsterdam, Louvain, 1954.

logy is not the faith, but a reflection on it; as philosophy is a reflection on life rather than life itself. The more important single factor here, however, is that *modern atheism is largely a by-product of Christian thought*, in the form of a reaction to it and, to some extent, to the way Christianity has been lived. The fact that atheism is virtually not found in non-Christian cultures is so significant that it seems incredible that this has not been realized more clearly before. Is it not possible that after the Second Vatican Council's *peccavimus* in our approach to the Reformation we may also have to beat our breasts in approaching the non-Christians in our Christian milieu? To those preoccupied with the uniqueness of Christianity as the *signum levatum inter nationes* this may seem like overstepping the boundaries of admissible compromise: it may even seem that one would in so doing be trying to safeguard Christianity by diluting it beyond recognition so as to communicate with unbelievers on something like a common ground. In fact, Mascall, in what is possibly a too massive attack on "religionless Christianity" and "Christian atheism," has summarized what must be the objection felt by many: that instead of converting the world to Christianity, we are converting Christianity to the world.<sup>14</sup> Yet it is by no means obvious that anything so cataclysmic is necessarily taking place in all cases of modern left wing theology. As regards Catholic theology, which is our concern now, we should realize that there can never be any undue compromise in admitting previous failings. And perhaps the most important single theological issue in Catholic theology, possibly hardly less than in Protestant modern thinking, is that of the problem of God. If that problem does indeed have the kind of background that must be subjected to scrutiny in the first place, then what we should be aiming at is a new Christian theism.

This is precisely what the book here under review attempts to do. Leslie Dewart's *The Future of Belief* carries the

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<sup>14</sup> E. L. Mascall, *The Secularization of Christianity*, New York, 1966, *passim*, e.g. pp. 101-2.

sub-title *Theism in a World Come of Age*.<sup>15</sup> While the main title is a deliberate antithetical variation upon Freud's *The Future of an Illusion*,<sup>16</sup> in which the end of religion was predicted at least as an ideal, the sub-title plays upon Bonhoeffer's concern with a "world come of age".<sup>17</sup> The operative word is "theism," and it is the theism of the future the author is concerned with.

According to Harvey Cox the book could be epoch-making.<sup>18</sup> This might well be true. He also calls the book utterly radical. It must be asked, however, if in certain respects it is radical enough; I shall return to this point when speaking about foundational research and metaphysics in general. However all this may be, the book is decidedly of great importance, if only because scholastic thinking has been exposed for the inadequate way of thinking it is for our times, and, what is more, in its own terms and in terms of its historical origin, hellenic thinking. Furthermore, the undue dependence of scholasticism upon hellenic thought has been described against a background of development of dogma, the requirements of which it has not met.

On the whole, Cox is perhaps somewhat too lavish in his praise of the book. He praises, for example, the confrontation with modern philosophy, but it is subject to some doubt if there are not also some defects there. It further seems somewhat of an overstatement to expect that "some people" will consider the book "blatantly heretical" and even a "colossal distortion of the tradition," unless by "some people" be meant a group that can be accounted as very little representative of Catholic theology. I do not think that any notable portion of Catholic biblical theologians will be greatly perturbed by the demolition of a manner of thinking so unbiblical as scholastic theology, any more than they were much impressed by it

<sup>15</sup> Except in the case of literal quotation, I shall not give references to specific passages in this book.

<sup>16</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, London, 1928.

<sup>17</sup> See note 2, above.

<sup>18</sup> Harvey Cox, "The Future of Belief, A Review," *Herder Correspondence*, vol. III, 9-10, 282A-B, Sept.-Oct. 1966.



when it was still more widely accepted. They might even feel slightly discouraged, quite conceivably, that the biblical approach does not loom large in D.'s book. While D. might claim that a more overall attention to biblical theology did not constitute the topic he wanted to write about, biblical theologians might well feel that it should have been brought in more than it has.

Cox, in praising the book the way he did, was possibly impressed by the fact that "Dewart is in many ways more radical than the death-of-God theologians". However, the "death-of-God flap of 1966," as Cox calls the latest developments, is hardly radical in view of its utterly dualistic historical antecedents. The Barthian conception of God as the "wholly other" was obviously bound to lead to its emotional, if not logical, conclusion that man can hardly be expected to stand in need of someone "wholly other". In the religious experience of the man in the street "wholly other" must mean, ultimately, "non-existent". And the fact that what actually is no more than the abolition of an antiquated concept of God has come to be called "the death-of-God" is a semantic performance of journalistic rather than theological impact. This phrase is not only about the most insignificant borrowing from Nietzschean resentment, but it also makes one wonder why, if God is really dead (in whatever sense), so many reams of paper are filled with its promulgation. Are not the death-of-God theologians trying (and rather in vain) to convince *themselves* at least as much as their readers? It is, in general, not in the interests of theology to go about its business in the manner of journalism.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, for Cox to praise D.'s book the way he did, in the same journalistic vein, is, though token of genuine and well-deserved admiration, perhaps not the highest praise that can be given to D., especially because D.'s book is a detached, balanced, and thoroughly scholarly work. In line with this comment, also, I should like to remark that

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<sup>19</sup> Perhaps it is occasionally good for theological sloth to be shaken rather roughly out of its complacency. It is well enough known, for example, that Robinson wrote his *Honest to God* (London, 1963) with his tongue in his cheek. But to build a theology on this, in the same shock method, is a different matter.

the book under review is indeed "radical," but not in the first place, and perhaps not at all, in the sense of "left wing" or "iconoclastic;" the book is radical in the quite literal and level-headed sense that it goes to the very roots of some of the problems of theism in the modern conception of the Catholic faith.

#### HELLENIC DUALISM

In what follows I am not undertaking to give an abstract of D.'s book; that alone would exceed article size and yet fail to do justice to the book. No review can dispense the reader from reading the book itself, and this is even more true of the present article. In what follows I shall attempt to bring out what strikes me as the most basic issues in D.'s philosophy and theology, largely phrased in my own words; after which I shall comment on those issues by way of a critique.

The principal merit of the book, in my opinion, is the coherent and expert exposition of how it has been possible at all for Catholic theology, even until quite recently, to get so seriously out of touch with the spirit of the times. The fact itself of this alienation has been noted often before; in explanation it has been pointed out that in the twentieth century we can hardly be expected to benefit by allegiance to a theology, however brilliant, of the thirteenth. The explanation, however, has to go far beyond exposing a seven century gap. Nothing becomes necessarily untrue or irrelevant because it was said long ago, even if one accepts, as D. does, the need for development and reinterpretation. D.'s main point is actually not so much our allegiance to scholastic thought, but scholastic allegiance to hellenic thought. Then, again, that scholasticism has been heavily indebted to Greek philosophy has also been known all along. However, the *charge* of hellenization of Christian dogma has been pressed almost exclusively in Reformation theology, already in the nineteenth century, notably by von Harnack. And in view of this fact, which, to my knowledge, has never been adequately met by Catholic theology, it is the more interesting to note that D. opposes it. That is, he does not think that the hellenization of Christian dogma

was wrong; all he claims is that it has been unduly perpetuated. Thus the "perennial philosophy" of scholasticism is not so much the problem as the symptom of a problem more basic. Therefore D.'s program is a dehellenization of dogma rather than a denunciation of scholasticism. He regrets that, put this way, his program is a negative one; but he is enough of a realist to see that that is where we have to begin. Whereupon he himself sets an example with some highly interesting and inspiring attempts at rejuvenation of Catholic thinking.

The other pole of the discrepancy between dogmatic theology and our times is called by the author "contemporary consciousness," and sometimes "contemporary self-awareness". This presupposes a theory of consciousness, which is explained at a later stage by the author, and which we shall attend to in due course. At this point it is worthy of note that the philosophy D. uses to explain these concepts is—as might by now be expected—not made to serve a dogmatic position already chosen, but they are developed with a view to making the gospel relevant for these times. In other words, philosophy is for D. not the *ancilla theologiae* of Thomistic thinking, nor even the preliminary understanding of man and the world in the sense of Bultmann's *Vorverständnis*, as supposedly required *before* the gospel could become meaningful to modern man.<sup>20</sup> Neither is it an apologetics geared to make all the Catholic defenses go up in the face of non-Christian challenges. D.'s philosophical elaborations bear upon the faith itself, contemporary faith, which, though by all means a free gift of God revealing himself in Jesus Christ, is nevertheless also man's response to Revelation, and as such a religious commitment in terms of contemporary consciousness; not interpreted through a previous medieval and ultimately hellenic *Weltanschauung*; *not even* by way of an assent to the articles of the Creed *as if* these mediated between the believer and God; but

<sup>20</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth*, New York, 1961 (German original 1948). Karl Barth, with whom Bultmann shares the basic inspiration of the "theology of the paradox," has a similar understanding of human existence, but Barth would never admit anything like a philosophical *Vorverständnis*.

as an immediate, God-given, basically inevident and yet reason-supported actual living in the very presence of God.

What is more, the type of philosophy employed here, far from being even theology's handmaid, is convincing in terms of contemporary experience, no matter whether it be used for the description of contemporary faith or not. That is, D.'s attempts surpass by far a philosophical approach like Bultmann's, which, after all, is based on one philosopher only (Heidegger), or even one like Teilhard de Chardin's, built as the latter is, however inspiringly otherwise, upon the concept of evolution alone. That is, Teilhard's work is basically apologetic. D.'s work goes deeper: it attempts no less than the beginning of a new dogmatic theology more in tune with modern times. D. agrees with the Christian as a believer in the first place; then he makes him agree with much that has traditionally been believed to be opposed to Christianity, and that, to mention only one example at this point, includes even much of Marxism, no doubt a rather extreme and therefore illuminating case. D. is, as it were, showing that, since God has become involved in human history, it is not up to us to determine rashly what sort of a history it is God has become involved in. D. does not rush in where traditional theologians have feared to tread; on the contrary, he fears to tread where traditional theologians have rushed in. Or, there is no temerity in the way D. discusses Christian dogma; his cautiousness in not surrendering to the demands of contemporary experience wherever basic Christian truths are at issue is clear throughout the book, though it will of course remain possible to contest certain points more in particular. He has even taken the rather forbidding trouble to show that scholasticism fails, in the scholastic's own terms. Otherwise, D.'s overall efforts are not spent much on specific issues; these issues are, on the whole, rather illustrations of his entire approach: to show the anachronism of traditional dogmatic theology. This anachronism, as noted, is mainly in the hellenic foundations of theological endeavors; and since the faith of the Church, including its privileged form in the *magisterium*, has never committed itself to hellenic thinking, whether it be the Pre-Socratics, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics or the later Platonists, it is

hard to see what could be ill-conceived about an approach which questions that whole body of thought for our times.

#### THE OBJECT OF THE FAITH AND BEATITUDO

But this is not yet clear enough, as a representation of what the author is saying. From the preceding it might still appear as if we are mainly concerned with an updating of theology in, let us say, the way of an adaptation. However, the issue is not in the first place theology, but that on which theology is a reflection: the faith. Second, the word "adaptation" might be misunderstood as meaning that only marginal changes might suffice to bring out better the immutable revealingness of the core. All this, however, would imply that Christian dogma is a monolithic whole, which, being presented to the faithful, would have to be "integrated" into his "previous" human experience, even though it might have to be done with certain fringe adaptations to make the integration possible. This supposition would imply that dogma, or, say, the articles of faith, would open the way, when assented to, to God in Christ. This position, however, is not accepted by the author. On the one hand, he does not deny that a certain conceptualization is necessary; indeed, he thinks it is of the essence of faithful consciousness. On the other hand, however, he insists that such a conceptualization is not something *in between* human consciousness and divine revelation, but part of that consciousness itself. If one were to think (as some might) that this is just another version of rationalism and/or semi-pelagianism (of the kind, say, rejected by the Council of Orange), that would be to miss the author's point completely. It would be like applying the Thomistic concept of "nature" (as correlative with "supernature") to Augustine's concept of "nature" (in the "same" correlation), which would of course be tantamount to making Augustine a pelagian. For Augustine considers nature as already ordained towards the supernatural, a thing Thomas otherwise perfectly well recognized.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, D. is not speaking of consciousness in a manner philosophically meant to be a preliminary understand-

<sup>21</sup> Cf. H. de Lubac, *Le mystère du surnaturel*, Paris, 1965, pp. 41 ff.

ing for the kind of consciousness that we call the faith; he is speaking only of the latter, not, therefore, the consciousness of God's salvific presence *through* the truths of the faith proposed to him for acceptance, but those truths *in* God's presence and involvement in his personal and communal life. To point this out seems useful to preclude unnecessary misunderstandings concerning D.'s position.

In short: for D. the faith is an articulated consciousness or self-awareness, which differentiates the self and all the factors of experience in faithful belief in God. It follows, therefore, that the concept of God has to be in harmony with the totality of experience. This is not to say that D. has been treading the weary way of nineteenth century protestant liberal theology all over again in a Catholic manner; or, it is not that God is degraded to human needs, let alone to human demands. It is, on the contrary, to say that God's involvement in history is incarnate in the way this human history develops. When God reveals himself to twentieth century man, it is hard to see why twentieth century consciousness has to be stretched on a Procrustean bed seven centuries long, or even more than three times as long if one takes into account the hellenic foundations of scholastic thought.

The hellenic background and foundation of traditional theology looms much larger than can be seen in medieval scholasticism only. An illuminating example of this is given by D. when speaking of Freud's attitude to religion.<sup>22</sup> When Freud stated that religion is an illusion, this did not necessarily mean, even for Freud himself, that religion is an error. He defined an illusion as a belief inspired by wish-fulfillment. However, the epistemological impact is not important here, since Freud was against religion anyway; but a more important reservation made by Freud is that he was speaking about the religious experience of "ordinary man;" and then it can indeed hardly be denied that religious goals have often been motivated by what really amounts to a refusal to shoulder

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<sup>22</sup> See also Paul Ricoeur, "The Atheism of Freudian Psychoanalysis." *Concilium*, Vol. 16 (*Is God Dead?*), New York, 1966, pp. 59-72.

personal responsibility.<sup>23</sup> More important is a second reservation made by Freud, that is, where he explains why, in his view, man would feel the need of such illusions at all. It is because that is the way man counterbalances the threats of a cruel world. However, says D., there is, quite gratuitously, a distinct pessimism in such an anthropomorphic conception of the "ill will" of the world towards man; that pessimism, according to D., is the heritage of Greek thinking, to which Freud was also otherwise so heavily indebted. The salient point of Freud's negative attitude toward religion, D. goes on to say, is not therefore his failure to recognize a harmonious, instead of a distorted, type of Christian experience, but rather that there is nothing obvious in the *Weltanschauung* from which he started out in the first place. Consequently, instead of picturing Freud as inadmissibly radical with regard to religious experience in general, what should be clearly recognized is that at least in one important facet of his theory he was not radical enough. There is of course a remarkable parallel between Freud and Marx in that the latter found religion to be "opium to the people" because it frustrated, in his view, legitimate concerns for human happiness during this life, by relegating all those concerns to the hereafter.<sup>24</sup> Have not exploited workers been too long and too often told that this life is a vale of tears and that it was their duty to accept what apparently for them was the will of God? One need not in any way be unaware of the mystery of suffering, let alone of its redemptive function, to contest the view that "a vale of tears" is the best theological characterization of human life on earth.

I will omit the issue whether the last example does not at least go back as much to a perhaps too other-worldly ideal of Christian perfection as noticeable in the Church's history of this ideal; or, the source of the pessimism underlying such

<sup>23</sup> This is a theme dear also to recent Reformation theology; see John A. T. Robinson, *The New Reformation?* Philadelphia, 1965.

<sup>24</sup> As noted before (p. 633), Marx's metaphysics goes deeper than this more humanistic and pastoral aspect (the latter of which is of course no concern of his), i.e., Marx wanted the unity of Man and Nature to replace that of God and Man; see Gaston Fessard, S.J., "The Theological Structure of Marxist Atheism," *Concilium*, etc. (see above, note 22), pp. 7-24.

an ideal is perhaps not so easy to trace back to the typically hellenic pessimism as in the example of Freud. However, we can afford to bypass this issue in favor of one to be found even on a deeper level, and one expounded by D. It is something apparently so innocuous as the conception of *happiness*, which, according to D., is as typically hellenic as it is arbitrary when abstracted from the hellenic frame of reference. That conception could easily lead to what D. calls "spiritual hedonism". If, as is done in the theology of Saint Thomas, happiness is taken to be man's perfection, there is the danger that, as D. phrases it, man's perfection is not so much *to be happy as to be*. This somewhat obscure statement is clarified when we follow the author further. The traditional "beatific vision" is again a sort of intermediate entity between man and God; or, perhaps more accurately, the conceptions of God and man find another conception of *beatitudo* wedged between them in a manner not quite obviously called for. Here is a most interesting parallel with the notion of the faith as supposedly intermediate between man and God: just as certain conceptualizations of faithful consciousness (say, the articles of the Creed) are not *mediating between* believing man and the God he believes in, so also happiness, whatever its conception, is not (necessarily) in between man and the God he loves.<sup>25</sup>

The parallelism of truth and happiness is of great importance, and not for historical reasons alone. If it is indeed possible for a believer to love the gift more than the giver, is it not also, and quite analogously, true that the "appropriation" of the faith in certain fixed and readily "available" conceptualizations could turn the experience of the faith into a personal accomplishment, a "possession" to which the believer might feel (even though perhaps largely unconsciously) en-

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<sup>25</sup> A folkloristic story recounted by D. illustrates the latter point better than any theoretical exposition. It tells about an angel who, carrying a pail of water and a torch, was asked by a saint passing by what he was going to do. The angel replied that he was going to set fire to the castles of heaven and extinguish the flames of hell; and that then he would be curious to see who would love God more: the blessed or the doomed.



titled, or which he might even use as an inquisitorial weapon against his brothers in Christ?

The author is saying that the hellenic frame of reference has led to a theology of dualism; the dualism between knower and known, and the dualism between pessimism of human forlornness and the urge for happiness. There have of course been attempts to overcome these dualisms by means of sophisticated gradations of intermediacy. But this obviously is not to overcome the dualism, but to refine it to the point where it would be less easily recognized and do proportionately more harm. In scholastic theological dimensions this concretely means that the living faith has been inhibited by the intermediacy of monolithic truths, with more concern for their immutability and over-all validity than for their relevance to certain types of consciousness in certain ages and cultures, while the love for God has been obstructed by a concern for happiness which not only is unnecessary as a bridge and harmful as a gap, but also harbors not a few psychological problems. The first inhibition arises out of the kind of doubt which has nothing to do with the inevidence of the faith or its essentially numinous character, and therefore out of what at least objectively must be branded as unfaithfulness; the second emerges from a pessimism which is in its roots fatalistic and unrelated to the mysteries of both iniquity and suffering, basically at variance with love and therefore at least objectively selfish. With regard to the first issue we might say (as D. does) that ideally we are not permitted to have faith in faith, we are allowed—and privileged—to have faith in God alone; and likewise we must never fall in love with happiness, not even the happiness God is granting us; we must love God alone. This is not to say that the faith is not certain, but that its certainty does not have to consist, and must never exclusively consist, in making it reduplicative; likewise the claim is not that we do not find happiness in the love of God, but that this happiness must never be allowed to make its own demands because then it will be impossible from the start to overcome our selfishness.

## THE HELLENIC VIEW OF REALITY

While the preceding explorations into some backgrounds of hellenic thinking have reached deep into the less accessible, because less obviously problematic, issues of Catholic theology, the more explicit problem of Christian theism should also come up for discussion.

The problem of the existence of God, according to D., has always been outlined against the background of the problem of the existence of objects. The negative side of this is that hellenic and scholastic thinking have, on the whole, contributed little to the understanding of man. The ultimate basis of the problem of knowledge D. finds in the Parmenidean principle of the equivalence of being and intelligibility. However, being had, in Greek thought, always been considered as necessary, and that is where, obviously, scholasticism had to introduce a reservation. It was not that the Greeks were unaware of contingency, but that was put down to chance circumstances which in the last analysis are reducible to the notions of matter and (later) potency. Scholasticism therefore, pressed on the one hand by the Greek notion of the necessity of being and, on the other, by the inevitability of reserving necessary being for God alone, found the ingeniously simple solution that created beings, although contingent, were at least necessary with regard to their intelligibility, that is, their essence. Therefore, created beings could have a necessary intelligibility and yet a contingent existence. The retrenchment of necessity to intelligibility or essence of course necessitated the real distinction between essence and existence. For obvious reasons this distinction was not to be held for God. D. feels that had Thomas retained the conception of contingency of created beings but abandoned the Parmenidean principle, the history of Catholic thought might have been different. Ockham of course was to draw the conclusion that no amount of knowledge about the essence of an object could enlighten us as to its existence. From the ensuing doubt, i.e. that we can never be sure that anything actually exists, it follows obviously that, unless the existence of God be demonstrable from the identity of his essence and existence, that existence is as problematic as that

of the creatures; and even more so seeing that, unlike creatures, God is not empirically intuitable.<sup>26</sup> This, in the philosophy of Descartes, ultimately led to the apriori certainty of God's existence, on the part of unbelievers to skepticism and later to atheism; and eventually, in the Catholic camp to fideism. Once agnosticism came in, on the part of unbelievers, concerning the existence of a God of whom they nevertheless had a sure concept, the way was open for anyone who discovered an empirical *substitute*, and a meaningful one, for that same concept of God, which, even though it was not subject to the same doubt as was his existence, yet failed to be meaningful enough to carry conviction. That is why most of modern atheism is a "relative" atheism (a concept to be explained below). D., quoting Hinnners,<sup>27</sup> claims that Marx, who interpreted Hegel in going back to the old Greeks, should have interpreted the Greeks by tracing the logical consequences of the Parmenidean postulate to Hegel. From that type of metaphysics stemmed absolute theism; from absolute theism it had to come to atheism. Also the antimony between rationalism and fideism is to be traced back, according to D., to the same hellenic false start. And thus, says D., it is understandable that Vatican I, in an otherwise entirely justified concern to rule out fideism, had to wind up in the conclusion that it was a matter of *faith* that the existence of God was *rationaly* demonstrable.

D. is actually pointing out not so much what Greek philosophy was saying as what it was implying: the necessity of reality. He nowhere notes that at least in modern Thomism the notion of necessity as transcendently convertible with being makes contingent being at least *analogically* "necessary". I assume the reason for this is D.'s qualms about the analogy of being itself (in one place he notes that though in a system of *predication* it might make sense, for an *understanding* of the problem of God it is inhibiting), especially because it so easily

<sup>26</sup> In terms of the *explicit system*, Thomas' thinking should be evaluated differently. On this see my "Some Notes on Dewart's *The Future of Belief*" (forthcoming in *Continuum*).

<sup>27</sup> Richard Hinnners, *Ideology and Analysis: a Rehabilitation of Metaphysical Ontology*, New York, 1966, p. 131.

would lead to absolute theism. However, we shall return to D.'s analyses of the Greek and scholastic notions and treatment of being later, and for the moment it is necessary to explain what "absolute" and "relative" mean for D. in the context of theism and atheism.

#### THEISM AND ATHEISM AS ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE

The distinctions conveyed here are philosophically of great importance, and we shall attend to these alone for the moment; theologically, however, I shall have more comments later. Briefly, then, as D. explains it, *absolute atheism* is the type of atheism in which God lacks all reality; it implies a theoretical indifference with regard to theism. According to some this type is found in Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. *Relative atheism* is roughly what Maritain calls "positive" atheism (a coincidence not mentioned by D.): it is a concept of and interest in the problem of theism, but bent backwards to some mundane reality, mostly man; it is an "inverted" theology, and it is found in Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Sartre. The alternative values with regard to which the traditional Christian God is supposed to be competitive and therefore has to be "killed," are, respectively, the unity of man and nature, individual human greatness, psychological integration, and freedom. In relative atheism the non-existence of God is not a beginning, but a conclusion. The existence of God is denied because it is found to be metaphysically, scientifically, logically, psychologically, or (especially) morally impossible.<sup>28</sup> Relative atheism, therefore, is "conditional" atheism. It is, in the term of de Lubac, not so much atheism as antitheism, as noted before. This might induce some thinkers to speak of that type of atheism as crypto-theism. While from a purely systematic point of view this would be true (the term "inverted" theology comes to much the same, and also *mutatis mutandis* Mircea Eliade would speak of "crypto-religious behavior" on the part of modern secularized man<sup>29</sup>), to insist on this, says D., would

<sup>28</sup> See also John A. T. Robinson, *The New Reformation?* pp. 106-22, where the traditional conception of God is found to be "intellectually superfluous," "emotionally dispensable," and "morally intolerable."

<sup>29</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane, The Nature of Religion*, New York, 1961, pp. 201-13.

not only inhibit dialogue with atheists but it would also overlook the failings of Christian practice, not coming up to the ideals of Christian belief. In this connection D. concentrates especially on Marxism, and suggests that to say that Marxism is a theism unaware of its own nature would be to overlook that Christianity has been all too often a humanism unaware of its own nature; this, however, has not been in general a point the Marxists have insisted upon.

The inadequacy of traditional forms of Christian theism here at issue is then, according to D., that it has been largely an absolute theism. While absolute atheism is the belief that nothing could be possibly God, *absolute theism* is the kind of thinking inclined towards the belief that anything is apt to be God. It is therefore close to idolatry. It appropriates divine reality within the dangerously distorting confines of human arbitrariness, degrades God accordingly, adduces premature solutions to establish a supposedly indispensable stability of what is in fact an over-organized articulation of the faith, and is basically a most serious oversight of another and more important tradition in the Christian doctrine of God, that of the Pseudo-Dionysian tradition of the *docta ignorantia*, of the *via eminentiae* of the Thomistic *triplex via*, and of the tradition of the great mystics of the Church, for example Saint John of the Cross in his theology of the *nada*. Here is, therefore, says the author, where relative atheism, however much antitheistic in effect, should begin to appear strangely familiar to the Christian, induce him to an examination of his conscience, and to a dialogue with at least the relative atheists of whatever color. He will then arrive at a *relative theism*.

What relative atheism should do for us in our actual Christian (contemporary) experience, says D., is that our respect for God and a healthy fear of anything approaching idolatry imply a true and genuine *concern* for the truth of our belief in God; this *practically* implies, of sheer necessity, a certain amount of disbelief. Note that what the author is speaking about is a *concern* for the truth of our belief, a *practical* attitude, therefore, and not the *theoretical* concern leading to the need for *reduplicative* certainty. This view then ties up al-

most organically with that other one of D.'s, propounded above, that we should beware of a faith which relies on itself instead of on God. The traditional concern for reduplicative certainty, even when triggered by an *otherwise* legitimate fear of fideism, should never lead us, unawares, into faith in faith; while the practical concern with the truth of our belief in God is ever to assert our contingency in the face of His presence, a healthy fear, therefore, that God might somehow become our "possession" (which would be the same as idolatry).<sup>30</sup> It is all too easy for man to end up by claiming to know too much about God.

#### ANALOGY, TRANSCENDENCE, AND PRESENCE

Supposing for a moment that the scholastic thinker were to share with D. the notions of relative and absolute theism at least according to what they mean, he would, of course, promptly plead not guilty of the latter by pointing out his doctrine of the analogy of being. D. does not say much about that theory, beyond the important comment already alluded to that, as a manner of *predication* it is no doubt defensible, but that it cannot be dovetailed into the *understanding* of the God of

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<sup>30</sup> What D. means by concern, therefore, is *vigilance*, and the "disbelief" or "doubt" in the *practical* sense is a suspicion of the human tendency to draw within the sphere of personal human accomplishment what can never belong there. That is what makes the *attitude* advocated by Dewart entirely different from fideism. The faith is "reasonable" in more than one sense: (a) that it, although transcending reason, is in no way counter to reason; (b) that there are, as traditional terminology has it, the "external signs of credibility;" (c) that it is possible to interconnect, to a certain extent, the truths of the faith, "*aliquam Deo dante intelligentiam*" (Dz. 1796), so as to arrive at a greater understanding of the faith, "*eamque fructuosissimam*" (*ibid*). D. simply presupposes (a), among other things by emphasizing the inevidence of the faith, and (b) in insisting that the faith be meaningful for these times. He is mainly concerned with (c) by eliminating anachronisms in the faith in the first place. D.'s rejection of reduplicative certainty is not a bypassing of (b), while his insistence on a (practical) "disbelief" is an attitude (equally practical!) to ensure that our faith as a state of consciousness does not amount to what (again, practically) would be a pelagianism of the intellect. In short D.'s "doubt" would affect the intellect only so that the *consciousness* of faith continue to defer to the mystery of revelation.

Christianity. In terms of contemporary experience it may even *distort* Christian understanding of God; although the analogy of being does not imply, in any sense, that God is the *apex mundi*, yet in terms of contemporary understanding that is what (unconsciously, of course) it could easily come to. Or, this would be the kind of speculation easily affecting, at least for all practical purposes, the infinite transcendence of God. This, indeed, is precisely the reason why Reformation thinking has always rejected the analogy of being, and, indeed, in most cases, the very possibility of a "natural theology". Though there is no doubt at the bottom of this a basic dualism of God/man, or God/world, this is evidently not the only reason. D.'s objection is otherwise somewhat different from this line of argument; his is rather that to attribute existence to God is to anthropomorphize him. He does not thereby claim that this would be an inevitable consequence of the Thomistic analogy of being, but rather, and more relevantly, that the contemporary notion of existence no longer suits the scholastic one.

D.'s alternative suggestion is not to think of God as "being" (in the verbal sense) at all. Whether that is necessarily a better proposal remains to be seen. Scholastically trained historians of philosophy might even feel some qualms when recognizing here a speculative move uncannily resembling one found in Plotinus, who refuses to predicate "being" of the "hen," the "One". But understandable though such objections would be, they would also be to misunderstand our author; first, because his rejection of hellenistic categories more in general hardly make him a suspect in the matter of relying on agnostic dualism; second, because once a semantic proposal is made, it is obviously admissible to pursue it to its logical conclusion. And the reason for the semantic proposal is that the contemporary notion of existence is considerably more phenomenological than ontological. D. is not saying that God does not exist in the way the atheist would claim the same; he is saying that God is *beyond* existence, this term having the contemporary connotations it does. Whether the notion of existence should loom as large as it does in D.'s thinking, we shall see in due course; but the proposal is a serious one, and therefore

a serious competitor to the traditional scholastic notion bearing the same name.

But even this is not enough. D. is not satisfied with a terminological rejection alone. More positively, he wants to see as most vital and functional in modern Christian thinking the conception of the "presence" of God. He recognizes several advantages of this. First, he invokes Marcel's distinction between existence and presence, the first being an uninspiring ontological category, and the second implying personal relationship: I am present only if I am present *to someone*; second, by this conception of the presence of God in human history he avoids the dialectics of transcendence/immanence, which, though no doubt consistent within a certain system, is confusing rather than enlightening for *understanding*. The experience of the faith does not in any way stand to benefit by dialectic speculation of this kind. We shall later see that the notion of the "presence" of God as "present *to us*" is also utterly biblical, so much so that it perhaps constitutes the most comprehensive "inclusion" in the entire Bible.

#### DEVELOPMENT, CONSCIOUSNESS, CONCEPTUALIZATION, AND CULTURE

The preceding was mainly about the distortions in Christian thinking for which the hellenic frame of reference has been largely responsible. A more positive line of thinking in the book under review, although likewise in confrontation with the hellenic problem of knowledge, is the elaboration of the notion of consciousness and its development. This is relevant seeing that (as noted before) in the opinion of the author the faith is a state of consciousness, rather than an intermediate set of truths, to be assented to if the believer is to approach God at all. Dogma of course could be taken in its more reflexive sense in which theology is a reflection on the faith rather than the faith itself, in the sense, therefore, that "dogma" might indicate a *corpus doctrinae*. However, even in that case it should be as closely related to faithful consciousness as possible, and D. seems to be using the notion of dogma in this sense of very close relatedness, rather than in its comparatively "autonomous" sense of (professional) dogmatic theology. For all



practical purposes, the development of dogma as discussed by D. might stand for development of the faith itself. Consequently the essence of (faithful) consciousness is elaborated in D.'s book.

Development, says the author, is of the essence of consciousness. Traditional scholastic metaphysics has looked for the nature of human consciousness too much in its reduplicative nature, as different from the consciousness of animals. Scholasticism, otherwise, speaks of knowledge rather than of consciousness; man is not only a knower, but he also knows that he knows; it is therefore self-reflexive. In this manner, and phrasing it now in post-scholastic terms, the essence of human consciousness has come to be seen in the *cogito* (recently, and most dualistically, in Sartre). However, though there is certainly such a thing as the heightening of consciousness, this only accidentally entails the possibility of self-reflection. Indeed, that element is mostly dispensable, and always inessential. First, consciousness as reduplicative self-awareness is also found, although to a lesser degree, in animals, so that the difference between man and animals should not be looked for there in the first place. But, more importantly, the heightening of consciousness, which is the very rationale of its development, is intensification rather than self-reduplication. The intensification consists in a progressive differentiation of the self, the things of our world, and others.

Consciousness, moreover, is not the same as knowledge, this being only one aspect of consciousness. If, however, the faith is a (God-given) state of consciousness, truth can no longer be the correspondence between the knower and the known. Admittedly the act of faith has always been distinguished from other acts of knowledge, because of the difference of the respective "objects," but the underlying notion of truth has been essentially the same. In either case it has been considered to be immutable. In this too rationalistic conception of the faith development has been mainly understood as a better knowledge of things already known previously, because the acquisition of things previously unknown, an alternative possible in the sciences, is usually excluded from the faith since

after the apostolic period there has been no new revelation; and in so far as development of dogma has been deemed possible at all, it has been understood mainly as an explication of the *depositum fidei*.

This position, however, overlooks the nature of human experience, of which consciousness is, as it were, the crystallization. Consciousness, then, is not a succession of mental states, but the function or activity by which the being of man himself emerges. It does not, that is, develop as an additional faculty to "being" (scholasticism would speak of the intellect as an "accident," albeit a necessary one), or, it is not a perfection which it acquires supererogatorily. Since, then, development is of the very essence of consciousness, truth cannot be the adequation of the intellect to an object, but fidelity of consciousness to being. Precisely for that reason there is some truth in all knowledge, and there can be no such thing as an absolute falsehood, because an absolute falsehood would have no connection whatsoever with our experience, of which, it bears repeating, consciousness is the crystallization. This, of course, would be an untenable position in a conception where "judgments" are supposed to be the joining or separating of subject and predicate, to which, then, the order of reality supposedly gives or denies its fiat. This would be true only if knowledge were some external overall faculty like the agent intellect of Averroes. This is not only not true of man (as Thomas well realized), but not even of God, because it would radically presuppose a "pre-established harmony". The aristotelico-Thomistic notion of truth is therefore not only contrary to empirical fact, but it also leads to the impossible conclusions of "God's truth" as the yardstick of everything. The notion of stability of truth entailed in such a conception of God's truth leads to its annihilation. Rather than conformity, truth is fidelity. As D. words it (*italics his*): "*Conformity is a relation towards another which is owing to another by reason of the other's nature. Fidelity is a relation towards another which one owes to oneself by reason of one's own nature. Conformity obliges from the outside. Fidelity, like nobility, obliges from the within.*"<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 96.

D. does not work out explicitly the remarkable parallel between his theory of truth and his notion of relative theism, but it is so striking that it is worth doing this here, if briefly. If absolute theism is the position inclined towards the belief that anything is apt to be God, the traditional notion of absolute truth is the theory that man can have on overall view of reality, if only in principle, analogous to the overall view of reality that God must have. Therefore to the conception of *relative* theism as the only theism which is free from the dangers of idolatry, there corresponds the notion of *relative* truth which prevents man from tending to consider omniscience as at least remotely within his power, or supposedly the prerogative of metaphysical thinking. That such a conception of relative truth is *toto coelo* different from, and indeed incompatible with, what in scholastic thinking is (rightly) rejected as "relativism" is clearer than daylight. "Relativism" enables a thinker to ignore truths previously established; the conception of relative truth (different also, it should be noted, from "agnosticism" in the modern sense) leaves the way open for refinement not only in the way in which scholasticism would accept this, but also in terms of integration in changed times and cultures.

When the author then proceeds to apply his conception of consciousness and its development to the development of dogma, two forms of it come up: the one in the individual person (called "ontogenetic" development by D.), and the one in the history of mankind (the "phylogenetic" one). About the first there is no basic issue: that faith develops in the individual person has not, I think, ever been denied; the very gospels testify to this in the case of the apostles. The point, therefore, is to show that there is development phylogenetically. For it is upon this aspect that the development of dogma should be brought to bear. D. does not really show that there is development in that overall sense; that is, though there is no doubt such a thing as change of consciousness and therefore also of the faith over the times, and also a growth in awareness of certain features of human existence not realized so adequately previously, yet this is not the same as to say that there is an *overall* growth. More concretely, is there really evidence that the twentieth century is more developed more

generally or in matters of the faith, than previous centuries in all respects? Is regress not possible in human history, or stagnation, in so many respects that the gains with regard to a few features are not able to restore the picture of a development (for the better) in a more comprehensive sense? It is not clear if that is the basic claim made by the author, but if it is, it must be asked whether it has been proven. While we shall return to this important aspect later, we shall now convey the gist of the structure of (phylogenetic) development as presented by D.

Consciousness, D. argues, faithful consciousness not expected, necessarily entails conceptualization. Indeed, that is what spells the difference between experience and consciousness. If for no other reason, this argues that the faith cannot be expected to adhere perennially to certain fixed formulas of dogma, unless they have been given living form in such conceptualizations. However, the latter is, as is now abundantly well known from the behavioral sciences, not a matter of abstraction of the potentially intelligible from the actually sensible (as scholasticism would have it), but a matter of cultural form. The communicability of concepts has long been conceived of as due to two factors, (a) the possibility that several minds might abstract the same intelligible objects; (b) the possibility of conventional agreement on signs to represent such abstractions. Hence, man's mind has been dichotomized not only into the intelligible and the sensible, but also into thought and language. All the results, however, of scientific research are there to show that, if we conceive of consciousness as experience having reached the level of conceptualization, neither of these dichotomies makes any sense. While culture and language are natural to man, no given culture or language is the natural culture or language of man. The development D. has in mind is not the same as what is called acculturation, however necessary this may otherwise be; for acculturation is adaptation and it does not reflect the concept of change, consisting in the ever progressing conceptualization of, and our never ending dissatisfaction with, the truth as presented to us at a certain moment, age, or stage. While this is true for consciousness not concerned with the faith, it is even more

true for the faith, since that is concerned with the inevident. I should add here that D. argues at some length that his conception is entirely different from the type of modernism condemned in *Pascendi*. The arguments he adduces for this are so convincing that it is not necessary to attend to them here, and the reader may therefore be referred to D.'s book for this particular issue.

#### DEWART'S MAIN INSPIRATION . . . .

So far some of the basic ideas which have led the author in his theology, have been conveyed here in what is hopefully not too inadequate a manner. Some interesting consequences of these ideas follow for trinitarian theology and christology for today and we shall briefly mention them later. It seems now time for an assessment of the ideas developed so far, confining ourselves to some major issues.

An extensive critique, indeed, would be faced with many problems. It would, for example, have to point out some inadequacies from the point of view of the history of philosophy. I will here merely mention three of them. First, it seems that D.'s interpretation of Descartes is somewhat faulty, in that he attributes a logical quality to the inference implied in the *Cogito, ergo sum*, whereas according to Descartes himself the illation was a *direct* one, something pre-logical therefore.<sup>32</sup> Second, D. repeats what histories of philosophy say about Averroes' hypostatization of the Aristotelian *nous poietikos*; however, it seems that careful reading of the third book of *Peri Psyches* leaves a distinct possibility open that Aristotle himself believed, in a return to Platonism surprising in such a late work, in such a *nous* of extraterrestrial status.<sup>33</sup> Third, D. claims that the thinking of Teilhard de Chardin was not primarily apologetic; however, this is a theological category, and in view of the fact that theologians who have written in

<sup>32</sup> See Wolfgang Struve, "Ueber das 'ergo' in Descartes' *ego cogito, ergo sum* und *sum, ergo Deus est*," *Lexis*, 2 (1951), 239-62.

<sup>33</sup> See F. J. C. J. Nuyens, S.J., *Ontwikkelingsmomenten in de zielkunde van Aristoteles*, Nijmegen, 1939. Nuyens' work is a substantial improvement upon Werner Jaeger's famous *Aristoteles* (Berlin, 1923), especially, though not only, in the analysis of *Peri Psyches*.

great depth upon the French paleontologist, de Lubac and Smulders,<sup>34</sup> distinctly claim apologetic status for Teilhard's thought, it seems that some substantiation on the part of D. would be needed for such an extraordinary claim.

More important, but also more elusive and therefore more difficult to assess, is D.'s appraisal of hellenic thought, especially because he does not so much describe Greek thought in its own terms as the underlying frame of reference; for example, where he says that the Greeks considered being as necessary, or that the Parmenidean principle of being as convertible with intelligibility is the kind of thinking that foreshadowed, and inspired, the overall preoccupation with matters epistemological in later Western thought. Claims like these are obviously different from the ones challenged in the preceding paragraph. True, these characterizations of Greek thinking are also not strictly proven by the author. On the other hand there is a distinct convergence of evidence in that direction, and at least as a hypothesis it seems as sound as any of that magnitude that could be made. For example, and following such a claim into its historical aftermath, there is little doubt that the Thomistic dictum *anima est quodammodo omnia*, itself a literal translation of an Aristotelian quote, ultimately goes back to that Parmenidean principle. Similarly, it would take a ponderous monograph to prove that pessimism was a distinct feature of Greek ideas, yet it is reasonable to expect that the diagnosis is basically accurate, and I am not sure that many Graecologists would want to question it. The underlying notion of necessity of being is manifested perhaps more clearly

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<sup>34</sup> Henri de Lubac, S.J., *The Faith of Teilhard de Chardin*, London, 1965, esp. pp. 133 ff. P. Smulders, S.J., *La vision de Teilhard de Chardin*, Paris, 1964; Smulders points out that in the whole *oeuvre* of Teilhard the distinctly *non-apologetic* passages (mainly the ones that have laid themselves open to suspicion of unorthodoxy, as different from objections against Teilhard on the part of those who failed to understand the apologetic approach) are largely unrelated to his phenomenology, and very little representative of T.'s general method. Whether this can still be held after hitherto unedited material has become available, remains to be seen. See also Robert L. Faricy, S. J., "Teilhard de Chardin's Theology of Redemption," *Theological Studies*, 27 (1966), 553-79.

by the absence of any radical notion of contingency in Greek thinking, especially because the later act-potency doctrine in Aristotle is by no means a radical approach to the problem of contingency, but rather an attempt to deal with change, and, at greater depth, with the problem of the one and the many. As for the undercurrent of pessimism, apart from what might be said on this by students of Greek drama, or by those of the typically Greek conception of history as cyclic, in the act-potency doctrine alone it would be difficult not to recognize just a more down-to-earth and more empirical version of the Platonic depreciation of earthly reality. Closely related to this pessimism is the fatalism of Greek *ananke*, the demythologized descendant of the earlier *moira*, an all-pervading force so potent, and indeed so much of a law (presumably, it might be hypothesized, the ancestor of the Thomistic *lex naturalis*) that even Zeus was supposed not to interfere with it. While the *physis* of the *kosmos* was a closed system, the "morality" element (but, characteristically, a *blind* one) of the order in that *kosmos* was concretized in the latter's careful compartmentalization, every part having some deity or demon in charge of it, while it was imperative that no god meddle with a part not under his supervision. Even Zeus was not supposed to infringe upon this order, but only to enforce its implementation; and what we therefore have here is a (rather epiphenomenal) embryonic concept of a supreme being, blind, nameless, and not to be defied. The *ananke*, resp. *moira*, was blind precisely because the *kosmos* had the self-supporting characteristics that in later ontology would have to be called necessity.<sup>35</sup>

So far D.'s characterizations of hellenic thinking are to be taken entirely seriously. While I do not feel competent to say how far they are substantiated by specialistic research in Greek thinking, I would, however, call attention to the problem of *hellenistic* thought, in the sense of post-classical, as distinguished from the classical Greek period up to and including Aristotle, say, the *hellenic* period. The importance of this is not that it was D.'s duty to go into refinements of

<sup>35</sup> Cf. also F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy, A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation*, New York, 1957.

the kind involved in that transition, from hellenic to hellenistic thinking, but rather that scholasticism cannot be traced back to (say) Aristotle directly. The connection is in many ways an indirect one.<sup>36</sup> This matter has not been deeply investigated in general, but, more seriously, scholastic philosophers are, on the whole, entirely unaware of it. For example, the Thomistic notion of *substantia* is, from an ontological point of view, more different from Aristotle's *ousia* than similar to it. Indeed, the fact that Thomas did not know Greek did not particularly predispose him to understand Greek thought adequately. While the meaning of Aristotle's *ousia* is quite adequately conveyed by the present-day English expression "concrete reality," the credentials of Thomas' *substantia* can be traced back no farther than Boethius. While *substantia* as the original rendering of Aristotle's *ousia* was still a denominative of the verb *substare* "to stand firm," "to stand rooted," for Boethius it was—gratuitously—a derivative of *stare sub* (i.e. *accidentibus*), which means a definitive deviation from the Aristotelian notion.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> For what follows I am especially indebted to the following publications of Johannes Lohmann: "M. Heidegger's 'ontologische' Differenz und die Sprache," *Lexis*, 1 (1948), 49-106; "Was ist und was will allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft?," *Lexis*, 1 (1948), 128-168; "Erik Wisstrand, Ueber das Passivum (Besprechung)," *Lexis*, 1 (1948), 280-98; "Vom ursprünglichen Sinn der aristotelischen Syllogistik," *Lexis*, 2 (1951), 205-36; "Das Verhältnis des abendländischen Menschen zur Sprache (Bewusstsein und unbewusste Form der Rede)," *Lexis*, 3 (1953), 5-49; "'Sprache' und 'Zeit'," *Studium Generale*, 8 (1955), 562-7; "'Wort' und 'Zahl', Eine geschichtliche Studie zu Begriff und Realität von 'Bedeutung'," *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie*, 25 (1956), 151-8. —For *substantia* and related terms I have derived material from C. W. M. Verhoeven, "Het woord *substantia*," *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie*, 22 (1960), 459-543. —With Lohmann compare M. Heidegger *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, Tübingen, 1958. For a more comprehensive discussion of the subject-object split incidental to Stoic philosophy as compared to classical Greek thinking see my *Some Relations Between Perception, Speech, and Thought*, Assen, 1963, esp. 77-80. With regard to all these publications, with the exception, it seems to me, of Verhoeven, some reservations have to be made; for this see below, in the text.

<sup>37</sup> Indeed, within the Thomistic system itself *substantia* is a notion with heavy epistemological overtones, since it is defined as *unum per se*; *unum* however, is defined in a double negation, i.e., as



Further research in line with D.'s investigations would have to be continued by studying the later fate of Aristotelian concepts before they found their home in medieval scholasticism. Our example of *substantia*, which we cannot now pursue any further, is obviously not just an arbitrary example. It is precisely this notion that functions in traditional Trinity tracts, its historical study is closely related to that of *essentia* and several other notions that have functioned in the hellenization of Christian dogma, like *hypostasis*. It is widely enough known that the christological disputes until Chalcedon were deeply frustrated by linguistic confusions.<sup>38</sup>

The Greek philosophical tradition went into medieval scholasticism through the hellenistic period and into Latin. Quite many subtle differences between Aristotelian and Thomistic thinking should be explained by this tremendously complicated linguistic and cultural change. In this virtually no research has been done so far. Heidegger's unparalleled intuition of the underlying forces of Western "forgetfulness of being" (*Seinsvergessenheit*) as compared to earliest Greek thinking has perhaps been the greatest contribution so far, but that philosopher's lack of philological detachment does not commend his efforts to the more sober-minded researcher; Johannes Lohmann pursued similar but more scholarly investigations in the now defunct journal *Lexis*, but it failed to elicit serious response from other scholars, also because they were understandably deterred by Lohmann's blind insistence on Western decadence as compared to classical Greek thinking from which in his view it had so ignominiously defected. Loh-

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*indivisum in se* and *divisum ab omni alio*. Actually, the closest non-epistemological (or non-formal, if you will) approximation to *substantia* in the Thomistic system is *actus primus*, but that cannot be made to serve the systematic purposes of the notion of *substantia*.

<sup>38</sup> See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, New York, 1959; while many of these confusions have been noted in specialistic studies of the history of the trinitarian and christological disputes, it seems that there is not yet available the kind of comprehensive monograph of hellenistic Greek (*koine*) analysed contrastively with regard to classical Greek, as *underlying*, that is, the confusions that have inhibited a more harmonious consensus in the first few centuries of the Christian era.

mann's principal thesis is that Stoic interference with classical Greek thought effectuated a subject-object split entirely absent in classical Greek philosophy. For purposes of brevity this difference might be worded as follows: while the "subject," or the self, is still a factor of *ordering* in classical Greek thought, later it becomes a factor of *disturbance*; there is a world of difference (in terms, that is, of the underlying frame of reference) between *lego* and *cogito*, *krisis* and *iudicium*, *energeia* and *actus*, *dynamis* and *potentia*, *physis* and *natura*, *aporia* and *dubium*, *toi onto* and *re vera*; the first in each of these pairs states the concept in terms of objectivity, equally applicable to "subjects" as to "objects" (but this of course is already a post-hellenic formulation), while the second in each pair is, say, "subjectivized"; *krisis*, for example, is just "separation," and not the judge's act of passing sentence as implied in *iudicium*; *energeia* is still reasonably close to what we now call "energy," an objective category therefore, while *actus* is what is done by *personal agent*, a subject, not, of course, explicitly, but by way of an underlying metaphor, or of subliminal meaning elements.

It is clear that in the hellenistic (in the sense of post-classical) period the *physis* was no longer the closed system, at one time still quite unproblematically including the human self. When the self jumped out of the objective *physis*, it of course acquired all the paraphernalia of transcendence, became the "judge" of truth in a manner which opened the way for "God's truth" in the absolute notion of truth as elaborated above. Is it not perhaps much more to Stoic thinking that we should trace the sophistication of epistemological issues, as so largely characterizing Western thought in the manner also meant by D., rather than to the hellenic Parmenidean principle? Is there not much more of an unbroken line between the transcendental analyses of Kant, back through Descartes' "turn to the subject" (*die Wende zum Subject*, to use Husserl's characterization of Descartes' philosophy), back again to the Stoic separation of subject and object; and only a broken and even somewhat discontinuous line from modern Western obsession with epistemology, back to Parmenides? These are

questions which a deeper analysis of D.'s claims than can be attempted here would have to ask.

Comparable problems arise when we attend to D.'s interpretation of medieval scholasticism. The same difficulty arises here as above: the author is investigating the underlying scholastic frame of reference rather than what scholasticism claims explicitly. While this task is more rewarding, it is also more elusive. But for the same reason D.'s attempts deserve all the more attention. For example, is it so undoubtedly clear that Thomas' problem was the clash between the Greek notion of necessity and his own theistic notion of the contingency of being? And if so, was it that which led him to the indeed basic claim of the real distinction between essence and existence? In terms of explicit thinking the way Thomas arrived at his real distinction was certainly different. He distinguished "being" (in its verbal meaning as *formalissimum quid*, where "*formalis*" meant "basic" or "fundamental") from the "beings" (in its nominal meaning); or, he made the distinction later to be phrased by Heidegger as the "ontological difference" (*ontologische Differenz*). Actually, objectivity obliges us to point out to D. that Thomas' distinction was not between *essentia* and *existentia*, but between *essentia* and *esse*. This is, of course, not denied by the author, since he is concerned rather with implicit assumptions. This makes D.'s interpretation hard to assess.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> It seems that in Thomas' earlier work *esse* is still seen as what "*accidit qualitati*" than as what "*accidit essentiae*". *Esse* is then increasingly regarded as *perfection*, suiting a frame of reference of participation. This is a somewhat simplified view of what in fact is a rather complicated development in the works of Saint Thomas (complicated also by unsettled issues concerning the chronology of these works), for the details of which I am indebted to class notes of a course by M. Marlet, S.J., now at Innsbruck. See Chapter VI of his *Grundlinien der kalvinistischen "Philosophie der Gesetzesidee" als christlicher Transzendentalphilosophie*, Munich, 1954, 111-25. —Even though Dewart outlines the underlying frame of reference rather than the explicit systematic treatment on the part of Thomas, thus making him comparatively immune against a critique relying directly on texts from Thomas' works, yet D.'s terminology must be called unfortunate. On the other hand, Suarezian scholasticism has always worked with *existentia* rather than with *esse*.

## . . . . AND FOLLOWING IT UP

It seems a safe claim that all Western metaphysics derives from hellenic thinking. All the major lines of thought in the Occident can be traced back along broken and quite frequently along unbroken lines to the philosophy that began with the Pre-Socratics; sharply divergent philosophies in the West like the thought of Nietzsche still rely on hellenic culture, even though the Dionysian cult is there confronted with and preferred to the Socratic developments. Iconoclasts, like Freud or the Vienna Circle, are ultimately as much indebted to the beginnings of Ionia. It seems therefore a good question, whether there could be a metaphysics at all independent of those sources. Obviously one might here point to Oriental metaphysics, as in Indian philosophies. But those are religiously inspired; for that matter, the metaphysics of the West is also of distinctly religious origin. Metaphysics as we know it is the secularization of religious thought, or the demythologizing process from, to take a familiar pair of concepts, *mythos* to *logos*.<sup>40</sup> As Auguste Comte already observed, metaphysics is a transition from theology to science, when taken in its developmental aspect.<sup>41</sup> It must therefore be asked if metaphysics has a value independent of this transitional function. D. does not ask this question, although occasionally he comes quite close to doing so.

The question must be asked for many reasons, and I shall review some of them to begin with. First, metaphysics is deeply mistrusted nowadays; in fact, it is generally rejected,

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<sup>40</sup> See W. Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos*, Stuttgart, 1940. There are some worthwhile linguistic and cultural studies on the transition from the mythic to the philosophic world view, but they do not seem to have influenced philosophical studies to any notable degree. A good specimen is Gustav Mensching's "Religionswissenschaft und Sprachwissenschaft," *Lexis*, 3 (1953), 240-4. The only notable exception to philosophical negligence of this topic in recent times is: Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Vol. I, *Language*, New Haven, 1953, and Vol. II, *Mythical Thought*, New Haven, 1955; but Cassirer was heavily Kantian, although with a refreshing admixture of phenomenology. For a briefer and less technical exposition see his *An Essay on Man*, New York, 1953.

<sup>41</sup> See Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, pp. 79 ff.

either in the name of science, or in the name of philosophies which claim to replace the task at one time fulfilled by metaphysics, as in certain types of phenomenology and in many contemporary non-traditional philosophies largely concerned with logic, semantics, the analysis of language, philosophy of science, criteriologies. Many philosophers consider metaphysics to be a crypto-theology. A more general disapproval is based upon the claim that metaphysical statements cannot be subject to confirmation (empirically or otherwise) or disconfirmation. Metaphysics, in short, and revealingly, is nowadays only believed in by those having religious interests in one form or another. Exceptions to this rule are in many cases only apparent: Heidegger, for example, has claimed to be a phenomenologist rather than a metaphysician (though he does use the term "metaphysics"), while many pronounce him to be an existentialist. Hartshorne does consider himself a metaphysician, but on closer inspection his aims turn out to be an overall organization of thinking and therefore a comprehensive criteriology rather than metaphysics.<sup>42</sup>

Second, the status and functions of the metaphysical component of Christian (both Protestant and Catholic) dogmatic theology is extremely unclear, as deeply distrusted as in the case cited above, and frequently felt to be incompatible with the organization of biblical themes (biblical theology as different from exegesis). The *ratio theologica* of the theses of traditional dogmatic tracts is usually somewhat out of tune with the rest of the thesis under consideration.

Third, metaphysics is often implicit in a manner not generally recognized as such. Thus Bultmann's definition of myth, when compared with the sophistication of his expert knowledge of Scripture, strikes one as comparatively naive, and certainly unproven.

Fourth it seems almost impossible to find an objective appraisal of metaphysics as a type of philosophy. Most modern philosophers opposing it are only sketchily familiar with it; their intuition concerning the nature of metaphysics may,

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example, "Some Reflections on Metaphysics and Language," *Foundations of Language*, 2 (1966), 20-32.

for all we know, be right, but it is generally not *shown* to be. Metaphysicians themselves are not very well disposed to foundational appraisal of their avocation: indeed, their lack of familiarity with modern philosophy comes quite close to the lack of interest on the part of modern philosophers in metaphysics. Characteristically those metaphysicians drawing upon contemporary philosophy are largely interested in genres still basically metaphysical, especially the existentialists.<sup>43</sup> Where the affinity with traditional metaphysics is more remote, as in many types of phenomenology, metaphysicians will use that trend as a beginning, in the sense that they consider phenomenology as at a certain stage superseded, lacking, as it is sometimes claimed, in depth.

Studies of the nature of metaphysics are comparatively rare. Georges Gusdorf has pointed out that "myth" is typical not only of primitive ways of thinking, but also (*versus* Lévi-Bruhl) of sophisticated ways of thinking like metaphysics.<sup>44</sup> The now defunct linguistic analysis school of Cambridge, ("therapeutic" analysis, taking up one line of Wittgenstein's inspiration) claimed that though metaphysics is "meaningless" it yet serves a purpose, showing that metaphysical questions are unanswerable, and therefore freeing the questioner from a "problem," in a manner analogous to the way emotional problems are solved by psychoanalysis. Metaphysics, in this conception, is "important nonsense".<sup>45</sup> A notable study of the nature of metaphysics has been made by Lazerowitz.<sup>46</sup> But such studies remain few and far between.

Space does not permit me to go into all these questions, and for what follows I will now confine myself mainly to the value of metaphysics for dogmatic theology. I attempt to show three things: (1) that the metaphysical frame of reference, even

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<sup>43</sup> For the profound difference between phenomenology and existentialism in terms of *frame of reference*, see my "Phenomenology as an Attitude," forthcoming in *Bijdragen*.

<sup>44</sup> Georges Gusdorf, *Mythe et métaphysique*, Paris, 1953.

<sup>45</sup> This expression is found in Wittgenstein. See John Wisdom, *Other Minds*, Oxford, 1952. On the whole of "therapeutic analysis" see Maxwell John Charlesworth, *Philosophy and Linguistic Analysis*, Pittsburgh, 1961, pp. 150-67.

<sup>46</sup> Morris Lazerowitz, *The Structure of Metaphysics*, London, 1955.

where perhaps legitimate in its own terms, creates unnecessary problems; (2) that the metaphysical approach, though by no means necessarily incompatible with the biblical approach, is nevertheless often inhibitingly incommensurable with it; (3) that the metaphysical approach makes what is supposedly knowable apart from what we know from revelation into the framework of revealed truths.—The three problems obviously overlap. They can moreover here be discussed only in a very summary fashion, by way of just a few examples.

For (1) I select the problem of the so-called “immediate” creation of the human spiritual soul. This is taught in *Humani Generis* and its qualification is presumably *theologicæ certum*.<sup>47</sup> On the theory, at the moment of conception of a new human being, God infuses a spiritual soul. The point is that the spiritual soul is beyond the procreative capacities of the parents. God therefore “moves in” to supplement what the course of nature (which otherwise is also ultimately the effect of the power of creation) cannot accomplish alone. The frame of reference here is that of man as being a composite of spirit and matter, the difference between them being not only gradual, but essential. It is clear that *if* one accepts this frame of reference, the doctrine of the immediate creation is inevitable, not only from a point of view of method, but also of orthodoxy. The alternative would be some form of materialism.<sup>48</sup> However, there is obviously no need to adhibit that frame of reference: the distinction between spirit and matter is in no way established by empirical fact. This is not to say that one cannot speak of spirit and matter in some sense, for example to bring out the essential difference between animals and man. Or, there is in itself nothing wrong with a manner of speaking pointing out that man is not only material but also spiritual. There would, it is true, be a distinctly mythical element in such a manner of speaking, “myth” here being understood as a concept not exhaustively accounted for intellectually. There is nothing necessarily wrong with a mythical element in any type of pursuit of knowledge, if only for the

<sup>47</sup> See Smulders, *op. cit.*, Chapter IV.

<sup>48</sup> It was clearly the mind of the encyclical to avoid this materialism, in line with Vatican I, see Dz. 1783 and 1802.

reason that it is absolutely unavoidable (as contemporary scientists, including those of the natural sciences, are only too well aware). The problem is therefore not myth, but, let us say, *undue* myth. Myth is undue when it entails, from a point of view of *systematicity*, consequences not otherwise established. Thus to say that the sun rises is myth, but it does not become undue myth until in the context it means, scientifically, that the earth globe does *not* revolve towards the sun. To say that man is a spiritual being is legitimate, so long as the spirit-matter distinction does not function as an *overall division* of the totality of reality. It does so function in a problem involving *also* the problem of creation.<sup>49</sup> Therefore in a context where the problem is creation to want to know how matter originates as one question and how spirit originates as another question is to divide the totality of reality, including the Creator himself, into the two realms of spirit and matter. The doctrine of the immediate creation of the human soul is true: *provided* it means that man has a relation of dependence to God, entirely peculiar to man.<sup>50</sup> This of course is likewise a mythical way of speaking (by reason of the metaphor involved), but innocuously so, because it has no *systematic* consequences.

An interesting example of how conflicting frames of reference can lead to inconsistencies of the type indicated is found in Thomas himself. The spirit-matter division is, of course, typically hellenic; indeed it *could* get uncomfortably close to gnostic conceptions. Thomas has superseded this pagan element by having an overall division of reality into the two "realms" of Creator and creatures; in an ontology in many ways derived from hellenic thinking this is no mean accomplishment; indeed it is the reason for Chesterton's proposal to call the Angelic Doctor *Sanctus Thomas a Creatore*; and this characterization is perhaps the greatest tribute to Thomas' originality. Nowhere does Thomas propose that the whole of reality

<sup>49</sup> It apparently does so in the IVth Lateran Council (see Dz. 428), but the expression "quasi" should be noted and more importantly, God is not called "spiritual" there. The teaching Church never guarantees a frame of reference, not even the one it is actually using (and which frequently is the one of the error refuted).

<sup>50</sup> Thus P. Smulders, *op. cit.*, Chapter IV.



be divided into spirit and matter in the manner of *primary* overall distinction, even though he does recognize purely spiritual creatures, the angels, and material-spiritual creatures, men, and non-spiritual creatures, like animals. But God is characterized in his thinking as *Esse subsistens* as well as *Actus purus*, but not as, say, *spiritus purus*. The reason for this is doubtless not only the *specific* fact that angels too are pure spirits, but also the generic consideration that the spiritual is unable to bring out the absolute unicity of God.

Yet there are texts in Thomas' works where the spiritual-matter distinction as an overall distinction of the totality of reality is *implied*. It is where it is claimed that man is the image of God *in so far as he is spiritual*.<sup>51</sup> This is not only pagan as different from Christianity, but it is in fact contrary to the christological saturation of all creation; in short, it is unorthodox. The *whole of man* is the image of God. Here the spirit-matter distinction has acquired an *unduly* mythical content, entailing, that is, systematic consequences that cannot be answered for.

*Ad* (2). Of this feature innumerable examples might be given. The christological disputes are already a collection of them. This is not to say that at that time the clashes entailed were avoidable. I would not care to decide such a large issue with such a sweeping statement, though there was certainly an undue amount of fighting about words and stubbornness involved. However, so long after Chalcedon, it makes sense to ask whether we should still do christology within a frame of reference in which the principal correlative concepts are those of divine and human nature, and therefore ultimately of God and man. Biblical texts in which the notions of God and man appear as *correlative* notions are extremely rare, and they certainly do not in any way function in the christology of the New Testament, where it is rather the composite phrases "Son of God" and "Son of Man" becoming thematic,

<sup>51</sup> *Summa Theologica*, Ia, qu. 90-3, esp. 93. The theological pre-occupation behind this is, of course, that God is not material. This quite unnecessary concern is so persistent in theology that even such a modern and enlightening book as Jean Daniélou's *God and the Ways of Knowing* (Cleveland, 1963) makes the same point (p. 38).

but so that the *latter* primarily indicated what was later indicated as Christ's divine nature, and the *former* primarily his human nature (but even this phrasing is unbiblical). A much clearer example is again the notion of spirit and matter; it is because of these notions so universally used in the teaching of Christian doctrine that the majority of the faithful will invariably, and well-nigh incurably, understand the flesh-spirit dialectic of Saint Paul in a manner which is downright manicheism.

*Ad* (3). This is possibly the most important feature of metaphysics in its relation to dogmatic theology. It consists, as already noted, in that the framework within which to treat the truths of revelation is one allegedly accessible to knowledge abstracting from revealed truths. By "framework" I now mean an *explicit system*; it differs from "frame of reference" in that the latter has an extremely low level of explicitness; indeed, a thinker may well be largely or completely unaware of his own frame of reference.

It may be in order to make entirely clear that it is *not* here maintained that dogmatic theology can ever legitimately be a "metaphysics." The latter is philosophy and cannot deal with the *mysteria stricte dicta*. That is why I speak of a metaphysical framework rather than metaphysics; or, certain features of metaphysical methodology, or certain metaphysical presuppositions, are relevant to the kind of dogmatic theology under discussion. When in what follows I speak, for the sake of brevity, of "metaphysical" or "metaphysicalized" theology, this stipulation should be constantly borne in mind.

A good example, then, is one elaborated by D. He attacks the kind of theology which starts out (as Thomas does) from a theodicy God and then proceeds to a theology of the three Persons. As these three Persons exist "in" that one God, the theodicy approach is either presupposed for, or made into the framework of, Trinitarian theology, and quite probably both. The New Testament, however, does not start out from the one God, not even from the O.T. conception of Jahweh (which would otherwise be quite unlike the theodicy approach), but it starts out from the three Persons.

The most overall characterization in more concrete terms of this metaphysicalized theology is found when we recognize how creation and elevation are related to one another. In this theology creation is made to be the framework of elevation, because creation is a subject supposedly accessible to philosophy, while elevation is not. Thus creation is presupposed, and, on the basis of that, elevation is brought in in a manner that *might* and *does* make it look like something "additional", or even "contingent". Once created, the argument goes, man sinned; then God remedied man's plight by the Incarnation. The point of course is that God need not have done so; this seems implied in the claim that God redeemed man "freely". This freedom of God is determined in terms of a *possibilia* theology. The Franciscan school thought that God would have become incarnate anyway, but now that man had sinned, its purpose became one of redemption. The theology of the motive of the Incarnation has long and rather fruitlessly been discussed; the background was of course an anthropomorphized conception of God's salvific Providence. Whatever the opinion, creation is presupposed before redemption.<sup>52</sup> In Trinitarian theology this framework comes out in the distinction between the *processiones* and the *missiones*. If the two were not distinct, it is felt, it would seem as if the former could not exist without the latter. And that again would jeopardize the notion of the freedom of God.

In Holy Scripture the perspective is precisely the reverse: the Covenant is the perspective within which creation is viewed.<sup>53</sup> Jahweh the creator is in the first place the God of the Covenant. In the new Testament the Incarnation is not an afterthought with regard to creation: everything has

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<sup>52</sup> On the whole question of the "motive" of redemption see the excellent brief survey and commentary in Chapter I of F. Malmberg's *Ueber den Gottmenschen*, Freiburg, 1960.

<sup>53</sup> Scripture scholars are so aware of this that it is surprising mention of this in dogmatic theology is so rare. See P. De Haes, *De schepping als heilsmysterie*, Tielt, 1962; Th. Mouiren, *La création*, Paris, 1962; H. Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning, The Theology of Genesis 1-3*, New York, 1964; the latter book is a Scripture study which, though relying on exegetical material, is more geared to biblical theology, with comments even of a dogmatic nature.

been created in Christ, that is, in the Word *Incarnate*. Thus in Colossians 1, 15-17. The Logos of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel is likewise the Logos having become flesh. The Bible has no qualms about what has come to be called the "problem" of the pre-existence of Christ.<sup>54</sup> Malmberg quotes a theologian's question: what would happen if the human nature of Christ were to be annihilated? The presupposition is, of course, that what is created by God can also be annihilated by him. Malmberg first states that the question is illegitimate, as it belongs to a *possibilia* theology; and he goes on to say that, once it is asked, the answer should be that in that case there would be *nothing left whatsoever of creation*.<sup>55</sup>

Metaphysical dogmatic theology generally overlooks a truth forcibly brought home frequently by Karl Barth, i.e., that the way God reveals himself is exclusively in the manner of what God is and means *for us*, not what He is *in himself*. It is indubitable that this point has been overemphasized by Barth, a feature which Bonhoeffer came to call Barth's "revelational positivism". The point is that, in the eschatological form of revelation in the New Testament, God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ *completely*. To think that we know the Father *partly* in Christ is ultimately a wrong-headed view of the human nature of Christ; in Christ the *plenitude* of God resides; while in traditional Trinitarian theology, the one of the *processiones* as (supposedly) distinct from the *missiones*, this would be unconditionally true only of the *Verbum Aeternum*. But the Word incarnate is not less the Son of the Father. Therefore we know God in Christ. Or, in the words of Rah-

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<sup>54</sup> In the perspective of Christ's "pre-existence" a text like Genesis 1, 27 ("in His likeness and image") takes on profound dimensions. For the concrete Jewish mentality, "in His likeness and image" could not mean anything else but "as His son;" in fact, the same phrase is used for Adam begetting Seth. Gen. 5, 3. It must have been this theme that was picked up by Luke, 3, 38b. The profound N.T. dimension of the Genesis text is seriously damaged by the traditional Thomistic interpretation of creation as one (though unique) instance of *agere simile sibi*: it reduces sonship to a depersonalized ontological similarity.

<sup>55</sup> Malmberg, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

ner and in Trinitarian terms the *processiones* are completely contained in the *missiones*,<sup>56</sup> and therefore in the Logos.

In this manner the mystery of elevation, or redemption, becomes the framework in which creation is viewed. It is the attitude of the Bible. It differs from the opposite viewpoint in that it is not apologetic; it may leave room for all sorts of doubts which are *practically* bound up with the inevidence or obscurity of the faith. It does not rest upon a philosophy which, in the well-known and humorous aphorism, whether it was used in conscious or unconscious self-derision, is *de omni re scibili et de quibusdam aliis*. The metaphysicalized type of dogmatic theology in the last analysis claims to know too much. In revelation God intimates to man that He, God, loves man. Then why would man even begin to ask why?

Precisely because metaphysical theology is basically apologetic, it is not obviously wrong-headed. It may well have fulfilled a useful apologetic function in earlier stages of the development of dogma. If it no longer does, that is not so much because apologetics has become superseded. Also Teilhard de Chardin is apologetic; but one does not have to believe in evolution first before believing in Christ.<sup>57</sup> Likewise one does not have to believe in metaphysics if one is to have faith. At one time it may have been useful to show philosophers, all of them metaphysicians, that the faith, far from being incompatible with philosophical knowledge, actually substantiates it; as it is useful now for scientists to see that there is a harmonious unity between the theory of evolution and the Christian faith. The difference is that a theory like that of evolution is in the heart of these times, while metaphysics is not. We therefore should abandon the metaphysical attitude.

The dangers of metaphysical theology are by no means only relevant for Catholic theology, but also for Reformation thinking. Let an example be the rather notorious one of the Easter faith, as in the view of several theologians of Bultmanian inspiration. I will now sidestep the issue whether a con-

<sup>56</sup> Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, I (Baltimore, 1965), p. 148.

<sup>57</sup> P. Smulders, *op. cit.*, Chapter VI.

sistent Bultmannian approach would claim that Christ was never resurrected.<sup>58</sup> However, this is often what is being claimed or at least suggested.<sup>59</sup> Roman Catholic belief, on the contrary, would hold that the Resurrection was indeed a revitalization of the dead body of Jesus Christ. I do not now claim that the issue, theologically speaking, could be decided completely by removing the underlying metaphysical assumptions of both positions. But it would certainly help to begin there. First if the issue is posited in terms of the two alternatives indicated here, it overlooks the biblical view of the Resurrection, which is not only that Christ stood up from the tomb, but also, and *primarily*, that he was exalted at the right hand of God. The glorification was a divinization, worded as it was in the earliest of all Creeds "Jesus is the Lord". As for particulars, the Resurrection narratives in the gospels exhibit various features not found in the narratives of Christ's public ministry. First, the fact of the Resurrection itself is not narrated, only that of the empty tomb. Second, Christ appeared to no one but believers. Third, even those who had known Him for years, frequently did not recognize Him. Fourth, the risen Jesus did things not recorded of his public ministry, like walking through closed doors, or disappearing. All this is enough to make us conclude (a) that his bodily presence is clearly and frequently attested; (b) that his presence is not for unbelievers; (c) that his bodily presence is not the same as before his death.—To conclude from there to an "Easter faith" which amounts to no more than the emergence of an awareness of what Christ did and said during his public ministry, on the part of the apostles, is to metaphysicalize the Easter event as much as happens when the main emphasis is on the revitalization of the body. It is also typical of the metaphysical attitude to feel urged to choose between the one and the other. In the one case to claim that a miracle is possible is as biased as to say that it is not. The bias is in the naive conception of a miracle as (say) a violation of the "closed" system of the laws of nature, rather than in the affirmation or denial of its possibility, which, after all, are conse-

<sup>58</sup> See on this R. Bultmann *et al.*, *Kerygma and Myth*, pp. 38-43.

<sup>59</sup> See P. Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, *passim*.

quent upon that conception of the miracle. That conception, in its turn, is again deplorably out of tune with the biblical notion of the *dynamis*, the power of God, or *semeion*, a "sign" of eschatological import. In the bible God is not a magician, and what has come to be called a "miracle" is in the biblical conception, an event of extraordinary significance for the faith and/or the consummation, while it is also frequently an instance of the struggle between good and evil (as when Jesus "rebuked" the storm).

The secular meaning of the gospel, to use a phrase that is the title of a recent book,<sup>60</sup> is not the distortion of the dispensation of grace into a view of nature supposedly modern but ultimately of incredible *naiveté* and of a distinctly anachronistic metaphysical dogmatism. There are very few facts, whether theological, philosophical, or scientific ones, that cannot be made to clash with assumptions which seem to come natural once they are summoned up. To make the clash unavoidable does not always serve the theological interests of the point at issue. Granted, we should eliminate a notion of miracle which is unbiblical, based upon a completely "closed" view of "nature" (such a "closed" view, incidentally, is *not* modern and in straight contradiction with, say, prevailing notions in the philosophy of science), and making of God a divine magician who at one time, but not in modern times, showed that He can do it if He wants to. But the solution to this is obviously not to suggest that He *cannot* do it if He wants to. *Both* conceptions are consequences of an absolute, and therefore *potentially* idolatrous, theism. Since an absolute theism inevitably drags down the mystery of God to mundane proportions, it is no wonder that the view of this mundane reality is equally absolute. Also this view is—and at this point we should almost expect it—unbiblical. For example, when that major event of O.T. history of salvation, the liberation of the Hebrews from Egypt came to be described, in later versions, as a "miraculous" event, as compared to the earlier accounts, in which the Red Sea fell dry rather as a "natural" phenomenon, the sacred authors were not changing their minds in fa-

<sup>60</sup> P. Van Buren, *op. cit.*

vor of a theology of the miracle; all they did was to bring out more clearly the divine dimensions of Jahweh's fidelity to his people. This is not so much myth as a mythologization, a thing useful to remember in view of Cox's claim that the bible itself favors demythologization and secularization.<sup>61</sup> The Bible simply does both. It therefore cannot be invoked to support a notion of secularization which in actual fact is a naive allegiance to an outmoded view of nature of a basically metaphysical signature. The danger of metaphysics is that we want to know too much, and the inevitable consequence is that we end up by knowing too little.

In short: a "metaphysical" dogmatic theology may at one time have served apologetic purposes. It seems a safe claim that it no longer does. It should therefore be abandoned as soon as possible. Considered now not so much from a systematic but psychological point of view, the reason for still adhering to a metaphysicalized theology seems to be that it supposedly enhances the *certainty* of the faith by providing an overall view of reality in which the mysteries of the faith are shown to fit. However, far from enhancing that certainty, all it accomplishes is more *clarity*. Clarity, however, is not the same as certainty. If this is already so in philosophy and the sciences, how much more in the faith, since that is evident and obscure. To mistake clarity for certainty is, in the words of D., to mistake *reduplicative* certainty for an essential feature of human consciousness. While the believer should have *concern* for the truth of what he believes, he should beware of expressing this concern in a way which makes him rely on the faith rather than on God. Therefore a metaphysicalized dogmatic theology is, psychologically speaking, quite easily a form of crypto-pelagianism, and an intrusion into the numinous. Objectively speaking it is a proud theology. But how can a proud theology be a reflection upon a humble faith? Like all pride, it is ultimately based on fear, and cognate to magic, as I shall show in the concluding paragraph of this paper. Theology should have at least a remote affinity to the *disciplina arcana* in a Church when it was still young.

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<sup>61</sup> Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, pp. 17-37.



## DEVELOPMENT AND CHALLENGE

D. justly remarks that the problems of the faith in our time are not so much those of a supposed conflict between faith and science, but between faith and a scientific *culture*. I have just suggested that, while modern science is largely anti-metaphysical, modern scientific *culture* yet has many traces of metaphysics to get rid of. If this is so, then a critique of D.'s view of (phylogenetic) development of consciousness is in order. And here, indeed, is where I must record my first more comprehensive disagreement with the author. I wholly agree that the development of consciousness consists not in its reduplicative character but in its progressive differentiation and therefore intensification. This is also true for the kind of consciousness we call the faith. This point is indeed a most penetrating critique of the hellenic conception of knowledge as an intentional intussusception.

That this development occurs in the individual is clear and will probably be disputed by nobody. But "phylogenetically" I think D. has, as hinted before, failed to prove his case. In fact, it is not even certain that he wants to prove it. That is, does D. allow for temporary retrogressions in what is otherwise no doubt a development of mankind? If so, does he allow for those which more or less *perpetually* mar the development of mankind's consciousness?

What is here at stake is a belief in progress. That there is progress in many ways is undeniable: technological, medical, social, political. Our times witness accomplishments never seen in human history, technological in the first place (or at least most conspicuously), but also phenomena like international organizations (the League of Nations before and the United Nations after the second world war); social reform and decolonization are other contemporary features without precedent in human history. And the list could be easily expanded.

But would it not be somewhat naive to think that all these things stand for an *overall* progress? Is that idea not too much inspired by our awareness (a correct one in itself) that we could never live humanly and humanely any more in conditions

prevailing some centuries or even fifty years ago? Should the assumption not rather be that we are as incapable of being aware of the shortcomings of this age as it was impossible for previous ages to recognize theirs? Is the "phylos" of this alleged phylogenetic development as uncontestably the subject of maturation in an overall sense as is the individual person? Do not young people commit the same follies their elders have, through so many crises, learned to avoid? And do not older people, in their almost inevitable stagnation in the stream of the times, create the same gap between them and the young which their forebears created in their times, and which their children will create before one more generation has elapsed?

True, D.'s principal aim is to have the consciousness of the faith attuned to the times, and that is obviously a necessity. But does he not also suggest, or presuppose, that this cannot be a random adaptation, but obeys certain laws of growth? If the choice were one between a purely cyclic and therefore fate-ridden and defeatist "development" of mankind on the one hand and a real continuous growth on the other, then, of course, we would never opt for the former, even though we might be unconvinced of the latter. Yet need the course of human history be presented in the perspective of these two alternatives? Would it not be better to recognize that we really do not know the first thing about the phylogenetic development of mankind, even though one were to accept certain features like the social dimension of evolution, after the threshold of humanization has been crossed, as in the conception of Teilhard de Chardin? It should be repeated that, though it is impossible to deny certain features of progress, the question is rather whether we can substantiate the claim that there is a development in the overall sense D. seems to imply.

Faithful consciousness seems no exception to this basic doubt. Also here there have been undeniable instances of progress in, say, the Second Vatican Council as compared with the First; on a smaller scale D.'s book could herald a tremendous progress in overcoming the evils of absolute theism. Here, again, the list could be extended. But do we have any basis for saying that faithful consciousness is now more adequate

than in previous times? Every age presents its challenges to the faith; that challenge may reflect progress in a secular sense, like the progress in technology; but it might also be a temptation, as in unorthodox movements. This has happened often in the Church. Why would it be impossible now?

D. himself touches upon some striking examples of distorted truth. He states, and I think quite correctly, that the image most believers have of Jesus Christ is, for all practical purposes, one of a crypto-docetism; and that the image many people have of the Holy Trinity is a crypto-tritheism. It cannot be objected that these are "lived" and not pronounced heresies, for the "lived ones" are as bad as the explicitly spoken ones. Neither can it be brought forward that these conceptions are based upon a misunderstanding of traditional official (or semi-official) doctrines; for these doctrines themselves do not any more measure up to the consciousness of these times. Whatever their provenance, they are alien and harmful elements in the actual faith of these times. And if they are well-nigh ineradicable, can we say that the world has come of age? D.'s rebuttal here would no doubt be that the world has come of age, but the faith has not. These distorted truths, he would say, arise precisely from the failure of faithful consciousness to keep up with the consciousness of the times. However, it must be asked if the spirit of the times is so dualistically to be distinguished from the failure to disengage oneself from the hellenic spirit in the matter of faith. Is it not rather the case that in scientific *culture* (though not in science) we still work with an entirely "closed" concept of nature, and, in the faith, with a notion of "miracle" entirely consonant with that closed concept, in that the latter would inevitably summon up its supernaturalistic and therefore dualistic counterpart: something that in nature itself would be, *and is* impossible? Is not the concept of nature attending modern scientific culture one which indeed fails to recognize the utter transitoriness of that nature, and which is therefore in no small danger of falling a victim to absolute atheism?

Also D., in advocating an overall dehellenization of dogma, points out that the fixed, frozen, and stagnant notion of

truth can be traced back to hellenic ways of thinking. That is, he claims that hellenic remnants in contemporary faithful consciousness not only reflect a failure to develop in accordance with the times; it is *also* an *inherent* feature of hellenic thinking to perpetuate itself unduly by reason of the hellenic concept of immutable truth. However, should we not also recognize that the alleged unalterability of truth is not only hellenic, but universal? In terms of faithful consciousness: although the typically hellenic need for reduplicative certainty has entailed the danger that we have faith in faith, instead of faith in God alone, should we not also recognize that it is more universal, not just hellenic, for man to appropriate to himself the God-given, basically inevident faith, distorting it into a considerably more evident (though not necessarily rationalistic) personal accomplishment? In this manner man becomes guilty of precisely the kind of attitude attacked by Paul in Romans and Galatians in its concrete form of the Jewish law. Instead of human dignity and maturity coming into its own in the faith, are we not almost universally inclined to make that faith subservient to, and therefore just one aspect of, that dignity and maturity? But *if*, then, D. blames on the hellenic frame of reference what no doubt historically takes its more obvious origins there, but is also much more universally a trait of human sinfulness and therefore an inhibition of the faith, does that not contradict D.'s underlying assumption that development, once it is well under way, can rid us of these inhibitions definitely? Or, does not D.'s position imply an unwarranted optimism with regard to the possibilities of progress of the human race?

Let me press this point in terms of a theological example, with the rudiments of which many of the uneducated faithful are familiar: the distinction between nature and supernature. As noted by D., the hellenic background of this has by now become anachronistic; I should like to add that a complicating factor must also have been a too other-worldly conception of the ideal of Christian perfection. Whatever the historical roots, the concept still fits the majority of the faithful, precisely because their "profane" concept of nature is entirely "closed". My point now is that, whenever any concept of

nature, as distinguished from supernature, is prevalent in whatever form, it will have the *inherent* tendency to overlook its transitoriness. This of course can be done in an extreme manner in the way it has been done by the (relative) atheists in theory, and in practice by all for whom God had become meaningless and who therefore defected from the faith. But even *wherever the concept of supernature has been retained*, whether dualistically or with all due regard for immanence, the *same* nature is there. Here is where progressive theology has possibly had too little regard for the preoccupation of the conservative. Working out this particular example, what it means is this. Consider nature as completely permeated by supernature, a concept probably accepted by all theologians of Catholic allegiance, including those who might prefer not to use that terminology. This conception, then, will almost unavoidably and imperceptibly lead to the forgetting of supernature, so that nature, being permeated by grace, will acquire the tendency to *replace* grace. In other words: the so optimistic incarnation theology that many in our times advocate, while in terms of systematic thinking entirely orthodox, carries in itself the possibility of becoming shallow. The so-called Christian values in this world have then become, at least partly, our own values. Then, in the words of Paul, we begin to "boast". By thus attaching ourselves so much to the gift, we have lost the Giver.

In view of the typically closed concept of nature of our times, we must recognize that the "scientific culture" of which D. speaks implies not only commitment, but also attachment. If the twentieth century finds it difficult to believe, this is not only because that dogma is behind the times, but also because to believe is difficult in *any* age. Although the faith is reasonable, as soon as this truth is no longer used to counteract fideism, it will make us forget that, if the faith as self-surrender is a sacrifice, it is *also* a sacrifice of the intellect. This is not to say that we should regard the faith as essentially lacking credibility, but that this credibility is as much, if not more, the fruit of time spent on our knees as of time spent in arm-chair speculation.

When D. recommends that our concept of nature be an open rather than a closed one, he is asking us to do precisely this. So far I do not believe I have said anything D. would disagree with. But it does change the notion of the development of mankind. The dehellenization D. advocates is not only a catching up on arrears in concern for a dogma suiting the times; it is also a giving up of human values in their transitory character in general, and a sacrifice of the intellect in particular. And it might well be asked if the perpetuation of hellenic thinking in the Church is not at least partly a hanging on to the transitory: a good definition, perhaps, of conservatism. Thus the correlative of "conservative" no longer is "progressive," but "eschatological"; for the essence of self-sacrifice, not excluding that of the intellect, to a self-revealing God is that it tends toward the consummation. If we want to meet God in Christ, we should recognize as a beginning Christ's first coming. But in the end the meeting point will be not where we locate it in a compromise with self-assertion, particularly not the self-assertion to which the faith is, even though perhaps almost imperceptibly, subservient; but it is at the point of the second coming of Christ; that is, beyond, and not before, the passion and the Cross. In this respect it is as well to entertain serious doubts if the twentieth century has come of age any more than its nineteen predecessors. Analogously, and more in particular, to use the twentieth century as a yardstick for progress in dogmatic awareness is perhaps to forget that, whatever must be said of human development, there are certain universals or constants in man's life, one of which is that we constantly grow roots where we should stay only temporarily.

#### FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH AND CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

What follows now is not, it should be clearly noted, intended as a criticism of D.'s book, in the sense that the issues I shall raise should have been included. In any work of this nature the line has to be drawn somewhere; and there is already such an impressive amount of material included in the author's illuminating discussions that my following remarks can only indicate what in further studies on the problem

of theism might be included, depending upon the scope of such further studies.

One thing that comes to mind is that of foundational research. By this I understand the kind of studies providing corroborating, clarifying or correcting material from the sciences, affecting the issues brought up, or rather what these issues are based on. It is the type of research some varieties of which at least have been recommended for the teaching and studying of philosophy and theology in the Second Vatican Council. Thus for the problem of theism it would be necessary to pay attention to the psychology of religion, as found in the works of Carl Gustav Jung, the phenomenology of religion as found in those of van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade, and the sociology of religion as done by Joachim Wach.

More importantly perhaps, at least from a point of view of methodology we should look into the linguistic and cultural underpinnings of certain ways of thought. I have indicated some relevant questions concerning the hellenistic as different from the classical Greek period. But also for D.'s own new proposals concerning the notion of being, the investigations obviously cannot stop with some modern philosophers the author feels cognate with. What should we say, for example, of the notion of "being" seeing that the greater majority of the world's languages, including the world's most spoken language, Chinese, have no word for "being" at all? Other languages have several, with profound implications, as much as in the case of Indo-Germanic "being," for a *Weltanschauung*. Seeing that Thai has half a dozen or so "equivalents" for our "be", might we not, and in a sense should we not, wonder what would have happened to philosophy if Plato had been a Thai? I grant that it would be a cheap challenge to systems of thinking that have arisen in certain cultures and certain languages to pit against them a number of vast questions that have so far been hardly investigated. Yet the matter is by no means academic. The mission of the Church is one for all cultures. Have not the hierarchical stop signs to such potentially epoch-making endeavors as those of Ricci and de Nobili been of the kind that should inspire us with fear that

such catastrophes be repeated? Is it too fantastic to suppose that China would have been spared its present condition, if Ricci's endeavors had been supported and continued? Would the Reformation have taken place if the specifically Germanic cultures had received parity of rights in the Church just as much as the Romance languages and cultures? What has the Church's mission accomplished in the Orient, with the only exception of the Philippines where support by the colonizing nation created cultural conditions making the reception of the gospel easier? Therefore, though it is only one aspect of a vast problem, should we not be extremely careful even in erecting a new notion of "being," however consonant with France and Germany (to mention some prominent examples) and their languages and cultures?

The study of culture itself in a wider sense also has now progressed far enough to undertake foundational research for the propagation of the faith.

And this brings us to the concept of modern philosophy. It is characteristic that D. relies mainly upon existentialism and phenomenology, especially upon the former. However, it is as well to recognize that existentialism is still very closely allied to traditional metaphysics. There are many professional philosophers for whom it means absolutely nothing, not to mention the still more numerous ones engaged on the natural sciences in one form or another. It is only realistic to state that also some of the most promising theological endeavors, the book here under review perhaps not excepted, are in some danger of esotericism. This is no less true of Protestant than of Catholic theology. The suggestion is not that philosophers like Heidegger and Marcel are not worthy of profound study; the point is rather that they reflect the experience and consciousness of only part of the people of this century. It should be a major task of Christian thinkers both solidly knowledgeable in and skeptic with regard to traditional theology to engage in large-scale religious research in at least some of the great number of cultures we have been too long expecting to come to the Church on our own Western terms.



## BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

One of the most important ways of pursuing further the attempts made by D. would be to bring biblical theology to bear upon a modern interpretation of the faith, or rather, as D. would probably phrase it, upon what modern faith means. The biblical issues nowadays are multifarious. There is exegesis proper, a branch of biblical studies now reaching unprecedented sophistication. Exegesis would obviously have to underlie all biblical studies but as obviously it cannot be expected of every theologian that he have a good command of all the highly professional matter involved. Then there is the *Leben Jesu Forschung*, recently revived in the latest quest for the historical Jesus; this, too, requires expert knowledge, much of it exegetical. Neither do I now have in mind the problem of demythology, at least not with the highly questionable metaphysical basic assumptions found in Bultmann. By biblical theology, then, I mean the study of the frame of reference (whether mythical in whatever sense or not) in which the Bible views the mysteries of God, Christ, man, world, as found, for example, in Cullmann's *Christ and Time* and *Christology of the New Testament*. As compared to the other branches of biblical studies this genre has not yet produced much, but the need for more results is crying. Though I am certain I must overlook some of the recent publications, it is probably safe to say that there is not yet a biblical study of prayer, of God and man as correlative notions (as noted before), of the priesthood as different in the Old and the New Testaments, of eschatology, of the sacrifice in both Testaments, of prophethood, and of hosts of other themes. In all of those topics valuable partial research has been done, but more comprehensive treatments of most, perhaps all, of them have not yet been forthcoming.<sup>62</sup> Yet on all these subjects also whole libraries have been written from non-biblical points of view, and many of them have in one way or another also appeared in the *magisterium* of the Church, but approached from the frame of reference at the time relevant because of confusions or errors or merely because of traditional ways of thinking. While the the Church's task was clearly to frame the answer within the

<sup>62</sup> See Rudolf Schnackenburg, *op. cit.*

same approaches, that is not to say that within the same approaches they are still relevant, at least to the same extent, today. To view (say) Denzinger as a *corpus doctrinae* of at least minimum conformity of all the issues brought up is about the surest way to misunderstand its pronouncements. Most dogmatic theologians, however, are very well aware of this, and the point need not, therefore, be further belabored.

#### FAITH AND MAGIC

D.'s claim that the faith is not a set of absolute truths to be assented to before one can be united to God, not something intermediate, therefore, but a state of consciousness itself, should prove very fruitful for the elimination of certain hidden magical features of the way many Christians experience their faith.

Let us take for an example a complaint, sometimes heard, of people going through some crisis: "Why does God do this to me? I have always said my prayers, gone to Church, received the Sacraments. God does not seem to care for me." We should note the underlying idea of God's way with us, and let us take the sacraments more specifically. To go to the Sacraments for such a person seems to be: doing God a favor, which should really be reciprocated; or, "operating" a means of salvation. In that quite common conception receiving a Sacrament is man's way to approach God, his way to "force" God to grant us a certain favor, such as the forgiveness of sins; he "elicits" God's grace; receiving the Sacrament seems to be man's own initiative; or, his way of approaching God rather than God's way of approaching us.<sup>63</sup> The underlying conception is clearly pelagianistic.

But there are more implicit assumptions (many of them perhaps unconscious) involved in this attitude. There is here, more often than not, the image of a rather arbitrary and unpredictable God, willing, it is true, to forgive us, but not quite spontaneously so. The gap bared here is one presumably universal in religious experience: that of guilty man before an all-

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<sup>63</sup> For these and some of the following ideas see J. Daniélou, *God and the Ways of Knowing*, Chapter I.

holy God. It seems that the gap cannot be bridged. One is never really sure, it is felt, that the ardent and often desperate entreaties in the depths of one's heart can bring about the reconciliation. With the notion of guilt that of powerlessness and fear is associated. This is perhaps psychologically the basis of magic practices: guilty man, powerless in the face of an almighty and perhaps vindictive God, will try to find a weakness in that God. He imagines that if only he performs a certain ritual, even God will have to give way. Ritual becomes a sort of remote control, conceived of as a distinctly impersonal, that is, "mechanical" way of obtaining what could not be obtained in any other manner. There is a concentration upon the exact and precisely prescribed manners in which the ritual has to be performed, and there is a greater or lesser degree of obsession. Magic is essentially something like taking an indifferent God unawares. In extreme cases the certainty aimed at is felt not to be forthcoming, and repetition after repetition of the same ritual is felt to be necessary; the effectiveness of the ritual seems assured; but after the fact the doubt may arise whether all the conditions were duly fulfilled.

Every theologian will note the many things wrong with these underlying conceptions; pelagianism is only one of them. The issue, others would note, is not dogmatic but psychological. Though this is undoubtedly correct, the sheer frequency of this kind of problem, at least in its more moderate form, raises the question if there is not also a conception of the faith, in the form of a certain implicit theological attitude, involved at least as a disposition, making it easier for the psychological problem to emerge. And then it seems certain that precisely the position rejected by D., that of the faith, and the *beatitudo*, as somehow "intermediate" between God and man, and therefore to be "taken care of" as a preliminary step to unity with God, is largely to blame in terms of such a disposition.

Crises of the faith (which otherwise belong to healthy religious development), it has often been noted, are almost invariably due to crises in psychological development. Again, this is probably correct. But from a theological point

of view it seems as certain that "truths" of the faith the person in question finds almost impossible to accept are as invariably the fruits of a rather arbitrary theology, which, though not necessarily false in the logical sense, are yet unfortunate formulations, at least for our times, of the issue concerned. While this can often be taken care of in single cases by a more updated and sophisticated explanation, the underlying idea is not only, as D. has noted, the unnecessary fixation into an immutable truth, but also, and perhaps more, the mere fact (as also noted by D.) that the truth in question is something *intermediate* between man and God, and therefore, *first* to be assented to, if any other salutary "effects" are to follow. Our examples of the sacraments are paradigmatic. There is also such a thing as a "magical" faith, where the same obsession with details obtains in regard to truth as that with details of ritual in regard to action. As noted before, the notion of clarity is substituted for that of certainty, as in ritual the mechanistic preoccupation is supposed to guarantee efficacy. As in the faith the magical attitude cannot bear the doubt, not even the one which follows from, and manifests, our concern for the truth, likewise in the sacraments there is easily a preoccupation with validity rather than with fruitfulness. Inversely, as (and that is even so in theology) the validity is considered to be a *sine qua non* for fruitfulness, so also in matters of the faith it is felt that only absolute clarity can guarantee the inner peace of the Spirit in our hearts. While D. rightly concentrated on the superfluousness of reduplicative certainty, it should be added that the basis for this is a possibly universal human problem of the urge for total inner security before that security can be translated into a union with God. It is felt, in either case, that one cannot climb a ladder while some of the rungs are missing.

However, we need not climb the ladder at all. We need not rise up to God, since He has come down to us. Our faithful consciousness should be a belief in His presence right where we are. Once we believe this, there can be no obstacles on a path which He traversed all the way, in divine commiseration with our inability to make even the first step. If the faith is obscure that is of its essence; if our happiness seems in the balance,

that is of its essence too. To walk upon the waters is not to make sure *first* that we cannot sink and then to believe that the waters will carry us; it is not to doubt that they will obey God's behest.

The presence of God makes preliminary steps like the ones sketched here superfluous. It is this presence of God which seems most urgently needed in a faith which should never have needed "secularization".

#### THE PRESENCE OF GOD

In a recent article W. F. Lynch maintains that it is about time we started occupying ourselves with a theology of the secular. He claims that for too long we have been concentrating on transmundane aspects of the mysteries of the faith, and that a complementation is now urgently called for.<sup>64</sup>

This opinion exemplifies just an alternative to a previous metaphysics-ridden type of theology. The underlying assumption is that a theology of the other-worldly and one of the secular are *both* called for, and that the latter has been largely neglected. As it happens, only a theology of the "secular" is possible. However, since the word "secular" already implies the split here indicated, it is terminologically unfeasible; it would moreover have the modernistic overtones it need not have by any means. Without going into the issue whether a distinction between the secular and the sacred is always necessarily ill-conceived (it certainly is not in a *science* like Mircea Eliade's phenomenology of religion) even in theology, it should be made clear that if that distinction indicates two branches of theology, each with its relatively autonomous domain, it is based upon an extremely hazardous conception. The faith, and therefore also theology, are not concerned with God-*ut-sic*, but with God's involvement in human history, with His *presence*. This world is the *locus* of revelation and redemption. The Bible not only never speaks about what God is apart from the Covenant, Old and New, but it also never speaks about what God was or did "before" creation. In this latter point

<sup>64</sup> William F. Lynch, S.J., "Toward a Theology of the Secular," *Thought*, 41 (1966), 349-65.

Christianity differs from numerous samples of pagan religious literature with their elaborate cosmogonies. Here is not only a salient difference between Christianity and paganism, but also, ironically, between Christianity and scholasticism. True, scholastic thinking about God avoids the typical ambiguities (dualistic, most of them) of the pagan cosmogonies, but the avoidance of an obvious error does not salvage it from the doubtful distinction of being otherwise on the pagan side. Again, such metaphysicalized theologies may have had their legitimate apologetic purposes, as in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, written at the request of Thomas's confrater, a bishop facing the intellectual challenges of a Muslim world,<sup>65</sup> but no metaphysical apology seems needed in a world not believing in metaphysical thinking. One could, of course, speak of biblical theology as a "metaphysics," but this would be a confusing term from the point of view of the history of ideas, while part of the *real* biblical metaphysics is of the kind it is now generally agreed should be demythologized.

Theology, then, is about God's work in this world, and for man. We should not aim at a theology which is *also* relevant for our actual lives of every day, but at one which is *exclusively* so. In this respect there is absolutely nothing that separates the Bible from our times, and presumably nothing that separates it from *any* age.

The first consideration here would be the christological centrality of the faith. The New Testament nowhere speaks about what is scholastically expressed as the *Verbum Aeternum*. If in our times the distinction between Christ's divine and human nature must still be made (and I am not certain that it should not), then evidently His human nature is *created*. Also presumably the distinction between Creator and creature should be affirmed, in terms of an underlying frame of reference, at least whenever it is an issue. But even then creation, according to biblical thinking, is through Christ and for Him, and

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<sup>65</sup> Raymundus de Peñaforte. Because of their pride, it was thought, the Muslims could only be approached intellectually. Otherwise the appearance of Aristotle on the book list of the University of Paris in 1255 also necessitated the kind of apologetic approach of the *ScG*.

that includes His human nature. Christ does not belong in creation, but creation itself, a redemption theme, belongs in Christ, Our Lord recapitulates all there is. He is the first born of the living, as He is also the first-born of the dead.<sup>66</sup>

Also, Jesus Christ is not a "partial" or "incipient" manifestation of the Father; the whole plenitude of the Godhead is in Him. Not only the Word of a theology insisting upon the distinction between the *processiones* and the *missiones* of traditional Trinitarian theology is the Son of the Father, but, identically, Jesus of Nazareth. To ask Our Lord who the Father is, is to ignore Our Lord Himself; "he who has seen Me, has seen the Father".<sup>67</sup> This is the biblical foundation of D.'s insistence upon a "relative" theism. To know the Father is not something *beyond* knowing Christ, although it is no doubt something beyond the way an unbeliever would approach the Rabbi of Nazareth. But the believer cannot consider Christ as just an ascent to a "further" knowledge of the hidden God, dwelling in unapproachable light, without being guilty of blasphemy, just as to claim that one loves God if one does not love one's brothers is a lie. Even the philosophical analogy of being when pursued to the conclusion that we know God analogously, is to bypass the *analogatum principale* of all created things, Jesus Christ. The claim that we know God analogously is not for that reason false, and it may at one time have had some apologetic significance. However, though not false, it so debilitates our conception of God that in theology, for all practical purposes, it must be called erroneous because of the inevitable by-products, for the understanding of the faith, of its irrelevance. Even in scholastic *philosophy* preference would, in my opinion, have to be given to an analogous knowledge of God *on the basis of man as God's image*, rather than on the basis of transcendental perfections running through all levels of being.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Colossians 1, 15-20.

<sup>67</sup> John 14, 7 ff.

<sup>68</sup> The reason for this is an inconsistency in scholastic philosophy. On the one hand the object of the will should be antecedently specified by the intellect: *nihil volitum, nisi prius cognitum*. However, the will is referred to God *directly*, so that *primum volitum est primum*

As is well-known, Jesus Christ in the New Testament is given names in the Old Testament reserved for God, or the Lord, as in the expression "Jesus is the Lord," to convey the divinization of the Resurrection. Also Jesus received "a name above every other name," He sits "at the right hand of God," He predicts He will "come upon the clouds," all of them divine attributes, as also, almost certainly, in the expression taken from Daniel, "the Son of Man". These are some of many ways to indicate that God is with us. This was already the existential meaning of "I am the one who am,"<sup>69</sup> it is conveyed in Jesus' name "Emmanuel,"<sup>70</sup> and it embodies Jesus' promise "I shall be with you to the end of the world".<sup>71</sup> This God-with-us theme is possibly the most comprehensive "inclusion" in the biblical-exegetic meaning of that term. The recurrent resurrection themes of "peace be with you," and "do not be afraid" (otherwise frequently anticipated in the narratives of Jesus' public ministry), and therefore particularly bound up with the idea of divinization argues that Jesus is God's very presence here on earth.

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*ontologicum*; yet, to state that *primum cognitum est primum ontologicum* would be ontologism and that is unanimously rejected by scholastic philosophers. How, then, could the *primum volitum* be the *primum ontologicum*, while the *primum cognitum* is the *ultimum ontologicum*, i.e. the objectives of sensitive knowledge? In other words, we have to have some knowledge of God prior to loving Him, but since love is direct and knowledge is not, this would be impossible. The solution for the scholastic thinker must never consist in juggling with the *triplex via*, but it should look for where indirect knowledge and direct love "cross": we love God *in imagine*, in our neighbor. Admittedly this is a rather uninspiring way of speaking about love and knowledge, but systematically speaking this would be the only one possible in scholastic ontology and the philosophy of God. —The theological analogue is of course christological and therefore the very heart of our faith.

<sup>69</sup> Ex. 3, 14. —See H. Renckens, S.J., *De godsdienst van Israel*, Roermond, 1963; an English translation is forthcoming; in the original, 109-13; and John Courtney Murray, *The Problem of God, Yesterday and Today*, New Haven, 1964, pp. 7-11.

<sup>70</sup> Matth. 1, 23; cf. Is. 7, 14; 8, 10; Psalm 46, 12.—See H. Renckens, S.J., *De profeet van de nabijheid Gods*, Tielt, 1961. 162 ff.

<sup>71</sup> Matth. 28, 20b.



An inexhaustible text for the presence of God as a major biblical theme is found in the apparently so "metaphysical" text of John 1, 1. The *Logos* here (need it be repeated?) is the Word having become flesh and does not refer to the pre-incarnational Word. Moreover, it says "in the beginning," a notion excluding the "of all eternity" idea of the God of scholasticism; this "beginning" is a redemption theme, refers to redemption as much (and more prominently) as to creation, being the same theme of 1 John 1, 1, Luke 1, 2, Acts 1, 1, and, for that matter, of Genesis 1, 1.<sup>72</sup> The *Logos* is therefore no more thought of as "transcendent" than "pre-creational," which, otherwise, is also true of God himself of the second portion of John 1, 1. The third and last portion of the text is most important for our subject of the presence of God. First, the usual translation "and the Word was God" is inaccurate and in some of its meanings possibly erroneous. A vastly more revealing translation is found in *The New English Bible*, "and what God was, the Word was". The motivation of this translation is presumably the fact that "God," *theos*, is here distinctly different from the name always used for the Father, *ho theos*, a difference impossible to convey in English (as in many other languages), where "God" is never preceded by a definite article; hence not "God," but "what God was". In other words: God-for-us is the *Logos*. Add to this that at least part of the origin of *Logos* was hellenic, conveying, approximately, what is meaningful in the world and man. We should therefore presumably take this portion of the text to mean that the only meaning all created reality could possibly have is Jesus Christ, and that this same Jesus Christ is God-for-us. Note also that

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Luke 3, 23; Acts 1, 22; 10, 37; Mk 1, 1; in all of which "begin(ning)" is analogously relevant as a redemption theme, for which Renckens has coined the term "protology" to correlate it with eschatology. —The "eternity" theme is well-nigh ineradicable; John 1, 1 is so explained in Rudolf Schnackenburg's *Das Johannes Evangelium, Einleitung und Kommentar zu Kap. 14*. Freiburg, 1965; his evidence is characteristically (and precariously) the comments of some of the Church Fathers, who would of course be wedded to Greek conceptions. Also Bultmann in his commentary on John says the same. I would venture to submit that there is no evidence for a biblical notion of "eternity" though there is clearly some altogether *unspecified* form of pre-existence of the *Logos*, i.e. prior to creation, *implied*.

Christ is thought of as "pre-existent" before the Incarnation, a theme not in any way creating theological problems for the sacred author, and indeed in line with Old Testament themes.<sup>73</sup>

Because the divine, in Christ, saturates all there is, man and this whole universe, while moreover He is the entire plenitude of the Godhead, it is utterly precarious to speculate about a "transcendent" God. While conceivably of some importance apologetically (for example in dialogue with pantheists), it certainly endangers an adequate *understanding* of the faith. And, as elaborated before, it has this upheaval we call atheism for its by-product, if pursued too long or given too much thought.

At this point I wish to make it clear that by all this I do not in the least suggest that there is no conception of God in our *understanding* of the faith. It is a deplorable rationalism of "Christian atheism" that it has tried to wipe out from our understanding of the faith any conception of the *Deus absconditus*; the God and Father of Jesus Christ is so deep within us that, in the words of Augustine, He is more intimate to ourselves than we are to ourselves. The point I have been attempting to make is that the temptation to put that conception into ontological categories should be overcome, as carrying in itself the seeds of self-exaltation of our intellect. We should find it rather difficult to talk about God at all even though never to speak about him would be wrong also. The experience of God is either prayerful or non-existent, which of course does not mean that it is never communicable, although it certainly is not if there is not the continuing evidence, at least for ourselves, of the kind of hesitation which is of the essence of such communication. But even then the experience of God can only be described in terms of His presence.

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<sup>73</sup> See K. Rahner, S.J., *Theological Investigations*, I, "Theos in the New Testament," 79-148; see especially R. Schnackenburg's *Das Johannesevangelium*, 209-12. —See also note 56, above. The hellenic origin of the Johannine "Logos" is now often disputed, e.g. by Schnackenburg. I would not care to settle the issue, its alternative being O.T. "wisdom," which is no doubt also, or perhaps more or less exclusively, the antecedent of "Logos."

This, it bears repeating, is entirely different from "secularism". If the term is used at all, then the fourth gospel is certainly the most "secularistic" of all four, but if that term implies, as it almost unavoidably does, that John treats "part" of the reality of revelation, this would clash with christology of no matter what (orthodox) frame of reference. It is here the place to quote the singularly profound insight of Maurice Blondel, who asks why we should always have to reach out for a God up there, where no doubt He is but where we are not, while we can find Him here, where we are and where He is also.

The presence of God in Jesus Christ is treated in different ways in the New Testament. If we wish to leave the "cosmological" setting of the hymn in Colossians 1, 15-20, we may shift to the theology of charity in John. John has a logic entirely his own; when he states how much God has loved us, one would expect to find the conclusion we should love God in return. Instead, the conclusion is that we should love our brothers. In itself this is by no means exclusively Johannine. The majority of the occurrences of *agape* in the New Testament refers to brotherly love and not (explicitly) to the love of God. However, the whole contrast indicated here is already to read the New Testament with a mind alien to it. In John it is shown just how and why. To give our lives for our brethren is not characterized by calling it an extreme form of Christian heroism; it is the earthly attitude of the love for Jesus Christ and worship of the invisible God, His and our Father. The most cataclysmic chain reaction tearing this world apart is: to hate one's brother, because it is the same as ousting God from this world, making His presence impossible. Thus to despise anyone is somehow the same as atheism. Not to be prepared to wash the feet of our brother is to belie the very intentions of our innermost prayers. To rush past the needy neighbor in hot pursuit of a God of our own making, as also to bear down on one's brother allegedly in His name, is to fan the fires of that despair which we call hell. The attempt to find God without an unfathomably deep respect for another human being is not to find God, but to have the depths of His divine mystery transformed into sheer emptiness, plunging headlong into the Godforsakenness from which there can be no rescue.

We hear the young complain that religion is irrelevant to their daily lives. If, as a complaint, that stands out as contrasted to the background of a bourgeois elder whose God fits the setting of his life, that young person is better than his elder. Have we perhaps been selling the young the idea of an unreachable God, sitting in unerring judgment on their erring lives in lofty heights, to be reached mainly in the hereafter by now, down here, collecting ever more rubber stamps of certain obligations fulfilled in their passports for heaven? Or, if we have done better than that, have we been clear enough that God can be found *only* down here? And if only down here, have they been able to find God in ourselves, as we find Him in them? The charges of legalism and formalism made, or at least felt, by the young, against what has undoubtedly been an over-institutionalized Christianity, are true enough. But can we offer them, or let God offer them through His presence in ourselves, enough of a basis to provide for an alternative?

D.'s book is of extraordinary importance. Some of his claims may very well be subject to disconfirmation. Possibly many true assertions can be improved upon. But to read the book in a polemic spirit (as some reviewers have done) is to bypass, and indeed to fail to understand, his main points entirely. The book aims at a re-appreciation of the faith, and to such a re-interpretation it has made a great contribution. The book is also greatly conducive to the ecumenical spirit, as it lays bare many anachronisms and fixations not less typical of the Reformation than of Catholic theology. It also holds great potential for dialogue with non-Christians. Studies combining all this are too rare not to be treasured with gratitude, as a sign of much needed progress.

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