

Review Article

The Dehellenization of Dogma¹

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With considerable warmth Prof. Dewart appeals to Pope John's decision 'to adopt a historical perspective: to "look to the present, to new conditions and new forms of life... to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us!"' (p. 172). This decision, he feels, and the unhesitating acclamation that greeted it, reversed a policy that had been gaining strength for centuries. 'This policy was, for the sake of protecting the truth and purity of the Christian faith, to resist the factual reality, and to deny the moral validity, of the development of man's self-consciousness, especially as revealed in cultural evolution' (p. 172).

His purpose, then, is 'to sketch an approach to... the problem of integrating Christian theistic belief with the everyday experience of contemporary man' (p. 7). He aims at 'the integration of Christian belief with the post-medieval stage of human development' (p. 15). He understands contemporary experience 'as the mode of consciousness which mankind, if not as a whole at least in respect of our own civilization constituting man's cultural vanguard, has reached as a result of its historical and evolutionary development. And the integration in question must be a true organic process of co-ordination, interrelation and unification' (p. 9).

Foot note
1) Leslie Dewart, The Future of Belief, Theism in World Come of Age, New York, Herder and Herder, 1966.
Pp. 223. \$4.95.

What is at stake is the unity and coherence of Christian and, in particular, Catholic consciousness. '... the problem is, at its most basic level, whether one can, while complying with the demand that human personality, character and experience be inwardly integrated, at one and the same time profess the Christian religion and perceive human nature and everyday reality as contemporary man typically ~~does~~ (p. 49) does' (p. 19).

~~Problems are defined to initiate investigations.~~

~~Usually problems are defined to initiate investigations~~

So much for the problem. The suggested solution is

? 'that the integration of theism with today's everyday experience requires not merely the demythologization of Scripture but the more comprehensive dehellenization of dogma, and specifically that of the Christian doctrine of God' (p. 49). Demythologization integrates no more than the Christian's reading of Scripture ~~with~~ with his contemporary everyday experience; and it creates several dogmatic problems for each scriptural one it solves (p. 47). To go to the root of the matter, to become both coherent and contemporary, we have to transcend our ~~H~~^Hellenic past and consciously to fashion the cultural form which Christianity requires now for the ~~best~~ sake of its future. So 'dehellenization means, in positive terms, the conscious creation of the future of belief' (p. 50). This future, he feels, is likely to depend on whether Christian theism 'chooses to ~~depend~~ contribute to the heightening of man's self-understanding and to the perfection of his "education to reality." This would in turn imply that Christian theism should first become conscious that its traditional form has necessarily and logically been childish and infantile to the very degree that it corresponded

to an earlier, relatively childish, infantile stage of human evolution. Theism in a world come of age must itself be a theism come of age' (p. 51).

The principal means for ~~the~~ dehellenizing dogma and obtaining a mature theism seems to be 'the theory of knowledge assumed here' (p. 168 n.). While its precise nature is not disclosed in any detail, apparently it involves a rather strong repugnance to propositional truth in some at least of its aspects.

'In the theory of knowledge suggested here human knowledge is not the bridging of an original isolation but, on the contrary, the self-differentiation of consciousness in and through its objectification (of the world and of itself); and conceptualization is the socio-historical mechanism through which the self-differentiation can take place. Concepts are not the subjective expression of an objective reality (nor, therefore, a means whereby we become reflectively conscious of a self which already existed prior to reflection). Concepts are the self-expression of consciousness and, therefore, the means by which we objectify (the world and the self), and the means by which we self-communicate with another self (including God), that is, the means by which we objectify ourselves for another self, and by which we objectify ourselves for ourselves' (p. 116 n., *italics as in original* in text).

Hence, we are repeatedly warned against the view that truth involves an adaequatio intellectus et rei. 'Truth is not the adequacy of our representative operations, but the adequacy of our conscious existence. More precisely, it is the fidelity of consciousness to being' (p. 92). 'It is the result of the mind coming-into-being through the self-differentiation of that-which-is

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into self and world' (p. 93). 'Now we have seen that... truth can be understood as an existential^s relation of self to being which must by definition develop in order to realize itself — and not as the relation of conformity to an objective thing which must by definition be stable in order to be at all' (p 97). 'Although truth is not the adequation of the intellect to being... truth might nevertheless be called an adequation of man to reality, in the sense that it is man's self-achievement within the requirements of a given situation... In this context adequation would ^{not} connote conformity, correspondence, likeness or similarity. It would connote adjustment, usefulness, expediency, proficiency, sufficiency and adaptation' (p. 110). 'The truth of human experience is the result of consciousness' incessant tending towards being — a tendency which, far from satisfied by the achievement of its goal, is further intensified by whatever success it may meet. Hence, the only valid "criterion" of truth is that ~~the achievement of~~ it it create the possibility of more truth' (p. 111). So '.. the concept is true to the degree that by its elevation of experience to consciousness it permits the truth of human experience to come into being' (p. 113). Similarly, '.. the concepts in which Christian belief are cast are true, not in virtue of their representative adequacy, but in virtue of their efficacious adequacy as generative forms of the truth of religious experience' (p. 113). To conclude with a citation from Maurice Blondel's Carnets Intimes: '.. truth is no longer the adaequatio rei et intellectus... But truth remains, and this truth that remains is living and active. It is the ~~ad~~ adaequatio mentis et vitae' (p. 118).

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Prof. Dewart's grounds for his view on truth seem to be partly ^{derived} the flood of light he has ~~received~~ from phenomenological and existential thought and partly the inadequacy of ~~the Scholasticism~~ ~~which he now rejects~~ his interpretation of Scholasticism.

To the light I have no objection. I would not deny that the authenticity of one's living, the probity of one's intellectual endeavours, the strategy of one's priorities are highly relevant for the truth by which one is truly a man. I have no doubt that concepts and judgements (on judgements I find Prof. Dewart ^{of} strangely silent) are the expression ^{of} one's accumulated experience, developed understanding, accured wisdom; and I quite agree that such expression is an objectification of one's self and of one's world.

I would urge, however, that this objectification is intentional. It consists in acts of meaning. We objectify the self by meaning the self, and we objectify the world by meaning the world. Such meaning of its nature is related to a meant, and what is meant may or may not correspond to what in fact is so. If it corresponds, the meaning is true. If it does not correspond, the meaning is ~~is~~ false. Such is the correspondence view of truth and Prof. Dewart has managed to reject it without apparently ~~adverting to it. He has written a book on 'The Future of Belief.'~~

Does he not mean the future of belief? Does he mean something else? Does he mean nothing at all? At least, when he asserts that God is not a being, he assures us that ^{what} his statement 'means is literally what it says, that God is not a being at all' (p. 175). Again, he ^{is} wants his proposals tried by the touchstone of public examination (p. 50). What is the purpose of the trial? ~~Are we to try them on like a pair of shoes?~~ What is the public to do but

adverting to it. So eager has he been to impugn what he considered the Thomist theory of knowledge that he overlooked the fact that he needed a correspondence view of truth to mean what he said.

Let me stress the point. Prof. Dewart has written a book on the future of belief. Does he mean the future of belief, or something else, or nothing at all? At least, when he asserts that God is ~~not~~ not a being, he assures us that what his statement 'means is literally what it says, that God is not a being at all' (p. 175). Again, he wants his proposals tried by the touchstone of public examination (p. 50). But what is that examination to be? What can the public do but consider what he means and try to ascertain ~~whether or not~~ ~~and~~ how much of what he says is certainly or probably true or false?

He urges that the correspondence view of truth supposes what is contrary to both logic and observation 'as if we could witness from a third, "higher" viewpoint, the union of two lower things, object and subject' (p. 95). But such a statement is involved in a grave ~~confusion~~. The witnessing from a higher viewpoint is the nonsense of naive realism, of the super-look that looks at both the looking and the looked at. On the other hand, the metaphysical union of object and subject is a deduction from the fact of knowledge and its premiss is the possibility of consciousness objectifying not only itself but also its world.

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~~He~~ he urges that ~~that~~ a correspondence view of truth implies an immobility that precludes development (p. 95) and, in particular, the development of dogma (p. 109).

Now I would not dispute that a wooden-headed interpretation of the correspondence view of truth can ~~exclude~~ ^{exclude and has excluded} ~~exclude~~ the possibility of development. But that is no reason for ~~not~~ rejecting the correspondence view along with its misinterpretation. Least of all is that so at present, when 'hermeneutics' has become a watchword and the ~~significance~~ ^{significance} existence of literary forms is generally acknowledged. For the root of hermeneutics and the significance of literary forms lie precisely in the fact that the correspondence between meaning and meant is itself part of the meaning and so will vary with variations in the meaning.

Just as he discusses truth without adverting to hermeneutics, so he discusses the development of dogma without adverting to the history of dogma. But the development of dogma is an historical entity. Its existence and its nature are determined by research and interpretation. ~~So far from supposing some one mode of development, I should be inclined to expect as many modes of development as there are dogmas, for history is not repetitive. Moreover, in this context, the distinction between 'explicit' and 'implicit' ~~means~~ has two quite different applications. The principal application is to the explicitly and the implicitly revealed, and this obtains when the dogma is declared to be a revealed truth. ~~are determined by research and interpretation.~~ Moreover, almost on this approach there are found to be ^{almost} as many modes of development, ~~as~~ almost as many varieties of implicit revelation, as there are different dogmas, so that a general discussion of the possibility of cultural development, such as Prof. Dewart offers, can provide no more than philosophic prolegomena.~~

Unfortunately it seems of the essence of Prof. Dewart's prolegomena to exclude the correspondence view of truth. ~~For~~ *Such an* ~~the~~ exclusion is as destructive of the dogmas as it is of Prof. Dewart's *won* statements. To deny correspondence is to deny a relation between meaning and meant. To deny the correspondence view of truth is to deny that, when the meaning is true, the meant is what is so. Either denial is destructive of the dogmas.

If there is no correspondence between meaning and meant, then in Prof. McLuhan's phrase it would be a great mistake to read the dogmas as if they were saying something. If that is a great mistake, it would be another to investigate their *historical* origins, and a third to talk about their development.

If one denies that, when the meaning is ~~truth~~ true, then the meant is what is so, one rejects ~~is~~ propositional truth. If the rejection is universal, then it is the self-destructive proposition *!* that there are no true propositions. If the rejection is limited to the dogmas, then it is just a roundabout way of saying that all the dogmas are false.

The same view of *truth* is applied not only to the dogmas but also to faith and revelation. We are told that 'belief must bear directly upon the reality of God, not upon words or concepts' (p. 167). In a footnote we are warned against the doctrine of St. Thomas ~~who~~ which has faith terminating ^{at} God himself through the mediation of the propositions of the creed. Prof.

Dewart holds that to believe in God by believing a proposition about God is to believe in a proposition and not to believe in God. But this follows only on Dewart's assumption that truth is not correspondence. On the contrary assumption to assent to the truth of the proposition does not differ from assenting to what the proposition ~~is~~ means. ~~Assent to a proposition is not a matter of~~ Verum est medium in quo ens cognoscitur.

With faith detached from assent to propositions (p. 167), it has to be ontic rather than ontological (p. 136 n.).

'Faith is the existential response of the self to the openness of the transcendence disclosed by conscious experience. It is our decision to respect, to let be, the contingency of our being, and, therefore, to admit into our calculations a reality beyond the totality of being. It is a lived response, identical with our freely willing to exist in a certain self-conception and self-resolution, ^{...} ~~with its unity we can by abstraction distinguish between our openness to the openness of transcendence...~~ It is no less a coming-into-being than the "act" of existence which is, likewise, a perpetual achieving of the unachieved. In real life we find not the act but the life of faith' (pp. 64 f.).

Such faith seems to coincide with religious experience. This differs from ordinary knowledge inasmuch as it is an experience of a transcendent reality first adumbrated negatively in the empirical apprehension of the contingency of our own being. So it is a conscious experience of something inevident, ^o ~~something~~ _A which unlike this desk and this chair is not seen to be there, even if it enters into the fabric of our personal ~~reality~~ relations to reality with at least as much force, relevance and moment as things which are seen to be there. Further,

faith in the traditional phrase is due to God's initiative. Again, faith as Christian is faith as conceptualized under some or other cultural form of the Christian tradition. Its continuity in truth requires the continuity of God's self-communication to man, and the continuity of man's correlative religious experience in response to God's initiative. But this is not the continuity of sameness or the continuity of that which remains (substantially) unchanged in the midst of accidental change. Truth cannot remain the same. It would make as little sense ^{as} to say that existence remains the same, that one moment of consciousness is the same as another, or that life is the same thing over and over again. (Pp. 113 - 116).

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Correlative to faith is revelation. ~~Although~~ '... although God does not reveal propositions or formulae or concepts about himself, he truly reveals himself... He does it personally, by his own agency, through his personal presence to human history, in which he freely chooses to appear and to take part... his revelation to man in the Judaeo-Christian tradition is unique and extraordinary: the Christian religion and the Catholic Church are, in this extraordinary and unique sense, the true religion and the true Church to which all men are called' (p. 115 n.). ~~Assumably this view is to be contrasted with the popular faith of the Church in which 'revelation has indeed tended to become God's transmission of cryptic messages. Correlatively, the magisterium of the Church has tended to become the decoding of these messages, and faith the Christian's assent to the accuracy of the translation...' (p. 165 n.).~~

Prof. Dewart, however, does not seem to consider that the call to the ~~true~~ true ~~Church~~ Church calls for ^{some attention to} ~~an acceptance~~ ^{and II} of the pronouncements of Vatican I, on revelation and faith. Instead we have the caricature of a 'popular faith' ~~(p. 300-430-144)~~ ^{These he caricatures as a popular faith} in which 'revelation has indeed tended to become God's transmission of cryptic messages. Correlatively, the magisterium of the Church has tended to become the decoding of these messages, and faith the Christian's assent to the accuracy of the translation...' (p. 165 n.).

No doubt, ↓ Prof. Dewart's esotericism is inevitable, once the mediating role of propositions has been eliminated both from God's revelation to man and from man's faith in God. But if one is inclined to doubt the soundness of the 'theory of knowledge assumed here' (p. 168 n.), if one's modernity includes a greater interest in ^{exegesis} ~~hermeneutics~~ and history than is exhibited in the opinion that 'Christianity has a mission not a message' (p. 8), then one will find abundant evidence from New Testament times right ↓ up to the present day that the ~~Church~~ Church has been explicitly aware not only of a mission but also of a message. Moreover, while it is true that the ~~message~~ message can be and has been abused to the detriment both of living faith and of the transcendent Revealer, ~~however with this abuse found~~ such an abuse does not show that a rejection of the message is not also a rejection of the mission.

Prof. Dewart dislikes the Greeks. He deplores the 'inability of hellenic metaphysical thinking to discern reality except in ens, that-which-is' (p. 180). He places at the sad root of both Greek and Scholastic thought Parmenides' postulate that 'that which can be thought is identical with that which can be' (p. 153). He would get beyond 'speculative-ideological metaphysics' (p. 163) and establish a metaphysics of presence (p. 169). Then we could get along without the training and education that only relatively few can afford. 'Christian theology and philosophy would then cease to be "academic" subjects, and theological ~~the~~ enquiry would once again take place predominantly within the public, everyday, real life of the whole Church' (p. 145 fn.). In anticipation of ~~the~~ this imminent utopia he notes that 'there is no need, if we discard Parmenides, to make God fit in the mould of being' (p. 176). Hence, he desires a philosophy concerned with the presence and reality of God, a God that is not even partially the God of Greek metaphysics (p. 170). Similarly he suggests that ~~the~~ Christian theology is not to assume any fundamental principle or essential part of that very mode of philosophizing on which was erected the concept of God which can no longer be integrated with contemporary experience (p. 41).

This hostility to Hellenism is of a piece with the already noted hostility to propositional truth. For not only do propositions mediate reality but also the first-level propositions that do so may be ^{themselves} mediated by second-level propositions. So dictionaries speak of words, grammars of languages, logics of the clarity, coherence, and rigour of discourse, hermeneutics of the relation between meaning and *meant*

and, to come to the villain, metaphysics of what is meant. Such second-level mediation of the first-level mediator was the secret of the Greek miracle that effected the triumph of logos over mythos.

Obviously, then, if one does not want a first-level mediation of reality by propositions, much less will one tolerate the second-level mediation ^{associated} ~~that began~~ with Greek metaphysics. Moreover, if one does not care to be entirely cut off from reality, one will have to turn to some non-propositional mode ^{of access} such as presence. So Prof. Dewart praises a metaphysics of presence but blames a Hellenic metaphysics.

Again, the Greek miracle had its price. It demanded a ~~second~~ second differentiation of consciousness, a second ~~withdrawal~~ ^{of immediacy} withdrawal from the world of immediacy. In that world the infant lives, but when the child learns to talk, he also learns to inhabit the far larger world mediated by meaning. ^{For the student, however,} ~~But~~ there is the further learning that mediates the mediator, that reflects on articulate sounds to correlate them with an alphabet, that uses ~~the~~ dictionaries, that studies grammars and logics, that introduces hermeneutics and even perhaps metaphysics. The basic purpose of this further learning is to control the mediation of reality ~~by~~ by meaning, to hold in check the affect-laden images that even in the twentieth century have the power to make myth seem convincing and magic ^{seem} efficacious.

But ^{how} ~~however~~ beneficial, the second differentiation of consciousness is onerous. It is all the more onerous, all the more resented, when compulsory, universal education ~~has~~ ~~extended to all what once had to be~~ ~~endured~~ ~~by few.~~

attempts to extend to all what once had to be endured by but few. So the word, academic, acquires a pejorative sense that expresses disapproval of any cultural super-structure. Despite his devotion to the mode of consciousness reached by man's cultural vanguard (p. 9), Prof. Dewart feels free to appeal to that disapproval and to look forward to the day when Christian philosophy and theology will no longer be ~~academic~~ 'academic' subjects (p. 145 n.).

A similar ambiguity appears in Prof. Dewart's ~~position~~ attitude to science. On the one hand, he assures us that 'modern man creates himself by means of science, that is, by means of his scientific mode of consciousness' and 'it is scientific culture that defines contemporary man' ~~is~~ (p. 18). ~~But~~ ^o on the other hand he is all for discarding Parmenides' identification of the possible object of thought with possible being (pp. 153, 165, 168, 174, 176, 181, 184). But to attack this identification is also to attack a cardinal point in contemporary science. For what is defined by a hypothesis ^{to be} is a possible object of thought, and what is ~~is~~ ascertained by verification is a real state of affairs. But modern science demands that every hypothesis be verifiable, and so it demands that its hypothetical objects of thought be possible beings. Not only is it thoroughly ~~committed~~ committed to the Parmenidean identity but also it has so ~~an~~ extended and developed the second differentiation of consciousness as to ~~to~~ erect a cultural super-structure far more elaborate and far more abstruse than anything attempted by the Greeks or the Scholastics. (14)

One begins to suspect that Prof. Dewart is not a reformer but just a revolutionary. He is dealing with a very real and very ~~grave~~ ^{an extremely} grave problem. He would have written ~~quite a~~ ^{an} important book, if he had distinguished between the achievements and the limitations of Hellenism, if he had ~~shown~~ listed the ways in which modern culture has corrected the errors and so transcended the limitations of its ancient heritage, if he had pointed out the precise bearing of each of these advances on each of the ^{many} levels on which Christians live and Christianity functions. He has not done so. He fails to discern the elements of Hellenism that still survive in the cultural vanguard, and so he plumps for vigor. Let's liquidate Hellenism. He does not distinguish between integrated consciousness and undifferentiated consciousness, and so he thinks and talks and prescribes his remedies as if ^{prayer,} dogma, systematic theology, philosophy, and contemporary common sense were ~~always~~ or should be a single homogeneous unity.

~~Prof. Dewart believes that the 'intellectual effort of the early centuries was, therefore, predominantly directed to the adaptation of hellenic concepts to serve the development of dogma -- that is, to the casting of Christianity in hellenic forms' (p. 136) and he works his way to the conclusions that in consequence we today are suffering from crypto-tritheism (p. 147) and crypto-docetism (p. 152).~~

I am afraid that Prof. Dewart's knowledge of the development of the dogma in the Greek councils is a matter of hearsay based on misinformation.

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Prof. Dewar conceives the development of the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas to have been a matter of taking over Hellenic concepts for the expression of Christian doctrine. For he feels 'it would be unhistorical to suppose that at the first moment of the development of Christian consciousness this consciousness could have created the concepts whereby to elaborate itself -- it is not until our own day that such a possibility has begun to emerge' (p. 136). Further, he laments that the Church still retains such outworn tools, for today this results in a crypto-tritheism (p. 147) and ~~a~~ in a crypto-docetism (p. 152).

It is, I should say, quite unhistorical to suppose that the ^{de} development of Catholic dogma was an effort of Christian consciousness to elaborate, not the Christian message, but Christian consciousness. Further, it is unhistorical to suppose that Greek philosophy supplied all the principal elements in which we have for centuries conceptualized the basic Christian beliefs of the Trinity and the Incarnation (America, Dec. 17, 1966, p. 801). My first contention needs no elaboration, and so I turn ~~to~~ to the ^{second}.

It is true, then, that profound affinities may ^{be} discerned between Hellenic thinkers and some ecclesiastical writers. The Stoic notion that only bodies are real ^{seems} intrinsic to Tertullian's account of the divinity of the Son in his Adversus Praxean. Middle Platonism is prominent in Origen's account of the Son in his De principiis and In Ioannem. But the ^{along with Arianism} subordinationism of these two writers was rejected at Nicea. Moreover, the term enshrining that rejection was homoousios and, while one might speculate that here if anywhere one has a concept forged by deep Hellenic thought and simply taken over by the bishops at Nicea (see p. 136), it happens that

historical research does not justify such a view. For according to G. Prestige (God in Patristic Thought, London 1936, p. 209; cf. p. 197) down to the council of Nicea homoousios was understood in one sense and in one sense only; it meant 'of one stuff'; [^] ~~of one stuff~~ and as applied to the divine Persons, it conveyed a metaphor ~~drawn~~ drawn from material objects. The Fathers at Nicea, then, did not find ready to hand a sharply defined, immutable concept which they made into a vehicle for the Christian message; on the contrary, they found a word which they employed in a metaphorical sense.

It may be urged, however, that the metaphor meant something and that meaning must be some other Hellenic concept. It happens, however, that while the metaphor had a meaning, still the meaning ^{was} ~~is~~ determined not by some Hellenic concept but by a Hellenic technique. What homoousios means ^t exactly, ^{was} ~~is~~ formulated by Athanasius thus: eadem de Filio quae de Patre dicuntur, excepto Patris nomine. The same meaning ^{was} ~~is~~ expressed in the Trinitarian Preface: Quod enim de tua gloria, revelante te, credimus, hoc de Filio tuo, hoc de Spiritu sancto, sine differentia discretionis a sentimus. Now such a determination of meaning is characteristically Hellenic. It is a matter of reflecting on propositions. It explains the word, consubstantial, by a second-level proposition to the effect [^] ~~by saying~~ that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, if and only if what is true of the Father also is true of the Son, except that only the Father is Father.

Let me add ^{five} ~~four~~ observations on this typically Hellenic technique. The first is that it offers an open structure: it does not determine what attributes are to be assigned to the Father and so must be assigned to the ^{Son} ~~son~~ as well; it leaves the believer free to conceive the Father in Scriptural, Patristic, medieval, or modern terms; and of course contemporary consciousness,

which is historically minded, will be at home in all four.

The second is that, when reality and being are contrasted, the technique decides for being. For being is that which is; it is that which is to be known through the true proposition; and the technique operates on true propositions. On the other hand, reality, when contrasted with being, denotes the evident or present that provides the ^{remote} grounds for rationally affirming being but, but unlike being, is in constant flux.

The ^e third is that ^{specifically} Christian thought on being came into ^{prominent} existence in Athanasius' struggle against Arianism and, in particular, in his ~~elucidation~~ elucidation of natum non factum, of the difference between the Son born of the Father and the creature created by Father and Son. No doubt, such an explanation presupposes a Hellenic background for its possibility. But the problem and the content are specifically Christian. A divine Son was simply a scandal to the Hellenist, Celsus; and the Christian notion of creation is ~~not~~ not to be found in Plato or Aristotle, the Stoics or the Gnostics. When Prof. Dewart talks about the God ^{of} Greek metaphysics (p. 170), one wonders what Greek metaphysician he ~~says~~ is talking about.

My fourth observation is that the Hellenic technique of second-level propositions is not outworn. The modern mathematician reflects on his axioms and pronounces them to be the implicit definitions of his basic terms. ^{This} ~~The~~ technique, then, pertains not to the limitations of Hellenism antiquated by modern culture but to the achievements of Hellenism that still survive in modern culture and, indeed, form part of it.

My fifth and last observation is that the technique is not within everyone's competence. The matter ^{seems to have been} ~~has been~~ settled with some accuracy for, in his celebrated studies of educational psychology, Jean Piaget has concluded that only about the age

of twelve (if my memory is correct) do boys become able to operate on propositions. It follows that other means have to be found to communicate the doctrine of Nicea, if Prof. Dewart's prediction of ~~many~~ pre-academic theologians is to be verified to less developed minds. be found to communicate the doctrine of Nicea, ~~in pre-academic circles~~. So much for my five observations.

For Prof. Dewart, 'person' is another ~~handyman~~ concept taken over from Hellenic thought, and, though we have not managed to improve on it, we must do so (pp. 143 f.). I find ~~that~~ this a rather inadequate account of the matter.

For Augustine, persona or substantia was an undefined, heuristic concept. He pointed ^{out} that Father, Son, and Spirit are three. He asked, Three what? He remarked that there are not three Gods, three Fathers, three Sons, three Spirits. He answered that there are three persons or substances, where 'person' or 'substance' just means what there are three of in the Trinity (De Trin., VII, iv, 7; ML 42, 939). Obviously, such an account of the notion of 'person' does no more than indicate the area to be investigated. It directs future development but it cannot be said to impede it. The only manner in which it could become outworn would be the rejection of the Trinity, for as long as the Trinity is acknowledged, there ^{are} ~~is~~ acknowledged three of something.

Moreover, the original heuristic structure, while it has remained, has not remained indeterminate. It has been developed in different ways at different times. There was the stage of definitions, indeed, of the three main definitions contributed by Boethius, Richard of St. Victor, and Thomas Aquinas. There was the trinitarian systematization that conceived the three ^t persons as subsistent relations and based them upon psychologically

conceived processions. If I may cite my own views, I have maintained not only in my classes but also in a ~~Latin~~ textbook that the three Persons are the perfect community, not two in one flesh, but three subjects of a single, dynamic, existential consciousness. On the other hand, I am of the opinion that the Christological systematization, from Scotus to de la Taille, had bogged down in a pre-critical morass. For the past thirty years, however, attention has increasingly turned to the consciousness of Christ and my own position has been that the doctrine of one person with two natures transposes quite neatly into a recognition of a single subject of both a divine and a human consciousness.

~~I would have it understood, of course, that I am not contending that contemporary theology has not a Herculean task before it. The purpose of my remarks has simply been to make clear that I find Prof. Dewart too unfamiliar with ~~the present situation~~ inaccurate about the past and too unfamiliar with the present situation to be able to offer any helpful guidance.~~

~~4/13/1964~~
I ~~may~~ may be more brief on such terms as substantia, hypostasis, natura. All three were ambiguous. We have just seen Augustine use substantia in the same sense as persona, a usage that had vanished by the time the Quicumque vult

Next, in the Tomus ad Antiochenos there is the account was composed. ~~There is the well-known story~~ of Athanasius reconciling those that argued for one hypostasis with those that argued for three; he asked the former if they agreed with Sabellius and the latter if they were tritheists; both groups were astounded by the question, ~~and~~ ^{put them,} promptly disclaimed ^{respectively} Sabellianism and tritheism, ~~and~~ ^{and} dropped their now obviously verbal

dispute. 'Nature,' finally, which for Aristotle meant either the form or the matter, and the form rather than the matter, meant neither of these to Christians some eight centuries later.

They, however, had their own ambiguous usage, and it was solemnly and recognized explicitly in the sixth and seventh centuries.

In successive canons Constantinople II explained^{ed} the correct meaning both of Chalcedon's two natures and^{of} Cyril's one nature^{ed} (DS 428 f.). More abruptly Lateran I imposed^{ed} both the Cyrillian and the Chalcedonian formulas (DS 505 f.).

So much for ~~the process of Hellenizing~~ the process of Hellenizing Christian doctrine. Let us add a few words on the meaning of the technical terms, for Prof. Dewart roundly asserts that ~~no~~ no Christian believer today (unless he can abstract himself from contemporary experience) can intelligently believe that

in the one hypostasis of Jesus two real natures are united^{Christian believer today} (p. 150). Let me put the prior question. Does Prof. Dewart's positive part of the Nicene decree accept the ~~Nicene creed~~ in which neither the term, hypostasis, nor the term, nature, occurs? If so, in the part about ~~the~~ Jesus Christ, does he observe two sections, a first containing divine predicates, and a second containing human predicates?

do not underline hypostasis nature

Next,
Now to put the question put by Cyril to Nestorius, does he accept the two series of predicates as ^{attributes} ~~predicates~~ of one and the same Jesus Christ? If he does, he acknowledges what is meant by one hypostasis. If he does not, ~~it is because~~ he ~~does not~~ ~~really~~ accept the Nicene creed. Again, does he acknowledge in the one and the same Jesus Christ both ^{attributes} divine ~~predicates~~ and human attributes? If he acknowledges both, he accepts what is meant by two natures. If he does not, ~~it is because~~ he does not ~~really~~ accept the Nicene creed.

What is true is that Catholic theology today has a tremendous task before it, for there are very real limitations to Hellenism that have been transcended by modern culture and have yet to be successfully surmounted by Catholic theology. But that task is not helped, rather it is gravely impeded, by wild statements based on misconceptions ~~for lack of faith~~ or unbelief.

Prof. Dewart has treated many other topics besides those I have been able to mention, but his principal concern, no doubt, is 'theism in a world come of age,' for that is the subtitle of his book. The substance of ~~his~~ his proposal here seems to come in two parts. Positively it is that God is to be thought of, not as being or as existing, but as a reality that at times is present and at times is absent (pp. 173 ff.). Negatively, it is that atheism is fo^lstered by unsuccessful efforts to ~~and~~ prove God's existence, and such failures are due to the real distinction between essence and existence (pp. 156-158).

He contends, then, that one need not conceive God as being, once one gets beyond the metaphysical method grounded on Parmenides' identity. Remove that method and 'being' need no longer be identified with that-which-is. So the ^way is opened to ^b giving to 'being' a new meaning, and this new meaning is to be found in man. It is because he is present to himself as object that man is most truly a being for, through that presence, man may transcend the subjectivity of mere objects and the objectivity of mere subjects to reach an understanding of himself as being. But to associate being with man is to disassociate being from God. As God is simply beyond man, so he is simply beyond being (pp. 173-75). By the same token God cannot be said to exist (p. 176). He cannot because to exist is proper to being (p. 180).

We are reassured immediately, however, that the denial of being and existence to God takes away nothing of his ~~reality and presence. With Gabriel Marcel we could say~~ reality and presence. To exist and to be present are quite different things. A man could be in the same room sitting beside me without being present to me, without making ~~himself~~ his presence felt. Conversely, God's real presence to us (and, therefore, his reality "in himself") does not depend upon his being a being or an object. On the contrary, to post-primitives a reality beyond the totality of being reveals itself by its presence (pp. 176 f.).

Prof. Dewart's views on truth are not defensible. Moreover, [^] the cultural vanguard has not yet surmounted the requirement that hypotheses be verifiable and so Parmenides' identity still stands. It follows that 'being' still is that-which-is, that intelligence still is related to reality, that 'is' and 'is not' are not open to reinterpretation, and that there do not exist the premisses for the conclusion that ~~the~~ 'being' and 'existing' are appropriate only to creatures.

Secondly, it is obvious that a person can exist without ~~being present~~ making his presence felt and that he cannot make his presence felt without existing and being present. But it is also obvious that one can have the feeling that someone is present when no one is there. Especially in a world come of age such feelings should be examined, scrutinized, investigated. The investigation may result in the judgement that someone really is there. It may result in the judgement that really no one is there. It may result only in an unresolved state of doubt. But in any case what is decisive is not the

felt presence but the ^{rational} ~~time~~ judgement that follows upon an investigation of the felt presence.

My point, here, is that man's coming to know is a process, that the earlier stages of the process pertain to knowing without constituting it, that ^{in each instance of coming to know it is} only with the rational act of judgement ^{that reaches} ~~does~~ the process ~~in each instance of coming to know~~ reach its term. Prof. Dewart does not want propositional truth and so he does not want 'being' or 'existing' or 'that-which-is' or assent to propositions or judgements issuing in propositions. Prof. Dewart does very much want the ^{reassuring} ~~comforting~~ sense of present reality that can be savored in the earlier phases of ~~man~~ cognitive ~~man~~ process and ^{, I have no doubt,} is to be savored all the more fully if the unpleasant and tiring business of questions, investigations, possible doubts, are quietly forgotten. But this seems to be less 'coming of age' than infantile regression.

Thirdly, maturity is comprehensive. It does not refuse to acknowledge any part of man but embraces all from the entities of Freud's psychic embryology ^X to the immanent norms of man's intellectual, rational, existential consciousness. As it does not deny propositional truth, so it does not disregard or belittle religious experience. On the contrary, it is quite ready to claim with Karl Rahner that a mystagogy will play a far more conspicuous role in the spirituality of the future (Geist und Leben, 39[1966], 335); and it is fully aware that spiritual advance brings about in prayer the diminution and at times the disappearance of symbols and concepts of God. Still this differentiation

and specialization of consciousness does not abolish other, ^{men} complementary differentiations and specializations, whether social, ^{Annual,} practical, [^] aesthetic, ~~scientific~~, philosophical, historical, or theological. Nor is this multiplicity in any way opposed to integration. For in each of such diverse patterns of conscious operation one is oneself in accord with some facet of one's being and some part of one's universe; and while one lives in only one ^{pattern} at a time in some cycle of recurrence, still the subject is over time, each pattern complements, reinforces, liberates the others, and there can develop a differentiation of consciousness to deal explicitly with differentiations of consciousness. That pattern is, of course, reflective subjectivity in philosophy and in theology. ~~It~~ It follows the Hellenic precept, Know thyself. It follows the example of Augustinian recall, [^] scrutiny, penetration, judgement, evaluation, decision. It realizes the modern concern for the authenticity of one's existing without amputating ^{one's own} ~~the~~ rational objectivity expressed in propositional truth.

Fourthly, maturity understands the immature. It has ^{itself} been through that, and it knows what it has been. It is aware that in childhood, before reaching the age of reason, one perforce works out one's quite pragmatic criteria for distinguishing between the 'really real' and the merely imagined, ~~the~~ desired, ~~the~~ feared, ~~the~~ dreamt, ^{sibling's} ~~the~~ ~~trick~~, ~~the~~ joke, ~~the~~ fib. Still more clearly is it aware of the upset of crisis and conversion ~~is~~ that is needed to purge oneself of one's childish realism and swing round completely and coherently to a critical realism. So it understands just how it is that some cling to a naive realism all their lives, that others move on to some type of idealism, that others ~~and~~

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 feel some liberation from idealism in a phenomenology or an existentialism while, at the opposite extreme, there is a conceptualist extrinsecism for which concepts have neither dates nor developments and truth is so objective that it gets along without minds.

Such is the disorientation of ~~the~~ contemporary ^{experience,} ~~mind,~~ its inability to know itself and its own resources, the root of not a little of its insecurity and anxiety. Theology has to take this fact into consideration. The popular theology devised in the past for the simplices fideles has to be replaced. Nor will some single replacement do, for theology has to learn to speak in many modes and on many levels and even to minister to the needs of those afflicted with philosophic problems they are not likely to solve.

There remains, finally, the contention that 'the ultimate epistemological consequence of the real distinction between essence and existence in creatures is to render the intellect incompetent for knowing the actual existence of any essence, be it created or uncreated, necessary or contingent' (p. 158). In this statement the emphasis ^{seems to} ~~lie~~ ^{is} not on the reality of the distinction but on the mere existence of any, even a notional, distinction. For the author has just argued: '.. the doctrine that there is in God no real distinction between essence and existence implies that nonetheless there is a conceptual distinction between them. We cannot empirically intuit the real indistinction of essence and existence in God. We must nonetheless conceive the two as distinct. There is, therefore, an unbridgeable difference between the way in which God is in himself and the way in which he is in our knowledge. Therefore, unless God were the object of empirical intuition, our concepts are in principle unable to

make known to us the actual existence of God. For, as Kant was to conclude...' (p. 158).

Now this argument has a certain validity if in fact human knowing consists in concepts and empirical intuitions. But empirical intuition is just a misleading name for the givenness of the data of sense and of consciousness. ~~On~~ ^{Linking} ~~connecting~~ data to conception there are inquiry and gradually developing understanding. The result of all these together is not knowledge but just thinking. To reach knowledge, to discern between astronomy and astrology, chemistry and alchemy, history and legend, philosophy and myth, there ^{are} ~~is~~ ₁ needed the further activities of reflection, doubting, marshaling and weighing the evidence, and judging. Finally, this ₁ process of judging, in an important because clear instance, is ~~is~~ like scientific verification, not as verification is imagined by the naive to be a matter of looking, ^{intuiting,} peering, ~~perceiving,~~ but as verification in fact is found to be, namely, a cumulative convergence of direct and indirect confirmations any one of which by itself settles just nothing.

I quite agree, then, that our ~~concepts~~ concepts are in principle unable to make known to us the actual existence of God. I would add that they are in principle unable to make known to us the actual existence of anything. For concepts are just thinking; thinking is ~~is~~ not knowing; it is only when we reach judgement that we attain human knowledge of anything whatever, whether of essence or existence, whether of creature ~~or~~ or Creator.

~~Page~~

There is, however, a further point, for Prof. Dewart asserts an unbridgeable difference between ^{the way in which} God ~~as such~~ is in himself and the way in which he is in our knowledge. This, of course, while absolutely possible, is not ^{possibly known} ~~possible~~ within our knowledge, and so the reader may wonder how Prof. Dewart got it into his knowledge. The fallacy seems to be Prof. Dewart's confusion of thinking and knowing. In our thinking we may distinguish a concept of divine existence from a concept of divine essence. In our knowing we may affirm (1) that we think in the above manner and (2) that there is no distinction between the reality of the divine essence and the reality of the divine existence. The contrast is, then, not between God in himself and God in our knowledge but between God in our knowledge and God in our thinking. Nor is there anything unbridgeable about this contrast or difference, for ~~the whole function of our judging is to determine the extent to which our thinking is correct~~ ^{the} thinking and judging occur within one and the same mind, and the whole function of our judging may be described as determining how much of our thinking is correct.

hope that the book will be epoch making in the sense that it will lead to ~~far more~~ ^{and complex} exigent courses in college and seminary theology ~~contribute mightily to a transcendence~~ of the limitations of Hellenism.

But let me conclude. On the dust-cover of The Future of Belief Harvey Cox is credited with the opinion: 'A mature, highly erudite, and utterly radical book. It could be epoch making.' If for my part I have made certain reservations about the first two epithets, I must express the hope that the book will be epoch making in the sense that it will contribute forcefully to the removal from theology of the many limitations of Hellenism. To that topic I shall return.