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CONTINUUM

Volume Five

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Introduction

- 607 • Leslie Dewart / METAPHYSICS AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD
616 • Walter H. Capps / VERTICAL V. HORIZONTAL THEOLOGY:
BLOCH-DEWART-IRENÆUS
634 • John W. M. Verhaar, SJ / DEWART AND THE NEW NEO-THOMISM
643 • Christopher F. Mooney, SJ / TEILHARD ON MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD
655 • Daniel Callahan / GOD AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MAN
673 • Kilian McDonnell, OSB / I BELIEVE THAT I MIGHT EXPERIENCE
686 • Thomas F. O'Meara, OP / HEIDEGGER ON GOD

Editorial

- 699 • The Editor / LIKE ROLAND'S GHOST WINDING A SILENT HORN

The Substantive Dialogue

- 704 • Michael F. Czerny, SJ / DEWART, HINNERS, AND THE ONTOLOGY
Richard Hinnens OF BELIEF
713 • Thomas P. Anderson / AFTER THE SIX DAYS WAR: TWO VIEWS ON
Jacob Neusner JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Folio

- 720 • James Torrens, SJ / VERSES

Witness to the Age

- 723 • Anselm Atkins, OCSO / NINETY-FIVE THESES FOR PUBLIC
DISCUSSION

Chronicle

- 734 • William Birmingham / THE EROTICIZATION OF LITURGY
738 • J. Massingberd Ford / THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN?
743 • Michael Kerlin, FSC / THREE MODERNISTS
747 • James M. Johnson / ETERNAL ROME
749 • Kurt F. Reinhardt / EXPLORER-BISHOP
753 • Louis Roberts / THE COLLISION OF RAHNER AND BALTHASAR
757 • Oliva Blanchette, SJ / TRANSCENDENCE AND THE PAST
760 • F. H. Drinkwater / THE RISEN BODY

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When the vertical scheme is supplanted by a horizontal one, new conceptual possibilities are introduced.

VERTICAL V. HORIZONTAL THEOLOGY: BLOCH-DEWART-IRENÆUS

Walter H. Capps

Theological stances which purport to be new are often not, at least not unreservedly nor in totality. Such appears to be the case with the current theology of hope which has gained increasing momentum during the past several years, largely as a result of the work of such European scholars as Jürgen Moltmann,¹ Johannes B. Metz,² Wolfhart Pannenberg,³ Gerhard

1. Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. James W. Leitch (New York, 1967); "Die Kategorie Novum in der christlichen Theologie," in *Ernst Bloch zu ehren*, ed. Siegfried Unseld (Frankfurt, 1965), pp. 243-263; "Hoffnung und Planung. Erhoffte und geplante Zukunft," in *Merkur. Deutsche Zeitschrift für Europäischen Denk*. Vol. XIX (1965), p. 609-622; "Ernst Bloch: Messianismus und Marxismus," in *Kirche in der Zeit*. Vol. XV (1960), pp. 291 ff.; "Die Theologie in der Welt der modernen Wissenschaften," in *Bayrisches Arzteblatt*. Vol. XIX (1964), pp. 6-12; "Gottesoffenbarung und Wahrheitsfrage," in *Parrhesia. Karl Barth zum achtzigsten Geburtstag* (Zurich, 1966), pp. 149-172; "Die Kirche als Faktor einer kommenden Weltgemeinschaft," in *Kirche in der Zeit*. Vol. XXI, No. 7 (1966), pp. 307-310.

2. Johannes B. Metz, "Creative Hope," in *The Month*. Vol. XXXVI, No. 3 (1966), pp. 105-113; "Politische Theologie," in *Neues Forum*. Vol. XIV (1965), pp. 13-17; "Gott vor uns," in *Ernst Bloch zu ehren*, op. cit., pp. 227-241; "Die Zukunft des Glaubens in einer hominisierten Welt," in *Weltverständnis im Glauben*, ed. Metz (Mainz,

Sauter,⁴ and others.⁵ The “movement” (or, at least, its loose but specifiable confederation of proposals) can claim to be new simply on the basis of its recommendation of an almost total reform in the methods and content of theology. If the recommendation is sound, the theological enterprise can no longer be conducted as it has been in the past. Not only must a new orientation be conceived; but, in addition, all previous orientations must submit themselves to a process of radical de-categorization. Not only must new structures be fashioned; beyond that, the techniques by which earlier structures were composed must be revised and, in some instances, reversed.

Perhaps the excitement generated by the proposals of this school stems in part from an ongoing enthusiasm toward the suggestions of Teilhard de Chardin regarding an evolutionary posture and the horizontal-ordering of religious affirmations.⁶ Support has been made ready also by the growing demand that theological assertions be stripped of their metaphysical trappings, or “de-hellenized,” so that the uniqueness of the primary biblical perspective — and, principally, its eschatological mode — can be recovered (a task called for, for example, by Leslie Dewart in his recent book, *The Future of Belief*).⁷ Yet, suggestions of this kind always force the new to come to terms with the old. The new emerges by distinguishing itself from the old. Its novelty is determined by comparison and contrast with previous positions. In this regard, the theology of hope is new; yet it also has precedence in an earlier classical theological tradition.

I have chosen to discuss the principal affirmations of the new movement by referring them to the stance of St. Irenaeus.⁸ There are several reasons for

1966), pp. 45–62; “Verantwortung der Hoffnung,” in *Stimmen der Zeit*. Vol. 177, No. 6, (1966), pp. 451–462, translated as “The Responsibility of Hope,” in *Philosophy Today*. Vol. X, No. 4/4 (1966), pp. 280–288.

3. Wolfhart Pannenberg, “Appearance as the Arrival of the Future,” in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. Vol. XXXV, No. 2 (1967), pp. 107–118; “Der Gott der Hoffnung,” in *Ernst Bloch zu ehren*, op. cit., pp. 209–225; and *Wast ist der Mensch?* (Göttingen, 1964).

4. Gerhard Sauter, *Zukunft und Verheissung* (Zürich, 1965; and “Die Zeit Todes,” in *Evangelische Theologie*. Vol. XXV (1965), pp. 623–643.

5. See also Wolf-Dieter Marsch, “Bildung des menschen — durch Arbeit und Kommunikation,” in *Kann ein Massenmedium bilden?* Schriftenreihe der Evangelischen Akademie für Rundfunk und Fernsehen. No. 11 (1966), pp. 15–29; Ernst Bloch, Wolf-Dieter Marsch, and Jürgen Moltmann, “Aus dem Forumgespräch über die Kategorie Novum,” in *Der evangelische Erzieher*. Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (1966), pp. 110–113; Walter Kreck, *Die Zukunft des Gekommenen. Grundprobleme die Eschatologie* (München: Kaiser, 1961); Paul Schütz, *Das Wagnis des Menschen* (Hamburg, 1966); George A. Lindbeck, “The Framework of Catholic-Protestant Disagreement,” in *The Word of History* (New York, 1966), pp. 102–119; and Carl E. Braaten, “Toward a Theology of Hope,” in *Theology Today*. Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (1967), pp. 208–226. The most thorough and up-to-date treatment of the school of hope is Heinz Kimmerle, *Die Zukunftsbedeutung der Hoffnung* (Bonn, 1966).

6. See, for example, Teilhard’s proposals in “The Heart of the Problem,” in *The Future of Man* (New York, 1964), pp. 260–269.

7. Leslie Dewart, *The Future of Belief. Theism in a World Come of Age* (New York, 1966).

8. Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses*, in Migne, P. G. (Paris, 1857), Vol. VIII, 1–2.

expecting this association to be illuminating. For one, the entire new movement seems to refer itself to the problem of "hellenization." Dewart suggests, for example, that hellenization beclouds that which is central to primitive Christianity since it represents a transposition which is not in all respects edifying to the *kerygma*. Irenaeus belongs in this discussion — by natural right, and not simply by imposition — because he was present when the process designated by that term occurred. Secondly, the new school pays particular attention to the *horizontal* dimension, instead of the vertical, and to *time*, instead of being, as the framework within which theological assertions register. Irenaeus belongs here too by virtue of his ability to prefigure the form of fine which seems to operate in the new stance, and because of his tendency to replace a vertically-ordered theological scheme with one which fits the horizontal model. Thirdly, the historical chronicle upon which the theology of hope draws contends that the *novum* (i.e. the *new* which was proclaimed by Deutero-Isaiah, understood only partially by Jesus' disciples, sensed by St. Paul, then so over-extended by Marcion as to require expulsion by the early Church) is the basis of a revolution which has not yet been carried out. As Moltmann has declared: the Church has postponed the *novum*, being content to live on the basis of its delay. Irenaeus is present in this conversation too by virtue of his attempt to construct a theology around the category of the *novum*. His recapitulation-theology might well exhibit the next stage in the chronicle of events beyond Marcion, i.e. the endeavor to secure the *novum* in a non-antithetical atmosphere.

The prospect for drawing upon Irenaeus' recapitulation theology as a historical touchstone for the theology of hope becomes even more intriguing when one discovers that the second-century bishop not only addressed such topics but also allowed each to illumine the other. In this way, I suggest, he is able to assume a new methodological relevance which is secured today at little categorical expense to the historical setting in which his proposals first registered. But I shall return to some of the principal implications of that suggestion after I have specified and explored the basis for continuity between Irenaeus' position and two topics of prime theological currency. Along the way, I think, we shall also be able to make some observations regarding the nature of the theological reflection.

At the 1966 International Conference on Vatican II at Notre Dame, Abbot Christopher Butler, commenting on the significance of the recent shift in perspective and structure, observed that theological reflection should be construed not according to a traditional metaphysical model, but, rather, in terms of the categories of time and according to a kind of "meta-chronics." In Abbot Butler's opinion

. . . the eschatological dimensions of the gospel take us to the very heart of the whole theological problem of our day. We have all learned that one must take the Bible on its own terms, and in order to give an exegesis of it one has to understand the mentality that operates in the Bible. . . . Now it seems to me that as one contemplates the eschatological moment in the Jewish-Christian teaching, one appreciates that . . . eschatology stands to history as in the Greek system of thought metaphysics stands to physics. On that analogy I rather like to talk, not about

eschatology, but about "meta-chronics." "Meta-chronics" stands to history as metaphysics stands to physics. It is the ultimate dimension of thought, apprehension, and understanding when you approach reality in historical categories.⁹

Hence, instead of normalizing the form of categorization used in Greek philosophy, theology is free to return to the language which can give due stress to the reality of time (*vis-à-vis* nature) and action (*vis-à-vis* being). The justification for this shift is manifold. For one reason, scholars have become increasingly aware that the temper of biblical affirmation can be captured much more exactly in categories of time (since the stress in the cultic origins of such affirmations is on the activity of God in precise events in the history of a people) than in ontological structures. That is, in the biblical perspective, historical occurrences are the primary loci for the affirmations of faith. This fact, one can further aver, has been overlooked, or at least obscured, by theology's inordinantly long preoccupation with various kinds of metaphysics. Certainly, as Abbot Butler noted, the work of Oscar Cullmann and other biblical interpreters have been catalysts in this regard. But one can also see in the shift the influence of Martin Heidegger whose *Sein und Zeit* sought to establish time as the irreducible starting point for disciplined reflection. Indeed, it seems to be a part of the mood of the time to regard "eschatological vision" as the key to the mentality reflected in the earliest Christian community's affirmations. Registered also in this preoccupation is the almost inevitable result of a shift in attention and perspective from whatever worlds lie beyond to this world. And this shift, it appears, is reflected in the series of events often chronicled as "secularization."

Yet the outstanding moving forces of the new wave appear to be two in number, i.e. Ernst Bloch, the contemporary Marxist philosopher of hope, and Teilhard de Chardin. As a process thinker, Bloch exhibits many of the same features as Teilhard. Both men seek to chronicle the path of humanity's realization of its hopes. Both are visionary, giving stress to actional or operational categories above descriptive accounts of "that which is." Each projects a time when the conflicts of narrow class loyalties will cease to be meaningful. Both posit a functional point of destination, i.e. the actual coincidence of the real and the ideal, the is and the ought.

It is something of this background, then (perhaps more Bloch than Teilhard), which is reflected in the recent writings of Moltmann, Metz, Sauter, Pannenberg, and an increasing number of others who are either firmly or loosely attached to what is appropriately called the school of the theology of hope. Typical of the attitude displayed by such thinkers are the views of Metz, who, in a relatively brief article sketched out a program for the reconstruction of theology in terms of the sensitivities inherent in modern consciousness' orientation toward the future. Metz notes that the traditional vertical model for theological reflection has become obsolescent by virtue of the shift demanded by a future-ordered disposition toward a horizontal scheme. This transition in

⁹ Christopher Butler, in *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal*, John H. Miller, editor (Notre Dame, 1966), p. 316.

perspective is therefore indicative of a full-scale transition in mode of experience, apprehension, and reflection.

The mark of "modern" times is the persistent quest for something "new," a desire expressed in social, political and technological revolution. Modern man is fascinated by one thing: what has not yet happened, the future. "What is in the hand, finished, is transformed into a task for the future. What is actual in actual things are its potentialities."¹⁰

And Metz goes on:

The new consciousness is characterized by a "passion for the possible" (Kierkegaard), while the direct influence of tradition is on the wane. What is old easily seems obsolete. The "Golden age" lies before us, not behind us, it is not remembered dreamily, but anticipated creatively.

Under these auspices, transcendence, if it is to be meaningful at all, must be conceived as something in front of us rather than above us. In like manner, the appropriate canons of reflection are "operational" rather than "contemplative" since they pertain to effecting that which will be instead of focusing observationally upon that which already is. That distinction reflects a clear break with *Seinmetaphysik*. Indeed, Metz argues that a *Seinmetaphysik* not only obscures the future: beyond that, it does not allow the future to be conceived. Hence, neither does the outmoded orientation give due place to the reality and dynamism of time. Thus the eschatological mode can be recovered if the attempt to square the present with the past is replaced by referring the present to the future. This entails a recognition that the future is constitutive of history (*Geschichte*). It further allows what Metz calls a deprivatizing of salvation in favor of a creative-pugnacious world responsibility. Such a disposition can exercise responsibility for "the promised city of God" since that city, as Metz observes, is constructed as one approaches it as a builder and not merely as an interpreter. Recalling Karl Marx' famous commentary-statement on Feuerbach, i.e. that philosophers have merely interpreted the world in various ways; what is necessary is to change it, Metz writes: "Christian eschatology must understand itself as a productive and aggressive eschatology. Christian hope is a hope from which we — as Ernst Bloch once beautifully said — not only have something to drink but also something to cook."¹¹

These comments give illustrative acknowledgment that the vertical theological model has been challenged, even threatened to oblivion, by a pattern of reflection which features a developmental, horizontal process. As a result, both George Lindbeck and Johannes Metz¹² are able to chronicle the shift in location of transcendence from the "above" to the "in front of," while Abbot Butler calls attention to this same transition when he recommends the categorization of "meta-chronics."

But the shift to a process-model, and an identification of a salvation with the purposes of the created order, are emphases found also in Irenaeus' earlier attempt to provide an alternative schematic account to that vertical, emana-

10. Metz, "Verantwortung der Hoffnung," *op. cit.*, p. 451.

11. Metz, *ibid.*, p. 459.

12. Metz, "Gott vor uns," *op. cit.*, p. 236.

tionistic pattern of Gnostic-oriented theologies. Hence, Irenaeus can also refer to a transcendence which is not strictly "above us," but more accurately, in front of us. He too can extend the normative horizontal line across time itself, in order to ascribe to the future the retentive eschatological abilities of which the vertical model is deprived. His chief significance in this regard is to be seen in his stress on the utter reality of this world against all those who threatened to mediate that reality by ascribing ultimacy to that which is not qualified by time or creatureliness. Yet curiously, Irenaeus met the challenge of the Gnostics in a way which also aided the cause of "hellenization." There is in him, then, an additional complication. The new theologians of hope have fashioned a horizontal model in order to break the influence of *Seinsmetaphysik* upon Christian affirmations, since the future is inaccessible within vertical projection. Irenaeus also fashioned a horizontal model, but in such fashion that something like a *Seinsmetaphysik* was given support. In the same way, the theologians claim special sensitivity to the specific context of New Testament affirmation, i.e. the eschatological mode. Irenaeus' recapitulation-theology is also obligated to a pattern of process or emergent-becoming; yet, for him, the eschatological mode is not an exact duplication of the New Testament outlook, but, instead, implies that a transposition into another frame of reference has occurred. Hence, we must postpone the encounter between the second-century bishop and the alleged new theology until we have had occasion to sketch out some of the detail of the accompanying interest in "dehellenization."

The relevance of Irenaeus' interest to the concerns expressed in Leslie Dewart's recent book is not difficult to establish. Dewart, in short, seems to recommend a transcending of the product of "hellenization" (i.e. the forming of the kerygma by means of Greek language and thought categories), a process to which Irenaeus' theology, in one way or another, apparently contributed. Nor are the affinities between Dewart's proposals and those of the theology-of-hope school simply contrived. Both believe that construing the Christian kerygma in terms of the theoretical categories of Greek metaphysics is a kind of impoverishment. Both place emphasis upon a future within a context which attributes normativeness to process. Irenaeus, the school of hope, and Dewart have much in common. Each cultivates a horizontally-ordered theological model within which whatever transcendence there is is secured by means of future-oriented time. In this light Dewart's distinctiveness lies in his suggestion that the process model can be employed as the corrective of "hellenization."

In calling for a "dehellenization" of Christian doctrine, Dewart has assigned himself a task somewhat similar to that undertaken at the beginning of this century by Adolf Harnack, and, subsequently, by many of his students. There is nevertheless a major difference in approach and intent. Harnack sought to isolate the pure, irreducible "essence" of Christianity prior to its appearance in formalized concepts.¹³ Hence Harnack contends — as Dewart notes — that true Christianity is to be identified with the original set of affirmations whose

13. For a discussion of Harnack's intention and methods, see Walter H. Capps, "Harnack and Ecumenical Discussion," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. Vol. III, No. 3 (1966), pp. 486-502.

roots are in a pre-conceptualized as well as pre-institutionalized gospel. For Harnack an increase in formalization is also a loss of essence: "hellenization" implies devolution. The resulting task in the twentieth century is to find ways of restoring the essence by bringing the present into relationship with the past. Dewart, on the other hand, finds it impossible to restrict the location of Christianity's normative element to the past. Hence his interest in the deformalization of Christianity's distinguishable affirmations is a concern to establish a new possibility for meaningful belief by fashioning models which are more appropriate to both present and future consciousness. By demonstrating the extent to which Christian theology is dependent upon classical Greek modes of reflection — which modern consciousness judges to be viable no longer — Dewart seeks to refer Christianity's distinguishing affirmations to the modes of experience of contemporary man. The problematic is phrased as follows:

Let us note, then, that the disparity between Christian theistic faith and everyday experience can be observed most immediately and instructively within the very heart of the Church. We all feel that not all is right with the present situation. To some of us this condition is painful; to others it is bitter sweet. But regardless of what we may feel, we all observe that the fairly total and serene self-assurance which had long characterized the consciousness of the Catholic believer, has been shaken in recent years.¹⁴

. . . the most common way for contemporary man to remain Christian and to believe in the Christian God is to retain, side by side, in relative though by no means complete isolation, two modes of experience, in the hope that somehow, in some way unknown to him, the two can be integrated. . . . In brief, 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.¹⁵

The main lines of Dewart's constructive proposal run as follows: the "dehellenization" of Christian doctrine is the abstractive side of the creative task of re-fashioning Christianity's thought forms in terms consistent with both the present and the future. For Dewart, the necessary fact of development justifies this constructive endeavor. Rejecting the Scholastic notion that truth is immutable, permanent, and impassive, the author of *The Future of Belief* also criticizes what he takes to be the standard previous description of the cognitive act. According to that schema, knowledge occurred by means of the subject's assimilation of the object of knowledge to itself. And, since objects of potential assimilation (which were also of prime religious concern) were also characterized by immutability, the cognitive enterprise lacked the dynamism which later epistemologists have underscored. Dewart contends that (contrary to traditional ways of understanding it) truth is established not in a faculty of a man, but, rather, in the constitution of one's being. Hence, truth cannot be construed in terms of an "adequacy of representative operations," but, rather, in the larger sense, as a "fidelity of consciousness to being."¹⁶ This enlargement is sanctioned, Dewart contends, by the socio-historical character of truth. Intel-

14. Dewart, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

lection is marked by a sensitive awareness, and this refers to the self-differentiation of oneself from the reality with which the self was originally continuous. This enables Dewart to conclude that a "stable truth" is one which is doomed to annihilation, and that a truth which is acquired must be continuously surpassed: "For the truth is the valuable quality that it is, only because it is part of the process of man's self-creation and coming-into-being." ¹⁷ This places the adequacy of Christian doctrines in their efficaciousness:

A concept is true if it causes (that is, permits the coming-into-being of) a true human experience as such (that is, as conscious). . . . it would be better to say that 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.¹⁸

The function of a doctrine is therefore to present to consciousness the kind of experience which can be denominated as religious. By means of such language the experience can be registered in (as it also intensifies) self-consciousness. This would imply that since such experiences are not only recurrent, but, also, at the same time, different and even progressive, no single language framework can function efficaciously in the self-communication within human consciousness. This implies further that Christian affirmations are not unalterably fixed to a single or specific thought-form. Rather, a variety of such forms are required by the on-going cognitive process in which theology participates. All of this enables Dewart to locate the situation which produced the crisis for belief in an "outstripping of hellenic thought forms by progressive human consciousness." ¹⁹ On the positive side, the crisis can be overcome only "if Christian dogma generally is required by its nature to develop constantly in the same measure that human consciousness develops." ²⁰

The outcome of this analysis is far reaching. Dewart argues that fidelity to the gospel can be expressed in terms sensitive to contemporary experience if God is conceived, for example, not as a being but as a presence or a reality beyond being.

It follows that a religion that were restricted by its nature or by its self-understanding to its own culture . . . would be indissolubly married to its own concept of God. But Christianity is essentially catholic. It believes itself to be essentially related to the temporal and spatial totality of men. . . . It is for all men and all times, for all societies and all ages, for all cultures and all stages of consciousness. Christianity therefore implies that no given concept of God can be the unique and necessary concept of God required by Christian belief. Thus, if Christian dogma generally is required by its nature to develop constantly in the same measure that human consciousness develops so as to maintain and realize its truth, the same requirement applies to the particular case of the concept of God.²¹

Not until Dewart outlines his alternative account does his dependence upon Teilhard de Chardin and his commitment to what we have been calling a process-orientation become unmistakably evident. While Teilhard's paleonto-

17. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 131.

tological interests found him focusing primarily upon man's place in nature, and not fundamentally on the implications of the evolutionary rise of consciousness for purposes of theological self-consciousness, the interests of Teilhard's readers are able to extend his suggestions into areas which they did not originally fully touch. Hence, one of the most fitting places to which to refer the evolution of consciousness is the complex problem regarding doctrinal development. From a methodological standpoint, what has prevented previous conceptions of "doctrinal development" from gaining full credence is that they have asked a vertical theological model to account for change, novelty, and progression. Hence, the fact of development always had to be reconciled with immutability. The vertical theological model serves to secure immutability, and possesses no regulative technique by which to give full status to change. But when the vertical scheme is supplanted by a horizontal one, new conceptual possibilities are introduced. In the process-model, for example, the permanence of truth and the fact of progression are not mutually exclusive; indeed, they can become mutually edifying. In the same way, normativeness need not be unambiguously reduced to the past (or, to the first occurrence of the truth); since immutability is no longer a necessary mark of truth, normativeness is as applicable to the correlation of the present and the future.

The clue to Dewart's dependence on the schema also implicit in Teilhard is the use of such terms as "orthogenesis" in his elucidation of the cognitive process.²² That term not only implies that cognition is indeed a process; it is also descriptive of the dependence of the acquisition of knowledge upon isolative and abstractive techniques. As Dewart contends, the intellectual life is a process in which the self gradually and then forcefully emerges: the self becomes present to itself by self-differentiating itself from the totality of being. With respect to development of doctrine, this would imply that religious truth can be ascertained by the differentiation of itself from the context in terms of which it first appears. The abstractive side of that contention would imply that the *consciousness* in which Christian affirmations register cannot be forever qualified by the cultural (and/or conceptual) forms of a given time and place. Thus, the appearance of such affirmations in a hellenic mode is not sufficient reason to normatize original form. But, on the constructive side, the contention implies that truth in any time can only be secured when the affirmations are made of necessity by a consciousness which has won its self-differentiation from whatever reality with which it was at one time continuous. It is from this perspective that Dewart ties his obvious hope for *the future* of belief in a world come of age to his proposals regarding the "dehellenization" of doctrine. From one side, "dehellenization" is described as "a transcending of the present . . . insofar as the present is out of the past."²³ From the other side, the same process is described as "the conscious historical self-fashioning of the

22. The Teilhardian influence is implicit in such statements as "Human knowledge or 'intellection' . . . appears at a certain moment of biological evolution, namely, when the individually circumscribed psychic life of animals is elevated to the level of a common psychic life among many selves." *Ibid.*, p. 102.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

cultural form which Christianity requires now for the sake of its future.”²⁴ From both sides the contention is that the dynamism of the underlying process is violated when the particularity of one of its moments is absolutized, or when its directed intensity is in any way threatened or thwarted.

As noted earlier, the historical presence of St. Irenaeus at that point in the history of theology at which the hellenization process was under way is of crucial illustrative significance vis-à-vis Dewart’s proposals. For, despite the difficulties the interpreter has in specifying the historical point of origin of “hellenization” (as well as its precise range of influence), it is demonstrable that Irenaeus stands in a transitional period in which primitive Christian affirmations were being formalized by being placed within conceptual patterns upon which they gradually also came to depend. Thus, Dewart’s recommendation of “dehellenization” implies some sort of reversal of the process to which Irenaeus contributed or at least which he constructively charted. This is reason enough for calling Dewart’s attention to Irenaeus — and we note, by the way, that the chapter, “The Development of Christian Dogma,” in *The Future of Belief* contains no reference whatsoever to a concrete case or an illustrative example.

In addition, Irenaeus is significant because the theological pattern which he fashioned vis-à-vis the “acute hellenization of the Gnostics” is one which is remarkably similar to Dewart’s eventual product. Both seem to be process oriented. Hence, Irenaeus is in the unique — possibly awkward — position of having sanctioned a modified form of “hellenization” (a sanction which Dewart is unwilling to allow) by building upon a pattern of thought which Dewart proposes as the product of “dehellenization.” The constructive side of Dewart’s program of “dehellenization,” i.e. that which results after such de-formalization has been successfully undertaken, looks very much like a classical theological pattern which Irenaeus offered as an alternative — but not necessarily as an alternative *in kind* — to the “hellenization” of religious affirmations in the position of his opponents. This, I suggest, says something which Dewart has overlooked regarding the manner according to which theological orientations are conceived.

There are at least two large current concerns, both of which appear close to the center of contemporary theological interest, which seem to recommend a renewed examination of the orientation of St. Irenaeus. The first is the growing preoccupation with *time* and the *future* in the writings of such men as Metz and Moltmann (who have been touched by the thought of Ernst Bloch) and the many others, both Catholic and Protestant, who have been influenced by Teilhard de Chardin. Typical of this view is the contention that an appreciation of the future as dynamic and living can only be attained within a thought pattern which is oriented toward process derived from action. This, we have suggested, is also characteristic of Irenaeus’ outlook. The second is the increased concern for distinguishing the formal and contentual ingredients of theological formulation as illustrated, for example, in the “dehellenization” program of Leslie Dewart. The claim seems to be that the future of Christian

24. *Ibid.*

belief depends to a large extent upon a conscious reversal of the process by means of which classical Greek philosophical thought-forms were originally imposed upon primitive religious affirmations. Under these auspices, too, we have recommended a reexamination of Irenaeus by virtue of his historical role in the original "imposition" which Dewart now finds it necessary to "de-form."

Thus, when we commit the contentions of Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses* to a structural examination, we note that his conflict with the Gnostics can be interpreted as a clash between the respective uses of horizontal and vertical models for conceiving the relation between God and the world. This, in the main, seems to be the point at issue. Irenaeus refers the error in the Gnostic outlook to the employment of a vertical scheme, which he then attempts to replace with one which is horizontal. This is the formal difference. In terms of content, all significant issues between the Gnostics and Irenaeus point to the question about the status of the created world. As Irenaeus is quick to observe, the reality of creation is dissipated in the vertically-modelled, emanationist-ruled position of his antagonists. The scheme which they use as the basis of coherence serves eventually to qualify the reality which Christians have ascribed to that which the Creator has created. Hence, Valentinus, Basilides, their followers, and a host of others (whom Irenaeus lists in the first chapters of *Adversus Haereses*) are criticized for their tendency to spiritualize, to compound abstractions above and beyond the physical world, and to identify reality with the *pleroma* against which created world stands as something less than real. The alternative which is proposed is one which ascribes full status to the created order and assumes that God both rules and fills all things. To oppose the Gnostic 'dualism' in this way is to invite a situation in which time, as the measure of order of the created world, is established as a necessary component of that which is most real. This disposition is shared by Irenaeus and the members of the school of hope.

The Gnostics cannot regard *time* in that way. Their distinctions between *pleroma* and created world prohibit it. The steps in Irenaeus' reaction to them are worth following. He begins his defense not by arguing baldly for the reality of the created order, but, rather, by pointing to inconsistencies within the Gnostic assertions. Focusing attention on both the upper and lower boundaries of the Gnostic *pleroma*, he asks whether there is any compulsion on the grounds of this pattern against supposing still additional regions beyond the limits proper to *Propator*. The suggestion is that the limits of neither the upper or lower regions of the vertical scheme can be fixed except in an arbitrary manner. But without such fixed qualities, the pattern contains no incontestable basis for establishing the divinity of *Propator*. If there is anything above or beyond that which God's territory circumscribes, then that which is container — and not the contained — must be greater, and, hence, God. The postulation of dominions beyond dominions can go on and on. Thus, without checks against this potential *ad infinitum* movement of thought, the account, according to Irenaeus, explains little if anything. Explanation by Emanation cannot produce the technique by which the upper limit of the *pleroma* can be determined. (Why need one stop, Irenaeus asks, with the three hundred and sixty five heavens which Basilides included?) Nor can such an

orientation provide the basis for fixing its lower limit in any but a presumptuous way. At this stage in the argument only the negative case has been offered. That is, Irenaeus has argued that the vertical model cannot achieve all that the Gnostics have attributed to it. As becomes clear in what follows, Irenaeus is also creating an opportunity to submit an alternative model to the one which interprets by emanationist progression, from higher to lower.²⁵

The alternative is a scheme which affirms both the reality of the created order and the oneness of the God upon whom both religion and truth compel the mind to fix. In bringing creation and the transcendent into some integral relation, he is not suggesting that fundamental distinctions between God and man be annihilated. To give the created order reality and status does not remove man from his subordinate position vis-à-vis God. The differences between the two can be delineated. For example, since the Creator cannot be contained, he also cannot be measured; the creature, by contrast, is marked by limits and conditioned by change — indeed, by time. But the Creator has also provided a means by which change can lead to growth by bestowing upon the creatures an *incrementum*, a faculty of increase.²⁶ Further, the Creator adapts his own activities to the specific natures and tendencies of the creatures. And the form in which this adaptation occurs is precisely the long line of human history in which divine action has occurred. There is indeed an *economy* of salvation,²⁷ but not one ordered to a vertically-ordered emanationist scheme. Rather, Irenaeus speaks of the *economy* of the uniform dispensation; and, then, by reference to time, he construes that dispensation in terms of a *tradition* which is marked by continuity from beginning, middle, to end.

The shape of the normative process derives from the interrelationships between divine adaptation and human increase. Irenaeus' chief example (similar to Teilhard's description of the progression of the entire line in terms of a graduated Christogenesis) is the christological one. Jesus, the first begotten, is always present with the human race. Irenaeus states that in every respect Jesus is man. But then he quickly adds: "man, the formation of God" (*In omnibus autem est et homo, plasmatio Dei*).²⁸ Thus christological activity cannot be understood apart from the thought-model which Irenaeus proposes in the place of the one employed by his opponents. When the vertically-ordered emanationistic scheme is replaced by one which requires the unity and oneness of God *together with* the ascription of real status to the created world, then the movement from divine to human must be projected out along an historical

25. For discussions of the theological method of Irenaeus see D. B. Reynders, "La polémique de saint Irénée: Méthode et principes," in *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*. Vol. VII, No. 1935, pp. 5-27; William R. Schoedel, "Philosophy and Rhetoric in the Adversus Haereses of Irenaeus," in *Vigiliae Christianae*. Vol. XIII, No. 1, 1959, pp. 22-32.

26. Bk. II, xxviii, 1.

27. On the use of the work *oikonomia* in St. Irenaeus, see A. d'Alès, "Le mot *oikonomia* dans la langue théologique de saint Irénée," in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*. Vol. XXXII, (1919), pp. 1-9; and Jean Daniélou, "Saint Irénée et les origines de la théologie de l'histoire," in *Recherches de Sciences Religieuses*. Vol. XXXIV, No. 2 (1947), pp. 227-231.

28. Bk. III, xvi.

line. To refer this dispensation to an historical process (an *economy* of salvation, or an ongoing tradition) rather than to emanations is to assert that the time-line itself is regulative of the relation between divine and human. The relationship conceived between God and the world informs the time-line and thus gives it its distinguished shape. Hence, the union between divine and human is not simply 'instanced' in Jesus, the Word-made flesh. It is also serialized. The supreme example of God-man union is also projected out along the historical time-line. For this reason it is appropriate for Irenaeus to declare that the Christ finds it fitting to pass through each successive period of life, gathering the beginning, middle, and end into one.²⁹ In so doing, the Saviour sums up all things. He experiences and renews each stage in the human life process. But at each point in the human career he achieves the full stature of man. The *telos* of human life is linked with the beginning. As the first Adam contained within himself all his descendants, so Christ *recapitulated* within himself the whole race of mankind from the beginning of time.

What happens in Irenaeus' formulation, therefore, is a replacement of a vertical model with one whose gradations are projected out along a line of sequential progression. The relation between the divine and the human is ordered according to a process which is marked by distinct integers. By means of that time-line the spiritual and the material can become continuous, and the acts of God which occur at the beginning, middle, and end points are not opposed to one another. Distinctions remain, to be sure, but they are comprehended within the line itself. The key difference is between increase and atrophy. Growth is opposed to thwarted development. As in the school of hope, and pre-eminently in Teilhard de Chardin, the stress is placed on maturation. Perfection is contrasted with deterioration. In this context "heaven" and "hell" are real possibilities. Distention stands over against deficiency or lack of realization. Directed tending is differentiated from inertness and motionlessness (just as creative pugnacious world-responsibility is distinguished from contemplative quietude). In short, by means of the shift in perspective, time is not only reckoned with: it has become the prime determinant of redemption itself.

The ingredients implicit in Irenaeus' view of time derive from his conviction that God adapts divine activity to human exigency. This is more than a negative reaction to Gnostic-oriented thought. In its structured dimensions, it is a recommendation of a process-ordered horizontal model in place of a deficient vertical scheme. It is an attempt to give full credence to the fact and reality of change. On the affirmative side, it argues for a continuity between Creator

29. The similarities between this and Teilhard's statements ought to be apparent. In the *Phenomenon of Man*, for example, Teilhard writes: "Christ, principle of universal vitality because sprung up as man among men, put himself in the position (maintained ever since) to subdue under himself, to purify, to direct and superanimate the general ascent of consciousness into which he inserted himself. By a perennial act of communion and sublimation, he aggregates to himself the total psychism of the earth. And when he has gathered everything together and transformed everything, he will close in upon himself and his conquests, thereby rejoining, in a final gesture, the divine focus he has never left. Then, as St. Paul tells us, *God shall be all in all.*" (p. 294)

and creature which is projected into this world and upon time. Time is so conceived that it is able to comprehend the differences between the divine and the human without destroying them. This capacity makes it appropriate to speak of a dispensation which is marked by growth within a uniform process. Since the activity of God has been adapted to the natures of those who are conditioned by limits and marked by change, it becomes both appropriate and necessary to speak of due season, proper order, and fitting sequence. Increase is mediated, therefore (just as it is for Teilhard), by serial periodicity. Directed tending toward the *telos* is also marked by distinguishable moments. Because of the dependence of salvation upon development and growth, time is regarded not only as a co-ordinate of the diversity which the process comprehends; it can be more precisely defined as the means of periodical progression within a context of continuous, uniform motion. This, then, is future-oriented theology: a theology which is conceived out of the rudiments of the process and reality of time.

Even this sketch of Irenaeus' position makes it evident that the horizontal process model was employed for theological purposes in Christianity's formative era. In one way, then, Irenaeus' outlook can be regarded as a structural precedent for the future orientation of Teilhard de Chardin, and, with various modifications, for the theologians of hope. In both the classical and the contemporary instances the emphases are markably similar. Both Irenaeus and the twentieth-century fashioners of thought conceive salvation according to an ongoing developmental process. In both, the process functions to safeguard the reality of the created order. In each instance the line itself is called upon to mediate distinctions between the supernatural and the natural, for example, or between the spiritual and the physical, or the transcendent and the given. By this means Metz can declare that man does not have both a *finis ultimus naturalis* and a *finis ultimus supernaturalis*, but, instead, a single *finis ultimus* (i.e. the future promised by God).³⁰ And, in the same way, by virtue of the reciprocal relation between "the supernatural" and "the natural," even Irenaeus could find Teilhard's close tie between redemption and "building the earth" meaningful. All of these thinkers give prominent place — even while speaking of a divine economy — to human aspiration and effort. Irenaeus, for example, stresses the cooperation between man and God, and, as noted earlier, is willing to call man the *plasmatio Dei*. Johannes Metz repeats the contention that the Kingdom of God is brought in when men also construct it. Teilhard refers again and again to the "divinization of human activities." In all such examples, the time-line serves as the means of negotiation: by its integral form the two themes (i.e. the reality of creation, and the priority of the divine) are brought into reciprocal relationship.

Even the respective descriptions of the structure of the progressive time-line utilize closely similar terminology. Irenaeus notes that the dispensation progresses by mediating divine adaptation and human increase. Teilhard refers to the process itself as the *divine milieu*, and suggests that its graduated tending

30. Metz, *op. cit.*, p. 458.

toward Omega is both the increase of hominisation and a progressive sort of "theophany." In giving shape to the process, Irenaeus conceives Christ as being extended throughout all the world, encompassing its length and breadth, and "inscribed cross-wise upon it all."³¹ Teilhard, in the same context, states that "the human epic [also linking the beginning with the end] resembles nothing so much as a way of the Cross."³² And, in a most fundamental way, the "recapitulation" of the process is repeated in Teilhard's description of the process' necessary "organic involution upon itself." Teilhard writes:

Christ invests himself organically with the very majesty of his creation. And it is in no way metaphorical to say that man finds himself capable of experiencing and discovering his God in the whole length, breadth and depth of the world in movement.³³

As pointed out earlier, Teilhard's description appears as a kind of echo of Irenaeus' elucidation of "recapitulation" as, for example, in the following passage from *Adversus Haereses*:

But in every respect, too, he is man, the formation of God; and thus He took up man into Himself, the invisible becoming visible, the incomprehensible being made comprehensible, the impassible becoming capable of suffering, and the Word being made man, thus summing up all things in Himself: so that . . . he might possess the supremacy, and, taking to himself the pre-eminence, as well as constituting himself head of the "Church, he might draw all things to himself at the proper time."³⁴

These, obviously, are not mere terminological or topical similarities. At a more fundamental level the similarities testify to the presence of structural parallels. And these parallels, in turn, show commitments to a particular conceptual model which pre-forms the way in which terms and topics are understood. But, instead of carrying this sort of comparison further, I would like to draw attention to some of the potential results of an investigation of structural analogies.

First, by tracing the lines of Irenaeus' pattern, one is enabled to place the following questions in front of Leslie Dewart's proposals. In the first place, and as Dewart conceives it, it now seems highly unlikely that the product of "dehellenization" will differ greatly in mode from the product of "hellenization." What Dewart calls for is a new form of thought: a form in keeping with the temper of the times and in accordance with the progressive intellectual discipline of self-differentiation. This, clearly, is not a proposal for something radically new. On the contrary, one notes that the form of thought which Dewart prefigures has striking similarities to a horizontally-modeled outlook which has already appeared — at least in rudimentary form — in Christianity's classical past. The time-ordered, horizontally-conceived, future-oriented process is not simply a recent innovation in theological reflection, but rather pos-

31. Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. Joseph P. Smith (Westminster, 1952), p. 70.

32. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

33. *Op. cit.*, p. 300.

34. Bk. III, xvi.

sesses a long and many-instanced history. And this particular model, in turn, possesses many resemblances to a classical Greek philosophical pattern of thought whose roots seem to lie in the suggestion of Heraclitus, i.e. that reality can be likened to a stream, or a river, into which one cannot step in the same place twice.³⁵ In short, it appears that Dewart has replaced one "hellenistic" thought pattern with another one. In order to propose something radically new, he would need to make it plain, it appears, that the alternative to "hellenized" doctrine is not another form of "hellenization," but, rather, another mode or expression of religious consciousness. Radical "dehellenization," it seems, would then need to be an explicit reversal of the very complex transition from *mythos* to *logos*. But, placed within a perspective oriented toward the future, "dehellenization" must be construed in some manner as "transhellenization": a recovery of *mythos* not at the expense of *logos*, but rather by fixing the latter's inherent capacities and range of competence. A defensible "dehellenization," then, would not be a transition from *logos* to another instance of *logos* — as Dewart's account, perhaps despite itself, seems to suggest. Nor is it simply a movement back, i.e. from *logos* to *mythos*, as Adolf Harnack portrayed it, for example, from the complex to the simple and irreducible. Instead, it must be construed as a transition which safeguards the initial movement (i.e. from *mythos* to *logos*), and, at the same time, through that movement also regains *mythos* (i.e. from *mythos* to *logos* to *mythos*). From this standpoint *mythos* and *logos* are not potential opponents. Instead, they refer to distinct forms of symbolization, each of which bears a unique sphere of relevance, and both of which are necessary to religious affirmations.

One of Dewart's mistakes is to identify a thought-form with a particular period of history, and then to infer that a transcending or surpassing of the period requires a transcending of its form of reflection. But thought forms are not tied to eras of history in such a simple manner. As the example of Irenaeus makes clear, one and the same structure of thought can — and does — re-occur at various historical occasions under varying circumstances and manifold auspices. Conceivably, no one of them will give the theologians the opportunity to say all that faith desires to affirm. Hence, there are transitions from one pattern to another: from the vertical model of a Pseudo-Dionysius, for example, to the process orientation of Irenaeus or Teilhard. There are also transitions from patterns which are able to secure a place for that which is observable and actual, as in St. Thomas, to other patterns which tend to stress possibility (as process thinkers characteristically do). Each must be understood as a pattern of formal coherence which possesses particular sensitivities to aspects of truth from which the others are often barred. Yet, conceivably, no one of them can perform all-sufficiently for the entire cultic community, that is, under all circumstances, in all places, at all times.

Secondly, the pattern implicit in rudimentary form in Irenaeus can also condition our expectations regarding the orientations of Teilhard and some of

35. See Heraclitus' Fragment 21, as in Philip Wheelwright, *Heraclitus* (New York, 1964), p. 29. Wilhelm Hunger discusses a related issue in "Der Gedanke der Weltplaneinheit und Adam einheit in der Theologie des Irenäus," *Scholastik*. Vol. XVII, 1942, p. 170.

the theologians-of-hope. By means of the prefiguration which Irenaeus' pattern affords, we can expect that the shift from the vertical to the horizontal will make it somewhat difficult to give *transcendence* the same structural status it enjoys in its previous context. In the vertical scheme transcendence is construed as one of the poles — indeed, the dominant one — from which the fundamental relation is conceived. The vertical scheme requires a transcendent element as a *regulative principle*: without it, bipolarity is lost. But, in the horizontal pattern, the process itself is regulative; and transcendence functions only in relation to the forward-tending of the time-line. Whatever transcendence there is must first assure the reality of time. This would account for, though it cannot explain, some of the anxiety which has been expressed, for example, regarding the *immanentism* of Teilhard. Some kind of necessary *immanentism* is assured by the orientation itself by virtue of the fact that the time-line conditions all things. Transcendence, on the other hand, is more difficult to achieve, and is a veritable impossibility if one seeks to construe it in an "other-worldly" sense. An awareness of this tendency of the horizontal model, however, should prepare Dewart's readers for some of his "austerity measures" with respect to knowledge of God. For methodological reasons, "God" cannot be conceived in a process orientation in the same way he is in the vertical model, i.e., as a supreme being whose reality transcends the world. It is much more appropriate to regard "God" as the motivating force of the process, or, possibly, as the coincidence of the ideal and the real to which the process tends. Eventually some form of immanentism is assured because of the methodological fact that nothing escapes the conditioning by time, not even the reality of God. One can also expect a stress to be placed upon the second person of the trinity. He is the embodiment or the portrayal of the normative relation of time and transcendence. In the same way, it is almost of necessity that God be located at the center of the world, as Bonhoeffer directed, and not at its borders. According to the process model, the God at the borders (a detached transcendence) is scarcely conceivable. But Bonhoeffer's "world come of age" probably refers not so much to recent events as it does to a shift in perspective, i.e., to a time ordered and qualified view.

In any case, the issue turns on the interrelationship between religious affirmations and conceptual models. From this vantage point, theological reflections can be described as the forming of religious affirmations according to the modes of given patterns of conceptual order.³⁶ Thus, theology does not commence anything, but "recommences" it by transposing it. To facilitate its "recommencing" theology can draw — and has — upon the resources of a number of patterns of order. There are doubtless a variety of reasons for the transposition: that the affirmations be made coherent with each other; that some sort of relevance to the current *Zeitgeist* be achieved; that the new language-form be able to give the affirmations a universality which they were disposed toward but could not exhibit in their original cultic context, etc. But,

36. Henry Duméry said it well (in *Critique et Religion*. Paris, 1957): "Theology is the choosing of a faith in the light of reflection upon faith" (p. 271).

wherever the transposition occurs, the affirmations both influence and are regulated by the formal requirements of the model by which they are conceived. True, the melody may be the same though every note is different when modulated into a different key; yet, the melody may not always be the same since it is also dependent upon the key. And, with regard to the transitions themselves, there are probably manifold reasons for selecting one key over another, or even for shifting from one to the other. But, as a viewing of a new theological mood in the light of a classical pattern makes apparent, there is no reason why a key once used cannot be renewed. On this basis Irenaeus is involved in the current discussion of the determinative influences of time upon the structure of theological formulation.