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PROCESS THEOLOGY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

being a Thesis presented by

William Creighton Peden, III

in the University of St. Andrews

in application for the degree of Ph.D.



YOUTHFUL VISITANT AND HIS YOUNG COMPANION

Th 5267

THE FRENCH IN THE FIELD OF PAINTING

THE FRENCH SCHOOL IN MALLORCA

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the following Thesis is
based on the results of research carried out by me,
that the Thesis is my own composition, and that it
has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree.
The Research was carried out in St. Mary's College,
The University of St. Andrews, under the direction
of Professor N. H. G. Robinson.

W. Creighton Peden

Certificate

I certify that William Creighton Peden has spent eight terms at Research Work in St. Mary's College, The University of St. Andrews, and one term at Duke University, and that he has fulfilled the Conditions of Ordinance Number 16 (St. Andrews University) and that he is qualified to submit the accompanying Thesis in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

WHITEHEAD, ALFRED NORTH

AI	<u>Adventures of Ideas</u>
CN	<u>Concept of Nature</u>
D-	<u>Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead</u>
FR	<u>Function of Reason</u>
MT	<u>Modes of Thought</u>
NL	<u>Nature and Life</u>
PNK	<u>Principles of Natural Knowledge</u>
PR	<u>Process and Reality</u>
RM	<u>Religion in the Making</u>
SMW	<u>Science and the Modern World</u>
AE	<u>Aims of Education</u>

WIEMAN, HENRY NELSON

IFOF	<u>Intellectual Foundation of Faith</u>
ITAG	<u>Is There a God?</u>
MUC	<u>Man's Ultimate Commitment</u>
MPRL	<u>Methods of Private Religious Living</u>

NPR Normative Psychology of Religion
NWMC Now We Must Choose
RESM Religious Experience and Scientific Method
DH The Directive in History
HNW The Empirical Theology of Henry Nelson Wieman
GR The Growth of Religion
IL The Issues of Life
SHG The Source of Human Good
WRWT The Wrestle of Religion with Truth

MELAND, BERNARD EUGENE

ASC America's Spiritual Culture
FC Faith and Culture
HE Higher Education and the Human Spirit
MMW Modern Man's Worship
SR Seeds of Redemption
RF The Realities of Faith
RCF The Reawakening of Christian Faith
TC Write Your Own Ten Commandments

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century, American theology has been expressive of four major schools of thought: Fundamentalism, Personalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and Empiricism. Although the concern of this thesis is with Process theology, a dominant expression of Empirical theology, it will be helpful for us to sketch the theological context in which Process theology developed. We shall give more consideration to Neo-Orthodox theology and primary consideration to the early expression of Empirical theology.

Fundamentalism developed into an organized religious voice in America around 1910, primarily in reaction against liberalism. Its position arose out of a return to scriptural literalism and chiliastic revival. Several factors provoked this Fundamentalist reaction such as the attempt to accommodate theologically

the scientific view of evolution, the study of sociology and social psychology, the growth of biblical criticism, and the general optimism in the social gospel movement. The most influential early expression of this movement is found in The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth, which is a twelve volume collection of articles expressing this general literal and chiliastic position and attacking those who would alter the basic biblical faith. Fundamentalism reached its peak during the 1930's under the leadership of J. Gresham Machen, although this school of theology continues to be a dominant popular voice in American religion.

The theological school of Personalism, which is probably better known in France, developed at Boston University under the leadership of Borden Parker Bowne. His followers have included the familiar names of Albert C. Knudson, R. T. Flewelling, F. J. McConnell, and J. W. Buckham. Probably the most noted recent American personalistic theologian is Edgar S. Brightman, who altered Bowne's original position by developing the concept of

a finite God. The leading young voice of this school is Harold DeWolf. The impact of this school must be seen from two perspectives. On the one hand, it gave emphasis to a personalistic, conceptual approach in theology. On the other hand, it served practically as the leading non-fundamentalistic expression of theology for the Methodist Church, the largest Protestant group in America during this period.

The most noted theological school in America, especially in European circles, is Neo-Orthodox theology.¹ This school has been designated also by the terms "neo-supernaturalism" and "neo-reform". Neo-Orthodox theology is basically oriented to Orthodoxy

¹This evaluation of Neo-Orthodox theology in America must be qualified by a recently conducted survey of Protestant clergy in the United States, which indicates that 74% consider themselves to be either "fundamentalist" or "conservative" as over against 14% as "modernist" or 12% as "neo-orthodox." cf. Smith, "The Conservative Evangelicals and The World Council of Churches", The Ecumenical Review, pp. 186-187, Vol. XV-No. 2, January, 1963.

rather than to Empiricism. Although Neo-Orthodoxy is basically different from Empiricism, in America Neo-Orthodox theology and Process theology have developed while serving as partners in a theological dialogue. Assuming this basic difference between these two positions, it is our purpose to indicate characteristics of specific Neo-Orthodox theologians which have made it possible for a fruitful dialogue to occur between this position and Process theology. Reinhold Niebuhr is probably the leading voice of this expression in American theology. H. Richard Niebuhr and Paul Tillich can also be considered as part of the Neo-Orthodox position, although they represent an expression of this position which tends to give more consideration to the contributions of Empiricism.² In a great many respects, Neo-Orthodox

²The work of other Neo-Orthodox theologians serve as a bridge in the dialogue between these two positions. "Walter Marshall Horton, John C. Bennett, and Robert Lowrey Calhoun are among the theologians who incorporated elements of empirical method and yet did not accept its restrictions on the transcendent dimension in the divine revelation." The Shape of American

theology in America shares similar characteristics with Empirical theology, especially in its Process expression. The major points of similarity are as follows:

(1) Both of these theological expressions give emphasis to constructive theology instead of to dogmatic theology, in the sense of developing a constructive theology that will relate to the social, economic, political and religious concerns of man. (2) This constructive approach has been oriented to a theology of community which gives special emphasis to the insights of sociology and

²Religion, p. 467. W. M. Horton at one time shared a common front with H. N. Wieman, as is indicated by their joint contributions in the publication of The Growth of Religion. Horton's shift from Empiricism to Neo-Orthodoxy can be seen in Religious Theology and Theology in Transition. In the latter confer especially pp. xv-sviii. Bennett in Social Salvation and Christian Realism and Calhoun in God and the Common Life develop a more sociological empiricism, which is more in line with the general approach of H. Richard Niebuhr. Nels Ferre also considers himself to belong to the Neo-Orthodox school, while at the same time he considers his position to be a theological interpretation of Whitehead's Process position. Though he separates himself from the general Process school, he admits a common concern with this position. Ferre's Christian Understanding of God shows his affinity with the Process element of Empirical theology.

social psychology. (3) Both have been concerned that constructive theology be based on empirical facts of existence instead of traditional or contemporary speculative thinking. This empirical base has been dependent in its approach upon the social and natural science for its evidence, although decided emphasis is given to the Bible and Church tradition. (4) Both have attempted to understand God's revelation through this empirical understanding of the God-man relationship. Although emphasis is given to God's revelation from biblical times to the present, primary emphasis is given to God's revelation in the present and the empirical demands it places upon man.

A basic difference between these two schools comes in their metaphysical orientation concerning the nature of God and the nature of the universe. Neo-Orthodoxy is oriented to the metaphysical tradition of Orthodoxy, while Empiricism is oriented to the metaphysical tradition of naturalism. This difference is accentuated by the fact that those holding the Neo-

Orthodox position generally use more traditional theological terms, while those in the Process school have a tendency to use terms which lack the sanction of tradition. Neo-Orthodoxy has presupposed a form of supernaturalism, while Empiricism, especially in its Process expression, has presupposed a form of naturalism. It is questionable whether their difference on this point is as great as it might seem. Neo-Orthodox theology in America has developed a supernatural view which differs from more traditional supernatural views by giving greater emphasis to the immanence of God and by considering God in his supernatural form to be the God "beyond history" instead of giving emphasis to the God "beyond the universe." Because of its psychological orientation, Neo-Orthodox theology has given emphasis to God's "depth" instead of to his "beyondness."

Empirical theology has developed a form of naturalism which differs from the naturalism of determinism expressed in previous centuries. Emphasis is given to God's immanence, although emphasis is also

given to God's transcendence over the particular expression of his immanence. Under the influence of psychology, Empiricism, somewhat like Neo-Orthodoxy, has given emphasis to God's "depth" instead of his "beyondness." No doubt many sharp differences exist between these two schools as well as between the men in each of these schools, but it would appear that in certain respects similarities between these two positions are strong. This similarity is underlined by the fact that both schools claim to belong to that general movement which can best be designated by the term "Realism."

As a leading voice of the American Neo-Orthodox position, Reinhold Niebuhr reveals the similarities and differences just listed. We must keep in mind that Niebuhr is basically oriented to the Orthodox tradition as opposed to the Empirical approach. Niebuhr makes use of more traditional theological terms than does the Process school, but he always considers his theology to be constructive rather than dogmatic. Even though he develops a form of constructive theology, Niebuhr is

somewhat embarrassed by the title of "theologian," as he points out that he is neither competent nor interested in the "nice points of pure theology."³ Niebuhr's theology takes a definite constructive approach, as he attempts to develop a position which is related to social, economic, political and religious issues. This point can be illustrated by his book Moral Man and Immoral Society, in which he presents a critical analysis of the conflict between moral ideals and political realities. In general, Niebuhr's constructive theology has an ethical emphasis with sharply developed political overtones. Hans J. Morgenthau has given testimony to the political character of his theology: "I have always considered Reinhold Niebuhr the greatest living political philosopher of America, perhaps the only creative political philosopher since Calhoun."⁴ That Niebuhr's position is a "theology

³Reinhold Niebuhr, "Intellectual Autobiography", Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, p. 3.

⁴Hans Morgenthau, "The Influence of Reinhold Niebuhr in American Political Life and Thought," Reinhold Niebuhr: A Prophetic Voice In Our Time, p. 109.

of community" is well established by his ethical insistence for justice before truth and by his belief that the meaning of life occurs for man in his human existence.

The clue to the meaning of human existence is verified whenever men witness to that meaning by lives of tolerance and charity, prompted by the consciousness that they are infected by a universal inclination to make more of themselves than they ought, and therefore distrustful of their own virtue, sceptical about their apprehension of the truth and grateful for the love which other men give them, despite their obvious weaknesses.⁵

This emphasis on community is expressed when he asserts that "there is. . . no dimension of existence in which the individual is purely an individual"⁶ and that "The individual can realize himself only in intimate and organic relation to his fellowmen."⁷

⁵Reinhold Niebuhr, The Godly and the Ungodly, p. 144.

⁶Reinhold Niebuhr, Self and Drama of History, p. 247.

⁷Reinhold Niebuhr, Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation, Vol. II, p. 244.

The partially empirical character of Niebuhr's theology can be seen in his evaluation of the biblical testimony, as well as in his social and political evaluation of man's effort to find meaning in community. He asserts that the biblical faith demonstrates an "empirical" superiority in comprehending facts which cannot be brought into logical coherence.⁸ He considers the truth revealed by Jesus Christ to be an empirical clarification of the truth of natural existence. Jesus Christ "does not superimpose, but merely clarifies the truth about man's situation. . . which is given by the very constitution of selfhood."⁹ Niebuhr rejects the biblical account of sin as the sole authority for contemporary understanding and asserts that the universal reality of sin can be established on empirical evidence

⁸Reinhold Niebuhr, Self and Drama of History, p. 255.

⁹Ibid., p. 249.

based on observation and introspection, "the estimate is supported by overwhelming evidence taken both from a sober observation of human behavior and from introspective analysis."¹⁰

The partially empirical character of Niebuhr's theology is an empiricism of "common sense"¹¹ and not a strictly scientific empiricism. He views man as an individual in community who must find meaning in life through the structures of his human existence. At the same time, he realizes from a psychological perspective that man is able to transcend the limits of his own particular role in history. This transcending quality is asserted to be spiritual. Man experiences God spiritually in this transcendent manner, and man experiences God as God is immanent in man's relationship

¹⁰Reinhold Niebuhr, "Intellectual Autobiography", Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, p. 11.

¹¹cf., Reinhold Niebuhr, Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. I, p. 143.

of love towards his neighbour.¹² Thus God is transcendent as a "realm of mystery above and beyond the ascertainable structures"¹³ and is immanent through the relationship of love within the community. On the basis of a "common sense" empiricism, man is able to gain insights into his relationship with God, in the sense that he must evaluate his personal, transcendent self and his self in community.

As pointed out previously, the difference between Neo-Orthodoxy and the Process position arises in respect to their orientation and presuppositions concerning the nature of God and the universe. Scientific empiricism and naturalism for Niebuhr are tied in fact and spirit to the deterministic naturalism of the nineteenth century. He sees God's working His purpose out

¹² cf., Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, p. 37.

¹³ Reinhold Niebuhr, "Intellectual Autobiography", Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, p. 17.

in history--God is immanent, while at the same time Niebuhr contends that God is not determined by the natural process in any absolute sense--He is transcendent.¹⁴ Tillich points out that Niebuhr begins with this orientation of faith,¹⁵ and Niebuhr agrees that he starts with this orientation.¹⁶ The interesting thing is that even though he begins with this orientation of faith, he accepts metaphysical presuppositions which assert that God is beyond history or is a depth of reality within history instead of being outside of the universe and that God's revelation is a "common sense" empirical revelation instead of being completely a supernatural revelation. Even when allowance is made for the fact that Niebuhr differs sharply from both those within the Neo-Orthodox position and from those

¹⁴cf., Reinhold Niebuhr, Nature and Destiny of Man, Vol. II, pp. 96, 155.

¹⁵cf., Paul Tillich, "Reinhold Niebuhr's Doctrine of Knowledge", Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, p. 36.

¹⁶cf., Reinhold Niebuhr, "Intellectual Autobiography", Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, p. 15.

within the Process position, it does seem that his emphasis, upon God as being in His transcendent nature a mystery beyond history and not beyond the universe and in His immanent nature a depth of reality in history which can be known on the basis of a "common sense" empiricism, places Niebuhr in a closer theological proximity to the naturalistic empiricism of the Process school than is generally accepted. It is often the case that those who share in part a common interest give greater emphasis to their differences, and this may be the case with Niebuhr and the Process school who share the common interest in "Christian Realism."¹⁷

Even more than Reinhold Niebuhr, H. Richard Niebuhr and Paul Tillich tend at times to accentuate the similarities rather than the differences between their views and those of Process empiricism. It might be more accurate to say that their views serve as a

¹⁷ cf., Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, p. 431.

bridge in the dialogue between the Neo-Orthodoxy of Reinhold Niebuhr and the Process school. H. Richard Niebuhr definitely stands as a bridge in the dialogue between these two views. In 1929 he published the Social Source of Denominationalism, in which he emphasized the socio-economic factors that effect the development of religion. For him sociology provided the empirical data necessary for an adequate evaluation of religion. This sociological orientation can be seen in his definition of the really distinctive feature of the church type "as an inclusive social group. . . closely allied with national, economic and cultural interests; by the very nature of its constitution it is committed to the accommodation of its ethics to the ethic of civilization."¹⁸ In his discussion of the sectarian movements and the religious movements, Niebuhr asserts that the social factors must be regarded prominently, since they "supply the occasion, and determine the form the religious dynamic will take."¹⁹ In a later book, Christ and Culture, he

¹⁸H. R. Niebuhr, Social Sources of Denominationalism, p. 18.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 27.

continues this socio-empirical evaluation of the nature of religious attitudes and gives greater emphasis to the way in which these attitudes have developed in the sectarian movements. Niebuhr points out, in The Meaning of Revelation, his affinity with process metaphysics. His concern with the principle of relativity and his evaluation of theology in the light of this principle show the "bridge" role of his socio-empirical theology in the dialogue between general Neo-Orthodox theology in America and Process empiricism.

No other influence has affected twentieth century thought more deeply than the discovery of spatial and temporal relativity. The understanding that the spatio-temporal point of view of an observer enters into the knowledge of reality, so that no universal knowledge of things as they are in themselves is possible, so that all knowledge is conditioned by the standpoint of the knower, plays the same role in our thinking that the idealistic discoveries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the evolutionary discoveries of the nineteenth played in the thought of earlier generations. . .

Theology. . . is concerned with the principle of relativity as this has been demonstrated by history and sociology rather than by physics, and if it is developing into a relativistic theology this is the result not of an effort on its part to keep up with natural science or with the

popular linguistic fashions of the day but rather of an attempt to adjust itself to a new self-knowledge.²⁰

H. Richard Niebuhr, in 1931, joined with H. N. Wieman and D. C. Macintosh and other empirical theologians in the writing of the volume entitled Religious Realism. As Daniel D. Williams makes clear, this joint effort in itself points to Niebuhr's close association with the Empirical position.²¹ In his article in Religious Realism, Niebuhr attempts to develop his interpretation of the position taken by Tillich in Germany of "beliefful realism" as the corrective to liberal idealism. In 1937 he joined with empirical theologians in a volume entitled The Nature of Religious Experience. Here he discussed the relationship of value theory and theology. With his sociological empiricism as the

²⁰H. R. Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation, p. 7-8.

²¹D. D. Williams, "Tradition and Experience in American Theology", The Shaping of American Religion, p. 469.

method for evaluating religion, Niebuhr stands both within the Neo-Orthodox position and within the tradition of Empirical realism. D. D. Williams offers an excellent summary statement which asserts Niebuhr to be firmly within the Neo-Orthodox tradition while at the same time having affinities with the empirical position.

In his theological construction, which has widely influenced American thought, H. Richard Niebuhr has reinterpreted the concept of revelation so as to hold that the human search for value is corrected and transformed by the Christian revelation, but the relevance of man's experience of goodness and justice to the understanding of revelation is maintained. He seeks to combine the objectivism of Karl Barth's doctrine of revelation with an acknowledgment of the relativity of human experience in appropriating that revelation. This relativistic emphasis is influenced by Ernst Troeltsch, and also has affinities with the empirical theology.²²

Paul Tillich, in the first two volumes of his Systematic Theology, acknowledges an affinity with the Process school of Empirical theology. This is

²²Ibid., p 470-1.

done by his inclusion within the scope of his method of correlation a critical phenomenological approach.

Theology must apply the phenomenological approach to all its basic concepts, forcing its critics first of all to see what the criticized concepts mean and also forcing itself to make careful descriptions of its concepts and to use them with logical consistency, thus avoiding the danger of trying to fill in logical gaps with devotional material. . ."²³

In his evaluation of the empirical approach of Whitehead and Wieman, he acknowledges that they share in the direct tradition of phenomenological theology, which as the above quotation demonstrates he includes in his method.²⁴ Although he differs from Process empiricism concerning his emphasis on ontology, he makes it clear in reaction to comments by Charles Hartshorne that his affinities out-weigh his differences; "I am not disinclined to accept the process-

²³Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 106.

²⁴cf., Ibid., p. 43.

character of being-itself.²⁵ That Tillich sees his theology as a bridge in the dialogue between the supernaturalism of the Neo-Orthodox view and the naturalism of the Process empiricism is evident in the second volume in his section "Beyond Naturalism and Supernaturalism."²⁶ It is here that he gives emphasis to a God of "depth" within the universe which at the same time has a self-transcendence over the functioning universe. He makes contact on the one hand with the Process position by giving emphasis to an immanent God of "depth" who is able to transcend the particularity of his immanence and on the other hand with Reinhold Niebuhr by giving emphasis to a self-transcendent God.

Reinhold and W. Richard Niebuhr and Paul Tillich offer an insight into the major theological position in America and the characteristics mentioned serve to

²⁵Paul Tillich, Theology of Paul Tillich, p. 239.

²⁶cf., Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 5ff.

indicate the manner in which a fruitful dialogue developed between this position and Process theology.

These two schools differ because of their metaphysical frame of reference, but more especially because of the terms which they have employed and because of their theological interests. Outweighing their differences is their common reaction against nineteenth century Liberalism, naturalism and supernaturalism, and their common emphasis upon the theological necessity of considering empirical data, especially from the perspectives offered by the social and natural sciences.

Granted that the men involved in both of these positions have sharp differences on a variety of points, it might be more accurate to say that they share a common approach of "Christian Realism", mediated by their particular theological interests and backgrounds, which enables them to go in their own ways beyond the naturalism and the supernaturalism of the nineteenth century.

The other major position in American theology,

to which we have been making reference, is designated often by the term "empiricism." In general the leading spokesman for Empirical theology in America has been "the Chicago-school." This school represents an "empirical" approach to theology, more in terms of the empiricism of the social and natural sciences than the subjective empiricism of Schleiermacher. As stated before, our concern in this thesis is with Process theology, which is a later development of Empirical theology in the Chicago-school. Our consideration of Neo-Orthodox theology indicates the broader theological context from which Process theology developed. It is obvious that Neo-Orthodox theology has been the dominant position in America, discounting Fundamentalism. It would be a mistake to assume that Empirical theology has not had and continues to have a lasting effect upon American theology. It may well be that John C. Bennett is correct in his evaluation that "empirical theology" represents "the most distinctive contribution which America is making to religious

thought."²⁷ Now let us turn to a consideration of the early Chicago-school, affording us an insight into the particular background in which the Process position developed.

Empirical theology in America began to develop as a part of the general Modernist movement, reacting against traditional Liberal theology. In its early stages it retained many of the emphases of the social gospel while giving rein to a definite anti-metaphysical bent. Methodologically its original emphasis was upon personal and social experience as the norm for evaluating traditional religious insights, and later it developed a more scientific, empirical method. It could be said that this position moved from an experiential empiricism to a naturalistic-process empiricism. With the shift to a naturalistic-process

²⁷John Bennett, "Currents of Religious Thought in America", The Student World, p. 13. H. P. VanDusen also indicates the noted importance of Empirical theology to American religious thought. cf., H. P. VanDusen "The Outlook for the Student Movement in the United States," The Student World, p. 33.

empiricism, the school developed a more metaphysical interest. An aspect of this later development has been also a definite emphasis upon mysticism, as a foundation for the religious experience or faith-encounter.

The dominant role of the Chicago-school in American Empirical theology has continued from around 1890. The highest point of influence for this school came in the 1930's under the leadership of Henry Nelson Wieman. Many noted American thinkers, directly or indirectly related to the University of Chicago, have played an important role in the development of the Chicago-school. Some of these men are Josiah Royce, John Dewey, William James, George Herbert Mead, Charles Pierce and Charles Hartshorne. Those within the Chicago-school whom we would like to present are the following: Shailer Mathews, Shirley Jackson Case, George Burman Foster, Edward Scribner Ames, Gerald Birney Smith, Henry Nelson Wieman and Bernard Eugene Meland. Other younger men whom today represent the Chicago-school, but whom we shall not discuss, are

Bernard Loomer, Daniel Day Williams and Schubert Ogden. Shailer Mathews and G. B. Smith will receive the most detailed consideration at this point, while Wieman and Meland will be considered in detail in chapters three and four, respectively.

The Chicago-school as a distinct influence in American theology begins with the work of Shailer Mathews, who joined the faculty at Chicago in 1894. Mathews, the leader of the early Chicago-school, served as Professor of New Testament History and later as Professor of Historical and Comparative Theology. He begins from the perspective of an evangelical liberal theology, as can be seen in The Social Teaching of Jesus, and moves in the direction of a socio-empirical theology. This shift in emphasis comes with the change in his professorial chairs and becomes evident in The Church and the Changing Order. He always considers his type of socio-empirical theology to be within the general scope of Modernism. He offers a summary of Modernism.

1. The Modernist movement is a phase of the scientific struggle for freedom in thought and belief. . .

2. Modernists are Christians who accept the results of scientific research as data with which to think religiously. . .

3. Modernists are Christians who adopt the method of historical and literary science in the study of the Bible and religion. . .

4. The Modernist Christian believes the Christian religion will help men meet social as well as individual needs. . .

5. The Modernist is a Christian who believes that the spiritual and moral needs of the world can be met because he is intellectually convinced that Christian attitudes and faiths are consistent with other realities. . .

6. Modernists as a class are evangelical Christians. That is, they accept Jesus Christ as the revelation of a Savior God. . .

In brief, then, the use of scientific, historical, social method in understanding and applying evangelical Christianity to the needs of living persons, is Modernism.²⁸

From his historical, socio-empirical perspective, Mathews asserts a practical, functional view of religion. He asks the question, "What is religion?" and answers it with the assertion that it is a series of historical, social experiments based on human needs. The social acts

²⁸ Shailler Mathews, Faith of Modernism, pp. 23-35.

are an attempt on the part of man to ward off danger by attempting to relate and to adjust himself to a superhuman force within the cosmic process.

Religion is life functioning in the interest of self-protection. It differs from similar functional expressions of life in that (1) it treats certain elements of its environment personally (though not necessarily as a person), by utilizing social practices and ideas as forms of worship, or as patterns for beliefs, and (2) it seeks to make these elements friendly and so helpful.²⁹

Mathews asserts that the concept of God can be approached from either the discipline of philosophy and metaphysics or from the discipline of religion. He rejects the approach of philosophy and metaphysics because it is tied to pure abstract speculation which is not related to reality; "religious faith is either consistent or inconsistent with reality."³⁰ For him religion is based on empirical social development and, therefore, must be

²⁹ Shailer Mathews, ed., Contributions of Science to Religion, p. 255.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

the basis for a true conceptual understanding of God.

It is to make evident that religion can be regarded as a series of experiments extending across thousands of years and involving a vast number of accumulated actions and convictions. It is not a philosophy, but a mode of vital action. Instead of starting with a metaphysical postulate we trace in religion humanity's empirical search after larger and more personal life.³¹

With a growing affinity with the metaphysics of organism or process, Mathews gives greater emphasis to religion as a functional process of adjustment to the personality-producing activities of the cosmos. He continues to emphasize the social acts of religion but places them in a wider context than the immediate environment of the individual or the group, namely the environment of cosmic mystery.

³¹ Ibid., p. 384. Mathews strikes out against philosophy and metaphysics whenever the opportunity presents itself, yet it is clear that he accepts the general position of pragmatism in his later writings, with the exception of conceptually designating God as the personality-producing force of the cosmos instead of the "principle of Concretion." cf., The Growth of the Idea of God, p. 219. For a broader perspective of his rejection of philosophy and metaphysics which he considers unrelated to reality, cf., Faith of Modernism, pp. 100, 109, 175; The Growth of the Idea of God, pp. 3 185, 213, 219; and Contributions of Science to Religion p. 409.

Religion thus becomes more than conventional behavior. It is a technique by which the human being gains more personal value from personal adjustment with responsive cosmic activities. It would be difficult for any political or even parental conception of God to be regarded as expressing this conception accurately. It is more likely to be cast in the pattern of organic life itself, or the relations of the individual to the group. . . An exact definition of God is less basic than a direct adjustment to those cosmic activities which the word God represents.³²

Based on his socio-cosmic empirical approach to religion, Mathews affirms a functional criterion for determining the value, meaningfulness or truth of religion. Right doctrines are not the essential things of religion. What is essential in religion are its attitudes and convictions. "This historical study enables us to recognize that the permanent element of our evolving religion resides in attitudes and convictions rather than in doctrines."³³ It is these

³² Shailler Mathews, The Growth of the Idea of God, pp. 232-3. cf., The Atonement and the Social Process, pp. 37, 185.

³³ Shailler Mathews, Faith of Modernism, p. 76.

attitudes and convictions which enable the individual and the group to relate themselves to those activities which meet their needs. When religion is conceived as a way of meeting man's needs the crucial issue is not one of truth but one of pragmatic efficiency, and it is on the basis of efficiency that religion is to be evaluated. "The efficiency of a religion will be measured by the efficiency of its patterns to integrate human life with those elements of the known universe capable of satisfying personal needs."³⁴ A quotation from J. Gresham Machen offers a striking contrast, from the perspective of a more conservative position, to the view which Matthews holds.

. . . if any one fact is clear, . . . it is that the Christian movement from its inception was not just a way of life in the modern sense, but a way of life founded upon a message. It was based, not upon mere feeling, not upon a mere program of work, but upon an account of facts. In other words it was based upon doctrine.³⁵

³⁴ Shailler Mathews, The Growth of the Idea of God, p. 215.

³⁵ J. G. Machen, Christianity and Liberalism, p. 12.

Mathews considers the Christian religion in the light of his general view of religion. From his Christological perspective he asserts that the Christian religion is Christ's way of laying hold on God in order to meet man's functional religious needs.

The Christian religion is Christ's way of laying hold on God, of ordering of life which makes it possible for God to help. It is not the product of merely intellectual processes. It embodies the urge of life itself.³⁶

With his emphasis upon social acts, Mathews sees the Christian religion as the reproduction of attitudes and convictions in those who stand within the particular religious tradition rather than the acceptance of doctrines, dogmas or literature. "Christianity becomes not the acceptance of a literature but a reproduction of attitudes and faith, a fellowship with those ancient men of imperfect morals whose hearts found God, whose lives were strengthened by the divine spirit, whose

³⁶Shailer Mathews, Faith and Modernism, p. 85-6.

works point out the way of life, and who determined the inner character of the Christian religion."³⁷ The Christian religion is not a static religion based on a particular past revelation; "the unity of the Christian revelation is found in the unity of a growing religion."³⁸ Progress in the Christian religion depends upon its ability to grow and meet the needs of succeeding generations; "by accustoming Christians through discussion to patterns codifying new applications of Christian attitudes, progress in religion is made possible."³⁹ As Mathews' thoughts increasingly emphasize process, he defines the nature of the Christian religion in terms of cosmic adjustment based on empirical attitudes as well as in terms of environmental-social adjustment.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 49.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 50.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 75.

We shall be less concerned with patterns than with the proper way of adjusting human lives to an increasingly complicated social order, to their own capacities, to cosmic reason and purpose increasingly discoverable to the human mind and incarnate in Jesus. We may be decreasingly interested in the metaphysics of Jesus Christ, but we shall be all the more determined to show that his life and teachings reveal the divine purpose in humanity and therefore it is practicable to organize life upon his revelation of good will.⁴⁰

With Mathews' view of religion in mind, it is easy to see that his method is based primarily upon a historical and general social science perspective and to a lesser degree upon the natural sciences. He considers the philosophical and metaphysical positions included in the social and natural sciences to be related to objective reality and, therefore, not to be identified with philosophy or metaphysics in the sense of abstract thought which is unrelated to reality. Even though he asserts that these sciences point to mystery in the universe, a mystery which he designates as God, he disassociates this mystery from his

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 175.

understanding of mysticism, because for him mysticism is not related to reality. In general it could be said that Mathews employed a historical method, based upon the presupposition that religious faith must be consistent with reality. Since he rejects the view that the essential factors of religion are doctrines, creeds, dogmas or literature and asserts that the essential factors are attitudes and convictions, he must show how the attitudes and convictions arise in order that modern man can implement them in his "pattern theory."

If we are to understand our religion we must, therefore, do more than study its formulas and institutions. We must look beneath and through the Creeds and Confessions to the attitudes and convictions, the needs, temptations and trials, the prayer and rites, in a word, the actual religious life of the ongoing and developing Christian group. We must discover when a doctrine arose, for what purpose it was organized, what religious attitude is expressed, what unifying social practice or idea is used as a "pattern." From such a study the conclusion will be clear that while formulas are a part of our religion they are not to be identified with that religion. They spring from the effort of Christians in different situations to organize their

lives and carry their daily burdens, perform their varying tasks, not only with prayer and sacrifice but in loyalty to the inherited attitudes and convictions of their group regarding God and Jesus Christ.

Nor is this all. A study of the origin and purpose of our doctrines shows how patterns have originated and served actual needs of a group.⁴¹

Having disassociated the pattern from a literal interpretation of the doctrine, Mathews considers the pattern an analogy. By considering the analogy in relation to practices of the religious community, it is possible to discover the particular attitudes involved. Mathews asserts that the pattern of a past group will not have the same authority for man today, when this pattern is understood as an analogy. What is necessary is the development of a new and more relevant pattern for these basic attitudes which will serve not merely as an analogy but will represent the reality which the individual and group experiences. An example of what he means by "pattern" is to be seen in Mathews'

⁴¹Ibid., p. 58-9.

treatment of the death and resurrection of Christ. He asserts that the basic attitudes and convictions involved can be explained today in terms of the theory of evolution.

The death and resurrection of Christ helps us interpret that long evolutionary struggle from which human life has emerged and which it carries on. A life which is superior to the circumstances of the impersonal world and capable of moral perfection, is in consequence superior to death. In this sense of embodying the end of human evolution, Jesus in his life and death and resurrection reveals the meaning of that process from which men have come and of which they are a part and from which they suffer. It is the production of individuals renewed by fellowship with God, secure in personal freedom, and triumphing over the backward pull of inheritances by living a life of good will in the midst of help-giving spiritual realities.⁴²

His criterion for developing contemporary patterns is that they must be more than meaningful, for they must be in accordance with our understanding of what is actual. In his later writings, he asserts that this pattern for modern man is to be that of an organism

⁴² Ibid., p. 161.

in relation to its particular and cosmic environment.⁴³

This is the pattern which we can use in religion. The individual is in personal relation with those personality-evolving elements of an environing process as he is to society. Such a pattern, born of biology and sociology, lies outside discussion of immanence and transcendence. Were not the expression so paradoxical, it might almost be called a distributive monism, since the ultimate reality we can imagine or infer is activity from which we select personality-producing elements as distinct from others. For religious purposes it is enough to hold that human life is conditioned by a relationship to an eternally creative environment in the midst of which are continuing forces that have produced personality and with which relations can and must be set up which advance personality. To such elements of the environment Activity which demand and permit appropriation of the plane of personality and which can be seen in the intelligibility of all nature, we give the name God. He is the "You" of the cosmic process. . .

In so saying we do not personify the universe, and we are the farthest possible from pantheism. We are using a pattern and not a metaphysic.⁴⁴

Mathews' doctrine of God is a mixture of his socio-empirical view and his cosmic-empirical view.

⁴³cf., Shailer Mathews, The Atonement and the Social Process, p. 184-5.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 186-7.

In his earlier writings he approached God through the understanding of Jesus Christ wielded by his "pattern" theory. Christians developed concepts of God based on their understanding of the attitudes of Christ and based on their adjustment of these attitudes to patterns which were socially, politically and economically relevant. His favorite illustration is the concept of God as King. It is his view that with the development of democracy, an industrial economy, and the thought-patterns of science, the concept of God as king has lost its meaning and more adequate concepts must be developed.

As over against the old conception of royal sovereignty external to and not dependent upon the nation, we have the conception of sovereignty immanent in the nation itself, but transcendental to that nation when expressing itself in governmental forms. In the case of American law, government with sovereignty expressed in the judicial, legislative, and executive elements, might even serve as a pattern for the Trinity. Our group experience, through free discussion, will find an analogy which will express the profound religious conviction that while God is immanent in nature he also must be thought of as expressing himself objectively to that nature, especially to humanity.

The process of making this theology does not involve transformation of values and attitudes which older theologies expressed for their authors, but rather the discovery of certain social practices and experiences, which as patterns will actually and constructively express our religious loyalties and beliefs. Theology will change but Christian experience and faith embodied in the Christian movement will continue.⁴⁵

Mathews asserts that personality is the most important feature of existence. He presents his "conceptual theism" view of God as those personality-producing activities of the cosmos. God becomes that Reason and Purpose in the cosmos which is sovereign for meeting man's religious needs. "For God is our conception, born of the personality-evolving and personally responsive elements of our cosmic environment with which we are organically related."⁴⁶ Mathews is careful always to assert that the God of his concept is not limited to the conceptual activities under

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 28. cf., Shailey Mathews, Faith of Modernism, pp. 90, 97.

⁴⁶ Shailey Mathews, The Growth of the Idea of God, p. 226.

consideration. "The word God stands for neither the concept alone nor the activities alone, any more than the word friend stands for a sentiment or a human body. It expresses a reality because it expresses and furthers the relation between existence."⁴⁷ That God is an objective reality is important to Mathews' position. He also asserts that the objective reality of the cosmic activities which he designates as God can be proved on "the evidence of observation."⁴⁸ In general he asserts that his concept of God can stand the test of experimental validation just as well as any of the ideas evaluated by science.

The conception of God is no more illusion than the scientist's conception of the electron. Both are subject to experimental validation. Men's tentative search for cosmic adjustment and personal values conditioned by such a concept need no more fear frustration than does the adjustment of other aspects of our life to the imperfectly understood but experientially accepted forces of electricity, gravitation, and light. In the struggles

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 219.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 217.

of life for higher social and individual goods, men are enabled by the use of a personal pattern to set up personal adjustment with those personality-producing activities of the cosmos by which they were evolved and on which they depend. In such relation there is help and happiness. For we are not comrades in doom but children of hope. We are organically one with those cosmic activities we know as God.⁴⁹

To suggest that Mathews' method and general position is scientific is an over-statement. He was not trained technically and never becomes involved in a technical understanding of the patterns which he adopts from science. His theological approach is rather a mixture of evolutionary and social optimism, historical criticism, and some metaphysics of organism. In history the important contribution of Mathews is that he brought the social factors of religion into organic relationship with the witness of faith itself. His cosmic emphasis is never fully integrated with his stress upon social acts, but even side by side they indicate the direction which theological empiricism

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 234.

was to take on its way to the "Process" theology of Wieman and Meland.

In brief, therefore, we can see that science is contributing not only a method of testing the legitimacy and value of religion, but also it is giving us thought-patterns with which one may set forth its nature. For we always live in new conditions by the use of patterns drawn from experience already possessed. When the highest reach of experience was that of the state, men organized their lives with the universe imperfectly but to their best possible advantage through the pattern ideas of the state. But now as science has enabled us to get glimpses of reality, of cosmic process and of life, it is giving us far more inclusive and improved pattern ideas. These pattern ideas of science enable us effectively to coordinate with other realities the urge to protect and enrich life by seeking help personally from the environment in which personalities find themselves.⁵⁰

The space which we can devote to Shirley Jackson Case does not indicate his importance to the empirical position in American theology. Case replaced Mathews as Professor of New Testament history at Chicago, and the reason that he receives limited

⁵⁰Shailer Mathews, Contributions of Science to Religion, p. 402.

consideration in the present discussion is that he follows the basic socio-historical method used by Mathews.

When linked up thus inseparably with the evolution of society, religion must be viewed as essentially a developmental rather than a static phenomenon. Religions, like other factors in the social order, emerge and increase by a gradual process of growth from simpler to more elaborate forms. It is the business of the historian to follow the course of this evolutionary process from first to last.⁵¹

Case's contributions to empirical theology falls into three areas. In the first area he deals with special historical problems: e.g., The Historicity of Jesus (1912, 1928) and Bibliographical Guide to the History of Christianity (1931). His second area deals with the early history of Christianity, from the perspective of its social and developmental nature: e.g., The Evolution of Early Christianity (1914), The Social Origins of Christianity (1923) and Jesus: A New

⁵¹S. J. Case, "The Historical Study of Religion", Journal of Religion, Vol. 1, p. 10.

Biography (1927). His third area of concern is "setting forth the evidence for the sociohistorical interpretation of Christianity in the evolution of the church down to the present time and culminating in a doctrine of optimistic social activism"⁵²: e.g., Jesus Through the Centuries (1932), The Christian Philosophy of History (1943) and The Origins of Christian Supernaturalism (1946). Case shares with Mathews a strong reaction against all forms of abstract philosophy and metaphysics, but unlike Mathews his writings do not point to a possible affinity with process metaphysics. In a memorial editorial to Case, B. E. Meland offers a summary of Case's method and general view of religion.

The Journal of Religion was inaugurated in 1921, replacing the Biblical World and the American Journal of Theology, with the specific purpose of advancing the scientific interpretation of religion.

⁵²C. C. McCown, "Shirley Jackson Case's Contribution to the Theory of Sociohistorical Interpretation". Journal of Religion, Vol. 29, p. 20.

Shirley Jackson Case was one of the formative influences in initiating this change. He, himself, had become one of the chief exponents of this approach to religious scholarship. His studies of early Christianity represented a shrewd application of the critical method of the social sciences to the historical study of the Christian community. His intention was to lay bare not only the environmental factors which had shaped Christian life and thought but the contextual meaning of these Christian forces as they had operated within a social environment. By understanding this interplay of social forces and influences one would come to understand the content and intent of Christianity itself.

Christianity as a social movement thus became the ruling concept in religious research, replacing the theological emphasis upon the Christian faith as a body of beliefs. In this shift of emphasis, it was believed, attention was brought to bear upon the total interplay of the life-forces concretely operating within the Christian community rather than upon an intellectualized segment abstracted from Christian experience. There was implied in this approach to understanding Christianity a revolt not only against the dogmatic method of theological orthodoxy but against the abstraction of philosophical idealism as well. Within the "Chicago School" it meant extending the presuppositions to the study of Christian thought and experience.⁵³

George Burman Foster was Professor of Theology

⁵³B. E. Meland, "Editorial". Journal of Religion, Vol. 29, p. 1.

in the Chicago-school. In the development of his religious thinking, we see a struggle between theism and psychological idealism, which contributes to the development of "religious humanism" in America. Foster began by holding to the objective validity of the Christian faith in God, but by 1905 he had come under the influence of John Dewey's pragmatism. At this stage he began to take seriously the possibility that truth and ideas have only a subjective, functional significance, in the sense that they do not offer a valid representation of objective reality in any metaphysical sense.⁵⁴ In 1909 with the publication of The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence, it was evident that Foster had adopted the functional-pragmatic approach to religion. The reality of God is dismissed and the idea of God as a functional value to man, an "idea-achieving" being, is

⁵⁴ cf., G. B. Foster, "Pragmatism and Knowledge", American Journal of Theology, Vol. XI, pp. 591-2.

affirmed. "A man creates whatever concepts and principles he may need in order to make himself master of the phenomena of his environment. To the same end were the gods created."⁵⁵ By 1912 Foster withdrew from this psychological religious humanism and was to be found again affirming the necessity of an objective theistic religion. "The reality of religion depends upon the reality of God. The question of the truth of our belief in God, even more than the question of the historicity of Jesus and the knowability of his own gospel, is the real crisis of the modern world."⁵⁶ It seems that Foster's theological life was a constant alternation between theistic religion and religious humanism. From his empirical perspective, he seems unable to hold consistently to God as an objective

⁵⁵G. B. Foster, The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle, p. 84.

⁵⁶G. B. Foster, "What Are the Basic Principles of Modern Theology?". Quoted in The Problem of Religious Knowledge by D. C. Macintosh, p. 107.

reality. He differs from Mathews and Case in his view that a metaphysical position is required for theology in order to hold to an objective God. He also differs from them by being unable to adapt a functional conceptual approach to God without moving into the area of religious humanism. Foster's death occurred before the Empirical theology of Chicago began to come under the influence of process metaphysics, but his contribution to this theological development is his insistence, from his theistic perspective, that theology must relate itself to a metaphysical position in order to make the objective reality of God relevant to contemporary man.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Foster's chair in theology was given to his former student, A. Eustace Haydon. Haydon's theology expressed only the radical pragmatic philosophy of religious humanism: cf., A. E. Haydon, "The Theological Trend of Pragmatism", American Journal of Theology, 1919. While Haydon was defending himself against the charge of atheism, the acceptance of his theological position was undercut by Wieman's new definition of God, which will be noted in chapter three. We do not consider Haydon because of his limited influence due to Wieman and because the position of religious humanism is expressed in the more noted person of E. S. Ames, to whom we now turn.

E. S. Ames was a student of John Dewey and later his colleague at Chicago in the philosophy department. As a social philosopher, Ames approaches the question of religion from a psychological perspective. Whereas Foster moves between theism and religious humanism, Ames develops a position of religious humanism from the perspective of functional psychology. He asserts that the problem of theology is radically changed because of the insights of functional psychology.

The question heretofore, from the standpoint of transcendence, has been: Does a supreme, absolutely perfect being exist? Is there an actual, objective reality corresponding to the subjective idea of God? No one has ever been able to produce any adequate answer to that question. The question itself has fallen under suspicion. . . This does not mean. . .that the idea of God is false and meaningless. . .In functional terms truth means value. The question, Is the idea of God true? means, Is the idea of God of value in actual experience?⁵⁸

⁵⁸E. S. Ames, "Theology from the Standpoint of Functional Psychology". American Journal of Theology, Vol. X, p. 228-9.

Ames saw religion as "the quest for the largest and the fullest satisfaction of felt needs."⁵⁹ That his functional view of religion is humanism is well substantiated by his view that the idea of God expresses the embodiment of man's ideals without referring to any transcendent being.

The idea of God, when seriously employed, serves to generalize and to idealize all the values one knows. . . .The "attributes" in the conception of God are as numerous as the ideal interest of those who use it, for it signifies the totality of our purpose and values.⁶⁰

By 1929 Ames's position had expanded, like Mathews', to include a more cosmic conception of God. This cosmic characterization of God includes an aesthetic interpretation of religion. This cosmic and aesthetic development can be seen in his evaluation of God and love.

⁵⁹E. S. Ames, Religion, p. 9.

⁶⁰E. S. Ames, Psychology of Religious Experience, p. 318.

Reality is characterized by love; that is, love is present in the world and in life. . . . Here, as in other respects, God is not equivalent to all reality but to certain phases of it. Only where love is, God is. But wherever love is, in the higher and in the lower living forms, there God is manifest. Those who experience love, paternal, filial, conjugal, communal, or cosmic, experience God. God as love, is not far from any one of us. In love we live and move and have our being. This love exists as personal, intelligent, and active in the living work of actual reality. Hence we say God is reality idealized. This idealization does not mean fabricated or imagined. It means selection. God is the world or life taken in certain of its aspects, in those aspects which are consonant with order, beauty, and expansion. That those features are present in reality as experienced, as known, is obvious.⁶¹

It is clear that Ames develops a pluralistic view of God as reality idealized, but his position loses some of its radical humanism as he increasingly stresses the objective reality of this idealized God. From both the perspective of his social philosophy and his cosmic-esthetic concern, Ames attempts to demonstrate that God is as objectively real as those things which are designated by terms, such as "Uncle Sam" and "Alma

⁶¹E. S. Ames, Religion, p. 154.

Mater."

The position here maintained is that the reality to which the term God applies, like the reality to which the term Alma Mater applies, is not the word itself, nor the image it suggests, but the reality of a social process belonging to the actual world. The reality of Alma Mater is not to be found in any particular noble woman, much less in the picture printed in a college annual. The name designates an organization of actual things and living people, the college or university. So the word God is not properly taken to mean a particular person, or single factual existence, but the order of nature including man and all the processes of an aspiring social life.⁶²

For several reasons Ames is important in our consideration of the background provided by the early Chicago-school. His conceptual approach to theology, more than that of the other members of the Chicago-school, is influenced by the insights of functional psychology. In his form of religious humanism we see the full effect of John Dewey upon this theological school. In his later cosmic-aesthetic interest, we see an indication of the changing emphasis of the Empirical theology

⁶² Ibid., p. 176-7.

of the Chicago-school.

Another noted member of the early Chicago-school was Gerald Birney Smith, Professor of Christian Theology. Smith was originally a Ritschlian and a follower of Hermann, but he came under the influence of William James and John Dewey. It was because of this latter influence, especially from James, that he developed an empirical, scientific approach to theology and religion. Smith's contributions to theology are in the form of a correlation of the empirical approach presented by the other members of the early Chicago-school. From his earlier writings we gain a synthesis of the empirical position represented by the early Chicago-school. A distinction is made between dogmatic theology of past generations and the type of systematic theology which is proper for the contemporary situation. In general, Smith wants a constructive theology based on a scientifically empirical and historical method "to formulate for today and to transmit to the coming generation an

expression of faith vitally related to our actual life."⁶³ He views religion as a mystic experience of cosmic adjustment.

Religion is an experience of vital unity with the great forces in environment upon which life is ultimately dependent. It brings the most significant enlargement of experience. It is this enrichment of life which is important. Doctrines and rituals are means to this end. The doctrines of religion vary with varying conceptions of the nature of our environment. Where animism prevails, religion will take the form of propitiating a host of spirits. Where environment is philosophically conceived, religion takes the form of a mystic understanding of the significance of one's unity with the ultimate reality.

To feel the wonder and the mystery of this experience of cosmic adjustment is essential if one is to interpret religion aright.⁶⁴

Following this view of religion, he asserts that "the real test of value in a theology is not so much its logical completeness, or its philosophical consistency, as its ability to furnish ideas and interpretations

⁶³ G. B. Smith, "Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics", A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion, p. 486.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 510. Cf. G. B. Smith, Social Idealism and the Changing Theology, pp. 237ff.

which enable men to realize the experience of satisfactory adjustment to the cosmic reality on which they are dependent.⁶⁵ A necessary task in carrying out this constructive theology was the development of a revised theological vocabulary. It was Smith's contention that such a vocabulary can best be developed by adopting "the empirical attitude which cares more for facts than for labels."⁶⁶ This emphasis on the empirical attitude points to the way in which this position attempts to relate religion to the scientific spirit.

There is no better defense of any theory than to show that it rests on a full and accurate examination of the facts. It ought to be evident to everyone that knowledge of facts is constantly improving as humanity advances. We today know many things concerning which men were ignorant two thousand years ago. Instead of assuming at the start that a doctrine which was formulated in the past is absolutely true

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 511.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 525.

and has only to be defended against "attack", we ought first to make sure of our facts. If this investigation results in the modification of the doctrine in question, it is far better to make the modification than to conjure up clever arguments which conceal the truth. If once we shall have come to the point of being willing to go wherever the facts lead, no matter what becomes of our doctrines, we shall occupy a position far stronger than that of the current popular "defense." Theology has so long been accustomed to rely on external authority that it is necessary to exercise particular care in order to meet modern questions in a way which will convince men accustomed to scientific exactness.⁶⁷

Although Smith desires to join religion with the objective reality with which he considers science to be dealing, he is careful to point out that neither constructive religion nor science are related to the past metaphysical ultimates of speculative philosophy.⁶⁸ In light of the insights of science, he indicates the problems for a contemporary doctrine of God.

Today we face a universe of unimaginable extent in space and time. We explain its structure and its behavior in terms of immanent forces

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 544-5.

⁶⁸ cf., Ibid., p. 514ff.

rather than by reference to an anthropomorphic will. No longer do we seek the aid of personal cosmic spirits in practical life. Exorcism, which was so prominent a function of early Christian activity, no longer exists among us. Science is everywhere using impersonal ideas in explaining the universe. The anthropomorphism of former days is inapplicable to our present situation. In response to this new cosmic consciousness many of the former characteristics of the doctrine of God have vanished or have been radically modified. The Calvinistic doctrine of "decrees" is becoming a theological curiosity. The idea of "creation" has been merged into the vague conception of evolution, where the exact extent of the divine activity is uncertain. Miracles are now "problems" rather than undoubted realities. The conception of God is thus undergoing a reconstruction, in response to the pressure of the new cosmic ideas. In this reconstruction men are likely to become bewildered.⁶⁹

Smith's later writings offer an indicative summary of the way in which Empirical theology at Chicago was developing at the time Process theology was emerging. It is his contention that theology was on the threshold of an extremely important development.

The time has come when an increasing number

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 514.

of religious thinkers are ceasing to attempt to find some "revelation" from which may be derived knowledge inaccessible to natural human experience. They are frankly recognizing that all that we can know, inadequate though it may be, must come through human inquiry; and they are beginning to insist that this inquiry shall be an investigation of the resources and the meaning of this "natural" world.⁷⁰

Smith points out that this new theological development follows "the empirical method"⁷¹ and that the most crucial issue for theology has become the doctrine of God.

This means that the most important religious question of the present day is the definition of God. The younger generation today has in general no sense of a supernatural world. . . Man is seen to be the product (or more strictly speaking, one of the products) of this vast cosmic process. Religion means finding right adjustment to this process. God, therefore, must be thought of as a reality in the process to which right adjustment may be made. But since we know something about the universe as a result of scientific inquiry, any conception of God must square itself with what scientists say concerning the nature and the

⁷⁰G. B. Smith, Current Christian Thinking, p. 144.

⁷¹cf., Ibid., p. 146.

behavior of the natural world.⁷²

God was no longer to be considered from the traditional perspective of theism, for from this developing theological perspective, God is seen as "a quality of the cosmic process akin to the quality of our own spiritual life."⁷³ Smith's own particular contribution to this theological empiricism comes in his emphasis upon mysticism. His mysticism, however, is not self-contained for he holds that man must have a mystic experience with empirical reality in order that an adequate adjustment can occur between the organism and the environment.

It seems probable that theologians in the near future will adopt a more inductive approach to the problem of defining the nature of the cosmic object of religious worship. They will state the problems of religious thinking in terms of human adjustment to environment rather than in

⁷² Ibid., p. 143. cf., G. B. Smith, "Theological Thinking In America", Religious Thought in the Last Quarter-Century. p. 113ff.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 168.

terms of a doctrine of theistic control. The character of God will be found in the experienced reciprocity between man and his environment rather than in the realm of metaphysical causation. The modern trend in theology is decidedly in the direction of exploring mysticism rather than in a dependence on philosophy.

We think of life as an adjustment between organism and environment. Religion is an aspect of this life-process. The problem to be faced is as to the kind of adjustment which is possible. . .⁷⁴

Smith looks to the future in theology and sees a change in the type of theism which would speak to the religious needs of man. Until an adequate cosmic definition of God is presented, it will be necessary to consider God in terms of social reciprocity. The empirical method will be employed by theology; but until the contributions of this method increase, religious men will have to go through an insecure period of believing in God while being unable to define God.

But it is questionable whether theism of the usual type will continue to be a convincing way of stating a religious view of the world, when once the world is apprehended in terms of

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 165-6.

our modern science. Religion for men who think in this fashion will consist in a great mystic experiment rather than in the acceptance of a theological system. . .Just what conception of God will ultimately emerge from the great experiment we cannot yet tell. But it will express the experience of kinship between man and that quality in environment which supports and enriches humanity in its spiritual quest. God will be very real to the religious man, but his reality will be interpreted in terms of social reciprocity with an as yet inadequately defined cosmic support of human values, rather than in terms of theistic creatorship and control. The experience of God will take the form of comradeship with that aspect of our non-human environment which is found to reinforce and to enrich our life. . .A more promising method of approach seems to be the frank recognition of the fact that our religious relationship to what we worship in our cosmic environment must be empirically studied, and our conception of God must be formulated in tentative terms which grow out of that experience, rather than in terms of an *a priori* philosophy assuming to be final. Men may believe in God without being able to define God.⁷⁵

From our discussion of the early Chicago-school, we see the immediate background from which Process theology developed. Mathews and Case brought the social factors of religion into organic relationship with the

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 169-170.

witness of faith itself. The later concern in Mathews' empirical theology for process philosophy points to the developing theological climate at Chicago preparing the way for the emerging "process" position expressed by Wieman and Meland. The religious humanism of Foster and Ames serves as a backboard against which Process theology reacts in its stress upon the objective reality of God. Foster's theistic emphasis upon the necessity for theology of a base in a contemporary metaphysics prepares the way for the shift in emphasis from Mathews' non-metaphysical assertions to the "Process" position which takes contemporary metaphysics into account. Ames's growing cosmic and aesthetic concern injected into the Chicago-school an insight which helped to make it more receptive to Whitehead's cosmic and aesthetic emphasis. G. B. Smith indicates the developing climate in the Chicago-school at the time Wieman began to develop his process position. He indicates (1) that systematic theology must be constructive instead of dogmatic; (2) that the development

of an adequate empirical method is essential for constructive theology; (3) that at that time the crucial issue for theology was the doctrine of God; (4) that theology must develop and present a functional view of religion; and (5) that theology must develop a position which combines the mystic experience with the empirical method.

It is evident that the Empirical theology of the Chicago-school was open during the early 1920's to a potential redirection. This redirection came under the direct leadership of Henry Nelson Wieman and indirectly from the writings of Alfred North Whitehead. In the publication of The Principles of Natural Knowledge (1919) and The Concept of Nature (1920), members of the Chicago-school saw the foundation for a contemporary metaphysical view to which their empirical theology could be related. We do not mean to imply that under the influence of Whitehead the more traditional influences of James and Dewey were rejected by the Chicago-school, but that under the

Whiteheadian influence the Chicago-school was able to include a metaphysical and aesthetic emphasis which enabled it to expand its empirical approach.

The influence of Whitehead came to the Chicago-school directly through H. N. Wieman. In 1926 Wieman wrote Religious Experience and the Scientific Method, in which he attempted to develop Whitehead's metaphysical implications for an empirical theology. It should be noted that this book was published three years before Whitehead's Process and Reality. Wieman was invited in 1926 to lecture at Chicago for the purpose of giving his interpretation of the importance of Whitehead's thought to empirical theology, and in the following year he was asked to join the faculty. It is difficult to explain the importance of Wieman to American theology in the 1920's and 1930's, but the attempt will be made in chapter three. For the present it is sufficient to say that George Hammar's remark, made in 1938, should be taken seriously: "The two most significant names of American theology today. . .

are Henry Nelson Wieman and Reinhold Niebuhr.⁷⁶

The other noted theologian of the Chicago-school is Bernard Eugene Meland, whom we shall consider in chapter four. Meland was a student at Chicago during the important years of transition directed by Wieman's emphasis upon the idea, process. He was directly under the influence of G. B. Smith and in his earlier writings develops Smith's mystical concern. Whitehead had a more noted influence upon Meland's theological development. By 1935, Meland and Wieman had come to work closely together and together became dominant voices for Process theology in America.

In our preceding review of G. B. Smith, it was noted that the primary issues for systematic theology at this time in the Chicago-school were the following issues: (1) the question of method for theology;

⁷⁶ George Hammar, Christian Realism in Contemporary American Theology, p. 72.

(2) the doctrine of God; and (3) the view theology developed and presented of religion. It will be our purpose to consider the writings of Whitehead, Wieman and Meland from the perspective of these three issues.

CHAPTER TWO

ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

INTRODUCTION

Alfred North Whitehead's life and interest can be divided into three periods. The first period extends from childhood until 1914, and is designated as his mathematical period. Philosophy of science becomes the dominant interest in the second period, roughly dated from 1914 to 1924. His appointment as Professor of Philosophy at Harvard marks the beginning of the Metaphysical Period, which lasted until his death in 1947. This division does not imply that all three interests were not active in each stage of his life; rather, it suggests that in Whitehead's life different interests were dominant at different stages.¹ Though

¹This division of interests is not shared by all students of Whitehead. cf., Rasvhary Das, The Philosophy of Whitehead, p. 12ff.; M. H. Moore, "Mr. Whitehead's Philosophy", Philosophical Review, Vol. 40, p. 258ff; and R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature, p. 176.

our primary attention is devoted to Whitehead's third period, we shall review the development of all three periods.

Whitehead's under-graduate education was historical, classical and scientific. His physical surroundings served as the dominant factor of historical education in his life, for he lived in a community dominated by Roman, Norman and mediaeval history. His classical education came from the study of Latin, Greek, and classical history, while the study of mathematics developed his scientific interest. At the age of nineteen, Whitehead began his studies at Trinity College, Cambridge. During his student days at Trinity, he never attended a lecture that did not deal with pure or applied mathematics. Yet this educational experience was actually Platonic in form, due to his association with the group known as 'The Apostles'. It was their custom to meet in the evenings and discuss social and intellectual problems. These discussions demanded a large amount of miscellaneous reading, and it was during this period

that he read and re-read Kant.

Moving from student to teacher, Whitehead entered fully into his 'mathematical period'. His writings during this period indicates this dominant mathematical interest. Whitehead was trying to deal with the mathematical problems raised by the fall of Newtonian physics. In 1903, he discovered that he and his former student, Bertrand Russell, were working on the same problems. They decided to unite their efforts, and this collaboration culminated in the publication of Principia Mathematica. By 1913, Whitehead realized that his interest was turning to philosophy of science and that because of this, it would be necessary to break off his working relationship with Bertrand Russell.

The second period in Whitehead's life is marked primarily by three important works: An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge, The Concept of Nature, and The Principle of Relativity. At this stage Whitehead operates from a realistic frame of reference,

giving emphasis to the order of nature.² It is his desire to limit his concentration to this order of nature in order to develop an adequate philosophy of science, and this he was constrained to do by the collapse of the Newtonian philosophy of science.³ The fundamental doctrine developed in this stage is the doctrine of the extensiveness of events.⁴ Extension is asserted as the ultimate and intrinsic feature of actuality; "the continuity of nature arises from the continuity of extension."⁵ The majority of Whitehead's metaphysical doctrines are expressed in an under-developed manner in his philosophy of science and are later developed on the basis of his primary doctrine of the extensive nature of events.⁶ Ivor Leclerc indicates the essential

²cf., PNK p. 12-13ff.

³cf., A. N. Whitehead, The Principle of Relativity, p. 4.

⁴cf., Leclerc, "Whitehead and the Problem of Extension", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 58, p. 559.

⁵CN p. 59.

interest of this period and points to its relationship to the later metaphysical period.

In his early period, especially that covered by Principles of Natural Knowledge and Concept of Nature, Whitehead expressly adopted the scientific procedure of restricting his problems, dealing with only certain aspects of the concrete totality of existence, and thus deliberately abstracting from metaphysical considerations. Although aware that metaphysics was important, and even that his analysis had metaphysical implications, he determined to leave all this out of account. At that time he was fairly conversant with metaphysical thought, but was not himself a metaphysician in the sense of having a metaphysical system of his own. He felt that to admit metaphysical considerations would be obstructive to his endeavour, since traditional metaphysics had proved inadequate to the needs of science and as yet there was nothing to replace it. As opposed to this, he then considered the scientific procedure, of restricting and abstracting, to be both legitimate and fruitful in dealing with the problems of the philosophy of science.⁷

At the age of sixty-three, when most men are

⁶For differing views on the development of Whitehead's metaphysical position, cf., Ivor Leclerc, Whitehead's Metaphysics, p. 4ff.; Nathaniel Lawrence, "Dity in Whitehead's Philosophy", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 58; and J. B. Mengs, "Professor Whitehead's Philosophy", The Catholic World, 1932.

⁷Ivor Leclerc, "Whitehead's Philosophy", Review of Metaphysics, p. 85.

withdrawing from the creative responsibilities of life, Whitehead begins a new profession as a metaphysician. This new endeavour became physically possible by his appointment as Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University. With considerable zest he devoted himself to developing a metaphysical position that would offer a unifying foundation to all disciplines. It had been necessary to deal with the problems of mathematics and physics brought about by the fall of the Newtonian view. An attempt had been made to present a philosophy of science to replace the Newtonian foundation. Whitehead had come to realize that a philosophy of science was not enough; it was also necessary to develop a metaphysical system based on the new scientific insights to replace the fallen metaphysical system of the Newtonian world. The problem of continuity and change, of relating the one and the many, must be dealt with on a metaphysical level. On the basis of the quantum theory and the theory of relativity, Whitehead made "process" the key term for describing the nature of

reality. Continuity was no longer seen as pertaining to actuality but, rather, to potentiality.⁸ As a metaphysical term, "process" was not limited to the consideration of mathematical and physical scientific data but became an all-inclusive concept which served for Whitehead's treatment of "the adventure of ideas" within the "process of history".⁹ His metaphysical considerations were based on science, but now science was related to the on-going problems of the modern world. The problems of religion, of symbolism, of the function of reason, of nature and life, were now all inter-related within the metaphysical system.

Whitehead's greatness is not that he claimed to, or actually did, formulate a metaphysical system which would serve as a true and adequate metaphysical foundation for the universal problems of the modern

⁸cf., PR, p. 95.

⁹cf., A. H. Johnson, "Whitehead's Philosophy of History", Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 7.

age and the ages to come. "Philosophers can never hope finally to formulate these metaphysical first principles. Weakness of insight and deficiencies of language stand in the way inexorably."¹⁰ His vital contribution lies in the fact that he once again brought to the forefront the need for attempting to develop an adequate metaphysical system which would bring together all areas of human interest. Whitehead's greatness lies in the open-ended method he developed and presented, affording a foundation for the development of a metaphysical system for each age which will exhibit the true nature of process itself.

Some Basic Terms

Our primary consideration is with Whitehead's method, his doctrine of God, and his view of religion. It is impossible to separate these three topics completely from his metaphysical presentation. Some

¹⁰ PR, p. 6.

consideration will be given to the metaphysical content but, in order that our consideration does not become engulfed by the vastness of the metaphysical system, basic terms will be defined.

Two points should be borne in mind in considering Whitehead's terms. The first point is that Whitehead considers himself to belong to the philosophical tradition from Plato to the present day. "This nomenclature has been made up to conform to the condition, that, as a theory develops, its technical phraseology should grow out of the usages of the great masters who laid its foundation."¹¹ His purpose is to use the terms of historical philosophy wherever possible, though at times he fits the meanings to his own particular purpose.

The second point is Whitehead's distrust of language.¹² Language is the tool and at the same time

¹¹AI, p. 235.

¹²cf., W. M. Urban, "Elements of Unintelligibility in Whitehead's Metaphysics", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 35, p. 622ff.

the basic problem of philosophy.¹³

One source of vagueness is deficiency of language. We can see the variations of meaning; although we cannot verbalize them in any decisive, handy manner. Thus we cannot weave into a train of thought what we can apprehend in flashes. We are left with the deceptive identity of the repeated word.¹⁴

It is the job of philosophy to use the tool of language but never to allow this tool to become an 'absolute' or limiting factor in the search for true expression. The philosopher must constantly re-evaluate his language in order that the symbol "propose the general character of the universe required for that fact."¹⁵ Philosophical language is to be used within the historical tradition of philosophy, but the symbols are to be employed in a relative manner in order that they should not limit the philosophical enterprise.

¹³ cf., PR, p. 16-17.

¹⁴ A. N. Whitehead, "Analysis of Meaning", Science and Philosophy, p. 136. cf., D, p. 325, 364.

¹⁵ PR, p. 17.

Whitehead's terms and statements are not always clear and distinct. At times statements are clearer than one would expect. At other times he paints a picture with words in order that the reader may gain a feeling for that which he means to convey. Verbal contradictions seem to abound in Whiteheads' writing, if one does not read carefully and make close comparison of texts. William Christian offers an excellent insight into Whitehead's style, which if noted will be of service in understanding Whitehead's terms and the varied manner in which they are used.

Some of the obscurities can be seen through if one distinguishes three sorts of discourse. In some passages Whitehead is evoking and describing the concrete experiences he takes as his basic data. This we might call presystematic language. In others he is constructing and developing the concepts which compose his categorical scheme. This we might call systematic language. Elsewhere he uses these systematic terms to interpret sense experience, the order of nature, art, morality, or religion. Here he is applying his scheme, and we might call this post-systematic language. These phases of his exposition correspond to the three phases of an airplane flight, with which he compares speculative philosophy. It begins on the ground; it rises into the air; and it returns to earth. Many blunders can be avoided if we do not

mistake nonsystematic remarks for systematic ones.¹⁶

1. Actual entity: Actual entities are also termed actual occasions. This represents the final, real thing of which the world or universe is made. An actual entity is a 'drop of experience' which in itself constitutes its internal right-to-be. On the basis that actual entities are the only real things, the ontological principle is asserted. On the basis of this principle, all things are positively somewhere in actuality and relatively potential everywhere for the process of another actual entity.

This ontological principle means that actual entities are the only reasons; so that to search for a reason is to search for one or more actual entities. It follows that any condition to be satisfied by one actual entity in its process expresses a fact either about the 'real internal constitutions' of some other actual entities, or about the 'subjective aim' conditioning that process.¹⁷

¹⁶ William Christian, An Interpretation of Whitehead's Metaphysics, p. 3.

¹⁷ PR, p. 37.

2. Eternal object: If the first type or primary entity is a temporal actual entity, the second is an eternal object. "Any entity whose conceptual recognition does not involve a necessary reference to any definite actual entities of the temporal world is called an 'eternal object'."¹⁸ Eternal objects should be related to the 'Platonic form'. The function of an eternal object is to serve as a potentiality for actual entities. In other words God supplies to the becoming experience its 'subjective aim' in the form of an eternal object. The temporal actual entity is not responsible for formulating its subjective aim, although it is responsible for the way in which this aim is developed. An eternal object is neutral so far as it relates to its physical ingestion in any particular actual entity of the temporal world. Two points are to be noted. On the one hand an eternal object is an individual, which in its own non-temporal way is what

¹⁸PR, p. 70.

it is. On the other hand, an eternal object has a 'relational essence', which is to say that it cannot exist except in relation to other eternal objects, actuality generally, and particular temporal actual entities on the basis of ingressions.

3. Process: An actual entity, an experience, can be analyzed into functionings which make up its 'process of becoming'. These functionings point to the fact that an actual entity includes another entity as an object of its experience. This act of inclusion is called positive prehension. When an entity is excluded as an object relating to the process of becoming of that actual entity, this exclusion is called negative prehension. A prehension of a temporal actual entity is called a physical prehension. The eternal objects are pure, not actual potentials, and a prehension of an eternal object is called a conceptual prehension.¹⁹

¹⁹There is much general disagreement with

4. Feeling: Feeling is essential to the process of becoming because on the basis of feeling, prehensions are made and direction is given to the becoming of the actual occasion. The complex constitution of a feeling is analysable into five factors.

The factors are: (i) the 'subject' which feels, (ii) the 'initial data' which are to be felt, (iii) the 'elimination' in virtue of negative prehensions, (iv) the 'objective datum' which is felt, (v) the 'subjective form' which is how that subject feels that object datum.²⁰

In considering feeling, the lure for feeling must be included. In the subject's act of prehension, the Primordial Nature of God is prehended. The Primordial Nature of God (to be considered under term number seven) serves as a 'lure for feeling' in the process of

¹⁹Whitehead's interpretation of 'process'. cf., A. J. Reck, "Substance, Process, and Nature", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 55, p. 722; R. E. Winn, "Whitehead's Concept of Process", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 55, p. 712; and Blyth, "On Mr. Hartshorne's Understanding of Whitehead's Philosophy", Philosophical Review, Vol. 46, p. 527.

²⁰PR, p. 337-8. cf., R. C. Whittemore, "The Metaphysics of Whitehead's Feeling", Studies in Whitehead's Philosophy, p. 112; and M. H. Moore, "Mr. Whitehead's Philosophy", Philosophical Review, Vol. 40, p. 275.

the becoming of an actual entity. In other words, God is responsible for the beginning of the feeling process.

5. Concrescence: This is the process of the coming together into a unity of the different parts of the experience. In the process of feeling, the subject has developed an aim. When the aim of the actual entity occurs in a unity of experience, a concrescence has occurred. The term 'satisfaction' refers to the fulfillment of the aim which has occurred in the concrescence. At this stage a new actual entity occurs. When an actual entity occurs there is a new form in the world; it means that novelty has come into the process.

6. Objective Immortality:²¹ This term refers to the fact that after a temporal entity has reached its satisfaction, it perishes. In the state of perishing, the

²¹ cf., Rasbihary Das, The Philosophy of Whitehead, p. 182; and H. N. Lee, "Causal Efficacy and Continuity in Whitehead's Philosophy", Studies in Whitehead's Philosophy, p. 68. Both men disagree with Whitehead's doctrine of objective immortality.

actual entity enters in the nature of God into a state of objective immortality, in the sense that in this state of "being" it becomes an object of possible pre-hension for the process of becoming for other actual entities, including God. "It belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming'. This is the 'principle of relativity'."²²

7. God: God is an actual entity which is non-temporal. This means that God does not perish and become objectively immortal as temporal actual entities. God's nature can be discussed in three ways. The first is the Primordial Nature of God. In this nature God sustains all eternal objects. In other words, God contains in the eternal objects all the potential 'subjective aims' for temporal actual entities. Through this nature God supplies each becoming experience with an eternal object-subjective aim.²³ The second is the Consequent Nature of God. "This 'consequent nature' of

²²PR, p. 33.

²³cf., PR, p. 46.

God is the physical prehension by God of the actualities of the evolving universe."²⁴ In this way God saves the perishing actual entities in his own nature. The third is the Superjective Nature of God. "The 'superjective' nature of God is the character of the pragmatic value of his specific satisfaction qualifying the transcendent creativity in the various temporal instances."²⁵ This is the manner in which God works to bring about good or harmony in the universe instead of evil or destruction. This trinitarian view of God must not be taken to mean that God is three, instead of one concrete actual entity. These three natures of God must be taken into account at all times, or the nature of God is being considered in abstraction.

8. Creativity: Creativity "is that ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality."²⁶

²⁴PR, p. 134.

²⁵PR , p. 135.

²⁶PR, p. 47.

Creativity is without character or individuality of its own. It is the active, creative force of the universe, being conditioned by the objective immortality of the actual world and by God. By making creativity the ultimate basis of the universe, Whitehead rejects the mechanical view for which the ultimate category is that of cause and effect. Because of creativity, every actual entity, temporal or non-temporal, is to some degree self-creative. Every actual entity, being to some degree self-creative, is a novel being. On the basis of novelty, as stated before, an actual entity is a new form in the universe. The doctrine of creativity points to the fact that constantly new forms are being created and are perishing in the universe.

Foundation Principles of Whitehead's Method

In the introduction it was pointed out that Whitehead operates from a historical, scientific, and metaphysical perspective. A review of the interactions of these perspectives will be helpful in understanding

Whitehead's metaphysical presuppositions. From the historical perspective, Whitehead tries to show that real progress in history has depended on creative or speculative reason, an open-ended rational process. It is necessary to bear in mind what Whitehead means by the rational process. "Rationalism is the faith or hope that in experience all elements are intrinsically capable of exhibition as examples of general theory."²⁷ Whitehead places his hope and faith in rationalism, but he clearly asserts repeatedly that nothing rests on ultimate authority, that the final court of appeal is to the intrinsic reasonableness of the claims that are being made.²⁸

Within the history of ideas and the areas of philosophy, science and religion have tended mostly to limit this speculative rational process. Philosophy, being conditioned by mathematics, has centered on logical problems, basing its premises on the obvious in life.²⁹

²⁷PR, p. 67.

²⁸cf., PR, p. 63; AI, p. 230;
SMW, p. 179.

²⁹cf., AI, p. 105; PR, p. 16.

By placing its emphasis on the more obvious in life, it has failed in its purpose to explain the emergence of the more abstract from the more concrete.³⁰ In this development of thought, philosophy has separated itself and has been separated from scientific inquiry; thus, the great limitation of modern philosophy is that its endeavours have not thrown light on scientific principles. "A philosophical system should present an elucidation of concrete fact from which the sciences abstract. Also the sciences should find their principles in the concrete facts which a philosophic system presents."³¹ Philosophy cannot perform its full function so long as it remains separate from the thoughts and findings of any discipline. The great task of modern philosophy is to relate the one and the many.³² To accomplish this task, philosophy must perform its proper role of harmonising the

³⁰cf., PR, p. 30.

³¹AI, p. 150.

³²cf., D, p. 132.

various abstractions of methodological thought.³³

Science has come to limit itself to the positivistic school of thought, refusing to risk its findings to the method of speculation.³⁴ In this way, science has cut itself off from the other disciplines and has, therefore, not performed its proper function of supplying these other disciplines with information which would transcend the immediate scientific concern.

Science has never shaken off the impress of its origin in the historical revolt of the later Renaissance. It has remained predominantly an anti-rationalistic movement, based upon a naïve faith. . . Science repudiates philosophy. In other words, it has never cared to justify its faith or to explain its meanings.³⁵

In another statement Whitehead makes explicit the general inherent danger in modern science.

Its methodological procedure is exclusive and intolerant, and rightly so. It fixes attention on a definite group of abstractions, neglects everything else, and elicits every scrap of information and theory which is relevant to what it has retained.³⁶

³³cf., SMW, p. 24.

³⁴cf., AI, p. 120; FR, p. 11

³⁵SMW, p. 22.

³⁶SMW, p. 179.

Religion has served as another limiting factor to the speculative process. The limitations of religion will be considered in a later section. It will suffice for the present to say that in general religion has limited itself to tradition, cutting itself off from all disciplines which might effectively question the validity of the traditional 'truths' and resting its case against speculation and other insights on 'absolute' dogmas.³⁷

To put the matter in another way, these three spheres have tried in their different ways to separate the mind from the body, and vice versa.³⁸ Emotion and reason have not been seen properly as a part of the same total process of human understanding. Man has been presented with a fragmented internal and external universe; on the one hand, the mind is separated ultimately from the body, and on the other, reason is separated

³⁷ cf., FR, p. 34.

³⁸ cf., AF, p. 47.

from emotion. This situation has been made worse by the assertion, on the part of philosophy and theology, of secret insight into a God outside the universe who is responsible for the fragmented condition but unconditioned by the fragmented situation. With each discipline working with its own method separately, the speculative process has been limited; and, thus, the progressive development of civilization has been limited. The need of the day is for a return to a true speculation which will combine all the disciplines by offering a method which will draw together all methods while at the same time transcending the procedure and limiting effect of method itself. History has shown that the progress of civilization occurs because of the process of creative speculation. This happens because men are willing to risk themselves and the old order with its limited method. Creative speculation is the process which joins the body and the mind, in order that man can experience and begin to understand true 'feeling'.³⁹ Whitehead

³⁹ cf., MT, p. 99ff.

intends his philosophy to serve this process of experience and understanding. At the same time he cautions, lest his philosophy or method be used as a dogma which holds back the true process.

From his trinitarian perspective, Whitehead asserts that all judgments are made from some general systematic metaphysical scheme.⁴⁰ By this he means that all thought operates from some metaphysical position, no matter how inadequate be the position.

Whitehead's own philosophical method and position presupposes a metaphysical scheme. Aspects of the presuppositions of this scheme will be presented. Although he is basically concerned with the individual, his view of the universe offers a good starting-point in understanding his metaphysical presupposition.

There is no reason to hold that confusion is less fundamental than is order. Our task is to evolve a general concept which allows room for both; and which also suggests the path for the enlargement

⁴⁰cf., PR, p. 16; AI, p. 3.

of our penetration. My suggestion is that we start from the notion of two aspects of the Universe. It includes a factor of unity, involving in its essence the connexity of things, unity of purpose, and unity of enjoyment. The whole notion of importance is referent to this ultimate unity. There is also equally fundamental in the Universe, a factor of multiplicity. There are many actualities, each with its own experience, enjoying individually, and yet requiring each other.

Any description of the unity will require the many actualities; and any description of the many will require the notion of the unity from which importance and purpose is derived. By reason of the essential individuality of the many things, there are conflicts of finite realizations. Thus the summation of the many into the one, and the derivation of importance from the one into many, involves the notion of disorder, of conflict, of frustration.

These are the primary aspects of the universe which common sense brooding over the aspects of existence hands over to philosophy for elucidation into some coherence of understanding.⁴¹

Man is part of this universe, and in no way can he experience except as part of the universe. "The doctrine that I maintain is that neither physical nature nor life can be understood unless we fuse them together as essential factors in the composition of 'really real' things

⁴¹MT, p. 70-71.

whose inter-connections and individual characters constitute the universe."⁴² Everything that man knows about himself in the universe is through experience. This experience is to be understood as a total body-experience--a combination of extensive body-reason and extensive body-emotion.⁴³ The total body never experiences itself in isolation but always in relation to the universe. Thus all experience has two sides: (1) the individual self, and (2) its signification in the universe.⁴⁴ Man is able to understand himself in relation to the universe by the process of creative imagination, using Whitehead's method which will be discussed later. Without this process, he is able only to formulate dogmatic propositions from a limited perspective. This process also rests on the pre-supposition that there are universal

⁴²MT, p. 205.

⁴³cf., MT, p. 156; FR, p. 22ff;
PR, p. 182.

⁴⁴cf., MT, p. 151.

principles, eternal objects, by which man's experience is conditioned.⁴⁵ Whitehead assumes that all experience is connected and inter-related, so that the basic premises of one experience can be used to help understand the pattern of other experience. All experience can be connected and understood on the basis of general principles.

Whitehead states these general principles as metaphysical assumptions. 'Presentational immediacy' is defined as "the 'mode' in which the contemporary world is consciously prehended as a continuum of extensive relations."⁴⁶ On the basis of presentational immediacy, two metaphysical assumptions are asserted.

(1) The first is "that the actual world, in so far as it is a community of entities which are settled, actual, and already become, conditions and limits the potentiality for creativeness beyond itself."⁴⁷ (2) "The second metaphysical assumption is that the real potentialities

⁴⁵ Cf., PR, p. 76.

⁴⁶ PR, p. 95.

⁴⁷ PR, p. 101.

relative to all standpoints are coordinated as diverse determinations of one extensive continuum."⁴⁸ From the assumption that no static maintenance of perfection is possible, Whitehead asserts three metaphysical principles. "One principle is that the very essence of real actuality--that is, of the complete real--is process. Thus each actual thing is only to be understood in terms of its becoming and perishing."⁴⁹ The second metaphysical principle "is the doctrine that any occasion of actuality is in its own nature finite. There is no totality which is the harmony of all perfections. Whatever is realized in any one occasion of experience necessarily excludes the unbounded welter of contrary possibilities. There are always 'others', which might have been and are not."⁵⁰ The third principle is that:

The individual, real facts of the past lie at the base of our immediate experience in the present.

⁴⁸PR, p. 103.

⁴⁹AI, p. 273-4.

⁵⁰AI, p. 275.

They are the reality from which the occasion springs, the reality from which it derives its source of emotion, from which it inherits its purpose, to which it directs its passions. At the base of experience there is a welter of feeling, derived from individual realities or directed towards them. Thus for strength of experience we require to discriminate the component factors, each as an individual 'It' with its own significance.⁵¹

As Whitehead develops his system of categories, other metaphysical principles are presented, but the later principles are basically derived from these fundamental principles. The basic ones presented should serve our purpose for considering his method.

Structure of Whitehead's Method

Whitehead's method is a method of speculative reason for speculative philosophy. His method is an attempt to transcend the limiting methods of particular disciplines. Previously, philosophy has been divided into schools of rationalism, empiricism and idealism - even if there has seldom been an absolute division.

⁵¹AI, p. 279.

Whitehead rejects the position of idealism because it has not taken seriously the scientific developments and insights of the modern period.⁵² It is asserted that both rationalism and empiricism have contributed isolated insights, but they have been limited by the narrowness of their basic presuppositions and methods. Whitehead's method is to combine rationalism and empiricism, and by this combination to do away with the limiting factors of each position. Emphasis is not given to philosophy but to speculative philosophy. The task of "speculative philosophy is the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, and necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted."⁵³ By using the terms 'coherent' and 'logical', he points

⁵² Cf., Yale Review, Vol. 23. Cohen and Urban maintain that Whitehead has retained the more significant insights of traditional idealism. Cf., M. R. Cohen, "An Adventurous Philosopher", Yale Review, Vol. 23, p. 174; and W. M. Urban, "Elements of Unintelligibility in Whitehead's Metaphysics", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 35, p. 637.

⁵³ PR, p. 4.

to the rational side of the method. This rational side permits the possibility of an understanding of experience. There is also an empirical side of the method, which can be expressed by the terms 'applicable' and 'adequate'. The empirical side of the method asserts that all rational postulates must be tested in experience according to their applicability or adequacy.

Whitehead has developed his method out of the felt need that modern man, especially in the sciences and religion, needs a more adequate foundation for gaining an insight into the nature of the universe. He asserts that "the main evidence that a methodology is worn out comes when progress within it no longer deals with main issues."⁵⁴ It was evident to Whitehead that the method of modern science had begun to wear out. It has been the purpose of the method of science to fix attention on a definite group of abstractions, neglecting everything else, and eliciting every scrap of information and theory

⁵⁴ FR, p. 13.

relevant to what is retained. Within limits, this method is valid and has proved successful. On the basis of this method, however, a dangerous fallacy has occurred which "is to make observations upon one scale of magnitude and to translate their results into laws valid for another scale."⁵⁵ Another limitation of science, from the perspective of particular scientific fields, has been its indifference to great areas of data and the possibility of larger amounts of future data. So long as the relevance of evidence is dictated by theory, it is not possible to prove or disprove a theory by evidence which the theory dismisses as irrelevant. Science in its limiting functions has shown the need for a more open-ended method which will keep the theory from functioning as a restrictive factor in the evaluation of what is relevant data.⁵⁶ "The science of the future depends for

⁵⁵A. N. Whitehead, "Study of the Past--Its Use and Danger", Science and Philosophy, p. 165.

⁵⁶cf., AI, p. 22.

its ready progress upon the antecedent elucidation of hypothetical complexities of connection, as yet unobserved in nature."⁵⁷ Reference will be made later to the limitation of religion and its method. Whitehead evaluates the contribution of science and religion, realizing them both to be vital, and asserts the need for a method that will offer more adequate service to mankind. Our understanding has revealed an extremely complex state of existence, and it is necessary for man to have adequate tools for considering every possibility in order that he may live more fully.

We need to entertain every prospect of novelty, every chance that could result in new combinations. But at the same time we need to entertain those with sceptical examination, and subject them to the most impartial scrutiny, for the probability is that nine hundred and ninety-nine of them will come to nothing, either because worthless in themselves or because we shall not know how to elicit their values; but we had better entertain them all, however sceptically, for the thousandth idea may be the one that will change the world.⁵⁸

⁵⁷AI, p. 156.

⁵⁸D, p. 280.

The spirit of the speculative method is that of curiosity going on an adventure.⁵⁹ Curiosity is the craving of reason that the facts discriminated in experience be understood.

It means the refusal to be satisfied with the bare welter of fact, or even with the bare habit of routine. The first step in science and philosophy has been made when it is grasped that every routine exemplifies a principle which is capable of statement in abstraction from its particular exemplifications. The curiosity, which is the gadfly driving civilization from its ancient safeties, is the desire to state the principles in their abstraction. In this curiosity there is a ruthless element which in the end disturbs.⁶⁰

Even though Whitehead gives great attention to the need for speculative thought, he is careful to balance the hope offered in his method by his evaluation of the possibility of proof.

Unless proof has produced self-evidence and thereby rendered itself unnecessary, it has issued in a second-rate state of mind, producing action devoid of understanding. Self-evidence is the basic fact on which all greatness supports itself. But 'proof' is one of the routes by which self-evidence is often obtained. . . It follows that philosophy,

⁵⁹ cf., SMW, p. 185. ⁶⁰ AI, p. 145.

in any proper sense of the term, cannot be proved. For proof is based upon abstraction. Philosophy is either self-evident, or it is not philosophy. . . . The aim of philosophy is sheer disclosure.⁶¹

Speculative philosophy cannot be proved in the normally accepted sense because its task is disclosure. This does not relieve speculative generalizations from the responsibility of being tested by the empirical and rational means, previously mentioned. At the same time man does himself a great injustice if he dismisses the speculative process because it does not conform to the purely empirical school. The history of civilization has shown that fear of error is the death of progress, and that an open-ended search for truth is the backbone of progress.⁶² If progress is man's goal, history has clearly shown that the only hope for attaining this goal lies in speculative process. "Abstract speculation has been the salvation of the world--speculation which made systems and then transcended them, speculations

⁶¹MT, p. 66-67.

⁶²cf., MT, p. 22.

which ventured to the furthest limit of abstraction. To set limits to speculation is treason to the future."⁶³

Whitehead's method is different in important respects from other philosophical methods. Thus Whitehead's method differs from the procedure of rationalism. Historically, one major view has been that the task of philosophy is to indicate premises which are certain, clear, and distinct, and then on the basis of these premises to develop a deductive system of thought.⁶⁴ This represents the more logical school of philosophy which follows the pattern of mathematics. The influence of mathematics was positive in that it provided reason with a more adequate means of testing, freeing the reasoning process "from its sole dependence on mystic vision and fanciful suggestion."⁶⁵ It is assumed by this school that the premises can be discerned easily, and the major responsibility rests in the deductive

⁶³ FR, p. 60.

⁶⁴ cf., PR, p. 12.

⁶⁵ FR, p. 32.

process. Whitehead asserts that man cannot know easily, clear and distinct premises which are of ultimate concern. The premises that are obvious are of little value, and indeed generally obscure for man what are the really important premises. The job of philosophy is then shifted from the deductive concern to the search for the premises that are not obvious but are of essential importance.

The empirical character of Whitehead's position is often misunderstood by identifying it with the more traditional forms of dogmatic empiricism. This misunderstanding can be corrected by taking seriously Whitehead's assertion:

The unempirical character of the philosophical school derived from Hume cannot be too often insisted upon. The true empirical doctrine is that physical feelings are in their origin vectors, and that the genetic process of concrescence introduces the elements which emphasize privacy.⁶⁶

Whitehead points out that "the philosophy of organism

⁶⁶ PR, p. 481.

is apt to emphasize just those elements in the writings of the masters which subsequent systematizers have put aside."⁶⁷ This he does, in developing the empirical character of his position in relation to Locke and Hume. Space will not permit a full consideration of Whitehead's evaluation of the relation of process philosophy to traditional empiricism, but we will try to indicate the general trend of his thought.⁶⁸

Whitehead points out that John Locke, in his later writings, most fully anticipated the main position of process philosophy.⁶⁹ Locke's nearest approach to the process position occurred when he said that the mind is furnished with a great number of simple ideas via the senses. The simple ideas often go together and

⁶⁷PR, chap. V.

⁶⁸For a fuller consideration of this point, cf., P. D. Wightman, "Whitehead's Empiricism", The Relevance of Whitehead, pp. 335-50.

⁶⁹cf., PR, chap. V. cf., John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bk, IV, Chap. VI, Sec. 11.

form more complex ideas. Exterior things are responsible for the fact that minds entertain these ideas. Locke did not develop this view adequately, but it laid the foundation for bridging the separation between mind and eternal reality. Whitehead developed this line of reasoning in terms of "the vector character of primary feelings."⁷⁰ Locke also insisted that the notion of 'substance' involved the notion of 'power'. Process philosophy develops this insight and "holds that in order to understand 'power', we must have a correct notion of how each individual actual entity contributes to the datum from which its successors arise and to which they must conform."⁷¹ His view of 'power' made possible 'change', but "Locke misses one essential doctrine, namely, that the doctrine of internal relations makes it possible to attribute 'change' to any actual entity."⁷² Whitehead's basic difference from

⁷⁰PR, p. 86.

⁷¹PR, p. 88.

⁷²PR, p. 92.

Locke is indicated by his criticism that Locke inherited, from Descartes, the view of "dualism whereby minds are one kind of particulars, and natural entities are another kind of particulars, and also the subject-predicate dogma."⁷³ Thus, his philosophy is limited by the unconscious and uncriticized assumption "that logical simplicity can be identified with priority in the process constituting an experient occasion."⁷⁴ For Whitehead, the more conservative side of Locke's anti-metaphysical position is an inadequate empirical approach, but some of his less developed thoughts point the way towards a more adequate empiricism.

Locke enunciates the main doctrines of the philosophy of organism, namely: the principle of relativity; the relational character of eternal objects, whereby they constitute the forms of the objectifications of actual entities for each other; the composite character of an actual entity (i.e. a substance); the notion of 'power' as making a principal ingredient in that of actual entity (substance). In this latter notion, Locke adumbrates both the ontological principle, and also

⁷³PR, p. 84.

⁷⁴PR, p. 85.

the principle that the 'power' of one actual entity on the other is simply how the former is objectified in the constitution of the other.⁷⁵

Whitehead believes the more sceptical, dogmatic empiricism of Hume to be a violation of empiricism, because it is based on the more conservative side of Locke's thoughts. Hume's sceptical reduction of knowledge is based on the tacit presupposition of the subject-mind with its contents as predicates.⁷⁶ Locke's use of the term 'idea', making room for complex ideas, is rejected and replaced by Hume with the more limited notion of a simple idea derived from simple impressions. In this way he re-asserts the 'fallacy of simple location'. Yet, as Hume develops his position, the doctrine of 'repetition' becomes essential.

The notion of 'simple location' is inconsistent with any admission of 'repetition'; Hume's difficulties arise from the fact that he starts with simple locations and ends with repetition. In the organic

⁷⁵PR, p. 91.

⁷⁶cf., PR, p. 81. Whitehead asserts that Hume actually repudiates this presupposition.

philosophy the notion of repetition is fundamental. The doctrine of objectification is an endeavor to express how what is settled in actuality is repeated under limitations, so as to be 'given' for immediacy. Later, in discussing 'time', this doctrine will be termed the doctrine of 'objective immortality.'⁷⁷

The attempt to combine these two doctrines is doomed to failure, and it is this which gives rise to all Hume's problems.⁷⁸ In trying to deal with this combination, he places "cause and effect" beyond the immediate impression of our memory and our sense. Operating within this conflict of doctrine, Hume also does not deal with the problem of "novel compound idea" and "imaginative freedom."⁷⁹ His inconsistency becomes compounded because he is not able entirely to disregard common sense.⁸⁰ Whitehead devotes much time to Hume's common sense assertion that the eye sees, implying that what Hume really means by "see" is "feel". Whitehead is trying to get away from the abstract mechanical

⁷⁷PR, p. 208.

⁷⁸cf., PR, p. 208.

⁷⁹cf., PR, p. 201.

⁸⁰cf., PR, p. 210.

associations of 'impression' in order to point out that in normal unsophisticated experience every perception has a 'feeling-tone.'

The crude aboriginal character of direct perception is inheritance. What is inherited is feeling-tone with evidence of its origin: in other words, vector feeling-tone. In the higher grades of perception vague feeling-tone differentiates itself into various types of sense--those of touch, sight, smell, etc.--each transmuted into a definite prehension of tonal contemporary nexus by the final percipient.⁸¹

Hume does not adequately take into account the complex nature of sense experience and, therefore, presents a false empirical position. For Whitehead, an adequate empirical approach must be based on his dictum: "How an actual entity becomes constitutes what that actual entity is."⁸²

Even though Hume's empiricism is limited by the doctrine of 'simple location', his philosophy does make a marked contribution to the philosophy of organism.

⁸¹PR, p. 182.

⁸²PR, p. 34.

His most important contribution is proclaiming "the bankruptcy of morphology."

Hume's train of thought unwittingly emphasizes 'process'. His very scepticism is nothing but the discovery that there is something in the world which cannot be expressed in analytic propositions. Hume discovered that "We murder to dissect." He did not say this, because he belonged to the mid-eighteenth century; and so left the remark to Wordsworth. But, in effect, Hume discovered that an actual entity is at once a process, and is atomic; so that in no sense is it the sum of its parts. Hume proclaimed the bankruptcy of morphology.⁸³

Hume's account of process is described as occurring within "the soul". In process philosophy, Hume's "soul" and Hume's and Locke's "mind" are designated either as "the actual entity" or as "the actual occasion".⁸⁴ The philosophy of organism also uses Hume's doctrine of "feeling", extending it into the doctrine of 'subjective form'.⁸⁵ Whitehead does not assert that he has solved the difficulty which puzzled Hume, but he does

⁸³PR, p. 212-3.

⁸⁴cf., PR, p. 213.

⁸⁵cf., PR, p. 215.

believe that his metaphysical position offers the possibility of complete solution.

Hume's philosophy found nothing in any single instance to justify the mind's expectation. Accordingly he was reduced to explaining the origin of the mind's expectation otherwise than by its rational justification. It follows, that if we are to get out of Hume's difficulty, we must find something in each single instance, which would justify the belief. The key to the mystery is not to be found in the accumulation of instances, but in the intrinsic character of each instance. When we have found that, we will have struck at the heart of Hume's argument.⁸⁶

The empirical character of Whitehead's position is actually an alteration of the traditional empiricism associated with Locke and Hume.⁸⁷ Whitehead's empiricism is based on the experience of the total organism in relation to the event. This is an inversion of the emphasis by Hume upon a simple idea derived from a simple impression. Hume pointed out the complex character of

⁸⁶ A. N. Whitehead, "Uniformity and Contingency", Science and Philosophy, pp. 153-4.

⁸⁷ It is important to note that when the terms "empirical" or "empiricism" are used in connection with Whitehead, Wieman, Meland or the general process position they refer neither to the position of Locke nor of Hume but, rather, are to be considered within the context of this altered process character of empiricism.

perception, according to the doctrine of secondary quality. This was tacitly presupposed by Locke in his discussion of color as a secondary quality. Considering the complex character of perception, Whitehead draws the conclusion that the character of sense perception is superficial.

. . . sense-perception for all its practical importance is very superficial in its disclosure of the nature of things. . . My quarrel with modern Epistemology concerns its exclusive stress upon sense-perception for the provision of data respecting Nature. Sense-perception does not provide the data in terms of which we interpret it.⁸⁸

For Whitehead, theory dictates method, and his basic affirmation is of process which asserts the interrelatedness of experience and the development from simple events to more complex events. He alters Locke's and Hume's doctrine of sensationalism by placing the emphasis upon the whole organism related to the experience instead of the five senses.⁸⁹ By giving emphasis to the

⁸⁸MT, p. 181-2. cf., AI, p. 279.

⁸⁹cf., AI, p. 226.

relatedness of the whole organism, Whitehead attempts to take into account the depth feeling-tones of the experience and the intuitions which are given in the total experience. In taking such a stance, Whitehead is altering Hume's introspective analysis by a primary aesthetic emphasis within the context of his process theory. This theory attempts to take into account the cosmological and environmental factors which condition the experience.⁹⁰ For Whitehead there is a depth, indeed an infinitude of actuality, which is not revealed by the superficial level of sense perception.

In other words, reaction to the environment is not in proportion to clarity of sensory experience. Any such doctrine would sweep away the whole of modern physical science as being expressed in terms of irrelevancies. Reaction does not depend upon sense-experience for its initiation.

Now confine the argument to human experience, which we know at first hand. This experience does not depend for its excellence simply upon clarity of sense-experience. The specialist in clarity, sinks to an animal level--the hound for smell, the eagle for sight.

⁹⁰ cf., AI, p. 227.

Human beings are amateurs in sense-experience. The direct, vivid clarity does not dominate so as to obscure the infinite variety involved in the composition of reality. The sense-experience is an abstraction which illustrates and stimulates the completeness of actuality. It increases importance. But the importance thus elicited is more than a colour-scheme of red, white, and blue. It involves the infinitude of actuality, hidden in its finitude of realization.⁹¹

Whitehead asserts the necessity for man to go on a speculative adventure in order to understand the depth of experience. By placing his emphasis upon cosmology and speculative philosophy, within the context of his process theory, Whitehead asserts an empirical emphasis which attempts to go beyond the superficial level of sense-experience expressed in dogmatic empiricism. Whitehead repudiates many habits of philosophical thought, including dogmatic empiricism. These may be listed as:

- (1) The distrust of speculative philosophy.
- (ii) The trust in language as an adequate expression of propositions.

⁹¹MT, p. 154.

- (iii) The mode of philosophical thought which implies, and is implied by, the faculty-psychology.
- (iv) The subject-predicate form of expression.
- (v) The sensationalist doctrine of perception.
- (vi) The doctrine of vacuous actuality.
- (vii) The Kantian doctrine of the objective world as a theoretical construct from purely subjective experience.
- (viii) Arbitrary deductions in ex absurdo arguments.
- (ix) Belief that logical inconsistencies can indicate anything else than some antecedent errors.⁹²

Whitehead designates his method for this task of speculative philosophy to be the method of 'imaginative rationalization',⁹³ or in other words the method of 'descriptive generalization'.⁹⁴ This method might well be called the method of empirical analysis and speculative generalization. Based on an analysis of experience, philosophical generalizations are postulated through the use of creative imagination. Then through an empirical process these generalizations are tested in experience to see if they are applicable and adequate.

⁹² PR, chap. viii.

⁹³ cf., PR, p. 7.

⁹⁴ cf., PR, p. 15.

In line with his metaphysical presuppositions, Whitehead's method begins with man in the actual world. Man in experience is considered from different perspectives. One perspective is that which views man in general as he tries to develop the 'art of life'. "The art of life is first to be alive, secondly to be alive in a satisfactory way, and thirdly to acquire an increase in satisfaction."⁹⁵ The history of civilization has shown that man has struggled with these three stages of development in order fully to develop his life. As man has struggled to acquire an increase in his satisfaction, he has been guided by a desire and purpose for this increase. Any method that omits or does not allow for this purpose serves as a limiting factor in man's development.

An infusion of novelty occurs in each stage in the progressive art of life, making possible the fulfillment of that stage, while giving direction to the

⁹⁵FR, p. 5.

next stage. In other words, each stage in developing the art of life needs its own method. As one stage is fulfilled, it is necessary that a new and more adequate method develop as the foundation and directional force for the next stage. This new method is made possible as the old method includes and is transformed by the infusion of novelty into the situation.⁹⁶ Reason is essential to this development of the art of life. Man is able to move from one stage to another because of the functioning of his reason; "the primary function of Reason is the direction of the attack on the environment."⁹⁷

The essence of Reason in its lowliest forms is its judgement upon flashes of novelty which is relevant to appetition but not yet to action. In the stabilized life there is no room for Reason. The methodology has sunk from a method of novelty into a method of repetition. Reason is the organ of emphasis upon novelty. It provides the judgement by which realization in idea obtains the emphasis by which it passes into realization in purpose, and thence its realization in fact.⁹⁸

⁹⁶cf., FR, p. 14.

⁹⁷FR, p. 5.

⁹⁸FR, p. 15.

There is contrast within the scope of method as it develops, and the good life is attained by the enjoyment of the contrast. Within this development, man's appetition is working within a framework of order, which makes it possible for reason working within this order to provide a direction of 'the upward trend'. Thus, reason and purpose cannot be separated. When reason operates within a method that includes novelty and purpose, an upward direction is given in the struggle for the art of life. The force working against reason is 'fatigue'. "Fatigue is the antithesis of Reason. . . Fatigue means the operation of excluding the impulse towards novelty."⁹⁹ The goal of the method is to exclude the force of fatigue by basing the method on Reason functioning within a situation which includes novelty, making possible an upward purpose for man in the art of life.

⁹⁹FR, p. 18.

At another time, Whitehead's method begins with man viewing the world through his immediate experience and trying to understand what it means. By thought, he attempts to make clear his immediate experience. "The starting point for thought is the analytic observation of components of the experience."¹⁰⁰ At this point, and at all points, the use of language is of essential importance. Words must be used and tested to be sure that they represent the most adequate mode of expressing what is meant to be conveyed. One can never observe or express the total actual world. The mistake comes as the attempt is made to pin down what the world means to the experiences we have. Whitehead asserts that this is the falacy of the Baconian method of induction. What is needed in trying to understand experience is imagination and analysis and not a resting on obvious but unimportant premises. What is essential is to develop adequate general premises in order to understand the experience and

¹⁰⁰PR, p. 6.

its relation to other experiences. In order that we may see the relationship of one experience to other experiences, an analysis of the experience into its different parts is necessary. It is important that this analysis be done in a systematic fashion, using language expressive of the situation. On the basis of analysis and the free play of imagination, controlled by the requirements of coherence and logic, philosophical generalizations are formulated from the observed experience. After generalizations are developed concerning the experience, they must be tested empirically, to see if they comply with the actual world. The value of the philosophical generalization is limited, if it does not comply with the actual world of the particular experience and other experiences. At the same time the generalization is limited if it is not interesting; "it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true."¹⁰¹ If a generalization is to provide

¹⁰¹AI, p. 243.

the maximum benefit, it must apply to reality, while at the same time it must be interesting. Whitehead describes this process in the following manner:

The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight into the air of imaginative generalisation; and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation. The reason for the success of this method of imaginative rationalization is that, when the method of difference fails, factors which are constantly present may yet be observed under the influence of imaginative thought. Such thought supplies the differences which the direct observation lacks.¹⁰²

In order that imaginative construction may perform its function, it must adhere to disciplined conditions. "This construction must have its origin in the generalization of particular factors discerned in particular topics of human interest."¹⁰³ A philosophical generalization is set forth on the basis of general observation from the perspective of some particular topic of human interest.

¹⁰²PR, p. 7.

¹⁰³PR, p. 7.

Philosophic thought has to start from some limited section of our experience--from epistemology, or from natural science, or from theology, or from mathematics. Also the investigation always retains the taint of its starting point. Every starting point has its merits, and its selection must depend upon the individual philosopher.¹⁰⁴

This topic of human interest, whether it be theology, physics, or history, affords the observer a theory or 'working hypothesis' from which to consider the experience.¹⁰⁵ Without a 'working hypothesis' the observation is not directed, and the observer cannot know

¹⁰⁴A. N. Whitehead, "Analysis of Meaning", Science and Philosophy, p. 138.

¹⁰⁵cf., A. N. Whitehead, "Remarks", Philosophical Review, Vol. 46. It is Whitehead's contention that you can start from any area of human interest with his method. "My own belief is that at the present the most fruitful, because the most neglected, starting point is that section of value-theory which we term aesthetics. Our enjoyment of the values of human art, or of natural beauty, our horror at the obvious vulgarities and defacements which force themselves upon us--all these modes of experience are sufficiently abstracted to relatively obvious. And yet evidently they disclose the very meaning of things." (p. 184-5) Though it is not our purpose to develop Whitehead's method in relation to his aesthetic views, it is important to note that he places great emphasis upon aesthetics. It is because every man to some degree is involved with aesthetic appreciation that Whitehead contends that his method is open to use by all men.

what to look for in the experience. Whitehead strongly insists upon this doctrine: "Such an hypothesis directs observation, and decides on the mutual relevance of various types of evidence. In short, it prescribes method. To venture upon productive thought without such an explicit theory is to abandon one-self to the doctrines derived from one's grandfather."¹⁰⁶

It is not enough to show that a philosophical generalization is adequate in its particular area of human interest. "The success of the imaginative experiment is always to be tested by the applicability of its results beyond the restricted locus from which it originated."¹⁰⁷ It is necessary to test a philosophical generalization which is based on one area of human interest in other areas of human interest. By this method of cross-testing, a generalization should show, if it is adequate, that all experiences are connected and

¹⁰⁶AI, p. 223.

¹⁰⁷PR, p. 8.

inter-related. In this way the basic premises of one experience can be used to help understand the patterns of other experiences. This aspect of the method supports Whitehead's presupposition that all experiences can be connected and understood on the basis of general premises. It also protects his method from a fallacy attributed to other methods; "since all things are connected, any system which omits some things must necessarily suffer from such limitations."¹⁰⁸ It is Whitehead's purpose to have his method begin with a particular area of interest, but not to be limited by the traditional method of that area. He overcomes this potential limitation by requiring that generalizations be made on the basis of the available evidence from the perspective of one particular area and then that these generalizations be tested from the perspective of other areas of interest. In this way, all areas of human interest and insights are called upon to participate in

¹⁰⁸ MT, p. 101-2.

the development of principles which will transcend their own area of concern.

For imaginative construction to be adequate, it must also seek two rationalistic ideals, coherence and logical perfection. Without coherence, there is the arbitrary disconnection of basic principles. "The coherence, which the system seeks to preserve, is the discovery that the process, or concrescence, of any actual entity involves the other actual entities among its components. In this way, the obvious solidarity of the world receives its explanation."¹⁰⁹ It is very difficult to develop the scheme into a logical truth. Logical perfection should be the goal; at the same time the logical propositions must always be under review and never used as absolute logical statements. "The scheme should therefore be stated with the utmost precision and definiteness, to allow for such argumentation."¹¹⁰ A philosophical generalization without these

¹⁰⁹ PR, p. 10.

¹¹⁰ PR, p. 13.

ideals may not be true to the observed experience and, thus, may not be related logically to other areas of human interest. Whitehead asserts that the lack of these ideals gives rise to the chief error in philosophy, which is overstatement. There are two forms of overstatement. The first is called 'the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.'

One form is what I have termed elsewhere, the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness.' This fallacy consists in neglecting the degree of abstraction involved when an actual entity is considered merely so far as it exemplifies certain categories of thought. There are aspects of actualities which are simply ignored so long as we restrict thought to these categories. Thus the success of a philosophy is to be measured by its comparative avoidance of this fallacy, when thought is restricted within its categories.¹¹¹

Here the generalization does not take into account all aspects of the observed experience, and thus forms its observations on the basis of restricted insight. The generalization is not coherent with what is actually given. "The other form of overstatement consists in a

¹¹¹PR, p. 11.

false estimate of logical procedure in respect to certainty, and in respect to premises."¹¹² The generalization cannot claim tentative certainty until it has been logically tested in a variety of areas of human interest. Without these ideals, adequate philosophical generalizations are developed on the basis of chance. Generalizations based on chance are often presented as dogmatic statements of what is obvious. Such generalizations do not take into consideration the complexity of reality and are inadequate. Adequate philosophical generalizations can only be tentative formulations of ultimate generalities. The purpose of Whitehead's method is to afford a transcendence of what is obvious in order that adequate philosophical generalizations can be established. The philosophical generalizations are never final, but always open to new tests based on new observation and generalization. Although no rationalistic scheme offers absolute certainty, it should be kept

¹¹²PK, p. 11.

in mind that "the verification of a rationalistic scheme is to be sought in its general success, and not in the peculiar certainty, or initial clarity, of its first principles."¹¹³ On the basis of the novelty of experience and observation, philosophical generalizations offer new insight into the structure of life. Whitehead offers a summary statement which describes the way in which his method of speculative reason brings together the empirical and rational interests without their limitations in order to gain this new insight into the structure of life.

The speculative Reason works in two ways so as to submit itself to the authority of facts without loss of its mission to transcend the existing analysis of facts. In one way it accepts the limitations of a special topic, such as a science or a practical methodology. It then seeks speculatively to enlarge and recast the categorical ideas within the limits of that topic. This is speculative Reason in its closest alliance with the methodological Reason.

In the other way, it seeks to build a cosmology expressing the general nature of the world as disclosed in human interest. It has already been

¹¹³PR, p. 12.

pointed out, that in order to keep such a cosmology in contact with reality account must be taken of the welter of established institutions constituting the structures of human society throughout the ages. It is only in this way that we can appeal to the widespread effective elements in the experience of mankind. What those institutions stood for in the experience of their contemporaries, 114 represent the massive facts of ultimate authority.

The final test of a philosophical position is not finality but progress. Generalizations cannot be limited to specific areas of human interest, and thus become dogmas which are important but limited truth. If generalizations are proved to be final, they are inadequate because they do not afford insight into the progressive character of the universe. What is needed is the development of a scheme of ideas that can serve as the most general interpretative system for experience. It is only by developing ideas into a system that the true adjustment of ideas can be explored, that they can be properly investigated and tested in order to establish their tenability as

¹¹⁴FR, p. 68-9.

metaphysical ultimates. Whitehead asserts this view when he says that "philosophy will not regain its proper status until the gradual elaboration of categorical schemes, definitely stated at each stage of progress, is recognized as its proper objective."¹¹⁵

Whitehead's method serves as the tool in his attempt to elaborate a metaphysical scheme, which is as detailed as possible, and in light of his scheme, to investigate the major philosophical problems. This scheme is always subject to the tests of coherence, consistency, universality, applicability, and adequacy. Yet, Whitehead's method for speculative Reason is different from other methods in that it is a method which is supposed to make possible the transcendence of the limitations of method itself.¹¹⁶ On the one hand, this means that this method makes possible the development of a new method. "The speculative Reason

¹¹⁵ FR, p. 12.

¹¹⁶ cf., Justus Buchler, The Concept of Method, pp. 169-71.

produces that accumulation of theoretical understanding which at critical moments enables a transition to be made toward new methodologies. Also the discoveries of the practical understanding provide the raw material necessary for the success of speculative Reason.¹¹⁷ On the other hand this method does more than provide for the possibility of the development of a new method. "Reason which is methodic is content to limit itself within the bounds of a successful method. . . Reason which is speculative questions the methods, refusing to let them rest."¹¹⁸ This method is open-ended. It questions the very basis of the validity of method itself. The essential spirit of Whitehead's method is that no factors within the method, or the method itself as a whole, be allowed to limit the search of understanding in the light of experience. The method must be broad enough to include all evidence and all data. It should include all the sciences, whether the science

¹¹⁷ FR, p. 31.

¹¹⁸ FR, p. 51.

be physics or theology. At the same time the method must serve to restrain the aberrations of mere undisciplined imagination.

The basis of all authority is the supremacy of fact over thought. Yet this contrast of fact and thought can be conceived fallaciously. For thought is a factor in the fact of experience. Thus the immediate fact is what it is, partly by reason of the thought involved in it. . .The supremacy of fact over thought means that even the utmost flight of speculative thought should have its measure of truth. . .The proper satisfaction to be derived from speculative thought is elucidation. It is for this reason that fact is supreme over thought. This supremacy is the basis of authority. . .In this way there is the progress from thought to practice, and regress from practice to the same thought. This interplay of thought and practice is the supreme authority. It is the test by which the charlatanism of speculation is restrained.¹¹⁹

The Metaphysical Scheme from the Perspective of Method

In making a complete study of Whitehead, the next step would be to present an exposition of Whitehead's metaphysical scheme. Such an exposition is beyond the

¹¹⁹FR, p. 64.

limitations of this chapter, although an evaluation of part of the metaphysical scheme from the perspective of method will be helpful. To accomplish this task, a brief sketch of the metaphysical scheme concerning the evaluation of an actual entity will be presented. On the basis of this sketch, an evaluation will be made from the perspective of method. It is necessary to bear in mind that Whitehead has indicated three major philosophical problems which his method is supposed to help solve. On the one hand, the method is to help deal with the philosophical problem of the one and the many. On the other hand, the method is to deal with the issue of efficient and final causes. Both of these problems are a part of the third, which is the problem of permanence and change. It will be necessary to evaluate how far Whitehead's method, as related to the metaphysical scheme of an actual entity, helps to solve these philosophical problems.

Whitehead begins with man in the universe and states that the only basis on which man can make

judgments and evaluations is his experience. It has already been stated that a 'drop of experience' is an actual entity. Man has experiences, or in some way stands in relation to the process of becoming an actual entity. At the same time man is not himself an actual entity. Rather, man is a collection of prehensions transmitted from one actual occasion to another. "The defining characteristic of a living person is some definite type of hybrid prehensions transmitted from one occasion to another."¹²⁰ This definition assumes that there is a definite, efficient causal relationship between an actual entity in the past or present and actual entities which will come into being in the future. Man realizes that a certain actual entity has occurred within his frame of reference. Upon consideration of the experience, there appear to be obvious causes. Certain sense-data were present to which my senses responded. These senses are a part of the

¹²⁰PR, p. 163.

body and seem to have played a definite role in the experience. "We feel with the body. There may be some further specialization into a particular organ of sensation; but in any case the 'witness' of the body is an ever-present, though elusive, element in our preceptions of presentational, immediacy."¹²¹ Yet it is difficult to know where the body ends and external influences begin. Upon second thought, the definite contributions of the senses do not seem as obvious, and so it becomes necessary to make a more detailed analysis of the actual entity.

Since by definition actual entities are the only real things of which the universe is made, the analysis must confine itself to the particular actual entity, and other actual entities which may have influenced it. In other words, this analysis operates on the ontological principle which states that the reason for things is to be found always in the composite nature of definite actual entities.¹²² Whitehead concludes: "I hold that

¹²¹PR, p. 474-5.

¹²²cf., PR, p. 28.

these unities of existence, these occasions of experience, are the real things which in their collective unity compose the evolving universe, ever plunging into the creative advance."¹²³ The notion of 'creative advance' must be considered. On the basis of reflection, one realizes that there was a time when each experience had not occurred. Each actual entity has come into being through some process. Since this 'coming into being' affects every actual entity, not just the one under consideration, it is necessary to assume that there is some force in operation which serves as the fundamental thrust within the process of becoming in all occasions. On the basis of the history of philosophy, it has been asserted that this force is 'God', generally a supernatural God operating outside the universe and responsible for the creation of the universe. It is obvious that the actual entities which occur bring both harmony and destruction to the universe,

¹²³MT, p. 206.

or in more theological terms, some are good and some are evil. This force cannot be God, since to make God responsible for good and evil would indicate a contradiction within the nature of God. In the light of the data from the natural sciences, it is difficult to conceive of a force outside the universe, because this would make the universe finite. It is true that we do not talk of an infinite universe today in any absolute sense, but, rather, contend that on the basis of the information available it seems more logical to work from the general theory of an infinite universe. From the perspective of the issue of good and evil and the general theory of an infinite universe, this basic force is considered the primary force of the universe itself. Whitehead uses the term 'creativity' to indicate this force; "it is that ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality."¹²⁴ In our analysis of an actual entity, it is possible to

¹²⁴ PR, p. 47.

assume that any actual entity receives its basic thrust in the process of becoming from the basic force of the universe, the principle of creativity.

In an analysis of an actual entity, the next step will be to consider the other temporal actual entities which have contributed to the process of a new actual entity occurring. These other actual entities have served as objects for the becoming experience. This function by which the becoming actual entity considers other actual entities as objects is called 'prehension'. The becoming experience is presented with an infinite number of other actual entities as objects. Since all these actual entities cannot work in harmony to help formulate the becoming actual occasion, it is necessary that the occasion be selective. Thus, Whitehead develops the terms 'positive prehension' and 'negative prehension'. A positive prehension, on this physical-temporal level, is the act by which the becoming experience includes other actual entities in its becoming process. When an object is excluded from contributing

positively to the process of becoming, this act is designated a negative prehension. "It is the mark of a high-grade organism to eliminate, by negative prehension, the irrelevant accidents in its environment, and to elicit massive attention to every variety of systematic order."¹²⁵ By assuming that some are included and some rejected, we are asserting that this becoming experience had the possibility of being other than it came to be. Because of our human limitations and the limitations of our technical tools, it is impossible to make an analysis which will explain the infinite number of actual entities which wereprehended, positively or negatively. We must push our analysis as far as possible, but in the last analysis only an educated guess is possible. The analysis offers no certitude.

Once the analysis is made of the physical prehension of the temporal actual entities which have contributed to the becoming experience, it is difficult

¹²⁵ PR, p. 483.

to assume that these were the only contributing factors in the experience. There must be some other actual entities besides the temporal ones which contribute to this process. Whitehead designates this other type of actual entities as 'eternal objects'. Eternal objects are non-temporal. Since they are non-temporal, although able to contribute to the becoming experience of a temporal experience, it is necessary that the nature of an eternal object be twofold. On the one hand, the eternal object must in some non-temporal way exist within itself. On the other hand, the eternal object must possess some 'relational essence' to temporal entities. Being temporal, an actual entity must prehend an eternal object in a different manner from that of physical prehension. Whitehead designates this process of prehending eternal objects as 'conceptual prehension'. As in the case of temporal actual entities, all eternal objects cannot be prehended in a positive manner for the becoming experience. It is necessary that the experience be conceptually selective, choosing those

eternal objects which can contribute positively to the creation of a new actual entity.

In our analysis of an actual entity, we have the becoming experience acting as a subject, making positive and negative prehensions of temporal and non-temporal objects. Since this selective process occurs, there must be some force within the becoming experience which is responsible for this selective process. Whitehead designates this force as the 'feeling' of the becoming experience. The becoming actual entity is a subject which feels. On the basis of this feeling, some objects are prehended positively while others are prehended negatively. The way in which a particular subject feels a particular objective datum is called the 'subjective form'. By including some objects and excluding others, the feeling subject expresses 'subjective aim'. In other words the feeling contributes a directive purpose to the becoming experience. Because of the subjective aim, the experience becomes what it is instead of what it might have been. Particular

potentials become actual while other potentials are rejected.

When the feeling subject reaches its subjective aim, the satisfaction of the actual entity occurs. In other words, the becoming actual entity has reached its 'concrescence.' This is the process of the coming together into a unity of the different parts of the experience. When the concrescence-satisfaction stage has occurred, the experience is no longer in the process of becoming but now actually exists as a new form in the universe. The working together of these different factors of a becoming experience make possible a new actual entity. That these factors do work together is understood by Whitehead as showing that 'novelty' has come into the process of becoming. To say that novelty has occurred is another way of saying that this particular novel actual entity has become and now exists as a new form in the world.

As we consider the actual entity under analysis, it is obvious that it does not exist in its state of

concrescence because at this time it is an object of our consideration. Whitehead asserts that a temporal entity perishes after it has reached its concrescence-satisfaction; it enters into a state of 'objective immortality'. The actual entity no longer functions solely as a subject of feeling; now it is an object of other feeling subjects. As an object, the subject of the actual entity is transformed into a 'superject'.

This is the doctrine of the emergent unity of the superject. An actual entity is to be conceived both as a subject presiding over its own immediacy of becoming, and a superject which is the atomic creature exercising its function of objective immortality. It has become a 'being'; and it belongs to the nature of every 'being' that it is a potential for every 'becoming'.¹²⁶

How does Whitehead's doctrine of God fit into our analysis of this particular actual entity? In our analysis, there are three factors which are difficult to account for completely. The first concerns the non-temporal actual entities called eternal objects. Since

¹²⁶PR, p. 71.

only a few eternal objects can be positively prehended in a particular conceptual process, what happens to these eternal objects as potentials when they are not being included in the becoming of an experience? These eternal objects are retained by the Primordial Nature of God as this nature makes a conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects. Since these eternal objects are what they are according to their own nature, they are retained or sustained by God but are not conditioned in this process. Thus, the Primordial Nature of God is necessary for the functioning of eternal objects. The second factor deals with the state of objective immortality. It seems logical to assume that every actual entity which has occurred cannot always be serving as an object in the process of another becoming. What happens to these actual entities which perish? Whitehead believes that in his Consequent Nature, God physically prehends all the actual entities in the universe. In other words, God saves the perishing actual entities in this aspect of his nature. God

is necessary for the retention or sustaining, not only of the non-temporal actual entities, but also of the temporal actual entities which have become objectively immortal. The third factor deals with Whitehead's metaphysical presupposition that there is an upward trend in the evolving universe. If there is an upward trend, then there must be some force operating within the universe that bears some responsibility for this trend. Since creativity is related both to the upward trend and the destruction which occurs, it cannot be that force which is solely responsible for the upward trend. Whitehead asserts that there is a Superjective Nature of God which acts as the force working to bring about good or harmony in the universe instead of evil or destruction. Each actual entity in a state of objective immortality, as well as each eternal object, is used by this aspect of the nature of God to bring about the upward trend. Since God sustains all actual entities, God is potentially able to affect directly each becoming experience in favor of the upward trend. This aspect

of God's nature is balanced by the fact that each feeling subject is free to choose those actual entities it so desires to contribute to its becoming. God has the power to work for harmony, while at the same time this power is limited by the freedom of each becoming experience. In essence, God is necessary for the entire process of becoming of experience; yet, because of the freedom of each subject, God cannot dictate the outcome of the becoming process. God is all-inclusive; God saves, but God is relative due to the freedom of each subject.

How does our analysis conform to Whitehead's method? According to the method, we have started with man in the actual world having experiences. In an attempt to understand a particular experience, the analysis begins from a particular area of human interest, which for this analysis would be the philosophical area. Based on Whitehead's philosophical presuppositions, our observation has been guided by a 'working hypothesis'. It has been assumed that actual entities are the only

real things that exist and that the reason for all things is to be found in the composite nature of definite actual entities. We have not dealt only with the obvious premises but have sought the more important premises that are not obvious in the experience. Language has been used carefully. We have tested our terms to be sure that they are the most descriptive for that which we mean to convey. Having made our descriptive analysis of the process of this actual entity and having considered the nexus of this actual entity, it is necessary to develop a philosophical generalization from this analysis. It is asserted that every temporal actual entity goes through a process of becoming, emerging as a new form in the world, and continuing to exist in a state of objective immortality as objects for other becoming actual entities. According to the method, our next function would be to test this generalization from the perspective of other areas of human interest. If this generalization is found from these other perspectives to be coherent, logical, applicable and adequate,

it then is postulated as a universal or tentative ultimate principle. This tentative ultimate principle becomes part of the total metaphysical scheme which is used to consider the major philosophical problems.

Evaluation

This evaluation will be made from two perspectives. The first will be an evaluation of aspects of the method in practice as presented in the brief sketch of the metaphysical scheme. The second evaluation will deal with the method in general.

It is basic to Whitehead's view that experience cannot be confined to human or conscious beings. Everything which constitutes human experience is to be found in the natural world, and vice versa. On the basis of this presupposition, Whitehead is able to develop his theory of 'feeling' and his theory of a 'moral order'. In the coming together of every actual entity, the basic element is the fact that the subject feels. Granted that Whitehead is trying to form a general

description which attributes qualities and functions to non-conscious things in ways not commonly done; there seems to be little support from non-speculative disciplines for non-conscious entities displaying the qualities of conscious entities. Unless there is some way of verifying this function of non-conscious entities, it seems difficult at this point to state that his scheme is 'applicable' and 'adequate'. The same issue arises in connection with the idea of a moral order functioning within the Universe. Whitehead rejects the view that this moral order can be supported by the theory of evolution based on the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The judgement that there is an upward trend or a moral order is a human judgement, based on our conscious faculty. It is not only difficult to support the view of a non-conscious temporal subject with a faculty of feeling; it is just as difficult to support the view that a non-conscious entity can make evaluations about or participate in a moral order. Unless there is some way of verifying that non-conscious

temporal entities can function in such a way as to support moral evaluations, this generalization cannot be supported by the requirements established in the method.

The doctrine of the process of an actual entity and the doctrine of objective immortality raise real difficulties. The basic force making possible the process of an actual entity is the creativity of the Universe. At the same time the feeling subject, taking into account the data from efficient and final causes, creates the concrescence of the actual entity. This dual creative process is an attempt to escape the trap of determinism, but by retaining this dual factor an actual or at least potential contradiction exists. Since creativity is the basic force, it would seem that the actual entity creates itself within the limits made possible by creativity. In one sense Whitehead would affirm this limitation, while at the same time he would want to say that the subject creates itself and that to deny it this creative function is to deny it its freedom.

Another way of dealing with this issue is by

considering the doctrine of relativity. Since creativity is not an actual entity, Whitehead does not deal with the question whether creativity is relative. All becoming, temporal actual entities are relative, and all non-temporal actual entities are relative. If everything is relative, it would appear that the theory of relativity itself is logically destroyed. Whitehead supports his relative view by retaining the state of satisfaction, the unity of the actual entity, as the one non-relative thing. The unity of concrescence is not relative at that instance. It might be possible to deal with the problem of creation by saying that the non-relative concrescence creates itself at the instant of its being non-relative.

Part of the doctrine of an actual entity is that it is continuous. The doctrine of objective immortality is supposed to describe how the continuous state occurs. It seems a linguistic contradiction to say that an actual entity 'perishes' and continues at the same time.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ cf., Rasbihary Das, The Philosophy of Whitehead, p. 182.

Objective immortality seems to imply that the real actual entity does not continue, but that the potential of the actual entity for other entities continues. If only the potential of the actual entity continues, then it seems false to say that objective immortality supports the doctrine of the continuousness of an actual entity. This would mean that there is 'real' discontinuity and 'potential' continuity. So long as there remains this element of discontinuity in the cosmology, it would be necessary to deal with the issue whether the continuous or discontinuous factor is ontologically fundamental.

Whitehead uses God's Consequent Nature to save the 'potential' continuousness. Why could not this 'potential' continue in the physical prehensions of temporal becoming actual entities? Let us accept Whitehead's assertion that all objective actual entities are not at all times serving as data in the physical prehensions of temporal becoming entities. It then follows that the continuousness would be broken and the potential of the actual entity lost, if the continuousness is dependent

upon the constant physical prehension of at least one becoming entity. It seems logical to assume his doctrine of God in order to have some force which sustains these potentials when they are not being realized. The question must be raised, however, whether God is used as a deus ex machina to support this retention. We have no way of supporting the thesis that these potentials exist even when they are not being actualized in a prehension. It is possible to assume that they do exist, but there is no way of supporting this assumption. Assuming that they do not exist apart from beingprehended, it would seem logical to state that Whitehead has developed this function of God to support his theory that actual entities are continuous, although there remains the more basic problem whether there is actual continuity if only the 'potential' of the actual entity continues.

If Whitehead is to overcome the limitations of the Newtonian view, it is necessary that the actual entity continue. If discontinuity is ultimate, there is no escape from the atomic-mechanical view to the

view which concentrates on the idea of organism. The philosophy of organism overcomes the Newtonian view by the doctrine of extensive continuum. In his earlier philosophy of science Whitehead had handled this problem by emphasising relational continuity or the interdependence of things, thus staying within the limitations of efficient causes. In the metaphysical period, he shifts his emphasis to teleological or final causes, emphasising subjective aim or feeling. Potentialities are involved in both the mechanical and the teleological views. In the former the present is conditioned by the past, or in some way the past begets the present. In the latter case, the efficient causes are not rejected, but the emphasis is given to the future. The subjective aim is more concerned with what can arise out of the future than with the effects of the past. It is important to Whitehead that his view of futuristic process should be kept in proper tension with the idea of the efficient contributing factors, in order that the true perspective, recognizing both efficient and final causes, should not

be distorted. God, in his Primordial, Consequent and Superjective natures, exerts strong directional influence upon the becoming process and its final actualization, and consequently Whitehead's view has a dominant futuristic orientation. Because of the dominant role of God in the becoming process, Whitehead does not seem to be able to keep an adequate tension between efficient and final causes. Since it is also questionable whether non-speculative and non-theological disciplines would agree that the becoming process is influenced to this great degree by final causes,¹²⁸ one cannot help but wonder whether on this point Whitehead's view is influenced more by the teleological perspective in the history of Christian thought than by his scientific background.

It is questionable whether Whitehead develops adequately his doctrine of eternal objects. Eternal

¹²⁸ cf., D. J. Miller, "Whitehead's Extensive Continuum", Philosophy of Science, Vol. 13, p. 146ff.

objects are non-temporal, secondary types of entities in the universe which are conceptually prehended by the feeling subject of a becoming experience. It is Whitehead's view that physical prehensions only account for repetition and that repetition cannot account for the coming into being of a really new actual entity. Since these new things do become, it is necessary to account for them. It is asserted that eternal objects actualized in experience are necessary for novelty. Within Whitehead's system, the doctrine of eternal objects is necessary in order that novelty should occur. From one view, something non-temporal is to be considered supernatural. If emphasis is given to the supernatural realm of things, then the temporal realm is less real, and vice versa. The problem arises, however, whether eternal objects are real things in relation to the actual entities. Charles W. Morris points out that "since a conceptual prehension is a prehension of eternal objects, the whole theory of mind depends upon the

validity of the notion of eternal objects."¹²⁹ On the basis of at least one understanding of Whitehead's ontological principle, it would seem that eternal objects have no reality except in relation to an actual entity which prehends them.

The 'ontological principle', at least in one of its meanings, is an unequivocal expression of the view that eternal objects, taken by themselves, are nothing. For the ontological principle states that only actual occasions are real. . . Hence it would seem perfectly clear that eternal objects are simply aspects of the actual occasions exemplifying them, and have no reality by themselves.¹³⁰

These eternal objects are not always being conceptuallyprehended by temporal actual entities, but Whitehead maintains that they are being prehended by God in his Primordial nature. In this nature God is not conscious. It is questionable whether a non-conscious actual entity

¹²⁹C. W. Morris, "Mind in Process and Reality", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 28, p. 126. cf., A. E. Taylor, "Dr. Whitehead's Philosophy of Religion", Dublin Review, Vol. 181, p. 31.

¹³⁰E. W. Hall, "Of What Use Are Whitehead's Eternal Objects?", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 27, p. 37.

can conceptually prehend, especially in view of the fact that Whitehead goes to great length to transfer some form of consciousness to actual occasions, (which normally are not considered to display consciousness), in order that they may perform the conceptual prehension necessary for their becoming process. One seems led to agree with Charles Hartshorne that Whitehead has not developed adequately his doctrine of eternal objects.

An obscure, if not definitely erroneous, feature of Whitehead's view is his notion of eternal objects. That these are legitimately distinguished from ordinary universals or essences is I believe a point well taken, but one which is by no means consistently carried out.¹³¹

A question will be raised concerning the doctrine of God in relation to the problem of evil, and fuller consideration will be given to this doctrine in the second part of our evaluation. Basically Whitehead is asserting that God is the ultimate ordering force for good in the universe. His other descriptions of God's

¹³¹Charles Hartshorne, "On Some Criticisms of Whitehead's Philosophy", Philosophical Review, Vol. 44, p. 344.

nature are based on this. From Whitehead's perspective, God is never a complete actual entity, in the sense that he always includes within his nature other actual entities as they become objectively immortal. Since God is never complete, he never perishes; in this sense God is eternal. Eternal objects and objectively immortal actual entities also never perish within the nature of God. Whitehead is very careful in his doctrine of God that God is not responsible for evil or disharmony. The doctrine of objective immortality means that evil, as well as good, continues, being sustained within God's nature. It is part of God's nature to present these objectively immortal actualities to other becoming experiences as data. Some of these potentials, with their evil elements, are made actual in the becoming experience. This means that the good in the becoming experience is less valuable than it might have been, if the past evil had been less evil. Since God sustains the past evil and is responsible in some way for presenting it to becoming actual entities, to some degree

God may be responsible for the fostering of evil. Whitehead tries to overcome this difficulty by asserting that God includes past evil within his purpose for future good, but it is not clear that God totally transforms past evil into good. This may or may not be an adequate description of the way in which God functions in relation to evil, but it is questionable whether Whitehead's theory completely relieves God of all responsibility for evil.

It was stated previously that Whitehead's method applied metaphysically was designed to deal with three philosophical problems: (1) the one and the many, (2) efficient and final causes, and (3) permanence and change. His description of a becoming actual entity and his description of God explain how the one includes the many within its nature. The problem arises how God, the one, in his non-conscious Primordial nature is able conceptually to prehend eternal objects, and this raises the question whether the one is able to include this aspect of the many within its nature. Another issue

is whether Whitehead gives adequate consideration both to efficient and to final causes. Because his emphasis upon process has a dominant futuristic orientation, it appears that the importance of efficient causes is minimized. It is also questionable whether the issue of permanence and change is satisfactorily handled. In the state of objective immortality, the essential objective 'potentiality' of the perished actual entity is retained within God's Consequent nature, but the actual entity in its state of 'actuality' perishes and is not retained. Attempting a theological analogy, we might say that God saves the 'soul' of the perished actual entity, but that there is no 'resurrection of the body'. If only the continuity of 'potentiality' is necessary and not of 'actuality', then Whitehead's description fulfils its purpose from the perspective of coherence.

It must be remembered that Whitehead does not claim that his scheme is an absolute metaphysical description. On the basis of the most inclusive scientific information and on the basis of his insights into

philosophical problems, he has attempted to develop a metaphysical scheme that will deal with the issue while being true to scientific data. There will always be limitations in any system which is not an absolute, but the greatness of Whitehead's attempt is that he realized basic problems and tried to deal with them. We should keep his limitations in view, but our primary emphasis should be on accepting the challenge offered by his insights to continue the metaphysical search. We can learn from his mistakes, but more importantly we can build on the spirit of his metaphysical attempt.

Whitehead's method is a method of speculative philosophy. Its value is that it calls man to take seriously today his responsibility to understand as much as possible about existence. The open-endedness of his method is important because the method itself includes the transcending of methods. "The speculative reason is in its essence untrammelled by method. Its function is to pierce into general reason beyond limited reason, to understand all methods as coordinated in a nature of

things only to be grasped by transcending all method."¹³² Whitehead's method must be judged by its intention, namely to overcome the narrowness of separate perspectives and to develop an understanding of existence which takes into account all areas of human concern.

Whitehead's method is important to religion and theology. Indeed his method implies the religious spirit because it takes into account the total man. All religions have in their own way claimed some mystical insights. One of the great dangers of mystical knowledge is that it becomes dogmatic and in this way serves to limit man's total understanding. The purpose of Whitehead's method is to develop a philosophy which will take into account these mystical insights which at the same time refusing to allow them to become fixed and inflexible. He clearly points this out in a conversation with W. E. Hocking: "If you like to phrase it so, philosophy is mystical. For mysticism is direct

¹³²FR, p. 51.

insight into depths as yet unknown. But the purpose of philosophy is to rationalize mysticism.¹³³ His method offers a bridge between religion and other disciplines. Whitehead asserts the essential importance of religion and calls upon religion and theology to take seriously their responsibility to relate their insights to the whole man and the entire range of his knowledge.

Doctrine of God

'Creativity' is the basic force of the Universe. God did not create the Universe out of nothing. The Universe is given with its force of creativity. "The true metaphysical position is that God is the aboriginal instance of this creativity, and is therefore the aboriginal condition which qualifies its action."¹³⁴ Creativity is the basic universal force, but God is that

¹³³ W. E. Hocking, "Whitehead As I Knew Him", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 58, p. 516.

¹³⁴ PR, p. 344.

force which gives unity and direction to the universal process. God is limited by the creative force, but at the same time God conditions creativity. "He is the principle of concretion--the principle whereby there is initiated a definite outcome from a situation otherwise riddled with ambiguity."¹³⁵

Whitehead considers God from the perspective of three natures. (1) "The 'primordial nature' of God is the concrescence of an unity of conceptual feelings, including among their data all eternal objects. (2) The 'consequent nature' of God is the physical pre-hension by God of the actualities of the evolving universe. (3) The 'superjective' nature of God is the character of the pragmatic value of his specific satisfaction qualifying the transcendent creativity in the various temporal interest."¹³⁶ With these three natures

¹³⁵ PR, p. 523.

¹³⁶ PR, p. 134-5.

in view, we shall consider his doctrine of God from three perspectives. The first point concerns the way in which God affects the world. The second will be concerned with the way in which the world affects God. The third will take account of the religious qualities Whitehead attributes to God. How God affects the world and vice versa, will be considered in terms of the threefold nature of God outlined above.

In his Primordial Nature, God affects the world as 'the Unmoved Mover' of the Universe. There is "an underlying eternal energy in whose nature there stands an envisagement of the realm of all eternal objects."¹³⁷ Eternal objects receive a unity of togetherness in God, and are sustained by this first nature of God. The eternal objects are non-temporal forms of subjective aim for the Universe. God presents selected eternal objects to a becoming experience. In this way God is responsible for the subjective aim of the becoming temporal actual

¹³⁷SMN, p. 99.

entity. By this action the temporal is joined with the eternal.

The things which are temporal arise by their participation in the things which are eternal. The two sets are mediated by a thing which combines the actuality of what is temporal with the timelessness of what is potential. This final entity is the divine element in the world, by which the barren inefficient disjunction of abstract potentialities obtains primordially the efficient conjunction of ideal realization.¹³⁸

The becoming experience is not responsible for its subjective aim, although in its freedom it is responsible for the manner in which the subjective aim is fulfilled. Whitehead asserts that novelty has occurred in the Universe when an actual entity has become. The actual entity conceptuallyprehends from God its subjective aim; in this way God is responsible for the 'novelty' in the Universe.

Those of God's feelings which are positively prehended are those with some compatibility of contrast, or of identity, with physical feelings transmitted from the temporal world. . . Apart from

138 PR, p. 63-4.

the intervention of God, there could be nothing new in the world, and no order in the world. . . . The novel hybrid feelings derived from God, with the derivative sympathetic conceptual valuations, are the foundations of progress.¹³⁹

In his Primordial Nature, God is infinite, containing all the possibilities for the universal process. But God is neither conscious nor does he have feeling in this nature. If God did have feeling and consciousness, he could be held responsible for the evil that develops on the basis of the subjective aims which he supplies to the becoming experiences.

We must ascribe to him neither fulness of feeling, nor consciousness. He is the unconditioned actuality of conceptual feeling at the base of things; so that, by reason of this primordial actuality, there is an order in the relevance of eternal objects to the process of creation. His unity of conceptual operations is a free creative act, untrammelled by reference to any particular course of things. It is deflected neither by love, nor by hatred, for what in fact comes to pass. The particularities of the actual world presuppose it; while it merely presupposes the general metaphysical character of creative advance, of which it is the primordial exemplification. The primordial nature of God is the acquirement by

¹³⁹PR, p. 377.

creativity of a primordial character.¹⁴⁰

It is the actions of God that make possible the order or upward trend in the universe. Creativity receives a definite character by the conditioning force of God. In his Primordial Nature, God transcends the temporal order by the unity he affords eternal objects, but more important is God's immanence in the temporal order by his presentation to the becoming actual entity of its subjective aim. It is by God's action that there is order and novelty in the Universe. "The immanence of God gives reason for the belief that pure chaos is intrinsically impossible."¹⁴¹

God affects the actual entities of the world in a saving manner in his Consequent Nature. God as the principle of concretion in the Universe is both the beginning and the end of the process. He is the beginning in his Primordial Nature. "He is not the beginning in the sense of being in the past of all members.

140 PR, p. 522.

141 PR, p. 169.

He is the presupposed actuality of conceptual operation in unison of becoming with every other creative act."¹⁴² When the actual entity 'perishes', it becomes objectively immortal in the Consequent Nature of God. God saves the actual entity by taking it into his own nature. God's gift of subjective aim is the beginning of a becoming actual entity, and the end of the process is salvation in the nature of God. In this nature God feels and is conscious, and it is because of these qualities that he is able to save the actual entities. God is an eternal process in that he takes unto himself all actual entities which have perished and in that it is inherent within his nature that he will always perform this function of salvation. Whitehead asserts that God shows infinite patience and love in his Consequent Nature.

In the Superjective Nature, God affects the world by actively working to bring about the 'upward trend' in the temporal world. By working for the upward trend,

¹⁴²PR, p. 523.

God attempts to save the entire creative process, whereas in his Consequent Nature God offers salvation only to individual actual entities. He is conscious and feels in this nature. In this state God has his satisfaction, though it is never complete. He is responsible not only for the subjective aim of the becoming experience; God is also responsible for the objectively immortal data of which the becoming experience makes use.¹⁴³ God, by his infinite wisdom, tries to convey the subjective aim and the objective data in such a way as to qualify the upward trend of the temporal world. He takes the good and evil objective data and tries to shape them in such a way that good comes from that which is evil. In his Consequent Nature, God saves the actual entities of the temporal world. In his Superjective Nature, he works to save the entire creative process of the Universe.

God, the three-in-one, transcends the world while at the same time being immanent in the world. He

¹⁴³ cf., MT, p. 140.

transcends the world on the same basis that each actual entity transcends every other actual entity. God is immanent in the world in that (1) he is responsible for both the subjective aim and objective data used by the becoming experience, (2) he saves the perished actual entity by making possible the extensive continuum, and (3) he works to save the universal process by giving it order and unity while working for the upward trend in the temporal world.

It is not so clear how the world affects God. Under the idea of the Primordial Nature of God, Whitehead asserts that God sustains the potentials which can only be made actual in the temporal world. If the temporal entities were not dependent upon God for their subjective aims, then God's Primordial Nature would not be relevant to the temporal world. God's Consequent Nature and Superjective Nature are more directly affected by the world. In these natures, God functions as a feeling and conscious becoming actual entity. The temporal objective entities provide God with data. God

could not be an actual entity in process without the increase made possible by the prehension of the objective data of the world. In other words, God's satisfaction is affected by the world. The satisfaction of every actual entity is relatively dependent upon the data it prehends. Since God is an actual entity, his satisfaction is relatively dependent upon the temporal data which he prehends.

Thus by reason of the relativity of all things, there is a reaction of the world on God. The completion of God's nature into a fulness of physical feeling is derived from the objectification of the world in God. He shares with every new creation its actual world; and the concrescent creature is objectified in God as a novel element in God's objectification of that actual world. This prehension into God of each creature is directed with the subjective aim, and clothed with the subjective form, wholly derivative from his all-inclusive primordial valuation, God's conceptual nature is unchanged, by reason of its final completeness. But his derivative nature is consequent upon the creative advance of the world.¹⁴⁴

Whitehead has developed his metaphysical scheme in such a way that the world depends upon God for its

¹⁴⁴PR, p. 523-4.

completion, and God depends upon the world for his completion. Whitehead asserts this relative interdependence between God and the world in a group of antithesis:

It is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent.

It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many.

It is as true to say that, in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that, in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently.

It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World.

It is as true to say that God transcends the World, as that the World transcends God.

It is as true to say that God creates the World, as that the World creates God.

God and the World are the contrasted opposites in terms of which Creativity achieves its supreme task of transforming disjoined multiplicity, with its diversities in opposition, into concrecent unity, with its diversities in contrast.¹⁴⁵

The doctrine of God presented by Alfred North Whitehead is a metaphysical description of God, dependent upon and conforming to his metaphysical scheme.

At the same time, this doctrine of God implies more than

¹⁴⁵PR, p. 528.

a metaphysical God; it describes a religious God. Whitehead's method requires that the contributions of religion be taken into account in his doctrine of God. Religion and theology are definite areas of human interest in which descriptive generalizations, especially dealing with God, must be tested. Whitehead does more than indicate the methodological necessity of taking religious insights seriously. All his metaphysical works deal in some way with the positive and negative contributions of religion to his metaphysical concern.

How does Whitehead's doctrine of God describe a religious God? Definite terms are used to describe God which traditionally have been used to express the religious qualities of God. In fact, the term 'God' is a religious term; it has been used by philosophers, but it remains a religious term in content and emotion. Aristotle used the term 'the Unmoved Mover' in his philosophical description of God. In the theology of the Middle Ages, this term acquired religious significance. Whitehead uses the term within the context of the

Primordial Nature of God, and he retains the religious significance allowable within the context of his use. The three natures of God all assert that God is eternal and that he transcends the world. God is perfect in that he contains perfectly all the potentials for the world and perfect in the sense that he is perfecting the world. The term 'omnipresent' and 'omniscient' can be used to describe God, because on the one hand he affects all actual entities and on the otherhand he displays his infinite wisdom as he works for the upward trend of the world.

The God described by Whitehead is an active saviour God. He saves the world in two ways. In his Consequent Nature, he saves the actual entities of the world through the process of objective immortality. All temporal things perish, but they are saved in 'ever-lastingness' with God.

Throughout the perishing occasions in the life of each temporal Creature, the inward source of dis-taste or of refreshment, the judge arising out of the very nature of things, redeemer or goddess of

mischief, is the transformation of Itself, everlasting in the Being of God. In this way, the insistent craving is justified--the insistent craving that zest for existence be refreshed by the ever-present, unfading importance of our immediate actions, which perish and yet live for evermore.¹⁴⁶

In his Superjective Nature, God saves the world by transforming the evil we do into the good which makes possible the upward trend of the world. God shows love, patience, wisdom in judgement. He suffers and finally triumphs. He shows love in that he cares enough to save every actual occasion, no matter how evil it may have been. Patience is shown in that he does not force us to conform in every way to his plan for the upward trend of the world. God shows infinite wisdom in the way that he judges the perished actual entities and conveys these data to becoming experiences in order that the upward trend will be sustained. He suffers in that his satisfaction shares all the suffering of our satisfaction. "This is the notion of redemption

¹⁴⁶PR, p. 533.

through suffering, which haunts the world."¹⁴⁷ Man knows that God is a lover of man, his judge and his fellow-sufferer. The order of the universe as process informs us that there is a progressive upward trend in the world.¹⁴⁸ We know that evil is part of our becoming experiences, but the upward trend informs us that God triumphs in his work to transform our evil into good. God is immanent in the world as he transforms

¹⁴⁷PR, p. 531.

¹⁴⁸There are at least three possible reasons why Whitehead has this assurance concerning the upward trend. He rejects the doctrine of the survival of the fittest as offering this assurance. Based on his analysis of how actual entities become and how they develop into a nexus, he sees a movement or upward trend towards order instead of chaos. From his historical perspective, he considers the development of ideas to have been slow, but that there has been a definite upward trend in this development. From his evaluation of religion, which we will consider in the next section, he considers there to be an upward trend in religion as man moves from God the void, to God the enemy, to God the companion. It is questionable whether Whitehead could have developed this assurance from a purely detached speculative position. Considering his religious concerns and the influence upon his life which he attributes to the Christian tradition, it seems reasonable to assume that this optimistic perspective is more related to his Christian heritage than to any detached evaluation.

it for his purpose of good, yet he transcends the world in that the evil of the world cannot limit ultimately the immanent purpose of God. In his Consequent and Superjective natures, God is a conscious feeling subject. He is God; God is person in the religious sense. He is the ground of all being who loves all, judges all, saves all in his suffering, and transforms all in his triumphant immanent presence.

View of Religion

The view of religion, as well as his view of education, is part of Whitehead's attempt to deal with the practical concerns of man. Metaphysical descriptions are of great value to man, but they do not fulfil their value unless they help meet the religious hunger of man. From his historical perspective, Whitehead tries to show how religious insights have developed, what their value is, and what their limitations are.

Religious insight begins when "our sense of the value of details for the totality dawns upon our

consciousness. This is the intuition of holiness, the intuition of the sacred, which is at the foundation of all religion.¹⁴⁹ Man's environment conditions his external life, but this intuition of the sacred comes from the self-realization of existence made possible by the internal life. The history of religions shows that man goes through several stages before he reaches the final satisfaction of religion. At the same time all religion begins with the primary foundation of man's own solitariness and has as its goal 'individual worth of character'.

Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness. It runs through three stages, if it evolves to its final satisfaction. It is the transition from God the void to God the enemy, and from God the enemy to God the companion.

Thus religion is solitariness, and if you are never solitary, you are never religious. . .what should emerge from religion is individual worth of character.¹⁵⁰

Religion has been externally expressed in four ways in history: ritual, emotion, belief and rationalization. On the basis of common experiences and feelings,

¹⁴⁹MT, p. 164.

¹⁵⁰RM, p. 16-17.

men develop ritual. As the emotions of the group become more defined, ritual is used as a means of expressing the emotions. Later beliefs are developed as verbal expressions of ritual and emotion. In the more primitive cultures, the myth is used for the expression of the belief.¹⁵¹

The myth explains the purpose both of the ritual and of the emotion. It is the product of the vivid fancy of primitive men in an unfathomed world. . .the myth not only explains but reinforces the hidden purpose of the ritual, which is emotion.¹⁵²

As the cultural situation becomes more complex and the religion expands beyond the narrow originating group, a process of rationalization becomes necessary.

Rational religion is religion whose beliefs and rituals have been reorganized with the aim of making it the central element in a coherent ordering of life--an ordering which shall be coherent both in respect to the elucidation of thought, and in respect to the direction of

¹⁵¹Whitehead realizes that this four stage development is not an absolute description. He points out that at times myth has preceded ritual, but in general he asserts his description to be historical.

¹⁵²RM, p. 24-5.

conduct toward a unified purpose commanding ethical approval.¹⁵³

The rational religion tries to develop a metaphysical understanding of existence based on the finest insights offered by man's emotions and expressions of emotions. If the new form of religion places its emphasis upon the 'companion God' who makes possible a positive ethic, then religion serves humanity as a main instrument for progress. When the rational attempt does not move to the final satisfaction of religion, it remains "the last refuge of human savagery."¹⁵⁴ When religion fails to reach its final goal, its inspiration comes to rest in dogmas instead of the companion God. Dogmatic expression is necessary, but dogmas are always just bits of truth and never absolute expressions. "Religions commit suicide when they find their inspirations in their dogmas."¹⁵⁵

153 RM, p. 31.

154 RM, p. 37.

155 RM, p. 144.

All religions can and should claim truth for their insights, but they should never claim absolute truth. Even the highest form of religion, the religion of the companion God, can never claim absolute truth. Religion can only seek and claim progress in depth of insight into human existence.

Progress in truth--truth of science and truth of religion--is mainly a progress in the framing of concepts, in discarding artificial abstractions or partial metaphors, and in evolving notions which strike more deeply into the root of reality.¹⁵⁶

Religion is not primarily individual; it has the social responsibility to serve as the foundation for the unity of civilization. When religion attempts to fulfil its 'great social idea', it justifies its insights by supporting the progressive order of the world.

The religious insight is the grasp of this truth: That the order of the world, the depth of reality of the world, the value in its whole and in its parts, the beauty of the world, the zest of life, the peace of life, and the mastery of evil, are all bound together--not accidentally,

¹⁵⁶RM, p. 31.

but by reason of this truth: that the universe exhibits a creativity with infinite freedom, and a realm of forms with infinite possibilities; but that this creativity and these forms are together impotent to achieve actuality apart from the complete ideal harmony, which is God.¹⁵⁷

The religion of Jesus was a higher form of religion in that he placed emphasis upon the companion God. The Jewish view of God was that of an oriental despot. "The progress of religion is defined by the denunciation of gods."¹⁵⁸ There was progress in the Jewish religion in that they moved from many gods to one god, but they never completely moved, in Whitehead's term, "from God the enemy to God the companion."¹⁵⁹ The greatness of any valuable religion consists in its 'interim ethic', which was an absolute ethic for Jesus who believed that the social order was about to be destroyed and God would save. This interim ethic enabled Jesus to move from the Jewish enemy God to the companion God

¹⁵⁷ RM, p. 119-20.

¹⁵⁸ AI, p. 18.

¹⁵⁹ RM, p. 24.

who would save the world. "A gracious, simple mode of life, combined with a fortunate ignorance, endowed mankind with its most precious instrument of progress--the impracticable ethics of Christianity."¹⁶⁰ The ethic of Jesus became impracticable when the truth of the myth was rationalized into an absolute dogma. This rationalization process began in full force with Paul. He began by whittling down the sense of infinitude in the religion of Jesus into finite and limiting concepts. Paul placed an absolute emphasis on ideas like heaven and hell. The limiting factors of dogma were made more complex with the development of the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church preserved one great value of religion, its aesthetic appeal in worship. "The Reformation was one of the most colossal failures in history; it threw over-board what makes the church tolerable and even gracious, namely, its aesthetic appeal; but kept its barbarous theology."¹⁶¹ Within

¹⁶⁰AI, p. 25.

¹⁶¹D, p. 286.

the Protestant tradition, theology became the guiding light of religion. There have been both value and disaster in the effect of theology. On the one hand, the effort of religion to provide an adequate theology has kept it from complete noxious superstition. On the other hand, the disaster of theology is that it has banished novelty, limiting the progressive order of the world. "This theological disaster is what I mean when I speak of the mischief which follows from banishing novelty, from trying to formulize your truth, from setting up to declare: 'This is all there is to be known on the subject, and discussion is closed'."¹⁶² Within the Modern Period and more especially since the fall of the Newtonian view, the limitations of theology have placed Christianity in an acutely negative position. Religion has come to rely on an escape to terms which are no longer meaningful to the modern person, "terms either suited to the emotional reactions of bygone times

¹⁶²D, p. 173.

or directed to excite modern emotional interest of non-religious character."¹⁶³ It is the responsibility of theology in each age to disengage its spiritual message from the associations of a particular imagery. Not to accept this responsibility is to exhibit a lack of faith.¹⁶⁴ Religion needs a new approach in its theology, which will presuppose a more adequate method. A clash of doctrine with other insights should not be a disaster for religion; it should be an opportunity. Religion, especially Christianity, will not regain its proper role until it can face change in the same, if not more positive, spirit as do the other areas of human interest.

The great point to be kept in mind is that normally an advance in science will show that statements of various religious beliefs require some sort of modification. It may be that they have to be expanded or explained, or indeed entirely restated. If the religion is a sound expression of truth, this modification will only exhibit more adequately the exact point which is of importance. This process is a gain. . .The progress of science must result in

¹⁶³AI, p. 170.

¹⁶⁴cf., AI, p. 169.

the unceasing codification of religious thought, to the great advantage of religion.¹⁶⁵

The great problem today is that religion and science must learn to live together. The forces of science have become so dominant in man's life, that religion can no longer afford to operate as if the scientific insights did not exist. Man will live within a scientific world; at the same time it is necessary that man also live within the religious world. "When we consider what religion is for mankind, and what science is, it is no exaggeration to say that the future course of history depends upon the decision of this generation as to the relation between them."¹⁶⁶ The job of theology is to combine its religious experience and aesthetic expression with the insights of science. If man's humanity is to be fulfilled in the progressive order of the universe, then religion must accept the responsibility to afford mankind his necessary essential novelty in a manner which is understandable and relevant. Not

¹⁶⁵AI, p. 169.

¹⁶⁶SMW, p. 162.

to accept this responsibility is to deny man the vision which gives meaning to existence.

Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realized; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest. . . The vision claims nothing but worship; and worship is a surrender to the claim of assimilation, urged with the motive force of mutual love. The vision never overrules. It is always there, and it has the power of love presenting the one purpose whose fulfillment is eternal harmony. . . The power of God is the worship He inspires. That religion is strong which in its ritual and its modes of thought evokes an apprehension of the commanding vision. The worship of God is not a rule of safety--it is an adventure of the spirit, a flight after the unattainable. The death of religion comes with the repression of the high hopes of adventure.¹⁶⁷

Evaluation and Comparison

In evaluating Whitehead's doctrine of God and his view of religion, it is necessary to keep two perspectives

¹⁶⁷ SMW, p. 171-2.

in mind. On the one hand, Whitehead does write from a religious concern. His conception of God is of a God who meets man's religious needs and who brings salvation through suffering. On the other hand, his doctrine of God, though religious in quality and content, is broader than the personal categories of religious thought. Whitehead is attempting to develop a metaphysical description, and his doctrine of God is an integral part of this attempt. To view his concept of God apart from its metaphysical framework is to do partial violation to his doctrine of God, even to its religious qualities. Henry Nelson Wieman offers a summary statement of the cosmic problems that faced Whitehead in his metaphysical description in general and especially in his doctrine of God.

The universe is made up of units which are highly active, call them atoms or what you will. The activities of these units are highly independent, one of the other. There is nothing in the nature of these units to keep them from frustrating and destroying one another and producing a hopeless confusion. Yet as a matter of fact they do not fall into such confusion. Doubtless there

is plenty of confusion and frustration, but at the same time there is a very high degree of order, of mutual adjustment and mutual support between all these seemingly diverse and relatively independent activities. How can we account for this mutual support and mutual adjustment? Whence does it come? It does not come from the atomic units. It cannot come from the higher organization of these units, such as animals and men and societies, for these latter should never have arisen if the microscopic units were not adjusted and organized sufficiently for these more complex bodies to arise. Whence then comes this mutual adjustment and order?¹⁶⁸

Seeing this mutual adjustment and order in the universe, Whitehead starts with the description of 'creativity' as the basic force in the universe. Creativity is not an actual entity, so Whitehead cannot empirically prove that it exists. It is rather a term which he postulates on the basis of general observation. God cannot be this foundation term, for God is an actual entity and to make him responsible for the creative force would be to make him responsible for evil as well as good. Since creativity is not an actual entity but

¹⁶⁸H. N. Wieman and B. E. Meland, American Philosophies of Religion, p. 242.

an inherent force operating within the universe, creativity is not responsible for evil and good. The contrasting forces of order and disorder just exist. There is no creation of the universe ex nihilo, and therefore there is no one actual entity responsible for good and evil. Whitehead regards God as the aboriginal instance of creativity.¹⁶⁹ Since in some way creativity is responsible for God and all other actual entities, it would seem logical to assume that even though creativity is not an actual entity, in some way it is partially

¹⁶⁹It is not Whitehead's concern to describe either how creativity or God come into being. Creativity is presented as the basic, neutral force of the universe. In one sense God just seems to exist as that becoming actual entity which works to bring about the upward trend. In this sense God is not created. In another sense creativity seems to be responsible in some way for the existence and functioning of God; "God is the aboriginal instance of this creativity, and is therefore the aboriginal condition which qualifies its action". (PR, p. 344) Though Whitehead is not clear about how creativity is responsible for the existence of God, he seems to be saying two things: (1) creativity as a neutral force makes necessary the positive working of God; and (2) God works in such a way so as to bring about the actualization of the positive potentials made possible by creativity.

responsible for the evil which develops. As pointed out before, it would seem that God is also responsible in some way for evil, since it is through his retention and making available of perished actual entities that evil is able to influence the becoming experiences.

Whitehead's intention is to assume that evil exists, while at the same time he denies any actual entity or creativity to be responsible for this evil. At the point of the social nature of evil, his doctrine of creativity and of God are not completely relieved of the responsibility for evil. Since his doctrine of God is based on creativity, Whitehead is unable to offer any factual reason why God is as he is. Since actual entities are the only real things, it is difficult to derive his view of God based on the idea of creativity. Creativity as a force and not an actual entity cannot logically afford any insight into the nature of God or even into the possibility that there is a God. Whitehead's doctrine of God can only rest on an argument that reminds one of the old cosmological argument, reasoning

from the contingency of the world to a transcendent necessary Being. He uses this basic argument, giving it a new slant by placing the emphasis on God's immanence in order to deal with the problem of evil. Since it is questionable whether this device takes care of the problem of evil, it is also questionable whether his line of argument transcends the limitations of the old cosmological arguments, as pointed out by Kant.¹⁷⁰

The Primordial Nature of God is the most fully developed part of Whitehead's doctrine of God. As Wieman points out, Whitehead sees an ordering principle in the universal process, which cannot be accounted for by his doctrine of creativity. The Primordial Nature of God is described as a logical explanation of this ordering principle. So far as this nature of God is concerned, Whitehead remains fairly consistent with his method. From the discipline of physics, he sees an operation of the universe which he cannot explain by physical laws.

¹⁷⁰ cf., Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, p. 284ff.

A descriptive generalization is postulated and tested from the different areas of human interest. In light of Whitehead's analysis of the becoming process of an actual entity and his analysis of the history of ideas and religion, there seems to be little, if any, evidence to support the contention that there is a force of order operating within the universe. Also there seems little traditional theological justification for naming this function God. Since this ordering process is far from perfect, it might be just as logical to assume that it is built into the universal system as a possibility, with disorder as the only possibility. Upon this latter line of thought, order or disorder would be decided by the becoming actual entity within its limited environmental freedom. In his Primordial Nature, Whitehead asserts that God is not conscious, that he is static, free from error and ignorance. At the same time God contains within this nature all eternal objects, having a vision of their potentialities. If God is not conscious, it seems hard to conceive logically that he can also have a vision

of the potentials of all the eternal objects. Without this vision, this nature of God would be little more than a computer machine of potentials. Whitehead also asserts that God is an actual entity, and we assume that this nature of God shares in God's actuality. Since no new eternal objects emerge for God to retain and since he is not conscious, it is difficult to understand how in this nature God is an actual entity. An actual entity must conform to the becoming process of the universe. God in his Primordial Nature does not conform to this definition since he statically retains all the eternal objects ever possible. If God is in this nature a static, non-actual entity without vision, it seems logical to assume that he is the complete transcendent Unmoved Mover, having no godly immanent relationship to the actual entities of the temporal world. It is also questionable whether God can be non-conscious in his Primordial nature while at the same time he is conscious in his Consequent and Superjective natures. Even if granted that Whitehead is talking about functions which

God performs, it remains difficult to understand how God can be both conscious and non-conscious. It would appear, at least from the discipline of theology, to be a contradiction to say that God is conscious and non-conscious.

Since God is conscious and performs dual salvatory functions in his Consequent and Superjective natures, it is possible to consider these natures together. It is interesting to note that Whitehead does not really develop his thought concerning this aspect of God until the final short chapter of Process and Reality.¹⁷¹ These functionings of God are necessary to his system, but they are not fully or adequately developed. This lack of development at such a crucial point is in itself a great limitation in Whitehead's writings. By not developing adequately these concepts, Whitehead is not true to his method. He neither develops these generalizations enough nor does he test them descriptively

¹⁷¹ The background for this short chapter is to be found in Whitehead's statement on "God" in Science and the Modern World, pp. 156-61.

within the context of other disciplines, at least within the writings available. It seems logical to assume that these concepts have not been adequately tested in other areas of human interest because there seems little evidence from the perspectives of other disciplines to support the view that there is a non-temporal actual entity which suffers and saves the world. The amount of seemingly illogical disorder in the universe could support the view that there probably is not a suffering God trying to bring about order in the universe.

It would seem that Whitehead has gone beyond the scope of observation and reason, outlined in his method, and has developed from some other frame of reference these concepts of God. It is obvious that these functions of God are developed in order to deal with the problem of evil and to offer a hope of some type of salvation. Issues have already been raised concerning the problem of evil and concerning the question how a non-temporal actual entity can operate within a temporal world in order to bring about salvation. Wieman asserts

that Whitehead has developed a cosmic consciousness to serve man's religious needs for a God that will conserve all and insure the inevitable growth of good in some realm beyond the evils of this world. "So in the face of the ultimate tragedy, Whitehead yields and builds a dome of glory and perfection above this world which we know by observation and reason."¹⁷² Wieman is correct in his condemnation of Whitehead in that these concepts of God are not self-evident. At the same time, there is some justification for the view which Whitehead has developed. His method pointed out that it would be necessary to think of things in ways not normally considered. He is trying to develop a description that involves man's emotional reactions, as well as the data offered by the sciences. The suffering, saving God does speak to man's emotional needs, while at the same time this idea tries to be true to the scientific view. Whitehead asserts

¹⁷²H. N. Wieman and B. E. Meland, American Philosophies of Religion, p. 240.

in the beginning that his descriptive generalizations must go beyond the narrower spheres of any discipline and include the total man. His doctrine of God is not final or complete, but it is successful because it does not violate the general theories of science while at the same time it tries to meet the religious needs of man. There is success also because his open-ended method keeps his doctrine of God open to new insights, thus calling man not to make his doctrine of God an absolute or a religious dogma.

Traditional Christian Theology would raise many points of disagreement with Whitehead's doctrine of God, as well as with his whole metaphysical scheme. For the sake of our limited purpose, we shall consider three general problems. The first point raised would be that Whitehead's God is not the infinite and eternal God of the Universe and Beyond but is rather a limited God within the Universe. Whitehead would not deny this attack upon his doctrine of God. He would accept this criticism, but at the same time he would assert that

his doctrine of God conforms to the scientific insights about the Universe, with God being eternal within the Universe while being limited to the conditions of the Universe. Any other description of God would violate the metaphysical method and scientific data, and it would make God responsible for evil. In summary, Whitehead would reject the supernatural God on two counts. On the one hand, to talk of a supernatural God is nonsense, because there is no scientific reason to justify belief in such a God. On the other hand, he would say that a supernatural God would be responsible for evil and by definition could not be God. There are no logical reasons to assume such a supernatural God, and if there were such a God, he could not be God by definition.

In the second case, traditional Christian Theology would assert that Whitehead's God does not actually save because he does not save the individual. Too often Christian Theology groups Whitehead with Albert Einstein and other philosophical scientists. Of course these men

share much in common, but a quotation from Einstein will show that Whitehead's thought is very different.

Nobody, certainly, will deny that the idea of the existence of an omnipotent, just and omni-benevolent personal God is able to accord man solace, help, and guidance; also, by virtue of its simplicity the concept is accessible to the most undeveloped mind. But, on the other hand, there are decisive weaknesses attached to this idea in itself, which have been painfully felt since the beginning of history. For example, if this Being is omnipotent, then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, every human feeling and aspiration is also His work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an Almighty Being? In giving out punishment and rewards He would to a certain extent be passing judgment on Himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to Him?¹⁷³

Whitehead does present a God that in his relative way is an omni-benevolent personal God, giving to man solace, help and guidance. His God saves every actual entity and in doing this saves the world through his working for an upward order. Christian Theology would expect Whitehead to say that God saves more than the actual

¹⁷³Albert Einstein, "Science and Religion", Nature, p. 606.

entities, that he saves the persons of each individual within his nature. With his scientific frame of reference, Whitehead talks about actual entities and not basically about personalities. A person is a collection of actual entities and is always in process. In one sense God saves the person because the actual entities are saved. In another sense God does not save the person, because the person as such has no unique existence in God's salvation. Whitehead asserts that the essence of life is to live fully. It is of the essence of God's nature to help each actual entity fulfil itself. Christian Theology sees the real meaning of life to be in a future life with God, and, therefore, places emphasis on a personal salvation. Whitehead would say that Christian Theology has misunderstood the essence of life; and, therefore, its theological emphasis is incorrect.

The third attack would hold that Whitehead's God is not the or a personal God.¹⁷⁴ If, by definition, a

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cf., William Temple, Nature, Man and God, p. 259;

personal God is such a God who is conscious and responds or relates himself to man through his conscious qualities, then Whitehead's God is a personal God. If one reads carefully the last chapter of Process and Reality, it seems almost absurd to suppose that Whitehead's God is not personal. The pronoun He is used to refer to God, which in no way can be taken to be neuter. In his Consequent and Superjective Natures, God is conscious; he loves and suffers; his satisfaction is increased; and he works for an increase in the temporal order. God is personally good because he never thrusts a desire on an actual entity, while at the same time, he works with evil to cause good. Being personal, God is both efficient and final cause. Whitehead would assert that to be personal, God must be able to love and suffer; and to love and suffer means that a being is effected by that which causes him to suffer in his love. In other words

¹⁷⁴ Charles Raven, Natural Religion and Christian Theology, pp. 102-3; D. E. Trueblood, Philosophy of Religion, p. 265; and Victor Yarros, "Dr. Whitehead and Professor Mather", The Open Court, 1928, p. 735.

to be a personal God, it is necessary that God be relative to the world, in a process of becoming, and open to change under the conditioning factors of the world. Whitehead would further assert that it is exactly at this point that Christian Theology strips God of his personal quality. Theology has asserted that God is absolute, perfect and complete, while at the same time loving and suffering. These opposing natures of God are called a paradox, but in reality they are nonsense because a personal God who loves and suffers cannot be absolute, perfect and complete. God is personal, as all actual entities are personal; but to be personal God must be relative, as all actual entities are relative.

An evaluation of Whitehead's view of religion must be considered from the perspective of his intention, which is to present a positive philosophy of religion. Traditional theology has often developed its religious insights from an exclusive view of God, which at times has presented man with a God who negates his

other areas of human interest. Jesus presented, according to Whitehead, religious insights which were basically positive; man was to live in love because God loved him and had expressed this love. Whitehead, in the positive tradition of Jesus, attempts to present a positive doctrine of God and a positive view of religion. God, who loves and suffers, always works for the upward order. Whitehead's evaluation of traditional religion is based upon this positive concern. He starts by showing how religion has positively developed. In the light of this positive development, limitations of religious development are then evaluated. He concludes his consideration by a positive call upon religion to accept the responsibility of its faith to make its insights constantly relevant to the changing process.

Whitehead's view of the development of religion is presented from a dual perspective, concerning the role of religion for man. On the one hand, religion is what man does with his own solitariness. On the other hand religion is definitely social; a crucial issue for

religion is the relation of the individual to the community. All religions, especially beyond the primitive stage, have tried to keep this tension between the individual and social nature of religion.

It is possible to make a comparison between Whitehead's four stages of religious development and the stages outlined in Whitehead's method. Consideration begins from the area of a particular human interest. This area is a discipline with which the investigator is familiar; the familiarity compares with the religious ritual. Hypotheses are presented as guides for consideration. An evaluation is made as to the best possible direction; this stage is similar to the emotional stage which develops from the ritual. On the basis of observation and evaluation, descriptive generalizations are presented. At this point qualities and functions are often attributed to things which they are normally not considered to have. A descriptive generalization compares with the religious myth. Finally the descriptive generalization is tested in other areas of human interest, and if found adequate,

it is presented as a universal insight. This testing stage compares with the rationalization stage in religion. The universal metaphysical principles, reached by the open-ended method, are never to be asserted as absolutes. This metaphysical lack of certitude compares with Whitehead's assertion that the failure of rationalized religion comes when its insights are presented as absolute dogmas.

Whitehead's four stages of religious development and three stages of development in the insights concerning God can be illustrated from the Bible. In the Old Testament, the four stages can be more fully seen. As the people of Israel come together from their different backgrounds, they bring with them different religious rituals. Over a period of time these rituals are consolidated and take on the emotional content of being God's chosen people. Myths develop, e.g. Red Sea deliverance, which show how God protects and saves his chosen people. Especially after the Exilic Period, the rationalization process takes hold. At this stage religious insights are

formulated, not as myths, but as a legalistic structure for religion. The development of the idea of God cannot fully be seen in the Bible. The Bible is a religious account, and the concept of God "the void"¹⁷⁵ precedes such religious development. The Old Testament presents God as the enemy and God as the enemy-companion. God is the enemy of all people, including his own, who do not obey his will. At the same time God is the companion of those who obey his commandments, especially his chosen people. By the time of the inter-testamental period, the stage is set for a greater emphasis upon God the companion. Jesus places primary, if not complete, emphasis upon God the companion. God loves; God saves the individual from his worldly cares to his heavenly kingdom. With the rationalization process of Paul, God the enemy partially returns, though the primary emphasis is still upon God the companion. God remains basically love, but now God chooses some to heaven and does not choose

¹⁷⁵cf., RM, pp. 16-17.

others. From Whitehead's perspective, Jesus presented the highest form of religious insights concerning the nature and function of God.

In Whitehead's evaluation of the development of the Christian religion from Paul to the Nineteenth Century, there are some interesting insights but at the same time some restricted appreciations. His evaluation does not do justice to the theological contributions presented by Paul. It is true that Paul does establish more rigid and absolute dogmas for belief and condemns those who disagree. At the same time Paul's primary emphasis is upon the companion God. He rejects legalistic religion and places great emphasis upon 'the mind of Christ' as a norm for human beings. All his writings show extreme love and concern, even though he often admonishes the people.

The evaluation of the effects of the Reformation offer true but limited insights. It is an over-statement to say that Luther and Calvin rejected the aesthetic qualities of religion. It was a definite concern of

Luther to develop worship in such a way that the people could more fully participate. This participation by the people was to be enriching educationally as well as aesthetically. An evaluation of Calvin's evening prayer service confirms its aesthetic quality. The service is a drama, showing how the religious faith developed from the Old Testament to the New. It is true that those who built upon the Reformation often developed services of worship that rejected or greatly limited aesthetic value. This lack of aesthetic quality has been especially true from the period of Protestant Scholasticism and represents a definite limitation in the quality of theology. The Protestant tradition has often developed its rationalized process to absolute dogmas, making it necessary to limit aesthetic features which could not assert these absolute qualities. The effect of the Reformation may have been the limitation or rejection of traditional aesthetic values in the Christian religion, but it is unfair to state that Luther and Calvin are primarily responsible.

Whitehead's evaluation of the importance of the contemporary relationship between religion and science is excellent. It is true that we live in a scientifically dominated age which makes it even more vital that religion should speak to man's total needs. Instead of being defensive in relation to science, religion must reinterpret its insights in order to meet man's emotional needs while not clashing with his intellectual growth. In order to do this religion must include all areas of human concern, including science, within its frame of reference.

The religious insights of Alfred North Whitehead are no final answer to those who try to find a more relevant way of interpreting the Christian faith within the contemporary situation. Whitehead would never make this claim. His method demands that his insights should never become final answers or dogmas. Religion is called upon, through his open-ended method, to seek continually new and more adequate ways of expressing the truths of the faith. Christian man in the scientific age searches

for better ways to understand the meanings of his faith and for more adequate ways of expressing these meanings. Our evaluations and comparisons have presented the possibility that Whitehead's method and religious insights may be of service in understanding the nature of reality and in better understanding and expressing our faith in relation to this reality. Whitehead stated that his purpose was to develop a position of rationalized mysticism. On the basis of his method, he has presented us with a contemporary myth for understanding the nature of total reality, as well as for understanding our religious natures. Both the method and the myth may help us to develop a more adequate theological method and a better understanding and expression of the meaning of the Christian Myth. We end with a quotation by Bernard Eugene Meland, giving testimony to the stimulating effect of Whitehead's method and religious insights for the searching Christian.

For beneath this talk about God heeding the claims of man, or being attentive to his predicament,

is the matter of the nature of reality, the kind of world process in which man must pursue his destiny. On this matter, Whitehead has been most illuminating. He has spoken to the religious man's condition. He has called him from the lethargy of acquiescence to a static deity, and has urged him to join hands with a Creator. He has roused him from the pampering of his own ego, from the plight of self-pity and self-concern, to participation in an enterprise of vast proportion, wherein the drama of the earth's seasons, the perennial cycle of perishing and new growth, is given its cosmic setting. To grasp the significance of living and of growth in the midst of the earth's perishings, to assess man's impulse to praise life in the face of the tragic sense of life, this is to rise to the religious man's vision of things, and to be equal to demands which creativity and our creature role lay upon us. On this matter, Whitehead's thought has been particularly fruitful.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ B. E. Meland, "The Religious Availability of a Philosopher's God", Christendom, 1943, p. 501.

CHAPTER THREE

HENRY NELSON WIEMAN

Introduction

Henry Nelson Wieman was born in 1884 into the family of a Presbyterian minister. During his childhood he developed a strong passion for religion. At the age of twenty Wieman entered Park College. There he developed an inquiring passion for philosophy, with Josiah Royce becoming his prophet.¹ After completing studies at San Francisco Theological Seminary, Wieman studied at Jena and Heidelberg Universities in Germany. Here he came under the direct influence of Bücken, Windelband and Troeltsch. Returning to the United States, he spent several years in the parish ministry. It was during these years that the writings of Henri Bergson came

¹ Cf., H. N. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion", Contemporary American Theology, Vol. I, p. 341.

to his attention. Under the influence of Bergson, Wieman began his Ph.D. studies at Harvard University. At Harvard he studied under William Ernest Hocking and Ralph Barton Perry, but more decisively he came under the influence of John Dewey and William James.²

In effect Wieman had joined the revolution in theological, philosophical and scientific thought dating from the turn of the century, which was making a concerted attack upon Idealism. Although Wieman was thus rejecting his past association in philosophy as an Absolute Idealist,

²In 1934, in The Christian Century, Wieman wrote several articles concerning his interpretation of John Dewey. Finally, Dewey wrote a statement which said that Wieman misinterpreted his position and intention. John Macquarrie gives special emphasis to the influence of Dewey on Wieman. Although it is true that there is this strong influence, Macquarrie overstates the case and fails to make clear that Wieman moved directly into the Process school. (cf., John Macquarrie, Twentieth-Century Religious Thought, pp. 186-92.) Wieman was also influenced by William James' pragmatic view of truth, although not by the popular interpretation of James' pragmatism as being "what ever works." Wieman adopts James' pleading for actuality, not practicality per se. For a sample of James' writing which points to his influence upon Wieman, cf., Wm. James, The Meaning of Truth, pp. 202-10.

his developing theology does retain a striking element of his idealistic past. This idealistic influence is retained in his doctrine of God as the Supreme, Sovereign or Absolute Good who gives meaning to the relative goods of human existence. It is essential to bear in mind this influence of Absolute Idealism in Wieman's developing position, even though it becomes coloured and reshaped by his increasing empirical emphasis.³ Having taken his Ph.D., Wieman went to Occidental College in California to teach philosophy. He stayed there until 1927, when he became Professor of Theology in the Philosophy of Religion Chair in the graduate school of the University of Chicago. It was during his stay at Occidental that another major figure came into his life. This figure was Alfred North Whitehead, and Wieman was introduced to his thought in the Concept of Nature.

³For a fuller development of this idealistic, unitary influence, consider the "Technical Postscript" to The Source of Human Good.

When Whitehead's Concept of Nature appeared it fascinated me. One blistering hot and stupefying summer in Southern California I toiled for many days upon it. Strange how one can detect the greatness of a man's thought before ever one can fathom it and even before the thinker himself has developed the implications of it or rounded it out! When I learned that his Religion in the Making was about to appear, I sent in an order to have it mailed to me the moment it was off the press. I remember how I poured upon it and read it over and over. The book is cryptic and one cannot understand it until after mastering Process and Reality, which did not come out until several years later.⁴

Although Wieman was influenced greatly by Whitehead, one must not make the mistake of assuming that he accepted completely Whitehead's system. As he had disagreed with the epistemology of Bergson, Wieman disagreed with what he considered to be speculation in the thought of Whitehead.

In Process and Reality Whitehead sets forth an idea of God which is a glorious speculation, but, it seems to me, a wholly groundless speculation. There is no evidence whatsoever to support it. He calls it the "consequent nature of God." As a myth, or a

⁴H. N. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion", Contemporary American Theology, Vol. I, p. 345.

form of poetic symbolism, it might be acceptable. But I doubt he would allow it to be so considered, although he admits it is purely speculative. Such speculations, unless they are treated as myths, are dangerous, in my judgment. But I hold that Process and Reality, taken as a whole, is the most magnificent achievement of constructive imagination that modern times can show. Doubtless it is infected with error through and through. Such ambitious efforts always are. But we must have them occasionally, at rare intervals, in human history, when there appears a man with the required genius to accomplish such work.⁵

Under the influence of Whitehead, Wieman advanced in the direction of a philosophy of organism. In the Concept of Nature he was influenced by the analysis of sense awareness as an awareness of "the whole occurrence of nature." This suggestion was developed by Wieman in Religious Experience and the Scientific Method.⁶ He here concentrated upon the need and possibility of man's developing a more objective sense of the reality beyond his immediate subjective experience. The theological empiricism of Schleiermacher had left man with his subjective experience,

⁵ Ibid., p. 346.

⁶ cf., RESM, p. 178.

and the psychological approach of William James has restrained man from envisaging a more objective sense of reality beyond himself. Wieman's view of an objective reality beyond man took theology beyond the confines of its past empirical limitations.⁷ If Henry Nelson Wieman had accomplished nothing else but this, his place would be secure in the field of constructive theology in America. Over the years Wieman's thoughts have grown and have been elaborated by subsequent works, in which he has attempted to give a more definitive interpretation of the objective datum of religious experience.

As the process of growth and elaboration began, Henry Nelson Wieman made a rather fierce impact upon the scene of American liberal religion. It is necessary to examine briefly this scene, recalling our discussion in chapter one, in order to understand fully the impact of

⁷ Like Whitehead, Wieman's empiricism differs from the tradition of Locke and Hume. For a discussion of these differences, cf., B. E. Meland, "The Root and Form of Wieman's Thought", HNW, p. 57ff.

Wieman's thought. Before the Great War, Rauschenbusch had presented liberal, social Christianity in a spirited and assured voice in his Christianity and the Social Crisis. Although this social emphasis continued in liberal circles, it continued with a voice which was no longer clear or assured. Rival theological interests were developing, and one of these interests was a mystical inquiry. William James had given direction to this interest with his experimental, introspective inquiry. Men like William Ernest Hocking and Rudolf Otto continued this mystical interest in a more reflective and less empirical direction. Whitehead continued in his own way this interest, through his emphasis upon religion as what a man does with his solitariness. Prior to Whitehead's statement, Wieman had already begun to develop his theology from this conception of religion as solitary. For him religion was solitary adjustment to God, in contrast to the Social Gospel;⁸ and in Method of Private Religious

⁸ cf., WRWT, pp. 29, 208.

Living, he developed this theme.

Another increasing problem after The War was the relationship between science and religion, and American Protestantism gave particular emphasis to the biological study of man. Wieman's theology, based on his own interpretation of the scientific method, contributed to the growing interest with the relationship of science and religion. In the scientific method he found a way of evaluating values, and he used this method to develop a minimum, objective statement of God's relationship to man and the demands of this relationship upon man. One would make a mistake if one thought that Wieman joined religion and science in order to secure a more acceptable place for religion. His purpose was to make contact with the objective God and to escape from the pitfalls of subjective theology.

I have been widely accused of trying to "reconcile science and religion" and introduce "scientific method" into religion in order to make religion respectable and acceptable to the intelligentsia. Nothing has been wider from my thoughts than that. This accusation is what the psychologists

call "projection" on the part of professional religionists. Their business is to make other people religious. Therefore they must try constantly to make religion appealing to others, make it dramatic, preachable or otherwise transmittable. Hence when they see anyone trying to reformulate our religious thinking, they very naturally jump to the conclusion that he is trying to make religion more acceptable to somebody or other. But that is not my intent. My sole concern is to find some way of escaping from the miasma of subjectivism and making contact with sacred reality. . .The only reason I insist on scientific method in religion, is because I want to deal with the objective, existential God, and not merely ideas.⁹

Probably the most crucial theological issue in the 1920's in America, especially for those in the liberal school, was the issue of theism. The ethical movement in American theology had become so strong that for many there was a rejection of any serious interest in the reality of God. This view might be expressed in the following way: "If we have the choice between Jesus and a God who is not as good as Jesus, then there is no choice. We must choose Jesus." In effect American

⁹H. N. Wieman, "Theocentric Religion", Contemporary American Theology, Vol. I, p. 347.

liberal religion had become a type of religious humanism. To a great degree this mood was an affirmation of humanism after a pattern of the human Jesus. With the lessening emphasis on the human Jesus after The War, the scene was set for the natural development of humanism. Unless one stood in one of the traditions of philosophical idealism, one had no alternative route, after this rejection, to theism. There were many attempts to deal with this problem of theism. The major voice of the time, dealing with this issue, came from the Chicago-school. From chapter one we recall that the writings of this school showed the early buds of empirical theism. E. S. Ames related the concept "God" to social values. Shailer Mathews developed a conceptual theism, in which the word "God" was a personal analogy for the personality-producing activities in the universe with which men must come to terms. It was also pointed out in chapter one that G. B. Smith was never able to develop his solution to the theistic problem, although he did offer a synthesis of the empirical position developing in the Chicago-school.

An analysis of the problem is presented by Smith in his article, "Is Theism Essential to Religion?"¹⁰ He completely rejects humanism as an answer to the problem, but he has no constructive alternative to offer. The only thing positive that Smith could say was that in some way man must continue to pursue "a great mystic experiment" in relating himself to the sustaining quality of the cosmic environment.

The crucial issue of the time was whether one could continue speaking of the existence of God as a concrete reality, and to this issue Wieman spoke as a fresh voice. Wieman did two things at this point. First he redefined the question of theism. He argued that the question, "Does God Exist?", is not the real question. So long as the wrong question is asked, it is not possible to give the right answer. Wieman asserted that God is that Something in our environment, however defined,

¹⁰cf., G. B. Smith, "Is Theism Essential to Religion", Journal of Religion, 1925.

upon which man is dependent for his security, welfare, and increasing abundance. The true question is "What is the character of this Something upon which man is dependent for his salvation?".

My own purpose is a very earnest and a very serious one. It is so to formulate the idea of God that the question of God's existence becomes a dead issue, like the question of other inescapable forms of natural existence, and all our energies can be turned to living for God and seeking better knowledge about God.¹¹

The second thing Wieman did was to assert a method by which theology could understand the character of this Something. This does not imply that Wieman's method was fully developed at this time, but the essential structure of his method was set.

Wieman spoke to a particular situation in such a way that he made a dynamic impact upon the American theological scene. Out of the decay of the liberal, social religion, humanism was becoming a very live alternative. Wieman redefined the issue and offered a method for

¹¹ ITAG, p. 276.

dealing with it. His significance is not that he defeated humanism, for it has continued to flower. Wieman's significance lay in the fact that he redefined the issue and presented a method by which at least one segment of the theological community could carry on a more fruitful inquiry. Whether Wieman's later work has helped to fulfil this more fruitful inquiry is another question; but whatever the answer, he holds a noted place in the history of American theology for the importance and brilliance of that brief moment.¹²

A very just comparison has been made between Henry Nelson Wieman and Karl Barth. It has been suggested that Wieman did for liberal American theology what Barth had done for Continental liberal theology in Europe some years earlier. Both men attempted to turn theology away from the preoccupation with a religion of ideals and to direct theology to the sovereign and ultimate God beyond our human ideals. Granted that these men are

¹² cf., B. E. Meland, "The Root and Form of Wieman's Thought", HNW, p. 53.

miles apart in the language and method used, their intentions on this point seem to have been similar. It would be possible to include also Reinhold Neibuhr, in his earlier writings, in this comparison, as Neibuhr, in Does Civilization Need Religion?, attacks a religion which is based on ideals and not on the sovereign God. The relationship of these men's purposes has often been overlooked because their theological systems differ. Wieman used the new metaphysics of organism and an expansion of the scientific method, while Barth and Neibuhr were oriented to the neo-Reformation way of thought. The important thing, however, is that both schools of thought were carrying on a line of attack against philosophical idealism, especially in the form of religious humanism.¹³

By the 1940's the situation in the world had changed radically, and the theological communities of the world were being forced to deal with different

¹³ cf., Ibid., p. 49.

theological issues, or at least with different aspects of old issues. In his earlier period Wieman had redefined and spoken to the issues with which the American liberal Protestants were probing. By the 1940's Wieman's theological writings were oriented to a wider cultural situation, in which the threat to human survival was acute. An example of Wieman's growing social concern can be seen in the following quotation.

We must achieve some new formulation of the old faith by which our fathers lived. The new formulation must state more explicitly in terms of rational empirical findings what we serve supremely and whereunto the deepest currents of our lives shall flow. The dogmatism, super-rationalities, paradoxes and super-empirical claims which have so frequently excluded the tests of inquiry may have been relatively harmless in the past except for a few inquisitions, a few thousand burnings and torturings of individuals. . .A faith now shaped by such findings turns to widespread doom in a world like ours.¹⁴

After Hiroshima Wieman spoke with an unceasing passion for religious inquiry. By this time his method and theory of value had been made sharp for designating

¹⁴ NWMC, p. 209.

man's ultimate good, and now he moves into the centre of social issues in a dynamic way. With these new theological and social interests, the issues to which Wieman addresses himself have become more particularized. The answers he develops in his theology presuppose the questions in the way he has formulated them. As the issues of life have become more complex in the international situation, Wieman's theology has become more complex and less popular, since it is dealing with questions which were often not understood or even considered.

It should be noted that Wieman realized that his thought was going through radical changes, changes which were much broader than the shift to a greater social interest. In 1939 he pointed out some of these changes in an article for the Christian Century entitled, "Some Blind Spots Removed."¹⁵ Since it is not within the scope

¹⁵H. N. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed", The Christian Century, 1939.

of this work to present a detailed consideration of the intricate development of Wieman's thought, these major changes will be listed as a guide in helping to understand the development in Wieman's theology. (1) In his earlier writings Wieman had been very hesitant to rely on Christian symbols, because he felt that these symbols were elevated often to absolute truths instead of being guides. It was necessary for him to clarify the meanings of these symbols by intellectual tools before he could use them.¹⁶ Having gone through this personal, intellectual process, Wieman is able to assert that "when the ambiguities and superstitions and superficialities have been cleared away from these ancient forms of expression, they carry a depth and scope of meaning which no other words can convey, because the same history which has made them has made us also."¹⁷ (2) The second point

¹⁶To see the development of his thought concerning the value of symbolism, cf., RESM, pp. 47-57; H. N. Wieman, "On Using Christian Words", Journal of Religion, pp. 259-69, Vol. 20.

¹⁷H. N. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed", The Christian Century, p. 116, 1939.

of change is concerned with the doctrine of sin.¹⁸ Having come out of, and been a part of, American liberal theology, Wieman had been influenced by the view which asserted that sin is the disparity between our conduct and our highest ideals. He now asserts that sin "is the disparity between our highest ideals and the concrete goodness in the immediate situation which is the offering of God and his demand."¹⁹ (3) It is essential to Wieman's theology that there is a transforming good within each concrete situation for which man is not in any way responsible, nor which man can predict or anticipate. He is able now to call this transforming Good by the more traditional theological term, "grace of God."²⁰

¹⁸For the development of Wieman's doctrine of sin, cf., NPR, pp. 147-58; GR, pp. 268, 470; SHG, pp. 126, 174, 272; MUC, pp. 15-17, 30, 57, 132; H. N. Wieman, "Responsibility and Freedom", Unpublished, 1962, p. 1ff.

¹⁹H. N. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed", The Christian Century, 1939, p. 116.

²⁰An important feature of Wieman's theology is "the growth of good," which we shall consider later. In order to see his theological development, cf., for the relation of this growth to the grace of God: NPR, p. 158; GR, p. 263; SHG, p. 244; MUC, pp. 125, 132.

(4) Wieman has asserted that history tells us that there has been a growth of this transforming good, especially in inter-personal relationships. He is able now to assert that this growth and its potential is the living Christ.²¹

This growth of connections of mutual support and enrichment, this growth of the bonds of potential meaning which fills each concrete situation with infinite fullness of value to be appreciated, is the living Christ because it issues from that historic situation in which Jesus Christ, regardless of our theological interpretation of his personality and teachings, was used by a process of history to initiate and promote such a growth.²²

(5) The Church as a historical institution now takes on

²¹As an essentially non-biblical, constructive theologian, Wieman is very concerned to develop his doctrine of Christ. His Christology is discussed and implied at many points. The following are possibly the most essential: WRWT, pp. 126-7; ITAG, pp. 16, 155-7; DPR, pp. 163-4, 168-9; GR, pp. 268-9, 282, 486-7; SHG, pp. 39ff, 214-15, 269; H. N. Wieman, "Appreciating Jesus Christ", The Christian Century, 1930, pp. 589-91; and H. N. Wieman, "Was God In Jesus?", The Christian Century, Vol. 47, pp. 1181-4. Also cf., Walter Norton, "God in Christ: Soteriology", HNW, pp. 180-93; E. J. Carnell, "The Son of God," HNW, pp. 306-18.

²²H. N. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed", The Christian Century, 1939, p. 117.

new meaning for Wieman.²³ He can assert that this growth of good, this living Christ in our midst, is a way of life which must be fostered by a historical community which is committed to this way of life. What makes this committed community different from every other community is that its way of life, with its hopes, ideals, and moral principles, is crucified with Christ, and must, therefore, keep a distinctive relationship with the original, historical community which formed around Christ Jesus. (6) His final change or clarification has come in his doctrine of God. Wieman has come to assert with increasing clarity the otherness of God, that is, that God cannot be identified with man, even with man raised to the nth dimension of perfection.

God is different from man. God works concretely. Man cannot possibly do that. Man must work abstractly. . .God alone is concrete in his working. God is creator. Man cannot be a creator.

²³ Wieman's view of the Church, cf., RESM, p. 246. SHG, p. 43 MUC, pp. 28, 163-5, 168, 172, 180-5, 194; Wayne Shutee, "The Work of the Church", HNW, pp. 211-21; Georges Florovsky, "The Church of God", HNW, pp. 332-42.

The production of unpredictable consequences through the forming of "internal relations" is creation. A common word for it is growth. It is God's working, not man's.²⁴

In essence, it can be said that Wieman's theology has gone through much more of a revolution than would be involved in simply developing greater social concerns. Man is undergoing great social change, and in this change he is asking the basic religious question of salvation. On the basis of his developed method, Wieman now turns to help man, in the middle of his social crisis, to find the answer to his religious question in two ways: (1) by discovering and relating the essential religious insights of the Christian tradition, and (2) by showing these insights to be valid by testing them on the basis of his method with all available empirical data. Thus, while Wieman's theology asserts a more social interest, it does so on the basis of his empirical-testing method

²⁴ H. N. Wieman, "Some Blind Spots Removed", The Christian Century, 1939, p. 118. Later we shall give more detailed consideration to his doctrine of God.

and on the basis of a rediscovery of the essential religious insights of the Christian tradition. On the basis of his method, Wieman's theology has come to centre on the relationship of man, as a social creature, to God. His interest with science, metaphysics and cosmology, continues only in so far as it relates to the central question of religious inquiry, the God-man relationship. "I have come to concentrate more and more on man in relation to God and less and less on subhuman, metaphysical and cosmic questions that may be peripheral to this central problem."²⁵

Method

Having as the central question of religious inquiry the God-man relationship, Wieman presents a scientific method. The purpose of the method is to enable man to gain knowledge of his relationship with God. Knowledge is not the end product of the scientific

²⁵H. N. Wieman, "The Ways of God with Man", Iliff Review, Vol. 19, p. 41.

method; rather, the goal of the method is that man should make an absolute faith-commitment to God. The faith-commitment is based upon the knowledge gained, but at the same time it goes beyond the scope of that knowledge. If one would assert that the use of the scientific method demands that the observer be detached in his consideration, then Wieman's method by definition fails the test of being scientific. Since the goal of religious inquiry is knowledge of man's relationship to God and a faith-commitment based upon this knowledge, man must use the scientific method in a passionate and partially non-detached manner. At the same time there must be a degree of detachment, for the analysis of the data must serve as the source of knowledge. The scientific method is improperly used when man imposes his desires and wants upon the epistemological process. With such a distortion, the resulting faith-commitment is inadequate because man has no way of knowing that he is committed to God and not to some illusion. In brief, Wieman's method demands detachment, in the sense that the knowledge gained and the

faith-commitment made are related to the religious experiences undistorted by our personal desires or wants.

In the introduction, it was stated that Wieman's theological endeavour centred originally on the issue of theism. As he redefined this theological issue, a method for gaining empirical knowledge of man's relationship with God became necessary, although Wieman sought this knowledge as a basis for the faith-commitment. Wieman has been accused of placing so much emphasis upon the act of gaining knowledge that the faith-commitment became insignificant. Desiring to correct this false impression, he has placed increasing emphasis upon the absolute faith-commitment as the goal of the scientific method, as it is related to the religious inquiry. Let us now turn to a fuller consideration of Wieman's scientific method.

Wieman's scientific method is in part determined by the data which he wishes to investigate; but at the same time he asserts that this method will apply to all data which can be investigated. Wieman first employs this

method within the context of the problem of theism. As stated previously, he redefined the issue of theism so that the question is not whether God exists but what is the character of God. By definition he asserts that God exists. His line of reasoning is as follows: Man has experiences which he calls religious. These experiences are religious because man experiences a saving quality in his life. There is Something within man's experiences which saves man. That Something in human experience which saves man is God, by definition. In his earlier writing, Wieman asserted that since God is found in human experience, God is found by man in and only in sensory data.²⁶ Wieman later qualifies this view of God by his emphasis on intuition and on the perceptual event. Man does not cause these religious experiences. He cannot foresee that these religious experiences will occur; therefore, man is not the creator of these experiences. They are created by a Something which is

²⁶ cf., H. N. Wieman, "Religion and the Physical Sciences", The World Tomorrow, 1930, pp. 56-7; RESM, p. 5.

outside of man but which functions in relation to man. This Something which produces the religious experience is God. From his naturalistic perspective, Wieman does not use the term "create" in the sense of bringing something into being out of nothing. He means by "create" to cause to exist with a particular form or character. For Wieman, God creates by giving a direction of value to a particular becoming process. God works through the development of culture as it centres on a particular situation, in order to transform the situation into being a saving experience. In this connection, one may likewise speak of a "growth of meaning." When man tries to live in relation to God, there is growth of meaning. Man cannot foresee this growth; consequently, God is responsible for it.

This experience of God is not knowledge of God, and knowledge of God is what Wieman initially is seeking. The God-given experience is the foundation of possible knowledge. It is the basis of what Wieman calls knowledge by acquaintance. God produces the experience,

and man's task is twofold in relation to the experience:

(1) to find out if the experience is an experience of God, and (2) if it is, to determine the characteristics of God in the experience, in order that man can live in more adequate relationship with God. It should be noted again that Wieman is saying that knowledge of God is not an end in itself, but that living in relation to God on the basis of knowledge is the desired end. A certain method must be followed before man can gain knowledge of God, or any knowledge at all. Wieman calls this method the scientific method, the empirical method, the common sense method, and the method of reason. "The scientific method" appears to be his favourite term, but he asserts that if we do not wish to call it by this name it makes no difference. "If one does not want to give the name of science to these inquiries, the matter need not be argued."²⁷

²⁷H. N. Wieman, "Bernhardt's Analysis of Religion: Its Implications and Development", Iliff Review, 1954, p. 53. For an attack on Wieman's use of the term "Scientific method", cf., Edwin Aubrey, Present Theological Tendencies, p. 32ff.

Another term used by Wieman which may explain better the true character of his scientific method is "problem-solving."

The word "God" should indicate a problem above all others imperative for human existence, a problem of such sort as to bring into action all the resources of the individual and of society to find a working solution. . .²⁸

Man has a problem. He has an experience in which he is interested, thinking it a religious experience. Wieman asserts that it is of the nature of man that he has a sub-rational urge towards those things which are super-rational. By super-rational he means those things which happen to man which man cannot understand fully. When man has an experience, this sub-rational faculty responds to the God-given super-rational possibilities of the experience; thus, the possibilities become a "lure" to man. This lure or interest is given to man in the possibilities of the experience. Man does not create the lure; God is responsible. Wieman calls this lure the grace of God.

²⁸H. N. Wieman, "Reply to Dr. Williams", HNW, p. 113.

But if he has not interest he cannot acquire an interest by his own efforts, because he must first have an interest before he can work to increase it. Therefore the interest must be given to him. In that sense it must be given by the grace of God.²⁹

Wieman also calls this God-given lure the revelation of God by the Holy Spirit. Man is transformed by the Holy Spirit in the experience in such a way that man can learn of God. Man must carry out the intellectual inquiry, but it is God in the form of the Holy Spirit who makes possible man's efforts.

Now this transformation by "the holy spirit" is what (rightfully) can be called revelation. It is not the giving of knowledge, but it is the giving of an attitude or disposition of the personality which enables one to acquire knowledge of God's way. It redirects the interests and desires and attentive awareness so that one can learn of God by the ordinary methods of intelligent inquiry.³⁰

Wieman's scientific method presupposes an initial revelation by God in the particular religious experience. God reveals to man the super-rational possibilities of

²⁹GR, p. 263.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 442-3.

the experience. Wieman calls this revelation "the grace of God" and "the transformation by the holy spirit." By designating this revelation by these traditional phrases, Wieman is attempting to relate the foundation of his scientific method to the Christian tradition. It is man's responsibility to use the scientific method to discover the implications of God's revelation and to act upon this information. From a supernatural perspective, one might assert that Wieman does not have the right to use these traditional religious terms within his naturalistic perspective. The implication of such an assertion would be that the traditional terms of the Christian faith are bound to a supernatural frame of reference. It is possible to justify such a position by appealing to the traditional use of the terms. In our consideration of Wieman, however, this assertion from a supernatural perspective is rejected on two counts. On the one hand this assertion is rejected because it implies that the grace of God working through the Holy Spirit cannot be presented in a naturalistic perspective. No

theology has the right to establish a man-centred perspective which limits our understanding of God's revelation, so long as this theology looks to the continuing revelation of God. On the other hand, it is questionable whether Wieman's naturalistic perspective is so radically different from the supernatural position. Both positions testify that God and his revelation are more than man can know or understand. Wieman speaks of the limitation of man in relation to God by referring to the super-rational instead of the supernatural. Accepting that the development of modern science stands between supernaturalism and naturalism, Wieman's reference to the super-rational places him in close relation to the supernatural view, as both positions attempt to speak of the God-man relationship from their limited perspective.

Wieman asserts that the first task in solving a problem is to develop a theory or hypothesis which designates, for testing purposes, why this is a religious experience. This first step is often the most difficult, because until one has a theory to be tested one cannot

gain knowledge. The theory is based on one's observation of the experience. At the same time one is not responsible wholly for this idea which is put in theory-form for testing. In a real sense, one receives this idea from the lure of the experience by way of intuition. By giving emphasis to intuition, Wieman is expanding his scientific method to include more than the narrow confines of sensory data. Intuition is not a form of knowledge; it is a state of awareness on the part of man. "Intuition, however, is merely a word to cover the organic reaction and use of language which generates such intuitive apprehension of structures."³¹ In the process of intuition, in response to the lure of an experience, an insight, a new idea, comes to the mind with a strong feeling of truth.³² Man does not create this insight, since he could not foresee what it would be; therefore, it is the grace of God which creates the insight. God

³¹H. N. Wieman, "The Responsibility of Philosophical Inquiry", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 38, p. 366.

³²cf., NPR, p. 121.

not only reveals to man the lure of super-rational possibilities in the experience. It is God who creates the insight which man must shape into a hypothesis to be tested in order to gain knowledge. Man must be responsible for gaining knowledge and making the faith-commitment on the basis of the scientific method, but man is able to fulfil this responsibility only through the direct revelation of God.

Spectacular instances of intuition are instances of God's doing something to attract our attention, hence providing the occasion when knowledge of God becomes possible. But, here again, intuition is not a peculiar way of knowing.³³

The second step is to analyze the theory to see what are the essential characteristics of the concept. It is necessary to be very careful in designating these essential characteristics, because in the testing process one will consider carefully other experiences to see if they contain these characteristics. If these

³³ SHG, p. 186.

characteristics are present, then there is a possible correlation between one's basic experience and another experience. Upon showing this correlation to be the case, it is possible to use a concept to designate the relationship of these two experiences. If the characteristics are not present in another experience under consideration, then it is not possible to use properly the same concept to designate both experiences.

Based on this analysis, the next step is to develop any implications. It is necessary to be careful in designating the implications. In a religious experience the implications are important because they may serve to guide man in his actions, as man attempts to live in a more adequate relationship with God.

The next step is to test experimentally this theory in other experiences, especially those which one considers to be religious. This experimental test is carried out by observation and rational analysis. By 1946, Wieman had expanded his conception of the testing process. Previously the observation was based on

sense data, qualified by intuition. Wieman now introduces the concept of "perceptual event." Observation becomes a series of perceptual events, but the perceptual event is not merely sense data. "The perceptual event, as here tested, includes everything within and without the biological organism which experiment can demonstrate makes a difference to conscious awareness when the perceptual reaction occurs."³⁴ These other factors beyond the sense data of immediate experience are basically, for Wieman, the historical conditioning factors which have shaped one's culture and which are dominant in one's own experiences. Thus for a person within a culture oriented towards Christian tradition, it is necessary for him to take into account the insights of the tradition as he evaluates his own experience.

So God cannot be perceived until those meanings are developed in some strand of history and in some community which are necessary to the occurrence of those perceptual events which enter

³⁴ Ibid., p. 182.

into the structure of that creativity which generates the appreciative mind of man and the appreciableness of the world.³⁵

Wieman asserts this same point in talking about the concept "God."

To what should we refer when we speak of God? To answer that question we should go first of all to the Christian tradition because the word as we use it acquires its meaning from this tradition.³⁶

Revelation occurs in the sense data of immediate experience, but it also occurs in perceptual events and their inter-relatedness in some strand of history. To carry out adequate tests of observation and rational analysis, it is necessary to consider the immediate experience and the perceptual events of the Christian tradition. When the test is performed adequately, perception occurs. Man now has knowledge of these conditions under which certain kinds of perceptual events occur, and he is able to infer a relation between past perceptual events and possible future events.

³⁵ H. N. Wieman, "Reply to Doctor Weigel, S. J.", unpublished, p. 28.

³⁶ IFOF, p. 51.

An illustration of how Wieman would relate the perceptual event of an immediate experience to the perceptual events of the Christian tradition will be helpful at this point. From a particular experience one perceives that it is necessary to live in a new way, a way which demands that one be transformed into a new person. One perceives that this transformation is necessary, if one is to be in an adequate relationship with God. Within Wieman's scientific method, this perceptual event can and should be related to the perceptual event of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and of the way in which these events affected the disciples.

When Jesus was crucified, his followers saw that he could never carry to fulfilment the mission of the Jewish people as they conceived it; hence there was no good in him of the sort that had led them to follow him. They had thought that he would save the world by making supreme over human existence the good as seen in the perspective of Jewish culture. Now they saw that he never could do anything of the sort. He was not the messiah they had expected, and so far as they could see, he was no messiah at all. . .They reached that depth of despair which comes when all that seems to give hope to human existence is seen to be an illusion. This

was the immediate consequence of the Crucifixion.

After about the third day, however, when the numbness of the shock had worn away, something happened. The life transforming creativity previously known only in fellowship with Jesus began to work in the fellowship of the disciples. It was risen from the dead. Since they had never experienced it except in association with Jesus, it seemed to them that the man Jesus himself was actually present, walking and talking with them. Some thought they saw him and touched him in physical presence. But what rose from the dead was not the man Jesus; it was creative power. It was the living God that works in time. It was the Second Person of the Trinity. It was Christ the God, not Jesus the man.³⁷

The disciples, after about the third day, perceived a new relationship with Jesus. The bounds of their cultural heritage were lifted, as they became transformed persons in a new relationship with God the Christ. It was the creative power of God working in their particular religious experiences who revealed to the disciples this perceptual event. The person who perceives in a religious experience that he is being transformed into a new relationship with God can gain a deeper understanding

³⁷ SHG, p. 44.

of his perception by considering it in relation to this and other perceptual events of the Christian tradition. Unfortunately Wieman does not devote much consideration to the relationship of contemporary perceptual events to the perceptual events of the Christian tradition. This is an inherent weakness in his theological system and one to which we shall return at a later time.

Having found that the characteristics of the basic experience conform to the characteristics of other experiences, the next step is to make rational inferences concerning the meaning of the object under consideration. These rational inferences are used in several ways. In one way they serve as guides for the way of living. Another role is that they become included in other theories to be tested all over again. Still another role is that on the basis of the inference a universal generalization is made which asserts: (1) that this experiential concept has these essential characteristics, and that consequently if the essentials change a different concept must be used; (2) that on the basis of one's

observation and analysis of experiences one finds that this concept designates a reality which exists; and (3) that therefore, whenever this reality exists anywhere, it must have necessarily at least these essential characteristics.³⁸

Only after a theory has been explored, tested by observation and experimentation which is oriented historically, and rational inferences have been made does a person have knowledge. His theory is a belief until it is tested and shown to be true or false. Thus, the knowledge gained is the knowledge of the experience. When it is a religious experience, it is knowledge of God. The experience, based on God's revelation, comes first, but in order to have any knowledge about the experience, the above method must be employed.

A statement is an instance of knowledge if, and only if, we (1) have had an insight variously called "hypothesis," "theory", or "innovating suggestion"; (2) have put this suggestion into the

³⁸cf., H. N. Wieman, "Faith and Knowledge", Christendom, 1936, p. 765.

form of a statement with terms unambiguously defined; (3) have developed the implications of this statement into a logical structure of propositions of such sort that some of these propositions specify what must be observed under required conditions if the statement is to be accepted as knowledge; and (4) have made the observation under the specific conditions to discover if the data do appear in the order required to warrant accepting the statement as having met the tests of probability.³⁹

The scientific method becomes one's authority for claiming to have knowledge. Within the context of probability, one is able to decide whether the theory is true or false, or whether the theory is untestable and, therefore, can be used only as a belief.

Two kinds of authority should be distinguished. One is dogmatic. The other is authority of a reliable method for detecting error and gathering evidence when this method is used with competence required by rigorous discipline. Authority of the first kind is the foe of freedom but authority of the second kind is one necessary condition of freedom.⁴⁰

The scientific method not only enables us to get knowledge, it also transforms the character of our

³⁹ H. N. Wieman, "Knowledge, Religious and Otherwise", Journal of Religion, Vol. 38, p. 13.

⁴⁰MUC, p. 153.

experiences because it transforms our habit of response. Man develops a scientific attitude toward God. This means that an attitude is developed which enables man to be more responsive to particular localized data. The development of a scientific attitude implies that man cannot assume a completely detached role in the process of religious inquiry. Proper use of the scientific method, in the religious inquiry, will enable one to be more attune to the specific experiences in which God reveals himself. Using the scientific method in a completely detached manner would cause one to consider all experiences on an equal basis. Wieman rejects this postivistic approach and calls for a scientific attitude which enables one to be more attune to the specific revelations of God.

Scientific method transforms the character of our experience because it transforms our habit of response. The stimuli that once aroused us no longer stir us in so far as we assume the scientific attitude, for the scientific attitude means to be responsive to certain rarified and selected data at certain loci in space-time.⁴¹

⁴¹H. N. Wieman, "Experience, Mind, and the Concept," Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 21, p. 570. cf., H. N. Wieman,

This method is essentially scientific because it attempts to deal only with available empirical data, makes a theory about the data, considers the implications of the theory based on its essential characteristics, tests by observations and experimentations within the historical context whether the theory conforms to the data and to other data, and then makes rational generalizations which must go through the same method as more data become available. The knowledge which is gained is relative always to the data and the conditions under which the data and the theory are considered. There is no claim that the knowledge is infallible.⁴²

Wieman attempts to develop practical applications for his scientific method. These applications are developed in Method of Private Religious Living, a book written in non-technical language for laymen. On the

⁴¹ "Objective Versus Ideals," International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 35, p. 304.

⁴² cf., H. N. Wieman, "Neo-Orthodoxy and Contemporary Religious Reaction," Religious Liberals Reply, p. 13.

one hand, he relates the scientific method to a technique of reflective thinking. On the other hand, he applies the scientific method to the development of a proper attitude in worship.

The technique of reflective thinking is to be used in the process of solving problems. Since religion presents man with the problems how and what man must do to be saved, this technique is important. There are six requirements necessary in this technique, in order to solve a practical problem intellectually. The first step is to locate the difficulty of the problem and to eliminate mental attitudes which inhibit its recognition. It is necessary to view the difficulty as comprehensively and disinterestedly as possible. The third step is to develop that state of mind in which one has as full access as possible to the recourses of one's past experiences. The fourth requirement is the courage to be logical. It is necessary to have the courage, honesty and disinterestedness required to follow through rigorously to the end wherever our logic may lead us. The

enthusiasm necessary for action is the fifth requirement. It is necessary to have the drive to carry out the implications of the tested suggestions in the form of practical behaviour. The final step is concerned with the way in which we carry out our course of action in relation to other people. It is necessary that we establish those habits, dispositions, and mental attitudes which will enable us to deal with the various factors which confront us.

Wieman applies the scientific method to worship as an aid towards the development of the attitude which will open a man to transformation by God. The first stage in the act of worship is that man must expose himself to the object of worship, in order that he can be responsive to the transforming grace of God.

One puts himself amid those physical conditions and in that bodily and mental state in which he can feel more profoundly and pervasively the stimulus of the order of Being which most vitally affects him in the conduct of his living. In order to be permeated, suffused, and transformed by the stimulus of the Supreme Being one must turn away from lesser matters and give attention to what affects

him most deeply. Furthermore, one must deliberately seek those conditions, both inner and outer, which he has discovered by experiment to be most favorable to the reception of this stimulus of divine presence with all its possibilities for human living. . . . Through exposure to this object the deepest drive of our nature is awakened and its highest aspiration. Our fathers called this stage of worship praise and adoration.⁴³

Diagnosis is the second stage in worship. As man seeks after the highest in worship, he is forced to consider what is wrong with his habitual adjustment. In this self-diagnosis he discovers what are the inhibitions, the disorganizing habits, and the hidden deficiencies and obstructive tendencies in him which keep him from truly seeking God. We become aware acutely of unattained possibilities due to our limited relationship to God.

⁴³H. N. Wieman, "Worship As Means to Successful Living," The Methodist Quarterly Review, 1927, p. 358. A comment should be made concerning the use of the term "order of Being" in referring to God. There are many orders of being for Wieman, but God is that order of Being which affects man for the greatest good. It is to this order he is here referring. It is important to note this use, in order to realize that it is different from possible use Tillich makes of the term. For a discussion between Wieman and Tillich over the term "being", cf., H. R. Landon (ed.), Reinhold Niebuhr: A Prophetic Voice in Our Time, pp. 46-7.

This stage traditionally has been called the confession of sin. By diagnosis man becomes aware of the deficiencies in his relationship with God. This awareness in worship is a true confession to God of our sin. The third stage of worship is personal reconstruction. This stage is the most difficult, for here the crucial work is done. Often man gets an emotional stir, a feeling of exaltation, from the first two stages and stops short of the third stage. When this happens worship is incomplete and self-defeating. The first two stages are preparatory to the third. It is here that man develops the habitual attitudes and habitual organization which serves to mobilize the total personality in adjustment to God, in order to profit by all that God can give to man.

The method by which this reconstruction of attitudes and habits is accomplished is somewhat as follows. In the stage of diagnosis one discovers his peculiar and most fundamental defect or need in the way of maladjusted habits of impulses. Then he forms as clear and definite a concept as he can of what is required of him, in the form of readjusted attitude or correct habit, to enable the Environment to accomplish what is desired. Then he states this required readjustment of habits in words as comprehensive, accurate,

concise, and forcible as possible. These words in themselves alone do not constitute prayer; the prayer is in that attitude of mind and body which the words serve to engender and establish. The words should be repeated many times in order to assure the arousal and fixation of this attitude which is the prayer.⁴⁴

In summary worship involves three things: exposing oneself to God; finding out what is wrong with oneself and establishing that personal attitude through which one can receive the influence of God working in the environment, which will correct the wrong which is in one.

Wieman's application of the scientific method, to these practical areas of religious living, is important for several reasons. The fact that man must attempt, in solving practical problems and in worship, to open himself up to the transforming grace of God indicates that a complete detachment is not possible for the adequate use of the scientific method presented by

⁴⁴H. N. Wieman, "Worship as Means to Successful Living," The Methodist Quarterly Review, 1927, p. 360.

Wieman. In relating the scientific method to the act of worship, Wieman presents his stages of worship in relation to the perspective of worship developed in the New Testament and the traditions of the Christian Church.⁴⁵

In so doing, Wieman makes clear that his scientific method, practically applied, must take into account the perceptual events of the Christian tradition.

For Wieman, the scientific method is used incompletely unless there is a faith-commitment. Gaining knowledge of the God-man relationship is important, but this knowledge is of limited value until man acts upon it, by making an absolute faith-commitment to God. Since Wieman places the faith-commitment as the goal of the scientific method, it is possible to question whether his method is really scientific. From Wieman's perspective, the true scientist does not gain knowledge for the sake of gaining knowledge. The scientist seeks knowledge in order to act upon it. The scientific method is used in

⁴⁵ cf., MPRL, p. 22ff.

gaining knowledge of the God-man relationship for the purpose of acting upon this knowledge, an act which is an absolute faith-commitment to God. The knowledge gained is important because it enables man to commit himself to the true God and not to some figment of his own distorted needs.

In order to understand more clearly the importance of the faith-commitment in the scientific method, consideration will be given to the role of God in the process of man's gaining knowledge. Wieman's original presentation of the scientific method gives the impression that God enables man to perceive the super-rational possibilities in an experience, and then man functions to gain knowledge from the experience. As Wieman amplifies his thought, however, the importance of the faith-commitment becomes more obvious.

God is identified by Wieman as Creativity, and creativity produces the situation which is the foundation of one's knowledge of God.⁴⁶ God transcends man

⁴⁶ cf., H. N. Wieman, "Reply to Weigel", HNW, p. 361ff.

and his knowledge, but this does not imply that God is not immanent in the situation. "To be transcendent means to be beyond the reach of our specific knowledge, but not beyond the reach of our knowledge that such a reality has being."⁴⁷ As creativity, God works in the creative events of human life. Previously it appeared that man used the scientific method independently of God's functioning, except for the initial "lure", and in so doing man served as his own authority as to whether his statements were true or false. Wieman does not desire to belittle the responsibility of man in the process of gaining knowledge, but he now makes clear that the ultimate determinant of truth and knowledge is not the scientific method but the creative event which generates the rational principles of the mind. God is responsible for creating the mind, and, consequently, God is responsible for the functioning of the mind, when knowledge is gained. God is responsible not only for creating the mind; as the creative event,

⁴⁷H. N. Wieman, "God Is More Than We Can Think," Christendom, 1936, p. 436.

God is responsible for generating the structure of matter in such a way that a situation in which God can be revealed is produced.

The ultimate determination of truth and knowledge is the creative event generating the rational principles of the mind and the structures of matter in mutual determination of each other. Also this progressive creation rears a culture which shapes the reactions of the human body, the direction of attentive consciousness, and the technology, so that empirical findings will yield reliable knowledge inductively established within this framework of order shared in common by the mind and its appreciable world.⁴⁸

God is firmly in control of the situation. He creates the environment in which the religious experience can occur and creates the mind of man, in order that man can have this experience and gain knowledge of what the experience means for his life. Wieman makes this same point in another way by asserting that it is the divine in our experience who works to enable man not only to gain knowledge but to have this knowledge corrected.

The conclusion from all this can now be stated. What is divine in our experience, what is holy,

⁴⁸ SHG, p. 201.

what should command our religious faith, is not the knowledge we now have nor the vision derived from moral idealism or mystical experience. . . . On the contrary, what is divine in him and you and me is that creativity which can widen and correct our knowledge if we meet the required conditions. . . . our reason must be applied relentlessly and persistently to every new pattern brought forth by creativity to learn where and how it should be applied to the conduct of our lives.⁴⁹

Man still has the responsibility of carrying out the scientific method. If man does not use his rational facilities, then knowledge of God remains hidden for him,⁵⁰ but it is the grace of God which enables man to execute properly the scientific method. If God does not perform his creative and transforming function, man cannot gain knowledge of God. Yet man must act upon the knowledge of God. If this knowledge is to be understood and used properly, man must commit himself to God in faith. Faith is necessary or the scientific method fails.

Faith, for Wieman, is an absolute commitment on

⁴⁹MUC, p. 150

⁵⁰cf., H. N. Wieman, "Can God Be Perceived?", Journal of Religion, Vol. 23, p. 29.

the part of man to that creative Something in life who saves man. This commitment should not be based on anything except the knowledge of God which one has gained from his experiences.⁵¹ Wieman in no way denies that knowledge is necessary for faith. He asserts, rather, that it is possible to have faith on the basis of a religious experience; but that it is not possible to have assurance that one's faith is actually faith in the God who saves without testing one's faith-claims. One of the limits of this type of faith is that without empirically supported knowledge, there are no principles by which to test one's actions to see if they conform to the demands of the faith-commitment.⁵² At the same time, the faith-commitment is not faith in the knowledge itself, it is faith in that saving Something which transcends the limited human knowledge. The importance of

⁵¹ cf., H. N. Wieman, "Empirical Religion: Answer to Mr. Thomas", *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 20, p. 394.

⁵² This point is well considered in his many writings on the value and limitations of mysticism. For an example, cf., H. N. Wieman, "The Problem of Mysticism," Mysticism and the Modern Mind.

the knowledge is not that it enables one to have faith; rather, its importance is in its serving as a tool by which man can test and correct his actions in order that they conform more with the will of God, which God has revealed and corrects in man's experiences.

The faith-commitment should not be based on beliefs, ideals or ideas. When faith is based on any of these factors, the factors tend to limit God and deny to God his essential transcendence. Also beliefs, ideals and ideas should not be used as primary guides for the way in which the person lives in faith, because these factors have not become tested knowledge and may well hinder man in his attempt to live in relation to the revealed will of God. God corrects man's knowledge, as man continues to evaluate religious experiences by the scientific method. There are no testing provisions by which man can understand that God has corrected beliefs, ideals and ideas, since they are unrelated to empirical knowledge. At the same time Wieman does not assert the complete lack of value in religious beliefs. Beliefs

have an important function, which is to serve as an intellectual tool for faith, never to serve as the foundation of faith.

The high function of religious belief may be listed as follows: (a) To guide our loyalty toward what is truly most worthwhile for all human living. (b) To enable us to organize our lives so that we can give ourselves more completely to it. (c) To guide our efforts so that they will be more efficient in securing the values to be found in this way of living. (d) To quicken our sensitivity to all factors that are involved in it. (e) To enable us to communicate our loyalty to others. (f) To lead us on to fuller comprehension of the supremely worthwhile.⁵³

Methodologically faith becomes of essential importance. In faith man's life is transformed, and his life is open to the increased possibility of God, working in his life. In faith man is more open also to knowledge being corrected and to an increase of knowledge. It was pointed out that by developing a scientific attitude man is transformed, because he becomes more sensitive to particular data. The scope of the initial

⁵³NPR, p. 125.

scientific attitude is expanded, when man makes the absolute faith-commitment. It was stated previously that God generates the initial insights of the religious experience from which man gains knowledge. Since the scientific attitude has been expanded by the faith-commitment, man is more attune to the working of God in his immediate experiences; therefore, because of faith man is in a better position to receive and respond to the insights which God reveals. Although man in faith is more attune to the insights which God reveals, it remains necessary that reason be used to gain knowledge which will serve as a source of understanding and a direction for our actions. Thus, faith and reason are both necessary for the proper use of the scientific method applied to the religious inquiry.

Faith in the sense of commitment to creativity generates insight and insight is the material with which reason works. In this sense faith and reason are necessary to one another and work together. But just as soon as either (or both) is interpreted and practiced independently of the other, it becomes an obstacle in the way of getting knowledge. Faith must generate the insight; reason must discover what the

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insight truly signifies.

Wieman's scientific method operates on four basic assumptions: (1) That there is Something in experience that saves man. (2) That the Something who saves in one experience is the same Something, or at least in some way related to it, who saves in another experience. (3) That this Something can at least in part be known. (4) That man can make an absolute faith-commitment to this Something. Wieman would say that these are insights which he gets from personal experience and history, but that he knows that these insights are relatively true, because they have been tested by the scientific method. It would be false to assume that Wieman's method is not scientific because he has these underlying assumptions. The observer gives a theoretical interpretation to his analysis by assuming, for theoretical reasons, that the data under consideration can be analyzed by the method employed. Sir Arthur

54 MUC, p. 143.

Eddington points out the importance of theory to the scientist in gaining knowledge.

Observation is not sufficient. We do not believe our eyes unless we are first convinced that what they appear to tell us is credible.

It is better to admit frankly that theory has, and is entitled to have, an important share in determining belief.⁵⁵

The same point is made by Wieman in a discussion of value.

We cannot search and cannot bring to light unknown possibilities of value unless we believe there are such possibilities to be sought and found. If we do not give our devotion to unknown possibilities, we cannot make those observations and criticisms and experimental ventures which are necessary to discover them.⁵⁶

Wieman frankly admits and asserts the necessity of theory as the basis for method. He also asserts that it is important for man to attempt to create the conditions necessary for him to be convinced by the knowledge which God makes possible through human experiences. Realizing

⁵⁵A. Eddington, The Expanding Universe, p. 17.

⁵⁶IL, p. 245. For a discussion of the relation of a man's Weltanschauung to his method, cf., H. N. Wieman, "Faith and Knowledge," Christendom, 1936, p. 765.

that Wieman begins with these basic assumptions which are scientific in spirit and method, let us attempt a short summary of his method.

Operating with these assumptions, man has an experience which interests him because he thinks it is an experience of God. This interest is due to the grace of God. On the basis of the scientific method, man attempts to gain knowledge of God revealed in the experience. By diligently applying this method, man develops a scientific attitude which makes him more attune to further revealed data of God in other experiences. At the same time as man becomes more attune, proper use of the testing process prevents him from reading into the experiences things which are not there. In this way the method is openended, because it keeps man open to the possibility of increased revelation of God. Through proper use of the scientific method man gains knowledge and remains open to possible future revelations by God, but the gaining of knowledge is not the goal of the method. To complete the scientific method it is necessary for man

to act upon the knowledge gained. Since the scientific method is being applied to religious inquiry, the desired action is an absolute faith-commitment to God. Having made the faith-commitment, man's scientific attitude is expanded in such a way that he becomes more attune to the grace of God. Man now is more open to God, open to increased revelation, increased empirical knowledge, increased practical wisdom, and in general open to having his life continually transformed by God. God now works in such a way that man's relative knowledge can be corrected. The knowledge gained should never become an absolute, but it does afford man the assurance that his faith commitment is to the true God and not to some false ideal. It also affords man assurance for the way in which he attempts to live from day to day, because his total self has been transformed and he is open to possible further transformations by God. The fact that man, according to Wieman's method, is able to function religiously because of God's action does not in any way lessen the importance of reason and practical wisdom.

Man must test his theories to be sure that he has true knowledge of God's revelation in the experience. Yet, knowledge itself is not enough; it is necessary for man to act upon this knowledge, action which is an absolute faith-commitment. The most important reason why man must use constantly his human faculties is that he may be as certain as possible what are the practical demands of God, and whether his human actions are fulfilling these demands. Thus, reason and faith are essential and interrelated, if man is to live the religious life.

Wieman's method is a method of religious inquiry for living the religious life. His method is scientific in spirit and scope, but it is not a completely detached scientific method. Man must accept the responsibility, through the grace of God, to gain knowledge from God's revelations and on the basis of this knowledge to make an absolute faith-commitment. For Wieman, the most adequate way in which man can fulfil his responsibility in the God-man relationship is through using properly the scientific method.

Wieman asserts that his method affords a variety of "fruits." The most important ones have been pointed to in our previous discussion, but it may be helpful for us to restate the most important implications. The first fruit which the method affords is the relationship between faith and knowledge; even though it is relative knowledge. Faith itself is not knowledge; it is total or absolute commitment to God. Faith can be false and very dangerous, when it is based on experiences which have not been tested to show that they are true experiences of God. Faith can blind the person to his true responsibility, when it is based on beliefs that may or may not be true. The faith-commitment is of such great importance, since it determines the way in which a man will live, that it should not be made except on the basis of knowledge. When man makes a faith-commitment other than on empirically tested evidence, he does not accept the responsibility of using his human capacities to their fullest in his relationship to God. If man does not use his full human capacities, the faith-commitment is false.

because it is not a commitment of the total self. It should be re-asserted that knowledge is not identical with faith.⁵⁷ Man must make the faith-commitment beyond, but based upon, the foundation of knowledge. Thus, it is clear that Wieman's method asserts that if faith is to be an absolute commitment of the total self, it must include the proper use of all the human capacities which make up the total self.

Another implication of Wieman's method is that it affords man the opportunity to assume the responsibility for creating the conditions in which his life can fulfil the will of God. On the basis of knowledge gained, man is able by inference to develop general principles for guiding his religious living. Having these principles, man has the responsibility to create the conditions in which his actions can conform to these principles; but since they are relative principles, his

⁵⁷ It should be recalled that Wieman admits that faith can occur independently of tested knowledge, but it is his contention that such faith is based on chance and is not supported by any reasonable assurance.

actions cannot be limited to past insights but must be oriented also to possible future revelation. If man does work to create these conditions, his life will display an "open awareness" to God, which means that man works, within the grace of God, to create the conditions in which his life can be transformed in a saving manner by God. We should be clear at this point; man does not save himself. All that man does is to create, as best he can, the conditions in which he can be more responsive to the working of God. Wieman's reasoning that man does not save himself is reviewed as follows: Man cannot foresee the transformation which can occur in life; therefore, man is not responsible for this transformation. Granted that man tries to create the conditions in order that he may be more responsive to this transformation, man does not know if, when, or how this transformation will occur. Since man cannot foresee or create this transformation, man is not his own source of salvation. There is something outside of man working in relation to man which creates this transformation.

Whatever this Something is, is God. Therefore, God saves man, not man himself.

The result of this "open awareness" to God, related to the individual, can also be seen in the development of society. If man comes to live by knowledge instead of beliefs and possible error, the possibilities of his individual and social life are much richer. On the basis of knowledge gained, man will understand more of the conditions which are required for the fuller development of human life. He will not know all the required conditions, but he will at least have the relative security that the conditions he is working for are the proper conditions. As more men work with him in life, the possibilities of a more fully developing social life, within the will of God, are much greater. In this way, man accepts the social responsibility to work with God in bringing about the Kingdom of God.

When this kind of interchange occurs, and truth is shifted from errors by the scientific method, there is no known limit to the expansion in range and richness of what each may come to know, feel and control in community with others, bringing good

will and brotherhood. This kind of interchange is the creative transformation of man by which human personality in relation to society and history on the one hand, and those in relation to the rest of the universe on the other, can be brought into the reciprocity yielding the greatest good human life can ever attain.⁵⁸

The last implication of Wieman's method, to be considered, is the relation of tradition and religious beliefs to faith. Wieman asserts that tradition is very important in religion and all aspects of life, but its value is lost when it becomes a limiting source of authority. The tradition is often used by men as an escape or bondage, which keeps them from developing greater knowledge and appreciation of God. An improper influence of tradition can cause man to become sentimental instead of critical in his religious life, and because of this sentimentality he can be cut off from growth in relation to God. Wieman asserts that if his method is used properly, it will free man from sentimentality and the bondage

⁵⁸H. N. Wieman, "Bernhardt's Analysis of Religion: Its Implication and Development," Iliff Review, 1954, pp. 54-5.

of tradition, without limiting the important value of tradition.

As scientific method serves to save Christianity from sentimentality, so also it may deliver religion from the bondage of tradition. Tradition has its rightful place in any religion. . .Tradition perverts religion unless the critical mind is turned upon it; and the critical mind is science. . .The great fight of scientific method has always been against the inertia of tradition.⁵⁹

On the basis of tradition, man has been given religious beliefs. These beliefs are of value to man, as long as he tests them and they become knowledge for him. These beliefs limit man in his total response to God when man tries to live on the beliefs untested. An example of such a traditional belief is that Jesus Christ revealed the true way of life, a way of love. This teaching has "come down to us through the transmitting medium of the thought and life of many generations of men, and especially through the medium of the thought of our own age."⁶⁰ The history of the Church offers a record of men who out

⁵⁹RESM, p. 62.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 62.

of untested belief have distorted this way of love. If we accept a belief in this way of life which we receive through the tradition without being critical, we run the risk of being unfaithful to that life to which Jesus called men. It is necessary to go to the tradition in order to understand better what this way of life means.⁶¹ At the same time, it is not enough to understand the teachings of Jesus about this way of life. What is necessary is for man to have the immediate experience of this way of life, if Jesus Christ is to be meaningful in man's way of life. Man must be able to go beyond the traditional beliefs about Jesus Christ and his way of life to the extent that he can assert, "Now I believe not on thy saying but because I see and know for myself."⁶²

Man often becomes perplexed and unsure in his religious life when he tries to hold to beliefs which do

⁶¹cf., Ibid., p. 112ff.

⁶² RESM, p. 63.

not conform or actually conflict with knowledge gained from other sources. Wieman asserts that his method will help overcome this problem, because man will come to understand that beliefs are used properly as intellectual tools in directing our life and finding greater knowledge of God. As intellectual tools, the new insights gained about our beliefs will not be upsetting but enriching.

This method enables us to treat our religious beliefs as intellectual tools to guide our behavior and direct our appreciative attention, but does not allow them to rise up and shut out the splendor of the uncomprehended reality. Instead, we can criticize them and reconstruct them as we would criticize and reconstruct any set of technological beliefs. Then our sense of the infinite value and possible meaning of life in God will not be disturbed, confused, or slowly atrophied by criticism and change of beliefs.⁶³

In summary, it could be said that Wieman's scientific method offers a dual benefit. On the one hand, it affords man the opportunity of gaining knowledge of God upon which to make his faith-commitment. The knowledge is not the faith-commitment, but the knowledge affords

⁶³H. N. Wieman, "God Is More Than We Can Think," Christendom, 1930, p. 437.

man the assurance that his faith is in an objective reality and not in a possible illusion or mistaken understanding. It also affords man an empirical method of evaluating his actions to see if they (a) conform to the principles gained in his knowledge of God, and (b) conform to that by which man is committed to live in his faith-commitment. On the other hand, the method not only affirms the immanence of God; it also affirms the transcendence of God. Man realizes that his knowledge of God is limited and relative to the experiences he has had, to the knowledge gained, and to his faith-commitment as it transforms his life. He realizes that there is much more in his experiences than he is able to understand fully, appreciate, and commit himself to. It is affirmed that God transcends our knowledge of every experience, just as there is more in every experience than our knowledge asserts or implies.

God is a transcendent being not in the sense of being timeless and spaceless but in the sense of doing what no human power can do. He is transcendent not in the sense of being unknowable but in the sense of saving man from the evil from which

man cannot deliver himself, and in the sense of bringing human life to a good unattainable by human foresight, purpose and power.⁶⁴

By realizing the limits of his knowledge and by being more attuned to God through the development of the "scientific attitude", man is in a position to respond in a more positive manner to further revelations of God, and so to grow within the grace of God. This increased understanding of God's transcendence will aid man in worship because man will be sure that he is worshipping a reality while at the same time he will not feel confined to worship his knowledge of this reality, but the fulness of God which he can understand only partially. Thus, the full value of this method is that it affords man knowledge of God and potential growth of knowledge of God, while at the same time it affords man a real understanding that the God to whom he is committed in faith and worships transcends his limited knowledge. The purpose of Wieman's

⁶⁴H. N. Wieman, "Reply to Weigel," HNW, p. 362.

method is to help man discover and commit himself to the reality who saves man. This reality is God, and both faith and reason are necessary for man to discover and commit himself to God. Faith and reason, as shown in Wieman's scientific method, are both necessary for salvation. "The will of God is the unpredictable fullness of value to be found in the creative synthesis of decisive moments. The will of God so understood can be discovered only when faith and intelligent action are combined.⁶⁵

General Metaphysical Position

In considering Wieman's doctrine of God, it will be helpful to begin with his metaphysical position and his evaluation of the role of metaphysics. It was pointed out how Wieman came under the influence of Whitehead and others, even before Whitehead had developed the fuller implications of his metaphysical position. Even though there were these different influences, Wieman had

⁶⁵GR, p. 480.

a distrust of metaphysics because of its speculative tradition from the beginning of his theological writing. In his earliest book he states that "metaphysics in the sense of that reasoning which abjures experience and the conclusions of scientific thought, is futile."⁶⁶ Metaphysics must be metaphysics of the universe, not that which transcends the universe. Metaphysical knowledge must be within the bounds of human knowledge, or it is not knowledge at all. Here Wieman is rejecting any form of speculation as providing metaphysical knowledge.

We believe metaphysical knowledge is quite within the bounds of human attainment, providing one does not mean by metaphysical the transcendental. But all such knowledge must be attained through the experimental operations of concrete human living.⁶⁷

Since man cannot know about a final beginning or final end of the universe, such questions are not within the proper scope of metaphysical consideration. Revelation in the traditional, super-natural form is rejected as

⁶⁶RESM, p. 12.

⁶⁷WRWT, p. 15.

being a source of metaphysical knowledge. Here again he is rejecting what he considers to be religious speculation.

Final outcomes, as well as all original beginnings, are entirely beyond the scope of our knowing. Anyone who claims to know by revelation or otherwise the ultimate beginning and end is deceiving himself and others.⁶⁸

In essence metaphysics is limited to the universe, and metaphysical knowledge is limited to that which man can know on the basis of human experience and the knowledge scientifically gained from such experience.

Wieman's metaphysical position can be considered from two perspectives: (1) the cosmological, and (2) the contextual. These perspectives are different only in respect of the way in which one metaphysically seeks an answer to the problem posed. Wieman is seeking to deal with the question of what saves man. From the cosmological perspective, he looks at the total universe and seeks to find that force of value or good functioning

⁶⁸ SHG, p. 92.

within the universe. Wieman favoured the cosmological perspective when he was dealing with the problem of theism. Wieman's cosmology is an attempt to present the character of the Universe as being given a value-direction by its theistic force. He begins with man's saving experiences, but on the basis of these experiences, he develops implications regarding the theistic character of the cosmos. In his contextual perspective, greater emphasis is given to the analysis of human experience to find that source of salvation, but he is no longer concerned to develop cosmological implications on the basis of this analysis. Wieman is now interested with what saves man within the context of his particular situation and is less concerned to describe a theistic force of value which gives direction to the character of the universe. This contextual perspective began to develop during the period when he was interested with religion as a social affair. There is no implication that the contextual source of salvation is different from the cosmological source, for his total metaphysical view

contains both the cosmological and the contextual perspectives.

Wieman's metaphysical view presupposes the scientific view of an infinite universe, in the sense that it is infinite because man cannot get outside of it. The Universe is the basic nexus of events, containing an infinity of events. If a being is an event, the universe is the ground-of-being. As the primary event or the ground-of-being, the character of the universe is neutral, in the sense that the universe does not shape the ultimate character or direction of the becoming events. By asserting the universe to be neutral, Wieman is making clear that the universe is not God. The events in the universe are in process, or one could say that the events are process.

One can consider an event from two perspectives: (1) structure, and (2) change. On the one hand, an event has a structure. By structure he means that the essential nature of the event is to be what the structure demands. In other words, a table is a table. The

table may change in the aging process, but its basic structure continues. When the table ceases to exist as a table, change continues but it then takes on another form. On the other hand is the fact that as a process events change. The structure of an event is to be a process which changes; but even though there is change, the basic structure is changeless. Thus, events are processes which change, but the basic structure of the event does not change.⁶⁹

We not only find something changing but also a law or order to which the process of change conforms. This law of change can also be called the structure or form of change. This structure or form does not itself change, but it is present in any process of change. . . Any existing thing can change only if it continues to exist as the same thing throughout the period of change. The moment it

⁶⁹A realization of Wieman's distinction between structure and change is important for understanding his position. It is on the basis of this distinction that he asserts an event to be in process, while at the same time being a process. Shortly consideration will be given to God as the source of value, while at the same time being the highest value. In making these dual assertions, Wieman is not presenting a paradox; rather, he makes these assertions based on his distinction between structure and change.

ceases to be the same thing, it is no longer changing because it no longer exists. . .When the changes cease to maintain the form, structure, or law of change which is characteristic of the table, change continues but it then takes on another form.⁷⁰

The events which make up the universe are in a constant process, but the structure of the universe remains the same. If the structure of the universe changed, the universe would cease to be. Thus, it is self-evident that changeless structures are necessary in order for there to be change.

The universe is a universe only because throughout all its changes there is a constitutive structure whereby we can call it a universe. . .because we can speak of anything at all only in terms of some structure. When all structures cease, mind itself ceases and there is nothing.⁷¹

Events, being in process, include within their structure possibilities for developing in process. As events come together and form a nexus of events, a "conjunction" occurs. A conjunction is a new or more complex event made up of strands of events. No event or conjunction can ever be repeated. Qualities, or values, are the

⁷⁰MUC, p. 29.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 81.

things of which events are made. In other words, qualities are the ontological reality of an event. The qualities include the possibilities of an event.⁷² When a conjunction occurs in such a way that the qualities of the events included in the conjunction fulfil to a greater degree their possibilities, while at the same time they are enriched through association with other events, there is an increase of quality or value in the universe. When this increase occurs on the human level, from the contextual perspective, there is an increase of meaning, or qualitative meaning. This occurrence is the creation of meaning, and it is a process having a structure and change. A conjunction that brings about such an increase of value is good. When a conjunction results in the limitation of the qualities and of the possibilities of the events concerned, there is a decrease of quality in the universe. When this happens on the human level, there is a decrease of meaning. Such a decrease is evil.

⁷² cf., DH, p. 19; SHG, p. 303.

This increase of quality, or value, is based on a principle of organization. These are unactualized events which come together to form actualized events. This organization must occur in such a way that the basic structure of the events is not changed, or the events will cease to exist. Further, in order that there should be an increase of value, this organization must occur in such a way that the potential of the events is realized in a mutually enriching process.

The value inherent in the universe depends on how many diverse possibilities can be actualized in it without changing the basic principle of organization. . . In other words, this basic principle is the adjustment of the two states of being, the actualized and unactualized, to one another in such a manner that the second is possibility to the first and the first is the established fact to which the second must conform when in process of actualization. . . It is apparent that all increase of value must depend on this principle of organization.⁷³

The universe includes the events and their possibility of value; but the universe, being neutral, does

⁷³H. N. Wieman, "Value and the Individual: , Journal of Religion, Vol. 25, pp. 238-9.

not determine whether there shall be an increase or decrease of value. The events themselves cannot foresee the developments to occur within a conjunction; therefore, the events cannot be responsible for the developments. Since everything that happens occurs because of processes within the universe, there must be some process or processes which are responsible for this development. Within the universe there are processes towards decreased value and a process towards increased value, or in other words a process for good and processes for evil. Since decreased value is a disintegration of value, the processes which cause these decreases are plural by definition, because their structures are oriented to disunity. The increase of value is an integrating process, in the sense that it works for a unity of value. Being a process for a unity of value, the process of integrating value must be one process. The process which works for increased value can be metaphysically designated as "God." From the perspective of structure, God is not the value itself, but is the source of value.

Functionally, God is the process of progressive integration of value within the universe. From the perspective of function, God is the highest value.⁷⁴ He is part of the cosmic whole, but God is not the universe. As the integrating process of highest value, God must work with the events which are given. All possibilities are limited to the possibilities inherent in the events; God is so limited. Discussing God as the "creative event," Wieman makes this point concerning God's natural limitations:

. . . there is an order which is coercive, determinate, and antecedent to all that man may do or seek or know, setting limits to knowledge, to truth, and to all that may happen. It is the order of the existing world as created to date, plus the order of creative energy as it operates in the world, plus the range of relevant possibilities as determined by this structure of creative energy and the world with which it must work. The creative event cannot transform the world in any other than what is conformant to its own nature.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Confer footnote 69, this chapter.

⁷⁵SHG, pp. 195-6.

Just as God participates in the events of the universe, man also participates in the events of his own life; thus, man and God participate in the same events. God reveals himself to man in these events in such a way that, if man uses his human capacities, he can understand what conditions are required in order that God should bring about the increase of value. God reveals to man what the conditions are, and man has the responsibility to dedicate himself to God by living in such a way as to create the conditions in which God can save him. God cannot transform the world or man in any way other than that which is conformant to the nature of the events involved in the situation. The responsibility of man is to discover under what conditions there is an increase in value through conjunctions, and then to structure the conditions of conjunctions in order that there will be an increase of value in the universe. In more theological terms, the task of man is to understand what are the conditions under which God can transform his life and then to dedicate his life to God, in order that God

can save him. In essence, according to Wieman's metaphysics, God is that process or function within the universe which is the source of highest value from the cosmological perspective, or, from the contextual perspective, the source of salvation for man. Metaphysically, it is God who increases value or saves the world.

It is helpful to consider Wieman's metaphysical position as a theory of value. He does not claim his theory of value to be the only valid theory, but he does consider it to be the most adequate.

Any theory of value is true if it identifies values with some one or more of the elements which we find are always present whenever we choose between alternatives. Any theory that does this is true, at least if special epistemological and metaphysical speculations are not brought into question. There are different ways of taking hold of the same reality; but, though equally true, they are not equally useful. It is not enough to take hold. We want an interpretation of value that will not only identify value but will also enable us to do something with it.⁷⁶

Wieman presents a contextual interpretation of value from his naturalistic perspective. Value is identified

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

with a total, complex situation, ordered so as to carry and to manifest what is generally designated as "value."

. . . it is a total complex situation, including whatever must be taken into consideration by practical operations which determine choice so that predictable outcomes can be known and approved. The context thus understood does not include the whole universe, since most of the universe can be ignored in making choices yielding outcomes which can be predicted and approved. In fact, one never could make such choices if he tried to deal with the whole universe.⁷⁷

For Wieman, the total, complex situation is created by the creative event working through less complex situations to create the more complex. He insists that in this process of creation nothing has causal efficacy except material events.

. . . by "material" we mean not merely pellets of inanimate matter but also events that include the biological, social, and historical forms of existence. These, however, never cease to be material. Nothing has value except material events, thus understood, and their possibilities.⁷⁸

In developing this view, Wieman asserts that he stands within the Jewish-Christian tradition which "gives

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

supreme authority to the creative event", but he ignores, because of his naturalistic position, "the transcendental affirmation in the Jewish Christian tradition of a creative God who not only works in history but resides beyond history.⁷⁹ The only God Wieman recognizes is the creative event itself. Value occurs in the becoming of complex events. God is the creative source of this becoming; therefore, God is the source of value.

Wieman considers how one determines what is good or of value. On the basis of his evaluation of the human situation, he asserts that goods can and do occur in situations in which they are not good, consequently, "something over and above their bare existence must pertain to them to make them truly good."⁸⁰ In taking the view that what is good in one situation may be evil in another, Wieman is not rejecting the importance of history for his theory of value.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

Analysis of the actual facts will reveal that this alleged tolerance and provision for justice in allowing each individual to decide what is good and what is evil for him is, in truth, diabolical. One age cannot be separated from another, nor can one people or culture. The hope of man lies in cumulative development through history; and human good can be increased only by progressive accumulation of good through a sequence of generations. If one age must tear down what previous ages have built, to achieve the good peculiar to itself, and if the present must rear a good for itself that becomes an evil for a later period, then the past can no longer provide building-stones for the present, and history becomes an evil and not a resource.⁸¹

Wieman is not taking a completely relative position by pointing to the fact that the good in one situation may be evil in another. He asserts that "it is imperative to discover and make clear that principle which distinguishes good and evil for each and for all in every age and situation."⁸² This guiding principle, which for Wieman is not relative, is an understanding of qualitative meaning and its source. "Qualitative meaning is that connection between events whereby present happenings enable me to feel not only the quality intrinsic

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 11.

⁸² Ibid., p. 11.

to the events now occurring but also the qualities of
many other events that are related to them."⁸³ Qualitative meaning alone cannot serve as the guiding principle because it "becomes unreliable the moment it usurps the greater good of which it is merely the product and for which it must function as a servant."⁸⁴ That which is the source of true qualitative meaning is the creative event. God is the creative event. It is necessary to discover whether the creative event has made possible the qualitative meaning. In order to live a life of value, man must not commit himself to particular created goods but to the source of these goods, which is God, the creative event. Wieman's theory of value is tied to an adequate understanding of, and commitment to, God as the source of value.

⁸³ SHG, p. 18. His theory of value, being related to the connection of events, will receive further consideration in the section on Wieman's Doctrine of God. Wieman's theory of value is developed in that section for the purpose of our using his theory of value as illustrations in the development of his doctrine of God.

⁸⁴ SHG, p. 24.

Wieman's theory of value is related directly to his scientific method. Man has an experience in which God reveals to him the possibility of qualitative meaning. Man must not commit himself to what may be qualitative meaning, but he must gain knowledge from the experience which will enable him to understand whether the creative event is the source of this value. With this understanding, man must then commit himself to God as the source of value.

This metaphysical sketch includes both the cosmological and contextual perspective. God is the source of increased value for all events in the universe, cosmologically. From the contextual perspective, God is the source of highest value in human life. The highest value for man is the increase of meaning in such a way that his personality is fulfilled to as great a degree as possible in relation to other fulfilled personalities. Man cannot himself bring about this increase of value. This increase of highest value, in theological terms, is salvation; it is the development of the Kingdom of God.

From the contextual view, Wieman pointedly asserts that man is dependent upon God for his salvation, granted that man has certain God-given responsibilities in this process.

This shift from the cosmological to the contextual has become more pronounced in Wieman's more recent writings. His theological emphasis has come to centre almost entirely on the God-man relationship, making all other issues peripheral to it.

I have come to concentrate more and more on man in relation to God and less and less on subhuman, metaphysical and cosmic questions that may be peripheral to this central problem.⁸⁵

If we allow the cosmic process to take priority in our concern, giving it priority over creative interchange at the human level, the cosmic process will itself fade into superstitious beliefs because we can know about these subhuman levels and work with them only by way of that creative interchange at the human level which creates our minds, expands our knowledge and appreciation, restores the individual to wholeness who is at war with himself, and resolves social conflicts by creating integration

⁸⁵H. N. Wieman, "The Structure of the Divine Creativity An Exchange of Views", Iliff Review, 1954, p. 41.

of perspectives across the barrier of conflicting views between East and West, white and black, rich and poor, parent and child, husband and wife, and on through the destructive conflicts that threaten our existence.⁸⁶

As we now turn to a consideration of how Wieman's doctrine of God develops within the context of his changing theological interest, let us keep two points in mind: (1) his shift of emphasis from the cosmological to the contextual perspective, and (2) the fact that Wieman's metaphysical position includes a theory of value which asserts God and not man to be the creative source of value.

Doctrine of God

Wieman is trying to present God intelligently to a man-centred age. In order to do this, he feels that he must present God in such a way that man does not engage in the useless discussion whether God exists. God is presented as the saving function of the universe

⁸⁶ H. N. Wieman, "Critical Comments to Unitarian Study Commission on Theology", unpublished 1962, p. 3.

immanent in man's existential situation. From one perspective, Wieman seems to be asserting that man should relate himself to this function in order to gain benefits. Wieman realizes this utilitarian implication of his writing, and asserts that this is not the basic reason why one should centre one's life on God.

In so writing I have seemed to represent God as a utility to provide moral dynamic. I have done it with shame and writhing. God should be loved because he is the source and substance of all great love, and for no other reason. To love God for the sake of getting a moral dynamic is even worse than making your child a device for providing you with moral zeal. But I have written this way because I do not know how to present theocentric religion to a man centered age with any hope of understanding, except in some way as this.⁸⁷

As pointed out before, the theistic problem of the 1920's was dominated by the question of proving the existence of God. Wieman asserts "Never in any of my writing have I tried to prove the existence of God, except by 'definition', which means to state the problem in such a way as to lift it out of the arena of debate."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ITAG, pp. 206-7.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 284.

Nothing about God is known a priori. Everything one comes to know about God, one discovers on the basis of one's human experience and by following a proper rational method. It should be stated that when one says that one knows that God exists, one's claim is just as probable as claiming that the objective world exists.

All knowledge of existing things is probable only. . . When I say that we can have assured knowledge that God exists, I mean that we can know it with as much certainty as we can know that an objective world exists or that other persons exist.⁸⁹

Many who were attempting to prove the existence of God, attempted to do so by a line of reasoning which moved from the natural to the supernatural, or from the supernatural to the natural. Wieman limits his consideration to the natural universe. If salvation occurs, the cause of this salvation is a natural process, which by definition is God. Different examples of reasoning will be presented later, which are used by Wieman, to support and explain his proof by definition. This

⁸⁹ H. N. Wieman, "Faith and Knowledge", Christendom 1936, p. 762.

reasoning operates on the traditional pattern that if A exists, B must also exist. It also takes into account a naturalistic view of cause and effect. Wieman asserts that if one accepts his basic premises, then by definition God exists. For those who accept Wieman's definition, it is true to say that the theistic problem is lifted out of the arena of debate. Wieman's attempt did not solve the problem for the majority in the theological world, who from a supernatural perspective rejected his definition and basic premises.

Let us try to follow Wieman's reasoning by definition that God exists and his descriptive-functional doctrine of God. His doctrine of God rests on the premise that there is a function within the universe which saves man. If we begin with this premise, the only way in which we can talk about God is functionally. In order to understand Wieman's doctrine of God, we shall consider the major terms which he develops to describe this functional God.

In his earlier writings, Wieman starts off by

saying that all human experiences are of objects. Man has an experience which he calls religious. By definition, God must be the object of that experience; therefore, God is an object which exists. It is the nature of everything that exists to interact with other things. A being which does not interact with other beings does not exist. In scientific language, one could say that there are no closed systems in the universe. Since God is an object which exists, God must interact with other objects. When God interacts within human experience, man is able to know God through this interaction. If God did not interact in human experience, man could not know God. Wieman is saying that God can be known only as God functions in relation to man. All activity is temporal. All objects are a process having a structure. The process of change, by definition, includes possibilities. All possibilities which become actualized must have a cause. Since it is the nature of a process in change that some of its possibilities become actualized, in order that the process continue to exist, some of the

possibilities of the God-process must be being actualized. God's possibilities are being actualized in part, at least, in the human religious experience. Since man cannot foresee the possibilities in the religious experience, man cannot be the cause; therefore, God is the cause of the actualization of his possibilities. Therefore, God is the temporal process having a structure which meets man in his religious experiences.

It is not enough just to say that God exists; it is necessary to specify the distinguishing characteristics of God.

When the word "God" is used without specifying the distinguishing characteristics of the being referred to, the word becomes a device concealing from others and from ourselves the true character of the faith which motivates our lives.⁹⁰

For the word "God" to be used properly, it must refer to the religious problem of salvation. Thus the word "God", by definition, refers to that which saves man as he cannot save himself; it must not refer to the infinite,

⁹⁰ IFOF, p. 47.

omnipotent and perfect, but actually to that which saves man in human experiences.⁹¹ Wieman uses a variety of terms to establish the distinguishing characteristics of God. In his earlier writings these terms are more general, and as time passes his terms become more pointed. His basic doctrine of God does not change appreciably, but it does become more explicit. The only major shift in his doctrine of God is the shift from a cosmological perspective to a contextualist.

Wieman begins by saying that God is that process in the universe which is Supreme Value. By the term "Supreme Value", he means that God is that Something upon which man is most dependent for his security, welfare and increasing abundance. God may be much more than this, but God is this by definition. This line of reasoning can be stated in another way. Man knows there is better and worse. If there is a better, then there must logically be a Best. God is the Best; therefore, man

⁹¹cf., Ibid., p. 21.

know that God exists.

Since I know there is better and worse, I know there is the Best; for the best is the inevitable implication of the reality of better and worse. When I say "God", I mean the best there is. Therefore I know God is.⁹²

Wieman realized he had given a minimum definition of God, and that he had not distinguished really the characteristics of God. By asserting God to be that function which increases man's abundance, he is saying that God in effect is the true source of man's enjoyment. Making God the source of enjoyment could be a form of hedonism, and Wieman realizes this. Because his God is not hedonistic, Wieman in further writings goes on to develop what he means by God as process.

⁹² H. N. Wieman, "The Absolute Commitment of Faith", Christendom, 1937, p. 204. Reasoning from the better to the best is similar to the traditional reasoning from the good to the greatest good. The difference in these two approaches is due to Wieman's process frame of reference. In the traditional line of reasoning, the good was a pattern of the highest good, but the occurrence of the good was not due necessarily to the functioning of the highest good. For Wieman, the better is due to the functioning of some source, which he calls the Best or God. The better is not a pattern of the Best but is directly related to the Best as the source of its becoming.

In the Method of Private Religious Living, he develops the view of God as the "integrating process" at work in the universe. This integrating process works in the universe whether man knows of it or not; but when man does know of this process, he knows of it on the basis of human experience. To get away from any tint of hedonism, it is necessary to establish what this process means to human existence.

When we speak of the integrating process at the level of human society we mean the process by which (1) we are made increasingly interdependent and (2) our behavior is so changed as to make us more cooperative and mutually helpful one to the other. This process goes on whether we will or no. It is more than human in the sense that it goes on independently of human purpose.⁹³

The term "mutuality" becomes the key for understanding the distinctive nature of God. This process carries in its existence and in its possibilities the patterns which make possible the most rich and complete mutuality there can ever be. It is the nature of

⁹³MPRL, pp. 51-2.

God that he functions in the universe, and for Wieman's concern especially in relation to man, in such a way as to bring about the greatest degree of mutuality possible. It is man's responsibility to open himself to God's functioning in order that this mutuality can occur. Mutuality occurs when man is being integrated with himself, his fellow humans, with God and the total universe to the greatest degree possible. This is salvation; it is the good; it is the highest value; it is God--God working.

At the level of human personality and society, this distinguishing pattern of God is that of promoting mutuality. . .God is this, his absolute nature, is a total system of patterns constituting supreme good, partially in this world as a process, but extending far beyond this world to include the highest possibilities of glory and blessedness that may ever visit this universe at any time throughout the entire span of its existence; and including, furthermore, whatsoever higher possibilities there may be which change may prevent from entry into our world at any time. . .When the patterns are embodied in a process, as they always are when in our world, they operate with power, over and above conscious intent of man, to promote the good.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ ITAG, p. 14.

Wieman next develops the concept of God as the "order of greatest value." This concept of God expresses in another way the same theme of God as the integrating process, but there are certain additions. The first addition comes in a clearer emphasis on the otherness of God.

. . . the first requirement of which is to recognize that this order of greatest value is something quite alien and even terrible to the "natural man," because we are in great part shaped and dominated by the ancient order of exclusive goods, exclusive views, and orders which are alien and hostile to one another: one is the ancient order of all animal life, and the other is the order of that new way of life which communication imposes.⁹⁵

The second addition comes in his emphasis on the uniqueness and importance of communication. It is through the use of language that man can come to understand himself, his fellowman, and the functioning of God. Language is the tool which makes possible the integrating process; for as language is properly used, the integrating process occurs. Thus for Wieman, the order of greatest

⁹⁵IL, p. 172.

value in synonymous with the order of communication.

To use our own language, this order of greatest value is the order of communication. It is that order in which and through which men can achieve a communical vision and a united good in which each individual finds in all his living the meaning and the value of the whole march of life.⁹⁶

Another way in which to speak of this order of greatest value, integrating process, or order of communication is to call it the order of community. When man relates himself positively and constructively to this ordering of God, an order of community develops. By the order of greatest value, man's life is transformed and integrated in such a way that a true order of community is possible. Theologically this order of community could be called the Kingdom of God as it is being created on earth.

In Normative Psychology of Religion, written with his wife, Wieman develops his thought on "the principle of value." This principle is a further attempt to explain the integrating process as it functions on the

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 176.

level of human existence. By this time Wieman is giving less and less emphasis to a cosmological view of God and is more concerned to analyze contextual human experiences to see how God really saves. Although this shift to a contextual emphasis is taking place, he continues to rely on descriptive terms for God which were developed from the cosmological perspective. "The principle of value which we propose is this: Value is that connection between enjoyable activities by which they support one another, enhance one another and, at a higher level, mean one another.⁹⁷ Wieman continues to use the term "enjoyment" in relation to value, but he is careful to qualify the relation of enjoyment to value in order not to be accused of hedonism.

Thus the doctrine of value we are here presenting is not a hedonism which identifies value with any sort of enjoyment. It does not represent increase of value as an additive sum of disconnected enjoyment. Rather it represents value as that connection between activities, which makes them enjoyable

⁹⁷NPR, p. 46.

by reason of their mutual support, mutual enhancement and mutual meaning.⁹⁸

The term "connection" becomes the key concept in the principle of value. Value does not lie in the events themselves, but in the connection of these events. Therefore, increase of value does not occur by an increase of events; rather, it occurs by an increase of the functional connection between these events. The principle of value also requires "meaning." Meaning "is the added factor of human appreciation and use of this mutual support."⁹⁹ When man gains meaning from the connections, value occurs in such a way that there is "growth" of value. This growth of value should not be confused with universal progress; it only means that, within the scope of the conditions under consideration, there is an increase of value. Since growth of value includes the connections and the meaning, growth means more than what is or might be; growth itself is a process which increases what is,

⁹⁸NPR, p. 48.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 48.

in order that it may approximate to what might be. This process of growth is the supreme value; it is the sovereign God.¹⁰⁰ The structure of the process gives the conditions by which functioning makes meaning possible. Thus, the structure and function make possible and are the growth of meaning in the world.

What, then, is supreme value? It is growth of meaning in the world. This is the supreme value for the following reasons: 1. In it the greatest value that can ever be experienced at any time is always to be found. 2. It carries the highest possibilities of value, possibilities reaching far beyond the specific meanings we now know. 3. All increase of value is found in it. 4. The best conceivable world can be approximated in existence to some degree through this growth, and in no other way.¹⁰¹

In the Growth of Religion, Wieman continues to develop the concept of growth. There are two types of growth. One is competitive and the other is connective. Competitive growth is oriented from the perspective of the individual and leads to limited growth. The connective type transcends the individual and joins it

¹⁰⁰cf., Ibid., p. 529.

¹⁰¹NIR, p. 51; cf., GR, p. 353.

constructively to others in order that unlimited growth can occur. The second type of growth is that of God. This growth is "creative synthesis," in the sense that it is the union of diverse elements in such a way that a new relation transforms them into a whole which is very different from the sum of the original factors.

Growth is the formation of bonds of mutual support and mutual control and mutual facilitation between diverse activities. Mutual control means that the activities in this new union are so related that each operates to sustain the new unity or system. . .Growth is the progressive formation of "internal relations" between diverse elements.¹⁰²

This growth is the work of love, where love means "the formation of bonds between diverse individuals whereby each works to conserve the system as a whole, and the whole works to conserve the parts in relation to one another which constitutes the system."¹⁰³ Since God is this unlimited connective growth of meaning which is the work of love, God is love.¹⁰⁴ The term "purpose"

¹⁰²GR, p. 326.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 327.

¹⁰⁴By identifying God with love, Wieman does

could be used instead of growth, in the sense of the purpose directly involved in the generating and promoting of this growth of organic connections. This purpose or growth could be called also the "will of God." "The will of God is the unpredictable fullness of value to be found in the creative synthesis of decisive moments."¹⁰⁵ God's will, structurely, is unlimited possibility of growth. God's will functioningly is the greatest degree of growth possible in the given situation. On the basis of structure and function, God wills growth and is growth.¹⁰⁶

Up to this point Wieman's doctrine of God has been moving from his cosmological perspective to his contextualist.¹⁰⁷ Our consideration so far takes him into the

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not mean to limit God to the human perspective of personal love. More detailed consideration of the relationship of God and personality will occur later.

105 GR, p. 480.

106 This is another illustration of Wieman's distinction between structure and function.

107 It is not our purpose to discuss in detail

late 1930's. At some time during this period, especially under the influence of the increasing international tension, both politically and economically, his theological orientation develops a more social emphasis.¹⁰⁸ Wieman comes to the realization that man must at this point in history choose a way of life which is devoted to God, the promoter and sustainer of highest value. He also realizes that, if man is going to be able to make this decision, he must take seriously into account the heritage of his religious tradition.¹⁰⁹ Just as the world is about to go full speed into the second great war, Wieman presents his book, Now We Must Choose. Here he continues his discussion of God as the greatest value, but he also gives greater emphasis to the necessity for

¹⁰⁷ Wieman's contextual philosophy. For such a discussion, cf., S. C. Pepper, "Wieman's Contextual Metaphysics", HNW, p. 142-55.

¹⁰⁸ This shift is pointed to by Reinhold Niebuhr; cf., Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought, p. 448.

¹⁰⁹ cf., Footnotes 18 through 24, this chapter.

man to understand how God saves and the necessity for man to commit his life to God.

Wieman now defines God as "creativity", but this creativity is not to be understood basically from the cosmological perspective. He is now fully in his contextual period, and God is to be identified only with that within the universe which is creative of human personality and its highest fulfilment.¹¹⁰ Wieman is not rejecting completely the importance of cosmological metaphysics; rather, he is saying that the immediate demands of life are so crucial that we no longer have time to emphasize those other metaphysical concerns. This emphasis upon the human situation leads Wieman to develop more explicit criteria of better and worse.

The general criteria of better and worse may be stated thus: (1) One order (value) or one thing (value-carrier) is better than another if it better serves to remove obstructions to the freest, fullest, and most honest self-expression of one individual to another, because such mutual interpretation of valuing widens and vivifies the appreciable

¹¹⁰ cf., NWMC, pp. 66-7.

world of each and for each. (2) One order (value) or one thing (value-carrier) is better than another if it better serves to provide conditions which promote the freest, fullest, and most honest mutual self-expression between all participants whose valuing involve one another. Of course this freedom and fullness of self-expression must be within the limits of appropriateness as determined by the nature of the situation and the participants.¹¹¹

Wieman now asserts that this ordering of the better gives one more than growth of meaning; it now gives one growth of "qualitative meaning" over against possible pragmatic growth of meaning. Growth of qualitative meaning occurs within a context; it requires contextual conditions before it can occur. The contextual possibilities are given by God in his structures. Man must do his part to create the contextual conditions in order that God can make possible the growth of qualitative meaning. God as creativity is the contextual structure and the contextual function which causes and is the growth of qualitative meaning, if man will but provide the contextual

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 111-2.

conditions necessary for such workings of God.

Wieman continues his contextual emphasis by trying to make a clearer distinction between the good or goods of human life and the source of human good, which is God. It is asserted that human good can be increased only by progressive accumulation of good through a sequence of generations, but this good cannot accumulate so long as man seeks the created goods of life. It is necessary that man seek, understand, and commit himself to some general principle of goodness in order that the unique goodness of each situation can occur. Man must seek and promote that kind of transformation which is the source of qualitative meaning, not seeking the qualitative meaning as an end. What man must seek and commit himself to is the source of qualitative meaning, the creative event.

The guiding thread--the thread that guides infallibly because it does not break and fail in the midst of great disasters, frustrations, and destructive conflicts--is not qualitative meaning, but it is what produces qualitative meaning. Therefore, we can find it best by tracing qualitative meaning to its source. This source, this genesis of qualitative

meaning, we shall call the "creative event". . . . This creative event always yields the best possible in each situation, no matter how frustrating and perplexing the situation in other respects may be, provided that we make this creative event our primary concern, and succeed in setting up the conditions it demands in order to occur. . . . Man can do much to provide the conditions releasing the full creative power of this event, including the self-giving of his own person to be transformed by it and to serve it above all. . . . But he cannot himself do the work of the creative event.¹¹²

It is not enough that man should seek the good or value in human life, because his untransformed apprehension of value is unreliable. His apprehension is unreliable in three ways: (1) His range of human appreciation is limited. (2) Man's apprehension of good and evil is distorted always, if not perverted, because of the domination of self-concern. (3) Because man is insecure, he always resists change in the structure of appreciative consciousness.¹¹³ These three characteristics affirm the fact that man cannot save himself. The only way in which man can be saved is by seeking and committing

¹¹² SHG, pp. 20-1.

¹¹³ cf., Ibid., pp. 27-8.

himself to another guide which will direct his sense of appreciation of value--a guide that will transform his appreciation. This guide is God, the creative event. Man cannot use the creative event to shape the value of the world to his unreliable heart's desire, because the creative event itself transforms the heart's desire so that man seeks and wants something different from what he desired in the beginning.

The creative event, God, is called also "the creative good." Wieman asserts that the creative good is the absolute good. By absolute he does not mean that this good is out of relation to the goods of life; rather, it is the character of goodness or the source of goodness, the goodness which occurs in human life.

When we speak of "absolute good" we shall mean, first of all, what is good under all conditions and circumstances. It is a good that is not relative to time or place or person or race or class or need or hope or desire or belief. . .A second mark of absolute good is that its demands are unlimited. . .Creative good is absolute in this for there is no amount of created good opposed to it which can diminish the claim that it makes upon me. . .It is unlimited in its demands because it is infinite in value. Its worth is incommensurable by an finite

quantity of created good. . .Fourth, absolute good is unqualified good. There must be no perspective from which its goodness can be modified in any way.¹¹⁴

The creative, absolute good is the sovereign God, who is the source of salvation for man and is the salvation for man. We recall that Wieman has been careful always to make the distinction between the structure of an event and the process or function of the event in reality. He makes this same distinction in discussing God as the creative event. "Creativity" and "the creative event" cannot be separated, but the two terms carry an important distinction in understanding the fulness of his doctrine of God. The sovereign God is creativity, in the sense that God is the character, structure, or form which enables the events of human life to be creative. If God were not this structure of creativity, the reality of the creative event could never occur, and man could not be saved. Creativity is changeless, and because it has this structure, the creative event can

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 79-80.

change and meet the relative conditions of human life in order to save man constantly.

The creative event is, therefore, changeless in respect to that structure whereby we call it "creative", even though the concrete wholeness of the event is always changing. It is unitary by reason of that self-identical structure, even though an infinite multiplicity of events displays this unifying character. Unity and multiplicity do not exclude each other. Unity, like changelessness, pertains to the abstract character of the event, while multiplicity and change pertain to the concreteness of it.¹¹⁵

Wieman is trying to assert that God is transcendent (creativity) and immanent (the creative event). Creativity is an abstraction which man infers because of the knowledge he has concerning the immanence of God. The creative event is not an abstraction; it is the concrete reality in human experiences which saves man. Wieman asserts that this concrete reality is both "matter" and "spirit."

The creative event is material if by "matter" is meant a form of energy which determines the very structure of time and space, together will

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 299.

all else that exists or is possible. The creative event is spirit if by "spirit" is meant (1) the continuous creator of ideals, aspiration, and value; (2) the supreme manifestation of freedom; (3) the source and sustainer of human freedom.¹¹⁶

Wieman asserts that it is the sovereign God working at the level of human, inter-personal relations that saves man. God as creativity gives a changeless structure to these inter-personal events in order that the possibility of creativity can be realized. God as the creative event is the actualized reality of this possibility as it occurs in the event, transforming human understanding and appreciation, and thus, saving man. Man does have an important role in the creative event. It is the responsibility of man to open himself up by dedication to the source of good, in order that he can be saved. Practically speaking, man carries out this dedication by creating the attitude or conditions which are necessary for his life to be transformed continually, making it possible for the creative event to occur in

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 300.

each changing situation.

Man's dedication to God is more than an intellectual process. Wieman realizes that man's intellectual formulations about the concrete reality of God are very limited; and because of these limitations, man must be sure that he dedicates himself to God and not to his meagre intellectual formulations about God.

We have identified God with the creative event, but this requires some qualification. Any intellectual formulation about a concrete reality is never more than a meager, sketchy abstraction pertaining to it. . . God, according to this interpretation, is immediately accessible to human living and human feeling in all the fullness of his concrete reality. He is not immediately accessible to the intellectual formulations of the human mind, but, for that matter, neither is any other concretely existing reality. . . Truth about God is a structure of possibility which the human mind can formulate and use to guide those events called "human beings" in their meaningful relations to that kind of event called "God."¹¹⁷

In his most recent published material, Wieman continues the consideration of God as creativity but changes terms in relation to the function of God. Previously he

¹¹⁷ SHG, pp. 305-6.

had used "creative event" to designate the function; now he employs the term "creative interchange" in place of the former. This shift of terms is a further attempt by Wieman to designate more clearly the contextual functioning of God as God saves man. He defines creative interchange as follows.

Creative interchange is that kind of interchange which creates in those who engage in it an appreciative understanding of the original experience of one another. . . Creative interchange has two aspects which are the two sides of the same thing. One aspect is the understanding in some measure of the original experience of the other person. The other aspect is the integration of what one gets from others in such a way as to create progressively the original experience which is oneself. This creative interchange creates the unique individuality of each person while at the same time enabling each to understand the individuality of others.¹¹⁸

It is clear that Wieman is employing the cosmological process of integrating value and applying it strictly to human beings in inter-personal relations. Having defined this functional aspect of God in terms of the

¹¹⁸MUC, pp. 22-3.

interchange between persons which transforms them in a saving manner, he also defines the structural nature of God, creativity, in such a manner as to conform to his functional definition.

Creativity is an expanding of the range and diversity of what the individual can know, evaluate, and control. Creativity is an increasing of his ability to understand appreciatively other persons and peoples across greater barriers of estrangement and hostility. Creativity is an increasing of the freedom of the individual when freedom means one's ability to absorb any cause acting on oneself in such a way that the consequences resulting from it express the character and fulfil the purpose of the individual himself. . . The fourth component of the transformation here called creative can be described thus: Increasing the capacity of the individual to integrate into the uniqueness of his own individuality a greater diversity of experiences so that more of all that he encounters becomes a source of enrichment and strength rather than impoverishing and weakening him.¹¹⁹

If these two definitions are considered fully, it becomes clear that Wieman's contextual interest has become so strong that there is no longer the sharp distinction between creativity as the structure of God and the

¹¹⁹MUC, p. 4.

creative event as the function. He has become so concerned about the context in which man is saved that the structure, creativity, is no longer as clear an abstract presentation about possibility but is included more in the concrete reality of the event.¹²⁰ Realizing that he has drawn the structure and function of God into very close relations, Wieman offers another term to signify both as one. This term is "creative transformation." God is creative transformation because God saves us by transforming our lives in such a way that the greatest value can occur in each situation. God creates the potential values in each situation, and God creates the human mind in such a way that it is able to appreciate these values in order that they may become actualized

¹²⁰cf., H. N. Wieman, "The Structure of the Divine Creativity An Exchange of Views", Illiff Review, 1954, pp. 37-8; H. N. Wieman, "Critical Comments to Unitarian Study Commission on Theology", unpublished 1962, p. 2. Here Wieman lists five aspects of divine creativity and five characteristics of creativity at the human level. The structure is so defined that it is very difficult to distinguish it from the function.

in the concrete situation. Because man has been transformed, he now has a standard whereby to judge good and evil. It is not man himself who establishes the standard; it is God who makes possible this standard and creates man's mind in such a way that the standard is applied. Man continues to have the responsibility to create the conditions by which God can save him, but the conditions he is responsible for creating are now very relative. Man must make the faith-commitment; but, in effect, it is God who creates the situation in which man can respond in faith, and it is God who transforms man's mind and total self in order that he can make the faith-commitment. It is true that man can block the will of God by creating false ideals about God, and for this reason it is necessary for man to follow the method previously stated in order that he may check his propositions and actions, to be sure that his devotion is to nothing but the sovereign God. Evil is very real and does occur every time that man creates the conditions which limit the highest value, which is potential through God in each situation.

Although evil is a real factor, God is the sovereign source of salvation. It is God who creates the world of man with its infinite possibilities of highest value; it is God who transforms man in order that these possibilities can occur.

Wieman's doctrine of God cannot be grasped fully unless his emphasis upon God's transcendence is seen in relation to God as immanent. He has asserted that, because of our man-centred age, he feels it necessary to give primary emphasis to God as immanent in human experiences. Yet, from the very beginning, his doctrine of God has also stressed the transcendence of the sovereign God. We may bring Wieman's emphasis on transcendence into perspective by considering it under two headings: (1) God as superhuman or supra-human, and (2) God and personality.

The sovereign God transcends man in such a way that he is superhuman.¹²¹ The term "superhuman" means

¹²¹ Wieman specifically relates superhuman to his

beyond or more than human in capacity or normal human power. Superhuman does not mean supernatural; "God is superhuman, but not supernatural."¹²² God is that force functioning in nature within the context of human experiences that saves man when he is saved. "It is superhuman because it operates in ways over and above the plans and purposes of men, bringing forth values men cannot foresee, and often developing connections of mutual support and mutual meaning in spite of, or contrary to, the effort of men."¹²³ In essence, God is superhuman "in the sense of doing what man cannot do when human doing is defined as producing what man intends and imagines before it occurs."¹²⁴ Man can and must work with this superhuman function by creating the conditions in which man can be open to being transformed. "The

¹²¹concepts of God as growth, interaction, creative event and creativity. For a very objective consideration of Wieman's view of God as Superhuman, cf., Edward Farley, The Transcendence of God, pp. 162-91.

¹²²ITAG, p. 11.

¹²³NPR, p. 52.

chief thing man can do for this sort of growth which is superhuman is to be intelligently and devotedly religious."¹²⁵ "To be intelligently and devotedly religious" means to carry out the scientific method with the understanding that it is God who saves. Yet man can never understand how the superhuman God brings about salvation. "The only question is, How does God do it? I say I do not know."¹²⁶ Through God's immanent functioning man knows that God saves; but because he does not know how God does it, he knows that God transcends his limited human experiences and understanding.

The traditional theological problem whether God is a person or personality is used by Wieman not to prove the existence of God but to point to the transcendent nature of God. He asserts that it is not his desire or intention to prove that God is or is not a personality;

¹²⁵NPR, p. 60.

¹²⁶H. N. Wieman, "The Absolute Commitment of Faith", Christendom, 1937, p. 212.

"I have no desire to prove that God is not a personality or to prove that he is."¹²⁷ God, for Wieman, is that cosmological or contextual process having a structure of highest value which saves man. He denies personality to God because he does not see any valid evidence to support such a claim; but if that evidence is produced, he asserts that he is willing to proclaim God as a personality.

If that process having the structure which constitutes high value, actual and possible, should be a personality, then so it is. I would be the last to disput such a claim if it could be based on evidence gathered by legitimate methods. I only assert that I do not see sufficient evidence to support the belief that this process is a personality.¹²⁸

On the other hand, although Wieman denies personality to God, he asserts that the concept of God as personality may be indispensable for the practice of worship and personal devotion. The reason why this concept is necessary in worship is that man can better express

¹²⁷ ITAG, p. 279.

¹²⁸ H. N. Wieman, "On Using the Word "God": A Reply", Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 33, p. 400.

the actual reality of God within a context of worship by using personal symbols. This concept is needed also in prayer. Man does not pray to a definition of God, such as creative interaction, but he does pray to the actual reality which saves him. Since man experiences personally this saving reality, it is natural and important that man in prayer express this actual, saving reality by the symbol of personality.¹²⁹

Since Wieman asserts the practical importance of attributing personality to God, why does he deny that God is a personality? It is Wieman's contention that the symbol "personality" is an abstraction used to designate the functioning of a human being. God is that structure which constitutes greatest value. No single personality constitutes greatest value; rather, personality is one essential component in the creative order. The highest value would involve the most complete development of personality, but it would not consist solely in personality.

¹²⁹ cf., SHG, pp. 267-8; IFOF, p. 77.

It would consist in an association of communicating personalities, along with physical conditions and symbols. Since God saves human persons, personality is one essential factor, but not the whole. The value of personality lies in its being a means to the end, namely that the will of God be fulfilled.

We deny personality to God not because he has less value than personality, but precisely for the opposite reason. We deny personality to God because he must have greater value than any personality can ever have. A personality, as we have said, cannot stand alone. It is a mere abstraction. The greatest value is an association of communicating personalities together with all the highest undiscovered possibilities involved in such an association, to be actualized in the future.¹³⁰

For Wieman, it is essential that when man talks about God symbols should not be used which limit God so that God is made in the image of man. Man is a mind and personality limited by being in a particular space-time location, operating always within these limited conditions. Since that which is limited to mind and

¹³⁰ IL, p. 220.

personality can never escape the confines of mind and personality, to make God either mind or personality, or both, would be to limit him as humans are limited. Limiting God in such a way would deny to God his proper transcendence and majesty. "That which has mind and personality cannot rise above mind and personality. . . I hold that God towers in unique majesty infinitely above the little hills which we call mind and personalities."¹³¹ In essence, Wieman's denial of personality to God is not a subtraction from the transcendent majesty of God. The purpose of his denial is not to limit God anthropologically but, rather, to affirm the transcendent sovereignty of God. Wieman's use of the term "deny" in this context is unfortunate, since the thrust of his argument is to assert that God is much more than personality. To deny personality generally implies that God is less than personality. Wieman intends to assert that even though God

¹³¹H. N. Wieman, "God Is More Than We Can Think", Christendom, 1936, p. 432.

is personal, God is more than personality; therefore, the use of the term "deny" is inappropriate. "I deny personality to God, not by subtraction but by addition. God functions so vastly and so importantly, that it is confusing and unintelligible to attribute personality to God."¹³²

Wieman asserts that his affirmation of God as transcending the limits of personality is the only way to answer the real religious question concerning God as personality. The real religious question is not whether God is a person, but whether God responds to the intimate needs and attitudes of the individual personality.

. . . it may be thus expressed: Do human personality and fellowship find in God the source of their origin the continuous source of their enrichment, and the condition of their most abundant flowering? If these questions are answered in the affirmative, the religious man has all that he is demanding when he asserts that God must be a personality.¹³³

Wieman asserts that God is the source of personality and,

132 ITAG, p. 48.

133 GR, p. 360.

as the source, does respond to man in such a way as to meet the intimate needs of the religious man. God is able to respond to the needs of every unique, individual personality in such a way as to be the source of its fulfillment, but a being that is able to respond in such a way cannot be a personality; it must transcend the limits of personality.

God is the source of human personality and fellowship. God does give to personalities all their enrichment and their fullest flowering. God does catch up the intimate and secret outreachings of the human heart. But to represent God as a personality would be to give him a character which would make such ministrations impossible by reason of the essential limitations of personality.¹³⁴

By affirming that God is more than personality, Wieman affirms that the sovereign God is transcendent, even though God is in an immanent relationship with man. He asserts that his contention that God is more than person "is what the ancient Christian tradition has always affirmed in the doctrine of the Trinity."¹³⁵ Let us

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 360-1.

¹³⁵ IL, p. 220.

take the doctrine of the Trinity out of the context of its historical formulation and use it as an analogous tool for presenting a summary of Wieman's doctrine of God.

In the doctrine of the Trinity, God is presented as having three characteristics, faces, or functions. These three are: (a) God as father and creator, (b) God as redeemer, and (c) God as sustainer. These three characteristics of God are presented traditionally as distinctive characteristics of the one God. God as creator is related to the Old Testament account of God, although this creative activity continues at all times. God as redeemer is related to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. God as sustainer is related to the Holy Spirit. These three characteristics are not presented by Wieman in as distinctive a manner as in the traditional presentation. This lack of distinctiveness is a definite limitation to his theology, because it makes it difficult to relate adequately his doctrine of God to the Bible and to traditional theology. Wieman presents a

non-traditional, trinitarian doctrine of the sovereign God. God is creativity. It was pointed out previously that Wieman uses the term "create" to mean the giving of character or direction to the becoming event. Because of his naturalistic perspective, the term "create" cannot be used properly by him in relation to the traditional problem of creation ex nihilo. God as creativity works in such a way as to create the conditions in which it is possible for man to be saved. He creates the environment and the mind of man in order that salvation may be a real potential possibility. The structure of God is such that the actual situations of reality become potentially saving situations. God redeems man. Man must open himself up to the situation which God has created. When man does respond to the situation, God transforms the mind, heart, and the total being of man so that he is saved. Man must act in such a responsible way as to fulfil his God-given capacities, but it is God who redeems man. God sustains man. He sustains him by sustaining within history his revelation in the

church,¹³⁶ by sustaining communication between men, and by sustaining from one generation to the next the revelation of love made manifest in Jesus Christ.¹³⁷ God also sustains the individual by meeting him in the events of his life in such a way that his life is continually being transformed. Man must be responsible, as in the process of redemption, but it is God who sustains man. God transcends man because God is and does more than man can ever know from his limited perspective. God is immanent, because in his immanence he creates, redeems and sustains man. Wieman's trinitarian, functional God is asserted as the sovereign God for man. Man must be responsible in using his God-given capacities, but it is God who is sovereign.

¹³⁶cf., footnote 23, this chapter, for detailed references on Wieman's doctrine of the Church.

¹³⁷cf., footnote 21, this chapter, for detailed references on Wieman's doctrine of Christ.

View of Religion

In one sense Wieman's view of religion can be stated simply: Religion is man's effort to discover what in human existence saves him, and then it is his self-commitment to this saving function by creating the conditions required in order that the salvation can occur. This simple statement offers in essence Wieman's view, but it does not make clear the richness of his thought on the subject. In an attempt to bring out the richness of his view of religion, we shall consider the subject from the following perspectives: (1) the way in which he defines religion, (2) his view of the religious quest, (3) the function of religion, (4) the role of mysticism in religion, (5) contemporary dangers in religion, and (6) the true, liberal religion. There will be a degree of re-statement, as we consider his view of religion from these six perspectives.

From the beginning of Wieman's theological writing, he has viewed religion as way of life in which man seeks

and commits himself to the God, functioning within the universe and within human experience in a saving manner. In his earlier writings religion was represented as man's ultimate concern rather than as ultimate commitment, although the element of commitment was very real. At this stage, religion was designated as a way of life in which man tried to find that adjustment to the conditioning factors of his environment which would yield the most abundant life. The realm of unattained possibilities and the conditions necessary for their attainment are of primary importance to religion, because it is in the realization of these unattained possibilities that man encounters the will of God and also realizes his human responsibilities in relation to the saving functioning of God. In essence, religion is man's attempt to adjust to all the facts of human existence, including the superhuman possibilities, in such a way that man is being

saved. The test of whether the religion is true depends on whether the results are such that man better understands that which saves and is able to make the necessary adjustments to that which saves.

A religion is true insofar as it consists of those concepts and convictions which correctly define the ultimate cause and supreme good for the individual under consideration and best enable him to make that adjustment which will yield for him his supreme good.¹³⁸

As Wieman began to move into his period of greater social interest he developed a different emphasis in his view of religion. Previously the emphasis had been upon religion as that way of life about which man is ultimately concerned. Now the emphasis is upon religion as that to which man is ultimately committed. "Philosophy is ultimate concern. Religion is ultimate commitment and nothing less."¹³⁹ Religion is defined now as that commitment man makes to what he believes to be of such character and power that it will transform man as he

¹³⁸WRWT, p. 166.

¹³⁹MUC, p. 5.

cannot do himself, that it will save man from his self-destructive propensities and lead him to the fullest human life possible, provided man meets the required conditions.

Wieman has defined religion as being man's adjustment or commitment to that which saves man, and it is in light of this definition that he approaches the religious quest. He asserts that his definition of religion is true because the common element of all religion is concern for and commitment to that which saves. "Any definition is true if it selects some element always present in religion and not present in anything else and defines religion in terms of that element."¹⁴⁰ It is natural that Wieman assumes that the religious quest is for that object which is the foundation of this common element of all religions.

¹⁴⁰H. N. Wieman, "What Is the Good of Religion", unpublished 1960, p. 2. Cf., H. N. Wieman, "The Absolute Commitment of Faith", Christendom, 1937, p. 206.

In his theistic period, the religious quest was centred on that total object which would render all experience significant and bring human life to its highest pitch of enrichment and interest. As his theological emphasis shifts, the religious quest becomes a seeking after an absolute commitment to the total will of God, even before this will is known fully. None the less, there is a balancing emphasis upon the necessity of man's using the proper method for finding out the will of God on the basis of his human experiences. By the time of his social period, the religious quest can be stated more simply: "What shall I do to be saved from the death of my own true self under the suffocating imposition of this automatic and trivial existence?"¹⁴¹ Within the context of this basic religious question, there are three subsidiary religious questions. "What is the evil from which man needs to be saved? What is the good to which he can be saved? What are the

¹⁴¹MUC, p. 5.

conditions which must be met before this saving power can operate effectively?"¹⁴² The religious quest is no longer the seeking of that cosmological process in the universe which brings about highest value. The true religious quest is a contextual problem; it is to find out the way of God with mankind and to make an absolute commitment to this God by meeting the required conditions of the will of God. ". . .the way of God with mankind, that and that only concerns religious inquiry, because religion has to do with the relation of God to man, not the relation of God to dinosaurs and dodos."¹⁴³

In light of his definition of religion and the religious quest, Wieman attempts to explain the function of religion. In his earlier writings, he speaks of the function of religion as that of helping man to create proper habit-formations and of giving man a surplus

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁴³ H. N. Wieman, "The Ways of God With Man", Iliff Review, Vol. 19, p. 41.

energy for creative living.

Religion has a twofold part to play in habit-formation. It gives one that profound, earnest, comprehensive and critical survey of the greatest needs of life, which is required in order to choose wisely what habits to cultivate. And then it adds a self-surrender, a devotion and enthusiasm, which renders the methods of cultivating habit exceedingly more effective.¹⁴⁴

Religion is the great provider of this surplus because it (1) brings about that physiological adjustment through which energy is released and (2) brings peace of mind by removing those mental conflicts which block and divert the vital energies before they can be expended in action.¹⁴⁵

In essence he is saying, at this point, that the function of religion is to help man become sensitive to the process and possibilities of highest value and to quicken to the maximum this interest.¹⁴⁶ In his later period, Wieman asserts that the function of religion is "to point to the way of salvation."¹⁴⁷ The true function is not just to cause man to be more sensitive, but is to

¹⁴⁴ WRWT, p. 100.

¹⁴⁵ MPRL, pp. 41-2.

¹⁴⁶ H. N. Wieman, "God and Value", Religious Realism, p. 168.

¹⁴⁷ IFOF, p. 80.

lead man to commit himself to the God who saves and to lead man to live the conditions necessary for this salvation.

The function of religion is to lead men to commit themselves to that basic creativity which transforms them as they cannot transform themselves, to expand indefinitely the range of what they can appreciate as good and distinguish as evil, can understand in themselves and in other people.¹⁴⁸

Wieman comes to assert that, if religion is to carry out its function, it must be basically mystical in form. His definition of mysticism is as follows: "mysticism is when there is a breakthrough in personality forms which are followed by the consummatory stage of higher integration."¹⁴⁹ For Wieman, religious mysticism is an attitude of responsiveness to the undiscovered possibilities of God. There is untold value in the mystic attitude because it engenders a striving to the unknown

¹⁴⁸H. N. Wieman, "What Is the Good of Religion", unpublished, 1960, p. 10.

¹⁴⁹H. N. Wieman, "The Problem of Mysticism", Mysticism and the Modern Mind, p. 23.

that nothing can daunt. The other major value of mysticism is that it produces a state of contemplation in which man becomes free from any limiting factors which older forms of faith might impose. In essence, mysticism is the creation of that attitude of intense awareness of the religious data about which Wieman was so concerned in his method. So far we have considered only half of Wieman's definition of mysticism. The first half of mysticism is the creation of such an attitude that man has a vivid consciousness of the religious experience. Wieman asserts, however, that for mysticism to be valid there must be a second stage, which is the consummatory stage of higher integration of the meaning of the religious experience by the person in relation to his own personality. It is not enough to have the intensely religious experience; man must use his human rational facilities for understanding the experience in order that he can make the true faith-commitment. To carry out the function of religion, one must help people to have the religious experience and then help them to understand

the meaning of the experience in order that they can make the religious commitment, which includes man's acceptance of the responsibility to create the conditions in which the religious experiences can occur. Thus, the function of religion is to help man engage in the true mystical experience. Religion functioning as it should is mysticism.

Having described the type of religion which he considers to be proper, Wieman evaluates the dangers for religion today in order to demonstrate that his view of religion is adequate to meet the needs of the present situation in a constructive fashion. We shall approach his evaluation from three sub-headings: (1) the general situation, (2) the limits of supernaturalism, and (3) the limits of traditional liberalism. The second and third heading are in fact part of the general situation of religion today, but we give them special consideration because these receive special emphasis from Wieman.

In evaluating the contemporary situation of religion,¹⁵⁰ Wieman is not concerned that man will cease

to experience God; rather, his concern is that man's understanding of God's will will become more and more inadequate for meeting the requirements of living in our complex scientific and technological age. For religion to be adequate in the present age, it needs to include all the insights which science and technology offer.

The danger is not that we shall cease to be religious, but that the quality of our religion will decline. Men will not cease to experience God, but their understanding of God will become more and more inadequate to the requirements of our life. Religion needs science as much as science needs religion.¹⁵¹

Because of the complexities of our culture, religion seems to have outgrown for many the forms of appreciative apprehension by which the individual is able to discern the realities which command the highest devotion in life. Religion is degenerating because it is not being progressively redirected and amplified by an adequate

¹⁵⁰ cf., D. D. Williams, "Wieman As a Christian Theologian", HNW, pp. 74-5.

¹⁵¹ RESM, p. 42.

religious philosophy and, in light of this philosophy,
by helpful religious fellowship, and by meditation.¹⁵²

Wieman is very critical of the limitations of institutional religion. He asserts that institutional religion blocks man from understanding the will of God by an over-emphasis upon sentimentality and the use of evocative words. What is needed is that man should be freed from the socially accepted institutional religious practices and beliefs, in order that the individual can work out his own personal religious practices and beliefs for himself. The view just expressed represents Wieman during the first stage of his theological development.

In the late 1930's, Wieman develops a greater social interest and, with this interest, a greater realization of the value of traditional and institutional religion.¹⁵³

Although Wieman comes to appreciate more the value of religious traditions and institutions, his attack

¹⁵² cf., NPR, p. 222.

¹⁵³ For detailed references concerning Wieman's appreciation of traditional and institutional religion, cf., footnotes 20 to 24, this chapter.

upon the contemporary forms of religion becomes sharper, in light of his social concerns. He is very critical of the old forms of religion active today because he considers them to be inadequate for guiding man in his use of the great power available through science and technology.

We must achieve some new formulation of the old faith by which our fathers lived. The new formulation must state more explicitly in terms of rational empirical findings what we serve supremely and whereunto the deepest currents of our lives shall flow. The dogmatism, super-rationalities, paradoxes and super-empirical claims which have so frequently excluded the tests of inquiry may have been relatively harmless in the past except for a few inquisitions, a few thousand burnings and torturings of individuals . . . A faith now shaped by such findings turns to widespread doom in a world like ours.¹⁵⁴

What has happened is that the old forms of religion in today's situation have offered to man a distorted faith. For many, faith is no longer a commitment to God which demands that man consciously experiment to live within the will of God; rather, faith has become assent to doctrines and ceremonies. Even though many religious leaders

¹⁵⁴NWMC, pp. 208-9.

say that this is not the faith to which they call men, in reality it is because they offer man faith without the necessity of man's faith resting upon tested knowledge. What is needed is not a distorted or cheap faith, but a faith which calls man to take part in the religious inquiry into salvation and man's participation in it. What is needed today is a new form of the old faith, in order that man can use the potentialities of his civilization in such a way as to release its power in accordance with the will of God.¹⁵⁵ Wieman asserts that there are at least three things this new form of the old faith must do, if it is to enable man to serve effectively the will of God in our present age.

Three things at least must be done if the conditions are to be provided that will permit creative interchange to bring forth constructively the new age: First, the full power of technology must be released to serve the needs of the common man. Second, responsible functional participation must be given to the common man in maintaining the social order. Third, the reality commanding religious devotion must be so interpreted that

¹⁵⁵ cf., H. N. Wieman, "What Is the Good of Religion", unpublished, 1960, p. 5.

technology and intelligence can be given to its service. These are the conditions we must establish if we would serve effectively the creative power to which we give ourselves in faith.¹⁵⁶

Wieman realizes that the supernatural form of the Christian religion is the dominant voice today. Although he asserts that he is indebted to many of its leading theologians, he is at the same time very critical of this expression of the Christian faith today.¹⁵⁷ In essence, Wieman asserts that supernaturalism has attempted to preserve the ancient faith in its old form and in doing this has lost the proper connection with modern life. Being a temporal being, man can experience and gain knowledge only within the temporal order. Since supernaturalism places God outside of time, man in the temporal order is cut off from God who is outside of time. This religious form also asserts that this non-temporal God is almighty, and this assertion is completely beyond what limited man can experience and understand. Supernaturalism creates an illusion which cuts man off from God and

¹⁵⁶ DIH, p. 134.

¹⁵⁷ cf., IFOF, pp. 81-133.

robs man of any form of cosmic destiny.

The illusion developed by religion is that an eternity stands in contrast to temporal existence and that this eternity is free of all evils of time, is the home of transcendent values having some kind of mysterious concreteness yet not characterized in space and time. Eternity is said to be "beyond history" infinitely better than anything to be experienced in the temporal world.¹⁵⁸

This illusion presented by supernaturalism is basically evil because it does two things" (1) it diverts man's energy and devotion from the actual problems of his own existence, and (2) it misdirects the devotion and the striving of man to ends other than the will of God and its fulfilment in his own human life. In essence, supernaturalism turns man away from the God he experiences and from understanding and fulfilling the will of God which is revealed in human experience. Because religion has the responsibility of directing man to God, supernaturalism must take the blame for the consequences which occur when it turns man away from God to an illusion.

¹⁵⁸H. N. Wieman, "The Creativity in History", unpublished, 1962, p. 41.

In all cases the agency chiefly responsible for this decline and self destruction is religion because religion directs the ruling devotion of the lives of men, or at least has the responsibility for doing so. If it does not direct the ruling devotion, and thereby the resources for inquiry and control, to the problems that must be solved to avoid self-destruction and attain the greater good it must take the blame for the consequences.¹⁵⁹

Although Wieman considers himself a liberal, he offers as much criticism of traditional liberalism as of supernaturalism. In an attempt to meet the religious needs of man in a changing and complex time, liberalism placed the emphasis upon religious experience or beliefs which would yield the desired religious experience. "The older liberalism tried to overcome the rational absurdity by constructing a metaphysics or a cosmology or some other device with which to justify the belief yielding the desired religious experience."¹⁶⁰ Wieman contends that in its attempt liberalism did not retain the essential truth of the ancient faith and was not true to

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁶⁰ H. N. Wieman, "Bernhardt's Analysis of Religion: Its Implications and Development", Iliff Review, 1954, p. 52.

the spirit of science. This failure of liberalism was due basically to its faulty method.

It did not retain the essential truth of the ancient faith and neither was it true to that spirit of science which ruled and shaped the modern mind. It tried to introduce the empirical method into religion by basing it upon religious experience but without making clear what was the nature of religious experience and how it was to be treated scientifically. It left out the heart of science, on the one hand, and the heart of religion¹⁶¹ on the other.

In essence, Wieman accused liberalism of being immature and irresponsible and, therefore, of not being able to help man meet the religious needs which our time demands. He offers a very lengthy list of reasons for saying that liberalism is immature and irresponsible.

. . . because it lacks clarity and agreement on what has the character and power to save human kind from self-destructive propensities and lead to the best that human life can ever attain. . . because it does not even undertake persistent and devoted inquiry to discover and demonstrate and communicate what does in truth have this character and power. Rather it leaves this most difficult and profound problem to the casual and uninstructured thinking of each individual. . . because it does not set up

¹⁶¹GR, p. 248.

institutions so endowed and equipped that dedicated men can give their whole lives to inquiry and teaching concerning this problem of religious commitment . . . because it assumes that the most profound problems of human existence can be adequately treated when individuals "think for themselves" without intensive, continuous and instructed study. . . because it promotes a miscellany of social reforms without penetrating to that depth where personality is progressively created and the course of history is determined. Consequently it cannot have the comprehensive perspective, the history-making purpose and the driving power of a saving faith.

Last to be mentioned is the most serious defect of current religious liberalism. . . It is failure to recognize that freedom requires conformity at one point.¹⁶²

Wieman's criticism of the traditional form of liberalism, which he sees current today, leads us to ask what form of religion it is that he seeks. He asserts that he wants a true liberal religion; it should stand for and essentially do everything which he claims liberalism is not doing. His liberalism is to be that of religious inquiry, seeking to experience God, seeking to understand God's will, and seeking to commit one's life to God in such a way that one's actions are in

¹⁶² IFOF, pp. 201-2.

accordance with God's will. Liberal religion is not faith based on beliefs but is a faith based on actuality. Such a faith is an absolute faith, and only this absolute faith can meet man's needs.

Therefore the commitment of liberal religion is not to a belief but to the actuality which a belief seeks to apprehend; not to a problem solved but to a problem in process of being solved; not to an answer given but to a question asked and an answer found more or less adequate to the question. . . Such a faith is in a sense an absolute faith because it does not depend upon any fallible belief or answer. It is absolute because it is founded not on an answer but on a question of such sort that when an answer is found inadequate, another and better answer is sought. . .¹⁶³

The liberalism Wieman seeks rejects supernaturalism and its limitations while claiming to retain the basic truths of the Christian religion. It rejects the claim that God is non-temporal and affirms that God is that temporal force working in history to save man, the same God of love who revealed his saving love in Jesus Christ. It rejects the claim of supernaturalism that although man is of this world he belongs to another

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 2.

non-temporal world, and affirms that man is made for this world in which God functions to save man. Liberalism rejects the claim that God is omnipotent and affirms that God can be and is limited by "the inertia in man himself, in social institutions and in subhuman conditions."¹⁶⁴ This affirmation enables liberalism to take evil seriously and to realize that God is not responsible for evil; it further takes evil seriously by placing upon man the responsibility for evil and by stressing the necessity for man to accept the responsibility to open himself to God's grace in order that salvation can occur.

It is because Wieman's view of religion asserts that the essence of religion is to ask the question how man is saved that his method is so important. Wieman contends that his method offers to man knowledge, although relative, upon which to base his faith in God. His method further serves man as a tool for correcting his knowledge and for testing his actions to see if they conform to

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 9. Cf., text where marked footnote 91.

the revealed will of God. There is another advantage of his method, over against a limitation he alleges in the method of traditional liberalism and of supernaturalism. This advantage is that his method enables religion to draw upon all the resources of science and technology and yet at the same time to remain true to the essential truth of the ancient faith. Because his method places science and religion in a mutually helpful relationship, his liberal religion is more able to help man meet his religious needs within a culture greatly under the influence of science and technology. Wieman is not saying that all men should think alike or believe what does not seem demonstrably true. What he is saying is that the task of religion, working with all other areas of human concern and knowledge, is to find and demonstrate to man the God functioning in human existence that saves and to call man to make a faith-commitment to this God, not only by words but by actions.

Liberal religion becomes positive and responsible only when it marshals all its powers to provide and equip at least some men for life-long and

dedicated inquiry into the problems which concern religious faith and then endeavors to proclaim as widely and persuasively as possible what this inquiry seems demonstrably to discover.¹⁶⁵

Critical Comments

These comments will be limited to an evaluation of Wieman's theology under four headings. The charge of pantheism will be considered first, and the conclusion will be that Wieman's theology is panentheistic rather than pantheistic in character. The second point will be the charge of pluralism. Under the third heading consideration will be given to specific limitations in Wieman's naturalistic position and, in particular, to certain deficiencies in comparison with the traditional concepts of supernatural theology. The role of tradition and myth, his doctrine of transcendence, and the charge that Wieman's God is impersonal will be considered under the third heading. The fourth heading will be a consideration of characteristics in Wieman's empirical

¹⁶⁵ IFOF, p. 201.

approach which make it more accurate to designate his theology as a modified form of empiricism.

The charge of pantheism is generally made against the empirical and naturalistic school of theology.¹⁶⁶ As a spokesman for this school, the charge is directed against Wieman. A strictly philosophical definition of pantheism casts light on this accusation brought against Wieman. "Pantheism is any system which expressly (not merely by implication) regards the finite world as simply a mode, limitation, part, or aspect of the one eternal, absolute Being; and of such a nature that from the standpoint of this Being no distinct existence can be attributed to it."¹⁶⁷ According to this definition, God and the world are inseparable. With this understanding of pantheism, this charge against Wieman is not valid.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ cf., Georgia Harkness, The Recovery of Ideals, p. 147.

¹⁶⁷ James Baldwin (ed.), Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, Vol. II, p. 256. (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1957.)

¹⁶⁸ cf., GR, pp. 288, 351, 434; H. N. Wieman, "God and Value", Religious Realism, pp. 169, 175.

According to Wieman, the world is not contained within the existence of God; neither is God the combined forces and laws which are manifested in the existing universe. God is only that force of highest value in the universe which saves man. The fact that Wieman rejects pantheism is stated by C. C. Morrison.

Yet it is not nature as a whole upon which man depends--Wieman rejects pantheism--but Whatever-It-Is-In-Nature which carries the power to realize the highest possibilities of value implicit in nature.¹⁶⁹

A more adequate charge against Wieman is that his position is a form of panentheism. Panentheism is defined as:

The term for the view that God interpenetrates everything without cancelling the relative independent existence of the world of entities; moreover, while God is immanent, this immanence is not absolute (as in pantheism); God is more than the world, transcendent, in the sense that though the created is dependent upon the creator the creator is not dependent upon the created, God thus is held to be the highest type of Unity, viz., a Unity in

¹⁶⁹ C. C. Morrison, "Thomism and the Re-birth of Protestant Philosophy", Christendom, 1937, p. 124.

Multiplicity.¹⁷⁰

As the integrating force of value, God does interpenetrate the becoming events, when value occurs, without cancelling the relatively independent existence of each entity. Although God is immanent in the becoming process, God is not absolutely immanent as in pantheism. Wieman's form of panentheism differs from that envisaged by the definition quoted, in respect of his doctrine of transcendence. For Wieman the fact that God is transcendent does not mean that God is completely independent of the becoming events of the world; God and the becoming events exist in a relative relationship. Wieman does contend that God, as the integrating force of value, is the highest type of Unity. Although the charge against Wieman of pantheism in a philosophical sense is invalid, his position is adequately characterized as a form of panentheism.

¹⁷⁰D. D. Runes, The Dictionary of Philosophy, p. 223.

Wieman has been accused of pluralism.¹⁷¹ From a metaphysical perspective, pluralism is defined as "the theory that reality consists in a plurality or multiplicity of distinct beings."¹⁷² Since Wieman considers reality from the perspective of process and does not speak of "beings", there is some difficulty in relating this metaphysical theory of pluralism to his position. Granting this difficulty, it is partially accurate to say that for Wieman reality consists of a plurality or multiplicity of distinct events. In taking such a position, he desires to affirm the reality of change, the individuality of events, and the relative independence of the becoming events. At the same time, Wieman's position is basically monistic. Reality, for him, is a natural process, which includes the plurality of events in process. The monistic character of reality is supported by Wieman's view of the universe as the

¹⁷¹ cf., A. E. Day, "Wieman's Philosophy and Christianity", Methodist Review, Vol. 113, p. 684.

¹⁷² James Baldwin, Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, p. 306.

changeless structure of reality. The plurality of becoming events exists within or are supported by the changeless structure of the universe. The plural events do not represent an absolute plurality, because they exist within some type of organized system, on the basis of the changeless structure of the universe as the ground-of-events. Although for Wieman the universe is neutral, the universe does serve as that basic structure which gives a form of organization to the plurality of events.

The universe is a universe only because throughout all its changes there is a constitutive structure whereby we can call it a universe. . .because we can speak of anything at all only in terms of some structure. When all structures cease, mind itself ceases and there is nothing.¹⁷³

A moral view, rather than a metaphysical view, of pluralism deals with the problem whether good and evil are equally ultimate. God, for Wieman, is the integrating force of value in the natural process. It is the nature of God to function in relation to the

¹⁷³MUC, p. 81.

plurality of becoming events in such a way that there is an increase of value. At the same time that there is the integrating force functioning in the natural process, there is also a disintegrating force. Being neutral, the changeless structure of the universe supports both the integrating force and the disintegrating force.

Operating on the theory of an infinite universe, it is Wieman's contention that one should not speculate about an ultimate outcome between good and evil. By taking this position, Wieman does not confront the issue whether good and evil are equally ultimate. Because he does not confront this issue, Wieman can be accused of this form of pluralism, a pluralism of good and evil being equally ultimate. Although Wieman does not deal directly with this problem, his evaluation of the function of the integrating force in history tends to qualify this charge of pluralism. Historically, Wieman believes the integrating force to have been relatively triumphant over the disintegrating force. Wieman's position leaves unanswered the question whether good and

evil are equally ultimate; but his evaluation, from a historical perspective, indicates the integrating force to be at least relatively triumphant over the disintegrating force.

Having considered the charge of pantheism and of pluralism, our attention is focused upon specific limitations in Wieman's naturalistic position which are generally held to be strengths in supernatural theology. Wieman's theology does not give adequate consideration to the Christian tradition in general, and, more especially, to the insights of the Biblical witness. In supernatural theology the Christian tradition is of central importance. In an article in 1939, "Some Blind Spots Removed," Wieman indicates the growing importance of the Christian tradition to his theology. Although he indicates the importance of the Christian tradition in this article, his later writings do not actively include a consideration of the tradition. It would appear that Wieman attempts to include the value of the tradition in his emphasis on the perceptual event in relation to

the tradition, but his presentation and subsequent employment of the idea of the perceptual event does not adequately indicate the significance of the Christian tradition to his theology.

A more accurate indication of Wieman's evaluation of the perceptual events of the Christian tradition can be seen in his view of myths. D. D. Williams contends that Wieman's theological approach in practice includes a radical element of demythologizing.

What Wieman proposes is a thorough and radical demythologizing of all tradition. This is to be done by means of a transposition of the problem of religious knowledge into the area where empirical rational method can be used on assertions about the most important human realities.¹⁷⁴

Wieman asserts that myths have had great value in the past, but that their value is limited today because the myths have come to be taken literally as the ultimate truth. He does not carry out a systematic programme of

¹⁷⁴D. D. Williams, "Wieman As a Christian Theologian", HNW, p. 81.

demythologizing, as does Bultmann. Rather, he demythologizes by rejecting myth out-of-hand as an invalid form of religious expression or understanding for modern man. The basis for his evaluation of myths is his contention that man must base his relationship to God upon knowledge and not upon myths which may be illusions. It is not our purpose to become involved in the theological discussion concerning the validity of demythologizing. At the same time we do wish to indicate that Wieman's out-of-hand method of demythologizing greatly limits the adequate employment of the perceptual events of the Christian tradition. His procedure of rejecting myth does not enable him to gain full insight into the richness of religious expression and understanding, which the perceptual events of the Christian tradition contain. This procedure indicates a weakness in his system at a point where the supernatural view has considerable strength.

Wieman does not develop an adequate doctrine of God's transcendence. This inadequacy is due to his

stress on God's immanence and due to his assertion that God can only be known through the empirical approach. In supernatural theology God clearly creates and transcends the universe. According to naturalism, God is within the universe. There is no longer in Wieman's theology the clear emphasis upon God's transcendence which is presented in supernatural theology. Wieman postulates the transcendence of God on the basis of a method of logical analogy. Everything one experiences transcends one's experience. One experiences God; therefore, God transcends one's experience. In effect, Wieman is saying that there is more to an experience than one can know or understand. It does not necessarily follow that there is something within the experience which at the same time transcends the experience. The transcending quality seems to be in respect of the person's understanding of the event and not necessarily in respect of the event itself. To say that God transcends the religious experience is not based on a logical evaluation of empirical evidence, since

the evidence offers no definite indication of the transcending quality of the event. Wieman claims that his doctrine of transcendence is based on empirical knowledge; therefore, it must be contended that his view of transcendence is inadequate and not supported by his method. The inadequacy of his doctrine of transcendence is important because it weakens his position of panentheism and gives some credence to the charge of pantheism. This inadequacy is also important because it indicates a weakness in his position at a point where the supernatural view has considerable strength.

The most important charge brought against Wieman is the common criticism that his God is impersonal. This charge is made from the agnostic perspective by Max Carl Otto.¹⁷⁵ From the idealist and realistic schools of philosophy of religion, the charge is made by Macintosh and Garnett. The general attack takes the following course:

¹⁷⁵ cf., ITAG, p. 34.

No amount of rhetoric, therefore, can give to an unconscious entity a higher value than attaches to a conscious being. A deity that is unconscious is therefore infrapersonal in value, however supra-personal it, or "he", may be in other respects. The creature that is conscious of value is the creature that has value in the only sense that is of ultimate importance. And if man is the creature most fully conscious of value then it is he who, in the last analysis is the creature that has the greatest value. Either God must be a conscious being or he cannot be the object of supreme devotion. We only fool ourselves with rhetoric when we try to pay devotion to something allegedly superhuman that, being unconscious, is in reality infrahuman in value.¹⁷⁶

From the more traditional, theological perspective, Wieman is criticized on this point by Georgia Harkness, Edward LaB. Cherbonnier and Herbert H. Farmer.¹⁷⁷ This general line of attack asserts that Wieman's impersonal God is not the God of the Christian faith and is not the God who can save man. It is stated also that such an

¹⁷⁶A. C. Garnett, A Realistic Philosophy of Religion, pp. 25-6.

¹⁷⁷cf., Georgia Harkness, The Recovery of Ideals, p. 148; Edward Cherbonnier, "The Word of God", HNW, p. 265ff; H. H. Farmer, "Some Reflections on Professor Wieman's New Book", Journal of Religion, Vol. 27, pp. 115-9; H. H. Farmer, Revelation and Religion, p. 59.

impersonal God is not a God who can be worshipped.

An introduction to Wieman's defense on this point can be taken from C. C. Morrison.

Mr. Wieman's theology has been widely characterized among theological scholars as impersonalism. He needs no defense from me, but I cannot help saying that such a characterization betrays a superficial and distorted understanding of his point of view. Mr. Wieman is just "guilty" enough to give color to this characterization, but he is not guilty enough to warrant scholars in so characterizing his position.¹⁷⁸

The only perspective from which rightly to accuse Wieman on this point is from an anthropomorphic perspective.¹⁷⁹ Those theologians who accuse Wieman do not take seriously the implications of his assertion that he denies personality by addition, not by subtraction. As previously stated, Wieman's use of the term "deny" in this context is unfortunate, since the thrust of his argument is to assert that God is much more than

¹⁷⁸C. C. Morrison, "Mr. Wieman Defines God", The Christian Century, 1932, p. 1166.

¹⁷⁹cf., R. L. Calhoun, "The Power of God and the Wisdom of God", Christendom, 1937, p. 47.

personality. To deny personality generally implies that God is less than personality. Wieman intends to assert that, although God is personal, God is more than personality; therefore, the use of the term "deny" is inappropriate. In the traditional trinitarian sense of Christian theology, Wieman is asserting that God cannot be limited by the term "personality," which he asserts to be a term tied to an anthropomorphic understanding. Wieman is not opposed to using personal terms in referring to God in worship, but he asserts that these terms are used in worship in the sense of praise and not as theological descriptions. He tries to make clear that it is the God who saves whom one worships and to whom one prays; that one does not or should not worship and pray to descriptive terms of God. Since he holds the view that God is personal in relation to man without being limited as a human personality, Wieman is justified in using pronouns and theological terms which convey the personal character of God.

Although Wieman denies "by addition" personality

and consciousness to God, there is a real sense in which his understanding of the structure and functioning of God is developed on the basis of an analogy with human personality. We realize that Wieman rejects this analogy with personality, but at the same time we contend that, at least in part, he uses it. He says that man cannot foresee his salvation; therefore, man does not save himself. God saves man. This line of argument seems to imply that God can foresee what will happen; therefore, God can save man. Wieman does not state this logical reasoning in so many words. If he did, it would be necessary to say that God has some form of consciousness in order to foresee the results of the saving process. Wieman, however, denies consciousness to God, here again by his method of addition, because he does not want to limit God. He says that it is the structure of God to save man, not to be conscious, and because of this structure God can save man. There is value in Wieman's point that our doctrine of God should not be limited by our understanding of human consciousness; yet, it does seem that

he has made use of an analogy concerning human consciousness in relation to God. This point could be made also concerning the way in which Wieman develops the idea that God is love.¹⁸⁰ No matter how one uses the term "love," it implies that two conscious beings are in such a relationship that at least one of them is able to respond positively in depth to the other. Wieman wants to assert that God is love, but here again he wants to explain that God as love is not limited by our human understanding of love. Even if it is granted that this point has significant theological value, it can be argued that whatever content Wieman gives to the declaration that God is love is based on an analogy between the human and the divine.

One of the noted contributions of supernatural theology is its affirmation of the personal relationship between God and man. When our understanding of God is

¹⁸⁰ Cf., J. V. L. Casserley, "The Mystery of God", HNW, p. 325.

limited by our understanding of human personality, this affirmation is misconstrued. Wieman attempts to correct this misunderstanding, while at the same time retaining the contribution of the affirmation. He attempts to implement this correction by the employment of the negative term "deny." The use of this seemingly negative approach is a limitation to his intent, because a superficial understanding of his approach implies that God is sub-personal. If Wieman is to retain an understanding of the personal relationship between God and man affirmed by supernatural theology, his approach to this issue should be completely positive and should in no way leave room for the implication that he is presenting a sub-personal or impersonal God.

Wieman's position is presented as being an empirical theology, because he contends that the absolute faith-commitment must be made only on the basis of empirical knowledge. Although Wieman presents a theological position which is considered to be empirical, his position does not represent a rigid empiricism. Because

of characteristics in his theology, it is more accurate to say that Wieman's theology represents a modified form of empiricism.

In a rigid form of empiricism, the meaning of the word "God" would be determined by empirical knowledge. Wieman contends that one must go first to the tradition to find out what the word "God" means, because it is from the tradition that the word acquires its meaning.¹⁸¹ If one goes to the tradition for this information first, the religious experience is not really the basic data as implied by the rigid empirical approach. Wieman seems to be shifting the emphasis from the experience as primary to the conceptual element as primary. "This seems to make the (a-priori?) concept of deity a matter of primary importance in religious knowledge."¹⁸²

In brief, it seems fair to say that Wieman's "empirical" view of God is derived primarily from his conceptual formulation of the "category of

¹⁸¹ cf., NWMC, p. 108.

¹⁸² James Martin, Empirical Philosophies of Religion, p. 91.

deity" rather than from an empirical survey of human experience, religious or otherwise, or from a consistent application of experimental method in the interpretation of such experience.¹⁸³

On the basis of the traditional meaning of the word "God," Wieman asserts that by definition God is that Something which saves. He contends that the content of the idea of God is based on the empirical activities of these religious people as they have experienced God's saving grace. Wieman also contends that the same meaning of the word "God" is supported by the empirical data of contemporary religious experiences. By giving emphasis to these religious activities in the tradition, Wieman is assuming an adequate presentation of these activities and the possibility of an adequate evaluation of these activities. Neither of these assumptions can be supported from a rigid position of empiricism, as will be indicated shortly in the discussion of perceptual events. To the degree that he depends upon the

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 106.

tradition for acquiring the meaning of the word "God," Wieman's position can only be described as a modified form of empiricism.

Wieman's emphasizes in his method the necessity of gaining empirical knowledge, but the overall philosophy of his method can only be characterized as a modified empirical approach. The goal or purpose of the method gives direction to the method. An absolute faith-commitment is the goal of Wieman's method. It was noted previously that because of the goal of the method Wieman contends that one cannot be completely detached in the employment of his method, although he does insist upon a degree of detachment. Since a strict form of empiricism requires detachment in the consideration of the data, Wieman's approach can only be considered a modified empiricism. This degree of non-detachment is presented by Wieman as the developing of a scientific attitude or, in other words, as becoming attuned to the relevant data of God's revelation. The scientific attitude is further modified when the faith-commitment is

made. Since faith is an essential part of his empirical approach, Wieman includes within his method a supplement to empirical data and to reason, which requires his position to be characterized as a modified form of empiricism.

Initially Wieman's empirical approach considers sense data as the only empirical evidence, but he later modifies this stand by his emphasis on God's revelation in the "lure" of experience, on intuition, and on perceptual events. God reveals to man the "lure" of super-rational possibilities in a particular experience; in this way God creates and selects for man the religious experience as data.¹⁸⁴ God creates an insight, which occurs because of the "lure" of experience and the process of intuition. It is man's responsibility to shape this insight into a hypothesis. Wieman asserts the "lure" of super-rational possibilities and the insights gained through intuition to be the work of the

¹⁸⁴cf., H. N. Wieman, "How Do We Know God?", Journal of Religion, Vol. 5, p. 119.

Holy Spirit making manifest the grace of God. A strictly empirical approach would represent man as evaluating the data in a detached manner and from this evaluation developing a hypothesis. Since Wieman represents God as creating and selecting the particular data and God providing the essential insights about the data, Wieman's approach is not strictly empirical but, rather, is a modified form of empiricism. His empirical approach is further modified by the role which he attributes to perceptual events. It is necessary, according to Wieman, to gain an understanding of traditional perceptual events in their interrelatedness in some strand of history, in order that an inferential relation can be established between the perceptual events and the present experience. In taking this stand, Wieman includes within his empirical approach existential fragments which defy empirical vindication or refutation.

Wieman's empirical approach is also modified by his contention that it is God who corrects and widens the knowledge which has already been empirically

established.¹⁸⁵ Not only does God create and select the data and provide the essential insights concerning the data, but God also is responsible for correcting the knowledge empirically established. Wieman's approach begins with God giving direction to the method and ends with God as the final source of authority correcting the knowledge gained. Man does have the responsibility on the basis of this empirical approach to develop the insights and gain the knowledge, but man's functioning is guided always by God. In light of the fact that Wieman's empirical approach is made operable by the grace of God, his theology represents a modified form of empiricism.

Concluding Remarks

The contribution of Henry Nelson Wieman's theology has been and continues to be of great significance to the

¹⁸⁵cf., MUC, p. 50.

development of contemporary, constructive Christian theology, especially in the United States. At a time when the issue of theism was splitting the theological community, Wieman offered a re-direction to his current of theology by re-defining the basic theological issue. In a scientifically dominated culture that seemed opposed to religion, Wieman attempted to show that the broad scientific method was necessary to the development of a vital faith. By giving emphasis to private religious living, he attempted to demonstrate that the true mystical religion was not in opposition to our scientific culture but, rather, incorporated practically insights of science to support the mystical religion.

With the development of the more critical international situation, Wieman asserted that the true way to live was on the basis of interdependence which could come only through a faith-centred life. In essence, Wieman begins and ends with the Sovereign God who saves, as this salvation has been revealed in the way of life made manifest in Jesus Christ. His method is developed

to show that man must include all the insights which are available in order that he may responsibly meet the conditions which God demands for salvation. Man must be responsible to God on the basis of all his human capacities, but the key-note in Wieman's theology is the Sovereign God who saves.

It will seem incredible that the essential values--mark, I say the essential values--of the Calvinistic system can possibly be brought to life for a generation like ours which has held that system in such disdain. But Wieman's thought leads directly to Calvin's God.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶C. C. Morrison, "Mr. Wieman Defines God", The Christian Century, 1932, p. 1167. Several other authors also indicate a comparison between Wieman and Calvin; cf., D. D. Williams, "Wieman As a Christian Theologian," HNW, p. 78; H. L. Parsons, "The New Reformation," HNW, pp. 116-34; Bernard Loomer, "Wieman's Stature As a Contemporary Theologian," HNW, p. 393.

CHAPTER FOUR

BERNARD EUGENE MELAND

Introduction

Bernard Eugene Meland comes from the stock of an immigrant Norwegian family. His childhood was dominated by manual labor, interrupted only by school. The religious influence of his childhood was that of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, where the emphasis was on piety and sound doctrine. Theologically, this religious orientation exemplified a modified form of evangelical fundamentalism.

In 1920, Meland entered Park College, after having served in the first World War and after having been employed in the office of an automobile manufacturer for four years. During his second year at Park, he began to study Sociology, which was at that time largely an ethical study of society.

In this study he came under the influence of such "modern prophets" as Walter Rauschenbusch, Shailer Mathews, F. C. Peabody, Norman Thomas, Scott Nearing and H. F. Ward.

The fervor that once found expression in pious testimony now became channeled into a social gospel. Whenever I was called on to preach or speak, my topic would usually be something like "Toward a Christian Social Order", or "War Is Sin."¹

In 1923, Meland went to the University of Illinois to begin graduate work in Sociology, while at the same time assisting in the University Presbyterian Church. Here he came under the influence of Josiah Royce and William James. Because of his extreme, evangelical orientation, Royce became his guiding light for the time. The effects of Royce were strong for a period, but the effects of William James upon his way of thinking have had a lasting effect which has continued throughout the development of his own constructive theology. In 1924, he entered McCormick Theological Seminary, but in the

¹B. E. Meland, "The Confessions of a Frustrated Theologian," unpublished, 1944, pp. 4-5.

following year he transferred to the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, from which he later received his B.D. and Ph.D.

At Chicago, Meland came under the influence of a school of thought from which he was to emerge a leading voice. We recall how Wieman came to Chicago in 1926 to give his interpretation of the relationship between Whitehead's metaphysics and systematic theology. Meland did some work under Wieman, but the most important immediate influence upon him was Smith.

The most single influence upon my thinking during graduate school days was Gerald Birney Smith. My devotion to him was so complete that for years after his death, I thought of my own work and writing as being a continuation of his labors, which had been cut off so untimely.²

Smith and Shailer Mathews influenced him by their conceptual approach, which is plainly evident in his first book, Modern Man's Worship.³ Under the influence of

²Ibid., p. 6.

³cf., B. E. Meland, "The Genius of Protestantism", Journal of Religion, Vol. 26, p. 281.

James, Whitehead and Wieman, Meland developed a metaphysical position in which he could relate theology and contemporary culture, giving special emphasis to a theory of value and contextualism.

In 1928, Meland went to the University of Marburg as an American-German Exchange student. His professor was Rudolf Otto, and he also came under the influence of Friedrich Heiler. At this time Meland considered himself to be a naturalist, philosophically, and a mystic, emotionally. It was because of these two factors that he designated himself during the 1930's to be "a mystic naturalist."

Meland left Germany for a teaching post at Central College in Fayette, Missouri. These years were a time of growth and fruitfulness for Meland. At Chicago he had devoted himself to the empirical quest of truth under the influence of a pragmatic approach to faith. To a great degree, this pragmatic approach had stripped him bare of the beauty and richness of life. At Central College he developed a renewed interest in the richness

of nature, art and poetry, replenishing a dimension to his feeling and thinking. Under this influence his empirical quest came to include a form of spiritual aestheticism, laying the foundation for his theological position of "empirical realism."

It was in 1934 that a close association began between Wieman and Meland. They were in Chicago, watching a tennis match, and discovered that they were working along the same lines in trying to interpret current philosophies of religion to their students. It was out of this conversation that American Philosophies of Religion was born. This association continued although Meland moved to California in 1938, accepting an appointment at Pomona College. While at Pomona his affinity with Wieman became more pronounced, as his theology developed within the framework of Whitehead's metaphysics.

In 1945, Meland went to the University of Chicago as Professor of Constructive Theology. His years at Chicago have been productive in many ways. In 1946 he became Editor of the Journal of Religion. During the

next ten years, he had five major theological works published. In these works he has moved even more from his primary position of mystical naturalism, although this orientation is always partially present to a interest for relating faith and culture within the framework of Whitehead's metaphysics. In this attempt to relate faith and culture, he attempts to bridge the gap between Wieman's position and neo-orthodox theology. In his assertion of the importance of myth in relating faith and culture, Meland attempts to combine the Process position with the neo-orthodox reassertion of the symbols of the Christian faith.⁴ One could say that Meland takes a "middle-road" between a strict neo-orthodox position, such as Barth's, and a strict empirical position.⁵ This middle path is a true indication of

⁴cf., Norman Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, pp. 148n, 174.

⁵His evaluation of Barth is interesting because at the same time that he disagrees with Barth he also finds similarity with his concerns. Cf., B. E. Meland, "Some Concluding Observations Concerning Religious

Meland's position, but it is true only if one bears in mind that he takes this theological middle-road within the context of Whitehead's metaphysics. Meland sees the development of culture within a naturalistic frame of reference, best expressed for him in Whitehead's view. In the light of this conception of the development of culture, he asserts that the task of systematic theology is to relate constructively faith and culture. Thus, a better way of expressing Meland's position would be to say that he develops a theological middle-road which attempts to relate faith and culture.

Since 1957, Meland's concern to relate faith and culture has taken on a depth, due to his experiences in India, Burma and Ceylon. 1957 was spent in India and Burma as the Barrows Lecturer, an expanded version of

⁵ "Inquiry", unpublished, p. 1; B. E. Meland, "The Genius of Protestantism", Journal of Religion, Vol. 27, p. 281; FC, p. 140; SR, p. 92-3; ASC, p. 19ff; MMW, p. 132-3; and RF, p. 302f, 357ff. For a more detailed consideration of his view of radical empiricism, cf., B. E. Meland, "Radical Empiricism", unpublished; SR, p. 39; and HE, p. 62.

these lectures being published under the title, The Realities of Faith.⁶ In this work he attempts to take into consideration the problem of faith and culture in the Far East, while at the same time expanding in more detail his own theological position on the relation of faith and culture within the world view of "the new physics."

In 1964, Meland retired from the University of Chicago. As an honor to Professor Meland for his outstanding contribution to theology, a Colloquy was given by some of the more noted theologians in the United States, under the title of "Theology and Empirical Realism." Some of those who participated were Bernard Loomer, Joseph Sittler, Joseph Haroutunian, Langdon Gilkey, Paul Tillich, and H. N. Wieman. This is indeed a fitting honor, and tends to justify Tillich's evaluation of Meland; "Meland is one of the greatest

⁶For an excellent review of this work, cf., J. G. Kuethe, Union Seminary Quarterly Review, Vol. XIX, pp. 81-3. Kuethe considers this to be Meland's magnum opus, in which he develops the full implications of his "deeper empiricism."

theologians America has ever produced."⁷

Metaphysical View

The metaphysical view in which Meland's theology is cast could be designated generally as a post-Newtonian view. Different writers have attempted to express this view under a variety of terms, such as "process", "organism", "emergence", and "contextualism." These terms all express the general notion that the universe is expanding, that the universe has no established beginning or end,⁸ that the universe is made up of events which are in process, that the events are in process and always are relative to their contextual existence, and that there are forces functioning within the universe which are related to events in such a way that novel or new events emerge. Meland accepts Whitehead's metaphysical description of the functioning universe as the

⁷A seminar comment by Tillich in 1960.

⁸cf., RCF, p. 58.

philosophical basis of his theological attempt to relate the Christian faith to contemporary culture. This does not imply that Meland agrees with Whitehead's description at every point. Rather, Meland translates Whitehead's view into his own metaphysical terms for the purpose of his theology. For our purposes, it is unfortunate that Meland has not written in one statement his general metaphysical position.⁹ Our attempt in this section will be to try to pull together his general metaphysical insights in order to indicate the metaphysical frame of reference in which his theology is placed.¹⁰

⁹For his most helpful discussion concerning metaphysics, cf., B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, pp. 87-102.

¹⁰It would be possible to take Meland's partial metaphysical assertions and to develop a more elaborate and systematized position. For the purpose of style, such a development would be valuable, in that it would make easier reading and possibly offer a more helpful continuity to his thought. Yet, such a development would distort a proper presentation and understanding of Meland's position. The reader should keep in mind that Meland basically takes major metaphysical insights from Whitehead, without their complexity,, and tries to show how these insights are related to the insights of faith and culture.

Since he belongs to the school of Process Theology, the term "process" is basic for Meland, and all other terms should be understood in relation to this basic term. The universe is described as an "on-going-Process." He uses on-going-process instead of the term "universe" because he wishes to express intense activity which is, not static but emergent--the process of becoming.¹¹ In the Newtonian view, the nature of the universe was a static order. Meland wishes to assert that the nature of the universe and everything within it is a process of emergence or becoming.

The character of this on-going-process is designated by the term "creativity."

Creativity is no abstraction. It is the continual happening appearing in every moment of time. It is the most immediate and persistent occurrence, giving both actuality and character to events as they emerge.¹²

¹¹Cf., MMW, p. 178.

¹²B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, pp. 91-2.

The creativeness of the on-going-process is essentially neutral. Within the on-going-process, there are opposing forces functioning. The basic process is neutral, in the sense that it sustains all the opposing forces. One important force is designated as "chaos" or the "chaos of change." Another important force receives a variety of names: "order-giving growth force", "creation of meaning" force, "creative order of life" force, "growth" and "creative sensitivity". The term "creative sensitivity" is used most widely by Meland as his descriptive, theological term for God. Within the on-going-process there is the chaos of change. Creative Sensitivity works with the creativeness in such a way that the chaos is transformed into growth-value.¹³ It is his contention that this metaphysical insight of transformation of chaos into value is an aid in understanding the theological assertion of salvation on the human level. On the human level, there is a development

¹³cf., ASC, p. 46-7.

of value or lack of value in each particular situation. For man, on a deeper level, there is the realization of a tragic sense of life, while at the same time a realization of hope, giving man a world of "tragic becoming."¹⁴ This realization of hope is an understanding of transforming grace, which can be made understandable to contemporary man within the frame of reference of the new metaphysics.

The distinctive turn of the new metaphysics lies in the fact that it has distinguished between that which is brute force in creativity and that which gives to creation meaning and character, a gentle working that is the redemptive influence upon force.¹⁵

With this general description in mind, let us now turn to several fundamental notions which may help to make Meland's metaphysical view more concrete.¹⁶ The first fundamental notion is that events are primary. Events are the basic form of existence, and every thing

¹⁴cf., B. E. Meland, "Some Unresolved Issues in Theology", Journal of Religion, Vol. 24, p. 235.

¹⁵RCF, p. 91-2.

¹⁶cf., HE, p. 24-30.

that exists must either be an event or a nexus of events.

In the perspective of the new empiricism, each moment of time is viewed as the creative passage taken as a total datum. What is said of each moment can be said of each emerging event. Event is thus to be taken, both in its elemental senses as the most primary notion, the simplest form of existence beyond which no analysis of experience can go, and in its ultimate sense as being inexhaustible: the bearer of all that is in miniature.¹⁷

All events develop and occur within a context and cannot be understood except within their context.¹⁸ In dealing with events, it is necessary to mention the problem of continuity and discontinuity.¹⁹ Events emerge, exist, and perish. The fact that they perish is just a tragic fact of existence, expressing discontinuity. At the same time, Meland asserts the

¹⁷ B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 91.

¹⁸ cf., HE, p. 69.

¹⁹ This problem of continuity and discontinuity can be considered best after the discussion of the fourth fundamental notion, that relations are dynamic, and the second secondary notion, the structure of experience.

possibility of continuity. The value of an event in the process of emerging events continues in part. So long as there is a future to which past value can contribute, there is continuity.

If this course of reasoning is sound, it follows that realities within the historical stream, whatever their form, continue to embrace value so long as they front a future in which actual value may pass into active relation with possible forms that give rise, in turn, to yet-unrealized conditions of value. . . This is not to say that their important values are subjective; but rather to point out that created value in the stream of history has organic connections with emerging forms of value; and apart from that continuing creative life of existence and expression, its value shrinks to the significance of milestones and museums.²⁰

Man is an event, an organic event in which the chaos of change has been transformed into some order of sensitivity by God.

The minimum metaphysical characterization of man is that he is an event. This means that he is a concretion: an actualization of meaning. Out of the indefinite flow of creativity and innumerable possibilities; he has been individuated as a

²⁰B. E. Meland, "Tradition and New Frontiers", Christendom, 1940, p. 325. Cf., RF, p. 130; HE, p. 137.

concrete organism by the gentle hand of a Creator who, in the creative act, has wrested from the chaos and brute force of creativity some measure of order and sensitivity, and from the indefinite range of possibilities, some limited range of possibilities.²¹

To understand man adequately as an event in process, it is necessary that the mind should never be separated from the body.²² It is necessary to have a view of the mind-body as an organism, in order at all times to keep in perspective the fact that man is earth-bound. If the mind is allowed philosophically or theologically to be separated from the body, man's creativeness cannot be kept in perspective, and with such a separation man can no longer be an event in the on-going-process.

The second fundamental notion is matrix of sensitivity. The on-going-process offers to each event a variety of possibilities, some oriented to the chaos of change and some oriented to value. Those possibilities of value transcend the immediate event, but are

²¹FC, p. 126.

²²cf., SR, p. 40.

the matrix which makes it possible for man to encounter and, thus, to be transformed by God. This matrix of possible value becomes a matrix of sensitivity through God's creative functioning. In other words, the matrix of sensitivity is the total environing context in which man encounters God.

The encounter with spirit is something other than this. (Meland has been talking about man's moral struggle with nature.) In the language of the ontology which affirms a transcendent good, it is the struggle between value humanly conceived, and a depth of sensitivity in which all life is cast, yet which is only partially apprehended in these intermittent moments of experienced relationship, when the self and the not-self are brought into vital rapport, as in the I-thou, or in other instances of working of grace. . . That is to say, grace or the work of the spirit is not to be conceived of simply as an inchoate realm of transcendent occurrences or of a supervening nothingness, giving airiness to our higher thinking. It is, in my judgment, a structure of sensitivity or a matrix of sensitivity which we have only limited powers as human beings to apprehend. We nevertheless participate in its transcendent structure, for, in decisive ways, we live by reason of it; our lives are cast in its matrix of relationships. We are concretions of this communal ground, actualizing its intent under certain limited circumstances.²³

²³RF, p. 225.

The social nature of reality is the third fundamental notion. Meland is influenced in this notion by the findings of cultural anthropology, especially the work of George Herbert Mead, and by Whitehead in his doctrine of prehensions. The theory of relativity also supports this view: "The modern physicist's way of stating the point is to say that 'we start with the fact of relatedness.'"²⁴ The social nature of reality asserts that every event is related to other events within its context, or, in other words, that every event is relative to every other event in its context. The use of the term "relativity" can be like the waving of a red flag to one who associates its use with a popular interpretation of pragmatism, so we shall present Meland's understanding and use of relativity.

Relativity, however, is a humble stance to which the modern mind has been brought through man's realization of the depth and complexity of

²⁴ B. E. Meland, "Tradition And New Frontiers", Christendom, 1940, p. 325. cf., RF, p. 130; HE, p. 137.

reality, of man's existence, and the partial, even fragmentary character of each man's perspective or vision. But relativity does not necessarily mean the loss of all decisive norms or of decision in the judgment of meaning or value. Neither does it mean indifference to these concerns. It does not imply that one thing is as good as another, one faith as good as another faith. On the contrary, it denies simply the reality of arbitrary absolutes and invests absoluteness in reality itself, wherever it occurs, under whatever guise it appears.

Relativity does not mean the disruption of all ultimate truth. This is a negative deduction based on the assumption that only a fixed order of things, either on the Aristotelian model, or in the manner of the Newtonian world machine, can give assurance of ultimacy. Relativity as a constructive doctrine means that every concrete situation bears witness to an ultimate peculiar to the interplay of circumstances and the limitations or resources that attend its witness. The infinite variety of good has its own claim upon us; and each situation can best be judged by a measure capable of dealing sensitively and genuinely with these concrete circumstances.²⁵

From the social nature of reality, we are able to gain an insight into a major philosophical problem, the problem of the One and the Many, and into a major social and theological problem, the relationship of the individual to the community. He considers the

²⁵RF, p. 163-4.

social question by asserting that an analysis of cosmic behavior offers an insight into the social nature of man.

The will to be together is a basic habit of cosmic behavior. It is apparent in the magnetic attraction of the solar bodies, in the adhesion of vapors, in the cohesion of molecular bodies, and in the gregarious movements of the pack, the clan, and the community. Thus unity is a natural phenomenon, an inherent quality of reality. And this wish for union, the expansive outreach for friends and communion,²⁶ is man's expression of this cosmic folkway.

Following Whitehead's theme, Meland gives noted emphasis to the problem of the individual in community, relating this issue directly to the relationship of faith and culture.²⁷ It should be noted at this point, that Meland attempts to keep a tension in this relationship by affirming, on the one hand, the uniqueness of the individual while, on the other hand asserting that the uniqueness of the individual is sacrificed unless the

²⁶MMW, p. 203.

²⁷This point will be developed in a later section dealing with Meland's view of religion.

individual is kept in proper relationship with the community. The affirmation of such a tension sets the stage for Meland's view that the uniqueness of an individual's faith is sacrificed unless it is kept in proper relationship with the culture of the community. This theme of tension is developed further by asserting that the consciousness of the unique individual and his communal relationships are together the channels through which God's grace encounters man.²⁸ In a real sense, the notion of the social nature of reality affirms the theological insight that the I-thou relationship is the channel of God's grace.²⁹

The fourth fundamental notion asserts that relations are dynamic. From the perspective of physics, this is a way of asserting that nothing which exists is or can be static, that every event is in process and

²⁸ cf., RCF, p. 49, 107.

²⁹ cf., B. E. Meland, "Theology And the Historian of Religion", Journal of Religion, Vol. XLI, p. 266.

relative to every other event within its context. On the level of human relationships, this notion would imply that every relationship is transitional, is in the process of becoming a new relationship. This dynamic character of relations serves as the principle for the emergence of value, in the sense that one event participates in the becoming value of another event. It also serves as the principle for the doctrine of continuity. The notion that relations are dynamic offers an insight into our use of language. Man has often been guilty of assuming that the language used adequately describes or encompasses the reality under consideration. Since language is always to a degree static, this notion offers the insight that due to the dynamic character of relations language should never be used in such a way as to imply that the terms used actually comply fully with the reality in question. This point is essential to an adequate understanding of Meland, and we shall return to it again in our consideration of his method and view of religion,

especially of his emphasis on the importance of myth.

The final fundamental notion asserted by Meland, following logically from the dynamic character of relations, is the idea of emergence. This notion expresses the idea of the creation of a novel event, conditioned by other contextual events. As events are in relationship, novel events are created, including contributions from other events. For Meland, the idea of emergence includes creation and mystery. The on-going-process functions in such a creative way that concrete events emerge out of the contextual relations of existing events.³⁰ Since one cannot fully understand the emergence of events with a sensitive character, or value, instead of a character oriented to the chaos of change, there is a mystery inherent in this emergence. This mystery is the force of creative sensitivity, or God.

Relations are thus seen to suggest not simply the notion of pattern but the interaction of structures in a way which makes for a subtle progression

³⁰ cf., Ibid., p. 265.

from lower to higher organizations of events. A binding factor, which is at the same time a thrust toward the advancing sensitivity of structures, is thus noted as a persisting horizon of mystery and promise attending each actualized order of structure.³¹

Within the framework of this general view of the on-going-process with its dual forces, and with these fundamental notions, Meland develops several secondary notions, considering them to be "indispensable constructs for giving direction and intelligibility to the Christian faith" within his theological understanding.³² The first secondary notion is the primordial ground of the individual person as actualized event. This primordial ground is the creative function of the on-going-process infused with the creative functioning of God; it is the one common ground or bond that unites all persons as human beings. It is also the foundation of man's relationship with God.

³¹E. E. Meland, "Theology and the Historian of Religion", Journal of Religion, Vol. XLI, p. 266.

³²Ibid., p. 92.

Creation is an instance of concretion, common to all individuated persons, which defines the base of our humanity. And through this creative act, we participate in a depth of reality which is in God. This primordial act bequeathes to each man as creature the capacity to apprehend both the humanity of another individuated being and the lure of the creative act which is itself an assertion out of the depth of sensitive reality which is in God. To be human is thus to be expressive, both of an affirming yet apprehensive response to the depth of reality, which is our primordial faith, and of an awareness of another man as man. Such universality as we are capable of exemplifying roots down in this primordial ground of each man's existence as he lives and knows it concretely.³³

Similar to this notion of the primordial ground is the next secondary notion, the structure of experience. "The structure of experience, as I use it, might be defined as the persisting, living nexus of relations and residual meaning as they are present in immediacy as actualized events."³⁴ The structure of experience

³³ B. E. Meland, "Theology and the Historian of Religion", Journal of Religion, Vol. XLI, pp. 265-6. cf., RF, p. 227-8.

³⁴ B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 93. cf., RF, p. 227-9.

can best be conveyed by presenting an illustration about the personal history of a people. There are two levels of history for every family. The first level is the one talked about; it provides the concrete evidence of events now held in memory. The second level of history is the survival character of the family.

The family history is one thing. This may be recaptured in festive moods that celebrate the passing of the years. The family character--this may be more. For it preserves as a present structure, subtly made manifest in a look of anguish or in a mood of expectancy, the uncommon workings of destiny which no celebration or historical review can apprehend. Thus actuality presents history in its stark, creative residue. It is here with the blessings and benedictions of God and with his wrath as well. Every community, every culture, likewise, carries as a living burden or opportunity this survival character as a structure of experience which cannot easily be explicated or described.³⁵

This communal character is the structure which gives form to one's accumulative valuation responses. This emerging structure of experience is not to be equated

³⁵ B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 93.

with the mere passage of events. It evolves in such a way to stimulate an organic unity at every stage of history. Each generation receives an organic inheritance which is beyond the perceptions of any one person. One is not completely bound by this inheritance, but the cumulative structure of experience is a part of one's existence. Man's relationship with God is influenced by the structure of experience, in the sense that God has given meaning instead of chaos to the inherited structure of experience. The fact that within our own culture the Christian faith is mediated through this structure of experience illustrates man's relationship with God as influenced by the structure of experience.

The full, actual valuational content of the structure of experience, which is our immediate possession, no human consciousness can know. It is a depth in our natures that connects all that we are with all that has been within the context of actuality that defines our culture. It is a depth in our nature that relates us as events to all existent events. It is a depth that relates us to God, a sensitive nature within the vast context of nature, winning the creative passage for qualitative attainment. The actual content

of all this, I say, we cannot know. Each man lives within his limitations. All men as a total system of conscious events live within limitations that characterize the human emergent. Beyond the perceptual powers of the human creature, vast, meaningful processes of creativity and qualitative creation transpire. Man picks up intimations of this vast working with such instruments of perception, conscious awareness, imagination and feeling, as he may be able to employ. The degree to which men apprehend this vast working depends greatly upon the sensibilities with which they are able to receive what is more than their self-conscious, self-attentive person.³⁶

Our final point on the structure of experience, as an introduction to the third secondary notion dealing with faith, is to present Meland's differentiation between faith and the structure of experience. Essentially he says that the structure of experience is the ground of faith. The similarity to his previously quoted view of the primordial ground as the foundation of faith is noteworthy.

Faith implies valuations and the thrust of the human psyche toward ends and expectations that have been distilled from the summit experiences of successive generations as

³⁶FC, p. 108.

perceptions of ultimate import. Valuations are to be understood as the accumulative sequence of meanings attributed by a people to objects, events, and circumstances within a common cultural history which, within these bonds, has channelled and shaped the human psyche. Faith, then, in its more elemental form, is the psychical orientation of an individual or of a people under circumstances that generate incentive for living and zestful attachment to life conceived in its ultimate significance. . . Deeper than the faith, serving as a spatial medium for all that occurs under its motivation, is the structure of experience.³⁷

The final secondary notion is faith as a social energy. In line with his notions that relations are dynamic and reality social, Meland is asserting the dynamic and corporate character of faith. The thrust of meaning implied in this notion comes to him through contemporary studies of cultural anthropology and is expressed as follows:

The gist of this notion is that in any culture, long before there are explicit attitudes of faith assuming theological refinement, there is a fabric of inexpressible meaning in living which provides a depth of incentive and of uncanny commitment to the ultimate ground of one's being and destiny. This feeling context within any

³⁷FC, p. 110.

culture is expressed in myth and becomes the source of the poetry, song, and art of a people, as well as of its religious ritual. Out of this primal imagery come the sensibility and sensitivity of a people to feel after the intimations of the working of God as these become concrete in history.³⁸

In essence, Meland is asserting that all men share in a faith-orientation because of the primordial ground of being, and that all men within a cultural context share in a particular faith emphasis because of their social structure of experience. To state this in another way, in the act of creation man is created into a state of faith.³⁹ For Meland, this is a first-level faith, shared by all men in their humanity, granting that their faith may be expressed differently due to contextual, cultural circumstances.

³⁸B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 94.

³⁹Like Wieman, Meland uses the term "create" to mean giving direction or meaning to a becoming event. This use is consistent with his naturalistic perspective, since there is nothing outside of the universe which could create out of nothing.

Faith in this primordial sense is given as a component of creation. That is, the creative act of God, in bringing life into existence, imparts to every creature the subliminal condition of being a life that is in God. It is a minimum and most innocent form at this level, faith is simply a will to live, or perhaps a capacity to live, expressing simultaneously a joy in living and an organic purposiveness which impels one to seek out conditions essential to the survival of life.⁴⁰

This first level of faith is called "primordial trust." This level is subject to dissolution through the experiences of the tragic aspect of life; yet, as previously pointed out, man has also a hope for the fulfilment of life. When this hope is transformed by grace into an ultimate assurance, the second level of faith occurs, designated as "the transcendent condition of trust." Both of these states of faith have their source in God, which is to say that the primordial faith and the redemptive faith are both part of the continuing creative functioning of God. These two levels of faith are separated because of man's self-centeredness.

⁴⁰RF, p. 215.

These two dimensions of faith, primordial trust (which is immanent and subject to dissolution through the individuation of experience) and the ultimate assurance that comes into the human psyche as a movement of grace (which is transcendent), are continuous in that they can be considered to have one source--namely, our life in God. The one follows upon the creative act, the other from the redemptive act. In between the two, and precipitating the split in the dimensions of faith, is the individuation of experience, intensifying the demands of self-experience, and thus dissipating the self's capacity to participate in the⁴¹ relationships that form its communal ground.

In an attempt to present a summary view of Mealand's metaphysical direction, let us consider his view of "spirit," "spirituality," or "spiritual life." Spirit is the mystery in the universe, being more than we can know or understand, which brings about the growth of sensitive value or qualitative meaning. This spirit is the gentle working of God which creates man in faith and through grace redeems man in faith. This redemption comes about through man's growth into a quality of existence which is called spirituality or

⁴¹RF, p. 217; cf., RF, p. 229.

spiritual life. The essence of the spiritual life is sensitivity or sensitive awareness. Since the nature of God is to bring about the growth of sensitive value, man's growth in sensitivity is growth in relation to God. Thus, it is the nature of man and his destiny to grow in relationship with God.

Metaphysically, man's spiritual emergence would be something like this: There is the on-going-process of the universe which is neutral in its essence. The on-going-process contains the conditions necessary for the emergence of events, events being the lowest common denominator of that which exists. The conditional possibility of these events includes the functioning of a chaos of change and of ordering value. The ordering process affords the becoming events direction in such a creative and sensitive way that events emerge with an increasing possibility of growth in value. Descriptively, this creative ordering process is called the primordial ground of being. All events that emerge do so within a contextual relationship with God, or do so

on the basis of a primordial faith. Each event is novel, in the sense that it is unique. At the same time, each event emerges within a social context, in the sense that it has a dynamic, relational character. Man as an event displays these same characteristics. In order that man may grow in the spiritual life, it is necessary for him to keep a proper tension between his individual uniqueness and his social nature. An adequate tension is essential, because if man cuts himself off from his social nature, he cuts himself off from God. Man's social nature is important in the God-man relationship for two reasons. One is that man is aided in the process of growth through the communal structure of experience, which sustains and unifies the past experience of value. The other reason is that man encounters God through his human consciousness expressed in its social character, whether it be through specific person-person relationships or through the general structure of experience. Without the aid of the structure of experience and specific person-person

relationships, man's growth in the spiritual life will be limited. As man tries to create the conditions necessary for an adequate tension between himself as an individual and his social relations, he opens himself in growth to the creative sensitivity of God. When this sensitive growth occurs, God transforms man's existence. The corollary to this transformation is man's commitment to the God which transforms his life. Man is now redeemed; he now has an ultimate assurance concerning the meaning of his existence; he now participates in the spiritual life made possible by the mysterious spirit of creative sensitivity.⁴²

Method

Meland characterizes his theological position in the early 1930's by the term "mystic naturalism." This mystical approach was partly a reaction against

⁴²Meland presents, from the perspective of man as a psychophysical organism, the sequence of man's spiritual emergence; cf., ASC, p. 82-3.

the strong, empirical emphasis which had been sweeping American theology, especially under the influence of Wieman. In the late 1930's the theological climate had begun to change, under the influence of the international situation and of a new expression of theological orthodoxy. We saw this change in Wieman's thought, expressed in "Some Blind Spots Removed." E. A. Burtt captures an insight into this changing theological scene.

The most challenging issue today. . .is probably this: Is the empirical method adequate in dealing with religious questions, or does it need to be supplemented by some process comparable to mystic insight.⁴³

Meland considered himself a mystic naturalist, but at the same time he placed great emphasis upon the empirical character of the mystic experience.

The fact that the constructive trends toward a mystical outlook have been grounded in scientific interests, and not in any evangelical urge, should

⁴³ E. A. Burtt, Types of Religious Philosophy, p. 501.

be encouraging. This may suggest that the return to mysticism is not an abandonment of reason, but a new integration of emotion and reason which seeks to correct the one-sided emphasis of both the rationalist and the romanticist.⁴⁴

With the realization in 1934 of his striking similarity to Wieman's position, Meland began to orient his theological endeavors toward the challenging issue of the day: the relating of the mystic insight to the empirical approach. With this orientation, Meland's theology is described no longer by the term "mystic naturalism" but by the term "empirical realism." The method of empirical realism always contains a dialectical encounter between mysticism and empiricism. We shall see that Meland develops this dialectic under the headings of "faith and reason," "faith and culture," and "myth and reason."

Our purpose in this section will be to present Meland's method of empirical realism. Our approach to this presentation will be as follows: (1) We shall begin

⁴⁴ B. E. Meland, "The Mystic Returns", Journal of Religion, Vol. 17, p. 157.

with an outline of four steps in a prolegomena to his method; (2) we shall present a general outline of the three basic steps in the method; (3) we shall shift our perspective to the relationship of "faith and culture"; (4) we shall consider the issue of "myth and reason"; (5) we shall consider the problem of intelligibility; (6) we shall consider the relationship of philosophy to the method; and (7) we shall conclude with a summary statement on the method. By presenting the three basic steps of Meland's method, bearing in mind the prolegomena, and then approaching the method from particular perspectives with which he has been concerned, it is hoped that a richer texture of the method will become evident. Our approach has a limitation in that it will necessitate a degree of repetition, but this limitation shall prove an advantage in integrating Meland's variety of methodological interests.

Our reason for this approach arises from the manner in which Meland's theological writings have developed. Most of his books and articles have derived

their existence from lecture series. These lectures have not developed in such a manner that Meland's works fall into a systematic consideration of dogmas, in the fashion of Barth or Brunner. Rather, his concern has been to speak to specific issues that were important to the group present. We mention this point because the reader cannot be referred to any of Meland's works in print for a simple and concise presentation of his method. In most of his works, he deals indirectly with the problem of method within the context of the major issue being considered. His most specific consideration is in several unpublished papers which are directed towards a consideration of different methods used in theology and philosophy. We shall include several long quotations from these in order to gain a flavor of his thought. In general, the most helpful works for the consideration of method are the earlier sections of Faith and Culture and Higher Education and the Human Spirit.⁴⁵ The latter work is complicated in that his

method is presented within the context of a philosophy of education.

Meland's theological method is basically oriented to dealing with the problem of the relationship of faith and culture, with special emphasis being given to the problem of myth and to the importance of the mythos of culture. The prolegomena to his method includes four steps, which focus on these issues. The first step is to gain a self-understanding of one's role as a participant in a cultural faith. This step includes the acknowledgment, as well as acceptance, of the limitations of the faith's historical witness. The second step requires an understanding of the relative situation in which each cultural witness stands. In considering this step, it is necessary to bear in mind Meland's understanding of the term "relativity." The cultural

⁴⁵ Though these publications are of value for seeing his method in action, neither these or any of his other books specifically consider the issue of method as a specific topic for consideration.

relativity of faith is being asserted, but it is asserted within the understanding that, even though each faith is culturally relative, each faith to a degree contains an ultimate reference which bears some relevance to the truth of actuality. At the same time cultural relativity means that each witness is partial and limited because it speaks forth and stands in judgment of the articulate, cultural testimony. Thus, in this step an attempt is made to recognize and to understand the cultural relativity of the faith, in order that what points to an ultimate reference may be distinguished from that which is bound culturally.⁴⁶

The third step deals with the problem of myth, which is an essential issue for Meland's theological position. At this point it becomes necessary to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of myth in the culture, and of the underlying mythos which shapes its orbit of meaning. The mythos is the elemental orbit

⁴⁶ cf., RF, p. 166-9.

of meaning in a culture which gives structure and direction at the level of the human psyche and within the realm of imaginative and cognitive experience.⁴⁷ To participate in the mythos means that man is responsive to what is ultimate within the context of his existence. The myth is the response which a particular people makes to what is ultimate in their existence.⁴⁸ Mythologies are explications of what is discerned or apprehended in myth. These mythologies may be transitory, but the structure and direction given to the human psyche, to imagination and cognitive experiences are enduring.⁵⁰ People may become sophisticated to an extent and attempt to dissociate themselves from their mythos. Attempts can be made on the conscious level

⁴⁷ cf., FC, p. 28.

⁴⁸ cf., B. E. Meland, "Analogy and Myth in Post-Liberal Theology", unpublished, p. 14. (The Perkins School of Theology, Vol. XV); FC, p. 14, 88; RCF, p. 67.

⁵⁰ cf., B. E. Meland, "Analogy and Myth in Post-Liberal Theology", unpublished (The Perkins School of Theology Journal, Vol. XV), pp. 14, 17; FC, p. 56.

to "demythologize", but these attempts fail because the person is tied to the mythos on the conscious and subconscious level. Since it is impossible to break with the mythos, the importance of coming to understand the phenomena of the myth and the underlying mythos is obvious.

The fourth step requires that note should be taken of the various forms of participation in the mythos within any culture. These forms are not always easily discernable. Generally, three fairly distinct forms can be recognized: the individual, the cultus, and the secular domain. From the religious perspective, these forms have often been divided into those in the spiritual domain and those in the secular. The Roman Catholics have given special emphasis to the spiritual domain as representing those in the cultus. Protestantism has been a protest against religion in its accommodation to culture, lest it end in assimilation. "The Protestant temperament is prophetic rather than priestly; it is pietistic rather than aesthetic; it is practical

rather than theoretical."⁵¹ A church built on protest cannot be positive and constructive, and for this reason, Protestantism has never developed a social philosophy equal to achieving a cultural realization of its faith.⁵² Even if it is granted that there are boundaries between these forms of participation, an understanding of the relationships of culture asserts that there is a great deal of overlapping between these forms. At the same time, the difference between the forms has become more assertive during the last few centuries, making it imperative for theology to consider seriously the relationship of faith and culture, the individual and community, the tradition and present developing outlooks.⁵³

The prolegomena to Meland's method indicates

⁵¹B. E. Meland, "The Genius of Protestantism", Journal of Religion, Vol. 26, p. 275.

⁵²cf., FC, p. 80-95.

⁵³This point is developed in B. E. Meland, "Tradition and New Frontiers", Christendom, 1940, pp. 323-31.

that his theology gives emphasis to the general theme of the relationship of faith and culture. The faith's historical witness must be understood, especially in the light of the relative situation in which each cultural witness stands. This understanding requires a clear insight of the phenomenon of myth in the culture, and of the underlying mythos which shapes its orbit of meaning. In order to deal with the mythos of any culture, one must have a working knowledge of the various forms of participation in the mythos.

Bearing in mind his basic interest of the relationship of faith and culture indicated in the prolegomena, let us turn to a general outline of the three basic steps in Meland's method. The first step in theological inquiry begins when man encounters his extremity, his absolute limit as a creature of the earth.⁵⁴ In this encounter faith occurs. The encounter itself is not faith; rather, God transforms man in the

⁵⁴cf., RF, p. 8, 179. This theme of man as an "earth creature" receives special emphasis in MMW and TC.

encounter. The result of this transformation is faith.

Meland's method begins with faith--faith in God made possible by the transforming grace of God. With this encounter comes the realization that for true fulfillment in life one is helpless, except as help comes in the form of a good not one's own. In this appreciative awareness one understands that it is by redemptive acts that this good comes, redemptive acts in the sense that one discovers one's own extremity and the fact that one is judged by a good not one's own.⁵⁵ When

⁵⁵ Meland would say that this redemptive act is man's existential experience of the true meaning of Christ. It was pointed out in the metaphysical discussion how man is created in the elemental stage of faith and develops to the transcendental stage of faith. These two stages of faith are part of the same process, so any doctrine of creation and redemption must be considered as two stages in the same process. In other words, this is to say that the meaning of Christ cannot be considered properly except in relation to the creative functioning of God's grace. Although it is not our task to develop Meland's Christology, it should be obvious that, in his emphasis upon the primacy of faith in the redemptive act, a strong doctrine of Christ is essential to his theological position. For a more inclusive consideration of his Christology, cf., "Analogy and Myth in Post-Liberal Theology", (The Perkins School

this appreciative awareness occurs, it is not some intellectual theory but something that passes into the very core of one's structured experience. This process of appreciative awareness--judgment, redemption and transformation--provides the empirical data with which the theological inquiry must begin; faith has occurred. When this empirical process has occurred, experience is never the same thereafter. The former organization and meaning is broken or reordered, and there is the discovery of a new depth of apprehension. This state of depth apprehension is designated by Meland by the following terms: "imagination" or "creative imagination", "art of imagination", "appreciative awareness", "appreciative consciousness", "religious vision", "act of faith", "mythical response", "elemental experience",

⁵⁵ of Theology Journal, Vol. XV) unpublished, pp. 19-27; "The Criterion of the Religious Life", Journal of Religion, Vol. 19, p. 37; "A Present Day Evaluation of Christian Ethics", Journal of Religion, Vol. 10, p. 378; "Toward a Common Faith", Christendom, 1937, pp. 392-6; FC, p. 85, 99, 109, 120-1, 182-4, 197-205; SR, p. 107; MMW, p. 284-5; RF, p. 250-66, 267, 278ff.

"mind-set".

Meland asserts that this transformation or new discovery can come on occasions independently of the gospel witness, making it clear that he does not subscribe to a traditional, kerygmatic theology. The sensitive experience which makes faith possible can come to one in tragedy, sorrow, frustration or failure. It is possible for these experiences to break one, but at the same time it is possible for them to open up the possibility of the redemptive process. Generally, no one experience of this character is of such a force as to bring about the apprehension of the faith-encounter, but such experiences have accumulative effect. Such an accumulation of experience can help one become more sensitive to one's own limitations in such a way that one is reoriented to the larger witness of faith. Because these experiences are contextual, it is difficult to describe them in terms which can easily be associated with each individual's forms of expression. What Meland is asserting is that there are empirically real creative

situations which encounter the individual, in his routine living, in such a way that the individual is forced to take seriously his own limitations and to look to a source of strength beyond the confines of his own intellectual and feeling context.⁵⁶ In other words, true religious inquiry is a response in some degree to encounters with actuality, which bring to the individual the realities of judgment and grace within the human situation in such a way that the individual is oriented to redemptive and directive resources beyond the limits of his own self. Theological inquiry itself becomes an act of witnessing to the energies of the spirit which have come into the individual's life.⁵⁷ Without witnessing to the redemptive process, there can be no true theological inquiry.

⁵⁶ cf., HE, p. 170.

⁵⁷ It should be kept in mind that the theological inquiry is also an act of witnessing to the energies of the spirit which are found in the culture. This point is especially stressed by Meland in his writings after 1945 and will receive our consideration at a later point.

Meland is careful to point out that this apprehension of judgment and grace need not come about in the traditional form of dramatic conversion. This experience need not be dramatic, for it can occur in the silent processes of life; but it must be insistent, compelling, and crucial, in the sense that one discovers an apprehension of judgment and grace. Meland surveys the accounts of biblical and church history and sees the individual going through the life-drama of redemptive acts, moving from the level of elemental man to the level of spiritual man. His method for theological inquiry asserts the necessity of repossessing this heritage of the drama of redemptive acts as peculiarly our own as the foundation for true inquiry. If one repossesses this drama in an existential manner, then the true facts of life confront one in a redemptive manner.

The crucial fact here, however, is that one then takes a proper measure of himself as a person, or of his rational or intellectual power as a creature under God, as a creature in relation to God and to other men. One comes of age spiritually, which in part is to see the ego in one's self for all its worth and peril: the

pretense, the illusion, the possibilities of deception, the over-reaching and assertive qualities of mind that are the bane of intellectualism where a sense of proportion and creaturely humility do not obtain. The mind awakened to its limits ceases to be spiritually naive. But in sensing its limits, the mind achieves freedom from itself and from the tyranny of other minds. And this affords it new power and penetration.⁵⁸

By making the first step of theological inquiry a faith experience, Meland is presenting a form of kergymatic theology. His form differs from traditional kergymatic theology because the faith-experience can occur independently of the gospel witness. At the same time it is similar to the traditional position in several ways. On the one hand, it is similar because faith occurs for both positions when man experiences the judgment and grace of God. On the other hand, both positions assert that the faith-experience does not require any external criterion for validation. Even though these two positions are similar, there is

⁵⁸B. B. Meland, "A Critical Footnote", unpublished, p. 13.

a basic difference. The traditional position contends that in the experience of faith man encounters the supernatural. From his naturalistic perspective, Meland contends that whatever happens, happens within the natural order; therefore, the faith-encounter is a natural experience. In a real sense, however, the division between Meland and supernaturalism on this point is not too great. Both positions assert that man has a mysterious encounter with God which can never be fully understood, and the result of this encounter is faith.

Wieman and Meland disagree on the first step of theological inquiry. Both men agree that in the religious experience God reveals himself. For Wieman, this revelation is the foundation for knowledge which man can gain through proper use of the method. The revelation itself does not give knowledge. The purpose of gaining this knowledge is that man may make the absolute faith-commitment. Assurance that faith is in the true God is not possible on the basis of

God's initial revelation in the religious experience.

For Meland, faith occurs because of the initial revelation of judgment and grace. In this revelation man gains assurance that his faith is in the true God.

Man will not have complete understanding of the implications of faith, but he will have this assurance.

Whereas the goal of Wieman's scientific method is the faith-commitment, faith is the first step of Meland's method of empirical realism.

Immediately the question must be considered how this new depth of apprehension can be tested and shown to be valid. Meland rejects the view that this test can be carried out as if this depth of apprehension were a cognitive act: the immediate awareness of objects, or of behavior patterns, and later, of events. In this depth there is a dimension of knowing which is too full for words, and cognitive tests are not adequate to test the validity of this depth of apprehension. Out of situations of extremity comes a perception of judgment and grace that is swift and sure. It is true that

the validity of this perception, to a degree, may be increased by a later test of applying cognitive criteria, but this added verification will always be inadequate to the depth of the experience itself and to the transformation of mind and experience which take place as a consequence. This added test really does not offer additional attestation to the reality encountered in this depth experience; it can offer only some knowledge of a useable sort. Even if it is granted that this knowledge is valuable and should be developed, it remains the case that this knowledge itself does not validate the experience.

What I am claiming is that in encounters within experience, whether in an "I-thou" relation, as it is sometimes expressed, in a vivid perception of events, momentarily heightened by their convergence in a time of crisis, or as Tillich words it, "the Kairos" of occasions, or in revelatory occasions of even greater moment when reality overturns and literally breaks asunder the structures of reason, compelling the structures of man to be remade or reordered if they would survive--in encounters of this dimension and depth, there is given to the human situation insight, a reorientation of knowing, "a knowledge by acquaintance", an apprehension of judgment and grace, (what shall we call it?)

that carries its own validation as a Word spoken out of the situation itself.⁵⁹

The process of critical analysis, which is the second step, follows or should follow any event of disclosure and will provide a type of illumination. This illumination is important because in time it will be assimilated into the stream of creative performance. Critical analysis is important also because it offers a style of discipline by which man's creative efforts and imagination may become more open to an ever increasing possibility of new depths of apprehension. Yet, the testing of critical analysis can never determine the actuality or value of the reality disclosed in this depth of apprehension. The disclosure itself carries its own force of authenticity as a Word

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 6. For a discussion of the truth of the faith experienced as an "aura of felt meaning", cf., B. E. Meland, "Tradition and New Frontiers", Christendom, p. 329.

given.⁶⁰ This transforming grace never depends upon the reassurance of any external criteria.

Essentially, Meland's method of religious inquiry begins with the act of faith moving toward its disciplined utterance, instead of an intellectual process which has been dissociated from its feeling context. He does not reject the added dimensions of critical power, which the latter approach can offer to one's perception and capacity for judgment; but, rather, he asserts that the religious inquiry which follows from a "grasping" act of faith is the true religious inquiry. The faith-encounter affords the true religious inquiry, because in such an encounter the intellect and feeling context of the individual is transformed. In this transformation the intellect and feeling context is not recreated only; it is also

⁶⁰ Meland's emphasis is similar to Barth's emphasis of listening and responding to the Word; cf., B. E. Meland, "Some Concluding Observations Concerning Theological Method", unpublished, p. 10.

redirected.⁶¹ When this transformed orientation occurs, it is what Meland calls "the shock of new discovery."

The fact that reason is recreated and redirected by faith should receive special note in our consideration. The first step in Meland's method is faith made possible by an experience of God's judgment and grace. The second step, critical analysis, does not occur in a detached manner. The rational process is transformed by faith, enabling one to be more attuned to the revelation of God in order that one can gain an understanding of the meaning of this revelation in

⁶¹ Essentially Meland is saying that the act of faith transforms the critical process in such a way that it can function within an orientation that includes consideration of this depth of experience. Reason transformed by faith develops a depth of humility which enables it to transcend the limited reality of bare facts dependent upon pure observation and reason. For a more complete consideration of the way faith recreates and redirects reason, cf., B. E. Meland, "Faith and Christian Thought", The Personalist, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 140-50; B. E. Meland, "Theology and the Historian of Religion", Journal of Religion, Vol. XLI, p. 271; FC, p. 22-3, 39, 115-18; RCF, p. viii-ix, 7, ASC, p. 46-7 HE, p. 71-80, 159-61, 170-2. Meland in his consideration of the relationship of faith and reason, also evaluates the

one's life. In the theological inquiry reason does not function independently of faith, reason is of value in this inquiry because it has been recreated and redirected by faith. It was stated previously that Meland differs from Wieman in making faith the first step in the method. This difference is necessarily carried over into the second step. Whereas for Meland reason is recreated and redirected by faith, for Wieman reason becomes more attuned to God's revelation through proper use of the epistemological process of the scientific method. Wieman does offer a similar account of reason being transformed by faith, but this transformation occurs only after the faith-commitment has been made on the basis of the knowledge gained. For both men reason is transformed by faith. The difference is that Meland begins the theological inquiry with faith, whereas Wieman regards faith-commitment as the goal of the inquiry.

⁶¹ limitations of the scientific method or attitude; cf., MMW, p. 223; SR, p. 21-2, 43, 46; ASC, p. 26-7.

Meland's method of theological inquiry asserts the primacy of faith,⁶² but at the same time he takes seriously the philosophical aspect of theological inquiry and pursues it as an explicit aid to the act of faith and its interpretation.⁶³ Thus, the second step in his method is critical and analytical. Meland makes this step for both negative and positive reasons. It is his contention that one's experience of faith will fall necessarily within a contextual structure of meaning, explicitly or implicitly functioning as one's intellectual reference or working philosophy of life. If one does not explicitly use the notions of this philosophical orientation, then they will be employed unwittingly in such a way that one's affirmation of faith can be distorted into an affirmation of a

⁶² cf., B. E. Meland "The Criterion of the Religious Life", Journal of Religion, Vol. 19, p. 40; B. E. Meland, "Faith and Critical Thought", The Personalist, Vol. XXXIV, p. 145; B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 89; RCF, p. 35; FC, p. 6, 15, 118.

⁶³ cf., B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 88.

philosophical bias.⁶⁴ His positive reason is that process philosophy offers contemporary insights into the nature of reality which can help to make the Christian faith more understandable and relevant to contemporary man.

Meland asserts that there should be a tension between faith and the critical process, as between art and discipline.⁶⁵ This relationship of tension is subtle and implies that neither side should ignore the other. Into the bargain neither side should confront the other in any explicit way as claiming superiority, because if such a confrontation occurs the creative tension is impaired, destroying something of the authenticity of each.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ cf., B. E. Meland, "Religious Zeal", The Christian Scholar, Vol. XLI, p. 48; B. E. Meland, "The Changing Role of Reason and Revelation in Western Thought", unpublished, p. 5.

⁶⁵ cf., HE, p. 17, 94ff.

⁶⁶ cf., B. E. Meland, "Faith and Critical Thought", The Personalist, Vol. XXXIV, p. 291; B. E. Meland, "The

Further, critical analysis confronts seriously the biblical witness. This confrontation is two-fold: it includes a creative encounter with the gospel of judgment and grace coming to us from the Scripture and includes our being instructed by the disciplined analysis and findings of critical biblical study. This process may be called an aspect of his method, because it should be included in the second step; and yet from another perspective this aspect must become a third step in Meland's method for theological inquiry. There comes a time within the task of constructive theology when it becomes necessary for the individual experience to confront and to converse with the communal witness of faith. This task can be expressed by saying that the major problem of religion is the relation of the individual to the community, or it can be expressed by saying that constructive theology must grapple with the relationship of faith and culture.

⁶⁶"Genius of Protestantism", Journal of Religion, Vol. 27, p. 291; B. E. Meland, "Theology and the Historian of Religion", Journal of Religion, Vol. XLI, p. 273; HE, p. 122, 171-2.

In step three the theologian must consider seriously the historical and communal witness to the Christian faith, as expressed in the revelation in Christ. It is important to note that Meland is saying that one does not begin by jumping directly into the centre of the Christian witness, trying to come forth with an intelligible and meaningful interpretation of the Christian faith. To make such a jump, without developing the critical process in light of faith, is to miscalculate the relation of discipline to creative expression. If one's endeavor in any area is to be significant, it is necessary that one first accept the burden of acquiring the discipline and critical judgment necessary to this endeavor. Acquiring discipline and critical judgment may seem tedious and difficult, but these will afford one the ability to consider later, with perceptiveness and power, the more complex situation. Meland's point should be understood as a common sense insight that one is not able to deal with the more complex situations without going through the

preliminary process. The method of theological inquiry is no different from other methods of inquiry, in that one must learn to crawl before one can walk.⁶⁷ Although there is a difference between Wieman and Meland regarding the place of faith in the theological inquiry, both agree that man must begin with the religious experience and then confront in a critical manner the traditional religious witness. It is fair to say that Meland gives more practical emphasis than does Wieman to the importance of this encounter with the tradition, although Meland broadens the scope of this emphasis through his concern with the important relation between faith and culture.

Meland's method can be presented more sharply if it is seen as a method of empirical realism, in which

⁶⁷ cf., HE, p. 21-32. In this chapter on "The Nature of Thinking in Education", Meland develops his common-sense approach to education by pointing out six levels of thought through which man must progress in order to develop an orientation for dealing with large scale problems of human destiny.

every opportunity is developed to probe both the individual experience and the communal witness to the revelatory event. The empirical character of the individual is taken seriously, that man lives within and by the faculties of his own organism. At the same time the empirical, communal character of the individual is taken into consideration, that life is organic, relations are real, and reality is social. This relationship is a creative tension. Between the individual and the community occurs a process of deep speaking to deep in which the individual judgment encounters and contends with a communal consensus and vice versa. The individual experience always occurs within the context of the communal structure of experience. Since God gives direction to the evolving structure of experience, God's judgment and grace are revealed in the individual's experience in part through the communal structure of experience. As the tension between faith and critical analysis must be maintained, so this tension between the individual and community

must be maintained. It is through this creative tension that a judgment and grace occur which are not man's own making, but which transform and redirect the life of man. If the original experiences do not include this creative tension, then the original experience will be limited so that true judgment and grace cannot be experienced. If the critical processes are not founded on this creative tension, then they are not functioning within the framework of faith; and if they do not include this creative tension, then they are blocking the possibility of true insight and the possibility of growth in grace.

In summary of this point, we should say that within the field of systematic theology Meland's method of empirical realism is oriented more explicitly to the task of constructive theology, than that of dogmatic theology. His starting point is the act of faith, which occurs when the individual experiences the judgment and grace of God. In the second step, the discipline of critical thought is employed for the purpose

of illuminining the act of faith within a relevant context of meaning. The third step, granted that aspects of this step are included in the second, requires that the individual witness to faith confront the communal witness, issuing from the biblical record and made manifest through the historic experience of the Christian church. This method of constructive theological inquiry asserts the integrity and authenticity of the individual and communal witness of faith and attempts to hold them in a relationship of creative tension, in such a way that there is a great degree of communication and interpenetration between the two.

The genius of the constructive method lies in its holding within a creative tension, individual and community, tradition and the contemporary experience, reality and the individuated though authentic human reason, the personal and the corporate witness. In this respect it is the method of a critical liberalism which takes the claim and protests of the human spirit seriously; yet compels it to confront its heritage and the consensus of tradition responsibly. The freedom of individuality is not to be looked upon as an acid of modernity that dissolves the tissues of relationships, leaving in tatters the communal fabric of faith; it is to be taken as a summons to maturity and thus to respond as one come of

age within the community of a social reality, consonant with the Christian understanding of the imago-dei.⁶⁸

At this point it is necessary to attend to another aspect of Meland's method, namely the emphasis given to the relationship of faith and culture.⁶⁹ The root principle of Meland's method of empirical realism is that the immediacies of experience are the bearers of a depth of reality to which response and interpretation must be given.⁷⁰ This principle asserts the notion that all human existence takes place within a particularized orbit of meaning. The cultural history of a particular people is the determining factor for the establishment of an orbit of meaning. Granting that interchange does occur with alien and rival cultures,

⁶⁸B. E. Meland, "A Critical Footnote", unpublished, p. 20.

⁶⁹Two fundamental notions discussed in the metaphysics section should be kept in mind, which are "the social nature of reality" and "relations are dynamic."

⁷⁰cf., RF, p. 116, 170.

Meland asserts that the initial and primordial drives within a particular culture achieve sufficient cohesion in the form of sensibilities, modes of awareness, and reflection, to generate a characteristic disposition of mind, or in other words, a persistent thrust of the psyche. On the basis of this analysis, the human response is limited in two ways: (1) the creaturely limitations which apply to all men; and (2) the limitations derived from the cultural orbit of meaning.

Because of this orbit of meaning, every people tends to employ the terms of their culture as the only terms expressive of universal meaning. This tendency has been especially true in the area of religious witness. Because of this tendency, it is necessary now to consider the problem of myth, as indicated in the prolegomena.

For Meland, contemporary theology rests precariously upon a repossession and reconception of myth. Such an assertion raises the question of myth, biblical and contemporary, and its relation to reason.

The relation of myth and reason has become important under the influence of those who would demythologize the New Testament. In view of Meland's understanding of man as tied to the mythos, the issue boils down to the question how reason is to be employed in our reaching out or encountering ultimate dimensions of reality.

The answer to this question of reason will be found in the method used, but it is predetermined by one's understanding of the nature and function of reason. If one has a view which asserts that reason is a faculty which is or can be separate from the body in its access to ultimate reality, then one's answer will be different from the process view which sees reason as the total functioning of the organism engaged in thought and inquiry.

Reason is not one thing among other things, one faculty or organ among others; rather, it is the total organism acting in a specific way under certain conditions; that is, with a specific focus, following from being attentive to something, in response to something, or intent upon something. Reason is the human organism when it is luminous

with thought and inquiry. And the human organism is that kind of structure that can fluctuate between a highly attentive state in which, as we say, reason is alert and active, to a near indolent state in which consciousness appears barely to exist. But one is not to assume that reason is active only in this highly attentive state of the organism; for to the degree that selected impressions have been reflected upon, assimilated and judged, they tend to be stored away, as it were, kept dormant, but ready to be activated internally as a memory recalled, or as an internal stimulus to further reflection. Thus what appears to be indolence is often either reverie or a vibrant internalizing of thought, sustained by this inner stimulus of recall and its reflective response.⁷¹

To understand Meland's evaluation of reason, it is necessary to remember his view of the creaturely limitations of man. Man holds a high position in the growth of natural structures, but his structure is not definitive of reality beyond his level of emergence. There seems as little reason to assume that man's organic structure is indicative of what is ultimate in reality. In view of these limitations of the human structure, the use of human pictures or analogies

⁷¹B. E. Meland, "Some Directive for Theological Method", unpublished, pp. 10-11.

in relation to what is ultimate in reality must be considered. Man uses such pictures or analogies in myths because they are forms with which he is most clearly associated. Such a use is natural in man's attempt to point to reality which transcends his own creaturely limitations. This mythical response is legitimate when it is used as a way of expressing praise, wonder, apprehension, gratitude, or anxiety about that mystery which confronts us in existence. The problem occurs when these metaphorical images are taken literally. When this occurs, it is asserted that mythological language presumes to describe, define, or characterize reality in literal or logical terms. Such a use of myth is illegitimate within the context of its original purpose. Especially this use of myth is illegitimate for the purpose of religion and theology.⁷² What actually happens is that the mythological structure confined to logical and

⁷² cf., FC, p. 80-95.

literal terms in destroyed and a new myth is created. Such a procedure for considering myths is very dangerous because it tends to preclude the possibility of a more sensitive encounter with realities to which man is trying to extend himself, since man's sensitivity becomes bound within these literal terms.

Meland is aware that this illegitimate use of myth can occur within the process position, and he accuses Schubert Ogden of this false use.⁷³ For Ogden, the results of scientific research change, but the fundamental method of science and the picture of the world correlative with it remain constant. Taking this position Ogden holds the process imagery to be definitive of this constant picture of the world. Meland asserts that Ogden needs to be more definitive and discriminating within scientific imagery. It is Meland's contention that the world-picture formed by

⁷³ cf., B. E. Meland, "Analogy and Myth in Post-Liberal Theology", unpublished (The Perkins School of Theology Journal, Vol. XV), pp. 19-27.

modern natural science is in a process of development; therefore, Meland rejects the use of process imagery as the definitive imagery. This illegitimate use of myth occurs when the framework of process is presented as being normative of reality. In this false situation it is asserted that the process position, to a great degree, amounts to specifying the structure of reality. Meland rejects this normative process view.

. . . I would hold that the framework and what issues from it in the way of a model is clearly a human formulation having the value only of a venture in intelligibility. The truth is not given by the framework. The truth is a truth of actuality (revelation), received from the witness ⁷⁴ of faith, or out of the depths of experience.

It is important that we give consideration to what Meland means by "intelligibility."⁷⁵ The question of intelligibility raises the question whether the myth is true.

⁷⁴B. E. Meland, "Some Directives for Theological Method", unpublished, p. 14.

⁷⁵cf., RCF, p. 71; RF, p. 95; B. E. Meland, "Some Concluding Observations Concerning Theological Method", unpublished, p. 9.

I should answer that, in the sense in which this question is generally raised, the question is not really relevant. . . Actuality asks no rational conformation. It does not wait for the intellect to settle its problems. It literally creates and cradles the mind that questions it . . . The truth aspect of anything depends upon the degree to which it can be made to accommodate itself to the intellect. . . But it also follows that the abstract procedure, by which truth is sought, tends to construct a fabric of meaning which may have only an incidental relation to actuality. . .

Truth as applied to myth or the structure of experience can have only the force of intelligibility. That they exist and what they convey, can be made consistent with a given structure of thought resting upon intelligible categories. Perhaps they can have one more kind of truth: a practical, functional truth--namely, that what they portray of man illumines experience and provides conditions in the sense of an orientation of the human psyche which actually redeems man.⁷⁶

Intelligibility does not mean the complete assimilation of the truth of reality; rather, it is a momentary recognition of the depth of reality revealed in the experience. In other words intelligibility is a vision that comes to the mind which serves to illumine the context in which this mystery occurs, enabling

⁷⁶FC, p. 113-4; cf., HE, p. 77.

man to receive and respond to its occurrence.⁷⁷ Thus, this form of thought is instrumental in enabling man to make a mythical response to this depth of reality which is beyond our human structure but confronts us within our own limitations. In effect, Meland is shifting the issue here from the question of faith and reason to the broader issue of the mythical response expressed through the act of faith.⁷⁸ Under the dominance of Idealism, faith came to be considered a subjective response or inner experience which could not stand up to the tests of reason. Meland is attempting to break with this subjective connotation of faith by associating the act of faith with the mythical response. In such an association, he is attesting to a total response by man to this depth of reality. He accepts that this depth of reality is initially unavailable to conscious scrutiny, but at the same time this mythical reality does encounter man as he

⁷⁷ cf., HE, p. 161.

⁷⁸ cf., FC, p. 88.

lives. It was pointed out in our earlier statement of his method that the act of faith is the foundation upon which reason can be used properly in the theological inquiry. This same point is made in his consideration of faith as mythical response, and in his contention that reason must be kept in creative tension with faith.

Faith as mythical response is more elemental than reason, not in the sense merely that it is less critical, less sophisticated; but in the sense that it is more basic in its integration with this depth of reality, more innocently responsive to what is unmanageable and commanding in the exigencies of existence. Reason offers each individual freedom, independence and an assertiveness expressive of our individuated existence. Left to itself it can be divisive and alienating; but when it is responsive and integrative with faith, it can be illuminating. It can be emancipating without dissipating this elemental response to the depth of experience.⁷⁹

Wieman and Meland disagree over the value of myth and the problem of intelligibility. Wieman rejects Meland's contention that myth is essential in

⁷⁹B. E. Meland, "Some Directives for Theological Method", unpublished, pp. 15-16.

making faith intelligible. It is Wieman's contention that myths do not afford knowledge and, therefore, cannot directly aid in the problem of intelligibility. As previously stated, Wieman has made use in his theology, at least to some degree, of the myth structure of process metaphysics. Granting this use by Wieman of a myth structure, it is accurate to say that he does not share in Meland appreciation of the value of myth in the theological inquiry.

At this point we turn to the question how this standard of intelligibility is developed within the context of Meland's method of creative tension between faith and reason. More appropriately the question is how the theologian is to employ philosophy in pursuing his theological inquiry.

Constructive theology, in so far as it pursues a formulation of the cognitive meanings of the Christian faith in the context of structural meanings that provide intelligibility in our time, has no alternative but to follow the procedure that has given rise to systematic theology in former periods of reconstruction--namely, of setting the sentiments of the Christian myth in the philosophical context that elaborates

the controlling idea. . .

One can say that the procedure of interpreting the Christian faith in terms of a controlling concept in any given age is simply the act of integrating the imagery of the faith with the intelligible discourse of the age. It is the way by which the sentiments of faith take on cognitive force and become relevant qualifications to human thought and action.⁸⁰

Meland readily admits that in the act of theologizing it is difficult to reduce one's disciplined efforts to a simple ideology or to a particular school of thought. For better or worse, the theologian makes a response based on the being he is due to the process of becoming.

I have steadily come to the view that one's philosophical orientation is not so much a system of ideas as a structure of meaning in which one's experiences occur and take on intelligibility.⁸¹

The theologian will have disciplined himself with a particular frame of reference, but there will be also a subtle blending of many other factors. An example of

⁸⁰RCF, p. 89-90.

⁸¹B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 88.

one of these factors is the type of educational system in which the theologian has been trained. If one has been trained as a British theologian, one probably has been influenced by a specialization system of education. If one is an American theologian, the chances are strong that one will have been influenced greatly by the pragmatic system developed by John Dewey. The theologian, or any one else for that matter, can never take into account all the subtle influences which determine his process of theologizing, but he should attempt to become as self-conscious as possible, to the degree that he can at least state his basic presuppositions.

Here Meland is attempting to find a middle road between the traditional kerygmatic theologian and the metaphysical or ontological theologian. He desires to go beyond the kerygmatic theologian in affirming some degree of conscious effort on the part of the theologian in bringing intelligibility to theological statements. At the same time he wants to do this in such a way that

his theology does not fall into the pattern of Tillich's, Bultmann's or Ogden's of translating mythical statements of faith into ontological propositions. It is not Meland's intention to set the Christian faith in a static categorical scheme of process philosophy. Granted that he speaks from a metaphysical process position, Meland wants to employ suggestive notions from a process imagery in order to show that a mythical expression of this depth of reality can be understandable as a meaningful way of speaking to modern man. In other words, he wants to develop a margin of intelligibility for theological statements without binding this witness of faith within a philosophical frame of reference. Thus, the philosophical imagery is used to give insights into the witness of faith as expressed in theology, without reducing either the witness of faith or the theology to the limits of the philosophical system.

It is rather setting the outreach of faith in an intelligible context such that the language of faith, its hopes and aspirations, become

continuous with the reasonable discourse of the culture. This is to render the faith intelligible and relevant to the living culture by bringing it fruitfully into accord with the sensible experiences of the age, out of which the intelligible response, informing life and conduct, emerge.⁸²

The theologian must understand how his own philosophical thinking is shaped by a particular philosophical system, in order that the making of theological statements is not limited by the philosophical system. The philosophical system affords one an imagery which may be of value in gaining intelligible insights into the meaning of the act of faith. Meland is placing specific limitations upon the role of philosophy in theology. Philosophy is a sharp attempt to look at reality from a disciplined perspective; but philosophy can give a distorted view of reality, if it does not take account of the historical limitations of man. Without taking into consideration these limitations, one could come to consider that reality is actually envisioned within the

⁸²RCF, p. 71.

disciplined view presented by philosophy. Process philosophy, under the influence of Whitehead, has attempted consistently in most cases to take into account the distance between its basic imagery and reality-as-such. It has done this by asserting that its basic notions are metaphors and not complete descriptions of reality. At the same time, Meland realizes that the process philosopher or theologian, like any other thinker, can assert the limitations of his position but become so involved in his thought-patterns that he begins to develop his position as if his frame of reference is normative of reality. This tendency Meland strongly rejects and asserts that reason as a vision of the mind must be employed always tentatively and experimentally as an attempt to gain intelligible insights into the depth of reality experienced within the limits of the human structure. This degree of intelligibility can never become normative but is at best a hypothesis or a venture of hope.

In Meland's method the theologian and philosopher

operate from different perspectives or, in other words, that theological speaking is different from philosophical speaking.⁶³ Their speaking is similiar in that it is a human form of expression and, therefore, is subject to human limitations; yet, their speaking differs because the focus of their speaking differs. The focus of the philosopher is the world of meaning which can arise from a particular perspective of conscious awareness. His speaking about this world of meaning follows the rules of an accepted logic. In part the focus of the theologian is a similiar perspective of conscious awareness, but he must attend also to the intimations of an ultimate reality included in the experience. These intimations come as the revelation of judgment and grace in the experience, but this revelation exceeds his conceptual reach. The focus of

⁶³Pointing to the difference between theological and philosophical speaking is but another way of asserting the difference between faith and reason.

the theologian is broader than the focus of the philosopher; he attends to the scope of conscious awareness but also attends to an unmanageable depth of existence within the experience in which the judgment and grace of God is revealed, even though this revelation exceeds his conceptual reach. Because of this depth, the theologian initially cannot use the language of philosophy or critical analysis, but must use more indirect forms of expression, myth forms. The imagery of philosophy then can be employed for the purpose of gaining insight for the contemporary mind into the myth forms, but the philosophical terms are transformed in response to the demands that are placed upon them by the scope of theological inquiry.

Because the new metaphysics, giving to scientific categories their full and imaginative meaning, rises out of the living experiences of men in which decisions are made and where events of tragedy and triumph are forged, it finds an immediate rapport with the imagery and poetic symbolism of the biblical writers. What this ancient lore sets forth through parable and poetry the metaphysician, attuned to the qualitative meaning of every concrete event, finds himself expounding in what he understands to be more

definitive terms. The interrelating of these ancient and modern sources forms a continual dialogue in one's reflections.⁸⁴

Meland's method is oriented as an attempt to develop a theological inquiry that will speak to contemporary man. He sees modern man conveying a form of sophistication which asserts that man is superior to the elemental stance of man as creature. This sophistication of modernity is conveyed under the pose of human self-sufficiency. Modern man seems to be asking for a theological or ontological formula that will enable his sophisticated mind to participate, at least intellectually, within the context of the Christian faith. Meland does not share this high assumption of the status of contemporary intellectual powers nor of the ultimate potency of contemporary imagery, and, thus, he rejects the theological formula which modern man requests. A reliance upon the

⁸⁴B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 91.

intellectual formulation of meaning is no alternative for modern man's encountering the realities of faith. Meland's method is the reverse of demythologizing. He wants to begin with the degree of elementalism which is offered in the human situation coming out of the historical situation, to take seriously the depth and complexity of this situation, and in so doing to open himself to the intimations of judgment and grace which are revealed to him.⁸⁵ The critical procedure will follow from this act of faith expressed in myth form, but it will be employed under the transforming influence of the faith-act.

Meland's method of empirical realism begins with the act of faith, which serves as the foundation for the witness to faith, or in other words, the mythical response. This elemental encounter transforms the total organism of man in such a way that his total

⁸⁵Cf., the two levels of faith in the metaphysical section.

response, including his reason, is re-created and redirected. There thus develops a creative tension between the act of faith and the critical process. When this creative tension is narrowed down to specific concerns, a creative tension becomes necessary between these concerns. This creative tension is expressed as a tension between the following concerns: (1) the individual and community; (2) the cultus and the culture; (3) the Bible as the primal source of ultimate valuation and the contemporary forms of witness to this depth; (4) the sacramental and ceremonial witness to the living Christ by the church and the individual's experience and response to the judgment and grace of God in his existence; (5) conceptual or symbolic level of witness to the living Christ and a concrete level of participation in the energies of grace and judgment, or the traditional witness to the Christ-event and a concrete awareness of this Event as a continuing revelation of judgment and grace; (6) the traditional Judaic-Christian mythos and contemporary expressions

of the mythos; (7) faith and culture; and (8) form and realities. It becomes obvious that although Meland's method begins with the act of faith it definitely includes a dialectical process, a dialectical process between faith and the critical process and, in more specific concerns, dialectical processes between those concerns just listed. In general, Meland asserts three witnessing vortices to the Christian faith, bodying forth the living Christ. The first is the witness of the Church, including the Bible as the primal source of this witness.⁸⁶ The culture is the second centre of witness, in so far as it retains the formative influence of the mythos within its orbit of meaning. And finally, the individual's experience of judgment and grace, in so far as it includes a distinctive witness of response

⁸⁶Doctrine of Church: cf., B. E. Meland, "Modern Protestantism: Aimless or Resurgent?", The Christian Century, Dec. 4, 1963, pp. 1494-97; B. E. Meland, "Toward a Common Faith", Christendom, 1937, p. 397; FC, p. 138; SR, p. 15, 33, 104, 130, 133, 154; ASC, p. 2-5, 31, 69-70, 105, 108-10, 206-7; RF, p. 287-95, 305-6, 314-18ff. Use of Bible: cf., FC, p. 46, 83; SR, p. 40; MMW, p. 255; RF, p. 45ff.

and decision.

In summary, it can be said that Meland's method moves in a faith-circle. It presupposes the act of faith. Theology then makes critical responses to three forms of Christian witness, just outlined, with the contemporary scene. This critical process consists of attending to these vortices of witness in the light of all available insights concerning man's elemental response to what is ultimate in existence. The theologian must make an evaluation whether this faith is available to all within the culture who receive this witness as pointing to a depth of judgment and grace or is limited to those only who stand within the "community of the faithful." Such an evaluation presupposes the critical response of the dialectical processes, pointed to before. Meland's own theological position has moved in the direction of affirming the faith-witness as open to all within the culture who share in a decisive way the experience of judgment and grace. The problem then presents itself of making the

faith witness intelligible to modern man. Meland insists that the meaning of this witness be kept in the contextual, nurturing matrix which has kept it alive and efficacious through many centuries. This affirmation points to the importance of the total matrix of history to the present.⁸⁷ At the same time, Meland asserts the necessity of using contemporary imagery to gain insight into the Judaic-Christian mythos. He feels that contemporary "process" imagery, with its relational mode of thinking and its emphasis on the depth of experience, can be employed in gaining insight into such traditional notions as "covenant",⁸⁸ "Suffering Servant",⁸⁹ "judgment" and "grace",⁹⁰ "sin",⁹¹

⁸⁷ cf., SR, p. 38-40; B. E. Meland, "The New Realism in Religious Inquiry", unpublished, p. 5ff.

⁸⁸ cf., B. E. Meland, "Analogy and Myth in Post-Liberal Theology", unpublished (The Perkins School of Theology Journal, Vol. XV), p. 15; FC, p. 50; RF, p. 46f, 136, 228.

⁸⁹ cf., SR, p. 110ff; RF, p. 80, 170, 181ff, 262ff, 279.

⁹⁰ cf., FC, p. 177-80; SR, p. 12, 58-9; HE, p. 13; RF, p. 300-18.

"redemption",⁹² "eschatology",⁹³ and "revelation".⁹⁴

This use of process imagery is of value because it also aids the contemporary mind to re-possess the notion of myth as a legitimate human response to what is ultimate in the immediacies of existence. Having re-possessed the value of myth, the theologian then is in a position to direct men to the primal source of witness, the Bible. At this point one is confronted by the options of demythologizing the primal witness or of retaining the mythos and trying to develop a margin of intelligibility between the limitations of one's contemporary circumstances and this primal witness

⁹¹ cf., FC, p. 70, 139, 146-51; SR, p. 79-80, 148; ASC, p. 55, 66; MMW, p. 199.

⁹² cf., FC, p. 157, 176, 180, 184-9; SR, p. ix, 91, 96; ASC, p. 82-3; RF, p. 48ff, 227ff, 269.

⁹³ cf., B. E. Meland, "Response of Bernard E. Meland to Papers Presented by Perry LeFevre, Kenneth B. Marshall, and P. E. Lichtenstein", unpublished, p. 8; B. E. Meland, "The Changing Role of Reason and Revelation in Western Thought", unpublished, p. 15; RF, p. 95ff.

⁹⁴ cf., RF, p. 170-84, 254ff, 290ff, 342, 248ff; FC, p. 86, 136-8, 196-7.

within its limitations. Having repossessed the value of myth for contemporary man, Meland rejects the path of demythologizing and affirms the task of developing a margin of intelligibility between the primal mythos and contemporary understandings of the mythos. Thus, Meland's method of empirical realism returns again to the act of faith with its critical response to the three witnesses of faith in his attempt to fulfil the demand for intelligibility in the Christian faith.

Meland's method begins with the Protestant appeal to faith. He points out that this emphasis on salvation by grace shows the influence of his Lutheran background. His Presbyterian influence can be seen in his emphasis upon the importance of the church and the Bible as our primal source of witness. Although Meland stands within this rich source of Protestant tradition, he offers two corrective insights into the way in which this original Protestant appeal has developed under the influence of a rising scientific

orientation. One insight is to counteract the individualism which has developed with the Protestant appeal to faith by asserting, on the one hand, the necessity of the individual being related constructively to the community of the faithful and on the other hand, of the individual being related constructively to culture.

In our consideration of his view of religion, we shall see that he considers the problem of religion to be the relationship of the individual to the community.

The other insight comes in his emphasis upon faith, but faith always in creative tension with reason. Thus, Meland's method of empirical realism can be said to be based on the Protestant appeal to faith, expanding this understanding to a creative tension between faith and reason.

In the working out of the theological task we shall have to go beyond the historical Protestant understanding of the interrelation of faith and reason, treating this concern, not simply as a problem of religious knowledge, but as a problem of relating affection to the act of knowing such that awareness of the source of human value may issue in faith and commitment to the sovereign God and thus a saving knowledge.⁹⁵

Doctrine of God

Meland, like Wieman, is not interested in proving the existence of God. He accepts the fact that there is empirical evidence which indicates that there is a force working within the universe which functions in such a way as to bring about an increase of value or meaning, instead of chaos of change. That force we designate by religious language as "God." Whereas Wieman says that God is that which saves man, Meland expresses the same point by saying that God is that which enables meaning to increase for man. Man is made in the image of God; therefore, an increase of meaning points to the way in which man is fulfilled in his relationship to God. This increase occurs because God creates and redeems man, so long as man works with God by creating the conditions in which redemption can occur existentially.

⁹⁵B. E. Meland, "Faith and Critical Thought", The Personalist, Vol. XXXIV, p. 150.

Meland presupposes that modern man is seeking an objective reality around which to integrate his life. This reality he asserts to be God, and it is his intention to point out the functioning characteristics of this reality and the necessary responsibility for man in integrating his life around this reality. Meland uses a variety of terms to point to the characteristics of this objective reality which is God. At this point we shall list some of these terms to indicate the emphasis of his thought. These terms are: "The System of Progressive Integration"; "a force for Growth"; "Growth"; "Growth of Organic Unity"; "Silent Process"; "A Silent Working"; "Creative Order"; "a Sensitive Nature Within Nature"; "Source of Good"; "Saving Creativity"; "Source of All Value"; "Supreme Reality"; and "Creative Source of All Being". Our approach will be to consider how Meland's doctrine of God develops over the years in his writings. His final two books will be considered for the purpose of presenting a summary account of his doctrine of God. Our

purpose in this approach is to follow the contextual emphasis in which Meland's doctrine of God develops.

In Modern Man's Worship, Meland rejects all traditional categories of deity and asserts that man will be able to develop an adequate understanding and relationship with God as he comes to be at home in the universe.⁹⁶ This process of becoming at home in the universe involves accepting the fact that one is a creature of the earth, that the universe sustains one, and that there is a functioning force within the universe to which one must be related constructively in order to fulfil one's human nature.

To answer the question directly, then, as to how the modern worshiper may recover awareness of reality, it is my conviction that it will come through some adjustment to the universe that has given us life. It will come through full orientation in the natural environment which sustains us and by means of which we fashion our destiny. But before we can achieve this adjustment to actual sustaining processes, or even approach the conditions of orientation in the universe, we must become fully aware of

⁹⁶ cf., MNW, p. 133ff.

our intimacy with its life. We must acknowledge ourselves creatures of Earth, whose air we breathe, by whose herbs we are nourished, and by whose waters we are refreshed and sustained.⁹⁷

What Meland is saying is that man is an organic part of cosmic life. If man can acquire this sense of belonging to the age-old cosmic process, then man will have the psychological basis for common devotion to reality.⁹⁸ When man becomes attuned to the objective reality of the cosmos, he will then become aware vividly of that functioning within the universe which creates, sustains and redeems him.

Contemplating this vast, on-going process of life in this intimate way makes one vividly aware of the great community of cosmic activities which sustain and promote life. The cosmos becomes a community, near and neighborly. It is, indeed, a vivid awareness of God!⁹⁹

In summary, it could be said that the objective reality of God increases for man in proportion as man's

⁹⁷ MMW, p. 143.

⁹⁸ cf., MMW, p. 156.

⁹⁹ MMW, p. 197.

activities become relevant to the natural process.

Man is a part of the universe, and there is a force within the universe which works in favor of man.

This force is God, and man becomes aware that the responsiveness of these environing realities, actually operating on man's behalf and aiding in the fulfillment of his life, is the benevolence of God.¹⁰⁰

It is Meland's contention that the term "God" is purely a religious or contemplative concept, that it is a collective term meaning "those most important conditions upon which human life depends."¹⁰¹ This collective term is valuable to man in worship, used for the purpose of devotional address. Yet, man is related to those most important conditions in other ways besides worship. Man tries to adjust to these conditions and to investigate them for the purpose of theoretical reflection. When man engages in this practical adjustment and theoretical reflection, he

¹⁰⁰ cf., MMW, p. 187.

¹⁰¹ MMW, p. 172.

should set aside this collective term "God" and use in its place terms that do not confuse the empirical character of these conditions. In the introduction to this chapter, it was stated that Meland is following at this stage of his doctrine of God the conceptual influence of Mathews and Ames.¹⁰² He is asserting that God empirically is a community of activities within the universe which sustain man in his existence, that empirically God is pluralistic. At the same time, he is asserting that in worship these many activities are unified under the concept "God" as the object of worship. For the religious purpose of worship we consider God to be One, but for practical or theoretical purposes we assume God to be Many. It is clear that Meland is raising the age-old problem of "the one and the many", focusing it upon his doctrine of God. In essence, he is saying that God is

¹⁰² cf., B. E. Meland, "The Genius of Protestantism", Journal of Religion, Vol. 27, pp. 281-2.

unified for man in worship and pluralistic for man in his practical and analytical activities.

Thinking of God as structure or process, or better still as the system of progressive integration, is very helpful, and, I believe, gets at the basic character of that which sustains and creates value. I do not believe, however, that that reduces objective reality to an empirical Oneness, except, of course, in religious worship. Any system in its functional aspect is pluralistic in character. There is a working together, a coordination of functions, but that coordination is the abstract pattern. . .The system in operation is a multiplicity of functions. . .Unless one selects some one activity in the system which he regards as supreme and most important, and designates that God, there hardly seems basis for asserting that God, conceived as the integrating system necessarily yields empirical Oneness in reality. Certainly the practical and theoretical procedure in dealing with that integrating system would be aided more, it would seem by attending to the pluralistic elements which, taken, collectively, constitute the system. . .The fact is, we get nearer to the truth of the matter when we recognize that the reality that environs us is both pluralistic and unified. And further, there is no particular point in contending for the superiority of either the Oneness or the Many; for Oneness is reality synthesized; the Many is reality analyzed. Looking at it in this manner, the question as to whether the term God is applicable or not depends entirely upon whether the task at hand requires the method of analysis or synthesis.¹⁰³

¹⁰³MMW, p. 173-4; cf., MMW, p. 178-9.

Meland moves from his pluralist and unified view of God to a consideration of personality in relation to God.¹⁰⁴ His view of the nature of personality is as follows:

Personality, in fact, properly conceived, is not individuated at all; it only appears to be atomistic. Actually it is a network of relations reaching out into a vast community of behaviors. For the sake of convenience we have come to think of a personality solely in terms of the physical organism that is immediately apparent to the physical senses; but the workings of that physical organism reach far beyond the space-time area that is concretely envisaged.¹⁰⁵

Based on his definition of personality and our tendency to limit personality to physical organism, Meland denies personality to God. But he is careful to point out that this denial is only a half-truth.

It then appears that we have hardly dealt with the matter adequately when we have merely said that God is not a personality. For in saying that, we are uttering a half-truth, the other

¹⁰⁴ Cf., B. E. Meland, "The Criterion of the Religious Life", Journal of Religion, Vol. 19, pp. 37-8.

¹⁰⁵ MMW, p. 176.

half of which is that personal life, however inadequate and partial, is included in whatever reality does describe God.¹⁰⁶

Meland is asserting that neither the on-going-process of the universe nor God is a physical organism displaying personality. At the same time he clearly points out that man, as a personality, has a personal relationship with those conditions which create and sustain him. Thus, in denying personality to God, he affirms that man is capable of and has a personal relationship with God. Meland's position on this point is similar to Wieman's. Like Wieman, it is unfortunate that he makes use of the term "deny" in his assertion that God is much more than personality.

Up to this point Meland has asserted that God is a select portion of activities within the universe upon which man depends for the fulfilment of his human

¹⁰⁶B. E. Meland, "Toward a Valid View of God", Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 24, p. 204. In a recent article, Meland continues to assert the necessity of going beyond the imagery of personalistic theism. cf., B. E. Meland, "A Voice of Candor", Religion in Life, Winter, 1963-64, pp. 20-24.

nature. Man gains an awareness of the functions of God as he becomes aware of his dependent relationship to the cosmos. In worship man seeks an awareness of the Oneness of this objective reality which sustains him, although man practically and analytically understands these activities to be pluralistic. Since these activities are not a physical organism, they cannot be considered a personality; but the denial of personality to God does not deny to man a personal relationship with these activities. Man has the responsibility to adjust constructively to these sustaining activities in order that his human nature can be fulfilled. We shall turn now to this process of constructive adjustment, which Meland practically develops in Write Your Own Ten Commandments.

In this publication, Meland joins Wieman in his concern that man should constructively engage himself in the process of growth toward a healthful fulfilment of human nature. Granted that there are these activities working in the universe for the

benefit of man's fulfillment, man still has an important responsibility for developing a design for living that will be compatible with these activities.

Every man guides his own life to some extent and in one form or another. Every time a man makes a decision, or fails to reach one, he shapes the course of his day; and the cumulative results of these daily events condition the course of his years. . . You may have a design for living, or you can just let things happen. . . We are not victims merely, neither of heaven nor of earth forces; we are creative organisms that respond in this way or that. And while our response is conditioned, both by circumstances of birth and by our sphere of living, we may bring conscious control to bear upon the order of living that is evolving us and evolving in us by reason of these determining influences.¹⁰⁷

There is a Creative Order in existence, and it is man's responsibility to develop a pattern of living which will enable him to grow in relation to this order. Meland develops ten commandments as aids in this process of growth.¹⁰⁸ "The basic assumption underlying these commandments, then, is that the the chief end of man is to grow, and to grow as

¹⁰⁷ TC, p. 27-8.

¹⁰⁸ cf., TC, p. 71-2.

significantly as capacities permit."¹⁰⁹ Meland points out that growth is a process in which the individual responds "to the stimuli of environment in such a way that new meaningful relations ensue."¹¹⁰

This process of growth in which man must become engaged is on the human level but an illustration of the functioning of those activities which in worship we term "God." It is man's responsibility to create the conditions in his life in order that he can participate in the growth process of God. Meland describes this process of growth in man and the universe as the working of "a Silent Process" and asserts that this Silent Process has been working long before the existence of man, creating the structures through which man could emerge and find meaningful existence.

This Silent Process was here long before man came upon these earthly scenes. Back in the distant past, aeons of time ago, when the world was a simple mass, the growth of organic unity was

¹⁰⁹TC, p. 63.

¹¹⁰TC, p. 73.

barely articulate. Yet structure was in the making. Gradually its complexity increased, rising from forms undefined to the naked eye to inorganic structures clearly defined. The organic life and vegetation emerged. There came a time, with the ripening of environment, when creatures such as we appeared.¹¹¹

Thus, Meland asserts that this Supreme Reality working in our midst which we have dared to call "God is to be discerned as a growth in our midst, a Silent Process making us what we are and shaping us into what we shall become."¹¹² Those activities bringing about growth of value in the universe, which occur in relation to man's existence, are empirical evidence of God's functioning and empirical evidence of the demands of God placed upon man to respond constructively in relation to this growth. There is a "creative venture" in the universe, shaping the process of chaos into value. Man participates in this venture as he

¹¹¹TC, p. 141.

¹¹²TC, p. 140. cf., B. E. Meland, "The Criterion of the Religious Life", Journal of Religion, Vol. 19, p. 41.

creates a design for living which enables him to grow. God is growth, a creative venture, A Silent Process creating and sustaining man, if man will respond adequately.

Up to this point, Meland's doctrine of God has been oriented from the perspective of morality or individual behavior. Although he has been concerned to point out that God is that process in the universe upon which man depends for fulfilment or growth of value, a primary concern of his perspective has been the manner in which the individual functions in relation to God in order to be fulfilled. This theistic individualism fits in with the general individualistic approach which dominated the popular American philosophy of life during this period. It was pointed out previously that Wieman also shared this individualistic perspective and that the conditions of that period were undergoing a transformation whereby a greater degree of social concern developed. Meland's doctrine of God participates in this transformation of perspective

as his interest moves from God and the individual to
God and culture.¹¹³ Let us turn now to this changing
emphasis in his doctrine of God, as illustrated in
his writings immediately following the Second World
War.

Meland comes out of the war realizing that man-kind needs to realize empirically that there is a reality at work not just creating and sustaining man, but a reality which is redeeming man. The shift in his doctrine of God now is to give emphasis to God the redeemer, to the Christ-event which can and is existentially transforming mankind. Meland develops

¹¹³ It would be misleading to imply that this change of orientation occurs in Meland over-night or that it is ever a complete transformation. Even though he becomes aware of the tremendous forces demanding interdependence, there always remains for Meland the call of nature, the call of small group living, and the call of a society based upon the family structure. A short quotation should make clear the great attraction in "the simple way of life" for him.

"The new age into which we are moving will see the rise of village communities as centers of culture and the restoration of the family hearth. This must happen if democracy is to recover from its internal dissolution and acquire the kind of culture cohesion necessary to survival and growth." (ASC, p. 173.)

his doctrine of God from three perspectives in an attempt to reassure man that there is a God working to redeem man and in an attempt to challenge man to accept the responsibility for creating the social and individual conditions through which God's redemption can occur. These three perspectives are represented in his three works of this period: pointing to seeds of redemption which are at work within the universe, asserting the spiritual dimension of culture, and calling for the necessary reawakening of the Christian faith. Let us briefly consider his doctrine of God from these perspectives.

In Seeds of Redemption, it is Meland's purpose to stress the sensitive character of God's nature which is different from the sheer dynamisms of activity without form or value that seem to dominate man's present state of existence. He wants to reassure man that even in these troubled times when life seems dominated by the chaos of change instead of being oriented to value, God is quietly working to redeem us.

Yet, so long as human beings exist and there is flexibility among them as well as incentive to alter prevailing tendencies which have made for deterioration of spiritual sensibilities, the prospects for redemption are present. . .I venture also the possibility of our survival, and seek on this basis to perceive the gentle forces now at work in this shattered world which, given enough time, may become redemptive in the sense of being adequate for providing conditions in which the creativity of God can work to fulfil our destiny as a people.¹¹⁴

A variety of terms is used to characterize the way in which God is working to redeem man, and these are: Sensitive Nature within Nature who creates and re-creates us; the Source of Good; Saving Creativity; the Process bringing about a sensitive working for meaning and character; the Source of All Value; the source of being; and God as the unlimited companion. By these terms Meland tries to indicate that the nature of God is more than creation, that God's nature is also redemptive. At the same time Meland is careful to point out that even though we are saved

¹¹⁴ SR, p. viii.

by the grace of God, a grace for which we are not responsible, man must accept his responsibility for creating the conditions necessary for God's grace to be redemptive. In essence, he asserts that God is not a superman who can manipulate the situation redemptively at will, that God works within the limits which man helps to create.

One can say with propriety that God, like any other creative artist, works within the limitations of the mediums that are available to him at any given time; and that his creative working, because it is functional to the circumstances of the age, is productive of those events which are determined by the needs of history at any given time.¹¹⁵

Meland has added two emphases to his doctrine of God in Seeds of Redemption. On the one hand, he has stressed the redemptive nature of God, that man is saved by a grace which is not his own. On the other hand, he has stressed the realization that God is limited in his redemptive work by the circumstances

¹¹⁵SR, p. 115.

with which God must work. In this latter point, he asserts that men must be responsible constructively in his relationship with God, not just for growth of meaning, but for the sake of salvation.

In America's Spiritual Culture, Meland gives emphasis to two other dimensions of the nature of God. These are that God reveals himself creatively and redemptively within culture and that God is sovereign. He is not accepting culture without a criterion for evaluating it. His criteria are those redemptive aspects of culture which are oriented to value instead of the chaos of change. These same criteria should also be used in evaluating the life of the individual and the church. Meland sees the church and society rejecting culture as being alien from God, and he sees in this rejection the blocking of God's redemptive activity. It is asserted that there are definite spiritual aspects within culture which must be taken seriously, if man is to fulfil his responsibility in relation to God.

It would follow then that, if this spiritual aspect is existentially real, and if it bears directly upon the course of events--that is, affects the quality of meaning that enters into decisions and actions--it is of such importance to culture and to the happenings of every moment of society that it cannot be ignored without serious loss to culture itself. Hence the spiritual quality of culture that is thus envisaged in moments of reflection and sensitive awareness is not simply esoteric data for cults to glory in, and to be separated from the daily events of society; it is of the essence of our living, and is indispensable to the living culture that aspires to be complete and sound of purpose.¹¹⁶

This view of God revealing himself in culture is based on Meland's view of the structure of experience. God affords a direction of value to the evolving structure of experience of the culture. Man is dependent upon and participates in the structure of experience. In this sense, man is dependent upon the creative grace of God and participates in God's grace. It is man's responsibility to help fulfil the spirit of God created in him. Man cannot fulfil his spiritual nature, if he cuts himself off spiritually from the

¹¹⁶ASC, p. 78-9.

revelation of God in culture.

Meland develops his emphasis on the sovereignty of God in relation to his view of God revealing himself in culture. His point about the sovereignty of God is three-fold. He asserts that man can realize the sovereignty only as he comes to understand that God reveals himself spiritually in culture, that God is the Supreme Reality of all life and not just of individuals. His second point is to reassert that man, individually and socially, must create the necessary conditions in order for the grace of God to be operative.

Let us note this elementary fact as our beginning: People living together either live in such a way as to create a condition wherein the growth of personality and human community is possible, or they do not. When they do not, the spiritual possibilities of that society are blocked, and the human personalities within its experience continuous frustration. . .When, however, some measure of organic unity is achieved, the processes of the corporate life becomes the media through which men and groups may experience significant satisfactions and through which the citizenry may achieve continuous growth toward fulfillment. . .Our concern here is to make clear that to the degree that the corporate life achieves

this kind of functioning, it begins to be a religiously motivated commonwealth, because its processes make possible the release of creativity in individuals and groups and provide conditions favorable to human growth which will open men more and more to the sovereignty of the Supreme Reality governing all life. . .¹¹⁷

For his third point, he like Wieman, tries to make clear that one goes to the Source of All Value in order to understand sovereignty and not to the immediate values or to a supernatural god.¹¹⁸

In The Reawakening of Christian Faith, Meland gives emphasis to the following dimensions of God: the sovereignty of God, the God of history, the redemptive God, and the power of God. God is presented as "a tender working" in the universe which transforms chaos in such a way that value is created and sustained. He is asserting that the sovereignty of God can best be understood if God is seen as a creative tenderness to which force must yield. "That tenderness is sovereign over force in every expression of

¹¹⁷ASC, p. 108.

¹¹⁸cf., ASC, p. 209.

creativity, I submit is the most tremendous idea of history.¹¹⁹ Even though tenderness is sovereign over force, it is not absolutely sovereign. There are definite times when force of chaos rules, which affirms the point that God's sovereignty is limited to the conditions with which he must work.

Wherever force is its own sovereign, and the appeal of tenderness is defied or ignored, such that power for its own sake rises to dictate men's course or to lure them into devotion to the pursuit of power, the intent of creation is denied; and the working of God, by which creativity is carried forward in human structures of consciousness, is defied.¹²⁰

This sovereign God is the God of history, which is to say that God is the God of the accumulated traditions of culture. History provides the empirical data of a pattern of the sovereignty of tenderness over force. This pattern is attested to in the Christian tradition, but it is not unique to the Christian tradition. Meland points to the many trends in history which

¹¹⁹RCF, p. 95.

¹²⁰RCF, p. 100.

exhibit force triumphant over tenderness, but he asserts that if the major tendency was not for structure of possible value instead of chaos, in effect, there would be no history. Since the sovereignty of tenderness over force is God functioning and this functioning is occurring in history, God is the God of history.

To speak of God's operations in history as a tender working is not to reduce it to sentiment which may or may not be ignored; it is rather to speak of it as a subtle, intricate, disciplined, restraining, resourceful, persistent, patient, and deep-working process, not unlike the skill of the artist hand, that shapes the crude clay into visible structures of beauty and intelligibility.¹²¹

This God of tenderness working in history is redemptive. God has created the structures of human consciousness, and it is through these structures that His grace must confront man. Events occur when God, the process of tenderness, affords a direction of value instead of the chaos of change; thus, God makes possible the becoming of each event. Since past events

¹²¹RCF, p. 117-8.

participate in the becoming of new events and since some of these events have given over to some degree to force instead of tenderness, God redeems these distorted past events by recreating them in such a way that they can participate in the process of tenderness over force. Meland realizes that this redemptive process is a mystery which cannot be grasped fully by his descriptive statement, and he asserts that the religious drama of sin and redemption is pointing out the same redemptive character of God. Thus, God creates man; man sins, and God recreates him by his redemptive grace.

The whole drama of sin and redemption roots in this creative act. In it, the intention of God is made manifest, namely, to bring into actuality, vivid events of spirit, capable of bearing in their structures of consciousness, the very creativeness that has brought them into being. In this sense, the Creator gives of His sensitive nature to His creatures in the expectation that in them, His spirit will be actualized and enjoyed.

The whole of this mystery we cannot know, but that a sensitivity works in the depths of all of us, and in the world, to realize the fulfilment of spirit, is so evident to the reflective mind that one wonders that it can be so widely missed.¹²²

¹²² RCF, p. 108.

The very fact that God is sovereign over force, that he is the God of history, and that he is redemptive in his relationship to man points to the Power of God. God's power can be seen in the fact that man alone cannot provide the becoming event with a direction of value. Only God is able to provide the becoming event with that basic structure oriented to value, instead of a structure oriented to chaos or power. Without the creative and redemptive work of God no event could display value, beauty, meaning or intelligibility. The power of God is the power that creates, sustains and redeems, and without this Power chaos of evil and destruction would reign.

His power lies in the fact that He, and He alone, can give to every situation of actuality, intelligibility, beauty, and meaning. Cultures can ignore His tender working; men may flaunt their arrogance and proud intellects or wills; but they do so at the peril of inviting incapable evil and destruction, by reason of the fact that without the dominance of this tender working, which gives order, restraint, resourcefulness to every actual occasion, the discipline and incentive to live meaningfully collapse.¹²³

¹²³RCF, p. 118-9.

In Higher Education and the Human Spirit, Meland gives emphasis to God as the creative ground of being. It must be remembered that he is developing an educational theory that tries to take seriously the spiritual working of God; and, consequently, he considers his view of God from the perspective of God as mystery. In education, man has come to approach reality from a perspective which assumes that the data of reality reveal the true and complete nature of reality. Meland asserts that there is a mystery operating within reality which is not revealed completely by the data of reality but which must be taken into account, if man is to attempt to deal seriously with reality. This mystery is the force which creates, sustains and redeems the events of reality. God is the mystery which cannot be overlooked, if the educational process is to be of real value.

The positive import of our analysis is that the appreciative consciousness, because it attends to the dynamic character of events and relations, to time that is lived, elevates perceptiveness to a place of prime importance in the art of

thought. . .

Perceptiveness acquires this importance because, in the dynamic and unfinished situation which the creative passage provides, the incalculable and immeasurable dimension attending every moment turns out to be the most formidable factor to be taken into account. Except as this dimension is envisaged, reality is simply not apprehended! When this dimension is ignored, facts turn out to be illusory. Except as some recourse to this dimension is sought, truth is unattainable. And without such recourse, knowledge becomes as chaff.¹²⁴

Now although God is a mystery working within our midst, this mystery is not hidden completely from man. If man will become sensitive to this mystery, he can gain insights on the basis of observation and reason into the nature of this mystery; man will come to understand in part the goodness of God. This goodness of God can be discerned in part because it is operational in the structures which give actuality to meaning. "God's goodness may thus be viewed operationally as his participation in events which move toward qualitative attainment. This is what is implied

¹²⁴ HE, p. 71.

in the creative act of God."¹²⁵ By making the point that man can gain in part operational insights into the nature of God, Meland is asserting that, even though God is a mystery which we can never understand fully, God does reveal himself to man through the human structures of consciousness which God has created. Thus, even though God is hidden, God also reveals himself to man in the manifestations of his creative and redemptive action.

In Faith and Culture and The Realities of Faith, Meland's doctrine of God is developed within the context of his concern for the relationship between faith and culture. In an attempt to draw together the different dimensions of his doctrine of God, we shall consider his doctrine within the context of this faith-culture theme.

It is Meland's contention that "both transcendence and immanence are essential even to a limited

¹²⁵HS, p. 162.

and tentative formulation of the character of the living God."¹²⁶ He develops the transcendent element of God by his emphasis upon mystery and the necessity of using myth forms in speaking of this mystery. By giving emphasis to the transcendence of God in relation to his immanence, he wishes to affirm that God is a free and integrated Being who is at the same time related to man.

. . . God is free and integrated Being with a destiny beyond all creatures, yet intimately partaking of the destines of all His creatures. And He is involved in every moment of their existence. In this mode of thinking it is possible to see that supremacy in the transcendent sense as applied to the person of God may very well include relations; in fact that it must do so.¹²⁷

Yet, for all his emphasis upon the mystery of God, great emphasis is given to the immanence of God. By stressing immanence, he desires to affirm that God reveals himself to man within the structures of reality, and that man is offered enough resources by God in order

¹²⁶ RCF, p. 277.

¹²⁷ RF, p. 277-8; cf., RF, p. 353-4.

to accept his human responsibilities for providing the necessary conditions for being in an adequate relationship with God.

I regard the doctrine of immanence as a crucial premise to be retained because upon its retention, to whatever degree, however altered or reconstructed, rests what I would call the sanity of the theological enterprise. Notice I do not say reasonableness of the enterprise. I am parting company with rationality as an arbitrary norm or generalized feature of existence in the sense in which idealism insisted upon it. Sanity does not presuppose a completely rational order of existence. It simply implies a margin of rationality in the midst of irrational and unpredictable factors which, nevertheless, assures sufficient order and meaningfulness to enable us to function intelligibly in a context of related disciplines.

Now immanence simply presupposes that there are structures within the reach and recognition of man which disclose God's working in some form and to some degree. This does not deny the hiddenness of God.¹²⁸

On the basis of his view of the immanence of God, Meland attempts to develop the manner in which God is related to man. God creates the structures of experience which are the foundation of the depth of man's

¹²⁸FC, p. 37; cf., FC, p. 47.

existence. In our metaphysical section, it was pointed out that the structure of experience is "a depth in our nature that relates us as events to all existent events."¹²⁹ This structure of experience is not something which God alone creates, for man must participate with God in this formulation. Man must be responsible constructively to God in this effort or the structure of experience will not develop fully, for "God's fulfilment of actualized good clearly depends upon the opportunities of history."¹³⁰ If man will work with God, then God will transmute the tragic dissolution of concrete good, evil, into actualized good in emerging events. Working within his limits, God creates for the individual and for the culture structures of experience. It is in this creation that the individual and the culture are given a primordial faith; God is the Primordial Ground of Existence. In this primordial act God gives himself to man; God imparts to man his

¹²⁹FC, p. 108.

¹³⁰FC, p. 106.

sensitive nature. Thus, man is primordially created in the image of God.¹³¹ Not only is man created in the image of God; but each culture includes the image of God, "for each culture exemplifies the concrete nature of God's working within the range of its available structures."¹³² This primordial faith is a disposition of mind given to man by God which asserts that tenderness is sovereign over force. In man, this disposition of mind is called faith; and in culture, it is called the mythos. Since the nature of reality is relational, faith and mythos must always be related in man's relationship to God.

In the emerging events of life, man is faced with responsibility for creating the conditions through which his human spirit, created in the image of God, can be nurtured. As man attempts to create these conditions, a sense of good not his own awakens him to a judgment of his past actions and a grace that

¹³¹cf., FC, p. 343ff.

¹³²FC, p. 85.

forgives him for these actions.¹³³ Meland calls this sense of good a "feeling tone"¹³⁴ or a "sense of wonder",¹³⁵ which recreates our hopes and reclaims us to a more adequate relationship with God.¹³⁶ That which nurtures man in this way is "spirit," or is more traditionally designated, the Holy Spirit.¹³⁷ It is spirit in that it confronts man with judgment and grace while at the same time sustaining the structures necessary for man's response.

When man is confronted with God's judgment and grace and responds, man has been redeemed by God and enters into the second level of faith, a transcendent trust. In this encounter and response redemption occurs for man, and he is saved from the sin of his own acts of dissolution.

¹³³cf., RF, p. 272.

¹³⁴FC, p. 120.

¹³⁵FC, p. 160-1.

¹³⁶cf., FC, p. 157.

¹³⁷cf., FC, p. 171-2.

Redemption is the renewal of the creative act in human life by which the sensitive nature which is God is made formative and fulfilling in our purposes. We are saved from our own acts of dissolution to the degree that this sensitive nature can reach us. Whatever happens in our lives to open up our natures to the tendernesses of life which are of God is redemptive.¹³⁸

The redemptive process reveals a depth insight into the nature of God in relation to man. This redemptive working of God with man to transform and redirect his life is not, in our human imagery, an impersonal functioning. God is not a computer or supernatural, magical power which functions redemptively; He is that Sensitivity within nature that is concerned and suffers with man in order to save man. God as Suffering Love can best be understood in the meaning of Christ as this revelation of God.

The essence of God's meaning, and this is the essence of the meaning of Christ as a revelation of God, is that God is related to men, that He is concerned, that He is involved in the travail of our critical circumstances. . .

¹³⁸FC, p. 176.

God suffers, as He suffered in Jesus Christ who died on the Cross.¹³⁹

In the redemptive process we also come to understand the ambiguity of human goodness and the ultimate goodness of God. Both the good and evil man may be brought to a crisis in which his life is inverted. Man is created in the image of God, an image of sensitive love. Because of the instability of his creaturely existence, man by himself cannot fulfill this image within himself and is, thus, an inter-mingling of good and evil. The only way in which man can be fulfilled is by the Source of Good coming to man, a good that is not his own and which he cannot control, and redeeming man by His suffering love. "There is none good but one, that is God."¹⁴⁰

In summary, we can say that Meland's doctrine of God is trinitarian in formula, within the context of his metaphysical orientation. God is Creator, in

¹³⁹RF, p. 265.

¹⁴⁰Matthew 19:17; cf., RF, p. 152.

that God creates man in his own sensitive image through structures of experience and the primordial faith. God is Spirit, in that He nurtures and sustains man by working with man within the structures of experience and human consciousness to bring about an increase of value instead of chaos. As Creator and Spirit, God displays empirically a tender concern for man over against the force of chaos which operates to destroy the nature of man. God also redeems man. As man grows within the limits of his environment, he is an inter-mingling of good and evil. It is not possible for God to save man by divine decree; it is necessary for man to create the conditions in which God's saving creativity can occur. This makes it necessary for man to be responsible in his relationship with God, and it also means that God is limited by the actions of man; individually and culturally God struggles and suffers with man in his sin and confronts man with a goodness not his own. This goodness reveals to man the judgment of God and at the same time offers to

man God's grace, if man will but respond constructively to God. When man responds to this act of judgment and grace, redemption has occurred in his life, and he is saved by God. In Meland's method the Protestant principle of faith is extended to include a tension between faith and reason. His doctrine of God is based on the Lutheran principle of salvation by the grace of God, but he extends this principle so that salvation does not occur by a "cheap grace." God's creative, sustaining, and redemptive love demands that man be responsible in creating the necessary conditions in which the God-man relationship can develop. Thus, his doctrine of God as Creative Sensitivity is balanced by his emphasis upon man's responsibility to create the conditions in which God can sustain and redeem His image in man. The Protestant emphasis of salvation by grace is qualified by man's being responsible to God. Our summary statement will be concluded by presenting quotations from a "credo" presented by Meland, which will serve to show that his doctrine of God is

related to the more traditional trinitarian formula.

(1) I believe God to be a reality of grace and judgment which both interpenetrates and transcends the life of man in the way that the hopes and judgments of a father transcend and intermesh with the life of his son. . .

(2) I believe God to be both hidden and discernible. . .

(3) I believe Jesus Christ to be the revealer of God and the mediator of God's redemptive work to men. . .

(4) I believe the Holy Spirit to be real God. . .

(5) I believe the work of Christ as mediator of redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit may be distinguished; yet they stand related. . .

(6) I believe that the church is the self-conscious and continuing witness to the revelation of God in Christ.¹⁴¹

View of Religion

Meland's view of religion can be viewed from several perspectives, namely: religion as the pathway to healthy living; religion as a pathway for the

¹⁴¹FC, p. 195-205. This credo is also printed in B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33. For an earlier statement in which Meland attempts to relate his views to more traditional forms of expression, cf., B. E. Meland, "Toward a Common Faith", Christendom, 1937, pp. 96-102.

development of a healthy and spiritual culture; religion as the pathway to salvation; religion as the problem of the individual in community or the problem of faith and culture; and religion as a reconstructed liberalism. These perspectives point to the contextual development of Meland's view of religion, and our discussion of religion as a reconstructed liberalism serves as a summary insight into his general view.

Religion as the pathway to healthy living is developed mainly in Modern Man's Worship and Write Your Own Ten Commandments. From this perspective it is asserted that religious living is an adequate adjustment to environing reality,¹⁴² that religious confidence comes through being at home in the universe,¹⁴³ and that religious devotion is possible through an awareness of our cosmic relations.¹⁴⁴ Such a religious perspective is a healthy, dynamic approach to life.

¹⁴² cf., MMW, p. 146.

¹⁴³ cf., MMW, p. 142.

¹⁴⁴ cf., MMW, p. 156.

This salutary religion is possible if man is able to develop an awareness and appreciation of reality. "Religion is the reality-relating factor."¹⁴⁵

The problem of modern man is whether he can have this salutary religion which enables him to live a healthy life. Meland contends that the great hindrance is to be found in the lingering effects of a supernatural religion. These lingering effects of supernaturalism can be stated in several ways. In one way, it can be said that in the passing of supernaturalism we have been left without a vivid awareness of our relation to objective reality.¹⁴⁶ Another way of making the same point is by saying that our religious experience of reality, oriented to supernaturalism, has not kept up with our intellectual understanding of reality.¹⁴⁷ Yet another way to make this point would be in Meland's assertion that religion is bankrupt for modern man,

¹⁴⁶ cf., MMW, p. 130.

¹⁴⁷ cf., MMW, p. 137.

"if it must depend upon traditional concepts of reality."¹⁴⁸ In essence, a religion of supernaturalism hinders man from a religion rooted in a deep experience of reality and leaves him with a religion based simply on an intellectual assent to accepted doctrines. It is Meland's contention that religion is man's way of affirming his relation to that objective reality which enables him to fulfill his human nature. So long as supernatural religion blocks man from this objective reality, it blocks man from the affirmative mood which is the essence of healthy living.

Meland asserts that this salutary or affirmative religion is something which man must cultivate practically. There are two ways of cultivating an adequate religion; they are (1) by worship, and (2) by developing a growth design for living. Worship is art; it is the structure through which man develops his religious response into the aesthetic attitude projected to

¹⁴⁸ MNW, p. 134.

cosmic ends. A healthy religion is aesthetic in that it enables man to be aware of and to appreciate the depth of reality.

For worship, in the sense that we have developed in these pages, is an important counter-rhythm of the activism which has brought on much of our culture-disease. Worship may be the route by which modern man may return to the healing sources of his natural environment, and where he might come into adjustment with those most important conditions and realities affecting his life. Worship may be the means of re-orienting him in the environment that produced him, and of integrating the human species in the natural order of life that sustains and promotes organic growth.¹⁴⁹

This aesthetic, healthy religion not only places man in a depth relationship with reality; it transforms man.¹⁵⁰ It transforms him by creating his orientation as a "lunge toward reality," a move toward union with the profound centers of life.¹⁵¹ "This experience of profound awareness and appreciation for the basic relationships between man and his cosmic environings is worship

¹⁴⁹ MMW, p. xii-iii.

¹⁵⁰ cf., MMW, p. 189.

¹⁵¹ cf., MMW, p. 228.

at its highest moments."¹⁵² The practical value of this aesthetic worship is that it creates affirmative attitudes in man toward reality. Man no longer needs the consolation of a pathological religion oriented to an illusion of reality.¹⁵³ Being able to affirm objective reality, he now has a religion which is spiritually healthy, not spiritually sick.¹⁵⁴ The essential value of worship is practical, in that it offers man the aesthetic attitude for returning to the healing sources of reality.¹⁵⁵ His criterion of a religion is whether it enables man to be affirmative in a healthy way in his relation to reality.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵²MMW, p. 269.

¹⁵³cf., MMW, p. 164.

¹⁵⁴cf., MMW, p. 162.

¹⁵⁵cf., MMW, p. 234; B. E. Meland, "The Criterion of the Religious Life", Journal of Religion, Vol. 19, p. 42; B. E. Meland, "Tradition and New Frontiers", Christendom, 1940, p. 330; B. E. Meland, "The Mystic Returns", Journal of Religion, Vol. 17, p. 159.

¹⁵⁶cf., MMW, p. 159; B. E. Meland, "The Criterion of the Religious Life", Journal of Religion, Vol. 19, p. 36.

The other aspect of this healthy religion is found in the development of a growth design for living. Such a design is the practical manner in which one tries to create the conditions necessary for constructively relating oneself to objective reality. This design involves the following features: (1) being realistic about one's abilities,¹⁵⁷ (2) trying to live "intelligently in relation to social and professional demands",¹⁵⁸ (3) thinking success rather than failure,¹⁵⁹ and (4) learning how to compromise.¹⁶⁰ In essence, this religion practically oriented is a matter of learning how to live as a mature, inquiring, and constructive person affirming one's contextual existence instead of being pathologically oriented. It was pointed out in the section on Meland's doctrine of God that those activities in the universe which help bring about growth towards authentic existence are God.

¹⁵⁷ cf., TC, p. 37.

¹⁵⁸ TC, p. 43.

¹⁵⁹ cf., TC, p. 49-50.

¹⁶⁰ cf., TC, p. 52.

Since the nature of man is created in the image of these activities, this pattern of growth is the proper way of living in order to have a fulfilled existence. Religion is the way in which man affirms his relation to these activities, and it is the way in which man attempts to live constructively with these activities. Thus, religion is an aesthetic experience of the objective reality "God" and includes practical attempts to create the conditions through which God can enable one to grow in His image.

Our second perspective is that religion is a pathway for the development of a healthy or spiritual culture. This perspective is given emphasis in Mealand's thought during the development of his more social interest in the 1940's. It is his contention that religion is essentially cultural and that religion should give constructive aid to the task of culture. It is his contention also that the Protestant religion has not been performing adequately this religious function. The peril of Protestant religion, historically

and in its present manifestation, is twofold. On the one hand, it has tended to separate man from culture, giving emphasis to an "other-worldliness" by asserting culture to be secular or non-religious.

Why this uprooting of religion in modern culture? . . . The issue goes deeper than political strategy. . . The real issue, however, lay in the relation of historic differences between a cultural outlook concerned with emerging values in the present world process and a faith that looked away from the world of life. Potentially these historic faiths are insecure in every modern culture where there is concern for promoting these emergent values.¹⁶¹

On the one hand, Protestant religion has given emphasis to protestation rather than to construction and to affirmation. This protestation can be seen today in the negative orientation of religion to the present and to the future, in its affirmation that essential religious value can be found only in the tradition. The most important example of this protestation is the refusal to give constructive emphasis to the good in life by

¹⁶¹ASC, p. 39-40.

giving emphasis to the evil.¹⁶² By taking this negative stand, religion blocks the spiritual development of culture and becomes a malignant growth.

The point we are insisting upon is that in every contemporary culture--and this applies especially to the West, where religious tradition tends to insulate itself and its cultus from the dynamic configuration we call the living culture, that is, a culture that moves experimentally toward new social ends, and responds creatively to new discoveries, new inventions, new technological advances, and thus to new human insights--religion develops as a malignant growth within the social organism, which becomes increasingly unassimilative and predatory. And when the situation becomes critical, removal of the malignant growth seems inevitable.¹⁶³

The true task of religion is to find and promote the good that is in culture. In other words, religion must designate and promote the spirit of God which is revealed in culture. This spiritual quality must not be asserted in any illusory fashion, but it must

¹⁶²cf., ASC, p. 66. Meland realizes that there are many persons in the Protestant tradition who are exceptions to his general evaluation. An example from Chapter One would be Reinhold Niebuhr with his position of "Christian Realism".

¹⁶³ASC, p. 42.

be demonstrated empirically.¹⁶⁴ This spiritual culture is more than a hoped-for-dream; it is a direction of living, an orientation of faith, a mythos created in man and the culture by God.

But the spirit of a culture is more than its tradition; it is to be found in the living hopes and dedications, in the discontents and aspirations, in the decision-making processes that carry the group life forward to yet unrealized goals.

Spirit is in the wakening life of our nation, the new growths that have hardly broken through the soil, yet give promise of reclaiming the wasted and decadent regions. Spirit is in the sentiments and wills of enlightened people, seeking through education and experimentation, and ultimately through legislation, to carry America's culture into a new day of maturity and spiritual well-being. Spirit is the wealth of new voices singing of America's dream.¹⁶⁵

The process of demonstrating and promoting the spiritual aspect of culture should be initiated by giving a constructive philosophy of values and practical steps for fulfilling the spiritual culture. This philosophy of values should be based on the realization that man can fulfill the more adequate conditions for

¹⁶⁴cf., ASC, p. 78-9.

¹⁶⁵ASC, p. 91.

growth by living in a constructive relationship with his fellow humans and with the contextual factors of his environment.¹⁶⁶ Some of the practical steps are to realize that religion in culture must always be a compromise¹⁶⁷ and that all institutions must work with organized religion to bring about the growth of spiritual culture. Meland emphasises the need for institutions, such as education, government and business, to accept the responsibility of working to bring about the spiritual culture.¹⁶⁸ Organized religion has a special prophetic function in relation to these other institutions of culture, by pointing out the objective good and calling upon these institutions to accept their religious responsibility of making this good more vivid, from their perspective, and to accept the responsibility of promoting the development of the good

¹⁶⁶ cf., ASC, p. 107-8. ¹⁶⁷ cf., ASC, p. 113.

¹⁶⁸ cf., SR, pp. 115ff.

in order that the spiritual culture can grow.¹⁶⁹ Thus, true religion is creative. "It is the stimulus to wrest from our daily living the significance that is there to be attained."¹⁷⁰ To perform its function, religion must be constructive, not reactionary.¹⁷¹ It must designate the spiritual good of culture empirically and promote prophetically and constructively the growth of this spiritual good. Its affirmation of the good is not done by ignoring evil.¹⁷² It is the nature of religion to be constructive. Evil is taken seriously, in order that a true constructive pathway can be designated by which the growth of spiritual culture can occur.

Our emphasis now shifts to religion as the pathway to salvation. We recall Meland's distinction between two levels of faith: primordial faith and transcendent faith. Man is created by God having a

¹⁶⁹ cf., RF, p. 323; ASC, p. 41.

¹⁷⁰ ASC, p. 158.

¹⁷¹ cf., RCF, p. 88-9.

¹⁷² cf., HE, p. 157.

primordial faith. Religion is the way in which man opens himself up in order that the grace of God can bring about in him the redemptive, transcendent faith. Meland's method is to be followed, not for the previous purpose of healthy living, but now for the purpose of being saved by God. Religion is the carrying out of this method in such a way that the conditions are created in which God can confront man with his judgment and through His grace enable man to respond positively. An essential part of man's response to God's judgment and grace is repentance on the part of man. Again, God's grace is not a "cheap grace." Man must be responsively repentant in order that reconciliation can occur through grace.¹⁷³ Thus, religion becomes the way by which man keeps a creative tension between faith and his intellectual capacities, in order that God can fulfill His image in man through His redemptive love.

¹⁷³ cf., HE, p. 180.

Our fourth perspective views religion as the problem of the individual in community. Meland takes the statement of the problem in this manner from Whitehead.¹⁷⁴ We recall that his theological position is framed within the context of process metaphysics. A cardinal doctrine of his process position is his theory of relativity, which we stressed in our metaphysical section. In his view of relativity, all events are contextually relative. At the same time each event retains its own uniqueness. This view contends that the uniqueness of the individual is retained while at the same time the contextual relativity of the events is affirmed.

Meland takes this metaphysical view and applies it to man and his religion. He asserts that the mystery of creation is "that individuation occurs simultaneously with socialization."¹⁷⁵ It is necessary that man retain and develop his own unique, subjective

¹⁷⁴cf., RF, p. 133.

¹⁷⁵FC, p. 133.

life; but he must do this always in relation to the community.¹⁷⁶ When man denies his communal relations, he gives too great an emphasis to self-centred existence and is in sin.¹⁷⁷ In sin man's understanding of his depth dimensions and responsibility is limited.¹⁷⁸ Only as the individual is kept in creative tension with the community is it possible for man to gain true freedom.

In this context the meaning of men enlarges because selfhood itself widens and deepens its bounds. Freedom also changes in meaning. In addition to connoting a measure of independent judgment or decision as well as flexibility, it means, in this context, freedom to have relations, freedom to avail one's self of the grace and power which relationships can bestow. The atomism of the autonomous self thus gives way to a sound sense of the community of being and responsibility, as well as the opportunity, of being fulfilled within such a creative nexus.¹⁷⁹

Meland is careful to point out that the relation of the individual to the community is not just sociological, in the sense that each person has relations with the

¹⁷⁶ cf., RCF, p. 110.

¹⁷⁷ cf., RF, p. 245.

¹⁷⁸ cf., RF, p. 199.

¹⁷⁹ RF, p. 133.

group. He is asserting this relationship "in the ontological sense that all individuated existence arises from a communal ground and derives its meaning from its continual, dramatic encounter with the activities of judgment and grace issuing from that communal ground."¹⁸⁰ We recall from his doctrine of God that God creates man in His own image and also creates the culture in His image through the work of the "spirit" expressed in the mythos. Meland is asserting that man as an individual has a unique relationship with God and that man in community has a unique relationship with God. God encounters man through the human structures which He has created; and if man gives such emphasis to one of these structures that the other is denied or not given its proper role, then man cannot be in adequate relationship with God. Thus, the problem of religion becomes that of creating the proper conditions for receiving God's

¹⁸⁰RF, p. 227.

grace by keeping man's individual uniqueness in tension with his community relations.

The relationship between the problem of the individual in community and the problem of faith and culture should be self-evident. We recall that God relates himself to man through his primordial faith and through the mythos of culture. It is necessary that one relate one's primordial faith to the mythos of culture, if one is to have an adequate relationship with God. If one does not take seriously God's revelation in culture, one develops a self-centred existence which separates one from God. Redemption cannot occur when man is separated from the cultural aspect of God's revelation; thus, the transcendental act of faith cannot occur unless a creative tension is retained between the primordial faith and the mythos of culture. This is but another way of saying that man is in sin and cannot be saved because he denies his community-nature, created in the image of God, by giving an exaggerated emphasis to self-centred

existence. If man is to be redeemed by God's grace, he must keep a creative tension between faith and culture, between the individual and community. Thus, the true problem of religion is the problem of the individual in community.

In order to gain a summary perspective of Meland's general position, we shall consider his theology as a "reconstructed liberalism." Meland looks at the contemporary situation and sees several things. Traditional liberalism has failed to meet the needs of the time for several reasons: (1) it has been too optimistic and has not taken evil seriously;¹⁸¹ (2) it has stressed a humanistic Jesus instead of Christology;¹⁸² (3) its imagery has not kept pace with contemporary imagery made possible by "new physics";¹⁸³ (4) its

¹⁸¹ cf., ASC, p. 66.

¹⁸² cf., B. E. Meland, "A Present-Day Evaluation of Christian Ethics", Journal of Religion, Vol. 10, p. 378ff; B. E. Meland, "The Present Worth of Jesus", International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 42, p. 326.

¹⁸³ cf., B. E. Meland, "Analogy and Myth in

doctrine of God has been oriented within the context of a supernatural view of transcendence;¹⁸⁴ (5) its method is limited because of a pseudo-scientific nineteenth century framework of reference;¹⁸⁵ and (6) its ethical concern has been so presented as to imply that Christianity is of practical but not of distinctive intellectual importance.¹⁸⁶ In essence, traditional liberalism has become "fundamentalistic", in that it has not reconstructed its position in order to make the Christian faith relevant to contemporary man within his changing world view. As a counter force to

¹⁸³ Post-Liberal Theology", unpublished, (The Perkins School of Theology Journal, Vol. XV), p. 9; B. E. Meland, "The New Realism in Religious Inquiry", unpublished, p. 8.

¹⁸⁴ cf., MMW, p. 147; B. E. Meland, "Toward a Valid View of God", Harvard Theological Review, Vol. 24, p. 197.

¹⁸⁵ cf., ASC, p. 27; B. E. Meland, "Analogy and Myth in Post-Liberal Theology", unpublished, (The Perkins School of Theology Journal, Vol. XV), p. 12.

¹⁸⁶ cf., RCF, p. 3-4; SR, p. 39, 45; B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 95.

traditional liberalism, Meland sees neo-orthodox or neo-supernatural theology becoming the dominant view of religion.¹⁸⁷ He asserts that this position is limited for several reasons: (1) it is reactionary instead of constructive;¹⁸⁸ (2) it has placed an undue stress on evil as over against good and the promotion of good;¹⁸⁹ (3) it separates faith and culture and the individual from the community by its emphasis upon otherworldliness;¹⁹⁰ (4) its doctrine of God and of Christology is inadequate because it is based on a supernatural imagery;¹⁹¹ and (5) its method is limited because it is dependent upon a supernatural

¹⁸⁷ cf., B. E. Meland, "Some Unresolved Issues in Theology", Journal of Religion, Vol. 24, p. 237.

¹⁸⁸ cf., RCF, p. 88-9.

¹⁸⁹ cf., ASC, p. 66; B. E. Meland, "Some Unresolved Issues in Theology", Journal of Religion, Vol. 24, p. 237.

¹⁹⁰ cf., B. E. Meland, "Some Unresolved Issues in Theology", Journal of Religion, Vol. 24, p. 234; B. E. Meland, "Interpreting the Christian Faith Within a Philosophical Framework", Journal of Religion, Vol. 33, p. 95; MMW, p. 146-7; ASC, p. 37.

¹⁹¹ cf., MMW, p. 133.

revelation and because it denies proper use of man's God-given intellectual capacities.¹⁹² In essence, this position is not adequate for modern man because it is reactionary rather than constructive and because it is based exclusively upon an imagery which is irrelevant to modern man's problem. Meland asserts that contemporary culture is oriented to the task of reconstruction and that, if religion is to participate adequately in this task, it also must be oriented to reconstruction.¹⁹³ Neither the traditional liberal nor the neo-supernatural position has faced this task of reconstruction; and, consequently, it is necessary that a theological position be developed which does embrace this task. Meland asserts that a reconstructed liberalism is that position.

¹⁹² cf., B. E. Meland, "Theology and the Historian of Religion", Journal of Religion, Vol. XLI, p. 267; MMW, p. 132-3; ASC, p. 77.

¹⁹³ cf., B. E. Meland, "Some Unresolved Issues in Theology", Journal of Religion, Vol. 24, p. 237.

Meland's theology is liberal in that he accepts the responsibility of relating faith, armed with a relevant imagery and based on a scientifically oriented method, to contemporary man. He would see this position correcting traditional liberalism in the following way: (1) evil is taken seriously, although the emphasis is retained on constructive good; (2) Christology instead of the human Jesus becomes the cornerstone of the position; (3) the method is scientific, although a humbler role is assigned to reason and observation; (4) contemporary imagery is used instead of nineteenth century scientific imagery and supernatural imagery; (5) adequate stress is given in the doctrine of God to both transcendence and immanence by placing this doctrine within the context of process metaphysics; (6) adequate emphasis is given to the mystery or otherness of God without losing sight of God's empirical revelations and without having recourse to the concepts of supernaturalism; (7) adequate stress is given to the Bible as the primary document

of our cultural mythos without making the mythological structure of the Bible normative; and (8) the traditional stress on the individual is corrected by the view which gives adequate stress to the individual and to the community in their inter-relation. He also sees reconstructed liberalism correcting supernaturalism at several points: (1) it gives emphasis to the immanence of God; (2) it keeps faith and culture and faith and reason in a creative tension; (3) it gives closer consideration to past and present schools of theology; (4) it takes philosophy and its imagery seriously into consideration in performing its theological task; (5) it is able to speak to contemporary man in a relevant imagery; (6) its method is based on faith but it takes seriously the important part played in God's revelation by man's rational capacities; (7) it gives adequate emphasis to man's sinful nature while at the same time affirming the good; (8) it stresses man's responsibility in relation to God instead of allowing for a "cheap grace"; (9) it stresses the

importance of myth and attempts to rescue myth from the confines of more limited mythology; and (10) it stresses that religion must be constructive instead of reactionary.

Meland sees two main problems for a reconstructed liberalism. One problem of liberalism is that, in its reaction to traditional liberalism and neo-supernaturalism, it must not develop an exclusively futuristic orientation. If liberalism is to perform its religious task of reconstruction in relation to culture, it is essential that liberalism give due emphasis to history and to the developed insights of the mythos. To be a true witness to the Christian faith, it must be based on the tradition of the past, and be open to God's revelation in the present and in the future.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Meland sees this false orientation to the future to be a special threat to those who live within the American culture. cf., B. E. Meland, "Tradition and New Frontiers", Christendom, 1940, p. 327.

The most crucial problem is how "to employ such a tool of intelligibility as analogy in a way that preserves the tension between what is manageable and unmanageable in the deeper experiences of creaturely existence."¹⁹⁵ His concern is that the demands for logical analysis and radical empiricism will become so great that the liberal will begin to think that his terms actually do designate adequately the reality considered. If this occurs, the essence of reconstructed liberalism will be lost, in that the depth appreciation of mystery and myth will be lost. Meland is careful to point out that man must always be attentive to that dimension of existence which elicits our sense of creaturehood. In other words, this new liberalism must be careful not to become another form of "fundamentalism", in that it makes its imagery and theological expressions absolute and static. The essence of

¹⁹⁵B. E. Meland, "Analogy and Myth in Post-Liberal Theology", unpublished (The Perkins School of Theology Journal, Vol. XV), p. 13.

reconstructed liberalism is that it is always reconstructing its imagery, reconstructing its interpretation of the relationship between traditional forms of myth and contemporary forms, and reconstructing its religious tasks to meet the spiritual needs of the individual and the community within the context of our changing world.

In closing, we present a list of clues or tentative formulations by Meland for a reconstructed liberalism.

(1) That the doctrine of immanence, which has given metaphysical orientation to the liberal position, can be substantially retained, though radically revised along lines indicated by the concept of 'structure of experience.'

(2) That revision of this assumption that God works through the concrete structures of history must come at the point (a) where liberalism has followed an idealistic practice of identifying these concrete structures with conscious events; and (b) where liberalism has tended to equate the human structure, either as mind or experience, with the creative working of God.

(3) That these corrections will be somewhat facilitated by a deeper conception of empiricism than historic liberalism has embraced. . .

(4) Immanence in this context presupposes transcendence as a category of differentiation in the sense that individuality and mutuality

are simultaneously embraced, and God and man represent distinct though related categories.

(5) In this revised doctrine of immanence, structure of experience becomes a basic concept. . . the bearer of all relevant meanings, including the seminal insights of the Christian myth informing our Christian faith.

(6) Access to the Christian faith is thus not a problem of relating the contemporary culture to a remote, historic event, as in the modernists' dilemma, but of attending to the depth of the immediate moment of the cultural structure of experience which bears, in its valuations, the witness to God's working in history and in the living moment--Jesus Christ, conveyed through the persisting drama of the myth.

(7) The meaning of the myth that God works on in history to redeem man through Christ is given in fragmentary form, wherever encountered. . .

(8) The myth that resides in the depth of the culture as valuation and motivation, and which is celebrated, attested to in the drama of ritual and song, is presented, clarified, and elaborated within a given historical context in the Biblical writings. The Bible is the primal source of the cultural motif that has been shaped into myth and, as such, is the primary document of our culture. . . The liberal will recover this document, not simply as a source of ethical teaching or of didactic discourse, but as a source of perennial renewal in sensibility to the deeply laid valuations of the culture wherein the sensitive nature of the living God is disclosed to our deepest sight.

(9) The valuations conveying the sensitive working of God are the historic responses to the good discerned in Christ as an event of sacrificial love, persuading men to receive the work of God's grace; yet witnessing to the 'costingness' of this life of love, and to the judgment upon those who

deny it.

(10) The church, understood as a community of men and women who have been awakened to the sovereign force of the Christian myth in culture, is the living witness to the revelation of God in Christ.¹⁹⁶

Evaluations

In attempting a critical evaluation, our procedure will be to consider Meland's method, doctrine of God, and view of religion in that order. The basis of Meland's method can be expressed in two ways: (1) faith resulting from an experience of God's judgment and grace, which will often be designated as "faith-experience", or (2) an experience which offers a margin of intelligibility into the depth of ultimate reality. The faith-experience occurs when the individual reaches the extremities of his human existence, in the sense that he encounters the judgment and grace of God. This faith-experience is the foundation and

¹⁹⁶FC, p. 59-61. For an earlier statement concerning the direction for a reconstructed liberalism, cf., SR, p. 48.

first step in the theological inquiry.

The question must be considered whether Meland's faith-experience meets the requirements he establishes as being necessary for faith to occur. This experience of an ultimate reality, its judgment and grace, is held to be self-validating. On the one hand, it would seem that for faith to occur a response on the part of the individual to this judgment and grace is necessary. In our previous consideration of Meland's two levels of faith, it was indicated that the second level of faith, redemption, included a total response on the part of the individual. A total response should include the employment of all of one's faculties, including one's critical or rational faculties. If we are correct in assuming that the faith-experience, discussed in his method, primarily deals with the second level of faith based on the first level, it appears that Meland posits this faith-experience as occurring primarily before the employment of the critical faculties in relation to the

particular experience. The fact that faith occurs prior to the use of the critical faculties or reason does not mean that faith is opposed to reason or is non-rational. Rather, faith is a response of the individual which includes the contributions of reason in the individual's becoming process. Nonetheless, faith occurs on the basis of a response to a particular experience which does not include the immediate use of the critical faculties in relation to the faith producing experience. Granted that Meland stresses the necessity of a creative tension between faith and critical analysis, before the critical analysis is employed faith has occurred and has validated itself. Thus, faith is a limited response by the individual to this judgment and grace, in the sense that the response does not include the employment of the critical faculties in relation to the particular experience. Since faith occurs on the basis of a response which does not include the immediate use of the critical faculties, Meland's designation of faith does not meet his

criteria of a total response on the part of the individual.

Meland also designates this basic experience as an experience which offers a margin of intelligibility into the depth of ultimate reality. This margin of intelligibility comes as a momentary recognition or vision, which is self-validating. Let us grant that one can have experiences which offer strong, directional insights, insights which cannot be completely expressed and which come with such force that they seem to be self-validating. As Meland contends, these insights may offer a margin of intelligibility into the depth of ultimate reality. Although one holds these insights with strong conviction, they should not be accepted as being dependable without attempting to express them cognitively and to test them in practical, living situations. Granted again that Meland emphasises the need for critical analysis in tension with the insight of faith, he still posits faith, or a margin of intelligibility, as having

occurred on the basis of its self-validation before this creative tension is established. He asserts that ultimately critical analysis cannot offer any insight into faith and cannot basically bring into question the validity of faith. By giving such overshadowing emphasis to faith, Meland offers limited scope for the employment of critical analysis in relation to the margin of intelligibility.

These comments bring directly into question the role of reason in Meland's method. He asserted that faith transforms and redirects the rational process. As stated previously, faith is rational in the sense that it includes the contributions of reason prior to the occurrence of faith; faith is non-rational in the sense that the occurrence of faith does not depend upon the employment of reason in relation to the faith-producing experience. In the light of Meland's separation of the ways in which philosophy and theology operate, it appears that without the transformation and redirection of reason by faith,

reason would be unable to function in relation to this depth of ultimate reality. It is questionable whether this transformed reason actually functions as reason in relation to this depth of reality. The reason cannot be used to evaluate the validity of this reality, because the reality has given its own validity and has transformed reason in such a way that it operates on the basis of this validity. To some degree it appears that reason operates as a tool of faith. Since reason is transformed and redirected by faith, an adequate tension cannot exist between faith and reason. Meland does make a good point in saying that faith and reason or reason and emotion should not be considered as separate functions or experiences of the human body. He asserts that neither should be allowed to gain the upper hand over the other. The point we have been trying to establish, however, is that Meland makes his method so dependent upon faith, that the balance between reason and emotion or faith and reason is upset.

This entire problem concerning faith and reason boils down to the question whether it is possible for the elemental experience of faith or the second level of faith to be a source of knowledge, and more specifically a self-validating knowledge. Meland asserts that this faith-experience does offer such knowledge. Granted that a person can receive compelling insights from an experience, knowledge cannot be established apart from cognitive assertions which are tested on the basis of observation and reason. This elemental experience and second level of faith may serve as the foundation for knowledge, established through the process of reason, but neither the faith-producing experience nor faith can offer knowledge itself. Meland would say that the knowledge gained by faith is "knowledge of" and the knowledge gained by reason separated from faith is "knowledge about." Since we accept the principle that reason and emotion cannot be separated, it seems an over-simplification to make this separation of knowledge "of" and knowledge "about". On the basis

of the process view, it would seem that the experience is the foundation for knowledge, and reason is the faculty through which knowledge "of" and knowledge "about" are established and expressed.

An important point in Meland's method is his stress upon cultural reality; the culture offers a basic disposition of mind to the individual and the group. This point is especially important to his prolegomena. He maintains the fact that other cultures influence to a degree any basic culture, but it is his contention that the disposition of mind in the culture remains unchanged in relation to these extraneous conditioning factors. Meland does not give adequate consideration to these inter-cultural forces, in the contemporary environment of inter-dependent nations.¹⁹⁷

W. C. Smith, in Islam in Modern History, points out that the growing Western influence in the Middle East

¹⁹⁷ Meland's most recent work, The Realities of Faith, The Revolution in Cultural Forms, indicates his developing concern with this problem.

is destroying the basic foundation of the Islamic culture, since this influence is developing at such a rapid rate that the Islamic tradition is not able to grapple constructively with the situation. The rapid transition in parts of Africa and South America would seem to point to the destruction of the basic disposition of mind of its different cultures, often occurring at such a rate that a new disposition of mind is unable to develop to give any cultural unity to the communities or nations in question. In the more advanced Western nations, the rate of crime, suicide, mental disorder, divorce, and general insecurity would seem to point to the fact that the complexities of modern cultural forces have destroyed or are destroying the basic disposition of mind of the previously more sheltered cultures.

Meland takes a firm stand in support of the use of traditional and contemporary myths and against the procedure of demythologizing. He takes this stand because he asserts that the myth is tied to the mythos

and not to the mythologies and because the mythos is but another expression of the cultural disposition of mind. To a degree he does demythologize the myth from the mythology, in order to give basic emphasis to the mythos. Meland asserts that this is a necessary procedure but that it is not demythologizing in the sense that the myths are then rejected. Granted that his procedure is necessary and is not the method employed by Bultmann, Meland's procedure is not completely adequate for restoring the use of myth. If our previous evaluation concerning the changing orientations of contemporary cultures is valid, the degree to which it is valid could point to possible changes in the basic cultural mythos. If a change is occurring in the mythos, it is necessary for his method to be restructured at this point to include a demythologizing which separates the myth from the mythos, not rejecting either the myth or the mythos but attempting to understand better their essential insights, and then to include a procedure of re-mythologizing in order to make

traditional and contemporary myth forms relevant to modern man, based on a relationship between the traditional and the contemporary mythos. Such a procedure would not be foreign to his method, as he almost includes this procedure in his use of contemporary process imagery as a way of understanding the depth insights of traditional myth-imagery.

Meland's use of process imagery leads to our final point concerning his method. It is his contention that a theologian should use contemporary philosophical imagery without being bound to the limits of the philosophical frame of reference. Meland has been accused by Nels Ferre¹⁹⁸ and by Edward T. Ramsdell¹⁹⁹ of not simply using the process imagery but of completely accepting Whitehead's philosophy as the structure of his theology. In our concluding chapter we

¹⁹⁸N. F. S. Ferre, "Review", Journal of Religion, Vol. 30, p. 136.

¹⁹⁹Edward Ramsdell, "Review", Journal of Religion, Vol. 35, p. 101.

shall see more clearly how far Meland agrees or disagrees with Whitehead. For the present let it be said that Meland definitely sees his task to be that of developing a theology which makes constant use of process imagery, but he does not think that he has sold his theological soul to Whitehead's philosophy. Meland's theology is an attempt to develop a faith-centred theology which contemporary man can understand, and he uses process imagery as a tool in this task.

Meland's doctrine of God will be considered in two stages: (1) the period before 1945, and (2) the period from 1945 to the present. So far as the first period is concerned, we shall devote our comments to problems arising from his pluralistic view of God. The consideration in the second period will be devoted to his trinitarian view of God.

It is Meland's contention in his early period that for the purpose of worship God is to be considered One, and for the purpose of theology God is to be

considered as particular plural activities functioning within the universe. The plural activities which are designated as God in worship are represented by Meland as being empirically concrete. It is difficult to understand how God can be concrete in his plural nature while at the same time He is concrete as One in worship. If the plural activities are empirical, one is led to the conclusion that the oneness of God expressed in worship is an abstraction created by man to meet his needs of worship. If this oneness is an abstraction, it would seem that the God of worship is in actuality an illusion created by man. It is questionable whether such an abstract illusion can serve as the object of worship for an intelligent man. This separation between the God of worship and the God of theology necessarily causes a split between these two religious functions, which would seem to impair their proper interrelationship. Since theology and worship emphasize essentially different concepts of God, it would seem that they necessarily would be at odds with

each other. It would also seem that these two religious functions, with their opposing expressions, would be unable to function in a coördinated manner within the same religious community.

Great stress is given by Meland to the importance, in the doctrine of God, of giving equal weight to God's transcendence and to His immanence. From the perspective of God's pluralism, it is questionable whether God can be considered transcedent. It would seem possible that these pluralistic activities could be limited to the interaction between events in the process of becoming. In this sense these activities would be immanent in the events. Granted that due to the view that all events are related in a relative manner and that no event can exist in isolation, it is possible to assume that these immanent events could have been related to past events and will be related to future events. At the same time events do change due to the process of becoming, so that it would be possible that, if God is limited to the interaction

of events, God also changes. The possibility that God, as the process of interaction, changes modifies the view that while events may be different the value-producing power immanent in them remains the same. If God does change as this process of interaction, it is questionable whether the pluralistic activities called God in the past can be considered to be the same God in the future. If this line of reasoning is adequate, it would seem that the God who is immanent in the becoming of one event is not the same God who is immanent in the becoming of another event. This line of reasoning would appear to be adequate within the context of the view that no two events can be the same and no event can ever be repeated; therefore, the interaction of events can never be the same or repeated. If these pluralistic activities could be designated as the creative interaction between events, it would be questionable whether God can be transcendent while at the same time being immanent in a particular interaction. Let us grant that God can transcend our knowledge of

his immanent interaction; it is one thing for God to transcend our knowledge and another to transcend a form of reality. Since God is known only as he functions creatively within the interaction of events, there seems to be no empirical reason to assume that God exists or functions apart from specific interactions of events. If God does not exist or function apart from specific interactions of events, then God is wholly immanent in particular events and does not transcend the events. One might assume that God structurally transcends particular events because He functioned in the past and will function in the future process of becoming. If God to some degree does change in the cumulative process of becoming events, it would seem that the activities designated God in the past are not the same activities to be designated God in the future; and if these activities are different, it would seem logical to assume that one has different gods (polytheism) immanent in particular becoming events and not a transcendent God immanent in

particular becoming processes.

An important emphasis in Meland's doctrine of God is that God reveals to man through his immanence the necessary conditions for the development of meaning or salvation and that man has the responsibility of fulfilling these conditions in order that meaning or salvation can occur. If the pluralistic activities which are God change to some degree due to the particular process of becoming in which they are functioning, it would seem that the conditions necessary for meaning or salvation also change, according to the particular becoming process. If these necessary conditions are relative to particular processes of becoming, it is questionable how much is revealed to man in past events which will enable man to function constructively in relation to God. It would seem that this revelation of God to man is limited to such a degree that man's ability to cooperate is impaired. Meland also asserts that God is limited by man's fulfilling these necessary conditions. If man is

limited in the possibility of his understanding what conditions are required, it would follow that God's creative functioning is limited to a great degree. From this pluralistic perspective, it would appear that both God and man are indebted to a benevolent "chance" for things having worked as well as they have.

It would be possible to take each of Meland's terms for God and to apply this line of reasoning, from the perspective of God being pluralistic. How can God be pluralistic, his nature changing to some degree due to the particular becoming process, and at the same time be the Silent Process transcending all history which is the Source of Value, the ground of being, or the source of growth? From the pluralistic perspective, it would seem that whenever value, being or growth occurs, those activities within the interaction of events which are responsible for these results are what is designated as God. For an adequate doctrine of God, the emphasis should be upon the unity

of God. Such an emphasis would not hinder an understanding of God's functioning in plural ways.

From the period of the Second World War, there is a definite shift of emphasis in Meland's theology and especially in his doctrine of God. This shift can be seen more pointedly in America's Spiritual Culture. Emphasis is given now to the Sovereignty of God, to His sustaining and redemptive function. Also equal stress is placed upon God's transcendence and immanence. God remains those sensitive activities within the universe, which create, sustain and redeem man; but for all practical purposes, these functional characteristics of God are considered in relation to God's unified Sensitive Nature. This unified emphasis can be seen especially in his development of the view that God is the God of history which creates man and all events when tenderness triumphs over force, which sustains man through his sensitive-silent working, and which works with man in order to redeem him. This view of God's unity can be seen also in his

emphasis upon the fact that all men are created in the image of God. Meland also employs the term "God" in his theology more and more during this period, which in effect negates his former separation between theology and worship. Even though this negation does occur, he does retain a separation between these two functions of religion in order that the language of praise in worship should not be confused with the analytical statements of theology. The important limitation of Meland's doctrine of God in this period comes in the fact that he does not explicitly reject his former distinction between the oneness of God and the plurality of God, although this rejection is implicit in the development of his more redemptive emphasis.

Meland's view of religion is based upon his contention that religion is man's way of affirming his relation to that objective reality which enables him to fulfil his human nature. During the 1930's, he develops his view of religion from a practical, functional

perspective. Essentially, there are two functional aspects of religion, which are worship and religious living. Worship is an aesthetic experience that gives the practical value of placing the individual in touch with the depth of reality. Religious living enables the individual to be fulfilled in relation to this depth of reality. During this period his view of religion lacks an adequate emphasis upon the communal aspect of worship and religious living, as well as upon the essentially redemptive character of religion.

By the 1940's, his view shifts to religion as a pathway for healthy living. With this shift of emphasis, we see a shift toward religion as the pathway to redemption. During this period he begins to develop his thought concerning the relationship between religion and culture. One of the most valuable contributions of his theology is his emphasis upon the necessity of holding faith and culture in creative tension. We have raised previously the question whether his evaluation of culture in relation to religion is

adequate. On the one hand, it is questionable whether culture does not have essentially a supernatural instead of process orientation, as well as a force instead of tenderness orientation, making it questionable whether Meland's process view of culture is an adequate perspective for keeping faith and culture in creative tension. An aspect of this creative tension is his emphasis upon religion as constructive instead of negative. Meland devotes a great deal of time to a consideration of the limitations of the supernatural view of religion. Granting that an important concern for him is the developing of a theology which constructively relates contemporary man to the Christian faith, it is questionable whether his negative evaluation of supernaturalism does not essentially make his process view of religion negative instead of constructive. If supernaturalism is the dominant religious perspective, which Meland contends to be the case, it would appear that he accepts the responsibility of being negative in relation to supernaturalism, while at the same

time attempting to be constructive theologically. With these two opposing orientations, a tight rope must be walked in order to keep his theology basically constructive, and it is questionable whether at times he does not slip from this rope on the negative side. On the other hand, it appears that his view of culture is dominated by the conception of small groups as the proper cultural living pattern. An illustration of this conception is found in his view that the ideal cultural situation in America will be the breakdown of the big city areas with a return to small towns as the pattern for group living. This ideal is important to his theology because of his emphasis upon God's grace as occurring through the culture, as well as through the individual. Whether or not such an ideal is to be desired is beside the question. The question is whether this view of an ideal cultural living pattern is a realistic perspective for a theological position which accepts the responsibility of keeping culture and faith in a creative tension. Since

the present cultural trend is in most instances directly opposed to his ideal view, it is questionable whether his evaluation of culture is adequate for fulfilling his theological task.

Another important contribution in Meland's view of religion is his emphasis upon the problem of the individual in community. He correctly points out that a correction is needed both to the individualism which has developed in Protestant religion and to the communalism which has developed within Roman Catholicism. He points out that both the individual and the community are created by God in His own image and that an over-emphasis on either perspective will serve to limit God's redemptive grace. This point is important because it re-asserts that God's grace occurs, at least in part, through the relation of the individual and the community.

Meland's view of religion must be seen within the context of his concern to present a reconstructed liberalism. He emphasizes two problems for a

reconstructed liberalism. One is that the process view should never be presented as if it expressed or designated fully the reality under consideration. Even if Meland is careful always to qualify his process view in this manner, he at the same time gives such emphasis to his process position over-against supernaturalism that one is forced to the conclusion that he has a great deal of confidence in his general orientation. It is questionable whether his emphasis upon the process view does not over-shadow his qualifications concerning its limitations. His warning on this point is well taken, and in all fairness to his theology, we should accept his qualifications.

His other warning concerns the extreme futurism implicit in the process orientation. The essence of process is the doctrine of becoming, which lends itself to an orientation towards the future. The question is whether with such an orientation one can give adequate consideration to history. Meland may be unique in the degree of concern he shows for the

history of theology, philosophy and culture, but his over-riding concern appears to be the becoming process of healthy living and redemption.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The Conclusion will be divided into four sections. Section one will be a summary of the general position shared by Whitehead, Wieman and Meland. In the second section, consideration will be given to the primary points on which these three men develop diverging positions. An evaluation of these divergent positions will be presented in section three. A general evaluation of the limitations and value of Process theology will be presented in section four. The sections of evaluation will focus primarily upon Process theology as represented by Henry Nelson Wieman and Bernard Eugene Meland.

Summary

Process theology is dominated by a world-view or metaphysical perspective which asserts the nature

of reality to be monistic. The key term for this position is "process." Reality is basically One Process, although there are infinite processes which function dynamically within the structure or realm of this basic process. The preceding statement is but another way of asserting that the universe is an infinite process, infinite in the sense that all other processes, including man, cannot get outside of it. The universe, as the basic process, is neutral and can be considered in its structure and function. The structure of this process is that it sustains all other processes, and its function is that it offers a basic "creativity" to all processes.

There are two primary processes functioning within the universal process. These are a process for order, growth or value and a process for disorder, destructive growth or chaos. The religious term "God" is used to represent the process for order, growth or value. For Process theology, the term "the source of growth" is generally used to designate the functional

character of God, with the terms "the source of order" and "the source of value" being synonymous with the former. These two processes are not neutral. On the basis of their structure and function, they have a mutually exclusive purpose. The structure of the process "God" is to be the source of growth, value, or order. The function of God is to be creative, sustaining and redemptive in relation to the becoming processes of reality, in order that growth may occur. On the basis of structure and function, God is the process for salvation in the universe.

The doctrine of God for Process theology is the central point in its explanation of the constructive nature of reality experienced by man. Primary emphasis is given to man's immediate encounter with God, although emphasis is also given to God as the God of history. God encounters man only as God is immanent in man's process of becoming. While God is immanent in relation to man, God is also in a sense transcendent. God transcends the particular relation to man, because of

God's structure and because of God's relationship to the other processes in the universe. The doctrine of God as transcendent is not to be understood in the sense of traditional supernaturalism, which contends that God transcends universal reality. At the same time, the doctrine of God's transcendence for Process theology is similar to traditional supernaturalism, in the sense that both positions affirm that God transcends the particular encounter between God and man. Although God, as the source of growth, is immanent to man in his becoming process, God is not the absolute factor in determining the becoming process of man. God is limited in his functioning by non-human and human environmental factors. On the one hand, the assertion that God is limited is an affirmation that man is morally responsible for his actions. On the other hand, this assertion gives emphasis to the contention that the God-man relationship is personal. God is sensitive to man's needs and responds in a saving way to these needs. It is contended that, if

God absolutely determined man's process of becoming, God could not have a personal relationship to man, personal in the sense that God in a sensitive manner responds to man's needs. This sensitive and personal nature of God is presented by describing God as love, or more aptly as suffering love. Although the God-man relationship is personal, God is inadequately described by the anthropomorphic term "personality." In other words, it is affirmed that God transcends our conception of personality.

Events are the primary components of reality. Events emerge through a process of becoming and are relative to all other processes which participate in their becoming. As an adequate process of becoming occurs for an event, growth occurs. Since God is the source of growth for each event, God is an essential ingredient in the process of becoming of each event. Other environmental factors condition the becoming event. At the same time each event gives direction to its own becoming; thus, the event is relative to

the conditional aspects of its environment, including God, while at the same time retaining its own uniqueness.

Environmental factors encounter the becoming event only in the immediate experience of the event. Nothing helps to create or give direction to the becoming event, except through the event's immediate experience; thus, immediate experience is the bearer of the depth of reality. God is no exception. God only encounters the becoming event as God is immanent in the immediate experience of the event.

Man is an event, or more properly a "nexus of events." Man must go through the same process of becoming common to all events, but in doing so exercise his peculiar human capacities. God encounters man in his immediate experience. Man is a creature of the universe, and to fulfill his process of becoming adequately, man must adjust and relate himself in a positive and constructive manner to his environment. In order that he may become fully man, the human

process of becoming must conform to the source of growth in the universe. In other words, to be true man, man must be positively and constructively related to God. Since God is limited in the God-man relationship, man is morally responsible for the growth which occurs in his own process of becoming. In other words, man is morally responsible for fulfilling his humanity in relation to God. For an adequate relationship to God, man's adjustment to his environment and to God must be made on the basis of a total response, total in the sense that there can be no separation of mind and body or intellect and emotions. At the same time, it is necessary for man's response to be disciplined, especially in view of man's rational and emotional character and the complex nature of reality. Thinkers who hold the Process position are not in complete agreement on the specific steps involved in this disciplined response.

Holding that God encounters man in his immediate experience, Process theology presents a functional

view of religion. This view is functional in the sense that primary emphasis is placed on the way in which religion helps man to meet his needs. In general, Process theology stresses both the individual and the social needs of man which can be aided by religion. This stress is seen in the theme that the major problem for religion is the relation of the individual to the community. As designated previously, God is the source of true growth, and it is man's responsibility to grow in relation to God. The purpose of religion is to help man to adjust himself to reality in order that growth may occur. In other words, the purpose of religion is to help man to adjust himself in a positive and constructive manner to his environment, including his encounter with God, in order that man may be saved by God. There are several keynotes to the functional view of religion presented by Process theology, and these are: (1) that the purpose of religion is to point man to that reality which saves him, (2) that the purpose of religion is to help man

to adjust himself to this saving reality on the basis of man's being morally responsible in using his God-given capacities, (3) that the purpose of religion is to call man to make an absolute faith-commitment to the God who saves, a commitment which includes his being morally responsible to the demands of God for true growth, (4) that the purpose of religion is best served when in each age man has an intelligible understanding of his faith, and (5) that the purpose of religion is to be positive and constructive in relation to the total life of the individual and the culture.

Points of Divergence

Whitehead, Wieman and Meland present divergent methods and divergent purposes for their methods. Whitehead's method is a method of speculation supported by rational and empirical foundations. The purpose of his method is to achieve a general interpretation of reality as a whole. Wieman and Meland

present a modified, empirical method for theology, which rejects the speculative emphasis of Whitehead. The purpose of Wieman's method is to make possible an absolute faith-commitment, based upon empirical knowledge; but whereas the goal of Wieman's method is faith, Meland's method presupposes faith. The purpose of Meland's method is to reach an intelligible understanding of the meaning and value of faith.

The conflict of positions expressed by Wieman and Meland concerning faith is the key issue separating their methods. In our previous discussion, the two levels of faith presented by Meland were considered, which are Primordial Faith and Transcendent Faith. Our present consideration is limited to the second level of faith, that is, Transcendent Faith. For Meland faith is an experience of the judgment and grace of God. In this experience of faith revealed knowledge is already present. This knowledge is absolute and self-validating, in the sense that no insights gained from rational procedures can essentially

change this knowledge. Faith not only reveals self-validating knowledge; faith re-creates and re-directs reason by providing it with a point of orientation. Intelligibility of faith is the goal of the method, but this intelligibility is determined by the self-validating knowledge revealed in faith and by the rational processes which have been re-created and re-directed by faith. Faith determines the religious knowledge which is or can be gained and the intelligibility of this knowledge.

Wieman disagrees almost completely with Meland on the question of faith, reason, and knowledge. Whereas for Meland faith is a mysterious experience of God's judgment and grace, faith for Wieman is a calculated and absolute commitment by man to God. For Wieman there is only one level of faith, which is the absolute faith-commitment. Wieman contends that man has experiences in which God reveals "lures" and "insights", but he holds that knowledge is not directly revealed by God in these experiences. Knowledge is

gained only through a process of empirically testing the data of the religious experiences. Reason is attuned to the data of the religious experience, but reason is not re-created and re-directed by this data. Wieman rejects Meland's interpretation of knowledge revealed in faith, as being unsupportable, untestable, and open to the possibility of illusion. At the same time Wieman contends that the purpose and function of reason is to gain knowledge and that reason cannot perform its function, if reason is limited by pre-established knowledge and by some mysterious force which re-creates and re-directs it.

Although Wieman and Meland differ in a striking way regarding this question of faith, reason, and knowledge, there is one factor in Wieman's position which qualifies these seemingly opposing views. After man has made the absolute faith-commitment, according to Wieman, his entire response becomes more attuned to the data revealed by God in religious experiences. Through faith man is able to gain more adequate insight

into the nature of the reality which he experiences. The result of this more adequate insight is that man in faith finds his knowledge, which remains empirical, corrected and broadened by the grace of God. In a real sense it is true to say that for Wieman faith does qualify the rational processes. This qualification permitted by Wieman is similar to Meland's contention that reason is re-created and re-directed by faith; but although there is this similarity, the primary difference between their positions remains, namely, that Wieman represents faith as occurring on the basis of empirical knowledge, whereas Meland presupposes faith from the outset and the mysterious knowledge revealed in faith.

In accordance with their interpretations of faith, reason, and knowledge, Wieman and Meland proceed to establish opposing positions concerning the value of myth. Wieman contends that in past ages myths were valuable in expressing and transmitting interpretations of reality, but that today their value

is limited because of the possibility of more literal interpretations. The inherent danger of myth is that it makes it possible for man to rest in an illusory interpretation of reality. Because of this danger, Wieman rejects myths and denies their essential value in the theological quest. Meland's interpretation of the theological quest differs from Wieman's, in the sense that the quest for Meland is for intelligibility, whereas for Wieman its aim is an absolute faith-commitment based upon empirical knowledge. In accordance with his emphasis upon intelligibility, Meland affirms the value of myth in the theological quest. According to Meland, the nature of reality is complex and our understanding of reality is limited. Myths should certainly never be presented as absolute or literal accounts of reality, but myths are important for providing a frame of reference for interpreting reality. Meland contends that the most adequate contemporary frame of reference is the position of process. Wieman rejects the contention that the position

of process is a myth and asserts that any elements within this position which cannot be supported by empirical evidence are based on speculation and have no valid claim.

The differing view in respect of method can be brought into focus by noting the authority designated as primary. Whitehead places supreme authority on an interplay between facts "being primary" and thought. Wieman accepts in general the supreme authority as represented by Whitehead. By his emphasis on the lure of experience, on intuition, and on reason in faith as it becomes more attuned to the data, Wieman represents God as the directive force in the interplay of facts and thought. Meland differs from Whitehead and Wieman on the question of methodological authority. For Meland the supreme authority is the aesthetic, revelatory experience, in which God imparts to man faith and reveals to man knowledge which is absolute and self-validating. The key points of methodological disagreement for Process theology centre on the

question of faith, reason, and knowledge.

Wieman and Meland disagree with Whitehead on specific points in the doctrine of God. Whitehead, as we have seen, affirms three aspects of God's nature, which are designated as Primordial, Consequent, and Superjective. Wieman rejects the elaborate description by Whitehead of God's Primordial and Consequent natures, because he contends that these descriptions are based on speculation and not based on empirical evidence. Wieman maintains that there is no evidence to indicate that God contains within his Primordial self all eternal objects or possibilities of value.

Although Wieman thus appears to be at variance with Whitehead in his rejection of the Primordial and the Consequent natures of God, this variance however is in form rather than in substance. Wieman considers God structurally and functionally. At one time, he holds that God is structurally the unlimited possibility of value. At another time, he indicates that

the structure of God is creativity. Wieman places emphasis on the growth of value, and he contends that this growth occurs because of the interaction of events. Now it is within God's structure that events interact in such a way that there is an increase of value. It must be within God's structure for this interaction to occur, since there is a force not accountable for in the events themselves which makes possible this increase of value. Wieman asserts that something must be possible before it can become actualized. Since there is an increase of value not accountable for in the events themselves, there must be a structure of value which becomes actualized to an increasing degree. Wieman does not claim to know how this structure of possibilities operates. Nor does he claim to know how the function of God operates in relation to God's structure. His only claim is that there is something functioning in relation to the interaction of events, for which the events are not responsible, which brings about an increase of value.

This function he designates theologically as God.

In two ways Wieman's structure of God is similar to Whitehead's Primordial nature of God. By giving emphasis to God as the structure of unlimited possibility, Wieman's thesis is close to Whitehead's view of God in his Primordial nature as retaining all eternal objects, since Whitehead's doctrine of eternal objects is but another way of saying that God retains all the possibilities of value for becoming events. His emphasis upon God as the structure of creativity is similar to Whitehead's view that God presents selected eternal objects to the becoming event in such a way that the event has a subjective aim upon which to become actualized. Although Wieman does not offer an elaborate description of the way in which God is structured and functions in order to actualize the possibilities of value in a particular interaction of events, Wieman essentially posits the same process occurring which Whitehead designates as the Primordial nature of God.

Wieman disagrees with Whitehead regarding the Consequent nature of God. Whitehead points out that when an actual entity reaches its point of concretion, its next step is to pass into a state of objective immortality. As objective data, it then becomes data for the becoming processes of other events. When this immortal entity is not serving as data for an immediate becoming event, it is retained within God's Consequent nature, until such time as it can serve as objective data for a becoming event. Wieman asserts that there is no empirical evidence to suggest that an objective event is retained in some ethereal realm, when it is not participating as objective data within the becoming nature of reality. For Wieman, everything that exists must participate within the interactions of reality or it does not exist; therefore, when an objective event ceases to exist in the interaction of other events, it ceases to exist. There is no deus ex machina for saving in a state of objective immortality those things which no longer exist in the processes of reality.

In one sense these two positions are irreconcilable. Whitehead holds a doctrine of immortality which Wieman rejects. In another sense, however, these positions are similar. For Whitehead, that which enters into the state of objective immortality is not the event itself but its essential, objective contributions. Wieman, however, also emphasizes the fact that the contributions of each event participate in the history of civilization, although the events cease to exist. These contributions are retained from one generation to the next as they attempt to deal personally with reality, and likewise in literature, music, art, and history. Because these contributions are retained in a variety of ways, Wieman emphasizes the necessity of retaining all available historical sources. He declares that the expressions of one age may not be meaningful at different periods of history, but that nonetheless they must be retained, since at some future date men may be able to derive value from them--value which we in the present are unable to appreciate. This retention

of the contributions of past events is an essential part of Wieman's view that God is the God of history, in the sense that as God sustains the historical process, God also sustains the contributions of events which have ceased to exist. Both Whitehead and Wieman include in their doctrine of God that character of God which sustains the contributions of events which have ceased to exist. Their difference arises from the fact that Whitehead contrives a description of the way in which God sustains these contributions, and accordingly affirms an infinite state of immortality which transcends history. Although Wieman rejects this description of immortality, his rejection is not an absolute rejection. Because of his fear that faith may be based on illusions, Wieman rejects the thesis as having no evidence to support it. His rejection, therefore, of the form "I do not know" rather than of the form "that cannot be possible."

Like Wieman, Meland differs from Whitehead concerning the Consequent nature of God, although

Meland gives more emphasis than does Wieman to the manner in which God sustains the contributions of past events by re-creating and re-directing them in the development of culture. Meland, however, differs no less from Whitehead by rejecting the notion of objective immortality involved in the Consequent nature of God. Things that cease to exist just cease to exist, although their contributions may live on in the development of the culture. There seems no way of reconciling either Wieman or Meland with Whitehead on this point of transcendent immortality.

There is however one major point of disagreement, concerning the doctrine of God, between Wieman and Meland. This point is predominant in their writings during the 1930's, but it has become less of an issue since the 1940's. Whereas Wieman has always stressed the unity of God, Meland in his earlier writings contends that the God of theology is Plural, while the God of worship is One. As pointed out previously, Meland's more recent writings implicitly stress the

unity of God. To the degree that Meland's theology gives credence to a view of God as plural, to that degree Meland's position is in opposition to Wieman's.

Although Process theology presents in common a functional view of religion, Wieman and Meland strike differing emphases in their view of religion. Wieman's view of religion has placed primary emphasis upon the individual in his immediate experiences, with less emphasis on the social character of religion. This stress is evident in the limited consideration Wieman gives to the value of tradition and to the role of history in his theological position. The limited role Wieman does attribute to tradition is provided for by his doctrine of the perceptual event. As discussed previously, the doctrine of the perceptual event provides an inadequate framework for the retention within his theological position of the religious tradition and the general historical tradition. Unlike Wieman, Meland follows directly the example of Whitehead and emphasises the social aspect as much

as the individual aspect of religion. This dual emphasis is seen in the relation of faith and culture as a major theme in his theology. In his doctrine of God, Meland gives special consideration to the manner in which God reveals himself in culture, in the tradition, and in history.

Evaluation of Divergent Views

There is value in the view of faith, reason, and knowledge presented by Meland, but Wieman's view is in the end more adequate. Meland contends that faith must be a total response on the part of man to the judgment and grace of God, but he represents faith as occurring in such a manner that man's proper role in the God-man relationship is limited. Man is not responsible for a true commitment to God. Faith, properly understood, is a total and absolute commitment on the part of man to God. For Meland, on the other hand, faith is an experience by which God transforms man, and man does not fully participate in, nor

is he fully aware of, this transforming experience. There is value in Meland's stress on the essential importance of the grace of God so far as the occurrence of faith is concerned, but as it stands his emphasis, on the dominating role of God in the occurrence of faith, denies to man his God-given humanity and, further, denies to man his moral responsibility in relation to God.

Meland contends that the experience of faith and faith itself are self-validating. This means that there is no possibility of external criteris whereby faith may be seen to be genuinely faith or not. One cannot really be sure that one has encountered the judgment and grace of God, so long as one's evaluations are based on internal or subjective criteria. Neither can one be sure that one has made a total response, so long as there are no external criteria for evaluating one's response. If faith is its own and sole authority for authenticity, there will always remain the real possibility that what one contends to be faith is in

reality a projection of one's distorted psychological needs.

A prominent element in Meland's theory is that there is to be a creative tension between faith and reason. Meland also insists quite explicitly that faith occurs independently of reason. Faith, however, is said to be a total response of the individual to God's judgment and grace. Yet man is a rational being, and, consequently, reason must be involved in man's total response. Since, however, faith occurs independently of reason, Meland's view of faith in reality implies a limited response by man. Man cannot make a total response to God in faith without including the use of his rational capacities. However, since faith is also self-validating, reason cannot perform its true function of assessing the authenticity of faith. It is, on the contrary, Meland's contention that faith re-creates and re-directs reason. The truth is that if faith has this completely transforming effect on reason, then one would not be able to engage true

reason in the theological inquiry. Only a faith-dominated reason could be engaged in this inquiry. When reason is so dominated by faith, a valid, creative tension between faith and reason cannot be established.

Meland contends that man receives in faith absolute knowledge, validated by faith, concerning the God-man relationship. If one accepts this contention, then reason of necessity would be limited in relation to this knowledge and to faith. If there is no external criteria for evaluating this absolute knowledge, then there is no way of being reasonably certain that the knowledge revealed in faith is true, instead of being an illusory "knowledge" which is self-projected. Since this knowledge is absolute, the possibility of an increase and correction of knowledge, concerning the God-man relationship, is eliminated. According to Meland, the role of reason dominated by faith is to develop an intelligibility of faith. Reason, limited only to the task of intelligibility, is stripped of its function of working for an increase and correction

of knowledge. Faith should be supported by reason in terms of external criteria, and faith should allow for an increase of and correction of knowledge based, at least in part, upon reason. Meland's view of faith does not allow for either of these factors, and, therefore, his view of faith is not based upon the total response of man.

Nonetheless, in spite of these defects there are specific themes within Meland's position which are valuable. These themes are: (1) that faith must be a total response of man to God, (2) that faith must be based on man's encountering the judgment and grace of God, (3) that a creative tension must exist between faith and reason, and (4) that faith must be intelligible.

The weaknesses in Meland's position--concerning the issue of faith, reason, and knowledge--are corrected in Wieman's position. For Wieman, faith is an absolute commitment on the part of man to God, made within the context of the grace of God. It is a

commitment which involves a total response on the part of man. Faith is based on knowledge which has been empirically established, but in the faith-commitment man goes beyond the limits of his human knowledge. Man commits himself in faith to God; the commitment is not to the knowledge gained. God reveals to man the initial insights in the religious experience, which serve as the foundation of knowledge, but man must be responsible in using his total capacities in gaining knowledge of the God-man relationship. Man does not employ his reason, in relation to the religious experience, in a completely detached manner. On the other hand, reason must not be dominated by the religious experience. Rather, reason must be attuned to the data being considered. The knowledge gained is never considered absolute or final, although the knowledge does offer one a degree of certainty for making the faith-commitment. If faith is based on empirical knowledge, the possibility of faith being no more than a projection of one's own psychological

needs is diminished if not eliminated. Wieman contends that, after the faith-commitment has been made, a form of creative tension exists between faith and reason. Reason, in light of the faith-commitment, becomes more attuned to the data of the religious experiences, making possible a correction of and an increase of knowledge concerning the God-man relationship.

In summary, Wieman offers an important correction to Meland's position in several respects. Wieman contends (1) that the religious experience does not provide faith or knowledge, although in the experience God reveals insights which are the foundation of knowledge, (2) that reason, attuned to the data, is employed in gaining knowledge, (3) that faith is a total response by man to God, (4) that faith should be based on knowledge, while going beyond the limits of knowledge, and (5) that, after the faith-commitment has been made, reason becomes more attuned to God's revelation in the religious data, making

possible within the grace of God an increase of and a correction of knowledge and understanding. Wieman's position is more adequate than Meland's because Wieman attempts to emphasize the role of God and the role of man in the God-man relationship. God is responsible for encountering man with His revelation in the religious experience, but at the same time man is morally responsible for using his God-given faculties for gaining knowledge and for making the faith-commitment to God. Meland represents faith as occurring before man can employ his God-given faculties in a total response to God. Therefore, Meland so emphasises the role of God, in the God-man relationship, that man cannot be morally responsible to God on the basis of a total response. Whereas Meland's lack of external criteria for the evaluation of faith and knowledge increases the real possibility of faith being nothing but the projection of one's distorted needs, Wieman's emphasis upon man's moral responsibility in gaining empirical knowledge and in making the faith-commitment

based upon this knowledge, lessens the possibility of faith being distorted by man's personal limitations.

Wieman's position also provides for an increase of and correction of religious knowledge due to the grace of God, an increase which is lacking in Meland's position. Because faith is based on knowledge and provides for an increase and correction of knowledge, Wieman's position includes non-subjective criteria by which man's actions can be evaluated in respect of their conformity to the demands of God revealed in the God-man relationship. Wieman's emphasis on non-subjective criteria makes clear that man must continue to be morally responsible to God, even after the faith-commitment has been made. Meland's conception of the need to develop an intelligible interpretation of and witness to the faith is valid and important enough; but the introduction of the project of intelligible interpretation, after faith and knowledge have occurred on the basis of a limited response by man, does not measure up to man's moral responsibility to

God to use his God-given capacities in gaining knowledge, in making the faith-commitment, and in testing his actions in order that they conform to the demands of God. Whereas Meland primarily stresses the role of God in the God-man relationship, Wieman stresses God's grace and man's moral responsibility. It is true that Wieman at times seems to stress man's responsibility to God more than God's grace; but this tendency is justified, within his clear emphasis on God's grace, because of man's sinful tendency not to accept and not to fulfill his moral responsibilities to God. That God is the source of faith must always be clearly stressed, but God's grace must not be stressed in such a one-sided way that man's responsibility to God is either diminished or negated. The Old and New Covenant theme of the Bible clearly confirms that man is saved by the grace of God, but salvation only occurs when man is morally responsible in a total sense to God.

One of the most important of Meland's contributions

is the value he places upon myth in the theological inquiry. He asserts that the imagery of myths is essential to man in each age, as man attempts to understand and to witness to the God-man relationship. By making use of myth-imagery, Meland is indicating that the nature of reality, experienced by man, is so complex that an adequate understanding cannot be gained by a purely empirical approach. Meland uses the term "empirical realism" to designate his modified form of empiricism. As noted previously, Wieman also presents a modified form of empiricism, and yet in his constant emphasis upon faith as founded upon empirical knowledge, he rejects the value of myths. By rejecting myth, Wieman gives credence to the charge that his empirical approach is in part superficial, because he omits from his consideration the depths of reality which man in all ages has apprehended and expressed in the form of myths. There is value in Wieman's contention that myths must not be taken literally, a contention with which Meland would agree. One's

understanding of the nature of reality must not be limited by a static and absolute myth-imagery. Nonetheless, one must not cut oneself off from the depths of reality expressed in myths, simply because these depths of reality are difficult to relate within a modified form of empiricism.

Meland's emphasis, upon the value of myth-imagery to the theological inquiry, is important for at least two further reasons. On the one hand, he points out that modern science and religion share a common approach in using myth-imagery for plumbing the depths of reality which confront man. In making this point, Meland offers a necessary correction to Wieman's rejection of myths as an invalid manner of dealing with religious and scientific insights. On the other hand, he points out that theology does an injustice to man, when it attempts to make any myth-imagery static and absolute. This correction is valuable over against those who attempt to make one particular system of myths regulative for all

Christians. The point, however, is of value to Process theology itself, because it implies that the myth-imagery of process is not sacred and should never be used as if it represents the ultimate imagery for expressing reality. Meland not only indicates the value of myths in the theological inquiry; he also contends that new myth-imagery must be developed, as man attempts to understand his relationship to God, within the context of an increasingly complex understanding of the nature of reality. Meland rightly points out that in order to be responsible, theology must recognize and accept the task of re-mythologizing.

In summary, the methodological authority presented by Wieman is more adequate than the authority designated by Meland. Whereas Wieman places his authority on the interplay of facts and thought occurring within the directive grace of God, Meland contends that the supreme authority is the aesthetic, revelatory experience, in which God imparts to man faith and reveals to man knowledge which is absolute and self-

validating. Meland's position is limited because on its terms man is unable to make a total response to God and because there are no external criteria whereby the claims of the faith-experience may be evaluated. Wieman's position is limited because his emphasis upon facts and thought excludes the depths of reality indicated by myth-imagery. Neither Wieman nor Meland present a pure form of empiricism. Wieman's modified form of empiricism is the more adequate, but it would be more adequate still if Wieman actively included the value of myths in the theological inquiry.

In general Wieman and Meland are in agreement on the essential points in their doctrine of God, as both give primary stress to the saving character of God. Wieman is correct in stressing at all times the unity of God. To the degree that Meland's early writings do not stress the unity of God, Meland is open to the charge of polytheism. Wieman and Meland are correct in rejecting as speculation the transcendent immortality included in Whitehead's Consequent nature

of God. At the same time, they both agree that God sustains the contributions of the past in the becoming processes of the present and the future. In this sense, salvation by God in the present and the future includes the contributions of the past. Meland's position is more adequate on this point than is Wieman's. Meland gives special emphasis to the relationship of faith and culture, an emphasis which is not adequately presented by Wieman. Stress is given by Meland to the way in which God is revealed in culture and to the importance of tradition to culture. Because of these insights, Meland develops a more adequate view of history, in relation to the theological inquiry, than does Wieman. Wieman tends to emphasise the religious experience of the individual. By so doing, Wieman fails to give due weight to the vital contributions of culture and tradition to the religious life of the individual. Wieman's inclusion of the perceptual event is not an adequate substitute for a strong doctrine of history in relation to the

theological inquiry. Although Meland gives more adequate stress, than does Wieman, to the relationship of faith and culture, they both reject a transcendent state of existence designated by the term "immortality." The saving character of God within the on-going-process of history is affirmed, but transcendent immortality is rejected because of the lack of any concrete, empirical evidence to support such a view.

General Evaluation

As has been previously indicated, Wieman's method is more adequate than Meland's. Because of this superiority, the general limitations to be considered will focus on Wieman's method; but it should continue to be borne in mind that Meland does offer corrective insights to some of the limitations in Wieman's method.

Process theology contends that its position involves an empirical method. This method is empirical in the sense that the claims made must be supported by

evidence which has been empirically tested. The empirical character of the method is not to be understood as a "pure" or orthodox form of empiricism; rather, this method represents a modified form of empiricism, modified in the sense that the evaluation of the data does not occur in a purely detached manner. The general, methodological limitations in the Process position are related to the manner in which this empirical approach needs to be clearly modified.

There are three points, concerning method, at which emphasis should be stressed if the modification of the empirical approach in Process theology is to be adequately understood. The first point deals with the relationship of that reality which can be simply understood on the basis of an empirical evaluation and of that reality which, because of its mysterious qualities, cannot be simply understood on the basis of an empirical evaluation. Whitehead points to this problem in his contention that one's understanding should not be limited to the superficial level of

reality. Wieman and Meland assert that their primary interest is with the particular experiences in which the God-man encounter occurs. Both indicate that there is a depth of quality to these experiences which is not found in man's general level of experience. Meland attempts to include this mysterious quality of the God-man encounter, but his position is limited because of a lack of any external criteria for evaluating the claims made on the basis of the religious experience. Wieman at two points attempts to include this mysterious quality. On the one hand, he emphasises that God is responsible for the lure of experience and for the initial insights which serve as the foundation for the hypothesis. At this level, God's initial revelation enables man to be more attuned to the religious data. On the other hand, Wieman contends that man in faith becomes more attuned to the religious data, making possible a correction of knowledge and an increase of knowledge. By not stressing the mysterious quality of reality, the modified empirical approach of Process

theology can be improperly interpreted to be closer to orthodox empiricism than it actually is. If Process theology is to be true to its modified form of empiricism, the empirical evaluation must adequately take into account the mysterious quality of reality, even though the inclusive character of this evaluation may limit the scope of the theological position. While not rejecting the modified character of its empirical approach, Process theology should clearly indicate that there is a mysterious quality in the religious experience which cannot be evaluated on the basis of a superficially orthodox empirical method.

The second point deals with the relationship of myths to a modified empirical method. As indicated previously, on this point Meland's approach is more adequate than is Wieman's. The nature of reality is complex, and our understanding of reality is always limited. Throughout recorded history, man has used myths as an aid in dealing with the complexities of reality. Wieman is correct in his rejection of the

literal interpretation of myths. When myths are taken literally, they become an end in themselves, instead of serving as a means to an end. Used correctly, myths can help man to be open to an increasing understanding of the complexities of reality. An important, methodological tool should not be rejected, simply because the tool can be and often is, used improperly. Wieman's modified form of empiricism would be strengthened, if it included an adequate use of myths. Meland indicates that constructive theology has the responsibility for developing new forms of myth in each age. The mythological insights of former times must be presented within contemporary mythological forms. If Process theology is to perform this task of re-mythologizing, its modified form of empiricism must adequately include the use of myths.

The third point deals with the inclusion of the religious tradition and the Bible in a modified empirical approach. Primary emphasis should be placed on one's religious experiences and on one's modified

empirical understanding of these experiences. At the same time, one's religious experiences and understanding are conditioned, to some degree, by one's religious heritage. No man is an island. All men are social creatures, whose existence is dependent upon the history of mankind. Any method which does not include a concrete dialogue between man's experiences in the present and the accounts of experience in history is limited. As indicated previously, Wieman and Meland stress, to varying degrees of success, the importance of a proper dialogue between the experiences of the present and the experiences of the past. If the modified form of empiricism in Process theology is to be adequately employed, this dialogue between the experiences of the present and the past must be established.

Concerning the doctrine of God, there are two primary points of weakness in the Process position. The first point of weakness deals with the personal character of God. For Process theology, God is the

creative process in the universe which saves man, although primary emphasis is given to the necessity of man's being responsible to God in order that salvation can occur. It is the intention of Process theology to affirm that this relationship, between God and man, is personal. Although God is personal, personality is denied to God. The denial of personality to God is supposed to be an affirmation that God is more than personality. This affirmation by denial is in agreement with the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, which describes God by using the Latin term for "person" instead of using the term for "personality." As previously stated, the use of the word "deny" in this context is unfortunate and inappropriate. By using the term "deny" it is possible to interpret Process theology as presenting God as less than personality. Since the intention is to affirm that God is personal and more than personality, the use of the term "deny" weakens the Process view of the personal character of God.

The second point of weakness is found in the way in which Process theology fails to relate adequately its imagery of God to the biblical tradition. One image of God, used in the Process position, is God as suffering love. This emphasis on the tenderness and sensitivity of God would be more relevant to the Church, if it were related adequately to the biblical theme of the Suffering Servant. In Process imagery, God is related to culture, while at the same time man's moral responsibility to God in culture is affirmed. This imagery would be more relevant, if it were related to the Covenant theme, where man is called upon to be morally responsible to God within the cultural situation. In Process imagery, the God who saves is not a static God, but an active God who brings about his saving grace within the immediacy of history. This imagery would be more relevant to the life of the church, if it were related to the biblical testimony to the active God who functions to save man in the unfolding drama of history and to whom man must

be committed.

The primary weaknesses designated are manifest in the view of religion presented by Process theology. The empirical emphasis tends to allow for an interpretation of religion which is impersonal. By not giving adequate emphasis to the mysterious depths of reality which man encounters, Process theology runs the risk of limiting religion to the superficial levels of existence. By not adequately relating its position to the Bible and religious tradition, Process theology creates the risk of cutting off contemporary religion from its cultural heritage and from the God of history. The greatest danger in this position is implied in the term "process," which indicates a futuristic orientation. An orientation to the present and to the future must always be balanced by an emphasis on the past. If this position is not to limit its interpretation of religion to a futuristic orientation, the empirical character of Process theology must be adequately modified--in order to give due emphasis to the mysterious

depths of reality, to the Bible, and to the religious and cultural tradition.

Although there are these basic weaknesses, Process theology has made and continues to make constructive contributions to systematic theology, especially in America. In summary, the major contributions will be listed. (1) As stated previously, the crucial issue in American theology, in the 1920's, was whether one could continue speaking of the existence of God as a concrete reality. Under the influence of Process theology, the question of theism was redefined. Theology turned from its attempts to prove the existence of God to attempts to designate the character of this Something upon which man is dependent for his salvation. (2) Not only was the issue of theism re-defined, but Process theology also began to develop a method by which theology could understand the character of God. This method represents a modified form of empiricism. As an empirical approach, Process theology has helped to bridge the gap between theology and science. This

position attempts to include a contemporary, scientific world-view, without making this world-view static or absolute. (3) The goal of this empirical approach is faith in God. Faith must be based on knowledge, but at the same time faith must go beyond the limitations of human knowledge. In other words--on the one hand, faith includes an encounter with the mysterious depths of reality; while on the other hand, faith is always based on empirical evidence. Because of this modified empirical approach, faith based on intellectual assent to or blind acceptance of, fixed propositions is rejected. The possibility of one's religious life being based on one's distorted, psychological needs is limited by the inclusion of empirical criteria for evaluating the God-man encounter. (4) Faith is made potentially possible by God's encountering man in the religious experience. Although it is by the grace of God that faith is potential for man, it is necessary for man to be morally responsible to God--in the process of gaining knowledge and understanding--before

man can truly make the faith-commitment. This position affirms the need for man to make a total response to God, in order that faith should occur. Man's religious life cannot develop independently of other areas of human interest. In an age when specialization is becoming increasingly dominant, Process theology affirms that man's religious life must be in tune with the total realities of human existence. (5) Claims are made by many today that the traditional understandings of faith are unintelligible for modern man. Process theology, in line with its modified form of empiricism, contends that faith must be made intelligible to man in each age. The demand for intelligibility means that the witness to faith must employ the use of images and myths which are relevant to contemporary man's experiences. A primary issue in the theological world has been the battle over the validity of demythologizing. The emphasis by Process theology on intelligibility would re-direct this theological discussion to include the question of re-mythologizing. (6) History

informs us that too often man makes the commitment of faith and does not live by the demands of God explicit in the commitment. Process theology extends its empirical approach to include the need for man to test his actions to see if they conform to his knowledge about the God-man relationship. It is not enough for man to gain religious knowledge and to make the faith-commitment. Process theology affirms the contention of the writer of I John--that man's actions must demonstrate that he is in the light. (7) Process theology, in its empirical approach, places definite emphasis upon man's being totally responsible to God. In an age when humanism is flourishing, this position is careful to indicate that its views are anti-humanistic. On the one hand, man is to be responsible for his own humanity, but man's primary responsibility is to God. On the other hand, man's role is kept in perspective by the clear contention that it is by the specific grace of God that man gains religious knowledge, makes the faith-commitment, and attempts to

fulfill this commitment. In summary, it can be said that Process theology stands within the broad tradition of Covenant theology. It is because of the grace of God that man is able to participate in the God-man relationship. Yet, man must be morally responsible to God in the use of his human resources, if man is to participate fully in the God-man relationship. In our man-centred-age, Process theology affirms that man cannot save himself. At the same time, man must be responsible to God on the basis of a total response, if salvation is to occur. Process theology contends that God does not offer to man a "cheap grace"; the grace of God demands that man be morally responsible in his full humanity.

ABBREVIATIONS

WHITEHEAD, ALFRED NORTH

AI	<u>Adventures of Ideas</u>
CN	<u>Concept of Nature</u>
D	<u>Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead</u>
FR	<u>Function of Reason</u>
MT	<u>Modes of Thought</u>
NL	<u>Nature and Life</u>
PNK	<u>Principles of Natural Knowledge</u>
PR	<u>Process and Reality</u>
RM	<u>Religion in the Making</u>
SMW	<u>Science and the Modern World</u>
AE	<u>Aims of Education</u>

WIEMAN, HENRY NELSON

IFOF	<u>Intellectual Foundation of Faith</u>
ITAG	<u>Is There a God?</u>
MUC	<u>Man's Ultimate Commitment</u>

- MPRL Methods of Private Religious Living
- NPR Normative Psychology of Religion
- NWMC Now We Must Choose
- RESM Religious Experience and Scientific Method
- DH The Directive in History
- HNW The Empirical Theology of Henry Nelson Wieman
- GR The Growth of Religion
- IL The Issues of Life
- SHG The Source of Human Good
- WRWT The Wrestle of Religion with Truth

MELAND, BERNARD EUGENE

- ASC America's Spiritual Culture
- FC Faith and Culture
- HE Higher Education and the Human Spirit
- MMW Modern Man's Worship
- SR Seeds of Redemption
- RF The Realities of Faith
- RCF The Reawakening of Christian Faith
- TC Write Your Own Ten Commandments

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